



THE

LAUNDRY FILES

A roleplaying game based on the 'Laundry Files' novels by Charles Stross

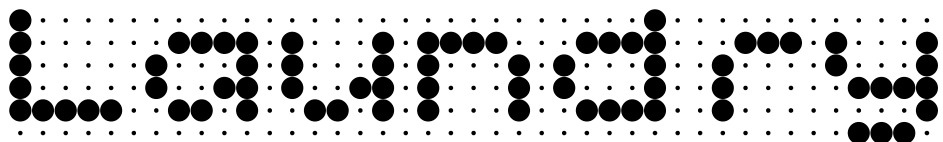


Written by Gareth Hanrahan,
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THE LAUNDRY

Based on the Laundry Files novels by Charles Stross.

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THE LAUNDRY

THE LAUNDRY



by Charles Stross

CUSTOMER SERVICE QA/RANDOM SAMPLE/OUTBOUND REC ONLY/USER:ANGLETONJ

-- Good morning, Bob. I do hope I'm not interrupting your game of Minesweeper?

-- Yes, Bob, this is more important than the cable fault in room D14. I've got a little job for you ...

-- Oh all right then. If you must. Yes, I'll sign it off for you. Send a memo to Facilities and let them fix the network. It can come out of the departmental infrastructure maintenance budget -- I'll square it with accounting. Yes, I'm afraid so. This task needs your undivided attention.

-- No, I don't think that will be necessary. It's a desk job; perfectly safe.

-- No, Bob, nothing's going to eat you.

-- All right, here's the briefing document and the material we want you to prepare a report on. You'll notice it's security coded CUBICLE SEVEN. It's clearly a job for a young fellow like you who grew up playing Dungeons and Dragons and Space Invaders or what-not. I don't understand these fads, I'm afraid. When I was a lad ... yes, that was a very long time ago. You understand this stuff better than I do ...

-- It's a huge embarrassment. CUBICLE SEVEN went to press and sold hundreds of thousands of copies of this so-called game before anybody noticed, much less thought to stop them. It's out there and out of control, in the wild as it were. We can't track down everyone who's bought one: it's a fait accompli. I'm told it's framed as some kind of fantastic fiction, but it's full of highly dangerous classified material and the portrayal of how we work and what we do is ... well, uncharitable barely begins to describe it. If we were a public department we could contract the spin control out to some PR firm, but we aren't so we can't.

-- To make matters worse, it mentions various codeword classified operations.

-- Yes, it's at least as bad as the "Spycatcher" case. When we catch whoever spilled the beans, Thaumaturgic Forensics will want to examine them very carefully to establish exactly how they broke their Oath of Office, before we throw the Official Secrets Act at them. The Board are absolutely livid. Questions are being asked at the highest level.

-- Yes, BLUE HADES is in there. And CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN.

-- Yes, I suppose you could call it a "load of bollocks", Bob. But I'd rather you didn't. People might get entirely the wrong idea.

-- Well, in the short term there's not a lot we can do. We can steal, confiscate or buy up every copy that comes to light, and bind any bystanders who've been exposed to classified material to silence. But that's a lot of work. It'd be easier to spin it as being a disinformation campaign. But the latter only works if there's material in it that can be plausibly presented as inaccurate, biased, erroneous, and designed to deceive.

-- Someone has to read it. And that someone has to be both the kind of nerd who understands these Role Playing Game thingies, and an officer who is cleared for all the codewords in the game book. Which means you, Bob.

-- Your job is to read this "Laundry RPG" and, if necessary, play-test it to determine whether the procedures documented therein are a threat to our national security, not to mention the sanity of any civilians who may have been exposed to it. If you spot any errata, please send me a memo immediately -- what they got wrong will be as important as what they got right in helping Internal Affairs to track down the source of the leaks. Oh, and you may need to inform the GAMMA YELLOW committee if you run across summoning rituals or occult lore encoded in the documentation, in case we have to send the Plumbers to mop up after so-called games. I'd appreciate a full report on my desk next Friday morning ...

-- What? What on earth do you need that for?

-- Dice? Paper? Players?

-- I told you I don't know anything about these new-fangled role playing games. Are you sure? If so, fill out a stationery request for the office supplies and submit it in triplicate to the departmental secretary. Players ... I don't know where you're going to get them. Have you thought about asking Personnel if they'll loan you some Residual Human Resources?

-- What, the players have got to be alive?

-- Oh, I see. It's not like lawn chess, then.

-- Ask HR. If you encounter any push-back I'll provide top cover. Three RPG players with security clearance for at least eighteen hours? Ouch. We're under a hiring freeze, in case you hadn't noticed: I've no idea where we're going to get a budget line for ...

-- That's an excellent idea. I seem to remember there's a disused level two containment grid in basement room B6 that you can probably use: check with Facilities. Black candles are easy, we're still overstocked thanks to that ordering mix-up in your first week on the job. The less said about that the better, yes, but if you can see your way to burning a couple of gross it would be appreciated. The "free beer and pizza for volunteers" idea sounds promising, and I'll definitely see if HR have a line item I can use to cover it. But you're going to have to recruit and vet the volunteer "players" yourself.

-- Remember: report by next Friday! And don't let anything eat your soul.

(ENDS)

ORIENTATION FOR NEWLY TRANSFERRED PERSONNEL

Version 4.5 (August 1995)

Human Resources Directorate



Dear Sir/Madam/Other,

As a newly transferred employee, it is necessary for you to acquaint yourself with the structure and operational methods of this organisation as soon as possible. Your supervisor will provide you with the documentation pertinent to your position; this general orientation is intended for the consumption of all employees. As a reminder, this and all other documentation is classified under Section III of the Official Secrets Act (1916) and hence is bound under the terms of your service.

You now work for a branch of Her Majesty's civil service known as the Laundry – the name derives from our original offices during WWII – tasked with monitoring and containing entities and phenomena that would be termed 'supernatural' by the general population. This is a misnomer; all phenomena are natural to this or another universe. Reality is a considerably more porous medium than is commonly suspected.

You are required to observe security and safety precautions at all times. Keep your warrant card and employee badge on your person at all times. Use of your legal or true name is to be kept to a minimum; use your assigned soubriquet for all non-essential forms, records, oaths and social interactions. Report all significant unusual phenomenon, blood spills or bleeding, unusual temperature shifts, electrical or computer faults to a supervisor immediately. Do not enter any secure areas without permission. Do not repeat any unusual phrases three times. Do not summon up anything you cannot put down. Review the **Basic Health, Safety and Security Protocols** document at least once per month.

In the course of your duties, you may be called upon to serve in the field. Such duties include, but are not limited to, investigating illegal or dangerous use of magic, containment and/or banishing of supernatural entities, testing or investigation of new magical phenomenon, providing occult support to other civilian (police, counterterrorism, customs, Home Office, Foreign Office) or military organisations, enacting or participating in rituals (ensure you have signed Form CF/432 before doing so) and protecting the sanity and stability of Reality As We Know It in general and the United Kingdom in particular.

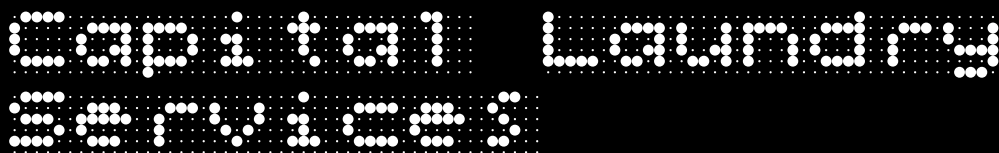
Secrecy is paramount in the field. Never discuss the nature of your work or the existence of the Laundry without permission. Your warrant card is enchanted to deflect suspicion and ensure your authority – use of the warrant card outside of official Laundry business is not permitted and suspected abuses will be Audited.

Before any field operation, a budget plan must be approved by your superior and on file with Financial Control. Expenditures outside of the approved operational budget allocation are the responsibility of the department and/or the individual. Similarly, use of any assets or office equipment (including wards, mobile telephones, charms, storage devices, stationary including pens, pencils and so forth) for non-standard purposes without prior approval is not permitted and costs will be extracted from the relevant department. Repeated offences may be Audited.

The Laundry is an **ISO9001-certified** organisation, emphasising quality record keeping and formalised management and problem-solving procedures. Maintaining this level of certification should be a high priority for every employee.

The near future promises exciting challenges for the Laundry. With hard work, diligence, attention to detail and a modicum of luck, we are confident that the majority of you may survive in some form.

Welcome to the Laundry!



'The laundry deserves a moment's notice.'

— M. R. D. Foot, from the foreword to *The Secret History of SOE*

We are a very minor infestation of organic life, clinging precariously to a small pebble of cooling rock. This little pebble orbits a brief candle of burning hydrogen, one of millions of similar wisps of hot gas that make up 100,000 lightyear-wide splotch called the galaxy. That galaxy is one of billions of galaxies in the universe and the universe itself is a) largely empty and b) 13.7 billion years old.

For the most part, we have got it all worked out. There is no God out there and precious few little green men. It is all just hydrogen and a light sprinkling of heavier elements bouncing around in the aftershocks from the Big Bang. Reality is deterministic and meaningless; life is a cosmic accident. As that bus said – stop worrying and enjoy your life.

It is the bits we cannot see that the Laundry worries about. There are sections of space-time where the physical laws are very different to the ones in our neck of the galaxy, impossible regions where reality gets squamous¹. There are other universes out there, other dimensions above and below this one where the many-angled ones live. You can call *them* gods if you want and you probably should.

Pray that they do not notice you.

Since we crawled out of the primordial ooze², a lot of very stupid people have tried worshipping such entities. 99% of the time, this had as much effect as most prayer, although Cthulhu cultists were less interested in selling you copies of the *Watchtower* than they were in sacrificing you to their squiddy deity. Sometimes, very, very rarely, some madman would actually manage to produce a genuinely supernatural effect (usually the effect known as 'opening himself to possession by the brain-eaters'). Magic is mostly garbage and even the spells that worked (for a given value of 'worked'; see brains, eaters of) were packed full of cruff and nonsensical ritual elements.

There has always been a strong association between espionage and sorcery. They are both occult, in that they are hidden from public view. Here in the UK, you had people like John Dee and the Wizard Earl of Northumberland

hanging around with Walsingham; later on, Dashwood's Hellfire Club was packed with spies and more recently, you had people like Jasper Maskelynn running around with Military Intelligence making the Suez Canal disappear. It is hardly surprising, then, that the modern age of sorcery began in the secret depths of British intelligence... more or less.

The greatest wizard of the 20th Century was Alan Turing.

He is better known, of course, as the father of computing theory. The Church-Turing thesis basically states that anything computable can be done by a Universal Turing Machine, aka a computer, and that is not as recursive as it sounds. It puts limits on what computers can achieve within the lifetime of this universe; it means certain problems are unsolvable by calculation. In computer science, it is one of the fundamental tenets.

The trouble is, in 1941, Turing himself came up with a theorem that disproved the Church-Turing hypothesis and here is where things get messy. Put simply, the Turing Theorem... no, it is too complicated to put simply. Let me analogise wildly. Imagine the platonic realm of mathematics, the infinite plane of numbers. This plane exists in all possible realities. You do a calculation in our universe and it, well, echoes in that wholly imaginary platonic realm. Assuming that it is the right calculation – technically, all spellcasting is a variation on the Dho-Na curves, popularised by certain long-dead star-headed sea cucumber civilisations³.

Now, assume there is another universe, a whole stack of them in fact, extending above and below ours. (Don't try to imagine this; it will give you a headache⁴.) In a vanishingly small number of these universes, there are Things. These Things have Minds and these minds can also imagine the platonic realm of mathematics. You do the right calculation, cause the right ripples and you attract the attention of Things. You can even get the Things to do Stuff. Stuff starts off with blowing every form of cryptography out of the water, moves onto raising spirits from the vasty deep and zapping your enemies with boils and goes right up to Opening The Way for bigger, nastier Things to crawl into your skull, or worse, our universe.

And to Them, our universe tastes good with ketchup.

1. Invisible, too, until NASA gets around to launching *Tillinghast One*.

2. Or were created by the Elder Things, as certain carvings from the Antarctic darkly hint.

3. At least, we hope they are long-dead.

4. If you are lucky. If not, it will not be your head anymore.

Deep breath. If your eyes glazed over about three paragraphs back, that is fine. Just remember that spells are a form of abstruse computation, which means you can warp reality by running the right program on your laptop.

Turing came up with his hypothesis back in 1941, when he was working at Bletchley Park and foiling dastardly Nazi encryption with two-fisted British cryptanalysis. The practical side of the whole 'the right computation can summon demons' theorem got turfed over to the Special Operations Executive (SOE). The SOE was the offensive, hell-raising⁵ side of intelligence, a bunch of cowboys who were looked down on by the refined, upper-class⁶ spies of Special Intelligence Services (SIS). Churchill had told SOE to 'set Europe ablaze' by training spies, saboteurs and sorcerers in England and parachuting them into occupied territory.

By the end of the war, SOE was also heavily involved in taking down the Nazi occult warfare sections. The SS's Ahnenerbe picked up a lot of tricks from the old Thule-Gesellschaft and while they were behind the Allies in terms of efficient computational sorcery, they were a lot more willing to use... sacrifices. There's power in death and the Final Solution was part of a vast incantation that – if it worked – would have changed the course of history. Hitler spent a lot of time in the bunker ranting about the wonder-weapons that could still win the war and even with the Russians marching into Berlin, he could still have won if his sorcerers cracked the problem. The power of the Elder Gods dwarfs the power of the atomic bomb.

The Special Operations Executive was dissolved after the war, ostensibly because of pressure from SIS, which mutated into MI6 and spawned a thousand spy novels and sexed-up dossiers. In truth, there is a small part of Whitehall that is forever SOE, and that is the Laundry.

5. Literally.

6. To which the Laundry tends to mutter 'Cambridge Five' under its collective breath, ignoring the fact that Kim Philby was involved in SOE.

The Laundry – the name comes from the organisation's original offices, which were above a Chinese laundry in Soho – is the remains of SOE's old occult warfare department, now with authority over all occult espionage and weird sorcery in the United Kingdom⁷. It has suffered a sea-change into something... well, terminally underfunded and very, very strange.

Today, the Laundry is:

- One of the pre-eminent occult espionage organisations in the world
- A dumping ground for people who saw too much and who now get a sinecure and a state pension in exchange for not screaming 'Iä! Iä! Shub-Niggurath' to the *News of the World*.
- An asylum where the crazies are given a budget and a summoning grid to play with⁸.

You work for the Laundry. Most of the time, this means going to meetings, filling out forms, filing reports, arguing capitalisation budgets and enduring the Machiavellian machinations of Human Resources⁹. It combines the thrilling excitement of a menial office job with the dazzling action of ISO9001 certification and a bureaucracy that's not so much Byzantine as it is cyclopean. Sometimes, they send you on missions, which combines the thrilling excitement of Things Trying To Eat You with the dazzling action of Running Away¹⁰.

Still, the alternative is far, far worse. They call it CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN.

7. Also Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man.

8. You may fall under multiple categories.

9. Ironically, not always human themselves.

10. If you fail, you may end up as a Residual Human Resource.

Cabling Meeting - 11am, Room 118 - Send PFY
HR - form CF530 before Tues. Ask Mo.
PICK UP DRY CLEANING!!!

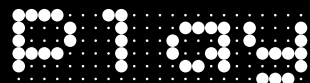
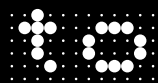
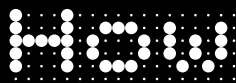
THE LAUNDRY

ACTION THIS DAY:

1. The establishment of Special Operations 3, to pursue unconventional warfare methods not explicitly banned under Secret Codicil IV of the Hague Convention.
2. SO3 is also to investigate and counter enemy use of same.
3. As per our discussion of report 443/10 on the work of Mr. Turing, SO3 will liaise with Bletchley Park and determine the full scope of the theorem's implications.
4. All unconventional assets and files relating to same are to be reclassified and transferred to SO3.
5. Execute this on extreme priority and report to me that this had been done.

— Winston Churchill





How To Use This Book

Welcome to *The Laundry* roleplaying game!

Using this book as a guide, you and your friends can create your own Lovecraftian espionage adventures, inspired by Charles Stross's *Laundry Files* books.

What is the Laundry Files series?

The Laundry Files is a series of books and short stories by Charles Stross, chronicling the life and times of Bob Howard, network administrator by day and computational demonologist by night. If you have not read them, you probably should. This game is based on them, after all. You can play the game without reading the books, but the Game Master should at least be familiar with *The Atrocity Archives*.

What is a Roleplaying Game?

Welcome to the hottest and fastest-growing hobby of, er, 1977.

We will assume that you are familiar with computer roleplaying games, where a bunch of sword and/or laser-wielding thugs with personality issues smite monsters for loot and XP in a variety of colourful locales. (Tabletop) roleplaying games are just like that, only instead of a computer, one of the participants is the Game Master. The GM describes the scene for the other players and adjudicates the results of their actions, often by throwing some dice¹. So, it goes something like this:

Player: I open the door into the next room.

GM: You see an orc armed with a battleaxe guarding a chest.

Player: I enter into a frank and meaningful dialogue with the orc, validating his right to guard chests but not pigeon-holing him into a stereotype, in the hopes of restructuring the traditional adventurer/monster antagonistic relationship into something more positive and mutually beneficial.

GM: Roll 1d20 against your Charisma skill.

Player: I succeed.

GM: The orc is moved by your rhetoric. Casting his battleaxe aside, he sits down on the chest and invites you to join him in a brain-storming session about ways to revitalise the decaying subterranean infrastructure and society of the dungeon, perhaps with a –

Player: While he is distracted, I stab him with my sword.

1. Either on the table, to provide a random number as part of a non-deterministic way of determining the success or otherwise of a player's action, or at the player if he suggested something stupid.

What is Capital Laundry Services: The Roleplaying Game?

Why, it is the very book that you hold here in your mortal hands (or that you read here on the screen). Prospective players should read through the Player's Section starting on page 157; Game Masters should skim the Player's Section, then delve into the arcane mysteries of the GM's domain, starting on page 163.

What Do I Need?

Other than this book and a few friends, you need a character sheet (photocopied from the back of the book), or downloaded from www.cubicle7.co.uk, some dice (at least 1D4, 1D6, 1D8 and 2D10), pencils and notepaper. A single session of play usually lasts between two and four hours.

How Do I Play The Game?

Firstly, you will need to create a character. The rules for generating characters can be found in **Chapter 4: Character Creation**. Your Player Character is an employee of Capital Laundry Services, the UK's premier – ok, only – counter-occult intelligence agency. For one reason or another, you have joined the Laundry and been placed on the active service roster. You and the other Player Characters will be sent on missions by the Laundry, to investigate weird events and thwart evil cultists. Between missions, you will fulfil some vital role in the Laundry's bureaucracy.

The basic rules are in **Chapter 3: Basic Rules**; players should be familiar with these. Later chapters (**5: Skills**, **6: System and Combat**, **7: Damage and Healing**, **8: Sanity**) contain special-case rules, which you can consult as needed.

The Laundry's structure is described in **Chapter 9: The Laundry**. Your equipment is listed in **Chapter 10: Tools of the Trade** and rules for getting equipment are in **Chapter 11: Budgets, Requisitions and Training**. **Chapters 12 and 13, The Directory and Counterparts and Other Powers** describe other organisations and agencies you may encounter. **Chapter 14: Sorcery** describes computational demonology.

Chapter 15: Security Best Practises is an in-character guide to Laundry operations; **Chapter 16: Expectations of Play** is a guide on how best to roleplay your character.

The Laundry

How Do I Game Master?

Start by turning to **Chapter 17: Expectations of Game Mastering**, which describes the role and techniques of GMing. There is a list of characters from the novels in **Chapter 18: Laundry Personnel** to use as a ready-made cast, while chapters **19, 20 and 21 (The Archives, Known Threats and CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN)** describe the dangers facing the Laundry.

Players may read those chapters too, if they wish, but remember that your character does not know everything that you know – and you will have more fun by discovering secrets in play than by reading them in this book. Even if you succumb to temptation and read the GM's section, *do not* read **Chapters 22, 23 or 24** – these are sample missions and should be not be read by prospective players.

We could use this as a training manual for new recruits as part of orientation kit...

GLOSSARY

Basic Roleplaying (BRP): The rules system used in the *Laundry* roleplaying game.

Check: A checkmark placed next to a skill, to show that the player may try to improve it.

CHA: Charisma.

Characteristic: Any of CHA, CON, DEX, EDU, INT, POW, SIZ, STR – see page 11 for details.

CON: Constitution.

DEX: Dexterity.

d6, d8, d10: The 'd' means dice – a d6 is a six-sided die, a d8 is an eight-sided die and so on. See page 11.

EDU: Education.

Game Master (GM): The participant who sets the scene, runs the mission and plays the Non-Player Characters.

HP: Hit Points.

INT: Intelligence.

Non-Player Character (NPC): A character run by the GM; one of the villains or supporting cast.

Player: A participant who portrays a Player Character.

Player Character (PC): A character run by a player; one of the protagonists and heroes.

POW: Power.

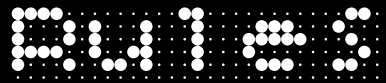
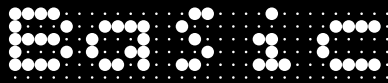
Roll: A test of a characteristic or skill; to make a roll, throw the appropriate dice (usually D100) and try to get under the relevant characteristic or skill.

SAN: Sanity.

SIZ: Size.

Skill: A learned ability – see page 15 for details.

STR: Strength.



'I'm no James Bond, with a sexy KGB minx trying to seduce me in every hotel room. That's about the first thing they drum into you at Capital Laundry Services ('Washes cleaner than clean!'): life is not a spy movie, work is not romantic, and there's nothing particularly exciting about the job.'

— The Atrocity Archive

Now that you're familiar with the world that the Laundry operates in, it is time to become familiar with the rules that determine what your characters can and cannot do, how well they succeed... and, unfortunately, how badly they screw up. *The Laundry Roleplaying Game* uses Basic Roleplaying (BRP), a percentile-based game system behind several of the world's most popular game systems, including the Lovecraftian horror-based *Call of Cthulhu* and many other games. Because of the decades-long connection between the horror works of H.P. Lovecraft and the Basic Roleplaying system, it is the ideal system for handling the exploits of Bob Howard and his peers... your Player Characters.

This chapter familiarises you with the rules you will be using while playing in the world of the Laundry, while later chapters go into more depth about how the rules work in a variety of situations. Some information may be repeated, though the second time around it will be in more detail. This way, you will understand enough about how the rules work for you to create a character and the further you read in the rulebook, the more you will know about how different aspects of the rules come into play.

The d100 System

Though it uses several other types of dice, BRP uses percentile dice as the primary means of determining success or failure for a task. In BRP, percentile dice (abbreviated as d100) are rolled whenever you or the Game Master need to determine whether an action succeeds or fails. Just as someone might say that there is a 60% chance of rain, actions such as skills, attacks, or other activities are rated by percentages.

Rolling Dice

Percentile dice (d100) are two 10-sided dice (d10s) rolled together, with one representing the tens digit and the other representing the ones digit. You can roll the same die twice to get a percentile result, or roll them together, paying attention to which d10 is the tens and which d10 is the ones. Some specialty d10s are even numbered 10, 20, 30 and so on, making this much easier. Other dice that you use in this system are four-sided (d4), six-sided (d6) and eight-sided (d8), as well as using the d10 by itself. When the rules call for you to roll percentile dice, roll d100 as described and you will be fine. The d100 roll handles almost every action that your characters will attempt.

Other types of rolls may call for multiple dice, such as three six-sided dice (3d6), a six-sided die plus a four-sided die (d6+d4), or a die roll modified by another number, such as d6-1. In other cases, you may be asked to divide a roll in half (such as rolling a d6 and dividing the result by 2), or double a roll, such as 2d6 x 2. You should always round up to the next whole number if the result is a fraction and if a dice roll has something added to or subtracted from it, add the modifier to the dice total before dividing or multiplying. If you are doing multiple tasks, such as d4+1+d6 x 2, add the dice results together, add the modifier and then multiply (or divide).

When Do You Roll Dice?

Though there is an element of uncertainty in almost anything a person does, with a chance of success and of failure, this does not have to be simulated through these rules. These rules assume that rolls are made when it is dramatically important, such as whether success or failure will have an impact on the outcome of the mission.

Your character **should not** have to make a Language roll to see if they are able to talk to their boss, a Drive roll to commute normally to work or a Computer Use skill roll to check daily email. On the other hand, your character **should** have to make a Language roll to see if they can decipher a message spoken in ancient Enochian, a Drive roll when fleeing a carload of angry cultists at reckless speeds on the Autobahn or a Computer Use skill roll to hack into a heavily-encrypted mainframe from an outside line.

The Game Master should inform the players when rolls are required. The rest of the time, it can be assumed that your character's successes and failures reflect their general level of competency and do not have life-changing results.

Characteristics

Characters (and some objects) are measured in a few different ways: the most important being characteristic values. Characteristics are measured in a linear scale (4 is better than 3, 18 is better than 17 etc). They describe how strong, tough, large, smart, wilful, agile, charming and even how well educated your character is. Generally, human characteristics have a range of between 3 and 18, with the average at 10 to 11. You will learn how to determine your character's primary characteristics in the next chapter.

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The primary characteristics and their uses are:

Strength (STR): Strength is the measure of how much physical effort your character is able to put into a task. Someone with a high STR is not necessarily covered in muscles; they could be lean and well-able to use leverage. You can use STR to pick up or move heavy things, to force open doors, carry a lot of stuff and to put an extra bit of hurt into punches or grapples.

Constitution (CON): Constitution is how tough your character is when it comes to resisting pain, injury and disease. Someone with a high CON is healthier than someone with a low CON: they generally get sick less and are harder to kill. Constitution is used to determine how much damage your character can take before dying, how easily they resist becoming sick or poisoned and how much exertion they can perform before becoming tired.

Size (SIZ): Size is less straightforward than other characteristics, as it can be interpreted in a few different ways. A character with high SIZ can be extremely tall, or can be very broad. Size is used in determining how much damage a character can take (larger people have more mass to hurt) or inflict (bigger characters can often hit harder), among other things.

Intelligence (INT): Intelligence is a measure of how smart your character is. It is not about how much they know but how able they are to use what they know. A character with a high INT generally learns faster and has likely picked up the basics of a large number of skills. INT can also represent how quick-thinking your character is in a pinch. You use INT to figure out things, make educated guesses where no applicable skill jumps to mind and while learning.

Power (POW): Power represents a few intangible aspects of your character, from willpower, internal drive, magical potential, to simple dumb luck. A character with a high POW is usually luckier than everyone else and is usually more 'connected' to the ebb and flow of the universe than someone with a low POW characteristic. You use POW to determine how much magical 'juice' your character has (more on this later) and how lucky they are.

Dexterity (DEX): Dexterity measures hand-eye coordination, raw speed and general physical agility. A character with a high DEX is catlike and may be a natural athlete, while someone with a low DEX is probably clumsier, slower and all thumbs. Dexterity determines when your character is able to act in a round, it figures into your character's starting Dodge skill and it affects other skills and actions requiring physical speed or agility.

Charisma (CHA): Charisma is a measure of personal magnetism, an intangible measure of force of character and appeal. Like many characteristics, it can be described in a few ways: how likeable or attractive your character is, how authoritative and compelling or even how influential they are in personal relationships. A character with a high CHA is very noticeable in a crowd, regardless of how they look, while someone with a low CHA does not attract much attention.

Education (EDU): Education covers formal schooling, roughly equating to one EDU point per year of education. It can also cover knowledge gained through a well-lived life, representing knowledge gleaned from experience, reading or general observation about life. A low EDU represents someone essentially unschooled, such as a small child or amnesiac, while a high EDU score indicates years of school and even higher education. The EDU characteristic determines how many points your character has in their professional skills and can serve as a general guide to how sophisticated and worldly they can appear.

Characteristic Rolls

Characteristic rolls are based on all but one of the primary characteristics described above (SIZ does not have an associated characteristic roll) and they are used frequently when your character attempts an action that is not represented by a specific skill or a resisted roll. You will learn more about skills and resistance rolls later but characteristic rolls are almost as important.

Effort (STR x 5): The Effort roll is an easy way to determine if your character is able to do something relating to physical strength that is not addressed by a skill or a resistance roll. For an example of a suitable Effort roll, your character might need to pull their body up into a ventilation shaft by their hands.



Endurance (CON x 5): Endurance rolls are used to determine whether or not an activity tires your character out. If they are doing something that might involve a lot of effort, such as running a great distance, the Game Master might call for an Endurance roll.

Idea (INT x 5): The Idea roll is used to determine if your character is inspired to make a guess about something that is not obvious, such as an intuitive leap based on existing facts. The Game Master may ask you to make an Idea roll for your character to determine if they know something that you, the player, do not know. Similarly, you may be required to succeed in an Idea roll if the Game Master thinks that your character would not easily be able to recall something.

Luck (POW x 5): The Luck roll is used to determine if fortune favours your character in any instance where luck, not skill, is an option. If your character was flipping a coin to determine heads or tails, or guessing the answer to a multiple choice question when they had no idea what the correct answer was, the Luck roll would be used. Luck has additional uses, explained in **Chapter 6: System and Combat**.

Agility (DEX x 5): Though many physical tasks are covered by more specific skills, the Agility roll may be used for simple situations, like catching something that was dropped, or running on an icy surface.

Influence (CHA x 5): The Influence roll is used in simple situations where communication has not occurred and appearance is the primary factor. Your character might use the Influence roll to be noticed in a crowd among a number of other people, or quickly impress (and bypass) a doorman with a confident stare and purposeful stride.

Know (EDU x 5): The Know roll is used to determine whether your character knows some piece of basic information about the world, ranging from current events, general etiquette, common cultural history to even trivial information. Your character might need to make a Know roll to recognise the name of a minor villain on an episode of *Star Trek* or the name of the current Prime Minister of Bulgaria. The Know roll may also be used for current events, such as knowing that there was a recent robbery in the rare books collection at Miskatonic University.

When Do You Use a Characteristic Roll?

Characteristic rolls are not as commonly used as skill rolls or resistance rolls and generally are only used when a simple task is being accomplished that does not have an immediately obvious skill or resistance value associated with it. The most frequently-used characteristic rolls will likely be the Idea roll, the Luck roll and the Know roll. Characteristic rolls can sometimes also be used temporarily in place of an actual skill roll, such as using an Agility roll to juggle two items, even though the Sleight of Hand skill would represent actual training with juggling.

Derived Characteristics

The primary characteristics (STR, CON, SIZ, INT, POW, DEX, CHA, EDU) define the backbone of your character. Other characteristics are derived from those values as shown below. Derived characteristics (other than SAN) may be affected if the associated characteristics are altered, so if this happens, you should recalculate the derived characteristic values.

Hit Points (HP)

For humans, Hit Points are determined by averaging CON and SIZ (adding them together and dividing by two) and rounding up. When you determine your character's Hit Points (HP), you should circle that number on their character sheet. Hit Points are a measure of how much damage your character can take through injury, poison and so forth, before dying. When your character has all of their Hit Points, they are uninjured and are (more than likely) healthy. When they lose all of their Hit Points, they are dead. You will read more about Hit Points, damage and healing in **Chapter 7: Damage and Healing**.

When Do You Lose Hit Points?

Your character loses Hit Points (HP) through injury, whether it comes from combat or physical mishaps. Additionally, poisons, disease or exposure to radiation can also cause Hit Point loss. A healthy and uninjured character has all of their Hit Points. When your character reaches 1 or 2 Hit Points, they are unconscious and at 0 Hit Points your character will die. If your character loses more than 1/2 their normal total Hit Points in a single injury, they may suffer a major wound, a condition with unpleasant physical results. Characters regain lost Hit Points through medical attention and natural healing.

Major Wounds

Your character's major wound threshold is equal to half their Hit Points, rounded up. If it is not immediately obvious, major wounds are bad news. If your character loses this many Hit Points in damage from a single source, the Game Master should roll on the Major Wound table on page 65 to determine what sort (if any) of major wound has been suffered. Major wounds are usually pretty nasty and may have other unfortunate side effects, such as loss of characteristic points through specific injury.

Damage Bonus (DB)

The bigger and stronger your character is, the harder they are able to hit other people with bare hands or weapons. Similarly, smaller and weaker characters do not do as much damage when they strike an opponent. The Damage Bonus (abbreviated as DB) is an extra die, added to or subtracted from damage, normally rolled for a hand-to-hand attack. You will determine your character's Damage Bonus in the next chapter, **Chapter 4: Creating Your Character**.

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Sanity (SAN)

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Sanity Points (abbreviated as SAN) are a reservoir of your character's stability, a pool of psychological fortitude that enables them to withstand the mind-shattering effects of experiencing horrors from the lower reaches of the Mandelbrot set. Your character's initial Sanity Points are equal to POW x 5.

To make a sanity roll, you must roll d100 and try to get below or equal to the character's current Sanity Point total. If the roll fails, your character loses Sanity Points and in cases of extreme threats to sanity, a successful roll sometimes only means that *fewer* Sanity Points are lost. Losing Sanity Points represents a chipping away at mental fortitude, causing your character to slowly lose their grip on reality. Sudden loss of a significant number of Sanity Points can cause temporary or permanent insanity.

Sanity Point loss, sanity and insanity are covered in more detail in **Chapter 8: Sanity and Insanity** and the Cthulhu Mythos skill is covered in **Chapter 5: Skills**.

When Do You Make a Sanity Roll?

You need to make a sanity roll for your character whenever they come face-to-face with graphic scenes of bloodshed or carnage, are put in horrific situations, suffer personal trauma, commit violent acts, encounter supernatural phenomena or creatures or encounter other similarly challenging situations or occurrences. When your character fails a sanity roll, they

lose an amount of Sanity Points (SAN), usually based on how horrible the experience was. More powerful experiences or especially horrifying beings may even cost Sanity Points if the roll was successful.

Move (MOV)

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Move (MOV) represents how far your character can move in a 12-second period (a 'round'). All humans have a Move of 10, though this may be adjusted by injury or special conditions. Unlike most characteristics, Move has a flexible value of 1 to 5 metres, though typically each point of Move represents one metre, meaning that the average human can move 10 metres in a round, normally. Movement is covered in more detail in **Chapter 6: System and Combat** but the Move characteristic is rarely used outside of resolving chases.

Experience Bonus (1/2 INT)

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Generally, a high intelligence means that learning new skills and improving existing ones comes easily. To determine your character's experience bonus, divide their INT by 2, rounding up. When you check to determine if your character learned from successfully using a skill, add the experience bonus to the learning roll. Experience is covered in **Chapter 6: System and Combat**.

When Do You Use Derived Characteristics?

You will probably use derived characteristics more often than the primary characteristics themselves. Derived characteristics come into play when your character: gets injured (Hit Points); is *really* injured (major wound threshold); hits someone (Damage Bonus); sees or experiences something horrific (Sanity Points); runs or walks while in a combat situation (Move); or tries to improve their skills through experience.

So, realistically, your character can count on hitting most or all of these circumstances during or immediately after a field assignment!

As Hit Points and Sanity Points are all temporary values and are lost, spent and gained throughout the course of an assignment, the character sheet has these values listed in fields of numbers. It is a good idea to draw a box around the normal maximum and lightly circle your current total, or lightly cross off the values as the points are lost, erasing the cross-marks when the points are regained.

HA! Lunch exists between keyboard and chair..



Skills

Most of the tasks that your character will attempt are based on skills. A skill is a particular kind of expertise representing a combination of learned knowledge, natural ability and general aptitude. Your character's skills can improve through experience, practice and study. Every skill is rated on a scale from 0% to 100%. This percentage is called the *skill rating*. Just as you might say about the weather that there is a 40% chance of rain, you would say that your character has a 40% chance of hiding or a 70% of sneaking through a cultist-infested house. Determining whether a skill succeeds or not is done with a roll of the dice, as described previously. Skills and their use are covered fully in **Chapter 5: Skills**.

When Do You Use a Skill Roll?

The majority of dice rolls that you will make are skill rolls. In the world of the Laundry, your character's value is not measured by who they are but by what they can do. This is best demonstrated through the use of skill rolls. Your character will use skill rolls when attempting to use computers, pick locks, research hidden secrets, bluff their way past a surly guard, spot the visual irregularity that may signify an illusion or ward or when trying to put the hurt on another being.

The Resistance Table

The heart of the system is the resistance table, a cross-referenced table providing the chances of success for each party and action where the two parties are working against one another. These are usually described as 'active' and 'passive' characteristics. The resistance table is based on the concept that equal forces should have a 50/50 chance of success, while numerical superiority or inferiority will alter the chances. The resistance table and resistance rolls are covered fully in **Chapter 6: System and Combat**.

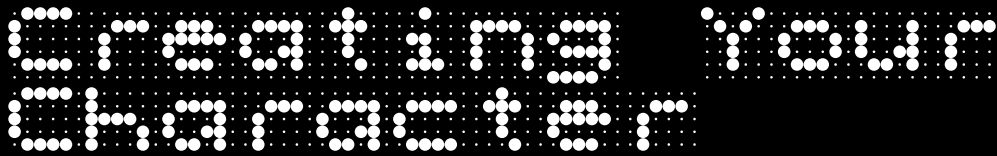
When Do You Use the Resistance Table?

You would use the resistance table whenever you have a clear case of one characteristic opposed to another at a dramatically appropriate point in the game. There is no point in rolling to determine if your character can successfully use his STR to pick up a coffee cup or stack of files but if it is a case of a chase (DEX vs. DEX) or dragging a fallen coworker to safety (STR vs. SIZ), you would use a resistance roll.

*Cleromancy - casting of lots as divinatory tool.
Sufficiently powerful observer can alter probability.
Multiple unlikely dice rolls in succession = presence of extradimensional entity.*

SUCCESS OR FAILURE

Whenever you roll percentile dice, you are determining whether your character succeeded or failed in whatever they were trying to accomplish, whether it be a characteristic roll, a skill roll or a resistance roll. The *chance of success* is the chance that you have of succeeding with a roll of percentile dice. The higher the chance of success, the better. Depending on circumstances and the action being attempted, the chance of success may be modified by a number of factors. All of these are described in detail in **Chapter 6: System and Combat**.



'By the abjuration of Dee and the name of Claude Dansey I hereby exercise subsection D paragraph sixteen clause twelve and bind you to service from now and forevermore. Right, that's it. You're drafted, and may whatever deity you believe in have mercy on your soul.'

— The Concrete Jungle

You will need a character if you are going to work for the Laundry, so let's get to it. Your character is a representation of you in the game, a persona you create and define through characteristics, skills and other numerical qualities, then bring life to through roleplaying. Your interactions with other agents, civilians, demons, extra-planar entities and low-level management personnel in the world of the Laundry will be through the filter of your character.

While going through this 10-step process of creating an agent character ready for duty with Capital Laundry Services, you are advised to write information down on your character sheet, lightly with a pencil, as you may need to erase and make changes if you wish to re-evaluate a previous decision or amend an existing total. Skill ratings, for example, are very fluid during character creation and it is best to wait until you are done before writing them in firmly on the sheet. Another good idea is to use a sheet of scratch paper for character generation and transfer them to a nice, clean character sheet when you have finished.

The Game Master should be able to guide you through this process, though it is presented in such a fashion that no outside help is required (with a handy summary on p20-21).

Step One: Identity

Write your character's name in the space provided. In all likelihood, this name will be one the Laundry provides for your character, not the one they were born with (you think Bob Howard is a real name?). Do not worry if your character shares a name with someone famous... that might even be a quick way to identify them, though picking something ridiculous would be a quick way to draw attention to yourself.

If you cannot come up with a name yet, hold off until Step Ten and name your character then. You should at least write your own name on the character sheet, as your Game Master may want to hold onto them between game sessions. It is easier to keep track of who is who when your real names are on the sheets.

Choose your character's gender and write it in the correct space. There are no differences between the way male and female characters are created and neither gender has an advantage system-wise. The Laundry is equal opportunity when it comes to putting immortal souls at risk!

Step Two: Characteristics

Here you determine characteristics, the fundamental values that define the physical and psychological capabilities of your character. As you roll the dice, write the numbers down in the appropriate spots on your character sheet or you can write them on a piece of scratch paper temporarily.

Roll 3D6 for the characteristics Strength (STR), Constitution (CON), Power (POW), Dexterity (DEX) and Charisma (CHA). Write the results in the appropriate places on your character sheet.

Roll 2D6+6 for the Intelligence (INT) and Size (SIZ) characteristics and write the numbers down on your character sheet.

Roll 3D6+3 for Education (EDU) and write it down.

These numbers are the framework of your character, determining what characteristics they are strong or weak in. If you wish, you can redistribute up to three points between your characteristics, though you cannot lower or raise them beyond what the normal range of rolled attributes would allow. If you are not satisfied with the characteristics you have, and the Game Master approves, you can erase all of them and start over.

Step Three: Age

Your character's default age is $17+2D6$, the age range of Bob Howard and most of his associates when they joined the Laundry. Your character's starting age must be at least equal to their $EDU+5$, so if the amount rolled is less than that, adjust the age upwards to that value.

If you wish to make your character younger or older, first roll the dice to establish their initial age and then modify their age using these guidelines:

Older Characters: For every full 10 years you add to your character's age, add another 20 professional Skill Points. Keep a note of these: you will spend them in **Step Seven**.

Profession and Skills. Additionally, for every 10 years added to your character's starting age, add +1 to their EDU

characteristic. For every 10 years above 40 (starting at age 50), you must choose to subtract one point from either STR, CON, DEX or CHA (you pick which). At age 80, 90, 100 and so on, you must subtract one point from *three* of these characteristics.

Younger Characters: For every year below 19 years old (the minimum age you can roll), subtract 20 professional Skill Points and one point from one characteristic of your choice.

Step Four: Characteristic Rolls and Base Skills

Now you can determine your character's characteristic rolls. Multiply each of your characteristics (except SIZ) by five and write the value on your character sheet in the space immediately to the right of the associated characteristic.

Two skills are derived directly from characteristics, just as characteristic rolls are. These skills and the characteristics they are derived from are listed here:

Dodge: The starting value for the Dodge skill (described on page 37) is equal to DEX x2.

Language (Own): For most characters, Language (Own) means English. This begins at a value equal to EDU x5.

Step Five: Derived Characteristics

Next, determine your character's derived characteristics, as described in the previous chapter. Write all of these values down on the character sheet in the appropriate spots.

Damage Bonus (DB): Add STR + SIZ and consult the Damage Bonus Table.

STR + SIZ	Damage Bonus
2 to 12	-1d6
13 to 16	-1d4
17 to 24	None
25 to 32	+1d4
33 to 40	+1d6
41+	+2d6

Hit Points (HP): Add CON + SIZ and divide the result by 2, rounding up any fraction. Circle the corresponding number and write the total in the space provided.

Major Wound Level: Your character's major wound level is 1/2 their Hit Point total, rounded up.

Experience Bonus: This value is equal to half of your character's INT, rounded up.

Move (MOV): Human characters can move ten units per round unless hindered in some fashion. Write '10' in the space provided.

Sanity (SAN): Multiply your character's POW characteristic by five to get their current Sanity Point total.

Step Six: Personality Type

You may have an idea of the sort of character that you would like to play or their characteristics may suggest their strengths and weaknesses. Here you can decide how your character approaches life and deals with challenges. Choose one of the following options or roll 1d6 for a random result and apply the benefits. If a skill that has specialties does not have specialties defined here, choose any specialty.

1. Bruiser. Your character believes that solving problems is best handled through quick application of physical force. Add 20 Skill Points to each of the following skills: Brawl, Climb, Combat (any two), Dodge, Grapple, Insight, Jump, Ride, Sense, Stealth, Swim and Throw.

2. Master. Your character believes that technique, craft and expertise are the keys to success. Add 20 Skill Points to each of the following skills: Appraise, Combat (any), Craft, Disguise, Dodge, Fine Manipulation, First Aid, Knowledge (any), Navigate, Pilot, Ride, Sleight of Hand and Stealth.

3. Thinker. When confronted with opposition, your character's first instinct is to outsmart their opponent to gain an advantage. Add 20 Skill Points to each of the following skills: Appraise, Bargain, Combat (any), Disguise, Insight, Knowledge (any two), Listen, Research, Sense, Spot, Stealth and any one Technical skill.

4. Leader. Your character enjoys calling the shots and persuading others to work. Add 20 Skill Points to each of the following skills: Appraise, Bargain, Combat (any), Command, Etiquette, Fast Talk, Insight, Knowledge (any), Language (any), Language (Own), Perform, Persuade and Sense.

5. Slacker. Your character has spent their lifetime dodging responsibility and believes that problems are best avoided altogether. Add 20 Skill Points to each of the following skills: Bargain, Bureaucracy, Disguise, Dodge, Fast Talk, Gaming, Hide, Insight, Language (any), Persuade, Sense, Sleight of Hand and Spot.

6. Nutter. Your character can safely be categorised as insane, though they are functional and able to work within the organisation of the Laundry. Rational thought and problem-solving methods are neglected: insane leaps of logic are the primary means of attaining goals. Add 20 Skill Points to each of the following skills: Command, Fast Talk, Hide, Insight, any two Knowledge skills, Research, Science (any two), Sense, Spot, Stealth and Strategy. Reduce starting SAN by 20 points and assign an appropriate mental disorder. Depending on the disorder, your character may be in therapy or on medication to deal with the symptoms. The Game Master may prohibit this particular option, so ask before you choose this.

4 CHARACTER

THE LAUNDRY

When distributing these Skill Points, add the bonus points to the base chance for each skill. Write that total after the skill, perhaps faintly as you will be adding more Skill Points as character creation progresses. For example, adding 20 Skill Points to Fast Talk (base chance 15%) yields a skill rating of $15 + 20 = 35\%$.

If a skill says '(any)' after the title, that means that the skill has many specialties. You must choose one of these specialties for each use of the skill. If you want to have multiple specialties, you must choose the skill multiple times. You only get the bonus to one specialty. Write the name of the specialty on the line provided on your character sheet.

Step Seven: Profession and Skills

At this point, you can choose what your character's profession was prior to entering the Laundry. The choice of profession provides a good handle on what sort of work they might be doing within the Laundry, but primarily it is a means of determining what starting skills your character will have.

Turn to the professions list on page 22. Choose a profession from that list. Once you have chosen, make a note of all of the skills used by that profession. Now it is time to determine how many Skill Points are applied to skills used by that profession. These Skill Points represent what your character used and learned at work, whether through training or on-the-job experience. If a skill that has specialties does not define them here, choose any specialty.

You can distribute a number of Skill Points among professional skills equal to $EDU \times 20$. The total Skill Points available may be modified by age, as described in **Step Three: Age**.

Skill points are added to any Skill Points granted from previous steps and the skill's base chance. You cannot spend points during this aspect of character creation to raise a skill higher than 75%. Some skills such as Language (Own) may begin at a value higher than 75%, so if the initial chance of the skill is greater than 75% before any Skill Points are added, you cannot add any additional Skill Points at this time.

Each profession offers a Wealth Level, representing how much money your character makes and how much they have been able to squirrel away. Salaries and compensation are an infrequently-discussed but still binding aspect of the loyalty abjuration, so your character should find it prudent to refrain from discussing salary and compensation with others in the Laundry, regardless of assignment or seniority.

Step Eight: Assignment and Training

This step represents your character's assignment and training since joining the Laundry. The choice of assignment does not lock your character down to a particular type of duty, however. Your character will inevitably be subject to the never-ending turf war waged between management of the various divisions, a battle that casts lower-ranking employees (read, 'your characters') in the roles of soldiers or collateral damage. Due to the matrix management system and willing (or coercive) cross-division cooperation, your character will likely be sent on a variety of missions outside of their assignment, causing all manner of headaches relating to accurate billing and budgetary allotments.

Though it boasts only a few hundred employees, Capital Laundry Services has a large number of internal divisions. The following list contains the ones that are the most appropriate for Player Characters, but there are many other departments listed in **Chapter 9: Her Majesty's Occult Service**. You can pick an assignment from that chapter if you wish. Note that regardless of your assignment within the Laundry, you are also considered to be on active duty and so can expect to be sent on dangerous secret missions for Queen and country.

Pick one of the following assignments (or roll randomly) and **add +10 to each of the listed skills**. If a skill that has specialties does not have specialties defined here, choose any specialty. At this point of character generation, skill ratings can go above 75%.

Archives: Bureaucracy, Knowledge (any two), Navigate, Research, Stealth.

Computational Demonology: Computer Use (any), Computer Use (Magic), Science (Mathematics), Science (Thaumaturgy), Sorcery.



Contracts and Bindings: Knowledge (Law), Knowledge (Occult), Persuade, Research, Sorcery.

Counter-Possession: Bureaucracy, Insight, Knowledge (Occult), Stealth, Sorcery.

Counter-Subversion: Insight, Knowledge (Espionage), Knowledge (Politics), Research, Technology Use (Surveillance).

Information Technology: Computer Use (any three), Knowledge (Occult), Technology Use (any).

Media Relations: Computer Use (Hacking), Fast Talk, Knowledge (Occult), Knowledge (Politics), Research.

Medical and Psychological: First Aid, Medicine (any two), Research, Science (Biology).

Occult Forensics: Science (any three), Sense, Spot.

Plumber: Firearms (any), Knowledge (Occult), Science (Thaumaturgy), Sorcery, Stealth.

The GM may assign you to a particular role, create more new departments or even ask you to come up with your own nightmare job.

The next step is your six-week field training course, which normally is assigned to you before you are assigned to active service. This training course involves several short seminars, classes and hands-on, one-on-one instruction for basic certification in a number of fields. The course provides the following benefits:

Add +5 to the following skills: Bureaucracy, Computer Use, Fine Manipulation, Firearm (any, usually Pistol or Esoteric), Knowledge (Accounting), Knowledge (Espionage), Knowledge (Law), Knowledge (Occult), Knowledge (Politics) and Spot.

Step Nine: Possessions

Even though you are going to be a humble civil servant within the Laundry and most of your gear will be assigned as required by the mission, that does not mean that you are penniless or without possessions of your own. Unless there is a solid reason otherwise, your character will have in their immediate possession:

- Several sets of clothing appropriate to your character's personality and assignment. This includes casual and business attire and at least one formal outfit. Depending on your character's personality, they may have a wide or narrow range of clothes.
- An appropriate amount of pocket money and savings based on your character's standing within the Capital Laundry Services.
- One or more personal items relating to your character's family, school or past. This can be in the form of an heirloom, keepsake or some trinket of little relative value but having some emotional connection.
- A secure mobile phone (or smartphone).

- A personal ward, issued by the Laundry, intended to warn your character of any hostile enchantments in the vicinity and to provide some defence against attack.
- A warrant card issued by the Capital Laundry Services. This is not to be lost or used frivolously. Abuse of the powers conferred by the warrant card may warrant an internal audit.

You may also have some equipment assigned to you, depending on your skills:

Computer Use (any) 50% or more: A laptop or palmtop computer with the Laundry's proprietary Occult Field Countermeasures Utility Trunk (OFCUT) installed, in addition to a top-of-the-line encryption package for electronic communications. OFCUT contains Level One versions of banishing, defensive binding, entropy manipulation, exorcism, glamour, scrying and wards (area, personal, and offensive). See **Chapter 14: Sorcery** for rules on how to use these spells.

Drive 50% or more: Your character may have a bicycle, scooter, motorcycle or potentially a car. Enjoy the London Congestion Charge.

Firearms (any) 50% or more: Your character has been issued with, and is authorised to carry, a conventional weapon (mostly likely a pistol). This weapon is kept in the Laundry armoury when you are not on duty.

More information about smartphones, computers, wards, warrant cards and firearms can be found in **Chapter 10: Tools of the Trade**. During the game, you may requisition or be assigned more equipment – see **Chapter 11: Budgets**.

Step Ten: Personalising Your Character

Here is where you come up with the personal aspects of what makes your character more than just a series of numbers on a page. If you could not think of a name for your character in Step One, now is the time to name them. This is the time to fill in all of the blank spaces that describe your character, mentally and physically, and come up with some ideas about their background.

What does your character look like? What colour hair, skin and eyes do they have? Your character's CHA characteristic may be helpful to determine relative looks. How does your character dress?

Take a look at your character's characteristics: STR, CON, SIZ, and DEX may be useful to determine size and general build. Sometimes it is easier to base your character on an actor you think would be appropriate.

Does your character have any interesting mannerisms or behavioural quirks? Does your character have an interesting or unfortunate reputation?

You may wish to determine where your character is from. Where did they go to school? What is your character's

Making your character: Summary

Step One: Identity

Who are you? Choose a name and gender.

Step Two: Characteristics

Roll 3D6 for Strength (STR), Constitution (CON), Power (POW), Dexterity (DEX) and Charisma (CHA).

Roll 2D6+6 for Intelligence (INT) and Size (SIZ).

Roll 3D6+3 for Education (EDU).

Step Three: Age

Starting age is 17+2D6 (must be at least EDU+5).

For Older Characters: Every full 10 years adds +1 EDU (and 20 professional Skill Points in Step Seven). Every 10 years above 40 (starting at 50), subtract one point from either STR, CON, DEX or CHA. At age 80, 90, 100 etc, you must subtract one point from *three* of these characteristics.

Younger Characters: For every year below 19 years old, subtract 20 professional Skill Points and one point from one characteristic of your choice.

Step Nine: Possessions (see p19)

Step Ten: Personalising Your Character

Here is where you come up with the personal aspects of what makes your character more than just a series of numbers on a page. Describe your character, mentally and physically, and come up with some ideas about their background.

Take a look at your character's characteristics: STR, CON, SIZ, and DEX may be useful to determine size and general build. Sometimes it is easier to base your character on an actor you think would be appropriate.

Does your character have any interesting mannerisms or behavioural quirks? Does your character have an interesting or unfortunate reputation?

You may wish to determine where your character is from. Where did they go to school? What is your character's relationship with their family like? Does your character have any significant religious or political beliefs? What is your character's romantic life like? These background details will not play any part at the start of the game but may become important later on.

Step Four: Characteristic Rolls and Base Skills

- Multiply each of your characteristics (except SIZ) by five and write the value on your character sheet in the space immediately to the right of the associated characteristic. **Dodge skill** = DEX x2. **Language (Own)** = EDU x5.

Step Five: Derived Characteristics

- **Move (MOV):** Human characters have a Move of 10.
- **Damage Bonus (DM):** Add STR + SIZ and consult the Damage Bonus Table.
- **Sanity (SAN):** POW x 5.
- **Hit Points (HP):** Add CON + SIZ and divide the result by 2, rounding up.
- **Major Wound Level:** Half the Hit Point total, rounded up.
- **Experience Bonus:** This value is equal to half of your character's INT, rounded up.

STR + SIZ	Damage Bonus
2 to 12	-1d6
13 to 16	-1d4
17 to 24	None
25 to 32	+1d4
33 to 40	+1d6
41+	+2d6

Step Six: Personality Type

1. **Bruiser:** +20 Skill Points to: Brawl, Climb, Combat (any two), Dodge, Grapple, Insight, Jump, Ride, Sense, Stealth, Swim and Throw.
2. **Master:** +20 Skill Points to: Appraise, Combat (any), Craft, Disguise, Dodge, Fine Manipulation, First Aid, Knowledge (any), Navigate, Pilot, Ride, Sleight of Hand and Stealth.
3. **Thinker:** +20 Skill Points to: Appraise, Bargain, Combat (any), Disguise, Insight, Knowledge (any two), Listen, Research, Sense, Spot, Stealth and any one Technical skill.
4. **Leader:** +20 Skill Points to: Appraise, Bargain, Combat (any), Command, Etiquette, Fast Talk, Insight, Knowledge (any), Language (any), Language (Own), Perform, Persuade and Sense.
5. **Slacker:** +20 Skill Points to: Bargain, Bureaucracy, Disguise, Dodge, Fast Talk, Gaming, Hide, Insight, Language (any), Persuade, Sense, Sleight of Hand and Spot.
6. **Nutter:** +20 Skill Points to: Command, Fast Talk, Hide, Insight, any two Knowledge skills, Research, Science (any two), Sense, Spot, Stealth and Strategy. Reduce starting SAN by 20 points and assign an appropriate mental disorder. The Game Master may prohibit this particular option, so ask before you choose this.

Step Seven: Profession and Skills

Choose your character's profession from the list on page 22. You can distribute a number of Skill Points among professional skills equal to EDU x 20. You cannot raise a skill higher than 75% in this step. If a skill begins this step at a value higher than 75%, you cannot add any additional Skill Points at this time.

Step Eight: Laundry Assignment/Training

Pick one of the following assignments (or roll randomly) and **add +10 to each of the listed skills**. If a skill that has specialties does not have specialties defined here, choose any specialty. At this point of character generation, skill ratings can go above 75%.

Archives: Bureaucracy, Knowledge (any two), Navigate, Research, Stealth.

Computational Demonology: Computer Use (any), Computer Use (Magic), Science (Mathematics), Science (Thaumaturgy), Sorcery.

Contracts and Bindings: Knowledge (Law), Knowledge (Occult), Persuade, Research, Sorcery.

Counter-Possession: Bureaucracy, Insight, Knowledge (Occult), Stealth, Sorcery.

Counter-Subversion: Insight, Knowledge (Espionage), Knowledge (Politics), Research, Technology Use (Surveillance).

Information Technology: Computer Use (any three), Knowledge (Occult), Technology Use (any).

Media Relations: Computer Use (Hacking), Fast Talk, Knowledge (Occult), Knowledge (Politics), Research.

Medical and Psychological: First Aid, Medicine (any two), Research, Science (Biology).

Occult Forensics: Science (any three), Sense, Spot.

Plumber: Firearms (any), Knowledge (Occult), Science (Thaumaturgy), Sorcery, Stealth.

All characters also **add +5 to the following skills:** Bureaucracy, Computer Use, Fine Manipulation, Firearm (any, usually Pistol or Esoteric), Knowledge (Accounting), Knowledge (Espionage), Knowledge (Law), Knowledge (Occult), Knowledge (Politics) and Spot.

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relationship with their family like? Does your character have any significant religious or political beliefs? What is your character's romantic life like? These background details will not play any part at the start of the game but may become important later on.

None of these aspects are essential for play, though knowing them can make roleplaying your character much easier. The back of your character sheet has places for additional descriptive or background elements. Fill out as many (or as few) of these as you like and check with the Game Master if any aspects will be relevant to the way other members of the Laundry view your character.

Finally, once you have got your character sorted out and know what they are good at and what they might be like in person, it is time to determine where they live. Due to the extremely sensitive information that your characters will be dealing with on a day-to-day basis, it is simply out of the question to allow your character to share living space with a civilian. Capital Laundry Services takes care of this aspect by encouraging appropriate agents to share accommodations with others of their approximate security clearance. So at this juncture, take a look around the table at your fellow players. Now imagine them as their characters. Wave and say hello... these are your new housemates!

Character Professions

These are professions suitable for Laundry Agents. They apply to people who have either been drafted from other branches of civil service or have been conscripted during the course of Laundry activities. Each profession includes a basic description, potential reasons for why the Laundry may have use of the profession, a Wealth Level and a list of professional skills used by members of that profession. All professions are presented in the following format:

Title of Profession

This is a description of what members of this profession do, how they may have come into the service of Capital Laundry Services and how they might be utilised by the Laundry.

Skills: These skills are the most appropriate skills used by someone in this profession. Your character does not have to have all of these skills, but generally a member of this profession uses some or all of these skills on a regular basis. As noted previously, any skill with '(any)' after the title requires you to pick an appropriate specialty, from a list provided with each skill description in **Chapter 5: Skills**.

Wealth Level: This is an indication of the profession's general level of salary, savings, availability of credit and financial stability. Wealth levels have been adjusted to account for Laundry salaries. See 'Wealth Levels' at the end of this chapter for further information.

HA!

The list of professions is not exhaustive by any means. Game Masters may create additional professions or may

LIST OF PROFESSIONS

Antiquarian	Linguist
Artist/Designer	Military Officer
Clerical Worker	Occultist
Computer Hacker or Tech	Parapsychologist
Consultant	Philosopher
Dilettante	Police Detective/Officer
Doctor	Professor/Scholar/Teacher
Engineer or Technician	Scientist
Journalist	Spy
Labourer	Student
Lawyer	

even allow players to create new professions. Information on creating new professions or adapting existing ones is found in **Creating New Professions** at the end of this chapter.

Antiquarian

Your career is based in research, procurement, restoration and care for physical items of historical value. Your field of specialty can be general antiques, cultural artefacts, old books, vintage musical instruments, obscure *objets d'art* and occasionally even religious relics. You may have owned your own shop dealing with the item you specialise in, you might have worked at an auction house or your interest might be solely academic and supported through consultation and published works. Potentially, you may have come to the Laundry's attention due to your expertise with an artefact of occult significance. Given the chance for greater access to items of tremendous historical significance, you signed up to join the Laundry.

Skills: Appraise, Art (any), Bargain, Craft (any), Fine Manipulation, Knowledge (any), Knowledge (History), Research, and two Art, Knowledge, or Science skills as personal specialties.

Wealth Level: Average

Artist or Designer

You have made a living through art of some sort, whether it is drawing, website design, painting, sculpture, advertising, photography, mixed media, computer graphics, music, clothing design or some other means of creative expression. As such, you have got an unconscious link into that weird and creative otherspace that brushes up to the realms where the many-angled ones dwell. Maybe something you created incorporated something you saw in a dream and it drew the

attention of the Laundry. Perhaps you took an unusual and lucrative commission for some exclusive clients, only to discover that they were occult whack-jobs who wanted to terminate your contract when your work was complete. In any case, you now find yourself employed by the Laundry, as soul-stifling a creative black hole as there ever was. And, horrifically, they like it that way.

Skills: Any two Art skills, Craft (any), Insight, Knowledge (any appropriate), Language (any), Language (Own), Listen, Research and Spot.

Wealth Level: Average

Clerical Worker
.....

Prior to your entry into the Laundry, you were an office drone, spending your days more-or-less chained to a desk, working in a field where you essentially kept paper moving along the path of its inevitable transformation into money... money for someone else. This profession could represent an accountant or salaried employee in a public or privately-owned company, a government agency or some other organisation. You might have had to deal with customers on a regular basis or been cloistered in a dark little cubicle somewhere. Essentially, if you worked at a desk and shuffled papers each day, this was probably your profession. You could have come to the attention of the Laundry in a number of ways, probably accidental. Now you have traded in your fancy ergonomic desk chair and cubicle for a less comfortable desk chair in a dingier cubicle... but you work for the Laundry.

Skills: Bargain, Bureaucracy, Computer Use (any), Etiquette, Knowledge (Accounting), Knowledge (any), Knowledge (Law), Language (Own), Persuade and Research.

Wealth Level: Average

Computer Hacker or Technician
.....

Lines of code, data and other virtual assets are as real to you as the tools and materials of other craftsmen. As you are now aware, with the advent of Turing's Theorem, computers can be used for computational demonology, making even the simplest terminal the equivalent to a nuclear bomb, only a hungry bomb with an attitude. Your area of expertise may have been coding, network administration or hacking. Regardless, these talents brought you to the attention of the Laundry. Perhaps you were messing around with some outré algorithms for deep fractal exploration and nearly brought about the premature de-urbanisation of Wolverhampton or you were a programmer who discovered some strange subroutines running in the slightly dodgy company mainframe. The next thing you knew, there was a knock at the door and you found yourself seconded to the Laundry. Because of your skill-set, you have got a leg up on the learning curve for computational demonology and the Laundry always has a use for tech-savvy individuals like you.

Skills: Computer Use (any two), Knowledge (any two), Language (a programming language), Repair (Electrical), Repair (Electronics), Research, Science (Mathematics), Technology Use (any) and choose one of the following skills as specialties: Bureaucracy, Hide or Knowledge (Law).

Wealth Level: Average

Consultant
.....

While you have no doubt got a skill-set that would enable you to make a career for yourself within any organisation in your field or would allow you to successfully run your own business, you have nonetheless chosen to turn your aptitude towards the more lucrative field of consulting. You generally provide your expertise to clients at a price, analysing their current needs and providing them with a road-map for optimising their methodology. Usually, this sort of contract-based work allows you to make your own hours and choose your own clients. You might work offsite or, in rare cases, be integrated into the organisation that you are consulting for. If you are consulting through a government agency, you may have come into the Laundry through simple expediency, being required to sign the classified Section Three of the Official Secrets Act in order to do business with Capital Laundry Services. Alternately, a great many cultists and would-be world leaders have need of outside help in matters computational and you may have been contracted to work for them, only gradually becoming aware of the nature of what you were working on. Unfortunately, as you are no doubt discovering, the Laundry pays nowhere near as well as the private sector did.

Skills: Bureaucracy, Computer Use (any), Fast Talk, Insight, Listen, Language (Own), Persuade, Research and two of the following as personal specialties: Appraise, Bargain, Etiquette, Knowledge (any), Science (any) or Technical Skill (any).

Wealth Level: Affluent

Dilettante
.....

You have got enough money that you can do whatever you want and that tends to be dabbling in a number of fields that interest you, whether as hobbies or actual passions. You may have inherited wealth and never applied yourself to a single occupation or perhaps you somehow came into a source of income that did not require dedicated work. You might even be a minor lord or possess some degree of peerage that gained you a position in government where you did not actually have to do anything. The one thing you do well, though, is know folks and your connection to the 'old boys' network' is strong. Whatever the case, you are without any real work experience and your knowledge of the fields you have followed is ultimately without any practical application. Despite this, you have managed to amass a considerable number of skills or aptitudes and came to the attention of Capital Laundry Services. Now

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that you are in the Laundry, you have got the choice: you can continue to hobnob, name-drop, fritter your time away and draw a pay-cheque or you can make a real difference and risk life and soul for country. Which will it be?

Skills: Appraise, Etiquette and any six of the following skills as personal fields of interest: Art (any), Athletics, Craft (any), Drive (any), Gaming, Knowledge (any), Language (any), Perform (any), Research, Science (any) or Technology Use (any).

Wealth Level: Affluent

Doctor

Prior to joining the Laundry, you made it your calling to treat the injured, sick and the needy, using a wide range of diagnostic skills and medical practices gained through years of extensive training and study. Every government organisation has need of qualified medical specialists and Capital Laundry Services is no different. Field agents and operatives encounter or suffer from a distressing number of unusual medical conditions and as such there is a great demand for doctors with security clearance to the degree that the Laundry requires. You may have been brought in to deal with agents suffering from unusual maladies suffered while on the job and, a quick geas later, you found yourself a member of the Laundry.

Skills: First Aid, Language (Own), Medicine, Persuade, Research, Spot and choose four of the following: Insight, Language (any), Psychotherapy, Science (any) or Science (Biology).

Wealth Level: Affluent

Engineer or Technician

Your career involved designing, constructing, repairing or maintaining some form of machinery, mechanical devices or even some aspects of architecture. This could range from work in the motor pool to designing state-of-the-art defence hardware. You may have been brought in at some point in your career to work on some classified aspect of technology related to defence, only to discover that rather than DERA (the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency) or its successor Dstl (Defense Science and Technology Laboratory), you were dealing with Laundry spooks, who quickly had you reassigned and brought over to their branch of Her Majesty's Service, potentially in Q Division (the very one!). In all likelihood, the Laundry has put you to work analysing, repairing or building strange occult weapons or machinery, the likes of which give you nightmares.

Skills: Computer Use (any), Craft (any), Fine Manipulation, Repair (any), Technology Use (any) and five of the following: Art (Drafting), Artillery (any), Demolition, Drive, Heavy Machine, Knowledge (any), Pilot (any), Repair (any), Research or Science (any).

Wealth Level: Average

Journalist

Prior to your stint with the Capital Laundry Services, you were a journalist of some sort. You could have been a blogger, a photojournalist, a television reporter, a member of the paparazzi or a writer for newspapers, magazines or books. Regardless, you made your living by investigating, describing and analysing the news and other events. You may have had some level of fame at it or even achieved a degree of notoriety from those you exposed. All of that changed when you came into contact with Capital Laundry Services. You might have been investigating a story, following a lead or got too close to the Truth through another means, but it put a quick end to your career as a public source of opinion and knowledge. While the Laundry has had some level of success geasing secrecy out of bystanders, it has never been particularly able to silence journalists. That leaves the choice between a position within the organisation or a quick trip to the morgue. You chose the slower road.

Skills: Fast Talk, Insight, Language (Own), Listen, Persuade, Research, Spot and three of the following: Art (Photography), Computer Use (any), Craft (Photography), Disguise, Hide, Knowledge (any), Language (any) or Stealth.

Wealth Level: Average

Labourer

Prior to (and potentially after) joining the Laundry, you were a blue-collar wage slave, a labourer who did mind-numbing work, paid at an hourly rate. You could have worked on a factory line, in a warehouse, as a delivery person, in a kitchen, waiting tables, sign painting, store clerk or some other form of moderate-to-unskilled labour. You may have had to work with customers at a cash register or you may have been one of the invisible behind-the-scenes folk getting things done, but one thing you were not and that is management. Your entry into the Laundry was likely due to accidental exposure to the paranormal and you should regard this as a step up, career-wise, a chance to make a difference and be recognised for more than just the menial tasks you were previously set to.

Skills: Brawl, Climb, Craft (any), Drive, Grapple, Heavy Machine and four others, as appropriate to setting: Appraise, Computer Use (any), Fine Manipulation, Language (any), Repair (Mechanical), Repair (Structural) or Technology Use (any).

Wealth Level: Poor or Average (player's choice)

Lawyer

Your training was in the law, interfacing with the legal system as either a paper pusher or as a solicitor. You may have handled contract law, negotiated settlements in legal disputes, served as private counsel to an organisation or you may even have handled criminal cases on the side of prosecution or defence. Then, through a weirdways step into civil service or an inadvertent brush with the many-angled

horrors that swim in the lower reaches of the Mandelbrot set, you found yourself working for the Laundry. As a civil organization deeply enmeshed in paperwork, the Laundry has an immense need of lawyers. Prior to joining, you had a license to practice law and although you had no authority above or beyond that of the common citizen, your inside knowledge of the inner workings gave you considerable power in Her Majesty's legal system. Now that you have been inducted into the Laundry, all of that has changed. Your duties with the Laundry include covering many of its questionably-legal activities and you have become aware of the dizzying range of legal power afforded to you while defending your country against unimaginable horrors.

Skills: Bargain, Bureaucracy, Fast Talk, Insight, Knowledge (any), Knowledge (Law), Language (Own), Perform (Oratory), Persuade and Research.

Wealth Level: Affluent

Linguist
.....

Your training involves language and communication, whether facilitating communication between diplomats, hammering out international trade agreements, studying the roots and evolution of languages or translating documents from one language to another. Somehow you came into contact with Capital Laundry Services and were drafted into the organisation. Perhaps you were brought in to identify unusual inscriptions on an bizarre, ancient artefact or your skills were needed to help translate between some of the stranger beings that the Laundry maintains a truce with, such as the original denizens out at Dunwich or others who dwell in the kinds of spaces that gave nightmares to Euclid. Now, your expertise is sought for the eventuality of a first-contact scenario with even stranger species and you spend much of your time analysing cryptic documents and blurry photographs of things that should not exist.

Skills: Etiquette, Insight, Knowledge (any), Language (any), Language (Own), Listen, Persuade and any three appropriate Knowledge or Language skills as personal specialties.

Wealth Level: Average

Military Officer
.....

You are an acting officer from one of the many branches of Her Majesty's armed forces, and in that service, you have attained a rank suitable to your experience and age. Depending on your deployment, you may have actually led troops into battle or you may have seen little or no action. Your presence in the Laundry is no great mystery and needs little explanation: Capital Laundry Services always has need of experienced officers capable of inflicting violence in the name of Queen, country and sanity whilst being able to keep your wits about you in the process. You may be a part of a group such as the SAS or OCCULUS, or even a simple desk jockey with hidden skills and a military demeanour. For the most part, you spend your time on alert, waiting for the call and immediate deployment into hostile territory,

whether it be an unassuming office block in Cheltenham or a distant planet in a Nazi-ruled alternate dimension.

Skills: Artillery (any), Command, Drive (any), Firearm (any), Navigate, Persuade, Strategy, Teach any two other skills as a personal specialty.

Wealth Level: Average

Occultist
.....

You are a student of obscure secrets, hidden lore and magical power, believing in the influence and primacy of supernatural forces. In your quest for supernormal understanding, you studied magic, perhaps as part of an occult organisation or secret society and, in the course of those studies, you came to the attention of the Laundry. Now you have learned the Truth, that most of the tradition of magic is essentially a load of bollocks and that the real course to power sits inside those computers you likely scorned in university. Your induction into the Laundry may have been a result of you stumbling across Things Man Without Security Clearance Was Not Meant to Know or you may even have been a lesser member of a group quashed by Laundry agents. At any rate, now you have been brought up to speed on the big picture and devote yourself to defending the world against the sorts of people you once looked up to.

Skills: Fast Talk, Insight, Knowledge (Anthropology), Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Occult), Language (any), Language (Own), Research and any two of the following skills: Computer Use (any), Craft (any), Knowledge (Archaeology), Medicine or Science (any).

Wealth Level: Average

Parapsychologist
.....

As the world has become more connected through electronic communications, the presence of active supernatural forces has become increasingly obvious to those paying attention. You have dedicated your life to following the unusual, the unexplainable, even the horrific and as a result, you more than likely ran into the Laundry. In short order, you found yourself drafted into civil service, a geas of secrecy placed upon you and your work directed at a scale of horror greater than anything you even imagined. In the Laundry, you are going to find yourself constantly challenged by the everyday approach to the otherworldly, mixed with the mind-numbing dullness of office politics and everyday bureaucracy. Your talents will be put to good use combing through news reports for elements of the outré, with the goal of finding an explanation and manufacturing a cover story.

Skills: Fast Talk, Hide, Insight, Knowledge (any), Knowledge (Occult), Listen, Research, Sense, Spot and Stealth.

Wealth Level: Average

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Philosopher

.....

You have spent your prior career pondering the infinite mysteries of life and human existence, whether as a lonely writer, an academic or even as a member of an elite think-tank. In the course of your intellectual journeying, you may have become aware that your work has profound and substantial applications in a universe where supernatural threats abound and where thought can cause the very stuff of reality to have a mid-life crisis and reassess its priorities. Philosophy and epistemology have become the fastest growing segments of the defence budget of the great powers and there is no slacking in the metaphysical arms race between Them and Us. You never imagined that you would define yourself as a combat epistemologist, but then you never dared even contemplate half of the things that you are now pressingly aware of. In the Laundry, you're able to do your work with adequate funding and indescribable resources buried within the archives of official secrets. Plus, there is absolutely no pressure whatsoever to publish.

Skills: Insight, Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Philosophy), Language (any), Language (Own), Persuade, Research, Teach and any two Knowledge or Science skills as specialties.

Wealth Level: Average

Police Officer

.....

Prior to joining the Laundry, you were a sworn officer, with the legal authority and the jurisdiction to uphold the law and defend the civilian population against lawbreakers or other

threats. Your primary tools were the skills of observation, deduction and criminology, as well as the authority that your badge conferred. Depending on your personal style, you may have a wide range of forensic and scientific skills or you might just operate on gut instinct. You were undoubtedly brought into the Laundry when you encountered something beyond your jurisdiction... beyond terrestrial jurisdiction, to be precise. After a quick geas, you found yourself reassigned to duty within the Laundry. Depending on the nature of your encounter, you may be allowed to continue on active police duty or you may be a permanent member of the Capital Laundry Services.

Skills: Brawl, Knowledge (Law), Listen, Persuade, Spot and choose five of the following: Brawl, Computer Use (any), Disguise, Dodge, Drive, Fast Talk, Firearm (any), Grapple, Hide, Insight, Knowledge (Streetwise), Language (any) or Stealth.

Wealth Level: Average

Professor, Scholar or Teacher

.....

Prior to joining the Laundry, you were either a scholar devoted to a specific field of study or you were an instructor who taught individuals or groups, employed by a school, university, private tutelage, think-tank or other some other institution. The nature of your field of study somehow brought you to the attention of the Laundry or one of its many enemies and unfiltered access to your expertise required that you swear by Section Three of the Official Secrets Act and become geased into secrecy in matters relating to the nation's occult security. You now serve the



Laundry as a fulltime researcher, instructor, consultant or as an expert in your field and are frequently asked to analyse evidence or other artefacts appropriate to your skill set. At other times, you are called on to visit strange and occasionally horrific crime scenes and assess what happened based on your field of knowledge.

Skills: Insight, Persuade, Research, Teach and choose six other skills as areas of expertise from the following list: Appraise, Art (any), Computer Use (any), Craft (any), First Aid, Insight, Knowledge (any), Language (any), Language (Own), Listen, Medicine, Psychotherapy, Repair (any), Science (any) or Technology Use (any).

Wealth Level: Average

Scientist

You were once employed by a corporation, educational institution, government organisation or were potentially working on your own. In this profession, you explored one or more fields of science through a process of rigorous speculation, experimentation and observation, repeating the process and refining the knowledge of your field. You may have even been actively challenging previously discovered or established data. In some fashion, your work became known to the Laundry and you found yourself in civil service, working for one of Capital Laundry Service's divisions and continuing your work or even altering it towards previously undreamt-of applications. In the Laundry, you have a fairly robust research budget, access to a wide variety of legal, and questionably legal, research materials and license to transcend conventional safety precautions. Furthermore, in light of the threat that the Laundry combats, you are freed from the burden of most of the ethical or moral concerns that your work may raise, as the alternative is considerably worse.

Skills: Computer Use (any), Craft (any), Persuade, Research, Technology Use (any) and any five Knowledge or Science skills appropriate to your field of study.

Wealth Level: Average

Spy

For an agency as shrouded in cloak-and-dagger activity as the Capital Laundry Services, pure secret agents are surprisingly rare in the organisation. Trained in old school spycraft for work in a clandestine service, you are skilled in subterfuge and infiltration, entering countries or organisations under cover or covertly, finding out their secrets and reporting them back to an enemy or interested party. You may be a relic, educated and indoctrinated under the auspice of Cold War political doctrine, or your training may be more recent, aimed at combating global terrorist organisations. You might have been brought into the Laundry because of exposure to its activities, or because they had need of your particular skill set. As an actual secret agent, you are notable among most of your desk-bound colleagues.

Skills: Dodge, Fast Talk, Hide, Listen, Research, Spot, Stealth and three of the following: Art (Photography), Brawl, Bureaucracy, Computer Use (any), Disguise, Etiquette, Firearm (any), Grapple, Knowledge (any), Language (any), Language (Own), Navigate, Pilot (any), Psychology, Repair (Electronics), Repair (Mechanical), Ride, Swim, Technology Use (any), Throw or Track.

Wealth Level: Average

Student

You have spent your time prior to entering the Laundry in study, whether at university or as a private student in a specialised training course. It may be that you came into the Laundry as an intern or you may have a relative in one of the offices that brought you in as a favour to your parents. Now you find yourself in a bewilderingly Byzantine organisation staffed by an increasingly odd mix of lunatics and hardened killers. Hopefully, you will fit in somewhere, paying close attention, asking the right questions and learning when to keep your mouth shut.

Skills: Language (Own), Research and choose eight other skills as courses of study. Common choices are from the following list: Art (any), Athletics, Computer Use (any), Craft (any), First Aid, Insight, Knowledge (any), Language (any), Listen, Medicine, Perform, Persuade, Psychotherapy, Repair (any), Science (any) or Technology Use (any).

Wealth Level: Poor or Average (player's choice)

Creating New Professions

If you have looked through the list of professions and still do not see anything that you like, ask your Game Master if it is all right for you to create a new profession that matches your character concept. This is advised primarily if the character you want to play really falls outside the normal professions provided.

First, you should describe the new profession to the Game Master. Determine whether or not the profession you would like to create is already close to another one or if it is something altogether new. If the new profession is nearly identical to an existing one, with the Game Master's approval you can change up to five of the skills until the new profession matches what you would like your new profession to be. The Game Master should adjust the range for salary.

If that does not do the trick and more than five skills need to be swapped out, it is time to create an entirely new profession. Follow these quick steps and you are good to go:

1. Decide on the title of the profession.
2. Describe the profession to the Game Master, including

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what someone from that profession would spend their time doing, what training they might have and how they may have come into contact with the Laundry (and been recruited).

3. Choose 10 skills that are essential or would be regularly used by a typical member of this profession. This should also include at least one 'pick one (or more) from the following', just as long as the total number of skills is equal to 10.
4. Decide an appropriate Wealth level based on the description of the Status skill on page 45 of **Chapter 5: Skills**.

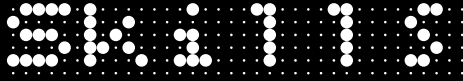
The Game Master has the right to veto any inappropriate professions or any skills that seem outside the purview of the profession.

Wealth Levels

While the specifics of salary, savings, pocket money and possessions are generally of great importance to your character, they are not tremendously important to game play. Wealth is abstracted to levels, which describe your character's financial situation to a general degree. Game Masters wishing for more detail on salary and additional financial issues are encouraged to consult real-world salary indexes and pricing, as appropriate.

Your character rarely changes their wealth level. However, the Game Master may choose to adjust your character's wealth level based on events during the course of play, such as significant advancement within the Laundry, financial ruin due to some unforeseen mishap or a concerted effort to change one's financial status.

Wealth Level	Description
Destitute	Your character is penniless and must scavenge for food and drink or rely upon charity. Home is any dry, safe spot. Your character has few possessions other than what they can carry. Your character's appearance reflects this poverty and they may have difficulty in society due to prejudice against the destitute. <i>No character begins as Destitute.</i>
Poor	Your character has a little money, a place to sleep and food to eat, but their life is filled with little pleasure. Bills may occasionally pile up and there is little to spend on luxuries. Your character's flat (shared) is humble and in a poor neighbourhood or is far out of town, signalling a long commute. <i>A character begins as Poor only by choice.</i>
Average	Your character has a comfortable income, an average home or flat in a decent neighbourhood and may have a reasonable amount of money in savings, enough for a moderate retirement. Bills are paid on time and your character can splurge occasionally on luxury items. Major purchases must be weighed carefully.
Affluent	Your character is well-off, with income enough to enjoy life to its fullest. Home is a quality house or an excellent flat and your character has enough pocket money to make major purchases without worry.
Wealthy	Your character has vast material wealth from a near-inexhaustible source such as high finance, inheritance or ownership of a lucrative business. Your character has one or more homes of impressive quality, as many vehicles as they would like and enjoys an opulent quality of life. They have social and business opportunities beyond those of any other wealth level. <i>No character begins as Wealthy.</i>



'The full package is a course in law and ethics (including International Relations 101: 'Do whatever the nice man with the diplomatic passport tells you to do unless you want to start World War Three by accident.'), the correct use of petty cash receipts, basic tailing and surveillance, timesheets, how to tell when you're being T&S'd, travel authorization requests, locks and security systems, reconciliation and write-offs, police relations ('Your warrant card will get you out of most sticky situations, if they give you time to show it.'), computer security (roll around the floor, laughing), software purchase orders, basic thaumaturgic security (ditto), and use of weapons (starting with the ironclad rule: 'Don't, unless you have to and you've been trained.').'

— The Atrocity Archive

The average Laundry agent has to make difficult decisions, face unimaginable challenges and accomplish a variety of tasks while on assignment. Most of the important actions your character can perform are defined as *skills*. This chapter lists all skills, their definitions and how they relate to the tasks that your character will attempt during gameplay.

What is a Skill?

A skill represents a specific combination of knowledge and aptitude. Every skill is rated on a scale from 0 to 100%. This is called a *skill rating*. Skills define the actions that your character can perform during play and the skill rating is a measure of how good they are at the skill; the higher the better. The list of skills in this book is far from comprehensive: the Game Master is encouraged to create new skills if they are required. There is a section on creating new skills at the end of this chapter.

Base Chances for Skills

Any normal person can swing a knife, instinctually dodge out of the way of harm or speak their native language. Every skill, then, has a *base chance*. The title of each skill has the base chance in parentheses after it. Your character is assumed to know the skill at this basic rating before any additional Skill Points are added during character generation. Even if no Skill Points have been added, the skill can be attempted at the base chance. If the skill has a base chance of 00%, your character cannot attempt it unless under special circumstances (see 'Unskilled Actions' on page 31).

Skill Specialties

Some skills are quite broad and require that you choose a specialty. Specialties are listed after the skill name in parentheses and should be written on the line next to the skill on your character sheet. For example, Firearm (Pistol) and Firearm (Rifle) are considered two different skills. At the Game Master's discretion, if your character lacks a skill rating in an appropriate specialty, you can use a related specialty's rating to make skill rolls. In these cases, the skill use should be considered as *Difficult* and success will not count for experience towards skill improvement in either skill.

Skill Ratings

Your character's skill ratings are simple to understand, though no one in the real world thinks of themselves as having a percentage in a skill. What does a given skill rating mean in more general terms? Following are guidelines to gauge your character's proficiency in a general sense.

Chapter 3: Basic Rules discussed when a skill roll would be required and this section provides additional guidance to supplement the previous information. Under routine conditions, characters with certain skill ratings can perform those skills without needing to roll for success. Alternately, even under ideal circumstances a complete novice may not be able to succeed with advanced uses of a skill.

Novice (skill rating of 05% or less): A character with a skill rating this low is a complete amateur with little hope of success, even at *Easy* tasks. At this low level of competency, you should roll each time you want your character to attempt this skill, regardless of whether they are in a stress-filled situation or the task is routine and under ideal circumstances. A novice succeeding in a task is a freak accident, a stroke of luck apparent to everyone witnessing it.

Neophyte (06–25%): A character with a rating in this range is either a beginner or has a small amount of expertise in the subject at hand. Your character gets lucky enough to succeed once in a while. You should roll whenever your character attempts this skill, even if the task is *Easy*. Generally, even if successful in the task, it appears sloppy and without finesse.

Amateur (26–50%): Ratings in this range indicate a little talent, some rudimentary training or hobby-level dabbling in a skill. Your character is barely qualified, though they can usually be trusted to succeed in *Automatic* or *Easy* tasks. In non-stressful situations an amateur can perform routine activities relating to the skill without needing to roll. The results will not be spectacular, but acceptable.

Professional (51–75%): A skill rating in this range allows your character to make a living using the skill. A professional does not need to worry about failing *Easy* tasks and is proficient enough to lead or manage others. A 51% rating is roughly equal to a university degree or specialised training.

A professional can succeed in routine or complex activities relating to the skill most of the time and is only required to roll when there is an element of risk or when the chance of failure is dramatic.

Expert (76–90%): Skills in this range indicate advanced expertise in a given field. Your character has a reasonable chance to succeed even at *Difficult* tasks. Few people ever attain such mastery of a given skill and those who do are respected and relied upon for their expertise. Skills in this range correspond to advanced university degrees or considerable years of experience. Most characters will not begin play with skills rated higher than 75%. An expert should be able to perform complex and challenging activities relating to this skill under routine circumstances.

Master (91% or higher): Only a handful of true geniuses attain this level of mastery. Only the most Herculean tasks are beyond their abilities and their expertise has likely made these masters famous within their field or throughout the world at large. In routine situations a master is able to perform with excellence and should rarely need to roll the dice except for the most difficult of tasks or in the direst of situations. Skill mastery brings self-confidence from such discipline and expertise. Improving a skill to 90% or more after play begins provides your character with a bonus of 2d6 Sanity Points. This is a one-time bonus per skill: subsequent increases do not yield additional SAN gains.

Improving Skills Through Experience

Practice makes perfect and using a skill successfully while in the field often yields the chance to learn from the experience and improve. Whenever a skill is successfully used in the course of play, the Game Master should allow you to put a checkmark in the little box next to your skill. For information-based skills, learning through experience represents affirmation of knowledge already possessed or additional information gained through practical application. After an assignment or training course ends, you may determine whether a checked skill improves. **Chapter 6: System and Combat** covers this in more detail; **Chapter 11: Budgets, Requisitions and Training** describes training courses.

The Cthulhu Mythos, Sorcery and Status skills **do not** improve with experience and can only be increased through specific methods listed in each skill description.

Skills Above 100%

As described on page 14 of **Chapter 3: Basic Rules**, your character's experience bonus makes it possible to learn a skill above 100%. Though a skill in excess of 100% seems counter-intuitive, this has many game-specific advantages. A skill higher than 100% has a higher chance of special successes, better odds of success at *Difficult* tasks and suffers less from negative circumstantial modifiers. Additionally (and some would say, most importantly), if your character has a Combat skill higher than 100%, they can attempt multiple attacks in a Combat Round, as described in 'Attacks and Parries Over 100%' on page 59 of **Chapter 6: System and Combat**.

Using Skills

Whenever your character wishes to take an action or accomplish a task where the outcome is in doubt, you must declare the desired action and the Game Master will allow you to attempt a d100 roll against your character's appropriate skill rating. A d100 roll equal to or less than the modified skill rating means your character succeeds at the task, while a roll higher than the skill rating means that they fail. An especially high roll is a fumble, with the worst possible result.

In most cases, the appropriate skill most useful for any given action will be obvious. However, unforeseen circumstances or unusual situations can lead to new uses of a skill. You are encouraged to find alternative applications of your character's skills, but all such skill uses must meet with the Game Master's approval. It is assumed that when your character learns a skill, they also pick up some of the related knowledge that comes with the skill. While many skills are oriented towards actions or specific applications of knowledge, they could also indicate general awareness of the kinds of tasks governed by that skill, people known for noteworthy expertise in the skill or grant the ability to recognise the general skill rating of another person exercising the skill. Any of these alternate usages should be at the Game Master's discretion.

Difficulty and Circumstance Modifiers

Most of the time, you roll against your character's unmodified skill rating. However, the skill may be modified based on the relative difficulty of the task being attempted or by circumstantial modifiers. These can adjust your chance of succeeding in a skill up or down. Difficulty modifiers and circumstance modifiers are covered in more detail in **Chapter 6: System and Combat**, but here is a quick summary:

Difficulty modifiers are: *Automatic* (an elementary task with no challenge whatsoever, requiring no roll and always achieving an average result); *Easy* (a basic task for which the skill rating is doubled); *Average* (a standard use of the skill, unmodified); *Difficult* (a challenging or particularly focused use of the skill, halving the skill rating and rounding up if necessary); and *Impossible* (unachievable by any standard, with no roll allowed or possibly a 01% chance if the Game Master allows). If no modifier is indicated, you should assume the roll is *Average*.

Circumstance modifiers are external forces acting on your character's ability to perform the skill. These range from quality of tools or assistance, lighting, footing, weather, other aspects of the environment, your character's physical condition and so on. Circumstance modifiers can modify a skill from as little as $\pm 5\%$ for trivial circumstances, $\pm 10\%$ for moderate or as much as $\pm 20\%$ for significant conditions or circumstances. These modifiers can be cumulative and are described in detail on page 49 of **Chapter 6: System and Combat**. Circumstance modifiers are always applied **after** a difficulty modifier (if any) is applied.

Secret or Concealed Skill Rolls

The Game Master may also make skill rolls for your character, in cases where the Game Master does not want you to know the outcome of the skill roll or even that a skill roll is being made at all. The Game Master may wish to keep a copy of your character sheet on hand or may ask you for a list of your character's current values of relevant skills (such as Insight, Listen, Sense and Spot). This way secret rolls can be made without alerting you and the other players that your characters might be missing something when the skill rolls fail. This method allows the Game Master to use failed rolls to potentially mislead or misdirect you, which is a useful tactic for Perception or other similar rolls. Do not worry if your Game Master is rolling dice and laughing hysterically without explaining why... paranoia is part and parcel of working at Capital Laundry Services!

Almost any skill with a non-obvious result can be performed secretly or without the player being aware of the outcome. Even normally obvious skills may be performed secretly, depending on the circumstances, such as a character using Computer Use to cover his activities on a particular terminal. The Game Master may roll secretly for the player and keep it a secret whether your character succeeded or failed until it becomes relevant.

These rolls do not have to be altogether secretive and the Game Master may tell you that a roll is being made against a particular skill. Depending on play styles, you and the Game Master may choose to make 'hidden' rolls where you roll the dice in an area where you cannot see how they land, such as behind a Game Master's screen or other concealing object. Alternately, you may also wish to make the rolls out in the open and role-play accordingly, acting as the dice result indicated.

If the skill roll is successful, the Game Master should tell you that your character has successfully used the appropriate skill and allow an experience check, if applicable. If the skill roll has failed, the Game Master may inform you that you have failed. Alternately, the Game Master may misinform you with false information or utterly refrain from informing you (and your character) of anything, as appropriate. These sorts of actions can add tension to the gaming experience, such as when you do not know if you failed or succeeded, or even if something was at stake!

When Do You Make a Secret Skill Roll?

There are times when the Game Master may wish for you to be uncertain whether your character succeeded or failed at a task. In these cases, the Game Master may roll one of your skills for you without telling you whether you have succeeded or failed or may ask you to roll the dice for your character without telling you what skill you have succeeded in. The most appropriate uses for concealed or secret skill rolls are skills such as Insight, Listen, Sense and Spot, where knowledge of success or failure may alter your character's behaviour. Any skill with a result that is not obvious can be performed in secret, though the Game Master should use these types of rolls sparingly.

Unskilled Actions

Sometimes your character will need to attempt an action even though they lack any rating in the skill and the skill's base chance is 00%. If the Game Master deems that the task is not *Impossible*, they may allow a roll with one of the following conditions:

Luck: The Game Master may allow you to make a Luck characteristic roll in place of the skill roll. Only a special success indicates success and it will be the result of sheer, dumb luck.

Wild Chance: The Game Master could allow a d100 roll with a 1% chance of success or a straight roll of POW x1 as a chance of success if luck is more a deciding factor than inspired improvisation.

In either case, even successful use of an unskilled attempt at a skill with 00% chance of success does not yield an experience check for the skill.

Opposed Skill Rolls

When two characters (player or non-player) oppose one another with opposed skill rolls (for example, Hide vs. Spot), it is important to know which of them succeeded if the dice results are unclear. Generally, the character who rolls the highest quality of success is successful. Use the following guidelines when comparing the results of opposed skill rolls of any type:

Success vs. Success: If both rolls are a success, generally both parties were successful. This may represent a stalemate that must be resolved through a later roll or through a different tactic once conditions have changed. In the case of combat, ties inevitably go to the defensive or passive character (such as while dodging or parrying, though successfully parrying an attack may damage the parrying item).

Success vs. Failure or Fumble: If one roll is a success and the other a failure or a fumble, the successful roll gets results, the failure is a failure and the fumbled roll suffers a fumble.

Special Success vs. Fumble, Failure or Success: If one roll is a special success and the other is not (whether a fumble, failure or normal success), the special success achieves a special success result. The failed roll has no effect and the fumbling roll suffers a fumbled result.

Failure or Fumble vs. Failure or Fumble: If both rolls are failures or fumbles, neither is successful and the fumbling roll suffers a fumbling result.

If these guidelines do not resolve the matter of an opposed success, then a simple guideline may be to take the highest successful roll (the result shown on the dice) and use that as the tie-breaker. This way, the character with the highest chance of success is usually the winner. If a tie still cannot be resolved (such as matching dice results), the tie goes to the side with the highest chance of success. Beyond that,

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the Game Master may decide that the two parties are simply deadlocked or call for a Luck characteristic roll to resolve the tie.

If you are pitting a characteristic against another characteristic, instead of using opposed characteristic rolls, you would use the Resistance table, described in **Chapter 3: Basic System**. Similarly, the method of determining the 'winner' from opposed skill rolls may also be used for determining the winner in a Resistance roll if the Game Master desires.

When Do You Make an Opposed Skill Roll?

You will make opposed skill rolls all the time during play, whenever your character attempts to do something that may be opposed by another Player Character or a Non-Player Character. Your attack may be dodged or parried, your attempt to sneak around or hide is usually opposed by someone's Perception, for example. Unless for some reason the other party is unaware of your character's actions or is unwilling or unable to respond, you will use opposed skill rolls to resolve outcomes.

Complementary Skills

Some skills are closely related to other and expertise in one area often yields benefits in another. With the Game Master's permission, your character may temporarily add 1/5 of your rating in a complimentary skill (round normally) to your rating in another skill for the purpose of a single skill roll. For example, if your character is attempting to bluff their way past a difficult supervisor using Fast Talk

57%, they might add 1/5 of their Bureaucracy 31% to the Fast Talk skill rating. In this case, the total would be $(31 \div 5 = 6.2, \text{ rounded to } 6) + 57 = 63\%$.

Only one skill may be considered as complimentary to another for any given roll. If multiple skills may be applicable for this bonus, these temporary skill rating bonuses do not stack – the player and Game Master should choose the highest bonus to use or whichever is the most appropriate to the situation at hand. If the skill is successful, only the 'main' skill receives an experience check. The Game Master may also call on a successful skill roll from the would-be complimentary skill before 1/5 of that skill can be added to the primary skill. If the complimentary skill roll is required, the complimentary skill does not receive an experience check.

Time and Skill Use

It takes time for your character to use a skill and different skills take different amounts of time. Following are examples of the game time required to perform a single use of a skill. Some skills can take a variable amount of time and are listed in each appropriate time category.

Instantly to One Round: Most attacks and parries, Artillery, Athletics, Brawl, Cthulhu Mythos, Dodge, Drive, First Aid, Grapple, Heavy Machine, Heavy Weapon, Hide, Jump, Listen, Melee Weapon, Missile Weapon, Pilot, Ride, Sense, Shield, Sleight of Hand, Sorcery, Spot, Stealth, Swim and Throw.

Between One Round and One Turn: Appraise, Art, Artillery, Athletics, Bargain, Climb, Command, Computer Use, Cthulhu Mythos, Demolition, Disguise, Drive, Etiquette, Fast Talk, Fine Manipulation, Firearm, First Aid, Gaming, Heavy Machine, Heavy Weapon, Hide, Insight, Knowledge, Language, Listen, Literacy, Medicine, Missile Weapon, Navigate, Perform, Persuade, Pilot, Repair, Ride, Sense, Sleight of Hand, Sorcery, Spot, Stealth, Strategy, Swim, Technology Use and Track.

Between One Turn and One Hour: Appraise, Art, Athletics, Bargain, Bureaucracy, Climb, Command, Computer Use, Craft, Cthulhu Mythos, Demolition, Disguise, Drive, Etiquette, Fine Manipulation, Gaming, Heavy Machine, Insight, Knowledge, Language, Medicine, Navigate, Perform, Persuade, Repair, Research, Ride, Science, Sense, Sorcery, Spot, Status, Strategy, Swim, Teach, Technology Use and Track.

One Hour or Longer: Appraise, Art, Athletics, Bureaucracy, Climb, Command, Computer Use, Craft, Cthulhu Mythos, Demolition, Disguise, Drive, Etiquette, Fine Manipulation, Heavy Machine, Knowledge, Language, Medicine, Navigate, Perform, Persuade, Pilot, Psychotherapy, Repair, Research, Ride, Science, Sorcery, Status, Strategy, Teach, Technology Use and Track.

Six Hours or Longer: Appraise, Art, Bureaucracy, Computer Use, Craft, Cthulhu Mythos, Demolition,

Disguise, Drive, Knowledge, Medicine, Navigate, Pilot, Psychotherapy, Repair, Research, Ride, Science, Sorcery, Status, Strategy, Teach and Technology Use.

In general, using a skill to recognise something, or figure something out, should be fairly quick and only take a round. Physical actions such as attacks are usually accomplished in one round, though more complex actions like climbing might be measured by turns. For longer durations, multiple skill rolls may be required. The Game Master may also require multiple skill rolls for extended research, study or other complex tasks. Creating, fixing or disabling something takes longer: the bigger and more complex it is, the more time it will take. **Chapter 6: System and Combat** covers time in greater detail.

Alphabetical Skill List

This is an alphabetised list of all the skills described in this chapter. Each entry lists its base chance and the page it appears on. If the skill requires specialties, it has '(various)' after the name and skills where specialties have different base chances have their base chance described as '(variable)'.

Skill	Base %	Page
Appraise	15%	33
Art (various)	05%	33
Artillery (various)	00%	34
Athletics (various)	10%	34
Bargain	05%	34
Brawl	25%	34
Bureaucracy	05%	34
Climb	40%	34
Command	05%	35
Computer Use (various)	05%	35
Craft (various)	05%	35
Cthulhu Mythos	00%	35
Demolition	00%	36
Disguise	05%	37
Dodge	DEX x 2%	37
Drive (various)	20%	37
Etiquette	05%	37
Fast Talk	05%	37
Fine Manipulation	05%	38
Firearm (various)	Variable	38
First Aid	30%	38
Gaming	10%	38
Grapple	25%	38
Heavy Machine (various)	05%	39
Heavy Weapon (various)	Variable	39
Hide	10%	39
Insight	05%	39
Jump	25%	40
Knowledge (various)	Variable	40
Language (various)	INT x 5% or 00%	41
Listen	25%	42
Medicine (various)	05%	42
Melee Weapon (various)	Variable	42
Missile Weapon (various)	Variable	42

Navigate	10%	42
Perform	05%	43
Persuade	15%	43
Pilot (various)	00%	43
Psychotherapy	00%	43
Repair (various)	15%	43
Research	25%	43
Ride (various)	05%	44
Science (various)	Variable	44
Sense	10%	45
Sleight of Hand	05%	45
Sorcery	00%	45
Spot	25%	45
Status	15%	45
Stealth	10%	46
Strategy	00%	46
Swim	25%	46
Teach	10%	46
Technology Use (various)	05%	47
Throw	25%	47
Track	10%	47

Skill Descriptions

Each skill is described in the same format:

Name (Base Chance)

Specialties: These are the skill's specialties (if applicable), presented as a list or as an expanded bullet-point list.

This paragraph contains a description of the skill and the sorts of things you can do with it. This section also covers system-related information about the skill, such as precise mechanics for its effects.

Appraise (15%)

Specialties: None

Successful use of this skill allows your character to estimate an object's worth, whether the object is an old painting, a gem, an antique, a rare book or a purebred dog. Your character's expertise in another skill may have a direct bearing on their ability to Appraise a particular item. If your character's rating in a skill related to the object being Appraised is 75% or higher, add 1/5 of that skill's rating as a temporary bonus to the Appraisal skill rating. The Game Master should determine when this bonus applies.

Art (various) (05%)

Specialties: Calligraphy, Drawing, Painting, Photography, Sculpture, Writing and so on.

This skill measures your character's ability in some aspect of visual or literary arts. Your character can use Art to create a work of art in paint or sculpture, or to compose a story, poem or musical work, or to create some other lasting work of art. You would use the Perform skill (on page 43) for acting, dancing, playing a musical instrument or singing. Some Art specialties require specific tools or materials and

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cannot be attempted without these materials on hand. The amount of time it takes to use this skill varies dramatically from minutes (a pencil sketch) to weeks or even years (for an epic novel). The player and the Game Master should determine cost and time requirements for the Art skill on a case-by-case basis.

Artillery (various) (00%)

Specialties: Cannon, Rocket Launcher, Turret, Vehicular Weapon and so on.

Artillery covers weapons too large for a single person to move or use, such as those mounted on tripods, vehicles or even part of military installations. In most cases, artillery fires solid projectiles such as cannonballs, torpedoes and missiles. If your character is trying to use an artillery weapon alone when it normally requires a crew, attacks are Difficult or Impossible (at the Game Master's discretion). It may take multiple rounds or even turns to load and prepare a weapon system between shots. Many large weapons employ automatic fire or shoot explosive ordinance. See the spot rules for Autofire and Explosions in **Chapter 6: System and Combat**, though the use of artillery is outside the scope of most Laundry operations.

Athletics (various) (10%)

Specialties: Acrobatics, American and Canadian Football, Baseball, Basketball, Bowling, Cricket, Cycling, Golf, Hockey, Rugby, Skating, Skiing, Soccer, Tennis, Track & Field and so on.

The Athletics skill covers performance of a team or solo sport, complete with knowledge of the rules and tactics for winning. Some sports are better covered by other skills, such as boxing (Brawl), equestrian (Ride), the long jump (Jump), swimming (Swim) and so forth. This skill can also address maintenance of equipment, the proper training regime and knowledge of notable athletes in the particular field.

Bargain (05%)

Specialties: None

This skill governs negotiation and compromise. Bargain is frequently used to haggle over prices, though can be used whenever your character has a different opinion than the other party in a negotiation. Bargain is best handled through an opposed skill roll to decide the outcome of an important negotiation and simple skill rolls for trivial attempts (for example, saving money on equipment or lodgings). Bargaining is about compromising over some aspect where some asset or quantity is being discussed: your character should use Fast Talk or Persuade to resolve an argument or sway another to their point of view.

Brawl (25%)

Specialties: None

Brawling is the catch-all skill covering unarmed strikes, whether you are kicking, punching, head butting, kneeling,

elbowing or any other kind of rough-housing that is not grappling (Grappling is a separate skill, described on page 38.) Brawl can also be used for improvised weapon attacks, at the Game Master's discretion. A successful Brawl attack does 1d3 points of damage plus your damage bonus to the target of the attack. You can use Brawl to parry an attack but if the attacker is armed (rather than using Brawl) a successful parry means that you take the attack's minimum weapon damage, as appropriate. Using Brawl against an attacker who has grappled your character is Easy.

Bureaucracy (05%)

Specialties: None

Bureaucracy is the art of manipulating processes or personnel within a political organisation or business to achieve a specific goal or to recognise that group's hierarchy. Every group has its policies and procedures and knowledge of (and skill using) the rules enables greater ease with achieving specific ends. This skill can be used in any political organisation, government agency and business with standardised policies and procedures – the skill grants facility with manipulating the bureaucracy even if its rules may not be apparent. At Capital Laundry Services, your character can use the Bureaucracy skill to use (or bypass) channels to requisition unusual equipment, learn things beyond their security clearance, play managers against one another, recognise the actual chain of command no matter how obfuscated it may be with matrix management and disguise potentially punishable behaviour in a screen of paperwork and forms. The Bureaucracy skill is an invaluable tool due to the Laundry's insistence on ISO-9000 compliance.

For more on the uses of bureaucracy, see **Chapter 11: Budgets, Requisitions and Training**.

Climb (40%)

Specialties: None

Your character can use this skill to climb walls, trees, cliffs or other vertical surfaces possessing usable hand- or foot-holds or a surface rough enough to find a degree of purchase. The Game Master should modify the difficulty of the skill roll based on the surface to be climbed. If a surface is full of accessible hand- and foot-holds (like a tree), it might be Easy to climb. A rocky wall or fence would be an Average roll (unmodified), while a less-accommodating surface could be Difficult. A sheer wall without any irregularities might simply be Impossible to climb. For an extended climb, such as up a cliff face or few stories of a building, the Game Master should ask for a skill roll for every 10 metres. Your character can take no other action while climbing and all actions taken while clinging to a climbed surface are Difficult. If you fail a Climb roll, you fall. The Game Master may allow you to make an Agility roll. If the Agility roll is successful, you do not fall but you do not make any headway. A Fumble on the Climb or Agility roll causes your character to fall. Generally, a fall does 1d6 points of damage for every three metres of distance. Falling is covered in more detail on page 61 of **Chapter 6: System and Combat**.

Command (05%)
.....

Specialties: None

Your character can use this skill to inspire, direct and coordinate followers or allies, guiding them through simple or complex tasks and improving the effectiveness of the group as a whole. This skill is fundamental in the day-to-day duties of a military officer, politician, business executive, head chef or even a sports team captain. Whenever you want to manage or lead a group, this is the skill to do it with. A successful use of the skill means that your team is successfully coordinated and guided and works at peak efficiency. Failing this, any attempts they perform are less effective, take longer and they suffer poor morale. This skill is primarily used for dealing with Non-Player Characters instead of Player Characters. Your character can attempt to directly command a number of Non-Player Character followers equal to your character's POW characteristic. For numbers above that, delegation or additional leadership is required or any attempts become Difficult.

Computer Use (various) (05%)
.....

Specialties: Due to the range of applications and the importance of computing to the Laundry, there are many specialties for this skill. The Game Master may define additional specialties, if desired.

Art: Using the computer for creating art, whether still images, animation, special effects, sound, video or another form of creative expression.

Design: Creating systems for computer use, whether user interface, web design, software programs, operating systems, games. This is distinct from actually programming the software.

Gaming: Use of recreational software; first-person shooters, casual games, MUDs, massively multiplayer online roleplaying games, networked games, text adventure games, online poker and so on.

Magic: In this case, 'magic' is not technological wizardry but actual honest-to-Azathoth magic. This includes knowledge of setting up computerised wards, assembling the equipment and programs for computational summonings and invocations and other uses of Turing's Theorem that will get you into trouble with the Laundry if you are not on the payroll.

Hacking: Bypassing firewalls, cracking security systems, installing secret processes, intentionally causing data loss and system exploits, virus creation, breaking into encrypted databases, the sort of thing Bob Howard calls 'Saturday night.'

Maintenance: Keeping computers and linked systems running optimally. Updating software, removing viruses and other malware, keeping security up to date (roll on the floor laughing), replacing hardware, monitoring system/network performance, server operations, making sure software is licensed and up-to-date (as per BSA certification) and so forth.

Programming: Creating software to run on electronic devices for a nearly-infinite number of applications and devices, using scripting engines and tools or the old-school way by writing code by hand.

Repair: Restoring a damaged or malfunctioning computer to full operational status, including software updates, diagnosing problems, removing malware or viruses, replacing hardware and so on.

In the era of computational demonology, the computer has emerged as the front-line weapon in the supernatural cold war, a weapon more versatile and potentially powerful than any that has ever existed. The specialties of the Computer Use skill cover what can be done with computers. Any reasonably competent computer technician has several of these specialties and your character can use a related specialty to accomplish a task even if they do not possess the exact specialty required, if permitted by the Game Master.

All of these specialties include the basics: word processing, spreadsheets, email, instant messaging, software installation/removal, web surfing and so on, as well as diagnosing basic problems and adding/removing hardware. Most basic operations of a computer do not require any skill roll or those uses are considered Easy if for some reason a roll is being required. It is only when your character is trying to do something on a computer when there is an element of risk, such as anything to do with magic, demonology, national security and so forth. Trying to perform Computer Use on a rudimentary or intentionally-limited system is considered Difficult, so your character should put in the ISO-9000-compliant paperwork for an upgrade as soon as possible.

Craft (various) (05%)
.....

Specialties: Carpentry, Cooking, Leatherworking, Pottery, Sewing, Woodworking and so on.

Constructing or making anything, from a table and chairs, a five-course gourmet meal, to the kitchen you eat the meal in, is done with a specialty of the Craft skill. The Craft skill deals with function and practicality: the creation of objects for purely aesthetic function is the Art skill. Depending on the specialty, specialised tools and materials are often required to use the Craft. Additionally, making things inevitably takes time and requires the use of some form of raw materials. In addition to the actual crafting of items, this skill can be used to identify how an object was made and possibly even the identity of the craftsman who made it. The difficulty of the thing to be crafted determines whether the skill roll is Easy, Average, Difficult or Impossible, while the workspace, equipment, materials and tools can provide circumstance modifiers such as those described on page 49.

Cthulhu Mythos (00%)
.....

Specialties: None.

The Cthulhu Mythos skill represents what your character knows about the blasphemous demonic horrors that exist beyond time and space, stirring in the lowermost reaches of the Mandelbrot set. Gleaning a knowledge of these entities is both damning and wearying on the soul, permanently limiting the mental stability of those who bear it. Compared to other skills, Cthulhu Mythos is unusual in several respects.

CTHULHU MYTHOS AND CTHULHU MYTHOS

As the title Cthulhu Mythos may seem unusual for a body of knowledge representing a vast array of paranormal entities, some of which would make Cthulhu itself run screaming in existential terror, some explanation is in order. Before Turing found a systematic and reliable method for breaking down dimensional barriers and summoning para-terrestrial entities, another person became aware of their presence and did much to publicise their existence. An American horror writer, H.P. Lovecraft, had a considerable knowledge of the occult and used it as inspiration for his weird tales.

Owing to the condition of the fiction market at the time, the only place these visionary stories were published were the pulp magazines. Later admirers of Lovecraft's work named the most prominent of them Cthulhu and titled the corpus of Lovecraft's tales 'The Cthulhu Mythos'. The name has stuck and for this reason the body of knowledge representing these paranormal entities has, for better or worse, become the Cthulhu Mythos.

Though Lovecraft had a high degree of awareness of these entities and was well able to depict them in properly horrific terms for his stories, he got a lot of the information wrong (more wrong than right) and his awareness of them was superficial at best. Consulting his works directly as a source of knowledge is a wonderful way to get killed in a hurry. Think of it as trying to get a proper understanding of Cthulhu itself by studying one of those ridiculous Cthulhu plush toys. However good the stories were, your character could memorise all of HPL's published writings and not gain a single point of the Cthulhu Mythos skill or lose a single point of SAN. There are other, unpublished works by HPL that were confiscated and destroyed after his death, but unless your character has clearance from the Black Chamber and knows exactly who to ask at Miskatonic University library, they are off limits.

No Player Character may begin with any Skill Points in Cthulhu Mythos. It must be learned after play begins.

This skill does not increase with experience. It may only be increased through research and through the unfortunate experience of going insane for the first time upon exposure to the entities from beyond time and space. This is covered in 'Going Down for the First Time' in **Chapter 8: Sanity**.

Your character's maximum SAN score is limited to a maximum of 99 minus their Cthulhu Mythos skill percentage. No matter how many SAN they gain in the course of play, any SAN points above or beyond that limit are lost. For example, if your character has Cthulhu Mythos 31%, their maximum SAN is 68 (99 - 31 = 68). Maximum SAN is addressed again in **Chapter 8: Sanity**.

However damning it is, the Cthulhu Mythos skill is useful for many things. It can be used to recognise demonic entities by sight, to identify the telltale signs of their manifestations and to determine their potential motives or behaviours. This skill can be used to identify summoning (or banishing) rituals involving these particular entities and their weaknesses (if any). Additionally, this skill can be used to know what reference works contain more information about these entities and what cults or organisations are actively involved in furthering their goals on Earth.

Though this skill is incredibly useful when encountering paraterrestrial entities and the cults that serve them, it is also a two-edged sword, a skill that inexorably cuts away at the limits of one's stability. Unlike other skills, mastery of the Cthulhu Mythos skill represents the dwindling of sanity and if your character ever achieves a skill of 99% in the Cthulhu Mythos skill, they are functionally insane and are no longer suitable for play. It is time to retire that character and generate a new one. The Game Master may choose to allow the character to live on as an NPC (hopefully not an antagonist), though the most likely outcome is residence and treatment at the Funny Farm (technically known as St. Hilda of Grantham's Home For Disgruntled Waifs And Strays, run by the Laundry for agents and operatives irrevocably psychologically scarred by Secrets Man Was Not Meant to Know).

Demolition (01%)

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Specialties: None.

This skill covers the use of explosives, from kegs of gunpowder to dynamite, Molotov cocktails and advanced plastic explosives, all the way through manufacture, storage, transport, setting and detonation. While anyone with basic instructions can set off a simple explosive, this skill allows your character to achieve a specific effect with the

explosion, whether it be collapsing a building, destroying a bridge, opening a safe without harming the contents or blowing the lock off a door without killing anyone inside the structure. Demolition also covers knowledge of appropriate accessories for explosives, including primer cord, fuses and detonators. A failure using this skill means that the explosion goes off incorrectly or not at all. A fumble means that the misfire has disastrous results, either exploding while being handled or having the opposite effect than desired. Simple explosives, such as grenades, do not require this skill. See **Chapter 6: System and Combat** for additional rules governing the effects of explosives and **Chapter 10: Tools of the Trade** for statistics for specific explosives.

Disguise (05%)
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Specialties: None.

Your character can use this skill to alter their posture, costume, voice and other aspects of their appearance to resemble a different person, specific or general. If your character is disguised, anyone who encounters them must make an opposed Spot or Insight roll against your character's Disguise skill to see through the ruse. Disguise covers appearance only: your character can use the Fast Talk skill to impersonate someone else in conversation. Using this skill to impersonate a particular type of person (a soldier, police officer and so on) is a standard action. Impersonating someone vastly different (significantly different body type, opposite gender, major age difference) or disguising oneself as a specific person is *Difficult*. Use of disguise kits and expert costuming may apply circumstance modifiers. Your Game Master may assign additional penalties to this skill if you must overcome cultural or language barriers or if you lack the relevant skills that the person they are impersonating would possess.

Dodge (DEX x 2%)
.....

Specialties: None.

The Dodge skill allows your character to evade incoming attacks to avoid injury. Your character must achieve an equal result to that of the attack: a regular success dodges a regular attack result, while attempting to dodge an attack with a special success requires a special success result for the Dodge. Your character may either dodge or parry in a Combat Round but cannot do both, as described in 'Dodging Attacks' on page 54 of **Chapter 6: System and Combat**. If your character is attacked by many opponents, they may make multiple dodge attempts in a round but each roll after the first is made at a cumulative -30% penalty. Dodging a missile weapon attack, like a firearm, is *Difficult* and dodging an explosion is *Difficult* or even *Impossible* (depending on where your character is when the explosion goes off).

Drive (various) (20%)
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Specialties: Automobile, Industrial Mover, Motorcycle, Tank and so forth.

The Drive skill allows your character to steer, manoeuvre and control a ground vehicle. Most day-to-day driving – even in central London – is an automatic task and requires no skill roll. Your Game Master should call for a Drive roll only under adverse conditions or for extraordinary driving (speeding through a busy urban area, chasing another vehicle and so on). To tail another vehicle without being noticed, use your character's Drive skill in an opposed skill roll with the other driver's Spot skill. To resolve vehicle chases, use the spot rules for Chases on page 59 of **Chapter 6: System and Combat**.

Etiquette (05%)
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Specialties: None.

Use this skill whenever your character absolutely needs to behave appropriately, whether attending a high-level political summit, visiting a foreign office, infiltrating a cult or joining an occult fraternity. Proper dress, modes of speech, secret signs and specific behaviours can all play a part in etiquette. Etiquette rolls might be required to gain an audience with an important Non-Player Character and should accompany any requests made of that person. The Game Master should only call for an Etiquette roll in an important situation, such as the first time your character interacts with a powerful group, if communication is critical or while trying to advance within that organisation.

Fast Talk (05%)
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Specialties: None

This skill convinces someone that your character is telling the truth or allows your character to convince that person of something in a hurry. With this skill, your character can ask someone to sign something without reading it thoroughly, buy or sell something that they might not want, let someone pass without a ticket or the proper identification, ignore suspicious behaviour, take false facts on faith, desert their post to go get additional help or equivalent changes in behaviour. The nature of the request may modify the Fast Talk roll to *Easy* or *Difficult*, depending on how much is being asked. For example, 'Can I take a peek at the autopsy photos... no one will know' is an *Easy* request, while 'Instead of shooting me, why don't you run away now' is *Difficult* (or *Impossible*). Fast Talk is quick to use and is always temporary. A short time after the roll is made, the victim of a successful Fast Talk roll can attempt an Idea roll. Success in the Idea roll means the target comes to their senses. The Game Master may reward an effective argument or excellent role playing with a circumstantial modifier bonus to the skill roll, or even penalise a flimsy argument and poor role playing with a circumstantial modifier penalty. Trying a second Fast Talk attempt after the first attempt fails is *Difficult*. To sway someone's mind for good, your character should use Bargain or Persuade.

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Fine Manipulation (05%)

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Specialties: None.

This skill covers any careful use of the hands and fingers, such as picking locks, assembling delicate computer equipment, defusing bombs (while being walked through the process), disarming traps or technical devices, tying or untying knots and disassembling mechanical devices. It can also be used for typing at superlative speeds, some parlour games or even bar tricks, such as twirling pens around your fingers, or the game with the knife and the spread fingers. Some uses of this skill require equipment such as lockpicks or precision tools. Trying to use the skill without them is either *Difficult* or *Impossible*.

Firearm (various) (by specialty)

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Specialties: Firearm specialties and their base skills are as follows:

Assault Rifle (15%): Assault rifles, machineguns, miniguns and so on.

Esoteric (0%): Unusual weapons like the Hand of Glory or any SCORPION STARE-based basilisk device. Includes activation wards, creation incantations and safety procedures.

Exotic (5%): Exotic or unusual firearms, such as dart guns, guns hidden in cellphones, umbrella guns and tie-clip lasers.

Pistol (20%): Sidearms, from automatics to revolvers.

Rifle (25%): Sporting and military-issue rifles, sniper rifles and so forth.

Shotgun (30%): Sporting shotguns, sawed-off shotguns, double-barrelled shotguns and automatic shotguns.

Submachine Gun (15%): Submachine guns.

This skill measures your character's ability to use their specialty firearm. Generally, if you succeed in a Firearm skill roll, your character has hit what they were aiming at and you can roll damage. Do not add your character's damage bonus to a firearm's damage roll unless they are using the gun as a club (which is just as effective against some creatures you might face). If the roll is a special success, it does double normal damage. Roll the firearm's normal damage and multiply the result by two to determine the extra damage. If the roll is a miss, the shot went wide. The Game Master may require Luck rolls from anyone potentially in the line of fire to avoid being hit. A fumble means that the firearm jammed and must be cleared before it can be used again.

The Firearms skill can also be used to recognise different models of weapons within the specialty, perform basic maintenance, to field-strip and un-jam them, the pros and cons of various models, recognise ammo types and to 'talk shop' with gun dealers. Knowing how to use one type of firearm usually means some familiarity with others, so the Game Master should allow your character the ability to use a firearm from a different specialty as if the skill were *Difficult*. The exception to this is the Esoteric specialty – your character has the skill and can use these weapons or they do not and cannot.

Firearms are covered in considerably more detail in **Chapter 6: System and Combat**.

First Aid (30%)

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Specialties: None.

This skill covers basic medical care and is used to stop bleeding, bandage wounds, treat minor burns, set broken limbs, resuscitate someone who is drowning or to revive an unconscious person. It can also be used to determine the nature of an obvious injury and what further treatments will be required. First Aid takes a full round (or longer) to perform. Each injury that a character has taken can be treated with a single use of First Aid. A successful First Aid skill roll heals 1d3 Hit Points of a particular injury, up to the total of the particular injury. You cannot use First Aid to heal more Hit Points to an individual injury than that injury caused. Once an injury has been treated (successfully or unsuccessfully), additional First Aid rolls on it have no effect. If your character is interrupted while attempting to use First Aid, the Game Master may declare that they need to start over. First Aid has no effect on poisons, diseases or other physical ailments. These must be treated with the Medicine skill.

Gaming (10%)

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Specialties: None.

This skill covers all manner of game-related contests, from ordinary games of chess or backgammon to gambling with cards, dice or other random elements. This skill provides knowledge of the rules of the game, the odds of success, average stakes, as well as regional variants and the history of the game. Successful use of the skill can also provide information about notable players of the game, living or dead. To resolve games of chance or skill, all characters involved roll against their Gaming skill. The highest roll with the best degree of success wins (a regular success is trumped by a special success). If the game involves betting or bluffing, your character uses the Insight skill against an opponent; success temporarily makes the Gaming skill *Easy* against that opponent. To cheat, your character might use Fast Talk, Fine Manipulation or Sleight of Hand as appropriate. For outcomes of games where no skill is involved, use an opposed Luck roll.

Grapple (25%)

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Specialties: None.

This unarmed combat skill covers any special attack used for wrestling, from Greco-Roman holds and pins, sumo-style pushing and unbalancing, to judo throws or even brute strangulation. Grapples are usually used to subdue a target without causing harm. If your character wants to cause harm, however, brutal wrestling moves, throws and strangle holds can be lethal. Your character must make a successful Grapple roll to establish a hold on their opponent. Grapple attacks can be parried using the Grapple skill or avoided with the Dodge skill. Once a hold is established, your

character must make a successful Grapple roll each round to maintain a hold. Taking any action other than one of the grappling actions listed here breaks a hold.

Each turn that your character has someone in a grapple hold, they can perform one of the following actions:

Choke: Your character tries to choke their opponent. The opponent must make an Endurance roll each round or suffer 1d3 plus your character's damage bonus in Hit Point damage. This continues until the opponent breaks free, falls unconscious, or dies. If the Grapple roll is a special success, the Endurance roll is *Difficult*.

Disarm: Your character matches their STR against the opponent's STR on the Resistance table. If your character succeeds, the opponent drops any weapon or item they are holding. If the opponent wins, they do not drop anything but are still in the hold.

Immobilise: Match your character's STR against the opponent's STR on the Resistance table. If your character wins, the opponent is immobilised and cannot act until free. If the opponent wins, they can take an action, though they are still held.

Injure: Match your character's STR against the opponent's STR on the Resistance table. If successful, your character hurts the opponent using brute strength, inflicting 1d3 points of damage plus their damage bonus to the opponent. This can be attempted until the opponent breaks free or wins the Resistance roll.

Takedown: Your character automatically makes a Resistance roll with their STR vs. the opponent's SIZ, dragging both characters to the ground. The opponent must make a successful Agility roll or suffer one point of damage. If the Agility roll fails, the opponent is on the ground in a disadvantageous position and all actions against them are *Easy* until they are up or change position.

Throw: Make a Resistance roll of your character's STR against the opponent's SIZ. If your character wins, the opponent is thrown 1d6 metres, is automatically knocked down and must make an Agility roll or suffer 1d6 points of damage. Throwing a target releases a hold. If the opponent wins the Resistance roll, they are released from the hold and remain standing.

Once in a hold, an opponent can attack your character if they have any free limbs, using Brawl (punches or head butts only) or any small weapon (knives or handguns). If two hands are free, the target can attempt to Grapple back. Multiple attackers can attempt to grapple a single target, though no more than two attackers can hold any one part of the body. Combine the STR ratings of both attackers in all contested tests.

Heavy Machine (various) (05%)

Specialties: Boiler, Bulldozer, Crane, Engine, Turbine, Wrecker and so forth.

Any machine larger than a person and any wheeled vehicle heavier than a moving van are handled with this skill. Your character would use Heavy Machine to drive a forklift, dig a trench with a bulldozer, swing a wrecking ball on a crane, start

and drive a turbine or keep a ship's steam boilers burning. Heavy Machine also covers basic care and preventative maintenance, though once a heavy machine fails, a Repair skill is required to fix it. Certain kinds of machines can be used in combat against opponents, with damage ranging from 3d6 to 6d6, based on the size and configuration of the device. Using this skill to operate machines outside of the range of your character's specialty is *Difficult*.

Heavy Weapon (various) (by specialty)

Specialties: Bazooka, Grenade Launcher, Heavy Machine Gun, Minigun, Rocket Launcher and so on. See **Chapter 10: Tools of the Trade** for the base chances of each weapon.

Success means that the attack strikes the intended target or target area and a special success does double damage (roll and multiply by two). A character can make a *Difficult* Dodge attempt to get out of the way of a heavy weapon and a special success for that modified Dodge roll is required if the attack is a special success. Do not add your character's damage bonus to that done by any heavy weapons. The skill governs the use of explosive weapons or large weapons that push the limits of portability. Heavier weapons such as cannons or vehicle/pintle-mounted weapons require the Artillery skill and are likely outside the scope of most Laundry operations. Most heavy weapons employ automatic fire or shoot explosive ordinance, so you should consult the rules for Autofire and Explosions in **Chapter 6: System and Combat**.

Hide (10%)

Specialties: None.

Your character can use this skill to escape pursuit, keep an object from easy detection or avoid surveillance. Hide is an opposed skill roll against the Listen, Sense or Spot skill of any searchers. Hiding something requires some form of cover: scant cover makes it *Difficult*, while a total lack of cover (wide open, broad daylight) is *Impossible*. Environmental conditions may offer additional circumstantial bonuses. To move without being detected, use the Stealth skill. Hide only guards against visual and aural detection. If your character fails a Stealth roll, it does not automatically mean that they were spotted: the chance to detect them becomes *Easy*. If the roll is successful, the chance of detection is normal and a special success for the Hide roll requires a special success for Listen, Sense or Spot to detect.

Insight (05%)

Specialties: None.

Your character can use this skill to evaluate another person's character, emotional state and motives based on body language, speech patterns and other intangible factors. Insight allows a gambler to sense a bluff or a detective to sniff out a lie. Wilful deceit can be difficult to penetrate: in such cases, your character should make an opposed Insight roll against the target's Fast Talk or Etiquette. Using this skill on close friends, family members or spouses is *Easy*.

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Jump (25%)

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Specialties: None.

This skill measures your character's ability to leap height or distance or to jump over obstacles. Under normal circumstances, a reasonably fit human can jump his or her height horizontally, half his or her height vertically from a standing position and roughly three metres horizontally with a running start. Performing flashy or showy jumps (somersaults, flips and so forth) is *Difficult*. The Jump skill also covers landing from a fall and can be used to mitigate falling damage. If your character falls, they can attempt a Jump roll to offset 1d6 of damage from the fall (remove one d6 from the damage dice rolled). A special success reduces falling damage by 2d6.

Knowledge (various) (by specialty)

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Specialties: The Knowledge skill specialties and their base chances are as follows:

Accounting (10%): The knowledge of bookkeeping practices. Use it to analyse a person or institution's general financial situation (debt, bankruptcy, wealth, net worth) or to identify financial irregularities (strange spending, embezzlement or odd windfalls).

Anthropology (01%): The study of cultures, including customs, art and behaviour. Using this skill, your character can identify a person or artefact's native culture or accurately describe a culture's social mores and standard behaviours.

Archaeology (01%): The study of ancient and vanished cultures. This skill allows your character to identify an artefact from a dead culture, spot a fake or conduct an excavation and make reasonable inferences about the ancient inhabitants of a site or region.

Art History (01%): The study of art from various eras and places, including style, famous artists and specific works. Your character can use this skill to identify the origin of a piece of art, spot a fake and describe the life and works of master artists.

Business (01%): The study of entrepreneurial practices, guild regulations, corporate laws and management techniques required to start or manage a commercial business. This skill allows your character to identify major players in a field or market, predict economic trends and potentially turn a profit.

Espionage (00%): This represents the field of espionage; spy organisations, famous or notorious spies and agents, field methodology, notable figures, organisations, tactics and so forth. Code-breaking is handled with the Science (Cryptography) skill on page 44 of this chapter.

Folklore (05%): Knowledge of the customs, stories, lyrics, tall tales and legends of a particular people or region. Your character can use this skill to identify or remember elements of a story, which might come in handy when dealing with legends involving the supernatural.

Group (00%): General information about a particular culture, nationality, group, club or social class. Your character can use this skill to identify a member of that group, know 'who's who' within that group and remember social customs and mores of the group. When writing this skill on your character sheet, write the name of the group in the parentheses.

History (20%): The study of past events and eras. Your character can use this skill to remember the significance of any place, person, event or object, or to correctly guess when an object or document was made.

Law (05%): The study of legal practice and precedent. Your character can use this skill to judge the legality of a proposed action, find legal precedents, free themselves from trouble with the authorities or build a case for or against a criminal.

Linguistics (00%): The study of language itself, from the foundations of grammar and vocabulary to the means by which societies shape languages and how they evolve and differ. Your character may use this skill to identify unknown languages and, at the Game Master's discretion, puzzle out a few words or grasp a basic meaning, though this skill is no substitute for the appropriate Language skill.

Literature (05%): The study of prose, poetry and essays, usually from a single culture or body of literature. Your character can use this skill to properly identify a quote or allusion to a specific work, identify when and where an unknown fragment might have been written, attribute a mysterious work to a known author, spot a literary fake or quote ominously appropriate passages from famous works of literature.

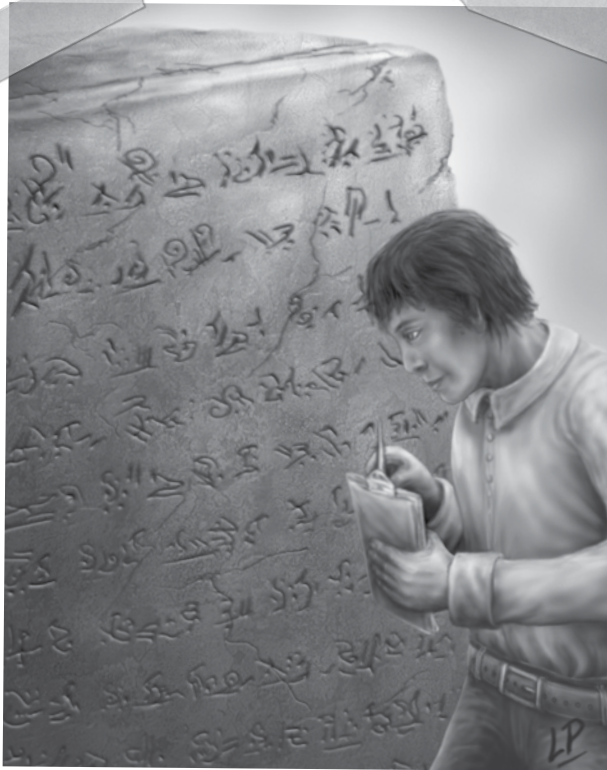
Natural History (10%): The study of plant and animal life in its natural environment. Your character can use this skill to identify a species by tracks, spoor, habits or appearance, to predict which fruits and berries are safe to eat, or how to avoid predators in the wild by knowing their habits. Natural History is a very broad, general skill – the Science specialties of Biology, Botany and Zoology are also useful for detailed or specific information.

Occult (05%): Knowledge of magic, obscure legends and 'secret history' that covers everything from arcane philosophies to modern conspiracy theories. Your character can use this skill to realise the significance of alchemical or astrological symbols, identify which magical tradition created a ritual workspace, know the names of powerful demonic entities, recognise a particular spell or identify the secret factions conspiring to manipulate a situation. For practical applications of magic, use the Sorcery skill on page 45 of this chapter.

Philosophy (01%): The study of existence and its meaning, from basic logic to existentialism, nihilism and beyond. Your character can use this skill to remember the precepts of a particular philosophy, identify the philosophical leanings of an author or speaker's argument and to engage in philosophical debate.

Politics (05%): The study and knowledge of political systems or other means of government elected by (or imposed upon) the citizens. Your character can use this skill to understand the major power blocs in an area, how to influence the political structure and how citizens will react to political change or influence.

Region (00%): General information about a specific city, region or nation, including important people, local landmarks and regional history. Your character can use this skill to find desirable lodgings in a city, know the name of the best restaurant of a particular cuisine, find a specific vendor or merchant, remember the name of political leaders and parties and be aware of cultural or civic events. When writing this on your character sheet, put the name of the region in the parentheses.



Religion (05%): This skill covers the details of the theology and practices of a specific religion. Your character can use this skill to avoid violating taboos, recall the laws and obligations of a faith, successfully debate points of theology, identify regalia or religious texts, sort orthodoxy from heresy or properly lead a religious ceremony. When writing this skill on your character sheet, write the name of the religion in the parentheses. Specific religions might be Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism, Zoroastrianism, whether as general as ‘Paganism’ or as specific as ‘Millennial Cults.’

Streetwise (05%): This represents awareness and specific knowledge of the shadier segments of a society, from the protocols of the poor to the ways of the criminal underworld. Unlike most other Knowledge specialties, there is rarely a written body of work on Streetwise. Your character can use this skill to find a safe house, identify a fence for stolen goods or know who to ask for other semi-legal or illegal favours.

The Knowledge skill represents experience with or academic study of a particular branch of knowledge. Knowledge allows your character to remember pertinent facts within the purview of the specialty. Use a Knowledge skill to analyse or identify clues, make logical suppositions and recall impressive trivia. Many knowledge skills have broad definitions and some overlap exists between some specialties described here. For example, to remember one detail of a town’s history, your character might use Knowledge (History) or Knowledge (Region). The Game Master is the final arbiter of whether a given Knowledge skill applies to a given situation.

Language (Own or Other) (INT x 5% or 00%)

Specialties: ‘Own’ is your character’s native language (probably English for Laundry agents) and other specialties are other languages. Each specialty applies to a single language; if you wish for your character to be bilingual, other languages are described as other Language specialties.

Language Fluency Table

Rating	Fluency
1–10	May only communicate simple ideas. For an example of speech at this level: ‘Book. Sell please to me.’ Complex communication in the language (Bargain, Fast Talk or Persuade) is <i>Impossible</i> .
11–25	Gets across simple requests, enough to be understood and survive day-to-day. For example, ‘How many moneys for old book?’ Complex communications (Bargain, Fast Talk or Persuade) are <i>Difficult</i> .
26–50	Assured communication. For example, ‘How much? But I can buy it cheaper at another shop!’ Your character can speak better than an uneducated native speaker, getting most ideas across. Communication skills are not restricted, but certain nuances of expression may still be <i>Difficult</i> .
51–75	Allows your character to tell stories, sagas, songs and so forth, as if they are a gifted speaker. For example, ‘You must be joking if you think this copy of <i>Nameless Cults</i> is worth half what you’re asking. The binding isn’t original; it’s a lesser translation of the Bridewell edition rather than from the original German; and it’s missing all of the appendices.’ Idioms, wordplay, subtle jokes and inferences become <i>Easy</i> . Your character can pass for native. Complex communications are considered an <i>Average</i> skill use.
76–00	At this fluency, your character is speaking the language of poets, philosophers, scientists and diplomats. For example, ‘Surely your initial assertion of this volume’s worth can be reassessed in light of the edition’s obvious and significant deficiencies.’ Jargon and obscure forms of speech come easily. Not only can your character pass for native, they can mimic local dialects with ease.

Your character’s initial skill in their native language is INT x 5%. Other languages are learned at home, in school, on the streets or through alternate educational methods. For all intents and purposes, Language governs written and spoken communication. Day-to-day conversation in your character’s native Language is *Automatic* and never requires a skill roll. Skill rolls are required when communicating difficult concepts or in difficult and unusual situations, such as

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translating or reading difficult-to-understand presentations of the language. Understanding obscure dialects or ancient varieties of a language is *Difficult*. Your Game Master might require you to attempt multiple Language rolls to understand extremely complex or lengthy documents or conversations. Consult the Language Fluency Table for a guideline on skill rating and fluency.

Listen (25%)

Specialties: None.

This skill allows your character to hear, interpret and understand muffled, concealed or distant sounds. Murmurs behind a closed door, furtive whispers, stealthy footfalls, distant cries, muffled humming, telltale scrapes and snapped twigs are the sorts of sounds a successful Listen roll can notice and identify. Use this skill to see if a noise wakes your character up while they are sleeping or to see if your character can recognise a specific sound or voice. Listen is both an active and a passive skill. Your character can attempt to Listen for suspicious noises or the Game Master can call for Listen rolls if events warrant it. The Listen skill should be opposed by the Hide or Stealth skills.

Medicine (05%) (various)

Specialties: Dermatology, Family Medicine, Immunology, Internal Medicine, Neurology, Nuclear Medicine, Oncology, Pathology, Pediatrics, Radiology, Surgery and so on.

More comprehensive than the First Aid skill, Medicine is used to diagnose and treat life-threatening conditions, diseases, poisonings and make general health recommendations. The specialties of this skill are used for long-term medical care rather than the quick patch-em-up of First Aid. It can also be used to determine the cause of death if it is not immediately apparent, to assess the function of and efficacy of treatment, to recognise various pharmaceuticals relating to the treatment or even to determine how long someone would ideally take to recover from a condition. Like many skills, Medicine also provides awareness of the practitioners in an area and the history of the specialty. Common illnesses and conditions (flu, inadvertent poisonings, broken limbs and so forth) are *Easy* to treat, while rare and/or extremely serious conditions are *Difficult*. The Medicine skill roll often requires the aid of medical facilities, equipment and pharmaceuticals, so attempting the skill without these may incur a penalty to the skill. Similarly, excellent facilities and equipment can add a bonus to the skill rating.

A successful Medicine skill roll represents one week of treatment and will restore 1d3 lost characteristic points or Hit Points if they have been lost due to illness, disease or some medical condition. If both Hit Points and characteristic points have been lost, the characteristic points are restored first, while natural healing will restore lost Hit Points. Each use of the Medicine skill applies to a single condition. Once it has been successfully treated, additional Medicine rolls have no effect.

Melee Weapon (various) (by weapon)

Specialties: Axe, Club, Garrote, Knife, Spear, Staff, Sword, Whip and so on. See page 271 for the base chances of each weapon.

The Melee Weapon skill governs your character's ability using a specific type of weapon in hand-to-hand combat. It is used to make attacks, to parry them (if appropriate) and provides knowledge of the maintenance and proper safety for use of the weapon. Each specialty in Melee Weapon applies to weapons of that specialty. To use a weapon from another specialty, use the other weapon's base chance or a *Difficult* roll from a similar weapon's specialty. A successful Melee Weapon roll means that the attack hits (or will hit if it is not parried). Roll damage and apply your character's Damage Bonus and the Game Master will apply that much damage to the target of your attack. If the attack is a special success, roll damage and double it, then apply the Damage Bonus. Special success attacks can only be parried by special success parries. To parry an attack, roll your character's Melee Weapon skill. A successful parry means that the weapon does no damage. Your character can attempt more than one parry per round but each roll after the first is made at a cumulative -30% penalty to the skill rating. Melee weapon combat is covered in more detail in **Chapter 6: System and Combat**.

Missile Weapon (various) (by weapon)

Specialties: Archery, Blowgun, Boomerang, Bow, Crossbow, Dart, Javelin, Shuriken, Sling, Spear, Throwing Axe, Throwing Knife and so on. See page 272 for the base chances of each weapon.

This skill measures your character's accuracy with any self-propelled missile weapon, from throwing axes, blowguns or even boomerangs. For grenades, use the Throw skill. Success means that the attack strikes the target, inflicting its normal damage and half of your character's Damage Bonus. A special success does double damage: roll the weapon's damage, double it and then add half of your character's Damage Bonus. For weapons that do not use any personal strength (blowguns, crossbows and so on) do not add the Damage Bonus. Missile weapons are covered in more detail in **Chapter 6: System and Combat**.

Navigate (10%)

Specialties: None.

Navigate allows your character to plot a course and find their way to a planned destination, using a map, compass, sea charts, global positioning system or even raw instinct. Some navigation methods require specialised tools but almost anyone can use perception, memory or intuition in an attempt to find their way. Navigating in a featureless landscape (at sea, in darkness, bad weather, in a vast desert or dense jungle) is *Difficult*. Navigating around an area that your character is familiar with is either *Automatic* or *Easy*, depending on how far off the beaten track you go.

Perform (various) (05%)

Specialties: Act, Dance, Juggle, Play Instrument, Recite, Sing and so forth.

This skill is used for various aspects of the performing arts, whether music, drama, dance or other forms of performance expression. Each specialty pertains to only one type of performance. Some Perform specialties require specific tools and materials, ranging from musical instruments to makeup or costumes, depending on the specialty. In these cases, your character must have these accoutrements before attempting a performance. The amount of time it takes to use the Perform skill is variable, from minutes (a quick song or extemporaneous speech) to weeks (to learn, memorise and rehearse a symphony, opera or play). The Perform skill can be used to impress others or even to perform rituals of magical significance.

Persuade (15%)

Specialties: None.

Successful use of the Persuade skill sways some opinion or belief held by another character (usually a Non-Player Character), convincing them of a particular idea or belief. Persuade can use logic, debate, oratory, empathy or even intimidation to make reluctant listeners take action or grant a request. Just as with the Fast Talk skill, the actual truth (or beliefs of the person using the skill) have no bearing whatsoever on its use. Unlike Fast Talk, the effects of successful persuasion last indefinitely and do not change until a second Persuade attempt is made or circumstances force a change of opinion. Attempting to Persuade across a language barrier (if both speakers have lower than 50% or in the language) is *Difficult*. It is also *Difficult* to convince someone of something that runs counter to their core beliefs. The Game Master may reward effective arguments or good role playing with a temporary bonus to the skill. Depending on the circumstances, this skill can take minutes, hours or even days to accomplish.

Pilot (various) (00%)

Specialties: Battleship, Helicopter, Hot Air Balloon, Hovercraft, Jet Airliner, Jet Boat, Jet Fighter, Ocean Liner, Propeller Plane and so on.

The Pilot skill lets your character steer, manoeuvre and control a boat or plane through the sky or on the water, as appropriate. Each kind of vehicle is a specialty, though there is overlap in training and basic principles enough that the Game Master may allow your character to use a related vessel at your unmodified skill in a specialty. For example, if your character has Pilot (Jet Airliner) they may be able to use Pilot (Propeller Plane) without the roll being *Difficult*. Most day-to-day piloting should be either *Automatic* or *Easy* and the Game Master should only call for a Pilot roll under adverse conditions or while attempting extraordinary manoeuvres (combat, vehicular chases and so forth). To resolve vehicle chases, consult the spot rules for 'Chases' on page 59 of **Chapter 6: System and Combat**.

Psychotherapy (00%)

Specialties: None.

A primarily psychological form of medical treatment, this skill incorporates diagnosis, counselling, focused therapy, behaviour modification and pharmaceutical intervention. Skilled psychotherapists can diagnose, treat and even reverse debilitating psychoses or mental illnesses such as the insanities inflicted by exposure to earthly frights or paraterrestrial threats. Treatment requires four to five hours of therapy per month for indefinite insanity. See **Chapter 8: Sanity and Insanity** for more information on recovering lost SAN through psychotherapy.

Repair (various) (15%)

Specialties: Electrical, Electronic, Hydraulic, Mechanical, Plumbing, Structural and so on.

As they say in the field, things become FUBARed and the centre cannot take it any more. Equipment and other objects will inevitably become damaged or stop working, so when this happens, your character can use Repair to fix things. The various specialties of this skill cover different types of repairs. Depending on how complex it is, a device may require a combination of specialties, such as an automobile requiring Electrical, Electronic and Mechanical repair. Most repairs require the proper tools, so attempting repairs without them should incur circumstantial modifiers as described on page 49 of **Chapter 6: System and Combat**. Routine repairs are either *Automatic* or *Easy*, while ones with significant problems or requiring work may be *Difficult*. Extensive repairs may even require multiple Repair rolls to accomplish.

Research (25%)

Specialties: None.

This skill allows your character to locate and identify potential sources of information, whether in a newspaper archive, library, network, the internet or Azathoth help you... the Stacks. When searching for information pertinent to a specific topic or subject, a successful Research roll lets your character identify and find books, documents, files, articles or websites of potential interest. Depending on the method and sources, this skill can take anywhere from minutes to hours to search. Frequently, Research involves multiple sources, such as finding something indexed online and then having to scrounge up a physical copy, which might mean contacting a library, going to a newspaper office or searching through a classified government archive for a cryptically-named file that may or may not have been shelved properly. Contrary to popular belief, not everything can be found on the internet through a search engine and Capital Laundry Services has some very specific policies about how searches are conducted in the public arena. Searching a poorly-organised archive or one without an index is *Difficult*. Specific archives may offer a circumstantial modifier to Research rolls, based on the size and quality of their collections. Sometimes the result of a successful

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Research roll is that there is no pertinent information to be found or learning that it has been expunged or otherwise removed. In every case, the Game Master must decide whether a particular source of information contains anything pertinent.

Ride (05%)

Specialties: None.

This skill governs the care, saddling and handling of a horse, camel, or other riding beast. Your character can use this skill to steer a steed through special manoeuvres or difficult terrain, guide it while at a full gallop or keep control if it rears or stumbles. The Game Master should resolve a race between the same type of animals using an opposed Riding skill roll and the guidelines for Chases on page 59 of **Chapter 6: System and Combat**. Your character must have combat and Ride skills of 50% or higher in order to fight normally if engaging in mounted combat. If your character's Ride skill is less than 50%, they must make a Ride roll every round to keep control of their mount. If the combat skill is lower than 50%, all attacks, parries and dodges are *Difficult*. Even if both skills are higher than 50%, your character uses the lower of the two skill ratings (Ride or the combat skill) to attack.

Science (various) (by specialty)

Specialties: The following is a representative list of Science specialties, along with the base chances for each skill. This list is not comprehensive: the Game Master may add or define additional specialties.

Astronomy (01%): The study of the universe, including planets, planetary motion, the sun, stellar life cycles and astronomical phenomena. Use this skill to know which stars and planets will be visible on a given night, predict an eclipse or comet or analyse the spectrum of a distant star to determine its composition, distance and brightness.

Biology (01%): The study of living organisms, including their internal structure, behaviour and classification. This skill includes the properties and behaviour of enzymes and hormones and is vital to an understanding of diseases, the effects of drugs and nutrition. Use this skill to identify a natural venom or toxin, find a vaccine for an unknown disease, isolate the hallucinogenic compound in a jungle plant, guess the purpose of an unknown organ or structure or classify a new organism.

Botany (01%): The study and classification of plant life. Use this skill to name or identify a known plant, its habitat and properties (poisonous, nutritious and so forth), and its particular needs and potential uses. The skill can also help classify and predict the behaviour of an unknown type of plant life.

Chemistry (01%): The study of matter, whether solid, liquid or gaseous and the effects of temperature, energy and pressure on matter. Chemistry also deals with the interactions and behaviours of substances and elements. Use this skill to create or extract chemical compounds, including explosives, poisons, poison gases and acids.

Cryptography (01%): The discipline of Alan Turing, who

made computational demonology possible, cryptology is a specialised discipline of mathematics. It deals with codes, ciphers and the ability to encrypt and/or decrypt information. Use this skill to turn a message into gibberish, identify an existing cipher or break a code. Some codes cannot be broken without computers, if at all.

Forensics (01%): The study of trace evidence at a crime scene. This specialty covers the correct collection or recording of items such as fingerprints, microscopic hairs and skin flakes, blood splatters and DNA samples, as well as laboratory analysis.

Genetics (01%): This advanced science uses heredity and biochemistry as the tools for understanding genes, chromosomes and their manipulation. Use this skill to identify a genetic defect, identify an individual or species from a DNA sample, edit an organism's traits or classify a previously-unknown organism.

Geology (01%): The study of the origin, history and structure of planet earth, from volcanism and plate tectonics to rock strata and erosion. Use this skill to identify types of rock, predict if valuable ores, compounds or fossils might be found in a given area or to try to predict catastrophic behaviour like earthquakes and volcanoes.

Mathematics (10%): The science of numbers and their manipulation, from simple addition through algebra, geometry and even calculus. Statistics, modelling and chaos theory form the modern cutting edge of this specialty. Use this skill to solve maths problems and make advanced calculations.

Meteorology (01%): The study of atmospheric phenomena; how pressure, temperature and moisture combine to create specific weather conditions. Use this skill to predict the weather in a local region based on existing climate data or to identify the conditions that create specific weather effects like snow, fog and storms.

Pharmacy (01%): The intersection of biology, chemistry and medicine, this skill governs the effects of specific chemical compounds and substances on living things. Use this skill to synthesise medicines from proper ingredients, identify a drug or poison by its effects, recall the side effects of a compound or suggest the best available medicine for a specific sickness or ailment.

Physics (01%): The study of forces, pressure, materials, motion, magnetism, electricity, optics, light, radioactivity and other related phenomena. Use this skill to chart an object's orbit or falling arc, predict the breaking point of a material or object or analyse the behaviour of light while standing on an alien planet, looking up at the stars.

Planetology (01%): The application of geology to other planets. Use this skill to analyse or predict the properties, composition and climate of a planet, as well as the presence of valuable ores or compounds and the potential presence of life.

Psychology (05%): The study of human thought, personality and behaviour, from child development and learning, to deviant behaviour and neurosis. Use this skill to predict the behaviour of an individual based on their upbringing and background (or vice versa), identify the symptoms of a mental illness or how best to communicate with or treat an individual based on their personality.

Thaumaturgy (00%): The technical aspects of magic, such as understanding the physics involved (and rudely violated

by) spells and supernatural entities and their effects upon the physical world. This includes practical applications of Turing's Theorem and highly-technical subjects such as phase conjugate grammars for extra-dimensional summoning, fractal dimensionality and so on.

Zoology (05%): The biological study of the behaviour, anatomy and physiology of animal species. Use this skill to identify a known animal based on traces or parts of that animal (tracks, droppings, hairs, claw/bite marks and so on), list the habits and qualities of a known animal or classify and predict the attributes of an unknown animal based on the same data.

Science is the process by which researchers observe phenomena and objects, in order to draw conclusions about their nature and properties. True science is always based on data gathered from observation and experimentation. Reason and deduction are the tools of science and its goal is the understanding of reality and the material universe.

Each Science specialty covers a specific discipline: if you wish for your character to learn another specialty, they must spend Skill Points on a separate skill. Many science skills have broad definitions and some overlap exists between the specialties described here. To calculate an asteroid's orbit, your character might use Science (Astronomy) or Science (Physics). The Game Master should be the final arbiter of whether a given Science skill applies to a given situation. If your character does not have a desired Science specialty, at the Game Master's discretion, they can use a related field (such as Physics and Astronomy) as if that related skill were *Difficult*. Success with a related skill roll does not provide an experience check for either skill. Science rolls may be instant or the result of months of work depending on the task. Attempting a Science roll without sufficient time or data is *Difficult* or even *Impossible*.

Sense (10%)

Specialties: None.

Though sight and hearing are the most dominant senses, it is possible to perceive the world using the other three: taste, touch and smell. For convenience, these three skills have been folded into one. Like Listen and Spot, Sense is both an active and a passive skill: you can have your character make a Sense roll or the Game Master can ask you to make a Sense roll in appropriate situations, either openly or in secret.

Sleight of Hand (05%)

Specialties: None.

Sleight of Hand is the art of manipulating small objects (anything smaller than a hand, like dice, cards, coins and even wallets or letters) without attracting attention or in a misleading manner. Card sharks, pickpockets and stage magicians all depend on Sleight of Hand to make a living. Your character can use this skill to pick someone's pocket, palm a piece of evidence at a crime scene, take a folder off someone's desk without being noticed, surreptitiously slide a cellphone out of a pocket and activate it quietly, secretly

boot up a program on a smartphone or ease a pistol out of a holster without being seen. Sleight of Hand is opposed by the Spot skill.

Sorcery (00%)

Specialties: None.

Unlike Knowledge (Occult), Sorcery is the real deal; the ability to use actual magic in the form of summonings, wards, bindings or other enchantments. This skill is one of the most zealously-guarded secrets in human history and as the foundation of the Capital Laundry Services, it is a closely-held state secret, the use of which is subject to a variety of penalties and/or loss of liberty. With the Sorcery skill, your character can cast spells of the appropriate rank, can recognise a spell or ward's purpose by studying its design or the physical equipment used to cast it, determine when a person, place or thing is under the influence of a spell, can create magical items such as the Hand of Glory and manipulate the parameters of the spell in significant fashion. This can include safely 'defusing' a summoning grid, if need be. The skill can also be used to recognise demonic entities by sight or other signs of their manifestation and to determine their capabilities and weaknesses (please, stop laughing).

Like Cthulhu Mythos and Status, Sorcery does not improve with experience. It can be learned through study of ancient grimoires, passed on from teacher to student or in any number of courses offered by the Laundry as part of its general training program. For more information on Sorcery, see **Chapter 14: Words Have Power**.

Spot (25%)

Specialties: None.

The Spot skill is used to notice tiny details, search a room for important clues, find a hidden compartment, catch a glimpse of a fleeting opponent or object, recognise a disguised foe or spot enemies lying in ambush. Spot can be used actively or passively. Your character can make an open Spot roll while searching an area or examining a scene or the Game Master can call for a Spot roll to see if your character spontaneously notices a fleeting detail. That roll might also be made secretly, without your knowledge. Skills such as Disguise, Hide and Stealth are opposed by the Spot skill.

Status (15%)

Specialties: None.

This skill measures your character's reputation and influence within the Laundry. It is a combination of rank, political pull, favours owed and standing. A character with a low Status is an anonymous drone; middle management has a Status of around 50% and people like Angleton, who get to talk to the Board, have a Status in the 90s.

Your grade in the Laundry is not exactly equivalent to your Status (a low-grade Line officer might be able to pull more

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strings than a mid-grade Administrator), but as a rule of thumb, assume that your pay grade is equal to 1/10th your Status, rounding down. So, a character with Status 15% is at the lowest rung of the Laundry ladder.

Status can also be used as a measure of social standing and wealth. The higher your status, the better your social circle and salary.

The primary use of Status is when requisitioning equipment and obtaining favours (see **Chapter 11: Budgets, Requisitions and Training**).

Unlike most skills, Status cannot be improved through experience. The Game Master should let you increase your character's Status as a reward for loyal service, increased acclaim or notoriety, organisational recognition, professional advancement or other means. An increase of 1% per mission is reasonable, with extraordinary deeds or feats increasing the gain to 1d3% all the way up to 1d6%. On the other hand, your Status can actually decrease if your character suffers the indignity of scandals, misdemeanours, professional setbacks and social improprieties. The amount of the reduction in Status should be determined by the Game Master, ranging from 1% for a minor decrease, to 10% for a major humiliation or professional regression.

The Game Master can also use Status as a way to measure your character's fame and that of others. When a Non-Player Character first meets your character, the Game Master may roll against your character's Status to see if they are known to that Non-Player Character. You can also roll for your character against other characters' Status skill ratings, to determine if your character recognises them.

Stealth (10%)

Specialties: None.

The Stealth skill allows your character to sneak through an area without drawing attention by sight or sound. Stealth assumes that your character is moving, rather than remaining immobile. Moving more than half of your character's normal MOV rate makes the Stealth skill *Difficult* to use. Environmental factors (ambient noise, thick carpets, creaky floors) or gear (soft-soled shoes, noisy armour, bulky equipment) may modify the Stealth skill using the rules for circumstance modifiers. To avoid being seen whilst immobile, your character should use the Hide skill.

Strategy (05%)

Specialties: None.

This skill allows your character to use tactical perception and knowledge of basic tactics to best deploy forces in battle, from a small squad to a massive army or fleet. Strategy requires at least a full turn of unimpeded preparation for your character to evaluate the situation, choose optimal positions, study enemy activities and so forth. Strategy is not leadership: that ability is covered by the Command skill. Longer periods of time may be required for larger-scale

engagements. Using Strategy in unfavourable conditions (outnumbered more than two to one, poorly equipped) is *Difficult*. Massive engagements involving entire armies should be resolved in abstract, with an opposed Strategy roll between the strategists influencing the outcome on either side. For the most part, Strategy is outside the purview of most Laundry missions, though it might be utilised by OCCULUS or the SAS. The result of a successful Strategy roll can vary significantly based on the scale of the engagement. The Game Master is encouraged to offer an appropriate benefit: from a round of surprise attacks for one side, a superior tactical position, added defensibility and cover or increased morale and long-term functionality.

Swim (25%)

Specialties: None.

This skill lets your character swim, dive and stay afloat safely. Swimming for recreation does not require a roll: rolling should be reserved for dangerous situations where drowning is a distinct threat. In calm waters, Swim rolls are only needed once per turn. Swimming in rough waters requires a Swim roll each round. Your character must have at least one hand free to Swim and swimming with only one hand free is *Difficult*. Your character can tow a buoyant object of up to his own SIZ x 2 indefinitely, assuming he has a free hand or some means of pulling the object. Carrying something that does not float is much more difficult – your character can carry anything up to his or her STR characteristic in pounds indefinitely without difficulty: above this weight a STR vs. SIZ Resistance roll must be attempted each round. A race between swimmers should be handled as opposed Swim rolls. If your character is wearing heavy gear, they sink and must shed weight or drown. Any type of combat under water is *Difficult* and an attacker uses the lower of their Melee Combat or Swim skill ratings. The Dodge skill becomes *Difficult*. See 'Underwater Combat' on page 62 of **Chapter 6: System and Combat** for more information.

Teach (10%)

Specialties: None.

Your character should use the Teach skill whenever they attempt to train someone in a skill or technique or impart some type of knowledge to another. The skill can be accomplished through the use of lectures, coursework, demonstrations, guided exercises or practical on-the-job training. In order to be a successful teacher for a particular skill, your character must have twice the student's skill rating or a skill rating of 50% (whichever is lower). The system on 'Skill Training' on page 63 of **Chapter 6: System and Combat** covers teaching and skill training in detail.

Technology Use (various) (05%)
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Specialties: Communications, Electronic Security, Electronics, Sensor Systems, Surveillance, Traps and so on.

This skill covers the use and maintenance of advanced technology such as large-scale computer systems, security systems or instruments used to operate large technological devices. Your character can employ this skill to activate and deactivate such devices, properly use technological equipment, monitor standard operations, adjust performance, troubleshoot a problem or even cause the device to malfunction by pushing its safety parameters. In a James Bond movie, all of those scientists and henchmen standing around working on instruments are using this skill.

Throw (25%)
.....

Specialties: None.

This skill allows your character to hit a target with a thrown object such as a baseball or grenade, or to successfully throw something not balanced for throwing, such as a pistol, beer glass, bar stool or a laptop computer. To catch something, use an appropriate Athletics specialty or an Agility roll. For a weapon balanced for throwing such as a knife or throwing star, use the Missile Weapon specialty. If your character successfully uses this skill, roll the item's damage plus half of their Damage Bonus. Well-balanced objects designed for throwing (including balls, grenades and darts) can normally be thrown one metre for every point of your character's STR that exceeds the SIZ of the object. Unbalanced objects (laptop, stool and so on) can be thrown one metre for every three points of STR over the object's SIZ. Throwing up to twice that range is *Difficult*. If the object is within 10 SIZ points of your character's STR, a successful Resistance roll must be made to see if the item can be grasped and held aloft to throw properly. The Game Master should estimate the amount of damage an improvised thrown item will do, based on guidelines for SIZ provided in **Chapter 6: System and Combat**.

Track (10%)
.....

Specialties: None.

This skill allows your character to follow the trail of a person, vehicle or animal, across a variety of terrain types. Making a successful Track roll means that your character has the trail and can follow it easily, though the Game Master may ask for a new Track roll when conditions change or if the trail is so long that it must be followed in segments. Moving faster than half of your character's MOV, while tracking, makes the Track roll *Difficult*. Every day that has passed since the trail was laid down imposes a -20% penalty to the Track skill rating. Bad weather (rain or snow) completely destroys a trail in a matter of hours, making it *Difficult* or even *Impossible* to follow. Tracking something across water or concrete is usually *Impossible*, unless the target has left some kind of trail (blood, for example). Someone trying to avoid being tracked would use their Hide or Track skill (pick one) against the tracker's Track skill.

New Skills and Specialties

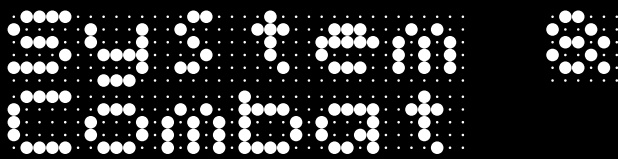
There are some blank lines for additional skills and specialties on the character sheet. These are for new skills the Game Master may choose to introduce to the game. You can suggest new skills but only the Game Master should be allowed to define the skill and authorise its use in the campaign. To devise a new skill, take the following steps:

- Name it.
- Determine a base percentage based on how commonly-known the skill may be (0% for highly-specialised knowledge, up to 25% or even 50% for instinctual knowledge).
- List specialties, if they exist and define them if they are important.
- Write a short description of what the skill generally does and what failing the skill means. If there are any game mechanics involved, it is good to reference or describe them in the skill description.

It is recommended that any new skills created be done so before character creation, so that these skills are available immediately if they are required.

TIPS

- Put points into Spot, Research, Dodge and at least one combat skill
- Check chapter 11 for skills needed for certification
- Co-ordinate with the other players. Identify areas of expertise & specialise
- Check chapter 14 for Sorcery requirements
- Go on training courses to increase low skills



'Do you play chess?' I ask Dr Renfield without looking round. 'No.' She sounds disinterested. 'It's one of the safe games – no dice, no need for a pencil and paper. And it seems to be helpful. Why?'

— Down on the Farm

Though **Chapter 3: Basic Rules** provided a good overview, this chapter covers the rules in more depth, dealing with combat and other unique situations that Laundry agents might encounter while on assignment.

First and most importantly, dice rolls should only be utilised whenever the result of an action is important to the mission. It is rarely, if ever, important to determine whether your Laundry agent character drove home through rush hour traffic to arrive safely at home, cooked a tasty and nutritious dinner and accurately balanced their chequebook before heading to bed. By contrast, it is vitally important to determine whether a hacking attempt on the encrypted server belonging to a millennial cult succeeded or failed, your character identified the cryptic sigils painted on the floor of a burnt tenement full of charred corpses and that your character pointed their Hand of Glory in the right direction when the man with luminous worms for eyes lurched at them.

The Basics

For instances where the determination of success vs. failure is critical, the following is a refresher course on the basic rules:

Most actions that your character will attempt (skills, characteristic rolls, Resistance rolls and so on) have their success or failure determined by a **percentile roll (d100)**.

Skills are rated by **skill ratings**, indicated by a percentage score. The higher your character's skill rating, the more skilled they are. Characteristic rolls are equal to five times the relevant characteristic.

If you roll d100 equal to or lower than the **chance of success**, your character **succeeds** at the action they are attempting. If the roll is above the chance of success, the attempt **fails**.

Rolling exceptionally low (1/5 of the skill rating) is a **special success**. A special success usually means a result that is twice as good as normal.

Rolling especially high might mean a **fumble**, which is a disastrous result.

The following table shows the ranges of all these results. To use the table, consult the first column and find the chances of a special success and a fumble.

Chance of Success

Base Chance	Special Success	Fumble
01–05%	01	96–00
06–10%	01–02	96–00
11–15%	01–03	96–00
16–20%	01–04	96–00
21–25%	01–05	97–00
26–30%	01–06	97–00
31–35%	01–07	97–00
36–40%	01–08	97–00
41–45%	01–09	98–00
46–50%	01–10	98–00
51–55%	01–11	98–00
56–60%	01–12	98–00
61–65%	01–13	99–00
66–70%	01–14	99–00
71–75%	01–15	99–00
76–80%	01–16	99–00
81–85%	01–17	00
86–90%	01–18	00
91–95%	01–19	00
96–100%	01–20	00
Each +5%	+1 to range	00

To determine the chance for a special success, for base chances in excess of 100%, divide the base chance by five and round up. Fumbles remain a possibility no matter how high the base chance goes above 100%. A roll of 100 ('00' on the dice) is always a fumble. These results are described later in this chapter.

Difficulty Modifiers

Most of the time, you roll against your character's unmodified base chance, whether as a skill or characteristic roll. However, some tasks are more complex or difficult than others, while others are so simple that they can be attempted with closed eyes. This range of difficulty can increase or decrease your character's chance of success by a multiplier called the *difficulty modifier*. If desired, the Game Master can apply one of these modifiers as appropriate to the roll.

Automatic: An action so simple it can be accomplished without risk of failure. No roll is required for an *Automatic* action.

Easy: A routine action that can be performed with minimal risk of failure. The base chance of success for an *Easy* action is doubled. Shooting someone at point-blank range, for example, is *Easy*.

Average: A normal action, with some degree of risk or challenge. There is no modification to the base chance for an *Average* action.

Difficult: An action that is especially challenging or representing unusual usage of the skill or characteristic. The base chance of a *Difficult* action is divided by two (round up). Shooting someone at extended range, for example, is *Difficult*.

Impossible: A hopeless or unachievable action, almost certain to fail. The Game Master may not allow you to even attempt to roll the dice for an *Impossible* action or it might be a basic chance of 01%.

If a base chance is modified, the chances of a special success or failure are also modified. Throughout the rules, if a task has a difficulty modifier applied, it will be presented as an italic before the skill, such as a *Difficult* Stealth roll, or an *Easy* Strength roll. If a roll does not have a difficulty modifier noted beforehand, it is assumed to be *Average*. Unless the Game Master indicates that a success chance is being modified, you should assume that a roll is at *Average* difficulty.

Difficulty modifiers can be applied to skill and characteristic rolls, never to resistance rolls.

Circumstance Modifiers

A further way that skill chances can be modified is based on the circumstances involved with the action being attempted. These are *circumstance modifiers*, percentage values applied to a skill's chance of success after its difficulty modifier has been applied. In general, minor circumstances can modify a base chance by $\pm 5\%$, moderate circumstances by $\pm 10\%$, while extreme conditions can be as high as $\pm 20\%$. If several conditions apply to a given action, consider them all when judging the total circumstance modifier.

Examples of circumstance modifiers can include:

Equipment: The quality of gear your character is using may make a difference: apply -5 to -20% for poor equipment or add 5 to 20% to the skill if superior equipment is available. This can represent anything from tools to a workshop.

Environment: Conditions in the area that your character is in can affect skill chances: slippery or uncertain footing could modify physical actions by -5% or more, while ideal conditions could add 5% or more for appropriate skills.

Positioning: Being in an ideal position may add a modifier of up to 20% to an appropriate task, while being in an awkward position may modify the chance of success by as much as -20% .

Personnel: If the task to be accomplished requires assistance from a team (four or more people), their own ability and condition may be influential. For a highly-

trained and enthusiastic team, a modifier might offer a positive modifier as high as $+20\%$, while an untrained and demoralised group might impose a -20% modifier.

Weather: Rain, snow or extreme wind can apply modifiers of up to -20% , depending on how severe. Generally, good weather has no positive effect on skill use.

Lighting: Poor lighting can range from -10% (dim) to -20% (dark) to any skill requiring sight, to a $+20\%$ for perfectly lit conditions. Pitch darkness may even make skill use *Impossible* or require a successful Listen, Sense or Spot roll to attempt.

Psychological Conditions: Being demoralised can provide anywhere between a -10% to -20% modifier, while exuberance or enthusiasm might increase chances by $+10\%$ to $+20\%$, depending on the task being attempted.

Fatigue: Generally, this is a negative modifier, with the default assumption that your character is well-rested. Apply -10% if winded, -15% if tired and -20% if exhausted.

Distracting Elements: Loud noises, flashing lights, excessive movement and so on can hinder perception- or concentration-based skills by as much as -20% .

Handedness: It is assumed that your character is either right- or left-handed (you pick!). Performing a task involving physical manipulation with your character's off-hand is done at -20% . If your character is trying to do two things at once, the primary hand is at -20% and the secondary hand is at -40% . If your character's DEX is 16 or higher, they may be ambidextrous (you pick!). Ambidextrous characters do not suffer the -20% for using an off-hand but still suffer a -20% to actions with both hands for attempting more than one action at a time.

Time: Sometimes time can be a factor in determining whether an action succeeds or fails. If your character is attempting to rush through a skill quicker than it normally takes, the penalty can range from -10% for hurrying a bit to -20% for rushing and trying to complete the task in half the time. If your character is trying to take more time than usual, allow a bonus of $+10\%$ for being slower and methodical and $+20\%$ if twice as much time as required.

It is important not to go overboard with circumstance modifiers. The Game Master should assess the severity of circumstances if necessary, apply an appropriate modifier and let you roll, all as quickly as possible. Circumstance modifiers are dramatic tools to add a further challenge to a task, not strict guidelines to account for every potential circumstance.

Circumstance modifiers should not be divided or doubled, so apply circumstantial modifiers after any action difficulty multipliers have been applied, not before. Circumstance modifiers can be applied to skill and characteristic rolls but never to Resistance rolls.

Special Successes

Not all successes are equal. Sometimes a roll – skill, characteristic, or resistance – is especially low and the result is much better than normal, the equivalent of a bull's-eye. In this case, the result is called a *special success*. A special success

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is equal to one-fifth (1/5) the chance of success, rounded up (use the final chance if difficulty or circumstance modifiers are in effect). For example, a skill of 60% means that any roll of 01 through 12 is a special success, as 12 is 1/5 of 60%. The **Chance of Success** table on page 48 of this chapter provides the ranges for special successes.

In skill use, a special success means that the skill succeeded especially well and should have an enhanced result. The exact result should be left up to the Game Master to determine but as a rule of thumb, it should be twice as good as a regular success. For informational rolls, it could provide more detail or additional information. For social actions, it might yield friendships or especially influential results. A special success with a physical action might mean that it was performed with exceptional grace, in half the normal time or allows some other minor advantage. In general, a special success is equal to double the normal result, if such a value can be quantified.

In combat, a special success does additional damage. **Whenever a special success is rolled in combat (and is not parried or dodged), roll the weapon's normal damage and double it.** If the weapon has a Damage Bonus applied, add the Damage Bonus after the damage has been doubled. The section on 'Special Successes in Combat' on page 54 covers this in more detail.

Fumbles

An especially high dice roll indicates a fumble, the worst possible result of an intended action. Basically, your character blew it. No matter how skilled or experienced your character is, sometimes things just go pear-shaped. The fumble may not even be your character's fault and could be the result of equipment failure, freakishly bad luck or even environmental intervention... Murphy's Law reaching down and singling out your character for a mishap.

Whenever your character fumbles, they get the opposite of whatever they were attempting. If they were trying to learn something, they receive (and believe) completely false or misleading information. When trying to manipulate someone, the person will likely be offended and potentially aggressive. In combat, a fumble usually results in characters hurting themselves, dropping or breaking weapons or other problems. The Game Master should examine the skill being attempted and determine what the outcome of the fumble is. It is recommended to limit the results to something appropriate and/or ironic, rather than outright slapstick.

The section on 'Fumbles in Combat' on page 55 covers this in more detail. Firearms have a special type of fumble, called a *jam*. Jams are covered in 'Jammed Weapons' on page 57 later in this chapter.

Opposed Rolls

Frequently, your character will attempt an action that another character wants to stop or oppose. This is called an *opposed roll*, a situation where both parties are attempting actions that are in direct conflict. For example, if your character

is using Stealth to move quietly through an area, a guard would use Spot as an opposed roll to see your character. For opposed rolls, both parties should make the appropriate skill or characteristic roll and compare the results:

If **both parties fail**, no one succeeds at anything they are attempting.

If only **one party succeeds**, that action is accomplished without challenge.

If **both parties succeed** with normal or special results, the results are tied and each side is at a standstill. The Game Master may ask for another opposed roll to resolve the conflict on the next round, turn or suitable time frame.

If the dice rolls are **exactly tied**, the character with the highest skill is successful.

If **one party achieves a special success** and the other does not, the one with a special success is the winner.

If the Game Master wishes more granularity in determining the 'winner' in a tie, one quick means of determining this is to compare the dice results to the actual skill levels. The highest successful dice roll is the winner, a result that favours the character with the highest skill.

SIZES OF OBJECTS

To pick something up, your character would match their STR (the active characteristic) against the object's SIZ (the passive characteristic). For reference, here is a list of the SIZ values of some average objects:

Average Object Sizes

Object	SIZ
Paperback book, gun, palmtop	1
Laptop, large book, helmet	2
Potted plant, purse, Uzi	2
House cat, assault rifle	2
Family dog, computer monitor	4
Chair, small child	5
Small table, large bicycle	9
Desk, small motorcycle	12
Large motorcycle	18
Sports car, phone box	50
Steel beam, small shack, van	65
Air vehicle, jet fighter	80
Medium tank, small house	80
Heavy tank, lorry	90
Locomotive, medium house	100
Airliner, large house	110

Resistance Rolls

Sometimes a character attempts an action where one of their characteristics is pitted directly against another person or object's resisting characteristic. This is resolved through a resistance roll, using the Resistance Table to determine each party's chance of success. The Resistance Table uses the principle that two equally-matched forces should have a 50/50 chance of beating one another, or 50% apiece. Unequal sides are modified up or down by 5% increments.

To make a resistance roll, cross-index the active characteristic to the passive characteristic on the Resistance Table. The active characteristic is the force trying to influence the passive characteristic (passive = resisting influence). The cross-indexed value is the percentage chance the active force has of success. If only one party is active (such as someone lifting something heavy), only the active party need roll. If both parties are active, such as an arm-wrestling match, each is considered active and rolls. Consult the Resistance Table for each party's chance of success. Each character is considered to be active, and their opponent is considered to

be passive (the cross-indexed success chances are the same, regardless which side is considered active or passive). The outcome is interpreted as with an opposed roll.

Here are some examples of normal Resistance rolls:

- Two characters arm-wrestling would use STR vs. STR.
- Two characters with equal MOV characteristics would use DEX vs. DEX.
- Drinking someone under the table uses CON vs. CON.
- A battle of wills between two sorcerers (or a sorcerer and an External Intelligence) would be POW vs. POW.

Not all Resistance rolls require that both sides roll. Here are some examples of one-sided rolls:

- Your character attempts to force open a door, using their STR vs. the door's STR.
- Your character tries to pick up something heavy, using their STR vs. the object's SIZ.
- Your character is poisoned and uses their CON to resist the poison's potency.

The Resistance Table

		Active Characteristic																														
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Passive Characteristic	1	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	2	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	3	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	4	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	5	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	6	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	7	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	8	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	9	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	10	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	11	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	12	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	13	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	14	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	15	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	16	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—
	17	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—
	18	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—
	19	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—
	20	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—
	21	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—
	22	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95
	23	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90
	24	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85
	25	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80
	26	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75
	27	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70
	28	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65
	29	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60
	30	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55
	31	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50

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Differences of more than 10 characteristic points between the active and passive characteristics usually indicate an automatic success for the active characteristic. The Game Master may allow the outmatched party to make a Resistance roll in such cases, with only a result of 01 counting as a success. This is the equivalent of a freak accident or incredibly lucky shot.

Time

Timing is everything and it is especially important when trying to determine who does what to who and in what order. Usually, the in-game time that your character experiences is nowhere near the equivalent of the time you and the other players actually spend playing. Sometimes, the Game Master may need to summarise the events of many days or longer in a single sentence, such as *'A week later, you've all been transferred to the special facility in Dunwich,'* while at other times – especially action sequences – the actions of only a few seconds of time can take several minutes or longer to resolve. The three important distinctions of time are *narrative time*, the *turn*, and the *round*.

Narrative Time

Most of the time, you and the other players will be using narrative time. Narrative time is squishy and elastic... a momentary glimpse at a horrific sight might take several minutes to describe completely (and resolve the effects of), while a week-long ocean voyage can be handled in a sentence. If large amounts of time are being dealt with in this fashion, the Game Master should allow for the Player Characters to perform any activities that could fit into this timeframe, within reason.

The Turn

Turns are used when it is important to take note of the exact passage of time outside of action sequences. Each turn equals five minutes (25 rounds). Turns are used for general movement when there is no conflict or other event that needs to be handled on a round-by-round basis. The turn is also a general measure for how long certain activities will take, particularly actions that are not during combat, such as picking a lock or finding a book in a library. In these cases, the Game Master may rule that a certain task takes a number of turns to complete.

The Round

A round consists of 12 seconds of fast-paced activity. Rounds are used during action sequences, when it is important to note exactly what happens and in which order. If an action sequence takes more than one round, then another round begins immediately after and they continue until the action sequence is over. Unless otherwise occupied, your character can make one attack (or other action) and one defensive action in a round, though special circumstances may allow for more or fewer actions.

Time and Movement

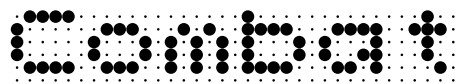
How fast and how far characters can move can be crucial during action sequences, though the farther a character is travelling, the less detail that is, usually, required. The MOV characteristic is used to measure character movement and

usually MOV is only really important when time is measured in rounds. Your character's MOV characteristic determines how far they can travel in a round, with each point of MOV being worth between one and five metres, depending on the rate of speed. Humans have a MOV value of 10, meaning that they can move anywhere between 10 and 50 metres in a 12-second round: walking to sprinting. The following table has some sample MOV rates for different creatures and vehicles:

Movement Rates

Rate	MOV
Human	10
Bicycle	50
Dog	12
Horse	16
Motorcycle	166
Car	134
Sports car	200
Lorry	100
Commuter train	80
Bullet train	366
Sailboat	15
Yacht	66
Speedboat	80
Battleship	100
Submarine	83
Helicopter	200
Small prop plane	200
Bomber	334
Jet airliner	1,084
Jet fighter	1,334

Chases are covered in the Spot rules on page 59 of this chapter, representing circumstances where one party is trying to catch up with or overtake the other.



'I can shoot at targets, sure, and I'm death on wheels when it comes to terminating cases of demonic possession with extreme prejudice, but the idea of killing a real human being in cold blood, some eating breathing sleeping guy with a job on a rich man's yacht, makes all the alarm bells in my head go tilt.'

— The Jennifer Morgue

Unfortunately, one of the easiest ways to end your employment at Capital Laundry Services is a violent death. Combat is an almost-inevitable part of Laundry missions, and one that requires specific rules to handle exactly what happens when, who can act at a particular time and what actions your character is capable of in the tense seconds of a fire fight or action sequence. This section covers the variety of actions that may occur in combat.



The Round

A round is 12 seconds long, where your character can perform one or more actions and react to other actions. A round consists of four phases. During each of these phases a number of things can happen, such as skill rolls, attacks, dodges, movement and so on. The phases of a round are:

1. Initiative
2. Movement
3. Actions
4. Resolution

The phases of a round are described in the order that each character resolves them, so you first determine when your character can act (Initiative), they then move when it is their turn to act (Movement), then they roll to see whether an action succeeded or failed (Actions), then they determine the outcome of that action (Resolution). The phases of a round always occur in the same order and are repeated by each character within each new round until the combat is over.

1. Initiative

The order in which characters can act in a round is their *initiative*, a value determined by DEX, with all participants in the round acting on their DEX characteristics, counting down from highest to lowest. This is called your *DEX rank*. Initiative is determined before any other actions can be attempted. Usually the Game Master counts down from the highest DEX to the lowest, calling on each player to state their intended actions when their DEX rank is called

and announcing how Non-Player Characters will act on their DEX ranks. If there is a need to determine who acts first when DEX ranks are tied, use the relevant skill; the character with the higher skill rating going first. If these are still tied, the actions occur simultaneously. Once initiative for a round of combat is known, the Game Master may ask that all participants in the round announce their intended actions or can simply skip this phase and allow actions as the DEX ranks occur. Once it is your character's turn to act, movement begins.

2. Movement

Your character can move around 30 metres in a combat round if performing no actions other than defensive (parries or dodges). Your character can move between 6 and 15 metres and still act at half of their normal DEX rank. Moving between 16–29 metres in a Combat Round means that your character acts at a quarter of their normal DEX rank. In most circumstances, your character moves before acting, whether the action is an attack or other activity. The spot rule section titled 'Actions While Moving' on page 58 of this chapter covers this in more detail. Once movement has been completed, it is time to move onto the actions phase of the round.

3. Actions

Your character, as well as every other character, can act on their DEX rank, with higher ranks going before lower ranks. Someone with DEX rank 15 goes before someone with DEX rank 14 and so on. If there are multiple characters attempting to act on the same DEX rank, attacks

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are performed in order of weapon type, with firearms and other projectile weapons firing before all others, then longest weapons to shortest weapons, then characters who are unarmed. For firearms allowing for multiple shots per round, subsequent shots after the first occur on later DEX ranks. The rules for 'Multiple Shots' on page 56 covers this in more detail.

If you are attacked during a round, you can attempt to dodge or parry the attack. Dodges and parries occur within the same DEX rank as the original attack and are covered in more detail later. Your character cannot both dodge and parry in a round. Each dodge or parry after the first is at a -30% modifier, cumulative.

These are the most common actions performed in a round of combat:

Attack: Your character can attempt to attack an opponent, by identifying the opponent, determining the chance of success and trying to roll equal to or below that chance. If the roll to attack is successful, the target may attempt to dodge or parry. If the roll to attack is a special success, the dodge or parry roll must also be a special success.

Dodge: A dodge is determined after the attack roll is made. If the attack fails, it does not need to be dodged. If the attack is successful, the attacked character may wish to dodge it. To dodge, your character must be able to see the attack coming. A special success is required to avoid an attack with a special success result. Dodging firearms, supernatural weaponry like basilisk guns or other high-velocity attacks is *Difficult*.

Parry: Parrying is knocking or blocking the attacking weapon out of the way. A parry is determined after the attack roll is made. If an attack fails, it does not need to be parried. To attempt to parry an attack, your character must be able to see the attack coming. For hand-to-hand weapons, your chance to parry is equal to your chance to hit. For improvised weapons or weapons not normally used to parry, see the spot rules for 'Improvised Weapons' on page 61. A special success parry is required to block an attack with a special success result. It is *Impossible* to parry firearms or high-velocity weapons unless using a shield of some sort.

Miscellaneous Action: In a round of combat, your character may also attempt a wide range of potential actions too numerous to list here. These can range from characteristic or Resistance rolls, many skills or other actions which may not require a roll. In this time, your character may try to reload or unjam a firearm, cast a spell, activate a program on a palmtop, unlock a door, start a vehicle and so forth. The Game Master is the arbiter of whether a particular skill can be attempted successfully in a 12-second round and should rule accordingly. Generally, taking more time (5 DEX ranks) can add a +10% modifier, repeatable up to the unmodified chance of success, while taking less time can modify the chance of success by -10% for a slight rush to -20% for foolhardy speed.

A quick means of determining the outcome of an attack versus a defensive action is to compare levels of success, just as with skills: **special success > success > failure**. A success will cancel out an equivalent level of success. The table on page 55 summarises the results of combat rolls.

4. Resolution

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Once your character has acted, it is time to determine what the resolution of their action is, whether it be the effects of damage or some other desired result.

Damage: As previously described, a successful attack that strikes the intended target inflicts damage. You should roll the damage dice and add your character's Damage Bonus if the attack is with a hand-to-hand weapon. If the attack is a special success, double the weapon's rolled damage.

Parry: If your character parried a normal attack successfully, there is no need to resolve anything further. If the attack was a special success, however, this might cause damage to the weapon. Weapons and shields can take damage from being used to parry special successes and can even break if their Hit Points are overcome. If the shield or weapon is broken while parrying, the attack continues onto your character and strikes them for the remainder of the damage (if any). This is also true for attacks that your character makes: if the result is a special success and the attack is parried normally, determine your damage as normal and apply it to the weapon or shield being used to parry the attack.

Miscellaneous Action: Again, there are too many potential actions to list the effect of each. If the action is a success, then the desired effect is achieved. If the action fails, nothing happens. If it is a fumble, the Game Master describes the unfortunate result. If the action is a special success, then the resolution is an extremely favourable one.

When the last character involved in the round has completed their resolution phase and the DEX rank countdown reaches 0, any potential effects that are 'once per round' or anything that lasts for the duration of the round ends at this time. This might include poisons, acid, fire, sorcery or other miscellaneous conditions.

Special Successes in Combat

Whenever your character achieves a special success in combat, this signifies a greater-than-average strike that does more damage than a normal attack would. It could be that your character struck a vulnerable organ, caused hydrostatic shock, rooted deep within the target, bypassed armour or some other favourable result. **A special success in combat allows you to roll the damage dice, apply any dice modifiers such as +1 and double the result.**

If the attack is a hand-to-hand attack, the Damage Bonus is added on top of the doubled damage, not doubled. The slight advantage that hand-to-hand weapons have over firearms is more than compensated for in the advantages of

Combat Results Summary

Attack Roll	Dodge Roll	Parry Roll	Result
Special Success	Special Success	Special Success	Parrying weapon takes normal damage. If dodging, attack misses.
Special Success	Success	Success	Parrying weapon takes double damage. If dodging, attack does normal damage.
Special Success	Fails	Fails	Attack does double damage.
Special Success	Fumbles	Fumbles	Attack does double damage, defender fumbles.
Success	Special Success	Special Success	Attack is parried or dodged. If parrying, attacking weapon takes normal damage.
Success	Success	Success	Attack is parried or dodged.
Success	Fails	Fails	Attack strikes for normal damage.
Success	Fumbles	Fumbles	Attack strikes for normal damage, defender fumbles.
Fails	No roll required	No roll required	Attack misses.
Fumbles	No roll required	No roll required	Attack misses, attacker fumbles.

being able to attack at range, rate of fire and the increased success chances from modifiers such as range, aiming, sights and so on.

If the Game Master is not entirely satisfied with this treatment of special success damage, the following options are provided to be used instead of the doubling of damage:

Bypassing Armour: For a heavily-armoured target, such as someone in full riot gear, ballistic mesh or a creature with supernaturally-tough hide, a special success may bypass armour entirely rather than doing double damage. This represents striking the target in a place that is not covered by the armour. If the target is covered entirely with armour, the attack struck in some weak point.

Impaling: Firearms (and other pointed weapons) have the advantage of being able to impale a target, lodging deep within the body. For a special success with an impaling weapon such as a firearm, the weapon does its maximum damage plus normal damage. For example, a Glock 17 does 1d10 damage. A special success results in an impale, doing 10+1d10 points of damage.

Bleeding: A slashing weapon like a knife, sword or claws might instead cause massive haemorrhaging, requiring immediate medical attention to prevent the target from bleeding to death. A special success with an appropriate weapon does normal damage, but causes the target to suffer 1 Hit Point in additional bleeding per round until a successful First Aid or Medicine roll is made on the wound. This bleeding stops naturally after a number of rounds equal to the Hit Points of the original injury.

Crushing: For heavy, blunt weapons such as clubs, rifle butts, fists and chairs, a special success represents additional force and gravity coming to bear on the target. A special success with a blunt weapon allows your character to double their Damage Bonus after it is rolled.

Knockback: A brawling attack, explosion, automobile impact or other attack involving a lot of kinetic force may cause knockback to occur, sending the target reeling, flying or staggering away from the direction of the attack or down onto the ground prone. A special success with a knockback pits the target's SIZ against the amount of damage taken on the Resistance table. Only the target of the attack needs to roll. If they are successful, they remain upright. If they fail, they are knocked one metre backwards for every point of damage caused by the attack. At the end of the knockback distance, the target must make an Agility roll to remain standing. If the target hits anything such as a wall or car before the end of the knockback distance, they will take another 1d6 points of damage.

These results are not cumulative and multiple results should not be applied to a specific target. If the Game Master is using these alternate forms of special success in combat, they are advised to only utilise them with specific weapon types and to apply them consistently to all special successes.

Fumbles in Combat

With all of the different events occurring in pitched combat, it is entirely likely that your character will somehow screw up and do the wrong thing. It happens to everyone sooner or later and fumbles in combat represent anything from a weapon breaking, friendly fire, a stumble or another freak occurrence. If your character achieves a fumble result through an activity relating to combat, roll on the Combat Fumbles table overleaf.

Firearms have their own particular type of fumble, called a jam. Whenever a fumble is rolled with a firearm, the weapon may have had a misfire, jam or other malfunction. Jams are covered in 'Jammed Weapons' on page 57.

Combat Fumbles

d100	Result
01–15	Character loses the next attack, dodge, parry or other activity.
16–25	Character loses the next 1d3 rounds by some freak mishap.
26–40	Character falls down and is prone.
41–55	Vision becomes obscured; lose –40% on all appropriate skills for 1d3 Combat Rounds.
56–65	Drop weapon and it slides or bounces 1d6–1 metres away.
66–80	Do 1d6 damage to weapon's Hit Points (or use result 81–85 if the weapon has no Hit Points).
81–85	Break weapon; weapon is useless, regardless of current Hit Points.
86–95	Hit nearest ally for normal damage or use result 56–65 if no ally nearby.
96–98	Hit nearest ally for special damage or use result 56–65 if no ally nearby.
99	Blow it; roll twice more on this table (roll again if this result is rolled).
00	Blow it badly; roll three times more on this table (roll again if this result is rolled again).

Weapons

Unless suicidal, your character is likely to go into the field armed with some sort of weapon other than a handy palmtop and a working knowledge of ISO-9000 compliance procedures. Weapons are described with the following characteristics:

Skill: The skill or specialty used to wield the weapon.

Base: The default chance to use the weapon, which any Skill Points are added to.

Dmg: The damage that the weapon does if used successfully.

RoF: Rate of fire: the number of attacks per round that your character can make with the weapon.

Range: The base range of the weapon (in metres).

Mal: The chance of the weapon malfunctioning or jamming.

HP: The weapon's Hit Points.

Ammo: The type of ammunition the weapon uses, if any.

SIZ: The weapon's SIZ characteristic.

A variety of weapons used by Laundry agents and their foes are provided in **Chapter 10: Tools of the Trade**.

Shields

Essentially, a shield is a weapon primarily used to parry attacks with. Parrying with a shield follows the same rules as parrying with a weapon, though only low-velocity missile weapons (thrown, arrows and so on) can be parried with a shield. Shields cannot parry high-velocity weapons like firearms effectively, with any attempts *Difficult*.

Armour

Armour protects its wearer from being injured. Armour is defined by its *armour protection* value, which is how many points are subtracted from damage. When your character is hit in combat, subtract the armour's protection value from the points of damage that were taken. Damage above and beyond the armour's protection value bypasses the armour and is inflicted on the character. If your character's armour protection value is higher than the damage taken, your character does not take any damage. Armour may impose a penalty on some of your character's skills, as some types of armour are bulky and hinder free movement.

Damage Bonus

The Damage Bonus is added to (or subtracted from) any hand-to-hand damage that your character inflicts. In the case of a special success, the Damage Bonus is not doubled: instead, it is added after any damage is doubled. If the Damage Bonus is a negative modifier, it is rolled and subtracted from the overall damage total, though it cannot reduce the results of a damage roll to below 0 points of damage.

Spot Rules for Firearms

The majority of combat that your character will be facing will likely involve shooting something or being shot at, so firearms and gunplay require more extensive rules coverage than do hand-weapons or unarmed combat. Following are a variety of issues and rules covering gunplay.

Multiple Shots

Firearms are quicker than hand-to-hand attacks, as it is far quicker to squeeze a trigger than it is to swing an axe or throw a dagger. Firearms have a rate of fire (RoF) rating, representing their rate of fire. Your character can fire up to the weapon's rate of fire in shots per round without penalty to accuracy. The first shot is at the shooter's full DEX rank, a second is at DEX –5 and a third at DEX –10. If the reduction to DEX takes your character below DEX rank 0, your character is too slow to fire the third shot allowed.

Automatic Weapons and Burst Fire

Many automatic weapons such as submachine guns, machine guns and assault rifles have the ability to fire more than a single bullet per pull of the trigger. These weapons generally have settings for single shot, burst fire or full automatic. Burst fire is generally a small group of around three shots, while full automatic (autofire) allows the weapon to discharge bullets so long as the trigger is held down. Bursts or autofire occurs at the attacker's full DEX rank rather than at later increments.

Obviously, firing more bullets at a single target increases the chance of hitting it. For bursts and autofire each additional shot beyond the first increases the chance to hit by +5%, up to double the attacker's unmodified skill chance. For burst or autofire, roll an appropriate die to determine how many of the shots actually strike. For example, for a four-shot burst, roll 1d4 to determine how many shots actually strike the target. If the roll is a special success, only the damage

from the first shot is doubled: further shots do normal damage.

Firing at multiple targets with burst fire or autofire does not add to the attacker's chance of success. Instead, the attacker rolls for attacks against everyone in the area they are shooting at, with the attacker choosing how many shots are directed at each target, up to the total number of shots fired. The attacker rolls for one attack per target and determines how many bullets strike them as per burst fire.

Range

How close a target is can affect your character's chance of hitting it. Each firearm has a range rating, representing the basic range that the weapon can be used at. This is not the actual range of the firearm: it is an increment used to determine how the range affects the chance of success. Whenever your character is going to shoot someone (or something), the distance to the target should be determined in metres and compared to the following range modifiers:

Point-Blank: Point-blank range is when the target is closer than the attacker's DEX/3 in metres (round up). It is considered *Easy* to shoot someone within point-blank range.

Normal Range: Normal range is the distance between point-blank and the weapon's range rating. There is no modification for range when shooting a target at up to the weapon's normal range.

Extended Range: At up to twice the weapon's range the attack becomes *Difficult*. At up to three times the range, the attack chance is a quarter of the normal chance, at up to quadruple range the chance is 1/8 the normal chance to hit and beyond four times normal range a shot becomes *Impossible*.

Gear such as laser sights, scopes and bipods may affect a weapon's operational range and are covered later in this section.

Jammed Weapons

If the roll to attack using a firearm is equal to or greater than the malfunction rating, the weapon jams or malfunctions in some fashion and cannot fire again in the round.

For revolvers, bolt-action rifles and breech-loaded shotguns, the problem is a bad round of ammunition. The weapon can be fired the next round once the round is ejected.

For automatics, semi-automatics, machine guns, pump-action shotguns and assault rifles, the malfunction is a jam.

Fixing a jam takes 1d6 rounds plus a successful roll of either Fine Manipulation, Repair or the skill of the firearm being used. At the end of the 1d6 rounds, the attacker can attempt the skill roll to unjam the weapon. If unsuccessful, they can attempt every round thereafter until the weapon is unjammed. Rolling 96 or higher while attempting to unjam the weapon breaks it, rendering it inoperable and useful only as an awkwardly-shaped club or flashy paperweight.

Aimed Attacks

A character armed with a firearm or other missile weapon can take aim, increasing the chance of success or striking a desired location.

To take more time for *improved accuracy*, your character must delay their action by 5 DEX or more. For each increment of 5 DEX, your character can add 10% (cumulative) to their next attack. Aiming can carry over for additional rounds, but the bonus cannot exceed your character's normal basic chance with the attack skill. If your character is distracted or takes any other physical action while aiming, the bonus is lost. Increments of smaller than 5 DEX do not carry over round-to-round.

If your character is *targeting a specific area* of a larger target, modify the base chance by the following modifier: -10% if the part of the body is large (torso); -25% if the targeted area is less than half the size of the overall target; and -50% if the targeted area is less than one-fourth the size of the overall target.

These modifiers can be cumulative, so that the difficulty of targeting a specific area can be offset by spending additional time to aim.

Reloading Firearms

It takes one round to reload a clip-fed weapon and one round to load two bullets or shells into a non-clip-fed weapon. If your character is in dire straits, they can load one bullet and get off a shot at half your character's DEX rank (round up). It takes two rounds to load a machinegun belt or a larger-scale heavy weapon.

Firing Two Guns at Once

If your character is inspired by the example of Chow Yun-Fat or Neo, they can try to hold and fire two handguns in the same round of combat. This is an effective means of sacrificing accuracy for the ability to fill an area with a spray of stray bullets and will certainly earn your character a round of abject mockery from any member of the Artists' Rifles who witnesses such unbridled jackassness. If your character's Firearms skill is 101% or higher, they can split the skill between two attacks, though each attack must be at least 50%. These attacks are modified by the circumstantial modifiers for handedness. If your character's Firearms skill is 100% or below, any attempt at two-fisted gunplay are considered unaimed (see 'Unaimed Shots' for more information).

Unaimed Shots

A weapon's rate of fire determines how often your character is able to squeeze off careful shots at the target. Sometimes, though, a Laundry agent in trouble may just want to unload at a target, squeezing the trigger until it goes 'click.' This sort of shooting is essentially unaimed and allows your character to shoot a number of shots equal to twice the weapon's normal rate of fire, though with a chance of success equal to 1/5 of your character's normal chance. If there is more than one target, the Game Master should make Luck rolls to determine who gets hit (opposed rolls: the loser gets hit). Unaimed shots can impale, if the modified roll is a special success.

Firing into Combat

Firing at a target that is engaged in combat lowers the chance of success by a 20% modifier, if your character is being discerning about who gets hit. If not, the chance is unmodified and a miss automatically hits anyone near the target (use opposed Luck rolls to determine who gets hit: the loser is struck by the stray bullet). Firing a missile weapon at another character while both the attacker and target are engaged in combat modifies the chance of success by -40%.

Drawing or Exchanging a Weapon

Drawing a handgun from a holster takes 5 DEX ranks, meaning that if your character begins a round without a firearm in their hand, they act on their DEX minus 5. Putting a firearm away takes the same amount of time. It takes no DEX ranks to drop a gun. A special speed-draw holster cuts this time down to 3 DEX ranks. If your character's DEX is reduced to below zero, they cannot act in the round and will only be able to act on their normal DEX rank in the following round. These rules may also apply to other hand weapons.

Stray Bullets

No matter how careful your character is, there may come times when they are forced to shoot when innocent (or inadvertent) targets are in the line of fire. If a shot misses the target in an area where other characters (player or non-player) are potential targets, the Game Master should determine who may likely be struck by the stray bullet. Anyone caught in the line of fire must make a successful Luck roll to avoid being struck by a shot that has missed its target. If everyone makes their Luck roll, the stray bullet continues on its way before burying itself in some portion of the environment. The immense feeling of guilt caused by friendly fire incidents can cause pales in comparison to the mountain of paperwork and the threat of a seat before the Auditing Board.

Other Firearm Gear

If you would like your character to have greater accuracy than the naked eye provides, they can fit their firearm with a number of optional bits of equipment to improve accuracy and address specific goals.

Scope or Sight: Affixing a regular sight to your character's firearm doubles the normal range so that attacks remain accurate. A laser sight triples the weapon's effective ranges. Using both a scope and a laser sight quadruples the effective ranges. Both of these must be used with the aiming action, described previously.

Suppressor: A suppressor (also called a silencer) is a tube filled with sound baffles that muffles the sound of gunfire and disguises it as something else. A suppressor reduces the chance of someone hearing a gunshot by 20% and adds 5% to the firearm's accuracy. Disposable suppressors last for d10+10 shots, while high-quality suppressors can last up to 30,000 shots. Older suppressors reduced the muzzle velocity of the bullet, but modern suppressors no longer have this drawback.

Flash Suppressor: A flash suppressor is a tube-like metal shape that fits on the end of a rifle or automatic weapon,

disguising the muzzle-flash caused by the explosive release of gunfire. A flash suppressor reduces the chance of a gunshot being seen by 20% and is not compatible with a sound suppressor (described previously).

Bipod: Many assault weapons have integral bipods. Using a bipod increases your character's accuracy with such weapons by 20%, though they limit your character's movement, providing a 20% bonus to any attacks against them while using a bipod.

It should be noted that most of these pieces of firearm gear are illegal for civilian use and are frowned upon for Laundry missions due to the attention they draw from law enforcement. If your character insists on utilising a laser sight or suppressor on a regular basis while on missions for the Laundry, they may be evaluated as more suitable for membership in the SAS or OCCULUS.

Spot Rules For Unusual Situations

Spot rules cover a variety of situations that may arise in play and may require additional guidance. These include environmental issues, damage from other sources or modifiers that may affect gameplay.

Acid

Acid or other corrosive agents can cause serious harm to your character. A weak acid does one point of damage per round, a strong acid does 1d4 points of damage per round and an extremely powerful acid does 1d6+1 points of damage per round. Armour protects against acid for one round per point of armour and the armour loses one point of armour protection for each round that it is exposed to acid.

Actions While Moving

If your character is riding a horse or motorcycle, driving a car, piloting a boat or performing any other form of 'powered' movement while attempting another action, your character's chance of success with the skill is lowered to the appropriate chance of success for the appropriate Drive, Pilot or Ride skill, if it is lower than the other action's chance. The penalties for attempting two actions with two hands may also apply: see the circumstance modifiers for handedness on page 49.

Ambushes

If one party in a conflict has successfully made a Stealth or Hide roll and remained undetected (versus a Listen, Sense or Spot roll), they can ambush the other party. If the attacks are with missile weapons, the ambusher gets a single Combat Round where all of his or her attacks are *Eazy*. If the ambusher is using a hand-to-hand weapon, the defender can only try to Dodge or parry (if a weapon is available) for one Combat Round. Combat is handled normally in the next round.

Area Attacks

Some types of attacks – such as explosives – are not directed at a specific target but instead affect everything in that area. If your character is in an area where an attack is aimed,

they can attempt a Dodge roll to get out of the way and avoid all damage or an Agility roll to reduce damage to half. Your character must pick which of the two rolls to attempt. Whichever roll is attempted, your character must make an additional Agility roll to remain upright. If your character takes damage from an explosive area attack, they may be knocked back (see the spot rules for 'Knockback' earlier in this chapter).

Attacks and Parries Over 100%

If your character has a combat skill of over 100%, they can split that attack into multiple attacks or parries. Each action must be made with at least 50% of the skill, for example a character with 101% in melee could split this into two attacks – one with an effective skill of 51% and the other of 50%.

If your character is taking multiple offensive actions, the first action takes place during their DEX rank in the initiative order. Second actions take place five DEX ranks lower, third actions ten DEX ranks lower etc.

Chases

Chases, whether on foot or in vehicles, are sometimes necessary when a suspect gives flight or when attempting to get away from a ravenous horror. There are just too many potential variables that a chase might include, from the speed of the parties involved, the environment, types of vehicles, mixing combat with pursuit and so forth, so chases should essentially boil down to a few simple principles and careful judgment from the Game Master. The first step to determining the outcome of a chase is determining what the goals are of each of the involved parties. The 'winner' is the party to achieve their goal. Following are guidelines for determining the outcome of any chase:

Speed: The Game Master should compare the relative MOV values of each of the involved parties. A quick way to determine who wins for unequal MOV values is to roll the MOV values of each party as a Resistance roll. The winner is the one with the better roll.

Skill: If the MOV values are even, the parties involved should make opposed skill rolls to determine who wins. Applicable skills could be Athletics, Drive, Pilot or Ride. The winner of the opposed skill roll achieves their goal in the conflict.

Environment: The environment that the chase is taking place in may be less than ideal and circumstantial modifiers could come into play. The Game Master should use these judiciously.

Duration: How long does the chase go on for? If it is long enough, the Game Master may resolve the chase through several rounds, or longer, or may even require appropriate rolls to remain involved, such as Endurance for footraces.

Combat: Does the chase involve combat? The Game Master should determine if the parties involved are able to attack or defend against one another. The rules on 'Actions While Moving' earlier in this chapter may be applicable.

Ultimately, the Game Master should resolve the outcome of a chase using common sense and only rely on dice rolls to resolve issues that are truly in question. If a chase's outcome seems inevitable or obvious to everyone concerned, then the Game Master should simply declare the outcome without needing to go through round after round of dice rolling.

Choking, Drowning and Asphyxiation

If your character is deprived of oxygen for some reason, each round they must make a roll based on CON to remain conscious and avoid damage. If your character was expecting the oxygen deprivation, for the first round the roll is the equivalent to an *Easy* Endurance roll (CON x 10)%. For the second round, the roll is reduced to CON x 9. The third round the roll is CON x 8 and so on until the 10th round when suffocation becomes inevitable (CON x 0). If your character was not expecting the lack of oxygen, the first round is equivalent to an unmodified Endurance roll (CON x 5), reduced to CON x 4 for the second round, CON x 3 the third round and so on. Any roll your character fails causes them to take damage of the following type: 1d6 points for lack of oxygen from choking, 1d8 points for inhaling water, 1d4 points for inhaling smoke and 1d8 points for an average toxic gas. See the Grapple skill on page 38 for information on breaking free from being choked.

Cold or Heat Exposure

If your character travels outside of London, perhaps even to the surface of an alien world, they may be exposed to a variety of harsh environmental conditions. If your character is inadvertently exposed to the effects of intense cold or heat and is inadequately protected against these extreme temperatures, your character must make an Endurance roll to resist taking damage. How often this roll must be attempted depends on how severe the conditions are. For relatively survivable conditions (deep winter), the roll must be performed daily. For incredibly hostile but terrestrial conditions, the roll must be performed hourly. For inhospitable, alien conditions, the roll must be attempted every turn or even every round. If the roll is failed, your character takes 1d6 points of damage. The Game Master should determine how useful any protective gear is and subtract a number of points from the damage as if it were armour protection.

Cover

Hiding behind something larger than, equal to or up to half of the character's SIZ can offer a defensive bonus. If the item can serve as cover, any missile attacks against the concealed character are *Difficult*. An attack that is higher than the modified chance of success and lower than the normal chance of success is assumed to hit the cover. The Game Master should determine if the attack passes through the cover, reducing damage appropriately (a brick or metal wall might stop the attack completely, a thin wood wall might only reduce damage by four points) as if it were armour protection.

Desperate Action

If your character has already performed all of their available actions in a round and absolutely must perform an additional action before that round finishes, the Game Master may allow your character to make an action on DEX

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rank 0. To be able to do this, your character must make a successful *Difficult* Agility roll. Failing the Agility roll means the desperate action cannot be attempted. If the Agility roll is successful, your character may attempt the desperate action at a -30% modifier if they have performed any physical activity during the course of the round. Whether the action can be attempted or not, your character is off-balance and unable to do anything other than dodge or parry in the following round.

Disarming

If your character wants to disarm an attacker (or even an ally), they can attempt to do so in one of two ways: by grappling with them and attempting to wrest the weapon from their grasp, or by attacking the target's hand and/or weapon and attempting to dislodge it. For a grappling attempt, the description of the Grapple skill on page 38 addresses this in detail. For an attack against the weapon itself, your character must make a normal attack with a -40% modifier. If the attack is directed at the hand, roll damage normally and divide in half. The target suffers the damage and must make a *Difficult* Endurance roll to keep the weapon in hand. If the attack is directed at the weapon to dislodge it, the target must make a *Difficult* Effort roll to keep the weapon in hand. If the attack was made to destroy or damage the weapon, roll damage normally and apply it to the weapon in a Resistance roll. If the weapon wins the Resistance roll, it takes half the rolled damage and if it loses, it takes full damage.

Disease

If your character is exposed to a minor disease vector (from an infected person or other source), make a Stamina roll to avoid catching it. Failure means your character catches the disease. The Game Master should choose the symptoms of the disease. Minor diseases usually exhibit symptoms within a few days and generally cause only discomfort and inconvenience (1D3-1 Hit Points damage and generally crumminess). The Medicine skill, rest and pharmaceuticals can generally restore these lost Hit Points and reduce symptoms. Every day, have your character attempt a new Stamina roll. If successful, the disease runs its course within 1d6 days. If the roll fails, the disease lingers.

For a more serious or more virulent disease, the chance to resist is based on a potency for the disease (a value chosen by the Game Master, equivalent to a characteristic). To avoid contacting it, make a Resistance roll with your character's CON versus the disease's potency. The Game Master must also determine the disease's effects and its duration. Generally, more serious diseases involve a loss of points from one or more characteristics for the disease's duration. A horrible disease might cause your character to lose 1d6 CON and 1d6 STR once infected, adjusting Hit Points and Damage Bonus while under the condition. Once the duration of the disease is passed, your character must make another Resistance roll of CON versus the disease's potency to shake it. If the roll is a failure, the character can try again the next day. The disease will dissipate shortly after the character succeeds with the Resistance roll and any lost characteristic points will return at a rate of one point



per week of relative rest. Successful use of the Medicine skill may reduce the duration of a disease by half. Another successful Medicine roll may reduce the disease's potency by 1d6 points for the purpose of determining recovery.

Explosions

An explosion inflicts a combination of concussion, projectiles and sometimes even flame on anyone caught within its blast radius. The Game Master should determine the blast radius of an explosion in metres (some explosives are described in **Chapter 10: Tools of the Trade**). Generally, the damage dice of an explosion is reduced by 1d for every two metres or so from the epicentre, with characters at ground zero taking the full dice roll in damage and characters at the periphery only taking 1d in damage. Your character can use the Demolition skill to increase the yield of an explosive, doubling its effective damage or increasing its range by an additional 50% (choose one for a successful skill roll).

Attacking someone with an explosion is either automatic (for stationary explosives) or requires a successful Throw roll to hit near the intended target. Getting away from an explosion requires either a *Difficult* Dodge or *Difficult* Athletics roll. However, if the roll would have been successful, reduce the damage by 1d. If your character takes damage from an explosion, they must make a Resistance roll with their SIZ versus the damage they took to avoid being knocked down.

Falling

Falling from a height can be painful and cause broken bones, ruptured organs and other calamitous injury. A character takes 1d6 points of damage for every 3 metres fallen, rounded up. Your character can reduce the damage from falling by half if they make a successful Athletics or Jump roll for any distance less than SIZ/3 (rounded up). Beyond that distance, damage cannot be modified or reduced by a controlled landing. The surface that a falling character lands on can modify the damage, from half for a relatively soft landing spot to three quarters damage for a fall broken by tree limbs and so forth. Armour does not protect against falling damage.

Fatigue

If your character performs some especially taxing physical action or extended level of activity for a prolonged period of time, they may become fatigued. Your character should make an Endurance roll to determine whether they are fatigued: success means that they are not fatigued and failure indicates that your character is weary and all of their physical actions are *Difficult* until they have the chance to rest for at least an hour, though preferably a good night's sleep is in order.

Fire and Heat

Fire can be as lethal as a gunshot or car crash. If your character is exposed to intense heat or even set aflame, use the following guidelines to determine how much damage they take:

- A minor flame does one point of damage per round.
- An amount of flame the size of a torch does 1d3 points of damage per round.
- A large bonfire does 1d6 points of damage per round.
- Being trapped inside a conflagration does 1d6+3 points of damage per round and may also cause asphyxiation (see those rules on page 59 of this chapter).
- Intense heat such as molten metal, a jet engine and so forth does 3d6 points of damage per round.

Armour counts half its normal protection value against flame. Special protection such as fire-fighter gear offers protection against flame just as if it were armour, such as four points for basic thermal protection, eight points for fire-fighter gear and up to 16 points for special fireproof suits. If your character is caught on fire, they must make an Agility roll to get the flaming clothing off within the round. Fire damage occurs at the end of each round on DEX rank 0, giving your character the entirety of the round to get out of its proximity.

Helpless Opponents and Sneak Attacks

If a potential target is unaware of an attacker, the target must make a *Difficult* Listen, Sense or Spot roll. If the target fails the roll, they remain unaware and the attacker can make a sneak attack against the target. The initial attack is considered *Easy* and cannot be parried or dodged. Attempts at dodging or parrying further attacks in the remainder of the round will be *Difficult*.

Improvised Weapons

Your character may need to use whatever comes to hand for a weapon if caught unarmed or unawares. For a general rule of thumb, when determining the damage of an improvised weapon, use a die type with a maximum value roughly equivalent to the SIZ of the item, though the wielder must successfully make a STR vs. SIZ Resistance roll to use the improvised item effectively in combat. An ungainly improvised weapon has a base chance of 10% to attack or parry and one that is relatively easy to use as a weapon has a base chance of 20%. Use the item's SIZ as its Hit Points if they are required.

Knockout Attack

Your character can attempt to knock another character unconscious rather than killing him. To knock someone out, make a *Difficult* attack and roll damage as normal, subtracting armour. Compare the damage done against the injured character's Hit Points (total, not current). If the damage is equal to or greater than half of the character's normal Hit Point total, the character is knocked out, with no actual damage being done. If the damage rolled is equal

Sample Poisons

Poison	Speed of Effect	POT	Symptoms
Arsenic	½ to 24 hours	16	Burning pain, vomiting, violent diarrhoea.
Belladonna	2 hours to 2 days	16	Rapid heartbeat, impaired vision, convulsions.
Black Widow venom	2–8 days	7	Chills, sweating, nausea.
Chloroform	1 Combat Round	15	Unconsciousness, depressed respiration.
Cobra venom	15–60 minutes	16	Convulsions, respiratory failure.
Curare	1 Combat Round	25	Muscular paralysis, respiratory failure.
Cyanide	1–15 minutes	20	Dizziness, convulsions, fainting.
Rattlesnake venom	15–60 minutes	10	Vomiting, violent spasms, yellowish vision.
Scorpion venom	24–48 hours	9	Intense pain, weakness, haemorrhaging.
Sleeping pills	10–30 minutes	6	Normal sleep; each additional dose increases the chance for respiratory failure by 5%.
Strychnine	10–20 minutes	20	Violent muscle contractions, asphyxiation.

to or less than half of the normal Hit Point total, the attack does minimum possible damage (the lowest the dice can roll, including the minimum strength bonus) in Hit Points and the target is not knocked out.

Large and Small Targets

It is easier to hit large targets and harder to hit smaller targets. For a target more than double your character's SIZ, the chance to hit is at +20%. If the target is greater than three times your character's SIZ, the chance to hit is at a +40%. For a target of half or less your character's SIZ (round down), the chance to hit is at -20%. If the target is SIZ 2 or smaller, the chance of hitting is modified by -40%.

Poison

All types of poison are measured by their potency rating, a value like one of your character's characteristics. The potency rating of a traditional poison is matched against the poisoned character's CON in a Resistance roll. If the victim loses the roll, the potency of the poison inflicts an amount of damage equal to its potency. If the victim wins the Resistance roll, the character only takes half the potency from the poison (round up). Poisons may be fast-acting or slow acting, doing their damage anywhere between three rounds and three turns. Other types of poison may be directed at a characteristic rather than at Hit Points, so instead of Hit Points being lost, the victim's characteristic points are lowered. Generally, if a characteristic reaches 0, the victim is dead. Above are some sample poisons.

Prone

If your character is prone (lying on the ground), any attacks directed at them are *Easy* and any attempts at attacking with a hand-to-hand weapon, dodging or parrying are *Difficult*. Any hand-to-hand attacks made from a prone position lose the advantage of a positive Damage Bonus, though firearms gain a 10% circumstance modifier if a prone character has their arm(s) braced for the shot. Your character can make a *Difficult* Dodge roll to instantly regain their feet if knocked prone or an *Easy* Agility roll as their next action to stand upright quickly.

Pulling Blows

Your character can 'pull' any attack in an attempt to do less damage. By simply stating the intent to inflict less damage, your character can forgo any positive Damage Bonus or reduce the damage dice of any weapon or brawling attack to a lower dice type, at a minimum of one point of damage. If attempting to lower the dice type below half of the weapon's normal damage dice (for example, lowering a d10 damage die to a d4), the attack becomes *Difficult*. Any modifiers to the damage roll are still applied.

Surprise

If your character is thrust into combat or a perilous situation suddenly, without any warning, they must make a successful Idea roll to catch their wits and perform any defensive or reactive actions (dodges, parries, jumps) in the round they are surprised. Assuming they are aware of the danger that they are in, your character can act normally the next round. If both sides in a conflict are surprised, everyone involved should make a Luck roll. Success means that those characters can react in the first round, while everyone else is considered to be disoriented or hesitant for the duration of the round.

Underwater Combat

While attempting to fight underwater, your character's combat skills (other than Grapple) are limited by the base chance of their Swim skill. Each round of combat, your character must make a Swim roll to be able to attack. If the skill roll is unsuccessful, your character cannot attack in that round. High-velocity weapons such as firearms have their range halved and do half damage beyond point blank range. Normal physical skill use is at a -20% penalty, at the Game Master's discretion.

Experience and Improvement

Aside from, well, living, an advantage to surviving missions in service to the Laundry means that your character has the chance of learning something and actually becoming better at their job. Skills that your character utilises successfully in the course of a mission have a chance of improving and if your character's characteristics are taxed, these also have a (slight) chance of improvement.

Aside from the experience gleaned from the field, your character can also embark on many potential courses of study between missions. Capital Laundry Services offers a variety of developmental opportunities for agents and employees wishing to better themselves or become more fit for their duty and your character may wish (or may be forced) to take advantage of these opportunities for educational improvement.

Improving Skills Through Experience

If your character succeeds in using a skill in the course of a mission, there is a chance that skill will improve. As described in **Chapter 5: Skills**, you should place a checkmark next to any appropriate skill that was used successfully in play, once per session. Multiple successes do not yield multiple checks. Successful use in two different specialties means two experience checks, not one. Using a skill when it is *Easy* does not count towards an experience check, nor does substituting a related skill. Finally, using a skill in a non-threatening situation where nothing is at stake does not count for an experience check.

At the end of the mission, the Game Master should ask you to make an experience roll for each skill your character successfully checked. To make an experience roll, roll d100 and attempt to roll higher than the skill's normal base chance. You can add your character's Experience Bonus (half of their INT, rounded up) to the experience roll. If the experience roll is higher than the skill, you can roll 1d6 and add the result to that skill's current base chance.

Generally, this is done at the end of a mission, though the Game Master may allow you to make additional skill improvement rolls for longer missions or any stretches of time where your character can rest and reflect on what has transpired so far. Depending on events, the Game Master may even tell you that you may automatically make an experience roll, such as demonstrating extraordinary competency or having a period of time particularly devoted to improvement of that skill.

Improving Skills Through Training

If your character is sent to any of the wide range of training seminars offered by the British government or the Laundry, or embarks on any of the other educational opportunities available to them, they may increase their skills accordingly. Characters may be sent on training courses by their superiors or purchase them through budget allocations. For more details, see **Chapter 11: Budgets, Requisitions and Training**.

Improving Skills Through Research

If your character chooses to try to learn skills through self-guided study or personal research, they must study for a

number of hours equal to their current rating in the skill (this can be broken up over time). At the end of the period of study, make a roll of the skill, adding the experience bonus. If the roll is over the current skill level, your character has learned from the study and gains 1d6–2 Skill Points. It is possible to lose points in a skill with unguided study, though the percentage cannot drop below 0%.

Improving Characteristics Through Experience

Your character can potentially modify their characteristics through various in-game methods. STR, CON and DEX can potentially be improved whenever they are tested successfully in a Resistance roll versus a superior characteristic, up to the highest value of one of those three characteristics. If your character is successful after such a Resistance roll, you should take note of that. When rolls for skill experience is determined, subtract your character's current characteristic from 21 and multiply the result by five to determine the percentage chance of improvement. Experience bonus is not included. If successful, the characteristic increases by one point. If the result is 0%, no improvement can be made. Only one such roll may be attempted for a number of months equal to your character's current rating in that attribute.

Your character's POW can be similarly improved, though the resulting characteristic improvement roll is 1d3–1, there is always a minimum 05% chance and there is no limit to how often improvements may be tested. POW is usually increased by sorcerous activity and once those muscles are flexed, they tend to bulk up rapidly.

Improving Characteristics Through Training

Though your character's other characteristics cannot be improved through experience, they can be improved through training.

INT can be improved through intense coursework and training specifically aimed at sharpening cognitive abilities, problem-solving capability, memory and other functions of Intelligence.

SIZ can be modified upwards by a diet consisting of high-protein foodstuffs and bodybuilding with emphasis on physical mass or it can be reduced by strict dieting and exercise with emphasis on weight loss.

CHA can be improved with a Pygmalion-esque course of study devoted to improving manners, charm, appearance and self-confidence.

Each course of training takes a number of months equal to your current characteristic in months. Self-guided improvement takes twice as long. You and the Game Master should determine how this training is undertaken and who the instructor or coach is. At the end of the course of training, subtract your character's current characteristic from 21 and multiply the result by five to determine the chance of success. Your character must roll below this, with success yielding a single point of improvement (or reduction, if desired for SIZ). A fumble on this roll costs one characteristic point.



Damage

I can shoot at targets, sure, and I'm death on wheels when it comes to terminating cases of demonic possession with extreme prejudice, but the idea of killing a real human being in cold blood, some eating breathing sleeping guy with a job on a rich man's yacht, makes all the alarm bells in my head go tilt.

— The Jennifer Morgue

Getting injured hurts and causes damage to the human body, which is represented by the loss of Hit Points. Hit Points are a temporary characteristic: they can fluctuate throughout the course of an investigation as your character is injured, receives medical attention (first aid, surgery) and heals naturally. **Chapter 6: System and Combat** covers many ways to lose Hit Points through combat or other mishaps and this chapter deals with Hit Points in more detail – including minor, major and fatal wounds – as well as healing and medical care.

As defined in **Chapter 3: Basic Rules** and **Chapter 4: Creating Your Character**, your character's Hit Points are equal to the average of their CON and SIZ, rounded up. A further value, the major wound threshold, is equal to half of the normal Hit Point total.

Getting Hurt

Whenever your character is injured, cross off the number of Hit Points equal to the number of points of damage they have received, starting from the number of current HP. Though your character may have suffered a variety of minor and major wounds, the individual wounds are not treated separately and are instead assumed to be a collective loss. It is not necessary to keep track of how many HP your character loses to each individual injury.

When your character has only two or fewer Hit Points left, they fall unconscious and stay unconscious until they receive successful medical attention, regain Hit Points to make their total three or more or after one hour of sleep. At zero Hit Points, your character dies at the end of the following round. This can be prevented by any successful medical attention that restores your character to one or more Hit Points.

Minor Wounds

A minor wound is any wound that is less than your character's major wound threshold (half of their Hit Points, rounded up). For example, if your character has 13 Hit Points, their major wound threshold is 7. Any injuries that do only 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 Hit Points in damage are minor wounds. These represent painful grazes, contusions, scrapes, bruises or other minor injuries that will not form lasting scars or have long-lasting effects. Your character can take any number of minor wounds without long-lasting effect so long as their current Hit Point total remains above 2.

The accumulation of many small injuries is not without its disadvantages: if your character loses a number of

Hit Points in minor wounds equal to their major wound threshold, they must make a successful Stamina roll to remain conscious. If the roll is successful, your character can continue to act without difficulty. If the roll fails, your character falls unconscious for one hour. As noted previously, when your character's Hit Points reach two or less, they will fall unconscious.

Major Wounds

Whenever your character receives a single injury that inflicts a number of Hit Points in damage equal to or greater than their major wound threshold (half of total normal Hit Points, rounded up), they have suffered a major wound. This is a more serious and incredibly painful injury that may have immediate and long-lasting effects. When your character receives a major wound, the Game Master should roll d100 on the Major Wound Table and apply the result to your character, in addition to the Hit Point loss from the injury.



The effect of a major wound is immediate and represents enough physical trauma that your character may go into shock. After receiving a major wound, your character can only act for as many rounds as they have remaining Hit Points. At the end of that period, your character drops unconscious for one hour or until receiving successful medical attention.

After your character receives a major wound, you should immediately attempt a Luck roll. Success means that the wound eventually heals cleanly and your character does not suffer the described characteristic point losses or permanent disfigurements (if any). Failing this roll means that your character suffers the described penalties, including any specified characteristic point loss and disfigurement.

Any characteristic point losses result in corresponding losses to the associated characteristic rolls and derived characteristics, so re-figure those based on the new characteristic value.

Fatal Wounds

A fatal wound is any wound (minor or major) that takes your character to 0 Hit Points. When your character reaches 0 Hit Points, they have become metabolically challenged. They drop anything they are carrying and, if possible, immediately fall down prone (or suffer an equivalent and suitable loss of vertical orientation). At 0 Hit Points, your character cannot initiate any action of their own and they are going to die at the end of the next round unless drastic, immediate and successful medical attention is provided.

Major Wound Table

d100	Result
01-10	Damaged leg tendons cause limping; crushed or broken ankle bones cause limping; back muscles or spinal nerve damage bends the torso to the left or right; a shattered knee cannot bend; or make up a new wound effect. Lose 1d3 DEX. The maximum MOV is now reduced by the same 1d3 result. Your character is still able to fight.
11-20	Much of your character's nose has been crushed or sliced away; multiple scars deface both hands; an ear has been severed or crushed to pulp; a livid scar lends an evil cast to your character's appearance; or make up a new wound effect. Lose 1d3 CHA. This visible and unappealing deformity cannot be disguised. Your character is still able to fight.
21-30	Wrist or hand damage; a slab of arm or shoulder muscle has been cut away or pulped; a chunk was hewn from thigh or calf muscles; spinal nerves are damaged; several fingers or toes are severed or crushed; or make up a new wound effect. Lose 1d3 STR; this loss may change what weapons can be used. Roll 1d6: 1-4 = primary hand, 5-6 = secondary hand. Your character is still able to fight with a weapon in the uninjured hand.
31-40	A punctured lung leads to a weakened respiratory system; deep stomach wounds become chronically re-infected or belly wounds weaken digestion and general health; kidneys and liver are damaged; or make up a new wound effect. Lose 1d3 CON, maximum MOV is now reduced by the same 1d3 and Hit Points may be lowered. Your character is still able to fight.
41-50	Concussion damages hearing and limits Listen and Insight to maximums of 75%; an injury to the head thereafter requires Luck rolls each time to use any mental-based skills; blows or cuts which affect depth perception leave missile weapon skill ratings at a maximum of 75%; multiple wounds to the face and neck limit any communication-based skills to 75% maximum; or make up a new wound effect. Lose 1d3 INT. Your character is still able to fight.
51-60	Refer to 01-10 for what happened, which now expands to the loss of one or both arms or legs. Lose 1d6 DEX and reduce maximum MOV by that same amount. Your character is unable to fight.
61-70	Refer to 11-20 for what happened, though the major wound now includes worse mutilations. Lose 1d6 CHA; it creates one or more visible deformities that cannot be disguised. Your character is still able to fight.
71-80	Refer to 21-30 for examples of mutilating cuts and losses. Lose 1d6 STR; change Hit Points and damage bonus. Your character is still able to fight.
81-90	Refer to 31-40 for various wounds to the vitals. Lose 1d6 CON; may affect Hit Points, damage bonus and reduces MOV by that number of units equal to the 1d6 result rolled. Your character is unable to fight.
91-92	Bad facial and vocal cord injuries. Lose 1d6 CHA; lower the Influence roll respectively. Your character is still able to fight.
93-94	Broken bones and severed ganglia. Lose 1d6 DEX; from now on your character can only use one-handed melee weapons. Your character is still able to fight using his or her remaining arm.
95-96	Nerve damage to left or right arm (roll 1d6; a result of 1-3 is the left arm, 4-6 is the right arm). Lose 1d6 DEX; hereafter your character can only wield weapons or equipment in his or her undamaged arm. Your character is still able to fight using his or her remaining arm.
97-98	Nerve damage to both arms. Lose 1d6 DEX; though the legs are fine, neither arms nor hands can wield anything. Your character is unable to fight, unless using his or her legs or head butts.
99	Your character is mutilated with vicious wounds. Lose 1d3 points each from CON, DEX and CHA and describe the results. Your character is unable to fight.
00	Spectacularly horrible and debilitating complications ensue from the extensive injuries. Remove 1d4 points each from any of four characteristics (GM's discretion as to which) and describe the results. Victim is unable to perform any strenuous activity and will likely need long-term physical and psychological counselling afterwards.

NOT GETTING KILLED

The life of a Laundry civil servant involves long stretches of utter boredom punctuated by spasms of horrific violence. Bob Howard, for example, gets through the whole of *The Fuller Memorandum* largely unscathed, until the bit where he is cannibalised by cultists. One stray bullet or rampaging monster can permanently damage a character in a single attack. Humans are squishy.

If you expect trouble, take precautions. Bulletproof vests, protective wards, tanks... anything to keep from getting eaten by horrible things. At the very least, your standard issue Necronomiphone has the level one Defensive Binding spell, which can give five points of ablative armour in an emergency. Raise your shields before going into a fight.

Death

If, through any combination of minor and major wounds, your character is injured and goes below 0 Hit Points and into negative Hit Points, they suffer additional mutilation and destruction of the body. Just as at 0 Hit Points, when your character is reduced to below 0 Hit Points they can only survive until the end of the next round. The negative Hit Point value should be noted, as any medical treatment for a character with negative Hit Points is considered *Difficult*. To survive, your character must have their Hit Points restored to a positive number (1 Hit Point or more) through medical attention before death.

If the Game Master allows it, your character can choose to spend their dying moments relaying last-ditch important information (requiring a successful Luck roll to get it out), attempting a minor physical action, such as triggering a secreted grenade (an Agility roll would be required), or attempting to die in a suitably dignified and aesthetically-pleasing fashion (succeeding in an Influence roll).

After death, your character is more-than-likely removed from play, though if Human Resources have anything to do with it they may become necromantically repurposed and continue to serve the Laundry in a variety of exciting roles such as night guard, filing clerk, coffee runner or internal delivery assistant. In this case, control of your character passes over to the Game Master and you should begin to create a new agent using the now-familiar guidelines presented in **Chapter 4: Creating Your Character**.

Healing

Fortunately, lost Hit Points are not gone forever and will heal naturally or can be restored through medical attention. Assuming that your character is not suffering from some debilitating illness and is taking it relatively easy, they recover 1d3 Hit Points at the end of one week of relative rest. This can include desk assignments or light administrative duties. This continues until your character has reached their normal Hit Point total.

If your character is in hospital, complete bed rest, receiving medical attention or recuperating in one of the Laundry's retreats, such as The Village in Dunwich, the caregiver can attempt an additional First Aid or Medicine roll, above any such rolls that have previously been attempted. Success yields an additional 1d3 Hit Points healed, as per the skill descriptions in **Chapter 5: Skills**.

If your character is in a dismal or unsanitary environment, continues physical exertion or is receiving no medical care at all, they must succeed in a Stamina roll in order to heal 1d3 Hit Points each week. Failure means that no healing occurs. Any attempt at medical attention in such conditions is *Difficult*.

Medical Care

Getting medical attention can speed the healing process: successful use of the First Aid skill will restore 1d3 Hit Points lost through injury, while successful use of the Medicine skill can restore Hit Points lost through illness, disease and so forth, or can be used for long-term medical care in place of First Aid. See the description of the Medicine skill on page 42 of **Chapter 5: Skills**.

Characteristic Point Loss and Recovery

In some cases, characteristic point loss is not permanent and lost characteristic points return with time. The rate of characteristic point recovery should be provided with the description of any condition that causes temporary characteristic point loss. However, if your character suffers permanent characteristic point loss as the result of a major wound, illness or other cause, you must recalculate the relevant characteristic roll(s) and any derived characteristics based on the new, lower characteristic value. This can be offset by recovering the characteristic point through medical attention (see the Medicine skill on page 42) training or experience (see 'Improving Characteristics' on page 63 of **Chapter 6: System and Combat**).

Getting Sick

If your character is exposed to a disease of some sort, make a Stamina roll to see if they manage to resist catching it (see also **Disease** on page 60). Depending on the virulence of the strain, the Game Master may make the roll *Difficult*. For a minor illness (allergies, cold, flu, stomach virus) your character may lose one or two Hit Points for the duration of the illness. Generally, most minor illnesses last 1d6 days. At the end of the illness, the lost Hit Points are restored. Each day after contracting the illness, make a *Difficult* Stamina

roll: success means that the illness was shaken and your character recovers. Keep making these rolls until the illness is shaken or it runs its course. A successful *Easy* Medicine roll increases the success chance of the recovery Stamina roll to *Average* (unmodified).

A major disease will generally attack Hit Points and CON. These can range from diseases causing one Hit Point loss per day or per week in damage or they could reduce CON by one point per day. Fast-moving and extremely virulent diseases such as Ebola or various flesh-eating bacteria may cause one Hit Point of damage per hour if not resisted. A Game Master wanting to introduce the threat of disease should determine the nature of the disease, how it manifests in terms of characteristic and/or Hit Point loss, how severe it is and how it can be fought, using the previous suggestions for a minor illness as a guide.

Laundry employees are requested to provide a doctor's note after taking any sick days. Failure to produce such a note results in the sick days being taken from your leave allocation instead.

I spent a lot of time in hospital recently, so here are a few added thoughts on the Laundry and work-related injuries.

Firstly, physiotherapy is boring. Really, really boring. I couldn't move my right arm for weeks, and while I'm used to typing one-handed (har har), I still couldn't do much with a computer. I would say no internet and no games make Bob something something, but I don't make jokes about going crazy anymore. Not after Brookwood.

Secondly, the Laundry does take care of its own. I can't complain about the treatment I got - top quality surgery, plenty of recuperation time, and a physiotherapist who probably trained under Himmler, but kicked my ass and got me motivated to work on my recovery instead of wallowing in depression.

Thirdly, using magic to speed healing is a bad idea. It's doable - the Black Chamber, for example, are really good at it. We've seen their agents take a sniper shot to the centre of mass, and be back on the streets within 24 hours. The downside of magic healing is all the side effects. If you just throw on a probability-manipulation field to speed cell growth, you're opening the patient up to a variety of exotic cancers. You can invoke a Wigner's-Friend intermediary, but that's got its own issues. You're very likely to end up with a passenger bound into your flesh.

(I've always worried about Alan Barnes. He took a lot of radiation back in the Amsterdam affair. I thought he was dying when I visited him afterwards, but he bounced back. I know they grow them tough in the Artists' Rifles, but that level of recovery is just inhuman.)



Sanity

'Every so often you think you've got a handle on this job, on the paper clip audits and interminable bureaucracy and committee meetings, and then something insane crawls out of the woodwork and gibbers at you, something crazy enough to give James Bond nightmares but just happens to be true.'

— The Fuller Memorandum

Threats to your character's physical form are described in **Chapter 6: System and Combat**, but that is only half of the picture. A greater danger of working for the Laundry is the chance that agents will experience something that sends them on a quick voyage to the local sanatorium and a wardrobe featuring the latest in straitjacket fashion. A direct confrontation with the cosmic horrors that the Laundry fights can end an agent's career in a moment.

A Laundry agent's mental stability is measured by their current SAN score. SAN is a derived characteristic that determines how psychologically healthy they are and how much horror or shock they can endure before going completely insane. Laundry training makes agents more resistant to insanity than the average person, though this is of small comfort in the face of extra planar horror.

Chapter 3: Basic Rules briefly described Sanity, while this chapter covers it in detail, including how it is lost, what happens when it is lost and when it is regained. A refresher course on Sanity is presented here:

- Your character's initial SAN score is based on their POW x 5.
- When making a SAN check, you must roll percentage dice equal to or below your character's current SAN score.
- Unlike physical wounds, lost SAN points do not regenerate naturally.
- SAN does not normally increase with experience.
- The Cthulhu Mythos skill lowers the total SAN that your character can have to 99 – Cthulhu Mythos skill.

A further characteristic is the *Madness Threshold*. This value is the amount of SAN a Laundry agent can lose at once without going temporarily insane. Because of the extensive psychological conditioning that comes with induction into the Laundry, a Laundry agent's Madness Threshold is equal to their POW characteristic or five (whichever is higher). For civilians, this value is always five. If for some reason your character is new to the Laundry, or is not a part of it, this value is five until they take the psychological conditioning training course.

Using SAN for Sanity Checks

Whenever your character confronts an unnerving or horrifying situation, you should test their sanity by calling for a Sanity check. Sanity checks are made like a normal

skill roll; roll d100 against your character's current SAN. Rolls less than your character's current SAN are successful; rolls that exceed the SAN fail. Unlike skill rolls, SAN checks never use difficulty modifiers, circumstantial modifiers or special successes.

Succeeding in a SAN check is not always enough to prevent SAN loss. Even a successful roll can result in lost SAN if the experience is horrific enough. Your character should only need to make one SAN check against a particular cause or entity per mission, though subsequent events might require additional SAN checks, if circumstances change or the entity manifests in greater numbers or performs some hideous act.

Losing SAN

Sanity Point costs for horrific experiences or entities are presented with two values (usually a number or a dice value) separated by a slash. The number before the slash equals the number of SAN your character loses if the roll is successful and the value after the slash indicates how many SAN are lost if the SAN check fails. If the SAN loss value is a dice roll, the dice are rolled and the amount is subtracted from your character's current SAN. The Game Master may also decide that conditions may modify the amount of SAN lost from a specific event. Seeing lots of demonic entities or undead, or being injured by a monster in the same round as seeing it could cause a loss of the maximum amount of SAN.

The following table serves as a guide to potential SAN losses from a variety of experiences or entities. The Game Master is encouraged to use these as guidelines for situations or experiences not addressed in this table.

Growing Accustomed to Horror

It is possible that your character can max out on lost SAN from a specific event or creature if it is encountered too often in a short period of time. As a guideline, during a mission, if your character has lost the maximum possible SAN points from a specific type of monster or encounter, no further SAN checks are required for that experience while on the mission.

Furthermore, your character can simply grow accustomed to a particular type of entity. If your character succeeds in a number of SAN checks against a particular type of entity equal to the maximum number of SAN points the creature's appearance can cost, your character is assumed

Examples of SAN Losses

Unnerving or Horrific Situation	SAN Loss
Suffering a shock or extreme surprise in tense situations.	0/1
Finding a mangled animal carcass by surprise.	0/1d2
Finding a human corpse by surprise.	0/1d3
Having a close brush with death (near fall, car crash).	0/1d3
Realising someone you are interacting with is undead, possessed by a demon or not human.	0/1d3
Finding a severed body part by surprise.	0/1d3
Seeing a dimensional rift.	0/1d4
Unintentionally causing the death of another.	0/1d4
Casting some types of sorcery or using minor magic artefacts.	0/1d4
Finding a mangled human corpse.	1/1d4+1
Witnessing something doing something abhorrent or ghastly.	1/1d6
Witnessing a natural animal behaving in an unnatural fashion.	0/1d6
Witnessing a friend or co-worker's violent death.	0/1d6
Committing wilful murder.	0/1d6
Seeing a monster (see Chapter 19: Archives for SAN losses per entity).	Variable
Casting significant sorcery or using a significant artefact.	0/1d6
Seeing something supernatural or patently impossible.	0/1d6
Meeting someone you know to be dead.	1/1d6+1
Undergoing severe torture.	0/1d10
Casting incredibly powerful sorcery or using a powerful artefact.	0/1d10
Seeing a corpse rise from its grave.	1/1d10
Being used as part of a powerful spell or ritual.	1d4/2d6
Being brought back to life after a gruesome death.	1d6/3d6
Being possessed by a lesser demon.	1d6/1d10
Witnessing mass destruction caused by a demonic entity.	1d6/2d10
Inadvertently causing mass destruction or immense casualties.	1d10/3d10
Being possessed by a powerful demon.	1d10/3d10
Witnessing a primordial chthonic entity in its entirety.	1d10/1d100

to automatically succeed against further viewings of the creature and only loses the lowest possible amount of SAN from future encounters with the entity. This makes it useful to keep track of how often you encounter a specific type of entity and whether your character succeeds in a successful SAN roll against it. As Angleton keeps telling Bob Howard, that sort of thing should go in your character's memoirs.

Going Insane

The loss of SAN is bad enough, but it corresponds with the risk of actual insanity. Depending on the amount or rate of SAN loss, your character needs to worry about three different durations of insanity: *temporary insanity*, *indefinite insanity* or *permanent insanity*. These are described here.

Temporary Insanity

If, as the result of a single failed SAN check, your character loses five or more Sanity Points, he or she has suffered

enough emotional trauma to go *temporarily insane*. After recording the SAN loss, you should immediately try to make an Idea roll. If the Idea roll fails, your character's mind protects itself by locking the painful memory away. They may act normally for the remainder of the encounter, but will have no memory of what happened when the encounter is over.

If the Idea roll succeeds, your character realises the full significance of what was experienced and their psyche crumbles, rendering them temporarily insane. The effects of temporary insanity begin immediately. The Game Master should consult the Temporary Insanity table for more information about the duration and effects of temporary insanity. The Game Master can roll on these tables, choose a result appropriate to the shock or even ask you to determine the most effective result. Most symptoms are self-explanatory. When the temporary insanity subsides, your character may act normally.

Temporary Insanity

SAN Loss From a Single SAN Check	Result Duration
Five or more points but less than half of the character's POW.	See the section on 'Short Temporary Insanity'.
Five or more points and more than half of the character's POW.	See the section on 'Longer Temporary Insanity'.

Short Temporary Insanity lasts for 1d10+4 Combat Rounds. The Game Master should either roll 1d10 or choose the most appropriate result from the adjacent table.

Longer Temporary Insanity lasts 1d10 x 10 game hours. The Game Master should roll 1d10 and consult the adjacent table or choose an appropriate result.

Dealing with Temporary Insanity

As exciting as the notion of going temporarily insane seems it could potentially, just possibly, represent something of an inconvenience in the middle of a mission. Following are a variety of methods your characters may use to deal with temporary insanity when suffering from it or dealing with others who have rounded that bend.

Snapping Out of It: The Game Master may allow you to bring a temporarily insane character back to lucidity by shaking them, shouting at them, slapping their face and so on. To see if this works, make a POW vs. POW Resistance roll between the temporarily insane character and the one trying to snap them back. If the insane character loses, they can act normally for a single round, then will revert to madness immediately after. The 'sane' round does not count as part of the temporary insanity's duration.

Insane Insight: A character at the edge of madness can stumble upon spontaneous revelations or insights, making connections that a rational mind would dismiss. A character that has just gone temporarily insane may attempt an Idea roll. If successful, they may gain a clue about the entity or situation that caused the insanity. Whether or not the character can communicate or act on this insight depends on the symptoms of their insanity.

Indefinite Insanity

If your character loses a number of SAN equal to or greater than their Madness Threshold in one game hour, they go indefinitely insane. No roll is required to determine whether this happens. Your character's mind has slipped the tracks, snapped under the pressure or gone out to lunch temporarily. They are afflicted with some neurosis, psychosis or other mental illness that lasts for an indefinite amount of time. Indefinite insanity can take a day or as much as a week to manifest. However, once indefinite insanity manifests, it lasts until your character can be cured, through use of the Psychotherapy skill or other means.

Short Temporary Insanity

d10	Result
1	Fainting or screaming fit.
2	Flees in blind panic.
3	Physical hysterics or another extreme emotional outburst (hysterical laughing, inconsolable crying etc).
4	An incoherent stream of babbling.
5	An attack of intense phobia, which may root the character to the spot.
6	Homicidal or suicidal mania.
7	Intense hallucinations or delusions.
8	Echopraxia or echolalia, repeating what others nearby do or say.
9	A stupor, the character is awake and able to stand but without any will or interest. They may be led or forced into simple actions but will take no independent action.
10	The character becomes catatonic, assuming the foetal position, oblivious to all events.

Longer Temporary Insanity

d10	Result
1	The character lapses into stupor or catatonia (as described previously) or suffers amnesia (described on page 72).
2	The character suffers a severe phobia. The character can flee but sees the source of the phobia everywhere and must succeed in a <i>Difficult</i> Idea roll each round to temporarily overcome the fear and act normally.
3	The character suffers vivid hallucinations. The character must succeed in a <i>Difficult</i> Idea roll each round to ignore them and act normally.
4	The character is struck with intense hopelessness or despair. If coaxed into action by allies, must overcome extreme lassitude by succeeding in a <i>Difficult</i> Luck roll each round.
5	The character develops a sudden fetishist obsession, latching onto another person or an object as a security blanket. If the fetish is removed from the character's presence, they suffer an additional short temporary insanity.
6	The character manifests uncontrollable tics, tremors or an inability to communicate via speech or writing.
7	The character is stricken with psychosomatic blindness, deafness or loses the use of one or more limbs (roll 1d4 for the number of limbs afflicted).
8	The character exhibits brief psychosis, represented by incoherence, delusions, aberrant behaviour and/or hallucinations.
9	The character suffers intense, though temporary, paranoia, suspecting anyone and everything of meaning them harm.
10	The character suddenly develops some form of compulsive behaviour, usually a ritual. Examples include repeated hand-washing, constant prayer or recitation, obsessively checking clothing or gear, repeating oneself and so forth.

Indefinite insanity has two major factors: *symptoms* and *severity*.

Symptoms: A list of mental disorders is presented on page 71. The Game Master can roll on this table and assign a neurosis but it is recommended to select a neurosis appropriate to the trauma that produced it.

Severity: To measure the severity of an indefinite insanity, the Game Master should assign a potency rating to the disorder. This potency rating should be equal to the total amount of SAN lost in the hour that spurred the indefinite insanity or the value of the greatest single SAN loss. If a character is beset with multiple disorders or symptoms, the Game Master should divide the potency rating between them equally or as seems appropriate.

Whenever an indefinitely insane character experiences a stressful situation (combat, a tense argument, or anything that might trigger a SAN check), they must overcome the potency of the disorder with a Resistance roll, using their POW to resist. If the character wins, they overcome the disorder and can act normally. If the disorder wins, the character is driven by madness, not reason and must suffer its effects for the rest of the scene.

Overcoming Indefinite Insanity

There are two cures for indefinite insanity: therapy and time. Both of these can reduce the potency rating of an indefinite insanity. Once the potency rating of a mental disorder is reduced to half its original value (rounded down), the symptoms disappear and the character can function normally.

Therapy: Before therapy can begin, the character using the Psychotherapy roll (page 43) must succeed in a roll to identify the root and nature of the disorder. Once it has been successfully diagnosed, successful use of the Psychotherapy skill can reduce the potency rating of a single mental disorder by one point per month of treatment or by 1d3+1 points if the Psychotherapy roll is a special success. If the character suffers from multiple disorders, treatment can target a specific disorder or results can be applied to multiple disorders. Once the potency rating of a disorder is reduced to zero, the symptoms disappear and additional therapy has no effect. Fortunately, the Laundry has many facilities for the treatment of insane agents.

Time: Time heals all wounds and a wounded psyche is no exception to this rule. A character suffering indefinite insanities may attempt a *Difficult* Luck roll every month after they went insane. If the roll is a success, the potency rating of one disorder drops by one point. This recovery is cumulative with therapy, as described previously. Once the potency rating of a disorder is reduced to zero, the symptoms disappear. In many cases, a Laundry agent will be given a temporary leave of absence to hasten this recovery, though unfortunately it is never enough.

Indefinite insanity has no bearing on current SAN totals and disorders do not disappear if the initial SAN loss is restored. As noted previously, the only ways to recover from indefinite insanity are therapy and time... usually plenty

of each. If your character has been institutionalised or is otherwise unable to perform their duties, you may wish to create another character to temporarily take over your original character's assignments, until your original character is fit for duty.

Relapsing Into Insanity

Even if a disorder caused by indefinite insanity has been treated and the character has successfully recovered, there is always a chance that future shocks cause a return of the disorder, stronger than before. The next time the character goes indefinitely insane there is a chance that the disorder returns equal to 5 x the original potency rating of the dormant insanity. A re-emergent disorder has a potency rating equal to the POW rating of the new disorder plus the original rating of the dormant disorder.

Mental Disorders

These disorders are only defined with simple guidelines and the player is encouraged to role-play them with help from the Game Master. The specific mental disorder caused by a particular experience might be obvious enough that the Game Master can select it or it might be selected by randomly rolling on the Mental Disorder table. The Game Master should roll 1d100 and either consult the following table or choose an appropriate result:

Mental Disorders

D100	Mental Disorder
01-05	Addiction
06-10	Amnesia
11-15	Catatonia
16-20	Criminal Psychosis
21-25	Defection
26-30	Fetish
31-35	Hysterical Disability
36-40	Megalomania
41-45	Multiple Personalities
46-50	Obsession
51-55	Panzaism
56-65	Paranoia
66-75	Phobia
76-80	Quixotism
81-90	Schizophrenia
91-95	Stupefaction
96-00	Tremors/Physical Symptoms

These mental disorders have been selected to represent those a Laundry agent might suffer and endure, rather than being a representative sampling of real-world psychiatric conditions and their actual causes. This list is not comprehensive and the Game Master is encouraged to develop new disorders, if desired or required.

Addiction: Overcome by the terror and stress of the experience, the character finds solace in alcohol, opium, stimulants or other drugs. This addiction has deleterious effects on physical and mental skills. Details are left to the Game Master but a penalty ranging from -10% to -30%

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to physical and/or mental skills is appropriate. Over time, the addicted character grows tolerant of the drug and must consume more to get the desired result. The expense and illegality of the drug may ruin an addict's life and addicts can be driven to uncharacteristically risky or illegal behaviour to feed the addiction. Prolonged drug use can lead to characteristic loss or even death. The character must overcome the potency of their addiction on the Resistance table to endure a stressful situation without a fix. If denied their drug, the character must make a *Difficult* Stamina roll or suffer debilitating consequences, including tremors, hallucinations or skill penalties double those of the drug's normal effects.

Amnesia: The character locks away unbearable experiences, effectively erasing their memories. The severity of the disorder indicates how selective or total the amnesia is. Amnesiacs tend to lose memory of specific incidents first, followed by the identities of friends and loved ones, their own identity and finally all mental skills. Language and physical skills are retained. If confronted with forgotten faces or facts, the character can attempt an Idea roll. Success means that the character overcomes the potency of the disorder to gain a bit of recall, usually no more than a cryptic hint or brief flash of memory.

Catatonia: As with temporary insanity, the character assumes a foetal position, oblivious to events around them. A catatonic character does not resist being moved and can be made to stand but always reverts back to a foetal position if left alone. Unlike most indefinite insanities, catatonia becomes the character's default state. In times of stress, success with a Resistance roll overcoming the potency of the disorder provides the character with a window of lucidity lasting 1d6 rounds.

Criminal Psychosis: This is a dangerous disorder suffered by sociopaths and serial killers. If the character suffers from criminal psychosis, they believe that human beings are utterly separate from one another. Social bonds such as love, truth, friendship and compassion are lies, tools to be used for personal gain. Life has no ultimate meaning. Once the character has this insight, temptations like bullying, threats, fraud and murder are assessed by risk rather than morality.

The character becomes a slave of their desires and impulses and must succeed in a Resistance roll vs. the disorder's potency to refrain from resorting to extreme methods to get what they want. The Game Master should be careful when assigning this disorder, as the consequences may be significant in play.

Defection: The character comes to believe that human endeavour is doomed and the only meaning to be found in life comes from worshipping some aspect of the Mythos, such as an alien race or the Great Old Ones. In effect, the character secretly becomes a cultist and may even seek out other worshippers. He has come to believe in the ways of the enemy, like a Cold War spy embracing Communist doctrine.

Fetish: A character suffering from a fetish becomes unreasonably obsessed with an object, person or condition. The fetish becomes an emotional security blanket or the object of an obsession (see 'Obsession', page 73). If the character is denied their fetish, they must succeed in a Resistance roll with their POW vs. the potency of the disorder to remain in control. If the character fails, they suffer severe distress. Treat this as an episode of temporary insanity. Consult 'List of Phobias' on page 73 for potential fetishes.

Hysterical Disability: The character's mind 'disconnects' a particular sense or a limb as a coping mechanism, leaving them physically disabled. The disability manifests as the loss of a particular sense (commonly sight or hearing) or partial paralysis in one or more limbs. Despite all efforts, the character cannot control or respond to stimuli that affect the paralysed limb or sense. Medical examination and treatment reveals nothing physically wrong with the character but the condition persists. If the character's life is in danger, they can attempt to use their POW to overcome the potency of the disorder in a Resistance roll. Success means that the condition temporarily clears but as soon as the crisis ends, the condition returns.

Megalomania: The character's ego and self-confidence exceed all bounds, giving them a view of reality where they are the centre. Once in the grips of megalomania, a person believes that they are never wrong, only misunderstood. The character feels singled out for greatness and exudes an unshakeable confidence. If events conspire against the character, they suspect treachery, conspiracy or the inadequacy of others. In order to listen to reason, the character must successfully overcome the potency of the disorder on the Resistance table with their own POW.

Multiple Personalities: The character becomes host to additional derived personalities. These may emerge gradually as coping mechanisms or they may immediately form at the disorder's onset. In some cases, the character's original personality is lost or hidden, while in other cases it is dominant. Divide the potency of the disorder by five (rounding up) to determine the number of additional personalities. Additional personalities are not necessarily the same gender or age as the



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character and in many cases represent suitable personalities for dealing with specific challenges or situations. Each personality has a name and a distinct behaviour, often associated with a single dominant emotion. In times of stress, the player or Game Master should make a Resistance roll of the disorder's potency versus the character's POW. If the character succeeds, they remain in charge. If the disorder wins, an appropriate alternate personality takes over. Each personality may or may not be aware of the others and the character's original personality is often either oblivious to their existence or perceives them as real people.

Obsession: An obsessed character is overwhelmingly preoccupied with a particular goal or an exaggerated aspect of personal behaviour. This overshadows all aspects of life, causing the character to withdraw from friends and family, slip up at work and withdraw from communication. The source of the obsession is usually based on fear of some sort. The obsessed character must overcome the disorder's potency with their POW in a Resistance roll to avoid the obsessive behaviour or to embark on any course of action that does not help achieve this goal. In time, the disorder causes the character to become an insomniac, with alternating periods of mania and deep depression.

Panzaism: Overwhelmed by the terror of the supernatural, the character resorts to extreme denial, refusing to see even the most extraordinary things as anything but ordinary, creating explanations to rationalise any unusual experiences. The character must overcome the potency of the disorder with a Resistance roll versus their POW to see the paranormal for what it is. A panzaic character does not need to make SAN rolls for seeing monsters, though gruesome sights and stress still affect him or her. Panzaism may seem like a blessing, though for Laundry work that denial can leave an agent oblivious to danger.

Paranoia: The character is ruled by suspicion and cannot trust anyone. Friends and co-workers become suspicious, though strangers are considered more threatening, especially those with cultural or social differences. Some paranoids are open with their feelings, becoming misanthropes, while others mask it, behaving agreeably while developing complex rituals of protection or schemes of revenge. The character must overcome the potency of the disorder versus their POW with a Resistance to be convinced of the paranoia. Over time, paranoia increases in intensity, scope and the character's responses grow more severe.

Phobia: Terror takes hold of the character, manifesting as an irrational fear of an aspect of the experience that drove the character mad. Whenever confronted with the object of the phobia, the character's first impulse is to flee or avoid it: they must overcome the phobia's potency with their POW in a Resistance roll in order to take any other action. If the character fails this Resistance roll and is forced to deal with the object of the phobia, an episode of temporary insanity results. Consult the 'List of Phobias' for an appropriate one.

Quixotism: A character afflicted with this disorder becomes obsessed with the supernatural and believes that they are surrounded by unnatural creatures, no matter how irrational. A quixotic character must overcome the disorder's potency

LIST OF PHOBIAS

The Game Master should select a phobia from the following list, based in some fashion (directly or otherwise) on the events that caused the indefinite insanity. This list is by no means exhaustive and the Game Master is encouraged to expand it as desired.

Acrophobia: Fear of heights, high places or falling.

Agoraphobia: Fear of wide-open spaces. Agoraphobia is the opposite of claustrophobia.

Ailurophobia: Fear of cats.

Androphobia: Fear of males. This is recommended for female characters only.

Anthrophobia: Fear of people.

Astraphobia: Fear of thunder, lightning and storms.

Bacteriophobia: Fear of germs or infection.

Bathophobia: Fear of the depths of the sea.

Botanophobia: Fear of plants.

Claustrophobia: Fear of tight or confined spaces.

Demophobia: Fear of crowds.

Entomophobia: Fear of insects.

Gynophobia: Fear of females. This is recommended for male characters only.

Hematophobia: Fear of blood, especially the sight of blood.

Monophobia: Fear of being alone.

Necrophobia: Fear of dead things.

Ophiophobia: Fear of snakes.

Pyrophobia: Fear of fire.

Scotophobia: Fear of darkness.

Technophobia: Fear of technology, including computers.

Thalassophobia: Fear of the ocean, the sea or open water.

Xenophobia: Fear of foreigners, strangers or people who are different.

Zoophobia: Fear of most animals.

This list may also be used to determine a fetish. A fetish is the opposite of a phobia, being craved by the character. Someone suffering a fetishist disorder cannot be calm or feel any sense of relief unless the object of the fetish is present.

with their POW in a Resistance roll to avoid hallucinations and realise that their suspicions are groundless. Quixotic characters may even need to make SAN checks for seeing hallucinatory horrors, suffering symptoms of temporary insanity for major shocks. All SAN lost to imaginary horrors should be regained in a few hours.

Schizophrenia: Victims of schizophrenia cut themselves off from reality, building a web of delusion that serves as the foundation for a different reality. These delusions can take the form of hallucinations or simply unrealistic beliefs but are often systematic and intricate. The character believes that a single unseen cause is at work in their life and its actions form an unseen link that binds together every significant event. Discovering and confronting this mysterious cause should reveal the mysteries of life itself, so the character becomes obsessed with finding that cause. Delusions and hallucinations always result in meaningful evidence, though 'the truth is still out there'. Career, family and self become secondary concerns and the schizophrenic character is convinced that their delusions are completely reasonable. The character must overcome the disorder's potency with their POW in a Resistance roll to appear or behave normally.

Stupefaction: As with the temporary version of this insanity, the character is stupefied, awake but unaware. They can stand and, if led, will walk but without any volition or independent thought. The character is incapable of speech and does not react to any outside stimuli. Unlike most forms of indefinite insanity, stupefaction becomes the character's default state. In a time of stress, the character may attempt to overcome the potency of the disorder with their POW in order to enjoy a temporary period of lucidity lasting no more than 1d6 rounds.

Tremors/Physical Symptoms: The character is powerless in the face of fear or anxiety, experiencing extreme symptoms when under stress. These symptoms range from twitches, nervous tics, screaming fits, uncontrollable sobbing, vomiting or seizure-like tantrums. Depending on the severity of the disorder, lesser tics and spasms may be constant. The character may attempt to overcome the potency of the disorder with their POW as a Resistance roll or will suffer penalties to all physical skills made while under stress. The degree of penalty depends on the symptoms: minor twitches might impose a -10%, severe ones a -30%, while a seizure makes most actions *Impossible*.

Permanent Insanity

If a character's SAN score is reduced to zero, they are considered to be permanently insane. The enormity of the shocks and terror they have experienced was too much to recover from. The Game Master may decide that that an existing disorder utterly dominates the character's brain or a new psychosis has taken over. Permanently insane characters are not functional, not curable and should be removed from play. At this point, it is time for the player to create a new character. The Game Master may even choose to have the character become a villain – a victim of criminal psychoses or the pawn of an evil cult or even possessed by a demon.

Regaining Lost SAN Points

Laundry agents regularly confront terror and the unnatural, so the loss of SAN points is an inevitable consequence of the job. Fortunately, there are several ways to regain lost SAN. Characters can use any or all of the following methods:

A Reward for Success: At the conclusion of a successful assignment, the Game Master may assign SAN rewards to the surviving characters. Foiling plots to destroy the world or saving loved ones from gruesome fates should be worth SAN rewards. The Game Master should use the guidelines in the 'Examples of SAN Loss' table on page 69 to determine the amount earned as a reward (should not be greater than the total of the greatest SAN threat and should be determined randomly for each character). These rewards can exceed the character's starting SAN total.

Increased POW: A character that increases their POW characteristic raises their current SAN total by 5 points. These points cannot exceed the character's new POW x 5 value and any excess points are lost.

Mastering a Skill: Mastering a skill represents discipline, confidence and self-esteem. These have a tangible effect on the character's state of mind. Whenever the character raises a skill rating to 90% or higher, they immediately gain +2D6 SAN points, once per skill. SAN point gains from skill mastery can raise the character's SAN points above their initial total of POW x 5.

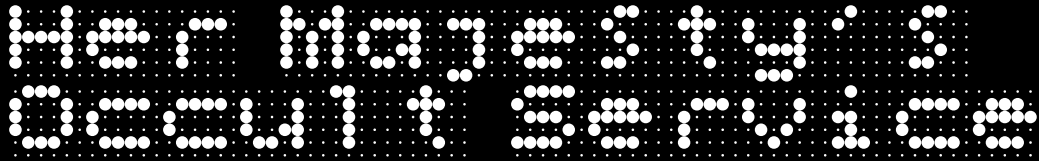
Defeating the Unnatural: When a character defeats any creature or force that can cause SAN loss, they gain SAN, representing relief that the creature is defeated. Defeat can represent thwarting the entity's plans, causing it to flee, banishing it or killing it outright. The number of SAN points rewarded should be equal to the potential SAN cost for encountering it. Driving a creature away without destroying it will grant half the SAN reward (round up). Defeating the unnatural can raise the character's SAN above their initial total of POW x 5.

Psychotherapy: Successful use of the Psychotherapy skill can restore lost SAN, a process described on page 71 of this chapter. A character seeking psychotherapy outside the Laundry can find a competent therapist with a successful Knowledge (Streetwise) or a *Difficult Luck* roll (whichever is higher). An average therapist's skill rating will be 25 + 5d10%. Therapy cannot increase the character's current SAN total above their POW x 5.

Rest and Relaxation: A character can seek solace in rest and relaxation, typically in a calm, soothing setting. A character 'getting away from it all' regains one point of SAN per month, though this method cannot raise the character's SAN above their initial SAN total of POW x 5.

Affirmation of Humanity: The Game Master may choose to award up to five SAN points for any action a character takes that 'grounds' them in the real world and improves their overall mental health. This may represent making a significant commitment to another human being, such as marriage or even parenthood.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, your character's maximum SAN is equal to 99 – Cthulhu Mythos skill. Some of the methods do not allow your character's current SAN to be increased beyond their initial SAN total, while others methods can increase it to above the maximum. Laundry agents are strongly encouraged to do anything and everything to increase their current SAN. Though there are many uses for an insane agent, unreliability is a liability.



The Laundry is the British Government's occult countermeasures and counterintelligence section. In terms of official standing, it is somewhere between DI5 and the British Transport Police (with an optional upgrade to 'running the whole show' in the event of CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN); in terms of prestige and political influence, it is right up there with Waste Management. A country's reaction to the implications of the Turing Theorem and applied demonology very much reflects that nation's ethos – the United States are 10 years ahead of everyone else and very paranoid, the French are trying to ignore the whole thing, the Soviets pigheadedly ignored the whole thing because it contradicted their own beliefs and the Germans tried to conquer the world with it. The English? They are embarrassed by it, even though they invented it. Hence, the Laundry.

A Brief History of the Laundry

Officially, the Laundry dates back to the days of the Special Operations Executive, but the weirdness goes back a lot further than that. Human history is inextricably intertwined with the occult. We crawled out of the seas and immediately started worshipping strange gods. In the secret recesses of human history, there were a few sorcerers who knew enough to actually work magic – Dee was pretty good when he was not being hoodwinked and cuckolded by Ed Kelley; Abdul Al-Hazred knew a thing or two and if you go back far enough you have got people like Eibon – but fortunately for the viability of Life As We Know It, none of them ever summoned anything that could not be put down.

After the events of March 1925, there was an unofficial but vigorous push by national governments across the world to remove awareness of the supernatural from the population. In Britain, the Mass Observation project's true purpose was to determine the success of these measures; prohibition in the US did much the same thing. Phenomena such as gorgonism and ghouls got moved from the medical dictionary to the secret files. Cults and fringe religious groups were disbanded or driven underground.

The secret codicils to Hague Conventions in 1907 had outlawed the use of occult weapons on the battlefield but research continued in secret. The Nazi's PROJECT JOTUNHEIM would have brought about an end to the war (and shortly afterward, humanity). They intended to call up an ice giant, an entropic entity from the nastier regions of the Dark Anthropoc Zone. It was the early days of computational demonology, so they went for a brute-force approach. Instead of a precisely calibrated summoning, they murdered millions to power their spell. The concentration

camps were part of a continent-spanning invocation, each death channelling necromantic energy into the grid. It dwarfed the Manhattan project in both cost and scale.

The SOE got wind of these plans; the Allies bombed the big soul-capacitors at Peenemunde and the Nazi plan to bring an elder god down on the world was spoiled; the Laundry's first and greatest success.

Operation PAPERCLIP got more than Von Braun – both the US and the Soviets looted the Nazi occult war machine. Germany became a demilitarised occult zone, as all their sorcerers and summoned entities were crated up and shipped home. The SOE, being a gang of reasonable and well-balanced people, assassinated as many necromancers as they could before the government pulled the plug on their operations in Europe.

A conference was hastily organised in the wake of the end of the war to discuss the implications of the Turing Theorem and occult weaponry. All the signatories agreed not to summon anything bigger than their heads, to prevent supernatural entities from eating the planet, and not to use civilians as power sources for necromantic incantations.

The Laundry spent the ten years after the war fighting for its bureaucratic survival. The rest of the Special Operations Executive was shut down or absorbed into Military Intelligence. By rights, SOE should also have vanished into the bowels of the secret service. We clung onto independent existence to the baleful influence of our shadowy masters but the Laundry's budget and operational reach was pared down to nothing. For ten years, the Laundry was nothing but a handful of agents and almost no research staff. We cleaned up the last of the Nazi necromancers (well, apart from the ones who fled to South America or Antarctica) and worked to control the dissemination of the Turing Theorem.

Turing himself was poisoned by Laundry agents, as it was feared he was about to be blackmailed by the Soviets over his homosexuality and would give them the theorem in an exchange. After the death of Turing, the Board reconsidered their attitude and expanded the Laundry's abstract research division, bringing in mathematicians, computer scientists and sorcerers instead of treating them as the enemy.

After years in the wilderness, the Laundry was brought in from the cold in the mid-50s. This coincided with a rise in home-grown weirdness, especially around the Severn valley region but also with Macmillan's government, who saw the British edge in computational demonology as a way to counterbalance the Soviets and prove that the United

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Kingdom was still a world power. He retired in '63, his ill health exacerbated by the horrors he had witnessed firsthand. After that, there was no question of a colder war using alien weapons.

Throughout the 60s and 70s, the Laundry expanded hugely. Turing had been ahead of the curve, but now there were more young occult turks catching up. The Dee-Turing Theorem was independently rediscovered in various forms, so the Laundry had to develop a policy for dealing with such incidents (either 'you're drafted' or 'kill it with fire!' depending on the situation). Witnesses to supernatural events were made to sign Section Three of the Official Secrets Act and brought into the Laundry; positions were created for them and these new positions required more supervisors and ancillary staff, so before long the organisation had grown to employ thousands of staff members.

The confirmation that CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN was inevitable dovetailed nicely with the joy of the Thatcher years. The dread demons Cutbacks and Privatisation arrived ahead of the other four horsemen and the Laundry was forced to implement all sorts of 'austerity measures' and prove its cost-effectiveness. Foiling the forces of darkness now came with more paperwork and auditing than ever before. Several sections of the Laundry were closed down; others were spun off into semi-private partnerships.

Since the 1990s, the whole world has gotten weird. It used to be that in order to summon up horrors from beyond you needed to spend years scouring occult bookshops and libraries for a copy of *The Book of Eibon* that was not hopelessly expurgated or a fake. These days, you can download a copy in 30 seconds and there are YouTube video walkthroughs on how to invoke Saint Toad. Everything is asymmetric now, as we crash into the future. As HPL put it: *'the time would be easy to know, for then mankind would have become as the Great Old Ones; free and wild and beyond good and evil, with laws and morals thrown aside and all men shouting and killing and revelling in joy. Then the liberated Old Ones would teach them new ways to shout and kill and revel and enjoy themselves and all the earth would flame with a holocaust of ecstasy and freedom.'*

However, 'Because there is an impending apocalypse' is not a valid reason for failing to submit your timesheet promptly, broken down into 15 minute sections please.

Structure of the Laundry

If you squint, the organisational diagram of the Laundry looks a little like the Voorish sign and a little like a slanted tree. There are sections that have not actually existed in decades, lying dead yet dreaming, awaiting the day when they are called forth again. Others stumble on like zombies, having long since lost all purpose but animated by the dread powers of budgetary appropriations. There are sections of the Laundry dedicated to witch-hunter licensing and preventing occult meddling in the telegraph network.

We would start at the top of the organisational structure but in the Laundry that is problematic. The Board is in charge

of it all, reporting directly to the Prime Minister. Allegedly. No-one below the level of DSS has seen the Board in a long, long time. The last minuted Board meeting took place in '71; after that, records just stop.

There are still offices for the Board; we call it Mahogany Row, all wood panelling, green leather desks, Edwardian décor and portraits of the Queen. They are maintained in immaculate condition, equipped with high-speed broadband and cutting-edge telecommunications and are more or less empty. There is nothing there, except the feeling that you are being watched.

Below Board level, the Laundry is divided into Administration and Operations divisions. Thanks to the modern miracle of matrix management, employees may be in either or both divisions depending on their current assignment. Broadly, Operations deals with field work, active surveillance and research, while Administration handles everything else, from payroll and records to internal security and auditing.

MATRIX MANAGEMENT

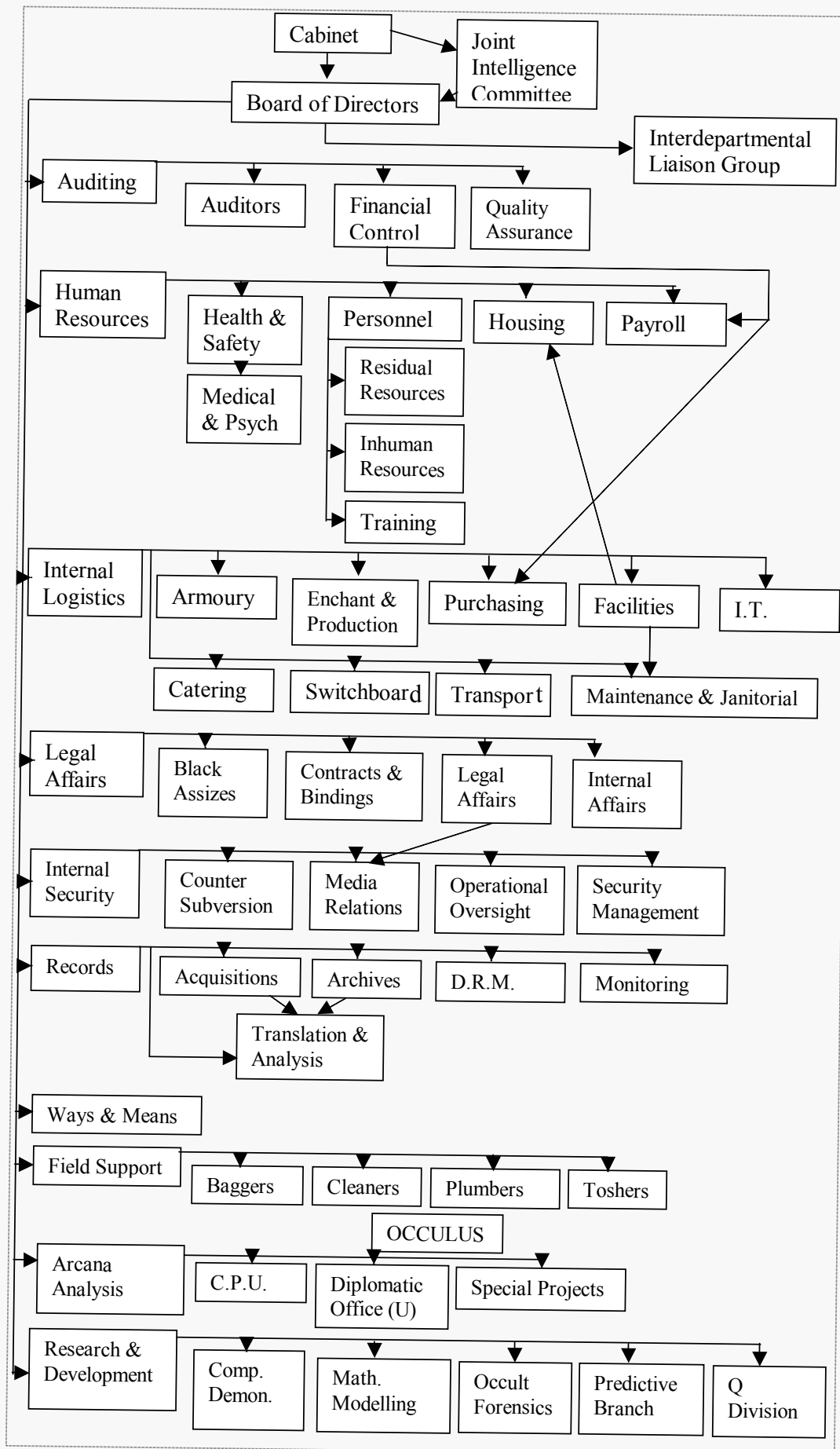
The idea behind this concept is that an employee may report to several managers at once, depending on his current assignments. Bob's day-to-day job may be doing tech support for Human Resources, which means he reports to Manager A in most situations. However, he is an engineer and therefore subject to the dictates of Manager B, who is in charge of all engineers. Any decisions related to Bob must be agreed upon by both managers.

Fortunately for Bob, he also works part-time for Manager C, in Counterpossession. Manager C is much scarier than A or B.

Other Departments

There are other Laundry departments that do not appear on the organisational chart or on the list. Some, like the old Accounts (as in settling) department have been scrapped. Others are secret, known only to those with the right codeword clearance. Still others have been forgotten about but still exist (and will submit their report any century now) or vanished due to some bizarre temporal loop (like Forecasting Operations).

Organisational Structure



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Department Information

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Each section of Capital Laundry Service's labyrinth has some or all of the following information:

Description: A brief description of what services that section provides.

Assignment: If a character works in this section, then this is his starting job and the skills that come with it. Add 10 to each of the listed skills.

Support: If a character can request support from this section, as per the Requisition rules in **Chapter 11: Budgets, Requisitions and Training**, then the difficulty of the request and the support offered is listed in this paragraph.

Administration Division

Administration's budget and manpower dwarfs that of Operations. For every two-fisted field agent with a shotgun in one hand and a rune of banishing in the other, there are a dozen clerks, accountants, inspectors, analysts and middle managers. The Laundry is the world's first ISO9001-certified occult espionage agency and management is keen to maintain that level of quality assurance. Everything must be recorded, filed, double-checked, inspected, catalogued, documented and then discussed endlessly in committee (Today's agenda: ironing out inefficiencies in the documentation process, part 492). Cynics might argue that the purpose of Administration is to give pointless busywork to an army of civil servants who have Seen Things Man Is Not Meant To Know Unless He Has Signed Section Three, but the Laundry does have a very good reason for tracking the most pernickety and obscure things (missing paperclips can be a security breach in a world where sympathetic scrying is a threat; using extremely specific and fiddly document formatting is a great way to catch out a concealed possessor entity and excessive bathroom breaks could be a sign of incipient BLUE HADES transformation).

Department of Auditing

It is the job of the Department of Auditing to make your life hell. Their agents circle above lesser departments like vultures, waiting for a moment of weakness. Then they swoop down and strike without mercy, ignoring the cries of panic, pain and 'what do you mean, we've got to account for every single tube ticket we've bought since 1977?' If you are lucky, then Auditing has merely unleashed some external agency like CESG or the NHS Audit Commission on you, to make sure you have got a license for every copy of Windows 7 Occult Edition ('now slightly less likely to contain cosmic evil!') or check that the asbestos levels are still within acceptable operating parameters. If you are unlucky, the Auditors check up on you... personally.

The Auditors

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Things that you get used to after a few years of working for the Laundry: Strange smells, zombie cleaning staff, unsociable hours, paperwork, tentacles, the impending and inevitable end of the world as we know it.



Things you never get used to: relentlessly foul 'coffee', the sense of dread in certain offices and the Auditors.

The Auditors are high-level mages specialising in truth compulsions. When they ask, you answer, no matter what the question. They have no shame and no hesitation – if they suspect you of having failed or misled your superiors then the Auditors will get to the bottom of it. Privacy is just one of the things you signed away when you joined the Laundry. If the size of your male member or the skeletons in your family closet is relevant in the cold black pitiless eyes of the Auditors, then they will ask the questions you do not want to hear.

Audits can happen at any time (either the Auditors do not sleep or they just take perverse joy in dragging people out of bed at five in the morning to answer questions about misfiled receipts), but rarely without due cause. A good, diligent and quiet employee might get through his whole tour of duty without a single personal Audit – but let's face it, you are not one of those.

Assignment: Auditor's Secretary. Bureaucracy, Etiquette, Knowledge (Law), Sorcery, Status.

Financial Control

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Financial Control's responsibility is to keep the Laundry's budget under control, in much the same way that the big sweaty guys with the drum and the whips keep the rowers under control on a slave galley. Each department has its own annual budget, which is broken down to individual line items at the start of the financial year. Any budget overruns – unforeseen purchases, unexpected projects, Plumbing – must be paid for by the relevant department, unless they have the prior agreement of Financial Control. (Translation: if Yog-Sothoth descends to eat our brains, we had really

better have submitted a budget in advance or else we will have to pay for the suicide nukes out of our own pockets.)

Assignment: Accountant. Appraise, Bureaucracy, Knowledge (Accounting), Knowledge (Business), Knowledge (Law).

Quality Assurance

As mentioned regularly, the Laundry prides itself on Quality Assurance (*ISO9001 Certified* is a lot more comprehensible to Whitehall than *Iä! Shub-Niggurath Nebbu Zin! Begone, in the name of Dee!*). Quality Assurance squats like some bureaucratic shoggoth in the heart of Service House, sending tentacles and squamous minions out. As a foulness shall ye know them – a foulness that regularly reviews individual processes and the quality system itself for effectiveness and facilitates continual improvement... much like a shoggoth grows extra organs as needed. Every department must fully document and record all procedures, even the most arcane and eldritch. (This has been known to cause problems – oddly, certain alien entities who are magically bound to serve the Laundry are unwilling to submit to certification.)

Assignment: Quality Assurance Compliance Officer. Bureaucracy, Knowledge (Business), Knowledge (Politics), Status, Teach.

Department of Human Resources

The Department of Human Resources is the mortal enemy of Ops Division. The opening shots in this bloody bureaucratic war were fired many years ago and good men have died in the trenches, drowned in ink or lost to the forms. Human Resources controls every aspect of life in the Laundry, which makes them singularly unpopular among most employees who do not enjoy every aspect of life in the Laundry. Do not complain too loudly, though – they might hear you and they are subtle and quick to anger.

Health & Safety

In addition to standard Health & Safety restrictions and requirements, the Laundry obviously has a whole range of occult precautions that must be observed. H&S Audits check to make sure that your chair is adjusted correctly (correctly, that is, for some alien species of invertebrate), your number of smoking breaks, your number of shivering-in-a-closet-and-wittering-about-cosmic-horror breaks and that you are observing the correct procedures for summoning Things From Beyond. They even have documentation for field operations (*'employees may not chant for more than 55 minutes at a time without a five minute tea break'*).

Health & Safety's regulations are well-meaning but hopelessly inadequate. They just finished the proposed advisory document on the handling of basilisks, when everyone has already moved onto stoner guns and SCORPION STARE.

Assignment: Health & Safety Assessment Officer. Bureaucracy, First Aid, Knowledge (Law), Science (Biology), Teach.

Housing

Due to security concerns, Laundry employees may only live in housing vetted by Internal Security and the Housing Section. You never know when work is going to follow you home, after all. The list of requirements is extensive – panic buttons, deadlocks on all external doors, regular sweeps for listening devices and thaumic presences, up-to-date wiring, no negative psychic influences and no suspicious looking IC6 neighbours.

Living in London is nigh-impossible on a low-level civil service salary, so most Laundry employees live in housing owned by the department. The Laundry has property all over London (you can get great deals just after you drag the tentacled carcass of something icky out of a flat – motivated seller does not even begin to cover it). The Housing section has a list of cleared flatmates, who have a range of interesting hobbies and odious personal habits.

Assignment: Secure Housing Manager. Knowledge (Architecture), Knowledge (Law), Knowledge (Occult), Repair (Electrical), Sorcery.

FLATMATES FROM HELL

The Laundry has a very limited number of secure houses, so it is standard practise for several employees to share a house. Seeing as the Player Characters are often working closely together, it makes sense (in the twisted, inhuman intellects of Human Resources) for them to be assigned to the same living quarters...

Inhuman Resources

Not all of the Laundry employees are human. While we are not the Black Chamber, they of the sapient demon servitors and the dream-mapped agents, there are a few fishy types up at Dunwich who are not quite *homo sapiens*. The Inhuman Resources section works with the other departments to take care of their special requirements. These requirements can be... unusual, but Catering are used to requests for 500 pounds of raw meat or spinal fluid drained from virgin lambs.

Assignment: Aquatic Affairs Liaison: Etiquette, Knowledge (Law), Knowledge (Linguistics), Knowledge (Occult), Swim.

Assignment: Shoggoth Keeper: Athletics (Running), Heavy Weapons (Flamethrower), Knowledge (Occult), Science (Biology), Sorcery.

Assignment: Subterranean Operations Liaison: Bargain, Knowledge (Architecture), Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Occult), Stealth.

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Medical & Psychological

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Med & Psych is like a fossil from some strange aeon; their bedside manner has not changed since they were founded in 1941. Employees are given biannual checkups to ensure that your blood pressure is not too high and that you are not possessed by some brain-eating horror. For some reason, they insist that you strip naked for the last test and breathe deeply while they probe you with ice-cold stethoscopes and poke you with pins left over from Matthew Hopkins.

To be fair, the Laundry's medical facilities are excellent. You cannot get so much as an aspirin without filling out 16 forms and submitting a budget projection but when it comes to dealing with extreme trauma, gunshots or unusual conditions like decompression, exposure to exotic radiation, bubonic plague or Twomey's Disease, there is no better place (available on the NHS, anyway).

The Psychology department is equally well equipped. Any employee on field duty or who works with extra dimensional entities, computational demonology or similar weird phenomena is given regular psychological screening (due to cutbacks, this screening may be 'once a year, maybe, if the omens are good' or 'when your line manager thinks you need it' or, more often 'when someone overhears you muttering *hastur hastur hastur hastur* over and over). Most Laundry employees are quite a few standard deviations outside the psychological norm to begin with, anyway, so the number of genuine breakdowns is comparatively small considering what field agents go through and most managers are good at spotting employees who need a break, even if it is just a night at the Squid and Crown and a day of leave.

For those who require longer-term care and who cannot be placed in a conventional psychiatric hospital, there is St. Hilda's (see page 90).

Assignment: Doctor. First Aid, Medicine (any two), Research, Science (Biology).

Assignment: Psychiatrist. First Aid, Insight, Knowledge (Occult), Psychotherapy, Research.

Payroll

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An island of normality in a sea of weird, until you sneak a look at their big, leather-bound ledgers that look like leftovers from the days of the East India Company and have entries that... well, *she's* fictional (at least, you thought so), *he's* been dead since 1934 and *that's* not a name in any tongue pronounceable by humans. Payroll is less than au fait with newfangled electronic banking and money transfer, so you get paid by cheque every month and if you are lucky it is not written in pounds, shillings and pence (Payroll resisted decimalisation in the same way they have stoutly resisted Quality Assurance – by having the other departments by the financial short and curlies).

Payroll Clerk: Appraise, Bargain, Bureaucracy, Knowledge (Accounting), Knowledge (Any).

Personnel

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The Personnel office does all the usual things one might expect – paperwork, tracking holiday and sick leave, resolving disputes, sorting temps and other staffing problems – but also has the responsibility of finding places for people newly recruited to the Laundry. Sometimes, it is easy: a computer scientist who nearly landscaped Wolverhampton by summoning Nyarlathotep gets turfed into IT, a squaddie who saw too much gets assigned to Field Operations and the Laundry can always use more overzealous middle managers.

For other new recruits, the choice is not so obvious, making Personnel into the bureaucratic equivalent of the kid making a jigsaw by hammering pieces into place. You were an investment banker before you were possessed? Hmm. Would you like to work in our catering department? Or how about cleaning out the shoggoth tanks?

Assignment: New Employee Assignment Desk. Bureaucracy, Fast Talk, Insight, Knowledge (Any), Teach.

Residual Human Resources

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The Laundry, they say, is a job for life plus 10 years. That is roughly how long it takes for a suitably preserved corpse to rot to the point of uselessness.

A lot of bodies turn up in the Laundry's line of work. Terrorists who had to be put down by OCCULUS teams, unfortunate bystanders who got soul-sucked or exsanguinated or just bludgeoned to death by monsters and a regrettable number of Laundry employees who are killed in the line of duty. Not all of these bodies can be released for reasons of operational security and the Laundry is much too short-staffed and under-funded to just store the corpses.

Hence, Residual Human Resources. Employees should note that the use of the term 'zombies' to refer to metabolically challenged staff is not appreciated and should not be continued. RHRs are human corpses with a class two demon riding shotgun on their decaying central nervous system. RHRs are used as night watchmen, janitors, library workers in the stacks and for other work that is laborious, high-clearance or both (Following employee complaints, RHRs will no longer be used as cafeteria staff). At the end of their tenure, the corpses are exorcised and given a suitable burial, although some zombies have been shambling around the Laundry since the dawn of time.

The RHR office is responsible for treating the corpses, for animating them and for general handling and maintenance. They are all a bit strange down in RHR – you can forgive the black robes and the oaken staves of command but the maniacal laughing is a bit over the top, as is calling themselves the 'necromancer lords'.

Assignment: Zombie Wrangler. Command, Grapple, Knowledge (Occult), Sense, Sorcery.

Training

The Training section (more correctly, the Training, In-Service Education and Certification Office) co-ordinates employee training courses within the Laundry. Maintaining and improving employee skills is part of the Laundry's drive towards Total Quality, so all those training budgets have to be used for something. This may mean janitorial staff are sent off for a weekend course in wing chun or surveillance or biohazard handling but is more likely to involve a lot of Powerpoint slides in hot airless rooms as some RHR drones on about Windows NT server management or proper accountancy procedures.

The Training office works with Inhuman Resources and Facilities to manage the Dunwich complex, the Lough Ness training grounds and the Invisible College's lecture series (see page 110).

Assignment: Training Co-Ordinator. Bureaucracy, Etiquette, Knowledge (Any), Status, Teach.

Department of Internal Logistics

The Internal Logistics department is the spine of the Laundry (hunched, twisted and prone to osteoporosis). It is second only to Human Resources in size but come a distant fourth or fifth in influence.

Armoury

The Laundry's armoury is not so much extensive as eclectic, like an exhibition of unlikely ways to kill people. You have got standard firearms, like pistols and shotguns, as well as more impressive kit – if you have got a particularly stubborn shoggoth, then why not try the Javelin Medium-Range Anti-Tank Guided Weapon? Make your way past the nuke suits (Integrated Biological Defence Systems) and the rack of sniper rifles and shotguns and you get to a range of quasi-medieval weapons made using modern technology, like swords with a tungsten carbide edge or carbon-fibre crossbows (some entities are irritatingly bulletproof). Then there are the unconventional weapons, like HOGs, Basilisk Guns, Shrivellers or Inverse Weapon Salves Delivery Pods and occult upgrades for conventional weapons such as banishment rounds and Tillinghast sights. And after all that, you reach the really impressive stuff, but that is beyond your clearance level.

You cannot just stroll into the Armoury and check out whatever you want – only those cleared to carry weapons may request a firearm and even then the restrictions on its use are considerable. The management frowns on casual or unsafe use of firearms.

The Armoury is also the place to go for non-lethal gadgets, like fresh wards or panic buttons.

Assignment: Armoury Clerk. Firearms (any two), Heavy Weapons (Any), Knowledge (Law), Repair (Weapons).

Support: Varies. Requisition occult items or weapons.

LAUNDRY PAY GRADES AND TITLES

'You've been fast-tracked for senior management for the past eight years. You knew that, didn't you? But you're only graded as an SSO 3. That's a bit low to be anything senior, so I did some digging. You're not being held back; it's just that the Laundry operates a Y-shaped promotion path – administration and line ranks diverge above a very low level. You're due for regrading later this year, Bob. If you pass the board, they'll make you an SSO 4(L). Doesn't sound like much, but it's the first step on the line hierarchy and it'll entitle you to boss Army majors around. Or police superintendents. I'm an SSO 6(A) but you'd be able to tell me what to do.'

— The Fuller Memorandum

The Laundry's internal grading system runs from 1 (new recruits) to at least 12 (very senior staff). Each step on the promotion ladder brings with it an increase in pay and pension, as well as added responsibilities. In addition, employees are assigned to Administration or Line roles above grade 4; only Line officers may be promoted to various key positions in Management.

Each grade has a variety of titles, depending on which department you work for. Job titles are typically non-descriptive – in a meeting, you might have a Senior Administrative Officer, an Executive Administrative Officer, a Supervising Technician, a Technical Supervisor, an Administrative Assistant or two and a Senior Assistant Technical Officer. (If you are not sure who is in charge, wait and see who gets served tea first when the trolley comes around.)

Catering

The unsung heroes of the war against cosmic horrors, the Laundry's catering corps provide nigh-endless cups of tea and nigh-inedible sandwiches to the staff. Catering is also responsible for the dietary needs of various 'biological assets' and specialist staff. The long-running dispute about who is responsible for procuring souls has finally been resolved in Catering's favour (you cannot stick a fork in a soul, so it is not their problem).

Assignment: Canteen. Craft (Cookery), First Aid, Listen, Sense, Spot.

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Enchantment and Production

E&P maintains a little arcane production line, mass-producing items that were originally developed by Q Division but which are now standard issue. Wards, warrant cards, summoning grids, banishment rounds and so on, anything that is needed 'occult and in bulk'. The E&P workshops are located in Liverpool in an unmarked warehouse complex. For unknown reasons, all but one of the doors into this complex are only three feet high and the place is soundproofed.

Assignment: Field Testing Coordinator. Appraise, Computer Use (Magic), Craft (Any), Knowledge (Occult), Repair (Any).

Facilities

Facilities – recently retitled, as it used to be Works and Buildings – is in charge of the Laundry's physical structures, offices and buildings. They are not responsible for day-to-day maintenance (that is Maintenance) or individual secure dwellings (that is Housing), but they are the ones who allocate office space and build new facilities (or, more accurately, put contracts out to tender to the handful of companies rated to build with blood mixed into the mortar and who have a geomancer on staff). The Laundry has a long list of requirements for new sites, but the right level of thaum is vitally important. You want enough weird bleeding through to make certain magics viable, but you also do not want a bad ley line or unresolved psychic tangle screwing up sensitive equipment. A lot of Laundry facilities are built on top of old monasteries, churches or graveyards to take advantage of ambient energies.

Assignment: Wiring and Warding Technician. Computer Use (Magic), Craft (Building), Knowledge (Occult), Repair (any two).

Information Technology

Adventurer! You have entered the deepest level of the dungeon of Laundry Bureaucracy, ruled by the dread necromancer Human Resources. You are in a dank 10' by 10' cubicle. On the floor, you see many discarded Jolt cola bottles and a tangled mess of cables. The chamber is illuminated by many blinking lights. Somewhere, you smell the pallid denizens of this realm. They chitter to each other in a strange dialect, redolent of mystic words and lolcats. What do you do?

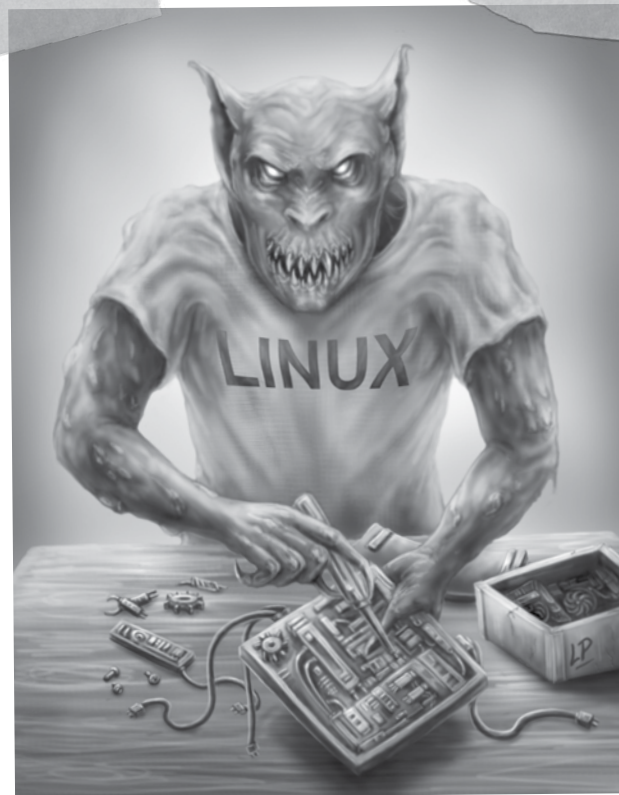
>Examine computer

You do not understand how to work this thing. Nonetheless, you fiddle with the settings and break it.

>Call for help

The IT goblins eat you.

Information Technology is vital to the Laundry's operations. There is an unbroken line from Alan Turing and *Colossus* down to Linux and the many beige boxes that the Laundry uses to summon up spirits from the vasty deep of the



Mandlebrot set. You would think, therefore, that IT would be well-funded and influential, given that it is absolutely fundamental to the organisation.

Instead, IT gets a dungeon and a pile of office-ready PCs. Most of the civil service still standardises on Internet Explorer 6, for Cthulhu's sake. (The Laundry has a special exemption for this, as a security breach here can have worse consequences than some Russian mobsters snarfing your credit card.)

Assignment: Helpdesk. Computer Use (any three), Knowledge (Occult), Technology Use (Any).

Purchasing

The keepers of the coffers, Purchasing's job is to say no to as many requests as possible. Can we buy a new summoning grid to contain – *no*. How about 20 million pounds to study suspected reality breaches in – *no*. A new biro? *Maybe – fill out these forms and wait until the start of the next financial year.* A word of warning – do not try a geas or any other mind-warping spells on Purchasing staff. Not only is it a serious breach of ethics, they are also warded to fry the brains of anyone who tries to tamper with budgetary decisions using magic.

Assignment: Financial Analyst. Appraise, Bureaucracy, Persuade, Research, Status.

Maintenance and Janitorial

This section is responsible for maintaining and cleaning all Laundry facilities. It employs more than a third of the Laundry's Residual Human Resource assets. In the Laundry,

even cleaning requires special precautions – leaving aside the strange goo and alien ichor, you also have to consider the risk of high thaum fields and their effects on rubbish. If you dispose of, say, a pair of latex gloves without properly degaussing them, then you have got EVIL HAND STRANGLES LOCAL MAN headlines the next day.

Switchboard

The Laundry's switchboard office is one of those things it's best not to ask too many questions about. They're inhumanly efficient, for one thing. Ask them nicely, and they will transfer your call to the phone nearest to the Laundry employee you are calling, even if he is on vacation in the Costa del Sol and the closest phone is the mobile of some other sun-lizard. Switchboard is also hooked into ECHELON and monitors phone calls across the UK for codewords and key phrases. All that and they take messages too.

Just do not hold the phone up to your ear for too long. If you do, just beyond the hiss of static and the susurrus of your own blood, you will make out someone screaming, very very far away.

Transport

Most of the time, agents are obliged to use public transport or their own vehicles but the Laundry does have a small specialised motor pool, including warded Bentleys for important dignitaries, cars equipped with invisibility spells for surveillance work and a few other curiosities, like the four occult recon Concordes that were operated by 666 Squadron or the tube train that is kept stored in the Kennington Loop.

Assignment: Courier. Drive (Auto), Knowledge (Streetwise), Navigate, Repair (vehicle), Sorcery.

Support:

- Average: Transportation to anywhere in the United Kingdom.
Average: Requisition a vehicle for use in London.
Difficult: International plane tickets at short notice.
Difficult: Requisition a magically augmented vehicle.

Department of Legal Affairs

The Laundry is not a bunch of occult cowboys who can sling spells around with impunity; they are not James Bond with a wizard hat, either. They are civil servants. The first question in any situation is not 'how do we stop this rampaging Elder God', but 'will our actions leave the government liable to a lawsuit in any conceivable way, shape or form?'

Black Assizes

The Black Assizes date back to the reign of King James I, who had a bit of a bee in his bonnie bonnet about sorcerers and witches. Back then, sorcery was something of an aristocratic hobby and so James decreed that sorcerers should get to face a jury of their peers just like everyone else. The Black Assizes is the only court in the land qualified

to convict a sorcerer (technically, most Laundry employees could demand that they be sent before the Black Assizes rather than the ordinary justice system but do you really want to stand in front of a court who really can condemn you to hell?). The Assizes are still in use today and try criminal cases that involve genuine sorcery. The judge and jury are all magically warded just in case someone tries to put a whammy on the wheels of justice.

Convicted prisoners are either magically compelled and sent to a mundane prison or incarcerated in the Laundry's own secure facility in Falkirk.

Assignment: Bailiff of the Black Assizes. Grapple, Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Law), Knowledge (Occult), Sorcery.

Contracts and Bindings

Contracts and Bindings handle the occult side of legal operations. They are the ones who draft treaties with alien powers or come up with watertight geas for binding Level Four entities to service. If you want to sell your soul, they have forms for that.

Assignment: Apprentice Demonologist. Knowledge (Law), Knowledge (Occult), Persuade, Research, Sorcery.

Legal Affairs

Legal Affairs spends most of its time telling other departments to please stop doing things that are technically illegal, advising them on what to do now they have done something illegal and getting Laundry staff out of legal binds. The Warrant Card covers a multitude of sins.

Assignment: Legal Researcher. Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Law), Knowledge (Occult), Research, Status.

Internal Affairs

The mundane counterpart to Contracts and Bindings, Internal Affairs deals with the Laundry's internal legal matters such as employee contracts, grievances, disciplinary hearings and internal investigations.

Assignment: Internal Affairs Investigator. Bureaucracy, Insight, Knowledge (Law), Persuade, Status.

Department of Internal Security

Internal Security is one of the departmental footballs that gets kicked back and forth between Administration and Ops divisions every few years. Both sides want the power but neither wants the headaches. Internal Security carries on regardless, ignoring the political storms that crash above.

Counter-subversion

In the shadow world of counter-subversion, the Cold War never ended... and they are right. Counter-subversion's

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role is to ensure that there are no leaks or double agents working within the Laundry and the biggest threat to counter-subversion is still out there. The Black Chamber is still going strong. Counter-subversion keeps tabs on Laundry personnel and drags them before the Auditors for interrogation when, in their obsessive focus on enemies overseas, counter-subversion has missed a few other internal problems in recent years. Just ask Bob Howard about his recent line managers.

Assignment: Counter-Subversion Office. Insight, Knowledge (Espionage), Knowledge (Politics), Research, Technology Use (Surveillance).

Media Relations

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Media Relations handles cover-ups and official disinformation. They have got the editor of every major newspaper on speed-dial, so they can squash any (*alien monster eats pensioner*) unwanted (*Satan lives in my fractal screensaver!*) stories (*Government pays immigrant workers from under the sea millions!*) by issuing a D-Notice (Defence Advisory – a polite request not to publish information deemed to be detrimental to state security). These days, of course, they are more likely to be found trawling RSS feeds and posting denials to forums. It is a sad decline for an office where having expensive lunches with the editors of the *Times* was once a weekly treat.

Media Relations sits oddly with the other sections in Internal Security – it was bundled in here eight years ago, as part of the reorganisation that created the ILG. Committee meetings are still rather fraught.

Assignment: Researcher. Computer Use (Hacking), Fast Talk, Knowledge (Occult), Knowledge (Politics), Research.

Support:

Easy: Get access to newspaper records or journalists.

Average: Issue a D-Notice to a local newspaper or broadcaster.

Difficult: Issue a D-Notice to a national newspaper or broadcaster.

Operational Oversight

.....

Operational Oversight ensures that any field operations are carried out properly. If you, say, fail to secure a weapon or loose track of a suspected cultist, then you can expect to have a lengthy chat with an Operational Oversight committee in the near future. Operational Oversight is currently the bludgeon of choice for Administration to use when beating Operations over the head.

Assignment: Operational Oversight Invigilator. Bureaucracy, Insight, Knowledge (Law), Persuade, Sorcery.

Security Management

.....

Security Management's role is to secure Laundry facilities and personnel. They are the ones who certify locations as being acceptably lethal to intruders, who do background

checks on new recruits and contacts and who generally see the outside world as the enemy. Professional paranoids, the lot of them.

Assignment: Security System Installation Technician. Craft (Building), First Aid, Repair (Any), Science (Thaumaturgy), Technology Use (Surveillance)

Assignment: Background Check Researcher. Bureaucracy, Disguise, Listen, Research, Stealth.

Interdepartmental Liaison Group

The Interdepartmental Liaison Group (or ILG) is a small department-level group within the Laundry, created in early 2002 to consolidate the organisation's links with other security and law enforcement bodies. The ILG is also supposed to lay the foundations for dealing with CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN.

Army and Air Force Office: Co-ordinates with the Royal Air Force and the British Army through the Defence Intelligence Staff.

Cabinet Office Liaison: Co-ordinates with the Cabinet.

Diplomatic Office (Conventional): Co-ordinates with foreign governments and other agencies.

Foreign Office Liaison: Co-ordinates with the Foreign Office (responsible for overseas affairs and international diplomacy).

Intelligence Liaison Office: Co-ordinates with the Joint Intelligence Committee, GCHQ, MI5 and MI6.

Home Office Liaison: Co-ordinates with the Home Office (responsible for immigration control and security within the United Kingdom).

Naval Office: Co-ordinates with the Royal Navy.

Police Liaison Office: Co-ordinates with the police services, primarily the Metropolitan Police via the Specialist Operations Directorate.

Assignment: Liaison Officer. Bureaucracy, Etiquette, Knowledge (Politics), Persuade, Status.

Department of Records

The Department of Records is a musty maze of files staffed by equally-musty clerks. Asking for one of their beloved files is like asking for their first-born; woe betide you if you get coffee stains on anything.

Acquisitions

.....

You know that warehouse from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*? It is like that. Acquisitions department is responsible for storing physical artefacts that do not fit neatly into an envelope (like the skull of a dragon or the weird non-Euclidian structures we found in Madagascar or that weird ticking clock thing). It used to share space with the British Museum, but it got moved to a warehouse in Hounslow years ago.

Assignment: Acquisitions Curator. Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Occult), Language (Any), Repair (Any), Science (Thaumaturgy).



Archives

Better known as the Stacks, the Archives section is located in a disused tube station deep underground. There is 50 kilometres of shelf space down here in the gloom, packed with documents and microfiche and CDs and the occasional misfiled grimoire. The Stacks are staffed mainly by zombies; if you want a file, it is better to ask one of the staff members to retrieve it from their arcane filing system rather than go looking for it yourself.

You can request any document from the stacks that you have codeword clearance to read.

Assignment: Archives Clerk. Bureaucracy, Knowledge (any two), Navigate, Research, Stealth.

Document Restriction Magic

All Laundry documents have DRM to ensure that only the right people can read them. The Document Restriction Magic office is responsible for sticking the right wards on the files. The intensity of warding varies depending on how important the file is. A low-ranking ward might just make the document unreadable to anyone without the right clearances, while more powerful protections range from 'alerts the Watchers' to 'my, don't your eyeballs look yummy'.

Assignment: Ward Security Reviewer. Appraise, Fine Manipulation, Knowledge (Any), Research, Sorcery.

Monitoring

Monitoring section's drones are eternally overworked. Their job is to monitor all occult activity in the United Kingdom, which means 'scouring every newspaper, publication and, these days, website and blog for possible signs of weirdness'. They use data trawling demons and have access to the ECHELON database and have all sorts of tricks to distinguish silly buggers from your genuine monster sighting but it is still a monumental task. Where possible, they outsource part of the never-ending workload to other departments, which is why Bob spends half his day peering at dodgy websites.

It is a far cry from the halcyon days of the '30s, when Monitoring was part of the old Mass Observation project and you really could come in each morning, read the newspapers, have a cup of tea and go home again.

Assignment: Researcher. Bureaucracy, Knowledge (Any two), Listen, Research.

Translation and Analysis

Most of the old (pre-Turing) occultists were grade-A nutcases and their writings are one part genuinely useful information to six parts paranoid ranting, five parts wild hallucination, four parts sniping at other occultists and at least eight parts rampant speculation and outright lies. To add irritation to insult, they tended to write in obscure or wholly invented languages. Oh, and they had terrible handwriting.

Still, the Laundry needs that one part of genuinely useful information, so T&A section gets to track down obscure occult tomes, scan them in, translate them and then work out what the hell the writer was on about. Most of the big ones (the *Necronomicon*, *Culte des Ghoules*, *the Book of Eibon*, *the Voynich Manuscript* and so on) were done years ago, but there are still some books out there that the Laundry would kill to get its paws on.

Assignment: Translator. Appraise, Fine Manipulation, Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Occult), Language (Any), Sorcery.

Operations Division

Never mind the panoply of state and secrecy, the cold-war trappings of village and security cordon – what it's about, when you get down to it, is this: our appalling vulnerability, collectively, before the onslaught of beings we can barely comprehend. A lesser one, not even one of the Great Old Ones, would be enough to devastate a city; we play under the shadow of forces so sinister that a momentary relaxation of vigilance would see all that is human blotted out.

I can go back to London, and they will let me go back to my desk and my stuffy cubicle and my job fixing broken office machines. No recriminations, just a job for life and a pension in thirty-five years time in return for a promise of silence to the grave. Or I can go back to the office in the village and sign the piece of paper that says they can do whatever they like with me. Unthanked, possibly fatal service, anywhere in the world: called on to do things which may well be repugnant, and which I will never be able to talk about. Maybe no pension at all, just an unmarked grave in some isolated defile on a central Asian plateau, or a sock-shod foot washed up, unaccompanied, on a Pacific beach one morning while the crabs dine heavy. Nobody ever volunteered for field ops because of the pay and conditions. On the other hand...

I look at the starfish-thing and see eyes, human eyes, with worms moving inside them, and I realise there is no choice. Really, there never was a choice.

— The Atrocity Archives

Operations Division is the other half (well, more like three-eighths, tops) of the Laundry. They are the ones who actually leave the safe confines of the office and smite things that need to be smitted. Operations works on more of a case-by-case basis than other divisions – one week, you are tagging ghouls in Manchester and next week they are flying you to some post-soviet Obscuristan you have never heard of to cast death spells on interesting people. Still, it beats rotting in a cubicle.

Department of Ways and Means

This department is officially in charge of allocating the black budget to other Ops projects. The Laundry as a whole is funded out of the Single Intelligence Account, which also pays for the Security Service (MI5), the Secret Service (MI6) and a lot of other spooks, all of which get their grubby paws on the money first. Ways and Means has to make do with what it gets.

Rumours claim that Ways and Means is also the new home of the Laundry's ultra deniable black bag jobs (now that Accounts is gone) but who listens to rumours anyway?

Department of Field Support

Field Support teams are specialised units, drawn from the Laundry's active agents and friendly resources, like the Territorial SAS or the Met's SO15. Support teams are never more than a phone-call away – any of these teams can be on site anywhere in London in 30 minutes and anywhere in the mainland UK within four hours.

Of course, that comes at a cost. Field Support teams are damned expensive even before you wake them at four in the morning, load them into a Puma HC1 and fly them to some godforsaken place. Field Support calls come out of the budget of whichever department requested the support. No-one is saying that you should sacrifice your own life instead of calling in the occult cavalry but think twice before calling.

'Baggers'

Baggers are occult support and control units, specialising in securing dangerous substances or creatures. As the name suggests, you call them in when there is something that needs to be put into a black bag and hauled away for analysis or controlled invocation. Baggers can also be called in to do occult field forensics.

Assignment: Bagger. Fine Manipulation, Science (Any), Science (Thaumaturgy), Sorcery, Track.

Support:

Easy: Occult forensic examination of a crime scene.

Average: Banishment of an entity that is already secure.

Difficult: Banishment or containment of a hazardous creature that is still on the loose.

'Cleaners'

Call the Cleaners when your cover is in jeopardy and you need support. The usual use of Cleaners is to remove unwanted bodies and bloodstains, but they can also make living people vanish, erase official records and even wipe memories if needed.

Assignment: Cleaner. Disguise, Fast Talk, Sense, Sorcery, Spot.

Support:

Average: Erase evidence at a contained location.

Difficult: Erase evidence and deal with witnesses at a public location.

'Plumbers'

Plumbers are the Laundry's field sorcery unit, specialising in exorcism, memory suppression, counter-possession and banishings. They are called to deal with outbreaks of possession or when witnesses need to be convinced they saw nothing unusual.

Plumber is also used as a generic term for any Field Support unit.

Assignment: Plumber. Firearms (Any), Knowledge (Occult), Science (Thaumaturgy), Sorcery, Stealth.

Support:

Easy: Prevent Laundry personnel from talking about an incident by placing them under geas.

Easy: Banish a level one or two entity.

Average: Alter memories of a single individual.

Average: Banish a level three entity.

Difficult: Alter memories of multiple individuals.

Difficult: Banish a level four entity.

'Toshers'

Tosher teams are specially trained in going where no man wanted to go before. They come equipped with scuba gear, HAZMAT suits and vacuum-proofed guns. Toshers have gone down deep shafts in Scotland that were carved by inhuman hands; they have explored flooded temples under London and caverns under Glastonbury. There are bodies buried in unmarked graves six kilometres from the South Pole, in the Hindu Kush and on the moons of Saturn. Gate travel is part of their expertise.

Assignment: Tosher. Climb, Firearms (Any), Science (Any), Spot, Technical Use (Survival gear)

OCCULUS

(Occult Control Coordination Unit Liaison, Unconventional Situations)

OCCULUS units are the NATO emergency response teams for occult situations. They are brought in when things are liable to go very bad, very quickly. An OCCULUS deployment consists of a control vehicle, a bunch of seriously scary troops and sorcerers and the authority to do whatever is necessary to prevent Armageddon.

Assignment: OCCULUS Support Officer. Command, Firearms (Any), Listen, Spot, Strategy.

Department of Arcana Analysis

The Department of Arcana has survived largely unaltered since the first days of the Laundry. The only thing that changed is the name; it has gone from being Station XIII of SOE to Unconventional Warfare to the Department of Arcana Analysis, but there is still the same picture of King George VI on the wall and the same eerie feeling in the corridor, as if you are being watched by invisible forces – and, of course, Angleton is always the same.

Counterpossession

The Counterpossession Unit is the occult counterpart of Counter-Subversion, ensuring that no Laundry personnel are being used as puppets by alien powers or are secret Cthulhu worshippers or have gone mad with power and are plotting to summon Azathoth in the middle of Westminster Abbey (again). Modern-day safety procedures and wards

makes possession a lot less common than it used to be¹, giving Counterpossession a) a nice fat black budget and b) carte blanche to poke its nose into any Laundry affairs.

Assignment: Counter-Possession Exorcist. Bureaucracy, Insight, Knowledge (Occult), Sorcery, Stealth.

Diplomatic Office (Unconventional)

'It is quite in keeping with the character of the Laundry to be aware of the most peculiar anomalies in our diplomatic past – the walking ghosts of conflicts past, as it were – and be ready to reactivate them at a moment's notice. That which never sleeps lives on until awakened, and it's not just us citizens of old-fashioned Einsteinian spacetime who make treaties, right?'

— The Atrocity Archives

The Laundry has treaties with foreign powers, treaties that can and will be invoked in time of need. The Benthic Treaty (see page 210) is the best known of these but there were older bargains than the Agreement of the Azores. Since the time of Dee, the Crown has given its assent to secret contracts. Pray we will never be called upon to fulfil our side of the bargains.

Assignment: Cultural Attaché. Etiquette, Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Occult), Knowledge (Politics), Persuade.

Special Projects

Special Projects, also known as the Laundry Basket, is a catch-all section for various projects that do not fit neatly into the current organisational chart or who no-one wants to touch without the safety precaution of an intervening layer of non-accountability. It has the reputation of being the weirdest part of the Laundry, which is an accomplishment.

Department of Research and Development

One of the ways to get recruited into the Laundry is to nearly do something that is simultaneously very smart and very stupid. The very smart bit is to independently discover some aspect of the Turing Theorem or some other bit of arcana, like the Logic of Thoth or the Rune of Al-Sabbah; the very stupid bit is to use it. If you are lucky, a group of angry young civil servants show up and escort you away before you accidentally summon Azathoth. If you are unlucky, they show up five minutes too late.

Anyway, the Department of Research is the one place where you are allowed to play with tentacles and higher mathematics. Projects range from pure research (*'what is the nature of reality, and why does it have teeth'*) to practical

¹ Although CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN promises a brain-eating demon for everyone in the audience.

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applications like death spells and Ever-Full Teapots. Research boffins tend to enjoy their work a little too much.

The Laundry has watchers in most of the top-end academic institutions in the country, although these days you are as likely to find some pimply-faced youth accidentally summoning up Nyarlathotep in a polytechnic as in the hallowed halls of academia. Sometimes, a particularly promising student is recruited directly long before they tread into the realms of the arcane but most are pulled out just before (or just after) they call up the wrong Thing. After all, it is a lot easier to convince someone that magic is real and they should dedicate their lives to battling the Great Old Ones if they have seen the consequences first-hand.

Research is also supposed to support field operations by analysing collected data, predicting potential threats and developing new methods of dealing with occult dangers. In practise, most field agents prefer researchers to stay behind cover and not move until it is all over.

Computational Demonology

.....

Computational Demonology (or CompDem) specialises in developing and expanding magical theory, which amounts to sticking your head into the depths of the dark anthropic zone (that hoary region of the multiverse where the Old Ones dwell) and shouting 'hello! Anybody home?' The *really* abstruse stuff is more the domain of Mathematical Modelling – CompDem produces actually useful spells and summonings.

They can also be called in to reverse-engineer spells, disarm live containment grids or work strategic wonders.

Assignment: Computational Demonology Researcher. Computer Use (Any), Computer Use (Magic), Science (Mathematics), Science (Thaumaturgy), Sorcery.

Mathematical Modelling

.....

The Mathematical Modelling section is staffed by a bunch of very smart boffins who use maths to explore strange new universes. They start with 'let $x=Yog-Sothoth$ ' and go from there. Their calculations are carried out in shielded conditions or the shadows they throw on the platonic realm of pure mathematics might grow tentacles and ooze back into our little cave. Whatever Mathematical Modelling is up to is a mystery to most employees – they could be mapping the Dark Anthropic Zone or searching for parallel Earths that have already passed through CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN.

Assignment: Mathematical Modelling. Computer Use (Any), Computer Use (Magic), Knowledge (Occult), Science (Any), Science (Mathematics).

Occult Forensics

.....

Occult Forensics section delves into the mysteries of thaumic fields and sympathetic traces, not to mention comparing dental patterns of shoggothim. They can find out who the murderer was by raising up the corpse and

OVERSEAS OPERATIONS

Deploying an officer overseas is done only when it is absolutely necessary, as it involves more paperwork than the human mind can comfortably comprehend. Financial Control looks askance at anything that might be considered a junket or a waste of time and money. The Laundry can send an investigative team overseas at short notice but usually only to destinations serviced by budget airlines operating out of Stansted Airport or Luton.

Still, officers may find themselves sent abroad to liaise with one of the EU partner agencies or to spy on some cult or sinister force that threatens British interests or to dig up an ancient temple in the Falklands. The Laundry also has officers permanently stationed at bureaux overseas, where they keep an eye on local occult activity and liaise with head office. Due to cutbacks, many of these local bureaux are little more than one man in an old school tie and a grotty little office that claims to be an Import/Export company/the British cultural attaché/passport control/the Esoteric Order of Dagon mission.

triggering the last few memories laid down in the brain or work out which spell was cast by analysing the ruined containment grid and the burn patterns on the hard drive. They are our magical CSI department.

Assignment: Occult Forensics Analyst. Science (Any three), Sense, Spot.

Predictive Branch

.....

Also known as the Weather Service, Predictive Branch uses a variety of divination methods to foresee the future. They have got banks of crystal balls hooked up to webcams, a pool of remote viewers staring at fractal screensavers, random synchronicity searches on the web, stochastic mapping of tarot cards to what is trending on Twitter and let us not forget psychic Mabel, who gets a funny feeling in her left knee whenever one of the Old Ones tries to break into our reality.

Predictive Branch is one of the oldest Laundry sections and spent its early years trying to determine German tank movements in Western Europe through the entrails of seagulls. Its predictions are notoriously vague, except when they are absurdly specific. Predictive Branch has a total miss rate of about 30%, when their advice is wholly wrong (hello,

45 minute WMDs), but that is balanced by the roughly 30% of the time they get it somewhat right and the 20% that their advice is absolutely vital.

Assignment: Stochastic Analyst. Knowledge (Any), Research, Science (Any), Science (Mathematics). You may also permanently increase your Luck by 10%.

Q Division

Q Division is where the Laundry gets those wonderful toys. The boffins and mad scientists down there have been making weapons since 1941 – they started with containment grids disguised as handkerchiefs and fire-and-forget demon summoning, but they have graduated to basilisk guns, Ibn-Ghazi aerosols and are working on pin-point polarised gateways to higher-energy zones and auto necromantic talismans for field agents.

Assignment: Mad Boffin. Computer Use (Magic), Craft (Any), Firearms (Esoteric), Repair (Any), Science (Any).

Support: Varies. Requisition occult items or esoteric weapons.

Laundry Facilities

Or, where do you toil away in the service of Her Majesty's Government?

As the red-headed stepchild of the intelligence community, the Laundry is encouraged to Make Do. The government spends the money when it has to – a few million for containment grids here, a few million for strategic gating there – but a spirit of wartime austerity prevails in general. The Laundry does not yet have a shiny architectural monstrosity like MI6's Babylon-on-Thames. Most employees are stationed in offices that have crawled out of the 1970s to die in obscure locations. The walls are a non-Euclidian shade of beige or green, mercifully hidden by stacked ringbinders and bookshelves.

Greater London

The Laundry's primary offices are in London, close to the seat of power. They used to be in Service House, a squat Georgian monolith just down the road from the Foreign Office. Service House is now mostly a hole in the ground², as it is being rebuilt just in time³ for CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN. Certain parts of the building had to be retained – there are spells woven into the very stones that cannot be broken. Other sections were magically transferred to the New Annexe, the current home of the organisation. The New Annexe is an anonymous 1960s office block in South

² Not as big as the hole in the public finances, which has put the whole operation in jeopardy.

³ It is only 15 months behind schedule at this point. No doubt the soul-devouring horrors from beyond the stars will wait politely. Queensbury rules apocalypse.

THE SQUID AND CROWN

The Squid and Crown is Ye Olde British Pubbe that was just down the road from the Laundry's first headquarters in Soho. It got adopted as the Laundry's semi-official watering hole in the '50s and was bought by the government in the '60s as it was cheaper than vetting all the bar staff to make sure that they were not Communist spies or cultists or Black Chamber drone zombies.

The pub got a full warding suite of enchantments along with the change in ownership, and you need a warrant card to even get past the door. The inside has not changed much, though – it is still all frayed cushions with the padding falling out, a stale smell of smoke that lingers despite the ban, real ales and a jukebox in the corner that reads your mind. There used to be a Space Invaders console too but that was removed as a potential security risk.

Oddly, the pub is convenient to the Laundry's current headquarters in the New Annexe, even though that is nowhere near Soho. Stiff drinks after traumatic encounters with the unnameable are a speciality.

London, with all the charm of a dead fish but it is home for the foreseeable future.

The New Annexe is the domain of Management and much of Administration; most of the technical and operations staff are scattered around various secure locations outside heavily populated areas (translation: if some berk accidentally summons Yog-Sothoth, it is better he do it in Basildon than in the city centre). The largest of these is the Station III complex located under Mornington Crescent tube station but there is also the Occult Forensics out in Croydon, the old Arcana labs in Greenwich, the Acquisitions warehouse in Hounslow and the warding lines built into the Thames Barrier.

Other, smaller offices are scattered through the city. Some are government property, inhabited by one department or another over the decades. Others were purchased cheaply by the Laundry following an exorcism or other occult event. The Unconventional Diplomacy office, for example, is still crammed into a basement in Electra House, while parts of Purchasing are housed in a refurbished clothes factory in Camden. (The old attic room in Soho where the Laundry first started is still in the organisation's possession. Officially,

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it is slated to become a museum when the Laundry goes public; some claim that it is haunted by the spectres of Claude Dansey and the other founders.)

Quite a lot of the Laundry's London facilities are located underground. The archives, for example, are stored in a disused stretch of tunnel under Service House that started out as a tube station, spent the Second World War and the early Cold War as a civil service bomb shelter and got turned into the Stacks in 1953. There are hundreds of miles of tunnels under London and the Laundry's tentacles snake through many of them.

Lower-grade staff members usually get assigned to underground offices. Just ignore the smells and the occasional scratching noise from the far side of the plasterboard. It is probably just rats in the walls. Big ones.

Manchester

The Laundry's 'Invisible College' is located in Manchester. Tom Kilburn, a former SOE necromancer and one of the fathers of modern computing, was the head of the facility from its foundation in 1947 to 1962. The Invisible College is a training school and research centre for computational demonology. Most of its facilities are on the campus of the University of Manchester.

Dunwich

Dunwich, in Norfolk, is a small village on the coast that does not exist. The Ministry of Defence used it as a training ground during the war; the Laundry inherited it after that and it is still in use for training today. Most field exercises and combat training take place here. It is nice and private – the fields and woods around Dunwich are heavily warded, repelling any intruders or avid ramblers from approaching the village by land. As for by sea, well, let us just say that the waters around Dunwich are treacherous and that the rocks have been known to move. And to bite.

Most Laundry personnel spend a few weekends each year at training courses in Dunwich. The Monkfish Motel is rarely empty. For more, see *Going Down To Dunwich* on page 241.

Porton Down

Most of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory at Porton Down is concerned with wholly mundane ways to kill people horribly. They invented VX nerve gas there, a lovely substance that is right up there with nuclear weapons in terms of potential megadeaths. Several of the Laundry's more questionable research facilities are located in Porton Down, including the Shoggoth Research Lab and the Pestilence Division.

St. Hilda's

Rejoicing in the full name of *St Hilda of Grantham's Home For Disgruntled Waifs And Strays*, this is the Laundry's private asylum for the temporarily or permanently insane and possessed. Most employees refer to it as the Funny Farm.

To ensure that the incarcerated possessor-entities and insane sorcerers are properly cared for, the building is loaded down with protective wards and is kept thaumaturgically grounded. Most of the staff members are robots, controlled by a demon-powered AI in the basement.

Kirkcudbright Training Area (Scotland)

The Laundry shares the Kirkcudbright Training Area with the British Army. This stretch of Scottish woodland and coastline is used primarily for live-fire exercises and joint training programs but also for occult weapons testing and the occasional open-air summoning. There is also a second testing area attached to the Kirkcudbright establishment at Loch Ness, for underwater operations well away from Our Friends in the Deep (BLUE HADES).

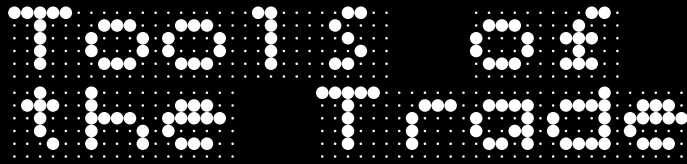
Trawsfynydd (Wales)

Trawsfynydd is a small village in the middle of nowhere, aka Wales. The Laundry has two facilities in this region. On the surface, there is what most people believe was the Trawsfynydd nuclear power station but was actually the Laundry's VLCG (Very Large Containment Grid) and associated research labs. The VLCG has been decommissioned in favour of the joint European occult grid at CERN, but Trawsfynydd One is still used for lesser summonings, exorcisms and gating.

Trawsfynydd Two is the Laundry's Deep Storage – a dozen miles of old coal mine, worming its way into the bedrock. The Deep Storage facility holds artefacts and entities that are too dangerous to keep elsewhere. Exactly *what* is in Deep Storage is highly classified.

THE LAUNDRY ON THE THRESHOLD

The Laundry has offices and safehouses everywhere – and if you are in the United Kingdom, then that includes your home town. Pick some ghastly office block or seemingly mundane industrial unit and declare that it is actually the Laundry's Department of Arcane Recycling or the Sumerian Diplomacy Section or a halfway house for reformed ex-cultists. Then send your PCs there.



In addition to spells, the Laundry also utilises a host of various high tech and enchanted devices. Theoretically, any spell can be transformed into an enchanted device. The only limitations are that the device performs exactly one function and that the POW and level of the spell being duplicated is fixed (see **Chapter 14: Sorcery**). So, a device that duplicated the effect of the Entropic Manipulation spell could render the user invisible or distort sound around the user to foil eavesdroppers but it could not do both. With a few notable exceptions, all of the occult items listed here are specifically created by the Laundry's Q Division. These items are pieces of well made precision equipment that are both effective and reliable. A few of the simpler items can be created by skilled computational sorcerers but doing so is always time consuming and often also quite risky. If you want something quick and easy to use and that will not blow up in your face, requisitioning an item from Q Division is a far better choice than casting a similar spell.

Advanced Technology

As well as all the top-secret occult goodies Q Division can also supply agents with the latest technologies and, by this, we do not mean the latest consumer technologies: we mean the sort of cutting edge gear that ordinary gadget freaks dream about. Most of these devices were designed for use by MI6 and other conventional intelligence organisations but when needed, and with the correctly completed paperwork, Laundry agents can gain access to them too.

If you read about a new technology that will be released in a few years, like colour electronic ink screens or higher density batteries on a gadget website, you can be certain that Q Division has been outfitting Laundry agents with these things for at least the last year or two. As a result, any gear that the Laundry outfits you with may have better batteries, more memory and all manner of similar advantages. However, it is also important to remember that the non-magical gear is simply slightly more advanced technology – other than a few ancient pre-human artefacts that are carefully locked away, you are not going to be seeing any transporter beams, AI netbooks or laser pistols (Laundry budget restrictions being what they are, you are more likely to be assigned a 10 year old desktop running Windows ME than a state-of-the-art machine unless you can justify your request to the budget office).

Acquiring Gear

Q Division is not going to outfit you with the sort of smartphone that other geeks will be using five years from now just because you are overcome with a serious case

of gadget lust. The outfitters may be sympathetic to your desires, but the point of secret organisations is that they prefer to remain secret. Advertising their presence by handing a hyper-advanced smartphone or a netbook better than a current high-end desktop to every agent who wants one is hardly the best way to accomplish this.

You will be freely given gear that your superiors think you need for your current mission – as long as you are qualified to use this gear. At the end of the mission, you are expected to return this gear in working order or to file a report about what happened to it. If a zombie ate the microdrone you were issued then all is well (unless it's clear that it was your incompetence that led to our undead chum's crunchy lunch) but if you simply want to keep it, then some unfriendly people are going to want to talk quite sternly to you.

You are free to request any gear you want and, if you have a good reason for it, you will likely get it. Asking for a high end protective ward and some sort of weapon when your mission might involve enemy agents attempting to kill you only makes sense. However, if you do not have a good reason to need a piece of equipment, you are not going to get it. Also, sometimes you will be issued with some rather strange gear. The Predictive Branch runs prophecy simulations on all important missions and sometimes oddities turn up. The Predictive Branch is occasionally wrong, but if you get issued a pair of bright orange golf shoes with powerful magnets in the soles and are told to wear them when you try to infiltrate a nasty cult, then you had better plan on wearing those shoes, at least if you want to survive. The Predictive Branch is right enough of the time that agents who ignore their suggestions are taking a considerable risk of coming back wearing toe tags.

Requisitioning Gear

If a Laundry agent wishes to gain access to gear that they have not been issued, they must make an official request. Requests for standard gear can be made by visiting the departmental armourer or by filling out the appropriate paperwork and submitting it. Most operatives choose the former, since it is faster and easier, as long as the department armourer is not annoyed at them because the last three devices they were issued were sucked through a dimensional rift. Requests for rare or exotic gear must be made directly to Q Division. Q Division is open 24 hours a day, but frivolous requests made at 2am will be considered rather more harshly than those made during standard business hours.

If the request is approved, the agent will be issued the item as soon as it is ready. Common, ready-made items like defensive wards, warding tape or Hands of Glory can be

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picked up immediately after the request is approved. More specialised items or items that must be specially enchanted are available within 24 hours, but highly specialised requests may take as long as three or four days to process. If the request is denied, then the agent may not request the same item again during the same mission or until circumstances have otherwise sufficiently changed to warrant a new request. If an operative lacks certification for a particular device, then the request will be automatically denied. However, operatives are also free to make requests for device certifications, if they are cleared to know of the existence of the device.

See **Chapter 11: Budgets, Requisitions and Training** for rules on requisitioning gear.

Occult Items

The following items are all created specifically for the Laundry by Q Division. There are two types; items that can easily be used without any training and items that require special training to use. Items that do not require training to use are listed as General, have a simple and obvious function and most function constantly. Wards and warding tape are two examples of such items. However, many items require training to use. Some are highly dangerous and are only issued to agents who need them and have proven themselves to be responsible and able to handle themselves well in violent situations. Such items require that the operative possess the required certification before the item is issued to them.

Banishment Round

Availability: Easy
Certification Required

Many demons are largely immune to bullets, either because their inhuman bodies heal rapidly or because they are possessing entities that can easily jump from one body to another and can inhabit the dead as easily as the living. As a result, killing these demons is exceptionally difficult. The best way to deal with such creatures is to banish them, but getting a demon to step on a banishing grid is usually far from easy. Fortunately, there is a far more direct modern alternative – banishment rounds. These hollow-point bullets are coated in silver that is engraved with a demicyclic banishment circuit written in 90 nanometre Enochian. These rounds are most commonly made in 9 millimetre but can be made for other weapons if circumstances demand. Being hit by one of these rounds works as a normal level three banishing (see p145). In emergencies, banishment rounds can even be used to banish demons that temporarily possess someone but doing so requires the operative to actually shoot the possessed individual.

Rules: If the shooter is specifically attempting not to harm the target badly, halve the damage, because the target has been shot in a non-critical location. Attempting this feat automatically subtracts 10% from the user's to hit roll.

Basilisk Gun

Availability: Average
Certification Required

This lethal device is based on the rare biological phenomena of gorgonism. Gorgonism occurs when humans, or occasionally other animals like chickens or lizards have a brain tumour that induces the basilisk effect in their gaze. The gaze of creatures affected with gorgonism utilises trans-dimensional energy flows to transform approximately 1% of the carbon atoms in a target made of organic materials into silicon. This transformation releases a significant quantity of energy, instantly killing all living targets and destroying most devices made of organic materials. In addition, this process releases a sufficient amount of various forms of radiation to provide everyone within 4 metres with approximately 50–150 rem of radiation – producing symptoms of mild radiation poisoning.

This burst of radiation causes everyone within two metres of the target to suffer one point of burn damage and to roll their CON vs. radiation of POT 15 or be bed-ridden for the next 2d10 days. Characters within four metres of the target must only roll their CON vs. radiation of POT 10 or be bed-ridden for the next 2d10 hours. In both cases, symptoms are weakness, tremors and fever.

Since the neural circuits involved in gorgonism were successfully mapped out in the 1980s, it has become possible to duplicate gorgonism electronically. In addition, the sorcerous technicians at Q Division fine-tuned the effect so that only 0.1% of the target's carbon atoms turn to silicon. The result is just as lethal and destructive but no longer releases sufficient amounts of beta particles and x-rays to produce radiation poisoning. As a result, operatives using basilisk weapons can safely use them at short range.

To create a basilisk weapon all that is needed is a special program and a pair of linked digital cameras that are aimed at the same target. The most portable version of the basilisk gun consists of a PDA or smartphone with one built-in camera and a second camera attached using an extension port or a Bluetooth connection. Other options include paired security cameras in a high security installation, a pair of webcams on a desktop or laptop computer or even British security cameras, which are all designed to be used as basilisk weapons. This weaponised camera network is known as SCORPION STARE and so Basilisk weapons are often referred to as SCORPION STARE weapons. In any case, all devices utilising this effect must contain two working cameras that are electronically linked.

Regardless of the size and nature of the components, when the SCORPION STARE software is running and the device is activated, any organic material containing long-chain carbon molecules that it is aimed at will spontaneously transform 0.1% of its carbon atoms into silicon. Basilisk guns affect everything from human beings to plastic or gasoline. This process results in a substantial release of energy, instantly killing any living target as the heat released



by the highly energetic atomic transformation instantly cooks and chars the target.

When subjected to this attack, tyres burn, volatile organic chemicals explode and humans are instantly transformed into charred, twisted husks as flames erupt from their eyes, ears and mouths and their limbs are reduced to charred stumps. Operatives and civilians who have not previously seen basilisk weapons used on a human must make SAN rolls or lose 1d6 SAN. Success on the roll reduces this SAN loss to zero.

Basilisk guns are instantly and almost invariably lethal, inflicting 6d6 damage on living targets. The only way to survive their attack is to either get out of the camera's line of sight via a Dodge roll or by moving behind an obstacle. Any opaque barrier provides complete protection, as does thick fog. Dimming the lights sufficiently so that the cameras cannot perceive their target also prevents the successful use of basilisk weapons. Unfortunately, accomplishing this typically requires near total darkness.

Mirrors can reflect SCORPION STARE attacks. Even if the two cameras haven't got a direct line of sight to the target, if they can see the target's reflection then it can be successfully attacked. Basilisk weapons are destroyed if their attack is reflected back at them. All plastic parts and insulated wires melt or burn. In addition, anyone holding the weapon is killed.

Basilisk guns use the Firearms (Esoteric) skill, but most attacks with a look-to-kill weapon are *Easy*.

Concealed Weapon

Availability: Difficult
Certification Required

This enchantment is primarily used to make guns invisible. Using a variant of the same observer effect used in Hands of Glory, this enchantment renders the gun invisible and inaudible to anyone who does not carry a Laundry warrant card, unless that person is using a scrying spell of level three or higher. This magical effect temporarily fails if the weapon is fired, because doing so draws too much attention to the gun. However, the effect only fails for one round, at the beginning of the next round, the gun again becomes invisible. A weapon using this enchantment allows the user to openly carry it, wave it around, clean it, reload it and cock it, yet no one without a warrant card notices it at all, although they may notice the user making odd hand motions. This same effect prevents observers without warrant cards from noticing the distinctive bulge of the gun if it is worn in a shoulder or hip holster.

While often unnecessary if Laundry agents travel to the United States or much of the third world, in the UK or most of the rest of the EU carrying a firearm is a serious offence and can provoke an extreme police response. This enchantment is commonly used on all firearms issued to Laundry personnel stationed in the UK or the EU and can be used on all handguns, as well as on any other items of similar size, from hand grenades to PDAs or knives. However, this enchantment cannot be used to conceal rifles or other large and bulky items.

Enhanced Smart Car

Availability: Difficult
Certification Required

Although this vehicle appears to be exceptionally unassuming, it is fitted with a mixture of occult and technological countermeasures and enhancements. Squeezed into this two and a half metre long two-seater car, there is a wealth of equipment. It is fitted with a special purpose video playing rig designed to project a level four area ward (see Area Wards, p145) inside the car, protecting the occupants from both possession and magic as long as the engine is running. In addition, the cigarette lighter is loaded with graveyard dust mixed with oil of Bergamot and tongue of newt, which functions as a level three banishing spell (see Banishing, p145). The car is also fitted with a sophisticated automatic guidance system, which allows the user to signal the car with their mobile phone, at which point the car drives itself to their current location. In addition, the user can use their phone to set off either of the car's occult countermeasures.

The car is also watertight and has one large deployable airbag attached to each of the wheels, so it can both float and drive along the water, with a top speed of 30 kph. In addition, it has a rocket and parachute repurposed from a helicopter ejection seat attached to it. At the push of a button, the entire car flies into the air on a parabolic trajectory, with

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a maximum height of 250 metres and covering a distance of approximately half a kilometre. During this time, the car travels at a speed of approximately 200 kph. This later addition should only be used if the car is out in the open. Using it in a building or underneath any structure is almost certain to kill the occupants of the car. The rocket and parachute can only be fitted on vehicles as small as a Smartcar. However, the Laundry can attach any or all of the other additions to any other car. Several high ranking Laundry personnel have larger and more luxurious cars fitted with the built-in area ward and banishing cigarette lighter, as well as the mobile phone link.

Erich Zann Violin

Availability: Difficult
Certification Required

This unique and terrible musical instrument is one of only 12 ever made. The Laundry owns three. Each violin is a pale ivory white colour – they are made from the bones of 12 people whose deaths are part of the twisted ritual needed to create the instrument. The Erich Zann Violin is one of the most destructive magical devices known.

In the hands of someone skilled with the violin, it can be made to play a variety of songs. It can duplicate the effects of a level two to four Banishing and a level two to four exorcism against magic. The level of these effects is chosen by the user. It can be used to banish a single creature or exorcise a single spell that is active within 20 metres, or it can be played so that it does both and affects all spells and extra-dimensional entities within 20 metres who can hear the music.

The violin can also be used to attack humans and other living beings. At the user's discretion, the violin can do between 1d6 and 2d6 points of damage per round that it is played. It is normally played so that it only affects the individual that the neck of the violin is aimed at. It can also be played to produce a wild and terrible song that affects every living being, other than the user, who is within 20 metres of the violin and is not acoustically isolated from the music (such as by being in a sound-proof room). Damage caused by this violin comes from burst blood vessels, disrupted neural impulses and eventually massive internal haemorrhages. Everyone hearing the violin must also make a SAN roll every round or suffer 1d4 SAN loss. Users can become used to this SAN loss in the normal fashion.

This violin does not just harm listeners. The act of playing it is painful and every round that it is played the user suffers one HP of damage, mostly due to pain and blood loss from the hand that is using the bow. Users also suffer one point of temporary POW damage for every round that they play the violin. A Perform (violin) roll is needed to activate the different spell effects.

Fancy Dress Spy Suit

Availability: Difficult
Certification Required

Although rarely used, one of the odder and more useful garments the Laundry has created is the fancy dress spy suit. Designed specifically for use by field agents who are computational sorcerers, it includes the following accessories:

- One of the two dress shoes contains a pocket for a smart card (see p101) in the tongue. When pulled sharply, one shoelace extends into a three metre ether net cable with ends that expand to fit all standard electronic connectors.
- A Tillinghast resonator is built into the heel of one dress shoe.
- The cummerbund contains a flexible folding keyboard.
- The bow tie contains a flash drive with a variety of intrusion and occult software and is also fitted with a built-in USB connector.
- Users also typically carry a ballpoint pen that serves as a Bluetooth mouse.

This same set of gear can also be modified to fit into female dress clothes as well as most uniforms.

Gravedust Rig

Availability: Difficult
Certification Required

This is a highly specialised circuit board designed to communicate with the dead. Low end models, made with off the shelf components can only communicate with individuals who have been dead for two weeks or less. If the circuits are made purer and with more exacting tolerances then the unit can communicate with individuals that have been dead for far longer. These improvements in purity and precision also greatly increase the expense of the materials used to manufacture the circuits. The best units can be used to communicate with beings that have been dead for several hundred thousand years or potentially even longer. The first gravedust rigs were created in the early 1970s and were made using specially designed and exceptionally expensive vacuum tubes set in a complex star-shaped pattern. More recent models use modern integrated circuit technology. However, the basic design remains the same. The device is connected to a phone and the user talks to the dead being through it. Modern gravedust rigs are occasionally built into cell phones.

Using a gravedust rig requires the immediate presence of a corpse, which need not be human. By dialling the correct code, the user can talk with the corpse as easily as they could call their relatives. This dialling code is automatically determined during the process of setting up a gravedust rig to communicate with a particular corpse. The process of setting up this device requires at least an hour of work and a successful Electronics skill roll. The price of failure is

simply the necessity of spending another hour and rolling again. Users are strongly advised to wear powerful wards when communicating with dead sorcerers or deceased non-human intelligences, since magically skilled entities that are dead can attempt to possess the user through the connection between them formed by the gravedust rig.

Hand Of Glory

Availability: Average (Class Two or Three HOGs) – Class One and Class Four HOGs are Difficult Certification Required

Often referred to as a HOG, this magical construct is a perennial favourite of field agents, because it makes the user temporarily invisible. More accurately, it makes the user unnoticeable. Observers cannot focus on or notice the presence of anyone holding a HOG, even if they are standing a metre in front of them.

Using a standard Hand of Glory is exceedingly simple, the user utters the command word and the hand automatically ignites. Professionally made Hands always come with the command word inscribed on their base. HOGs ignite the instant their command word is spoken and immediately render the user unnoticeable. This effect extends to everything the user is wearing or carrying, including the HOG itself. However, the HOG physically ignites, burning as hot as a wax candle. Igniting a HOG in your pocket is an excellent way to set your pocket on fire. Once ignited, a Hand of Glory can be extinguished either by blowing out the candles or by the user saying the command word again. The one limitation on a HOG is that it only makes the user unnoticeable for as long as it burns. The HOG's burning time is determined by its class, which is in turn

determined by its size. See the following table. Fortunately, the listed time is the total burning time. A class three HOG burns for a total of five minutes. If it is ignited for three minutes and then extinguished, it can be reignited and used for an additional two minutes.

The protection provided by the HOG affects all observers, including living beings, zombies and electronic surveillance. Even if an observer knows that the user is locked in a small room with them, the observer cannot see the user for as long as the Hand of Glory is burning. The user can see and hear normally and can be heard by anyone nearby but they cannot be seen by any means, including night vision or infrared cameras. This invisibility also protects the user from attacks by basilisk weapons. The user instantly becomes visible if the Hand of Glory goes out or if the user lets go of it.

Normally, a Hand of Glory only renders a single individual unnoticeable. However, if the user is in skin contact with another person, then that person is also rendered invisible. The user can render up to two additional people invisible in this fashion. People who are rendered invisible using a single Hand of Glory can all see one another normally.

Mirrored Hand of Glory

This recent variant of the Hand of Glory is a deadly weapon. It appears identical to a standard HOG, except that its base is a silver phase-conjugate mirror. When activated by saying the command word, a mirrored HOG emits a beam of coherent light – a laser beam. It is essentially a five-shot laser weapon made from a dead human hand, a silver mirror and some carefully crafted circuitry. Each shot uses up one finger. It is aimed normally and the user rolls their Weapons (Esoteric) skill to successfully hit their target.

Regardless of whether they are mirrored or standard, HOGs can be manufactured out of any hand-like appendage, from mouse paws to the hands of great apes. Class two and three HOGs are by far the most common and are the only ones that are kept in stock. Class one and four HOGs must be specially requisitioned. The duration of the invisibility effect and the power of the laser beam depend upon the size of the hand used.

Class	Hand Type	Total Burning Time	Damage
1	Mouse or shrew paw	30 seconds	1d6+1 *
2	Pigeon claw or monkey paw	2 minutes	2d6+4
3	Human, chimp or orang-utan hand	5 minutes	3d6+6
4	Gorilla hand	10 minutes	4d6+8
5	Hands from huge alien beings	30 minutes	6d6+10 **

* This type of HOG is very rare and is only made for special uses.

** This type of HOG is purely theoretical and is not created by Q Division.



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Manufacturing HOGs

Most operatives check out a Hand of Glory from Q Division, but they are also one of the few items that can be created on site with the correct materials. The most essential component is a severed human hand and wrist from someone who was executed or the equivalent body part from an animal that was deliberately killed. The operative also requires a few inches of thin conductive wire or solder, a soldering iron, a digital-analogue converter and a computer or smartphone running the correct magical application.

When combined with specialised micro-circuitry, the neurons in the hand open a small type one gate (see p139) that allows through a directed stream of information that serves to power the HOG. The process of creating a HOG is not for the squeamish and requires at least 15 minutes of work. However, it is relatively easy and requires only a single successful Electronics roll. The result is not quite as elegant as a professionally made HOG, but it is just as effective and just as durable. This process cannot be used to create mirrored HOGs. Also, operatives are expected to provide a report of every HOG they manufacture, including the source of the hand.

Necronomiphone

Availability: Average
Certification Required

The iPhone 3GS is a marvel of modern technology, in addition to being a phone, it is a web browser, a GPS device, a digital compass and a fairly good still and video camera. It can also run a wide variety of apps, from ebook readers to one that provides location sensitive restaurant recommendations. However, in the hands of a skilled computational sorcerer, it can be so much more. By altering the phone to accept outside programming (a process known as jail-breaking the phone), sorcerers with lots of skill at coding, or sufficiently obsessive and dedicated colleagues, can install a full suite of occult apps. These apps can be used to create level one banishing, defensive binding, entropy manipulation, exorcism, glamour, scrying and wards (area, personal, and offensive) instantly and at the push of a single touch screen 'button'. This device can also be used as a general magical assistant to perform all manner of more complex spells. However, these spells require a normal casting roll and not merely the push of a button.

Pale Grace Cosmetics

Availability: None
Enemy Technology

This line of popular high-end cosmetics functions as a level one glamour (see Glamour, p141). The cosmetics are all contagion linked to a powerful glamour maintained at the factory where they are made. As a result, these cosmetics actually hide wrinkles and give the appearance of smooth and healthy skin. The only drawback is that the manufacturing process requires a small but regular supply of human sacrifices, who must all be young women. In addition, Pale Grace mascara contains particles nano-



engraved with a Scrying spell (see Scrying, p142) as well as individual chemical tags to tell each individual container of the cosmetic apart. As a result, the sensory impressions from the eyes and ears of all wearers are transferred to a set of connected servers where they can be both recorded and monitored live. When in use, these cosmetics created the largest covert world-wide surveillance networks ever known. Although both the glamour and the surveillance network were taken down in 2005, the technology is now known by several intelligence agencies and a few private corporations and these cosmetics are known to be under careful investigation by several governments and transnational corporations. The Laundry does not know of any other cosmetics that produce a glamour or that tap into the wearer's senses that are currently in use, but both must be considered to be likely. Any use of mass enchantments similar to those on Pale Grace cosmetics is considered a matter of national security and must be immediately investigated by all Laundry field operatives. Laundry Operatives are never issued these cosmetics.

Personal Panic Button

Availability: Not Available for Request

The PPB is a wearable item that is only available to a small number of Laundry personnel who are both considered to be at high risk of attack and who are not certified for or carrying weapons. This item consists of a small transmitter that can be set off at the press of a button, backed up by an enchanted amulet linked into the Laundry security network. If the wearer cannot press the button or is in an area that is isolated from cellular signals, then all they need do is speak a special code-phrase to activate the amulet.

Once activated this device alerts Laundry security that the wearer is in trouble. At this point, the entire SCORPION STARE network uses advanced facial recognition software to look for the wearer and for anyone who appears to be an immediate threat to them.

If operators see anyone who is attacking or threatening the wearer, they use the SCORPION STARE network to eliminate those attackers. At the same time, the Laundry dispatches special, well-armed Watch Teams to protect and render assistance to the wearer, using both the cellular signal and triangulation using sympathetic magic to precisely locate the operative. Because of the obvious danger of Watch Teams getting caught in mundane or magical crossfire or of being mistaken for additional attackers, agents who are certified with and carrying occult or conventional weapons are never issued this device. Also, due to the demands of maintaining Watch Teams constantly ready for immediate deployment, only personnel who are both considered vitally important for national security and who have also had at least one recent attempt on their lives are eligible for PPB units. A PPB is usually either worn around the wearer's neck or locked to a wrist. In the latter case, it is disguised as a wrist watch. Operatives cannot request a PPB, these devices are only issued if the operative's superiors or the Predictive Department consider it necessary.

Personal Wards

Availability:

- Class One: Easy
- Class Two: Average
- Class Three: Difficult
- Class Four: Difficult

In addition to being an invaluable spell, protective wards can also be made into a small item designed to be worn. A typical ward is a small leather, linen or silk bag containing a wide variety of materials, usually including at least one carefully made electronic circuit. Personal wards are considered essential equipment by most field operatives. Although it is possible to create wards of classes one through four, there is little demand for class one wards. Instead, all department issue personal wards are class two, three or four. Class two wards are automatically issued to all department personnel. Class three wards are available to all field operatives upon request. Class four wards are only available to operatives on high risk missions or to operatives who have experienced attempts made to abduct, harm or kill them.

See page 145 for further details on wards.

Thaumometer

- Availability:** Easy
- Certification Required

This is another basic occult tool and can be built into most types of portable electronics, including PDAs and smartphones. Thaumometers detect thaumic or magical energy (see page 126). They can detect the energies of hauntings or bound up in objects that have been to other

dimensions and the energies associated with possession. They can also detect the spatio-temporal disturbances that indicate current occult energy. In short, they can detect if someone is casting or using a spell. A thaumometer can detect the level of a spell but it cannot determine the exact nature of the spell – you need some sort of scrying for that. Most thaumometers can be set for directional or non-directional sensitivity. In directional mode most have a range of 15 metres and in non-directional mode they can detect thaumic energy in any direction that is within five metres. If your thaumometer suddenly gives you a high reading, one of three things has happened: someone nearby is using magic or carrying an enchanted item, a haunted object is nearby or someone possessed is nearby.

Tillinghast Resonator

- Availability:** Difficult
- Certification Required

This device alters the user's perceptions so that they can see phenomena normally invisible to ordinary humans, as well as seeing through some types of glamours. A Tillinghast resonator automatically penetrates glamours up to level three, but does nothing to remove the emotional effects of such glamours (see Glamours, page 141). In addition, it allows the user to see the presence of all active magic spells, including offensive wards, and to catch glimpses of entities that are otherwise discreetly possessing the living or the dead.

However, for all of this device's utility it is not recommended for long term use. Using a Tillinghast resonator causes the entire world to appear distorted and subtly wrong, because it allows the user to see their surroundings in ways their brain was not meant to see it. While this device is on, the user temporarily subtracts three from his POW during all attempts to resist fear or intimidation. Also, the user temporarily reduces all social skills by 10% because the perceptions caused by this device are so disturbing. Operatives are advised to only use this device when necessary. Using a Tillinghast resonator also forces the operative to make a SAN roll or lose 1d4 SAN. Operatives grow used to this effect normally. This device can now be made quite small and, including the battery, it fits comfortably in a box no larger than a pocket-sized packet of breath mints or the heel of a dress shoe.

Trigger Guard

- Availability:** Automatically provided on all magically concealed firearms issued by Q Division.

This enchantment is most often used on the triggers of firearms, but can be used to render any device, from a phone to a car, inoperable to anyone but the designated operator. Creating this enchantment requires the designated user to provide Q Division with both the device and a drop of their blood. They then use the principles of sympathetic magic (see page 142) to link the device with its operator. Once this linkage has been made, only the designated operator can fit their finger through the trigger guard of a gun, turn

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the key of a car or press a button on a phone. Anyone else who attempts to do this finds that their finger slips off and that they are completely incapable of operating the device. Unfortunately, this enchantment does not prevent someone from coercing or even physically forcing the user to operate the device. In addition, if someone can cut off the user's finger or any other body part, like a toe, they can use that severed appendage to help them pull a trigger, push a button or turn a key. The user does not even need to still be alive for this grisly tactic to work. Also, while an unauthorised individual could not turn the key of a car fitted with this device, they could successfully hotwire the car. This enchantment is used on all magically concealed firearms issued by the Laundry.

Warding Tape

Availability: Average (class three warding tape) – class four warding tape is Difficult.

In appearance, this is a roll of silver or yellow duct tape that has various occult symbols written on it in black marker. Looking closely at these symbols also reveals that they glow slightly and eventually cause headaches to anyone who looks at them too closely. Civilians who examine warding tape carefully must make a SAN roll or lose 1d3 SAN.

Warding tape can be used to rapidly create level three protective area wards (see page 145), either by using it to mark out an area of floor space or by taping around every door, window or other opening in the room. If it is used in a public location or anywhere that civilians can see it, it must either be disguised or removed before anyone can encounter it due to its disturbing appearance. Class four warding tape exists but is rare and difficult to manufacture and is only issued if there is excellent reason to believe that class three wards will not be sufficient. See page 145 for further details on area wards.

Warrant Card

Availability: Special

The Laundry warrant card is a field agent's most essential item. All operatives are required to carry it while on duty.

All Laundry operatives are issued warrant cards. In addition to being official identification, they also include an inscribed geas that affects everyone who sees it. This geas has a variety of effects. The most basic and most powerful effect is that viewers do not question the bearer's identity. Also, if the bearer takes charge of a situation, anyone seeing the warrant card accepts the bearer's authority. In addition, the bearer can order someone looking at the warrant card to either not talk about events they have witnessed or to forget the bearers presence, simply by ordering the viewer to do so in the name of national security. Warrant cards accomplish these feats because they all contain a powerful geas. The first words on a warrant card are *'Her Britannic Majesty's government commands and compels you to provide the bearer of this pass with all aid and assistance'*. These words are written on top of an exceptionally powerful sigil that compels obedience.

This geas also prevents any unauthorised personnel from picking up or attempting to use a warrant card. Warrant cards work on all personnel who have not signed the third paragraph of the Official Secrets Act in blood, as well as on signatories who do not out-rank the bearer.

In addition to its other uses, warrant cards are also tied into Laundry magical security protocols. As a result, Residual Human Resources and other inhuman beings employed to keep Laundry and related facilities secure can all be controlled by showing them a warrant card and giving them orders.

Normally, warrant cards appear to be ordinary official ID cards but they can be commanded to reveal their true appearance, creepy sigils and all. In their natural state, warrant cards are exceedingly distinctive and disturbing items and thus serve as an unforgettable form of identification for identifying Laundry agents to other signatories. Abuse of a warrant card is a very serious offence and is usually grounds for an investigation by the Auditors.

Bob's Bag of Holding

- Wallet
- Warrant Card
- Credit Card
- Oyster Card
- Cash - inc. Euros, Dollars, Krugerrands
- House keys
- Necronomiphone
- Hardened phone case (bullet-proof!)
- Phone charger
- Personal Ward (Class 3)
- Leatherman
- Circuit tester
- Conductive-ink pen
- Throat lozenges
- Tissues
- Plastic gloves
- Salt

Conventional Spy Gear

The Laundry is an intelligence agency specially tasked with dealing with occult threats. As a result, Q Division specialises in creating and issuing occult gear. However, Laundry operatives must also regularly function as covert operatives and cannot always rely solely upon their magic and the enchanted devices produced by Q Division. As a result, Laundry operatives are occasionally issued and can also request tools and devices designed for conventional covert operations. Most of these devices were created for use by SIS operatives.

Many of these devices are known to civilians only as prototypes or rumours, because the best intelligence services can get access to technology at least three to five years before it becomes commercially available. This is yet another of the many advantages to being in the intelligence community. Of course, your superiors are never happy to find that you left one of these devices where someone else might find it and the fact that you were injured or running for your life, or both at once, does not always mollify them. These would be some of the many disadvantages of being in the intelligence community.

Concealed Ballistic Vest

Availability: Easy

Magic is deadly, but so are bullets. It is difficult to use magic to affect a well prepared computational sorcerer wearing a level four ward. However, a single bullet can definitely ruin their day. The problem is that the best ballistic protection consists of bulky and obvious gear that quite rightly looks like something worn by soldiers. Such body armour is more than a little off-putting for walking down the street or stopping into a pub. Because the goal is for covert operatives to remain covert, this sort of gear will not be issued to them and operatives are discouraged from purchasing military-grade body armour on-line. However, there are also ballistic vests that can be comfortably and undetectably worn under any clothing that is at least as bulky as a suit jacket or a sweatshirt. These vests will not stop rifle bullets, but they will protect the operative from attacks by knives and most handgun bullets without scaring the neighbours or otherwise attracting undue notice.

Note: This vest provides the wearer with four points of protection against melee weapons and low velocity missile weapons and eight points of protection from all firearms.

Disguised Pistol

Availability: Average
Certification Required

Low calibre guns can be built into a wide variety of objects. Cigarette lighters and large fountain pens are especially popular choices, but options can include everything from cigars to umbrellas. All of these weapons are single shot weapons firing .32 ammunition. They require one full round to reload with another bullet and are designed only for use in dire emergencies.

Fibre Optic Probe

Availability: Average

This simple but useful tool consists of an optic fibre as slender as a single bristle on a toothbrush, with a wide angle lens located at the end. Able to extend up to 50 centimetres, the it can be slipped under doors, through old-style key holes or through any other small opening to allow the user to see what is beyond the barrier. The view provided by this device is equivalent to that provided by a cell phone camera in the same location.

When not extended, the probe is housed in a container that appears to be a fancy medium-sized pen, which also houses a small directional microphone. This directional microphone can be used to hear normal speech at a range of up to 50 metres and whispering at a range of up to five metres. This device can either plug into or use a Bluetooth connection to connect to a laptop, PDA or smartphone, allowing the user to view the images on this device's screen.

Gecko Suit

Availability: Rare
Certification Required

This black suit looks like gear for off-road motorcycle riding or some other extreme sport, except that the lower legs, lower arms, palms, chest and back are all covered with a rough-textured material derived from a careful analysis of how geckos stick to walls. This suit allows the user to climb any relatively flat surface, from the brick or wooden wall of a house, to the outside of a glass and steel office tower. It works in both dry and rainy weather and the only limitation is that the wall must be strong enough to support the climber – which all walls that are not in immediate danger of falling down normally are.

Using this suit is tiring and the user can only use it to climb at speeds of 30 feet per minute. However, no climbing roll is needed to use this suit, nor is any other special equipment required. Once instructed in its use, the user can simply climb up almost any wall. Also, if the user becomes tired, they can simply stop moving and the suit will hold them to the wall.

Users who make a successful Climb roll can turn over, so that they are supported by their back and the backs of their arms and legs. This allows the user to easily observe their surroundings. Failure on this roll causes the user to take two full turns to get themselves in a position to try again and a fumble on this roll means that the user falls. Users who have successfully turned around and are within three metres of the ground can attempt to make a successful Jump roll in order to pull free and jump down on an opponent below. A failure on this roll leaves the user stuck to the wall. A fumble means that the user falls clumsily, taking falling damage and missing their opponent.

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Keystroke Logger

Availability: Easy

If you really want to know what is going on with someone else's computer, this is the gadget for you. A keystroke logger gives you a sequential record of every keystroke made by everyone who used this computer, including all of their passwords. The standard way that the Laundry manages keystroke logging is by externally hacking someone else's computer. No field agents are needed, on-site techs merely make use of various useful security holes in software that allow them to have the target computer deliver a record of these keystrokes via the internet. This tactic works 98% of the time and only fails when dealing with network security experts, paranoids who hire network security experts, computers that are always kept off the internet and similarly secure machines. Unfortunately, these are exactly the sorts of machines likely to belong to enemy intelligence operatives, rogue computational sorcerers and other individuals of interest. To use keystroke logging on these highly secure computers, you need to get far more up close and personal and install a hardware keystroke logger.

Hardware keystroke loggers are small devices that plug into computers and record every keystroke. Although some are made to broadcast this information, most are not, since anyone with a computer secure enough to require one can likely either block or detect such broadcasts. Instead, the keystroke logger keeps a record of these keystrokes on its internal memory. To gain access to this data, an operative must gain access to the computer a second time and retrieve the unit. Most are no larger than a fava bean and installing or removing one only requires a few seconds, if the operative is either plugging the device into the computer between the keyboard and the cable going between the computer and the keyboard.

However, people who are observant and careful may notice a new device plugging into their computer. The only other option is opening up the computer and installing it. This is a very simple procedure that does not require a roll if the character has both the Computer and Electronics skills at 25% or higher. However, the process of either installing or retrieving the device requires at least 3 minutes of work and if it is not completed, then it was clear that someone was attempting to get into the computer.

Laser Microphone

Availability: Average

This listening device is usually disguised as a pair of binoculars. One of the eyepieces can actually be used as a low-power telescope, while the other contains the laser microphone. This device operates by projecting a low power, invisible infra-red laser beam off of a reflective surface made of glass or hard plastic, typically a window or mirror. Because sound waves cause such surfaces to vibrate minutely, a laser bounced off of the surface records these vibrations and can be used to listen to any conversations or other noises inside the room. The latest microphones can

also record sounds from smoke or relatively still bodies of water ranging in size from a lake to a bird bath.

The primary limitation on this device is that the operator can only listen to conversations while the laser is aimed at a mirror or other reflective surface in the same room as a conversation they wish to overhear. Also, heavy curtains or shutters completely block the use of laser microphones. Most other covert operatives are aware of the existence of these devices and attempt to ensure that their conversations take place where these devices cannot be used to overhear.

Laser microphones must be mounted on a tripod or otherwise remain stationary while in use, they cannot be handheld. The range of a laser microphone is 100 metres. Laser microphones cannot be used in all situations but they are the best non-occult method of gaining covert surveillance on a location that the operative cannot gain physical access to.

Locator Bugs

Availability: Average

These tiny devices allow the user to locate any object to which the bug has been affixed and also to listen to any sounds within five metres of the device. Locator bugs are most often attached to cars or placed in a target's coat pocket to allow the user to constantly track the location of the car or person. Broadcasting an encrypted signal on cellular data frequencies, this device can be used anywhere that has cell phone reception. Broadcasts from this device can be received on any laptop, PDA or smartphone with either an installed map database or internet access. The user can track the location of this device to within two metres. The only limitation is that this device's broadcasts cannot be received if the locator is underground or in any other location that is cut off from the cellular network.

This device is the size of a fava bean and can be disguised as anything from a button to a piece of candy. If swallowed, its broadcast still allows it to be located but the microphone provides no useful information. These devices come with a peel-off adhesive backing that can be replaced and are normally issued in lots of five.

Microdrone

Availability: Difficult
Certification Required

This tiny robot is the size and shape of a small hummingbird and flies in a very similar manner. It is five centimetres long, one centimetre in diameter, with a six centimetre wingspan. This diminutive robot flies using wings and high density lithium batteries. It contains two video cameras. One camera allows the user to see from the point of view of the microdrone. The other connects to a computer within the microdrone and enables it to navigate autonomously, avoiding obstacles. It also allows the drone to automatically follow a person based on the colour and pattern of their clothing or a car based on its colour and shape. Both cameras

can clearly see objects within 15 metres and have optical zooms lenses to allow them to focus on targets up to 50 metres away. These cameras also have light intensification capability to permit somewhat grainy night vision. The microdrone also contains a speaker and microphone, allowing the user to both listen to the drone's surroundings and to communicate with anyone nearby.

Microdrones fly at speeds of up to 50 kph and can fly for up to 30 minutes without recharging. They can maintain encrypted radio contact via cellular data networks or via a two way radio with a range of two kilometres. Versions designed to swim underwater, with top speeds of 20 kph also exist. Microdrones can be controlled via a specialised smartphone app or via a dedicated controller that looks much like a portable videogame. Using a smartphone with an accelerometer allows the user to steer the microdrone simply by moving the phone. Operatives are discouraged from using pairs of these units in radio-controlled dog fights. The one limitation on this device is that anyone who gets a good look at it, even in flight, will know that it is obviously artificial.

Remote Controlled Bug

Availability: Difficult
 Certification Required

In the intelligence community, the term bug typically refers to a covert listening device but in this case it also refers to an actual living insect. Based on recent research in arthropod neurology, MI6 has a small number of specialised devices that can be implanted in a large insect like a stag beetle or one of the larger species of dragonfly. The external portion of this device is a disk one centimetre in diameter and is typically coloured to match the insect's carapace, allowing the insect to appear to be a perfectly normal member of its species unless it is examined carefully. The control unit also contains a camera, microphone and speaker. Essentially, this device is a wireless video camera, mounted on a remotely controlled insect. As with the microdrone, this device can be controlled via either a smartphone or radio controlled via a specialised controller at a range of up to two kilometres.

The battery in this device can power it for up to 12 hours. The bug is specifically used for both long term assignments where the limited battery life of the microdrone is insufficient or where a microdrone is likely to be noticed. It simply appears to be a large insect that is perhaps behaving a bit oddly.

One of the major limitations is that this device is only as fast and manoeuvrable as the actual insect. This is not a problem for the dragonfly, which is highly manoeuvrable and has a top speed of 50 kph. However, the dragonflies used with this device have wingspans of 16 centimetres and are 13 centimetres long, so are exceedingly obvious, if not particularly suspicious. The stag beetles are seven centimetres long but they can only fly at a speed of 7 kph. The one advantage stag beetles have is that most of the transmitters are implanted in female stag beetles, whose jaws are less impressive than the male's but far stronger and

they can be ordered to cut very thin wires, damage fragile objects or deliver a painful but harmless bite to any person who gets their hands near the beetle's mouthparts.

Nausea Flash

Availability: Average
 Certification Required

This new piece of technology appears to be a large LED flashlight with many LEDs, including coloured LEDs. It can be used as a flashlight but, with the push of a button, it produces brilliant flashes of coloured light that disorients any target within 10 metres. Aiming this device is very easy, requiring only a successful DEX x 5 roll to hit. If this device is aimed at a target that is within 10 metres, who can see and is not facing away from it, the target must make a CON x 3 roll. Targets who fail are incapacitated with nausea for the next five turns. Targets that succeed are still mildly nauseous and halve all rolls for as long as the light is aimed at them and for five additional turns. Also, targets that succeed in resisting the effects of this device must roll again every turn that this device is aimed at them. Unless activated in its incapacitating mode, this device appears to be an ordinary large LED flashlight that is 20 centimetres long with a barrel nine centimetres in diameter and a cone containing the lights that is five centimetres in diameter. This device can operate for up to two hours of continuous use before it must be recharged.

Smart Card

Availability: Easy

This useful device is an electronic card that superficially looks like a normal electronic hotel key card. It comes with a set of removable decals for all major hotel chains. However, the circuitry inside the card is an induction loop and a microprocessor, instead of a simple magnetic strip. Once inserted in a lock, the card runs through all of the standard override keys used to open doors locked by hotel key cards. With this card, the user can enter any hotel room as easily and swiftly as if it were their own.

T-Ray Scanner

Availability: Difficult

Using a mixture of long wave infra-red radiation and terahertz radiation (electromagnetic waves halfway between infra-red radiation and microwaves), this device allows the user to see through all interior walls that are not specially shielded or reinforced and through outside walls that are not made of thick stone or reinforced concrete. It also allows the user to see underneath long overcoats and similar bulky garments to see if the target is wearing or carrying something obvious like a firearm or a suicide belt. This device has a range of 10 metres and clearly reveals people and other large objects on the other side of walls.

However, these images are fuzzy and reveal no more than outlines without much detail. Recognising individuals is

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impossible. As long as the external temperature is below 30 degrees Centigrade, it can determine if a person on the other side of a wall is alive or dead (if they have been dead more than several hours and have thus cooled). The one downside of this device is that it is quite large and obvious. It consists of a large flashlight shaped object 25 centimetres long, with a seven centimetre diameter cone at one end and a barrel four centimetres in diameter. It weighs half a kilogram and is very obvious. Using either a wired or a Bluetooth connection, it displays images of whatever it is aimed at on the screen of a laptop, PDA or smartphone.

3-W Laser

Availability: Difficult
Certification Required

Yes, real spies occasionally get laser weapons. Of course, this isn't an action movie so it's not a particularly dangerous laser weapon. No one is going to blast their enemies, cause cars to explode or cut through windows with this laser. However, it can be used to almost instantly render CDs, DVDs or plastic covered flash drives unreadable, destroy exposed sensitive circuitry in seconds, permanently or temporarily

blind security cameras, ignite paper and cardboard and burn small holes in plastic. It can also be used to cut through thin cables like phone lines or Ethernet cables in 10 seconds or to burn enough paper or plastic to set off most smoke alarms in less than 30 seconds. Best of all, you do all of this at a range of up to 30 metres, if you have a clear line of sight to the target. Also, the beam is invisible unless it is shining through smoke, fog or water.

This laser can also be used to attempt to blind people. However, the beam needs to strike one of the target's eyes, meaning that the user must roll DEX x 3 to hit and if the target is aware of the attack, they can also make a Luck (POW x 5) roll to avoid the beam striking their eyes. If the beam does strike the target's eye, the target is temporarily blinded in that eye and halves all rolls based on vision, including all ranged attack rolls. The target must also roll POW x 3 to avoid being immobilised by pain and panic. In almost all cases, this blindness is temporary unless the user is able to shine the laser at the target's eye for several seconds, which requires the target to be restrained. This laser is 12 centimetres long, 2.5 centimetres in diameter and is often disguised as a LED flashlight. It can operate for 20 minutes before it needs to be recharged.

Name	Avail.	Skill	Base	Damage	RoF	Special	Range	HP	Ammo	SIZ
Disguised Pistol (.32) *	Average	Pistol	20	1d8	1	Impaling	5	4	1	0.5
Glock 17 (9mm Pistol)	Average	Pistol	20	1d10	3	Impaling	20	8	17	1
Walther PPK (9mm Pistol)	Average	Pistol	20	1d8	3	Impaling	20	8	7	0.5
AA-12 Assault Shotgun	Average	Shotgun	30	4d6/2d6/1d6	1 or 2 or burst	Impaling	10/20/50	14	20	4
MP5	Difficult	Submachine Gun	15	1d10	2 or burst	Impaling	15/30	10	30	2
L119A1	Difficult	Assault Rifle	15	2d6+4	1, 3 or burst	Impaling	90	11	40	3
L96 Sniper Rifle	Difficult	Rifle	25	2d10+4	1	Impaling	250	10	11	4
Taser	Average	Exotic	10	2d6	½	Stun	DEX	8	1	0.5
Grenade, Explosive	Difficult	Throw	25	4d6/4 metres	1	Knockback	Thrown	8		0.5
Grenade, Concussion	Difficult	Throw	25	2d6/2 metres	1	Knockback, Stun	Thrown	8		0.5
Grenade, Smoke	Average	Throw	25	3 metre smoke cloud	1		Thrown	6		0.5
UGL Grenade Launcher	Difficult	Heavy Weapon	15	3d6/2 metres	1/3	Knockback	20	12	1	+1
M72 Law	Difficult	Heavy Weapon	15	8d6/1 metre	1	Knockback	150	10	1	5
Javelin Missile	Difficult	Heavy Weapon	15	10d6/5 metres	1/3	Impaling, Knockback	400	12	1	7
Plastic Explosive	Difficult	Demolition	01	6d6/3 metres		Knockback		15		1

* The disguised pistol is described on page 99.

Common Firearms and Explosives

The Laundry has a modest but comprehensive arsenal of hot lead delivery systems. In general, guns are kept out of the hands of agents – a gun that is never fired is less likely to cause legal complications. Still, sometimes one needs to put five rounds rapidly into the chap with the wings.

All firearms require certification.

The Glock 17 and Walther PPK are both standard issue handguns for various security and intelligence agencies. The Glock 17 is the standard sidearm for armed police in the United Kingdom; the Walther PPK is a concealed carry weapon made famous by James Bond.

The AA-12 is an automatic 12-gauge shotgun with a 20 round drum magazine that is used by combat-trained operatives for handling severe threats.

The H&K MP5 is a compact submachine that is especially popular with counter-terrorism and hostage rescue teams and is used by the SAS.

The L119A1 is the SAS assault rifle, a variation on the more common M16 design.

The L96 Sniper rifle is one of a family of sniper rifles used by the SAS.

The taser weapon fires two darts connected to trailing wires and incapacitates the target with a jolt of electricity. The victim of a taser hit may be stunned; roll the weapon's normal damage and make a Resistance roll vs. the target's current Hit Points. If the attack is successful, the character is stunned for a number of rounds equal to the points of stun damage done.

Grenades list both the damage and the radius of the explosion; reduce the damage by 1d6 for every metre beyond the epicentre of the blast. For example, a character who is three metres away from an explosive grenade blast takes only 1d6 damage.

The UGL is an Underslung Grenade Launcher that can be attached to an assault rifle or other long-barrelled weapon. It is a single-shot weapon.

The M72 Light Anti-Tank Weapon is a man-portable direct-fire anti-vehicle rocket, while a Javelin Missile is an indirect-fire laser-guided weapon designed to strike at tanks from above.

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Budgets, Requisitions and Training

'Here's the vast expanse of what used to be the typing pool – so-called because in the old days there used to be officers here who couldn't use a keyboard. These days it's our administrative core, a place where civil servants come to die. The Laundry, perforce, must find work for many idle hands – the hands of everyone who comes to our attention and must needs be made a job offer they're not allowed to refuse. Luckily bureaucracy breeds, and it takes many meetings to manage the added complexity of administration required by our chronic overstaffing. There are people here who I only know of through their Outlook calendars, which are perpetually logjammed. Entire departments beaver away in anonymous quiet, building paper dams to hold the real world at bay. I shine my torch across empty in-trays, battered chairs, desks that reek of existential pointlessness. I could have been trapped here for good, I realize. I shudder as I move on. Being part of the Laundry's active service arm brings hazards of its own: but dying of boredom isn't one of them.'

— Overtime

Capital Laundry Services is a branch of the civil service and that means more red tape that the human mind can comfortably comprehend. There are endless, labyrinthine procedures for everything, no decision can be taken without 16 rounds of meetings, consultations and cost/benefit analyses and defending reality from the horrors of the Mythos takes second place to defending your budget from the horrors of cutbacks. Roleplaying game sessions focus on the 1% of the time when interesting things are going on – most of your character's working life is taken up with completing forms, writing reports and filing.

Still, you cannot escape the Laundry's bureaucracy. The red tape tentacles draw you inexorably back into the mouth of madness. There are two key skills related to dealing with the Laundry bureaucracy:

Bureaucracy (see page 34): Your knowledge of the ins and outs of the filing system, how to hide reports, cheat the system and catch others doing the same thing.

Status (see page 45): Your standing in the Laundry – your rank, your seniority, your invisible influence and your political pull. Your ability to get things done. Status can be used to requisition items or services.

Requisitions

'That's the cue for business: 'first, I need to indent for a new class four certified defensive ward, personal, safe to wear 24x7.' I pause. 'Make that two: the second one's for Dr. O'Brien.' That's Mo. 'I also want to draw a HOG, cat three with silvered base and a suitable carrier. And.' I steel myself: 'I'll take your advice on the next, but I was thinking about drawing a personal protective firearm -- I'm certificated on the Glock -- and a box of ammunition. I won't be routinely carrying it but it'll be kept at home to repel boarders.'

'You don't need a Glock to get rid of lodgers, my son --' he spots my expression -- 'had a problem?'

— The Fuller Memorandum

When requesting support or equipment, you must make a Status roll, applying the modifiers listed for each item of gear or support service. If the roll succeeds, your request is approved. If it fails, the request is denied. At his or her discretion, the Game Master may give circumstantial bonuses for excellent justification or roleplaying.

If the roll fails, you can dig into your budget. See Budget Spending, page 110.

Example: Bob Howard (Status 50%) wants some extra firepower for home defence: two Class Four wards, a Class Three Hand of Glory and a gun. The class four wards are both Difficult to obtain, so Bob's skill is halved to 25% when rolling to requisition those items. He rolls an 18 and a 32... Bob can only get one ward but then Mo's player points out that the second ward is for her character and that she has got a higher Status than Bob, so the roll should be against her Status, not his. The GM shrugs and agrees. A Class Three Hand of Glory is Average, so Bob's player rolls a straight Status roll for that. He rolls a 30 – a success.

Finally, the Glock is also Average difficulty to obtain. This time, Bob's player rolls a 64, well above his Status of 50. Bob's request is denied, unless he can come up with a very strong justification to convince Harry the Horse.

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT AND SUPPORT

Characters may be assigned equipment by their superiors. This equipment must be returned in proper working order at the end of the mission. If equipment is damaged in the line of duty, you must account for this loss.

Similarly, you can be assigned support services, like a police helicopter, to get you to the murder scene quickly. These services do not come out of your budget.

Gear Requisitions

Gear requisitions are made through the Armoury section or direct from Q Division. Some items have a minimum skill level required to obtain certification.

Occult Items	Availability	Certification Threshold	Page
Banishment Round	Easy	Firearms (Any) 20%	92
Basilisk Gun	Average	Firearms (Esoteric) 40%	92
Concealed Weapon	Difficult	Firearms (Any) 60%	93
Enhanced Smart Car	Difficult	Computer Use (Magic) 40%, Drive (Auto) 20%	93
Erich Zann Violin	Difficult	Play Instrument (Violin) 60%	94
Fancy Dress Spy Suit	Difficult	Computer Use (Hacking) 20%	94
Gravedust Rig	Difficult	Computer Use (Magic) 40%	94
Hand of Glory Class One Class Two Class Three Class Four	Difficult Average Average Difficult	Firearms (Esoteric) 20%	95
Necronomiphone	Average	Computer Use (Magic) 20%	96
Personal Ward Class One Class Two Class Three Class Four	Easy Average Difficult Difficult	None	97
Thaumometer	Easy	Science (Thaumaturgy) 20%	97
Tillinghast Resonator	Difficult	Science (Thaumaturgy) 40%	97
Trigger Guard	Special	None	97
Warding Tape Class Three Class Four	Average Difficult	None	98
Warrant Card	Special	None	98

Spy Toys	Availability	Certification Threshold	Page
Disguised Pistol	Average	Firearms (Unconventional) 20%	99
Fibreoptic Probe	Average	Technology Use (Surveillance) 20%	99
Gecko Suit	Difficult	Climb 40%	99
Keystroke Logger	Easy	None	100
Laser Microphone	Average	None	100
Locator Bug	Easy	None	100
Microdrone	Difficult	Pilot (Drone) 20%	100
Nausea Flash	Average	Firearms (Exotic) 20%	101
Remote Control Bug	Difficult	Pilot (Drone) 20%	101
Smart Card	Easy	None	101
T-Ray Scanner	Difficult	Technology Use (Surveillance) 20%	101
3-W Laser	Difficult	Firearms (Exotic) 40%	102

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Firearms and Combat Equipment	Availability	Certification Threshold	Page
Concealed Ballistic Vest	Easy	None	99
Walther PPK	Average	Firearms (Pistol) 20%	103
Glock 17	Average	Firearms (Pistol) 20%	103
AA-12 Shotgun	Average	Firearms (Shotgun) 20%	103
MP5 submachine gun	Difficult	Firearms (Submachine gun) 40%	103
L119A1	Difficult	Firearms (Assault rifle) 40%	103
L96 Sniper Rifle	Difficult	Firearms (Rifle) 40%	103
Grenade, Concussion	Difficult	Demolition 20%	103
Grenade, Stun	Difficult	First Aid 20%	103
Grenade, Smoke	Average	Demolition 20%	103
Grenade Launcher	Difficult	Heavy Weapons (Grenade launcher) 40%	103
Javelin Missile Launcher	Difficult	Heavy Weapons (Rocket launcher) 40%	103
Plastic Explosive	Difficult	Demolition 40%	103

Modifiers

-20%	The most recently requested item was lost or returned damaged or inoperable due to any neglect or carelessness by the operative .
+20%	The officer was issued an identical item for similar reasons before and returned it safely.
-10%	The item is outside of the operative's specialty.
+10%	The item is obviously useful for dealing with the problem at hand (such as a defensive ward or a weapon to deal with the threat of attack).
-20%	The item is not obviously connected to the problem at hand.
+10%	The officer's skill is at least twice that needed for certification.

Support Requisitions

Requests for support work the same way as gear requisitions. If a character needs to call in the Plumbers or the SAS, he can do so – assuming he makes a successful Status roll. Again, the Status roll is modified depending on the difficulty and the situation.

The list of potential support from other departments and government agencies is not exhaustive; if the characters need to requisition, say, NHS hospital admission records or an RAF Hercules transport plane or a Polaris missile, the GM should assign a suitable difficulty to the request.

Laundry Departments

Section	Service	Availability	Page
Transport	Transport within UK.	Average	83
	Requisition a vehicle for use in London.	Average	
	International plane tickets at short notice.	Difficult	
	Requisition of a magically augmented vehicle.	Difficult	
Media Relations	Get access to newspaper records or journalist.	Easy	84
	Issue a D-Notice to a local newspaper or broadcaster.	Average	
	Issue a D-Notice to a national newspaper or broadcaster.	Difficult	

Baggers	Occult forensic examination of a crime scene.	Easy	86
	Banishment of an entity that is already secure.	Average	
	Banishment or containment of a hazardous creature that is still on the loose.	Difficult	
Cleaners	Erase evidence at a contained location.	Average	86
	Erase evidence at a public location with witnesses.	Difficult	86
Plumbers	Prevent Laundry personnel from talking about an incident by placing them under a geas.	Easy	86
	Banish a level one or two entity.	Easy	
	Alter memories of a single individual.	Average	
	Banish a level three entity.	Average	
	Alter memories of multiple individuals.	Difficult	
	Banish a level four entity.	Difficult	

Other Groups

Section	Service	Availability	Page
Police	Access to police records.	Easy	
	Police backup.	Average	
	Use of police resources.	Varies	
	Use of surveillance team (SCD-10).	Average	115
	Evacuate an area (CO3).	Difficult	115
	Armed Response Unit (CO19).	Difficult	116
Territorial SAS	Armed Backup (four man squad).	Average	116
	Armed Backup (16 man troop).	Difficult	116

Modifiers

- +10% Requisition is from character's own section.
- +10% The section has been forewarned that it may be required to provide services in the near future.
- 10% to -20% The requested support must travel outside their normal area of operations (for example, calling in the SAS in the middle of nowhere).
- 10% The requested support must be available within the next 24 Hours.
- 20% The requested support must be available *now!*

Example: Bob, for reasons that are wholly outside the scope of this example, is hiding in a cave on a small uncharted island in the middle of the North Sea. He needs the cavalry to come riding to his aid. Bob has a Status of 50%. He requisitions a four-man SAS squad (Average difficulty). He needs support now (-20%) and it is outside of the SAS's normal area of operation (-20%), meaning he has only a 10% chance of being able to get this help without consequence.

Budgets and Spending

'The Laundry is infamous for its grotesque excesses in the name of accounting; budgetary infractions are punished like war crimes, and mere missing paper clips can bring the wrath of dead alien gods down on your head. But when Angleton says don't spare the horses he sends us screaming across the countryside at a hundred and forty miles per hour, burning aviation fuel by the ton and getting ATC to clear lower priority traffic out of our way - and all because he doesn't want to be late for a meeting.'

— The Concrete Jungle

Bob Howard works in the IT department. When Bob buys a new server, it comes out of the IT budget. When Bob calls in the Plumbers to deal with a demonic outbreak, it also comes out of the IT budget. Both of these things make Bob's boss very unhappy.

Your characters can always charge some expenses to your department. You should not - departmental spending decisions are taken by people several pay grades above you - but in an emergency, you may have no choice but to stick the cost of calling in the Plumbers or the SAS onto the department tab. Drawing on the departmental budget makes you very unpopular with your superiors.

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When on a mission or other field assignment, you may also have a mission budget. The mission budget can be spent on equipment and support for your assigned task; if anything is left over, you can spend it on training for your group. Mission budget decisions are taken collectively by the Player Characters.

Mission Budgets

There's a certain vicarious amusement to be had in stepping out at night with a beautiful blonde on my arm and a brown manila envelope in my inside pocket labelled HOSPITALITY EXPENSES – even if I'm going to have to account for any cash I pull out of it, in triplicate, on a form F.219/B that doesn't list 'gambling losses' as an acceptable excuse.'

— The Jennifer Morgue

All of the Player Characters share a single mission budget. The size of this budget, if any, is determined by the GM but as a guideline:

Mission	Budget
Internal committee or event (Christmas party organisation committee)	10
Unremarkable mission (investigate occult activity in Swindon)	25
Important mission (track down a missing Laundry agent before terrorists get hold of the <i>Necronomicon</i>)	50
Dangerous mission (lead the exploration of the island that just rose up out of the Pacific and look out for Black Chamber assassins)	100

For example: Three Laundry officers are sent to investigate a possible cult in Cornwall. They have a budget of 25 points to use on requisitions. The three officers must decide which requisitions are worth spending budget points on.

Departmental Budgets

'Harriet looms over me, visibly working on her anger. You realise that last night you cost our working budget more than seven thousand pounds? That's going to have to be justified, Mr. Howard, and you are going to justify it to the Audit Commission when they come round next month.'

— The Atrocity Archives

Each Player Character has access to the budget of his or her own department. The Departmental Budget is effectively bottomless but the more you draw on it, the more trouble you are in. If you exhaust your collective mission budget, you can draw on the Departmental Budget instead in certain circumstances:

- You can draw on your Departmental Budget if it is an emergency. If you call in the Plumbers because a monster has followed you home, then they will rescue you first and bill you later.

HOW MUCH MONEY?

Budgets are deliberately abstract – like so many government spending projections, the numbers involved are quite unreal. Spending also means different things to different departments – a 10 point spend in the IT department might cost ten thousand pounds, while the same spend for SAS support might run to half a million. Do not consider the real-world amount – consider the amount of hassle spending the money is going to cause your superiors.

- You can draw on your Departmental Budget if you make a successful Bureaucracy check to hide the spending. If you fail this check, then your superiors have noticed your attempt to hide a requisition for a Basilisk Gun as 'audio-visual recording equipment with after-market memory upgrade'. If you succeed, you have managed to bury the paperwork for a while but it may come back to haunt you at some point in the future.

If, through the miracles of matrix management, you work for several departments, you can pick which department's budget you are exploiting. It is a good idea to share the pain, so that no one departmental budget is overextended.

Departmental Budget expenditures reset to zero after a mission.

Using a Budget

You can spend money from a budget to turn a failed Status check into a successful one. This reduces your budget by an amount equal to the margin of failure (the difference between your Status skill after modifiers and the roll you actually made).

For example: To continue the previous example, Bob only had a 10% chance to succeed in his Status check to request support from the SAS. Bob's player rolls a 65 – a difference of 55.

Bob had a mission budget of 25, so he exhausts that first. That still is not enough to turn his roll into a success, so he dips into the IT department funds. He takes another 30 points from the IT department budget to pay for his rescue.

End-of-Mission Accounting

After a mission, if you have points remaining in a Mission Budget, these points can be spent on Training Courses for team members. If your Mission Budget is exhausted, you do not get to go on weekend junkets to the countryside. (You may also be sent on training courses by your superiors.)

However, if you have drawn on your Departmental Budget, then you have to face the wrath of your superiors and Financial Control. The degree of inquiry and possible retribution depends on how much you appropriated from

the budget (not including any spending you have managed to hide). The Game Master may choose to roleplay the inquiry process or just call for a Bureaucracy or Persuade roll to determine how well you defend yourself.

If the inquiry goes badly, your Status score is reduced by the listed amount.

Budget Appropriation	Likely Inquiry	Status Loss
10 or less	A stern talking to by your manager.	1d3%
25 or less	Long boring meetings with Financial Control, review of past spending (which may turn up previous irregularities).	1d6%
50 or less	Audit committee.	2d6%
100 or less	Suspended pending full review of procedures, complete audit, potential budget freeze, cutbacks or termination.	3d6% or more

Note that if a team are consistently spending under their budget, they are obviously being assigned too much money and their future allocations should be reduced!

Training Packages

If you have any Mission Budget left over, you may spend it on training courses. Each training course must be bought separately for each Player Character.

At the end of the course of study, the Game Master should make a roll of the instructor's Teach skill (usually 30+3d20%). If the roll is successful, your player gets a successful check in all of the skills taught in the course. If the roll is a special success, your character gets an automatic gain in all of the skills taught in the course. A failure on the instructor's part wastes everyone's time and yields no experience checks and a fumble causes your character to lose 1d6% from one of the skills taught in the course through disinformation or bad example.

A character may take a course more than once, but may not increase the same skill from the same course twice. For example, if you go through a Level 1 Firearms course and increase Firearms (Pistols), you may not gain another checkmark for that speciality from the Level 1 course. If you redo the course, you must pick another Firearms speciality to benefit.

Examples of commonly-taught courses available to Capital Laundry Service employees, the cost per Player Character, any requirements and the skills taught are shown overleaf.



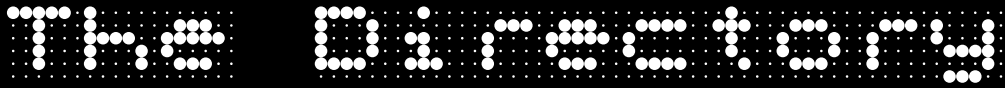
CREATING NEW COURSES

The Game Master should determine the following:

- What skill or skills are potentially improved in the course of training?
- What is the length of the course?
- What is the instructor or course leader's Teach skill?
- What is the cost of the course? As a rule of thumb, the cost is five points per skill but obscure or dangerous skills like Sorcery should cost more and common skills like Bureaucracy or a Knowledge skill should cost less.

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Course	Cost	Requirements	Skills
Certificate of Weaponry Expertise (COWE)			
Level 1	5	None	Any one Firearms speciality (other than Esoteric)
Level 2	10	COWE1	Any two Firearms specialities (other than Esoteric)
Level 3	15	COWE2	Any two Firearms speciality (other than Esoteric)
Level 4	15	COWE3	Any one Firearms speciality (other than Esoteric), Strategy
Level 5	20	COWE4	Any three Firearms speciality (other than Esoteric), Strategy
Certificate of Weaponry Expertise, Unconventional (COWEU)			
Level 1	10	None	Firearms (Esoteric)
Level 2	10	COWEU1	Firearms (Esoteric), Science (Thaumaturgy)
Level 3	10	COWEU2	Firearms (Esoteric), Knowledge (Occult)
Level 4	15	COWEU3	Firearms (Esoteric), Knowledge (Occult), Science (Thaumaturgy)
Level 5	20	COWEU4	Firearms (Esoteric), Knowledge (Occult), Science (Thaumaturgy), Sorcery
Introduction to Applied Occult Computing (IAOC)	10	None	Computer Use (Magic), Science (Thaumaturgy)
Advanced Occult Computing 1	15	IAOC	Computer Use (Magic), Science (Thaumaturgy), Sorcery
Advanced Occult Computing 2	20	AOC1	Computer Use (Magic), Science (Thaumaturgy), Sorcery
International Relations	5	None	Etiquette, Knowledge (politics)
Orientation and Objectivity: Overseas Liaison	10	International Relations	Bureaucracy, Etiquette, Knowledge (Politics)
Sensitivity & Awareness	10	None	Etiquette, Insight
Basic Stealth & Evasion (BSE)	10	None	Pick two: Disguise, Hide, Knowledge (Streetwise), Stealth
Advanced Stealth & Evasion (SE1)	15	BSE	Pick three: Disguise, Hide, Knowledge (Streetwise), Listen, Stealth
Expert Stealth & Evasion (SE2)	20	SE1	Pick four: Disguise, Dodge, Hide, Listen, Knowledge (Streetwise), Spot, Stealth
Hostage Negotiation	10	None	Insight, Persuade
Practical Occultism	15	IAOC	Computer Use (Magic), Knowledge (Occult), Sorcery
Advanced Occultism	15	Practical Occultism	Pick Three: Computer Use (Magic), Cthulhu Mythos, Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Occult), Linguistics, Science (Thaumaturgy), Sorcery
Emergency Field Medicine	10	None	Craft (Improvised medical supplies), First Aid
Team Building & Management	10	None	Bureaucracy, Command, Persuade
European Computer Driving Licence	5	None	Computer Use (Gaming)
Media Relations	10	None	Etiquette, Knowledge (Politics), Persuade
Esoteric History 1	5	None	Knowledge (Occult)
Esoteric History 2	10	EH1	Knowledge (Folklore), Knowledge (Occult)
Esoteric History 3	15	EH2	Knowledge (Folklore), Knowledge (Occult), Sorcery
Basic Surveillance	5	None	Disguise or Stealth
Advanced Surveillance	10	Basic Surveillance	Pick Two: Disguise, Hide, Knowledge (Streetwise), Spot, Stealth, Technical Use (Surveillance)
Expert Surveillance	15	Expert Surveillance	Pick Three: Disguise, Hide, Knowledge (Streetwise), Spot, Stealth, Technical Use (Surveillance)
Process Workflow Management	10	None	Bureaucracy, Status
Advanced Evasive Driving	15	None	Dodge, Drive (Auto), Repair (Auto)



'My job, as Night Duty Officer, is to sit tight and answer the phone. In the unlikely event that it rings, I have a list of numbers I can call. Most of them ring through to duty officers in other departments, but one of them calls through to a special Army barracks in Hereford, another goes straight to SHAPE in Brussels—that's NATO's European theatre command HQ—and a third dials direct to the COBRA briefing room in Downing Street. Nobody in the Laundry has ever had to get the Prime Minister out of bed in the small hours, but there's always a first time: more importantly, it's the NDO's job to make that call if a sufficiency of shit hits the fan on his watch.'

— Overtime

The Laundry is one small part of the overall security and intelligence services of the United Kingdom. There are other organisations, agencies, groups and TLAs that the Laundry must work alongside, with, under, through or in some cases despite. Half of the Administration workload involves meetings with representatives of these other groups.

In cases where an incident falls within the purview of two organisations, then primacy is determined by a prearranged hierarchy, which can be summarised as: the Laundry gets command if:

- (a) the other group do not want it.
- (b) the other group are not cleared for it.
- (c) there is clear evidence of extra dimensional or magical activity.
- (d) there is a clear and present shoggoth.
- (e) this is the interesting one, from the perspective of Laundry agents. If the Laundry suspects occult involvement – say, a bunch of home-grown Al-Qaeda terrorists are suspected of trying to summon up something ghastly – then the Laundry has to provide strong evidence that it should be given control of the investigation. In the past, this has led to clashes between the Laundry and other organisations.

Her Majesty's Government

Involving civilians in Laundry matters is rarely a good idea. The Laundry pays lip service to the notion of parliamentary democracy but it is hard to brief MPs on the importance of, say, SCORPION STARE or BLACK CODICIL without a lot of blank stares and worried looks. Most people do not want to know about the true nature of reality; the thought that everything from lazy Sundays walking the dog to the local football team to the next election to all life on Earth could be washed away without warning by an incomprehensible and sudden event is unthinkable to them. Therefore, the Laundry operates with comparatively little parliamentary oversight – it reports to the Defence Committee and the Intelligence and Security Committee on an irregular basis (there was a Secret Joint Select Committee on Unconventional Affairs, but that last met in 1982).

All of these committees are buried deep in the Whitehall apparatus; the average member of the Laundry will never,

ever attend any of these meetings. If you find yourself sitting before a session of the Intelligence and Security Committee, then something has gone very, very wrong.

COBRA

Remember: COBRA is *not* a bunch of international megalomaniacs with improbable schemes who fight Action Force (or GI Joe if you are an American). COBRA stands for Cabinet Office, Briefing Room A and it is the emergency co-ordination committee for the United Kingdom. The makeup of COBRA depends on the crisis at hand – you will always have the Prime Minister or a deputy and a couple of other Ministers, plus Army chiefs, the JIC (Joint Intelligence Committee) chair and whatever other representatives or specialists are needed. The COBRA committee meets only when something important is happening, such as strikes in key industries or services, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, civil unrest.

Calling for a meeting of COBRA is only done as a last resort, when a mass outbreak and considerable civilian casualties are extremely likely.

THE HELSINKI PROTOCOL

The Helsinki Protocol, signed by the Allied Powers in 1945, banned the use of 'unconventional weapons' derived from Dho-Na topology and related methods of energy transference. The Helsinki Protocols are why the Cold War was fought primarily with the threat of nuclear bombs instead of the threat of Elder Gods, why magic never became a tool of modern warfare, why we spend billions on aircraft carriers instead of two-way mass transfer gates – and why we are still here. Without the Helsinki Protocols, there would be no chance of keeping the genie in the bottle.

THE LAUNDRY

Joint Intelligence Committee

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The JIC is part of the Cabinet Office and directs the various secret services and intelligence agencies (DI5, DI6, GCHQ, DIS and us). Each year, it drafts the Requirements and Priorities for the agencies, co-ordinates joint efforts, directs overall intelligence policy and advises the Prime Minister and the other ministers on intelligence gathered. The Laundry's representative attends meetings of the JIC.

The UK Intelligence Community

The Laundry sits awkwardly between the other intelligence agencies, overlapping with each of them at times. It is impossible to wholly avoid treading on toes – the Laundry's domestic investigations clash with the Security Service's counter-terrorism investigations, while our overseas offices are in the same vein as the Secret Intelligence Service's. We cannot even be lumped in with GCHQ as we have field agents – if we just did occult SIGINT, it would be easier but the Laundry needs eyes in the field as well as researchers in the labs and officers in the offices, making lists of who has been naughty and who has been summoning byakhee.

GOLD/SILVER/BRONZE COMMAND

To ensure there is a clear chain of command in any joint operation, all emergency and security services follow the Gold/Silver/Bronze system. GOLD is in charge of Strategic decisions, SILVER is Tactical and BRONZE is Operational. In general, GOLD issues command remotely from their headquarters, SILVER is near the incident site in a command vehicle or command post and BRONZE is on-site.

For example, if a bunch of cultists screw up a summoning and you have suddenly got Fire Vampires crawling all over the place, then the fire department might take GOLD until the blaze was under control, at which point it shifts to SILVER to let the Laundry deal with the cult.

Similarly, in the Amsterdam OGRE REALITY incident at the end of The Atrocity Archives, the Laundry had GOLD strategic command ('close the gate'), while the OCCULUS unit was SILVER, making tactical decisions about how to accomplish this strategic goal. Individual Laundry assets, specifically one Robert Howard, were very much BRONZE in that case.

When dealing with other agencies, it is important to represent the Laundry in a professional and competent manner. While the other groups have signed Section III of the Official Secrets Act and are cognisant of the existence of computational demonology and associated threats, individual officers may be less than co-operative due to institutional rivalries, territorialism or a lack of belief in the existence of Alien Space Gods.

The Laundry is GOLD in any situation where occult weapons or technologies are implicated. Otherwise, we are muscled out of the way or given a subordinate role in intelligence gathering or surveillance.

Security Service (DI5)

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Officially, it is the Security Service or Defence Intelligence 5 but everyone on the outside refers to it by its old name of MI5. They are the UK's main counter-terrorism and counter-espionage agency, responsible for collecting intelligence on domestic threats and rooting out spies. Since the end of the Cold War, the organisation's main focus has shifted from counter-espionage to counter-terror, initially against Irish Republicans but now also against home-grown terrorists and extremist groups. DI5 maintains files on a large percentage of British citizens; they are reading your email and bugging your phone right now.

The Laundry has a moderately good working relationship with DI5 – any suspects who flag certain criteria (background in mathematics or computing, unusual religious connections, tentacles) get turned over to the Laundry for investigation.

DI5 Officer

STR 11 CON 12 SIZ 14 INT 16 POW 10
DEX 12 CHA 11 EDU 16 SAN 50 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +0

Skills: Command 40%, Computer Use 30%, Demolition 25%, Etiquette 40%, Insight 50%, Knowledge (Law) 50%, Knowledge (Politics) 65%, Knowledge (Streetwise) 40%, Knowledge (Terror groups) 65%, Research 60%, Spot 50%, Stealth 45%, Strategy 40%, Track 40%

Secret Intelligence Service (DI6)

.....

Again, it is officially DI6 but better known as MI6, home of James Bond. They are the UK's foreign intelligence gathering service.

The rivalry between SIS and the Special Operations Executive (of which the Laundry is the only surviving section) continues to this day, even though this institutional vendetta has lost all meaning. If there is ever an opportunity to embarrass or expose the Laundry, then SIS are sure to take it (and vice versa). The two organisations work poorly together, to put it mildly but are obliged to co-operate for overseas operations.

Relations between the Laundry and SIS are complicated even further by the sharp divide between occult and non-occult

intelligence relations internationally. SIS and their American counterparts share intelligence and co-operate extensively (do not mention the Iraq War), while the Laundry and the Black Chamber are antagonistic. SIS regularly complains that the Laundry jeopardises its special relationship with the CIA and the UK-USA Security Agreement.

DI6 Field Operative

STR 14 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 16 POW 14
DEX 10 CHA 14 EDU 16 SAN 60 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Bargain 40%, Brawl 40%, Bureaucracy 50%, Command 30%, Disguise 50%, Fast Talk 45%, Gaming 40%, Grapple 50%, Firearms (Handgun) 60%, Insight 50%, Knowledge (Espionage) 60%, Knowledge (Politics) 50%, Research 30%, Spot 55%, Stealth 60%.

GCHQ

Government Communications Headquarters is the United Kingdom's signals intelligence group, responsible for intercepting and monitoring communications. They have listening stations in various strategic locations and are part of the ECHELON system for eavesdropping on global telecommunications. GCHQ is also responsible for maintaining the integrity and security of the United Kingdom's communications security, by advising and auditing other departments and funding research into more secure communications methods.

As the kids say, the relationship between the Laundry and GCHQ 'is complicated'. The two groups work very well together on the technical side, co-operating on applications of computational demonology (*your 256-bit key encryption is unbreakable... but only in this universe! Mwahahaha!*) and security. In fact, they co-operate much too well; there is a strong case to be made that large chunks of the Laundry (about half of R&D and parts of Admin) should be transferred to GCHQ. Proponents of this claim that the remainder of the Laundry would then become a specialist agency with a focus on field operations and counter-cult work, perhaps attached directly to DI5 instead of remaining independent. Mahogany Row is determined to resist any further vivisection of the Laundry's structure (they have long cold memories of the post-war gutting of SOE), so any co-operation with GCHQ is fraught with tension. The orders are to work with them but not *too* efficiently. This means throwing up bureaucratic barriers and unreasonable demands at infrequent intervals – anything to keep the Intelligence Select Committee from thinking that the proposal sounds like a good one.

DIS

The Defence Intelligence Staff is part of the Ministry of Defence (MOD). They collect and collate intelligence from other agencies for military use and also provide intelligence from a variety of sources – HUMINT on the ground, drone and satellite photography, intercepted SIGINT and so on. Unlike the other members of the JIC, DIS is a military organisation (albeit with a considerable civilian staff).



WHO KNOWS ABOUT THE LAUNDRY?

'The trouble with Section Three of the Official Secrets Act is that it's an offence to know it exists without having signed it — in blood. So us signatories who are in theory cleared to talk about such supersecret national security issues as the Laundry's tea trolley rota are in practice unable to broach the topic directly. We're supposed to rely on introductions, but that breaks down rapidly in the field. It's a bit like lesbian sheep; as ewes display their sexual arousal by standing around waiting to be mounted, it's hard to know if somebody else is, well, you know. Cleared.'

— The Concrete Jungle

Within the government, anyone who's been briefed on the Laundry knows about us, which means members of the Cabinet, senior civil servants in the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Defence, and whoever they got drunk with in the Commons bar.

Within the intelligence community, it's possible to find references to the Laundry if you know where to look, and most senior staff are aware of our existence. Anyone who counts has signed Section III.

Within the police & emergency services, very few people, mainly senior police know about the Laundry. A somewhat larger pool have signed Section III and can be called upon to serve as liaisons or local contacts - they are cleared to know that the government takes an active but clandestine interest in weird stuff and that there is an organisation dedicated to investigating said weirdness, but not the exact nature of the Laundry or the threat we face.

As for tactical support - they don't ask questions.

The Laundry and DIS have a distant but cordial relationship. We do not overlap that much; you can spot a uranium enrichment facility from a spy satellite but not a computer science lab where some Iranian boffin is hot on the trail of the Rune of Al-Sabbah. We have occasionally given them something useful (remote viewing and other divination magics) and warned them not to tread in certain places (ancient temples wrought by no human hand are a bad thing).

European Institutions

These are 'mundane' organisations, so do not bother ranting about shoggoths and computational demonology to them. Instead, ask for a qualified officer who is cleared under Appendix III of the Agreement of the Azores. For a more detailed listing of parallel organisations to the Laundry in Europe, see page 118.

SHAPE

Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe – the central command of NATO. It is extremely rare for the Laundry to interact directly with SHAPE (how often do you need to call in an airstrike?) but the Benthic Treaty provides the necessary legal mechanisms. As with so much else in the Laundry, inappropriate use of this facility will be charged to your departmental budget, so if you do nuke Eastern Europe, you will have a very awkward meeting with your manager the next morning.

Europol

The European Police Force, EUROPOL is a clearing house for information on criminal activity. The Laundry has access to Europol files but it is often easier to go through SOCA or a European partner occult agency than request information from Europol directly.

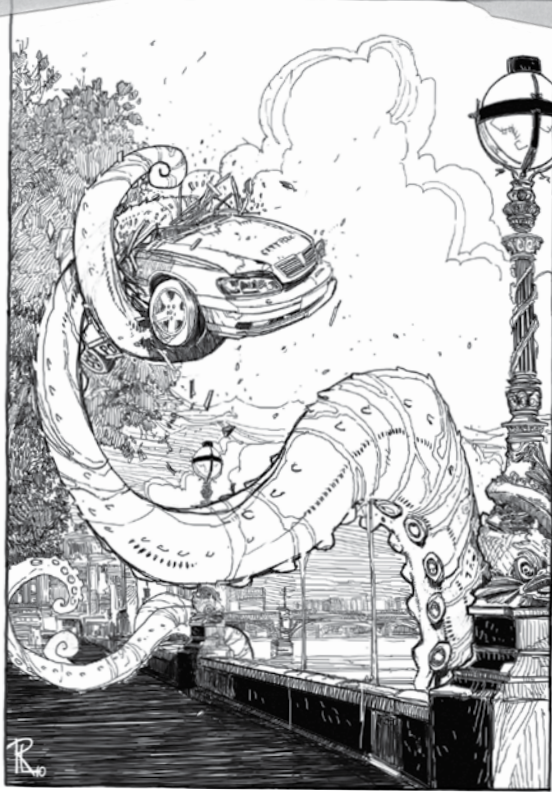
Police and Emergency Services

The Laundry can request help from the police and other emergency services as needed. Theoretically, you are supposed to go through six layers of committee and arrange everything in advance but most Laundry personnel just cut through the red tape by waving a warrant card, which is permissible if you do not do it *too* often.

Metropolitan Police

The Metropolitan is the police force that the Laundry deals with most often. The Met is London's police (and London's weirder, per capita, than most cities) and also has several specialist units that handle crime across the United Kingdom. The Specialist Crime Directorate is tasked with investigating serious crime that is beyond the scope of individual borough stations, while the Central Operations Directorate provides support and services for the Met and other police forces.

The Laundry has access to the police CRIMINT database via HOLMES2 and any reports matching certain keywords ('ritual sacrifice', 'radiation burns', 'brains exploded across the floor', 'hideous tentacles') are automatically flagged for Laundry investigation. There are several ex-Met officers in the Laundry who still have contacts at their old stations; the police old boy network is still faster and more accurate than any database.



Where necessary, the Laundry can request support from any of the Metropolitan specialist units. Such requests must be cleared by head office, unless there is an impending crisis that mandates rapid action (i.e. if the bad guys are about to summon Azathoth on top of London, then wave your warrant card and get the police snipers to take them out now instead of waiting on the phone – but be prepared to justify your decision before the Auditors).

Specialist Crime Directorate	Central Operations Directorate
Homicide and Serious Crime (SCD-1)	Emergency Preparedness Operational Command (CO3)
Fingerprint Services	Central Communications Command (CO10)
Forensic Services Command Unit (SCD-4)	Public Order Operational Command (CO11)
Child Abuse Investigation (SCD-5)	Clubs and Vice (CO14)
Economic and Specialist Crime (SCD-6)	Specialist Firearms Command (CO19)
Serious and Organised Crime (SCD-7)	Territorial Support Group (CO20)
Covert Policing/Intelligence (SCD-10)	Counter Terrorism Command (SO15)

SCD-1

Unexplained deaths and cultists go together like virgins' hearts and ritual sacrifice. The Laundry keeps a close watch on SCD-1 and makes sure there is always a cleared officer on every Murder Investigation Team, in case the investigation turns up occult links.

SCD-1 Investigating Officer

**STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 14 INT 13 POW 13
DEX 10 CHA 12 EDU 16 SAN 55 HP 14**

Damage Bonus: +0

Skills: Brawl 40%, Bureaucracy 40%, Command 30%, Insight 55%, Knowledge (Streetwise) 60%, Medicine (Frensic) 40%, Research 45%, Sense 50%, Spot 50%, Track 60%.

SCD-10

SCD-10 provides surveillance teams and undercover officers to the Metropolitan Police and other police forces, including the Laundry when necessary. A surveillance team can be on site anywhere in London within 90 minutes. Again, where possible, the Laundry works with officers who have already signed Section III but this is not always an option.

SCD-10 Techie

**STR 8 CON 12 SIZ 10 INT 14 POW 12
DEX 10 CHA 15 EDU 14 SAN 50 HP 11**

Skills: Bureaucracy 30%, Climb 60%, Computer Use (Various) 50%, Disguise 70%, Fast Talk 60%, Fine Manipulation 55%, Hide 55%, Spot 40%, Stealth 55%, Technical Use (Surveillance) 65%

CO3

CO3 has prepared a number of fake incidents that can be used as cover for Laundry operations. All these false incidents result in the evacuation of the area and give plausible deniability for any alien entities or gratuitous sorcery. There is the ever-popular 'toxic chemical spill', the 'terrorist threat leading to public hysteria', 'mass heatstroke' and 'flash mob gone wrong'. Any one of these simulated disasters can be put into play within a few hours.

CO3 is also involved in preparing for CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN with the Laundry and the Civil Contingencies Secretariat. Early models are not encouraging; even with SCORPION STARE technology, the most likely result is mass demonic possession during the early stages of the conjunction, making a successful transit of the danger zone extremely unlikely.

CO3 Officer

**STR 10 CON 13 SIZ 16 INT 15 POW 11
DEX 9 CHA 11 EDU 14 SAN 50 HP 15**

Skills: Bureaucracy 50%, Brawl 45%, Command 55%, Demolition 40%, Fast Talk 55%, First Aid 40%, Insight 60%, Medicine (Toxicology) 30%, Persuade 40%, Strategy 70%.

THE LAUNDRY

CO19

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The Specialist Firearms Command trains the Metropolitan's Authorised Firearms Officers and also maintains tactical response teams of Specialised Firearms Officers. SFOs have access to a range of specialist firearms, such as sniper rifles (H&KG3K), breaching shotguns (Benelli M3 Super 90) and submachine guns. CO19 elements can be called in to support Laundry operations where necessary, although the use of 21 SAS is preferred (see below) if time permits.

CO19 Sniper

STR 12 CON 15 SIZ 11 INT 14 POW 10
DEX 15 CHA 10 EDU 16 SAN 40 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armour: Ballistic Vest (4/8 vs firearms)

Weapons: Glock 17 handgun 60%, damage 1D10; H&KG3K Sniper Rifle 65%, damage 2D6+4

Skills: Brawl 45%, Climb 65%, Command 40%, Hide 55%, Spot 55%, Stealth 55%, Strategy 60%.

CO20

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The Territorial Support Group is used for riot control, public order containment and disaster management. They can be used by the Laundry to deal with crowd control. CO20 also has a CBRNO (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Occult) team trained in dealing with the aftermath of such attacks.

CO20 Rescuer

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 12 POW 13
DEX 10 CHA 13 EDU 17 SAN 50 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armour: NBC Suit

Skills: Brawl 50%, Command 40%, Demolition 50%, Fine Manipulation 30%, First Aid 60%, Grapple 50%, Listen 55%, Persuade 45%, Science (Chemistry) 65%, Strategy 40%

SO15

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The Counter Terrorism Command works closely with the Laundry to identify terror threats that may be willing to use occult methods. The portability and concealed nature of computational demonology, coupled with its potential extreme effectiveness makes it ideal for use by terrorists. Predictions show an extremely high risk of a terror attack using summoned possessor entities or unconventional weapons within the next five years, which would be alarming if it were not for the upcoming apocalypse. The thought of Cthulhu rising rather overshadows, no pun intended, the threat of some Jihadist with a laptop and a rudimentary summoning grid.

SO15 Agent

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 10 INT 16 POW 13
DEX 11 CHA 10 EDU 16 SAN 55 HP 12

Skills: Appraise 40%, Bureaucracy 45%, Command 40%, Computer Use (Hacking) 40%, Demolition 30%, Insight 55%, Knowledge (Espionage) 50%, Knowledge (Politics) 40%, Knowledge (Terror groups) 65%, Language (Various) 50%, Research 45%, Strategy 40%, Track 40%

Civil Nuclear Police

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The Civil Nuclear Police are one of the more obscure branches of Her Majesty's Surveillance State; they are in charge of safeguarding the transport of civilian nuclear materials such as reactor fuel and radioactive waste. They are also regularly used as a false front for Laundry operations. The CNP are perfect as monster-control cover – they are allowed to carry firearms, they have all sorts of strange gadgets and no-one wants to ask too many questions to the man in the CNBC suit with the clicking counter (even though it is a thaum reader and not a Geiger counter).

All CNP officers have signed Section III.

Other Police Forces

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Most regional police forces have a few Inspector-rank or higher officers who have signed the OSA(3) and are at least tangentially aware of the existence of the Laundry. It can take hours or days to get one of them on the phone, so for minor requests (access to police files, five minutes with a suspect, do not bother investigating reports of strange lights) it is easier to wave a warrant card and claim to be from New Scotland Yard or the Tax Office.

Local Police Officer

STR 13 CON 11 SIZ 14 INT 12 POW 10
DEX 10 CHA 13 EDU 15 SAN 50 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: Truncheon 40%, damage 1d4

Skills: Brawl 40%, Bureaucracy 30%, Command 25%, Etiquette 30%, Grapple 40%, Insight 45%, Knowledge (Law) 40%, Knowledge (Local area) 55%, Spot 50%.

21 Special Air Service Regiment (Artists) (Reserve)

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The Artists' Rifles began as a volunteer regiment back in the Napoleonic Wars, organised by an art student named Edward Sterling, hence the name. The regiment served with distinction in various forms over the years and eventually became the core of the British special forces, the SAS. There are three SAS regiments, 21 SAS, 22 SAS and 23 SAS but 21 and 23 are part of the Territorial Army while 22 SAS is part of the regular army.

Do not mistake 21 SAS for a bunch of weekend warriors, though. They may have full-time civilian or rear-echelon jobs, but they are all highly trained special forces who know 57 ways to kill you with a pencil (but they are more likely to use an MP5). During the Cold War, their remit was to remain behind and sow chaos in the event of invasion but they have also been dropped into every godforsaken desert, swamp, jungle and urban hellhole you care to mention and a few you probably do not know about.

These days, elements of 21 SAS are loosely attached to the Laundry. We call them in when we need something ventilated or when, say, we have got an open gate to a parallel universe and someone has got to stick their head through it. Several members – Alan Barnes, for example – are Laundry employees who train with 21 SAS at weekends.

21 SAS Soldier

STR 15 **CON** 16 **SIZ** 14 **INT** 13 **POW** 12
DEX 14 **CHA** 11 **EDU** 16 **SAN** 50 **HP** 14

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Weapons: H&KMP5 65%, damage 1d10

Artefacts: Class Three Ward, Charm of Defensive Binding (Class Two)

Skills: Artillery (Spotting) 40%, Brawl 65%, Climb 70%, Command 55%, Demolition 50%, Heavy Weapon (Grenade launcher) 55%, Hide 60%, Stealth 65%, Strategy 55%, Track 50%



THE LAUNDRY AND THE LAW

Section III covers a multitude of sins. If a Laundry officer breaks the law it is unlikely ever to come to a public trial, but officers must still be aware of their rights and obligations. You are not James Bond and do not have a licence to kill.

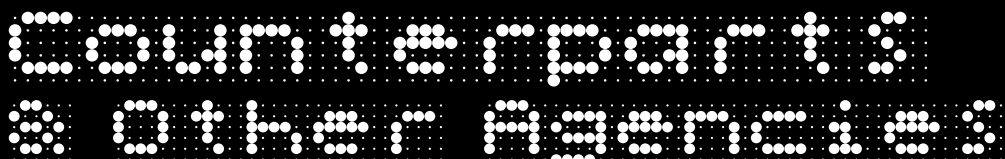
Surveillance: To obtain a phone wiretap, plant a listening device or electronically spy on a target, the Laundry needs permission from the Home Office; in practise, such permission is given freely as long as there is evidence that the target is a valid suspect. Britain is rapidly becoming a surveillance state, with more security cameras per head of population than anywhere else in the world and wiretaps are becoming equally ubiquitous. Information from a phone tap cannot be used in court, but that is rarely a concern for the Laundry.

Breaking and Entering: Permitted only when absolutely necessary. If you ask for permission before breaking in, then the Laundry will protect you. If you fail to ask permission and get caught, then they will still protect you, but the Auditors will feast on your liver and entrails.

Search Warrants: A warrant for 'intrusive surveillance' must be obtained from the Home Office.

Assault and Restraint: Physical force may be used only as a last resort in cases of self-defence or when there is a clear and present danger.

Deadly Force: Not permitted – at least, certainly not within the United Kingdom. Theoretically, under the 1994 Intelligence Services Act, the Laundry could request permission to kill a target outside of the UK, but such permission is unlikely to be granted.



The Laundry is not the only occult intelligence/research/suppression organisation out there. Most First World (a nice, retro turn of phrase) nations have had something analogous to the Laundry since WWII or even earlier. Half the world is desperately trying to keep a lid on the Pandora's Box that is the Dee-Turing Theorem and the rest are trying to find their own keys to the ultimate gate. Occult proliferation is like nuclear weapons, with the added threat that some little tin-pot dictator might make the Cult of the Bloody Tongue into his state religion or find a buried ANNING BLUE SKULL gate into the Dark Anthropic Zone.

The OCCINTEL community is a curious one. While all the spookshows have their own long-term goals that may conflict with those of other agencies, we are *mostly* on the same side. The Laundry may tangle with Thirteenth Directorate agents in Marrakesh if both sides are after the Shining Trapezohedron or the Hungarian *Necronomicon* but everyone has got a vested interest in preserving the status quo. No-one wants a possession epidemic and no-one wants some crazy alien-worshipping death cult to get their hands on the backdoor codes to reality. Everyone should be getting ready for the years to come.

Furthermore, none of the major players want open occult warfare. The Dr Strangelovecraft days where generals dreamed of turning the Elder Gods on their enemies and opening gates to Hell over Moscow are long gone; even the Black Chamber is unwilling to fully exploit certain aspects and entities. The patina of corruption and madness cannot be removed, even if you strip away the occult baroque and replace it with bland codewords. Call them Class IV Possessor entities or Eaters of Souls, call it quantum foaming above the Planck scale or Azathoth, call it CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN or the end of the world but it is still *wrong* by any measure of morality or sanity. When it comes down to it, all humanity is on the same side against *them*.

Or so we hope, anyway.

There is an element of the Prisoner's Dilemma to this. While most cultists are idiots, there are a few who have figured out ways to trade worship for power. One way to survive CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN might be to shack up with one of the first Old Ones to awaken, to bind yourself to the service of an alien god and offer him the rest of humanity as a sacrifice. If you pick the right alien god and you are lucky, maybe you get to bring your nation or just yourself through the conjunction unscathed. The Laundry does not currently believe that any of the other major players have turned to the dark side, but it is always a possibility.

Our European Partners

'With only a decade to go until the omega conjunction – the period of greatest risk during NIGHTMARE GREEN, when the stars are right – everyone in Europe is busy oiling the gears and wheels of our occult defence machinery. Nobody wants their neighbours to succumb to a flux of green, gibbering brain-eaters, after all; it tends to lower real estate values.'

— The Jennifer Morgue

The secret Second Treaty of Nice mandated that all European Union member states establish an unconventional weapon control policy, that we share information on threats and significant discoveries and that all states sign the Benthic Treaty. There is the Joint Intergovernmental Framework on Cosmological Incursions, which Brussels bureaucrats would love to expand into their proposed EUCLID agency (European Union Central Locus for Incursion Defence) but existing supernatural bargains and treaties have scuppered this plan, at least until the lawyers work out a way to harmonise EU law and the Mandate of Enoch.

Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst (AIVD), Unit G6

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The Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service operates a counter-occult department as part of their normal operations (unlike most other secret services, which prefer to hive their occult operations off into some dank corner of the bureaucracy). The AIVD is renowned for its efficiency and is one of the primary movers behind the EUCLID program.

Direction Centrale de la Sécurité Extraordinaire (DCRI)

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The French counter-occult agency has a budget other groups can only dream of and access to occult resources that even the Black Chamber would sell their own grandmothers to obtain. Unfortunately, it is also bitterly divided against itself – there are more power plays and internal schisms than any outsider can possibly keep track of and seems to produce an endless number of cynical Gallic sorcerers who mutter about revenge or squamous things between drags on their enchanted endless Gauloises. The DCRI also distrusts the Laundry; institutionalised paranoia on both sides means that Joint Framework meetings chaired by either party get torpedoed by the other.

The DCRI denies that it operates an 'occult foreign legion' and certainly denies that it has at any point actively recruited non-human assets or ex-cultists.

Geheime Sicherheitsabteilung (GSA)

After WWII, Germany became an occult demilitarised zone. The Nazi magical war machine was dismantled, their demons and summoning grids grounded and exorcised and their sorcerers executed or given exciting new careers in the Black Chamber. A joint allied security force was formed to purge any surviving occult threats, such as Werewolf teams (special forces left behind to resist occupation forces using conventional means) or resuscitated casualties (zombies created using the West-Dippole Formula). In 1955, this security force was officially handed over to the West German government and was nicknamed the 'Faust Force'. Although the GSA's understanding of computational demonology was handicapped by the loss of a whole generation of researchers and discoveries, they have made great strides since the 1970s and now provide wards and countermagics for several other state agencies. *Vorsprung durch Zauberei.*

The East Germans had their own parallel organisation under the Stasi, which was disbanded after unification. The records of the Stasi Special Administration Department were partially destroyed before they could be acquired by the GSA and there are persistent rumours that the Special Administration Department survives in some illegal capacity.

Dipartimento delle Informazioni per la Sicurezza (DIS), Office of Special Investigations

The Italian OCCINTEL scene was notoriously balkanised; up until recently, there were four official departments with counter-occult responsibilities and at least another five semi-official groups. The new DIS section claims to have brought everything under one roof, although there are rumours of internal disputes and spells being flung around the office. Everyone is waiting with a mixture of dread or glee for the next occasion when the Italians get to chair the Joint Framework meetings. It promises to be interesting.

Garda Unit for the Bizarre and Unprecedented (GUBU)

The Irish counter-occult group is part of the police force (*garda síochána*). The GUBU unit dates back to 1923, when the keys to the Red Room in Dublin Castle were handed over to the Irish government. The Red Room contained documents and files relating to occult phenomena in Ireland (irritatingly, the Laundry possesses a full index to Red Room documents but not the actual documents themselves). GUBU is commanded by an Assistant Commissioner and is supported by an occult research group currently operating out of the Science Department in University College Cork.

GLADIO AND THE STAY-BEHIND NETWORKS

The Stay-Behind program was a network of armed cells across Europe set up to provide armed guerrilla resistance in case the Soviet tanks started rolling west again. There were networks in most European countries - the whole operation is best known as GLADIO, after the Italian branch.

The Stay-Behind program was orchestrated by the CIA and the SIS, but many of the British organisers were ex-SOE who knew about the Laundry and were sympathetic to counter-occult operations. Through the Stay-Behind program, the Laundry was able to train suitable agents in other countries to watch for signs of supernatural activity and potential threats. Some of these agents went on to form Laundry counterparts.

To this day, there are Stay-Behind cells operating, passing on secret information to the Laundry. In the event of CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN, these cells will provide a parallel organisation to the existing Joint Intergovernmental Framework, giving humanity a chance to survive even if all national governments collapse or are devoured.

Joint Portuguese Counter-Occult Group (JPCOG)

The Portuguese equivalent of the Laundry was part of the Portuguese state police from 1945 until 1974. During the Carnation Revolution in '74, when the Portuguese military overthrew the *Estado Novo* dictatorship, the old *PIDE* counter-occult group was quietly removed by the Black Chamber. Why? Because Portugal owns the Azores and the Benthic Treaty rounds are held at the Azores. The Black Chamber wanted to make sure that Round Three of human/BLUE HADES relations went according to plan. (Also not part of the plan: President Salazar's sponsoring of occult experiments designed to reconcile his brand of conservative Catholicism with the Dee-Turing Theorem, including 'angel' summoning in breach of the Helsinki Protocol.)

After removing the occult elements of *PIDE*, the Black Chamber, the Laundry and DCRI jointly sponsored a replacement organisation, JPCOG, to ensure the occult security of Portugal. JPCOG still technically exists, although

B COUNTERPARTS

CERN

Pure science is all well and good but you do not spend billions of euros flinging protons around Geneva without expecting some return. Ever since the first Council on Dimensional Security in 1953, the CERN complex has been the heart of high-energy occult research in Europe. You can use a particle accelerator to probe the structure of subatomic particles or you can stick a black goat in the circuit, align it with the telluric currents and use it as the mother of all summoning grids.

Computational demonology is also studied at CERN. The first hypertext systems used there were for cross-referencing the Necronomicon.

The current plan is to configure the LHC as a mass exorcism grid, in the hope of reducing thaumic flux across Europe and delaying the onset of CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN until other occult and conventional defences are in place. The backup plan, if that fails, is to flip it around, set it up as a protective pentacle and then crowd as many people into the protected zone to wait out the horror. There are secret bunkers located within the loop of the LHC that can hold tens of thousands of survivors.

it is staffed almost entirely by Portuguese nationals and reports to the national government. The Black Chamber keeps the organisation going to give it a channel into European policy, although the Second Treaty of Nice calls for the establishment of an independent Portuguese agency after the fifth Benthic Treaty round of talks. Laundry agents may be seconded to JPCOG on occasion, to provide technical or specialist support.

National Countersubversive Organisation (OCN), Section Five

Inevitably nicknamed the Spanish Inquisition, the National Countersubversive Organisation's Section Five is the only surviving remnant of a Franco-era state intelligence agency (the Laundry survived the dismemberment of SOE – occult groups are like bureaucratic cockroaches). Section Five has its own Dunwich equivalent down in Valencia and it is hinted that they have got more BLUE HADES derived-technology (and what they gave up to get Deep One co-operation is a worryingly unanswered question).

P27/Service for Analysis and Prevention (DAP)

There are two agencies in Switzerland. P27 was part of the Swiss GLADIO project – a Laundry-backed spy network with occult ties. For much of the 20th Century, Switzerland was a hotbed of occultism – the Swiss acquired several important relics after the Second World War from unclaimed safety deposit boxes and they have also given legal cover to non-human entities in the past; there is more than one creature out there with a Swiss passport and glowing worms in its eyes. P27 tried to keep tabs on potential threats, but never really managed to get that deep into the other agency, now part of DAP. P27 was mostly rolled up in the mid-90s, although there are still operational cells in outlying cantons.

DAP is the active front for the main Swiss counter-occult group. Their current main priority is maintaining operational security at CERN.

UK-USA Pact Members

'My colleagues in GCHQ listen in on domestic US phone calls, compile logs, and pass them across the desk to their NSA liaisons – who are forbidden by charter from spying on domestic US territory. In return, the NSA Echelon listening posts give GCHQ a plausibly deniable way of monitoring every phone conversation in Western Europe – after all, they're not actually listening; they're just reading transcripts prepared by someone else, aren't they?'

'But in the twilight world of occult intelligence, we aren't allowed to cooperate overtly.'

— The Atrocity Archives

The UK-USA Security Agreement provides for the sharing of signals intelligence between its signatories – the UK, United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. It has been in place since 1945 and is the foundation for world-wide intercept networks like ECHELON. In 1958, the Laundry offered to extend this agreement to cover occult intelligence but the USA refused. The other pact members, however, agreed to a limited exchange of information. We do not know if they have similar arrangements with the USA, but it is likely that the Black Chamber knows everything anyway.

The Black Chamber (USA)

There is the visible universe and there is dark matter. Something like 93% of the material universe is undetectable. It is just out there, lurking in the shadows of the cosmos. If the post-war occult community is the visible universe, then the Black Chamber is dark matter.

What is known about the Black Chamber could be written on the back of a postcard and still leave room for a nice message to Aunt Mabel, but for what it is worth: there was another organisation called the Black Chamber or MI-8, which operated in the United States from 1913 to 1929. It specialised in cryptanalysis, was jointly funded by the State Department and the Army and was famously closed down by Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson because 'gentlemen do not read each other's mail'. *That* Black Chamber may or may not be related to the current entity known by that name.

Of the signatories to the Helsinki Protocol, the United States took the lead in occult research. They got a head start with Tesla and the Innsmouth raids of 1927, so they hit the ground running once they had the Turing Theorem (assuming they did not have it already – the Gilman papers released by Miskatonic University in '72 suggest that they had the mathematical underpinnings for exiting our Calabi-Yau manifold in the mid-30s).

After the war, the Black Chamber – at least, we assume it was the Black Chamber – spent billions on acquiring occult assets. They certainly had teams excavating the ANNING BLUE SKULL civilisation in Antarctica by '48 as part of HIGHJUMP, successfully invoked Yog-Sothoth in '51 and were operating mass-transfer gates to the dark side of the Moon two years before Neil Armstrong took his one small step. After *that*, they got really weird.

It is said that the Black Chamber specialises in taking the human out of 'human intelligence'. Their field teams are usually composed of lobotomised goons or reanimated corpses, controlled by agents several hundred miles away in

a secure bunker. They routinely deploy multiple-possessor entities bound with geas spells, which is about as safe as putting a tuxedo on a nuclear bomb and calling it a spy. They have got golems, vat-grown clones made from essential salt samples, mind-jumping incantations and reverse-engineered OLD DREAMER and PLUTO KOBOLD technology captured from Australia and near orbit, respectively – and that is just the stuff we think we know about.

For most of the Cold War, the Black Chamber was locked in what it thought was a struggle to the death with the Soviets, until it became clear that the enemy was 15 years behind and had no chance of catching up. If you are a conspiracy theorist, you can speculate about why there has been comparatively little involvement by the Black Chamber in recent world events – their seers should have spotted 9/11, Bin Laden should have been taken out years ago by a divination-guided cruise missile or a Dimensional Shambler and what is really going on in Iraq anyway? (The prosaic answers: they did spot 9/11 coming, but the usual bureaucratic snafus meant that the warnings were ignored, Al-Qaeda have their own occult countermeasures and Bin Laden's dead already anyway, some senior figures in government have religious issues with American demon-summoning and Iraq's mostly about oil – finding Irem, the City of Pillars said to be the seat of the Cthulhu cult is a secondary objective.)

The Chamber has a worryingly antagonistic attitude to the other inhabitants of Earth – they signed the Benthic Treaty only after a lot of persuasion and they have pushed back against BLUE HADES ever since (see JENNIFER MORGUE, for example). These are the same people who thought that a nuclear war was winnable, so it is possible that they are equally misguided when it comes to a clash between a superpower and an undersea hyperpower.

Canadian Secret Unconventional Intelligence Service (CSUIS)

CSUIS is a minor player in the international occult scene, rarely operating outside Canada's borders. Either they are just keeping their heads down until stars come right or they are busy making long range expeditions into the hollow world through the north polar entrance. (Short version: Symmes was wrong about Earth being hollow, but there are vast tunnel networks down there and one of the main entrances is in the frozen north.)

Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), South Australia Office

A hundred million years ago, the Australian continent was home to a non-human civilisation, codenamed OLD DREAMER. They built to last – the most enduring human monument would be unrecognisable dust after 10,000 years but we found relics of the Australian civilisation 10,000 times older than that. OLD DREAMER reaches out to us out of deep time.



THE LAUNDRY

ASIO's South Australia office oversees the continuing excavation, investigating and cataloguing of OLD DREAMER sites. Australia has a statistically significant low number of possession incidents and several forms of Dho-Na invocation simply do not work within roughly 2,000 kilometres of the centre of the continent.

Domestic and External Security Group (DESG)

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New Zealand's Domestic and External Security Group provides occult counter-intelligence and counter-possession services. The Laundry partners with the DESG to run a secret naval operation out of Wellington, to study deep-ocean structures and the Pacific abyssal plain (while fully observing all terms and conditions of the Benthic Treaty, please do not eat HMS *Astute*).

The Old Bad Guys

The Thirteenth Directorate

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The Soviets had trouble with the basic principles of sorcery – when your state policy rejects Invisible Sky Daddies of all flavours, it is hard to accept $2+2=Tentacled\ Invisible\ Sky\ Bastard$. They moved into what they termed 'psychotronics' in the late '50s but they were never as dangerous as the west feared. The Laundry spent the Cold War convinced that the Soviets were on the verge of cracking the Incantation of Yaddith; in fact, they were always 10 years behind us in several key sectors. It was not for lack of trying, though – Stalin's gulags provided ample subjects for experimentation.

Laundry Kremlinologists suspect that Stalin's supposed cerebral haemorrhage and 'death' in 1953 was cover for a failed apotheosis ritual. We know Stalin was still around up until 1956 at least, when Krushchev said *'it is impermissible and foreign to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism to elevate one person, to transform him into a superman possessing supernatural characteristics akin to those of a god'*, which translates as *'Uncle Joe is staying dead this time.'*

Possibly as a reaction to this, the KGB's Thirteenth Directorate was established in the 1960s to provide OCCINTEL control and security for the USSR. Following the collapse of the Soviet state and the restructuring of the KGB into the FSB (Federal Security Service), it is believed that the Thirteenth Directorate was spun off into an independent agency. The primary purpose of the Thirteenth Directorate remains similar to that of the Laundry – ensure that supernatural forces are contained and prepare the Russian Federation for the upcoming conjunction.

The Directorate has a reputation for old-school occultism. Instead of using modern computational demonology and standardised wards, they prefer to actually fling spells and use ancient talismans salvaged from some nameless tomb in the Urals. The Directorate's fabled occult library is said

to be the biggest collection in the world, making the Stacks look like a hall closet; the Orne library at Miskatonic is a sad little bookshelf by comparison.

Ministry of State Security, The Nameless Bureau

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The Chinese Ministry of State security is the biggest intelligence-gathering apparatus in the world, although they prefer to cast their nets wide and shallow instead of cultivating deep-cover agents. The MSS sucks up intelligence from overseas students, academics, computer hackers and foreign and domestic media, then collates it.

Their occult section, referred to as the Nameless Bureau, is catching up rapidly with the Black Chamber in the use of non-human agents. MSSNB agents are scouring the globe for occult assets; the speculation that the Plateau of Leng is at least sometimes co-existent with the Himalayas puts a sinister spin on the People's Republic activities in Tibet. The Chinese government has always taken the long view and with more than a billion people to shepherd through CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN, they are expected to take extreme measures when the time for action comes. Getting hard intelligence on the MSSNB's plans is a high priority for the Laundry.

The New Bad Guys

'Bad' is relative, of course. You can be a thoroughly despicable human being – torturing puppies, acting contrary to the interests of the Western Military-Industrial-Entertainment Complex, sticking anthrax in envelopes, jumping the queue at the post office – without being of concern to the Laundry. There are other, better-funded, agencies who deal with merely human threats.

The danger comes when you add computational demonology to an already unstable geopolitical situation. The occult is the great leveller – more power than a nuclear bomb and potentially easier to obtain. Deriving even the more basic elements of demonology requires hairy high-level mathematics and very smart people in lab coats but it is possible to get lucky or to take a short-cut through some old grimoire. Sanctions and spy drones cannot stop sorcery. Preventing the use of magic against British interests is part of the Laundry's brief.

Jihaz Al-Mukhabarat Al-A'Ma/Iraqi Intelligence Service

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This was the old Iraqi state intelligence service, before OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM remodelled most of Baghdad and the Black Chamber brainsucked them. The Laundry had its own run-in with the Mukhabarat (OGRE REALITY) before that; they had succeeded in making contact with a Class Five entity that had devoured all the energy in a parallel universe and was hoping to relocate to ours. The OGRE REALITY incident illustrates the danger

of occult proliferation – the Mukhabarat had nothing more than simple invocations but they invoked something they could not put down. There are no minor threats, only immediate and impending ones. Any organisation or individual who practises magic without the proper knowledge and safety procedures is putting everyone on Earth at risk.

VEVAK/Ministry of Intelligence and National Security
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The Iranian intelligence connection to the occult is disputed; previously, it was thought that the Ayatollah had banned any research that might lead to computational demonology but it is now believed that elements of VEVAK are working to close the gap. Predictive Branch believes that the Iranians have already developed class three summoning grids and that escalation to class four entities and the Rune of Al-Sabbah is inevitable. Meanwhile, they have started digging in the desert near Pasargadae again and the Sivand dam may be providing cover for an occult research facility in that area.

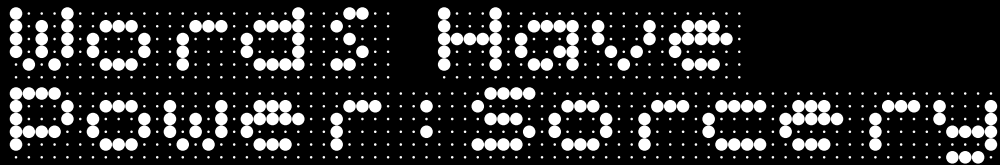
If VEVAK is involved in occultism, it represents a major shift in their policy. While the old SAVAK organisation was definitely pursuing demonology, their ranks were purged of sorcerers after the Iranian Revolution in 1979.

Research Department for External Intelligence (RDEI), North Korea
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North Korea is virtually impenetrable to conventional intelligence, and occult intelligence does not fare much better. The RDEI are known to have a fifth section dedicated to OCCINTEL, concentrating on necromancy – the ‘March of Tribulation’ was caused by the fall of the Soviet Union and flooding but it also provided a thaumic reservoir of millions of souls. If the RDEI tapped even a fraction of this, they could have invoked even a Class Five entity. The Cult of the Bloated Woman is known to have agents in Korea; it is possible that senior members of the Central Committee Secretariat are cultists or even possession vectors for such a creature. The Dear Leader is certainly using a Level Two mass glamour to maintain his cult of personality.

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Boss - the description of the Black Chamber doesn't include any information from Agent RANDOM's debriefing, so whoever wrote this isn't on the BEACON HILL distribution list. There's nothing about their remote-viewing labs in Amherst, or HAARP2, or the Big Dig in Caddo County, Oklahoma. It doesn't even mention the USS Eldridge, although that's been in the public domain for decades. This whole thing could be a BC disinformation packet - 'printed in America', like it says on the front page...



'Today learned the Aklo for the Sabaoth, which did not like, it being answerable from the hill and not from the air. That upstairs more ahead of me than I had thought it would be, and is not like to have much earth brain. Shot Elam Hutchins's collie Jack when he went to bite me, and Elam says he would kill me if he dast. I guess he won't. Grandfather kept me saying the Dho formula last night, and I think I saw the inner city at the 2 magnetic poles. I shall go to those poles when the earth is cleared off, if I can't break through with the Dho-Hna formula when I commit it. They from the air told me at Sabbath that it will be years before I can clear off the earth, and I guess grandfather will be dead then, so I shall have to learn all the angles of the planes and all the formulas between the Yr and the Nbhnggr. They from outside will help, but they cannot take body without human blood. That upstairs looks it will have the right cast. I can see it a little when I make the Voorish sign or blow the powder of Ibn Ghazi at it, and it is near like them at May Eve on the Hill. The other face may wear off some. I wonder how I shall look when the earth is cleared and there are no earth beings on it. He that came with the Aklo Sabaoth said I may be transfigured there being much of outside to work on'

— H.P. Lovecraft, *The Dunwich Horror*.

Magic does not have much of anything to do with wands, brooms or pointy hats, although there is nothing to prevent a magician from wearing a pointy hat if they are so-inclined. Instead, magic is the ability to directly affect the fabric of our own reality or even the fabric of other realities. Performing magic also always requires computation of some sort. This computation can be performed by some ancient weirdo playing with magic squares or manipulating complex symbols or it can be performed by some modern weirdo of the type we commonly call geeks, using a cheap netbook, a massively parallel supercomputer or even a smartphone. Someone sufficiently crazy or desperate can even perform these calculations solely in their brain, although many people who try this never perform magic or much of anything else beyond advanced drooling ever again.

Regardless of how the computation is performed, the result is the same. Mathematics does not just represent the structure of reality; it actually is the structure of reality. When you perform sufficiently complex calculations or symbol manipulations of just the right type, the entire multiverse responds to them. This response can be anything from making you temporarily invisible, to providing you with information about a distant location, to opening a hole in the fabric of space and letting all manner of foul and hungry entities from another universe into our own. Unfortunately, the latter sort of result is often easier than either of the first two and thus organisations like the Laundry must occasionally go around and prevent talented software engineers from accidentally reformatting their neighbourhood or perhaps even their entire hometown.

A Brief History of Magic

Long before our ancestors developed opposable thumbs or even limbs, powerful ancient beings inhabited the Earth. Some came from this dimension, some from others, but they

could all travel through space, time and other dimensions at will, using magic and various forms of advanced technology that no human can understand. Eventually, most of these creatures flapped off into the cosmos or died out in various wars, while the remainder dwell in hostile (to us) environments that they prefer and we do our best to avoid.

Once humanity appeared, there were always a few eccentrics who played around with symbols, either in their heads or by drawing them, singing repetitive chants or whatever. Eventually, some of these eccentrics figured out that some of these symbols or chants could make things happen. Although they do not appear in any ordinary archaeological journals, there are a number of ancient cave paintings that are strictly off limits to all but authorised personnel, because the symbols used in them are still powerful.

Any good, and typically very well locked, occult library will have books, paintings and other items that are centuries or millennia old. However, the one universal truth about magic before the middle of the 20th Century was that it was both dangerous and a truly frightening amount of work. Magicians needed to design and solve all manner of exceptionally complex formulas, diagrams and calculations, and a single misstep could result in everything from, at best, total failure, to being kicked out of their own brainmeat by something that used the opportunity to move in and redecorate.

Both the effort and the risk kept magic as an exceedingly fringe hobby and most would-be sorcerers either did not last long enough to cause much trouble or they got a clue and after a few useful successes gave sorcery up for safer pursuits, like Russian roulette. All this changed near the end of World War II, when Alan Turing discovered that digital computers and advanced mathematics could be used to do a whole lot more than simply decode Nazi messages.

Ever since then, magic has become increasingly easy as every iteration of Moore's Law put faster and smaller processors in the hands of increasing numbers of tech-savvy people.

This is also when various governments suddenly became very interested in sorcery. Previously, political leaders ranging from Queen Elizabeth I to Adolf Hitler had attempted to recruit sorcerers to work by their side, but these efforts met with the same sort of mixed success that sorcery always faced before the dawn of the Digital Age. However, after WWII, sorcery could be made relatively reliable, and that caused some politicians to become overly ambitious and others to become very worried indeed. Thankfully, worry has mostly won out over ambition.

In the wake of Turing's discoveries, various governments did their best to classify all research into computational sorcery and related fields. As a result, advanced cryptography and various other fields of mathematics have become highly classified endeavours. All this worked out fairly well when computers were huge machines found in the basements of secure government buildings and a few universities. However, as the Digital Revolution progressed, it became clear that the sorts of computers found in the homes and offices of millions of professionals could not only be used to perform all manner of powerful feats of magic, they could even do so accidentally. When someone attempted to create a new type of graphic rendering system or a new audio compression algorithm, they might accidentally end

up performing calculations that could result in several dead bodies in a nearby morgue getting up and looking for something to eat, or worse yet opening a gateway to another dimension filled with vast and hungry entities.

Previously, governments had spent a fair amount of their magical effort working to stop enemy sorcerers, just as British occultists worked against the Nazi sorcerers during World War II. Now, the Laundry also had to attempt to stop well meaning hobbyists who had no idea that the code they were getting ready to run could let hordes of hungry monsters from other dimensions into their living room. Today, the Laundry and the occult intelligence agencies of other nations must defend their nations against all manner of occult threats, including accidents, terrorism, sorcerers from rival occult intelligence agencies, intrusions by hungry or ambitious extra-dimensional entities and potentially deadly mistakes made by overly curious geeks. As computers become more powerful and knowledge of them becomes more widespread, magic becomes easier and magical apocalypses like CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN look increasingly likely.

Magic, Energy, and Magical Energy

In less informed discussions of sorcery, there is a great deal of talk about so called 'magical energy'. To actual sorcerers, this phrase can have one of two meanings – three if you count proof that the speaker is utterly clueless. There is energy summoned by magic, and there are the energies that become bound up in places and objects associated with magic, strong emotions or dying.

Energy Summoned By Magic

The most basic type of magic involves summoning magical energy from other dimensions. Everything from the blast of laser light from a mirrored Hand of Glory to the subtle changes produced by a glamour come from simple or complex energies summoned from another dimension. These energies are the basis of all magic – even summoning or banishing a possessing demon is actually the transfer of a particular organised energy field from one dimension to another. One of the most useful aspects of magic is that it breaks most conservation laws and is thus a way to get something for almost nothing – assuming you regard risking possession, brain damage or insanity as almost nothing.

If you are willing to deal with these risks, you can play around with some simple circuits and some less than simple computations on a computer or PDA and instantly turn someone into a pile of ash or short out every circuit breaker over several city blocks. Of course, this energy can also be used in exceptionally subtle ways, to temporarily alter the motion of air molecules around you to make certain that any sound you make gets no more than a metre or two from you before it utterly vanishes. By controlling energy in very obvious and exceptionally subtle ways, sorcery can be used to do almost anything.



Thaumic Energy

When most sorcerers talk about magical energy, energy summoned by magic is not usually what they mean. Summoning energy is simply what magic does. 'Magical energy' is an entirely different and usually far less manageable beast. It is also known as thaumic resonance, and places with lots of that sort of energy are popularly described as 'creepy' or simply haunted. The reason for these 'hauntings' is simple: objects with a high degree of thaumic resonance act as dimensional thin-spots, that allow various sorts of energies to slip through from other dimensions. Most often, these manifestations are simple phenomena like cold spots or other local temperature changes, local electrical or magnetic anomalies, poltergeist activity involving objects moving or occasionally bursting into flames. Occasionally, people experience hallucinations and in areas with an especially high degree of thaumic resonance, spontaneous possession may occur. Thankfully, most often these possessions are temporary and end when the subject moves more than a few metres from the affected object or area.

There are a variety of reasons for objects or locations to accumulate large amounts of thaumic resonance. The sites of many people dying or suffering can do it, since human minds can become conduits to other dimensions, especially human minds pushed to the extremes of emotion which transform through dying. However, the degree of 'magical energy' produced by such sites is relatively small. Objects or places that have been repeatedly used for magic tend to accumulate significantly more thaumic resonance, especially if the magic is both frequent and powerful. You could cast dozens of level two glamours or other relatively simple spells for many years and not accumulate much more thaumic energy than you get at the site of an old gallows. However, repeatedly summoning lots of powerful extra-

dimensional entities or working other sorts of powerful magic leaves a deep and lasting stain upon the local fabric of reality and can go so far as to make a weak spot where non-Euclidean creatures can slip through. However, the worst and thankfully rarest sort of 'haunted' objects are those that have either repeatedly visited other dimensions or have been the site of multiple class three gates or a single enduring class four gate.

The thaumic energy build-up from such events can be immense, and poses several additional dangers. In addition to the problems of various sorts of disturbance, such sites can also attract sorcerers who wish to use them for even more magic in order to draw upon some of this resonance. Performing sorcery on these sites increases the power of the spells cast there and also eventually increases the local thaumic resonance.

In a few of the most extreme hauntings, people walking around late at night or even simply alone, become inexplicably lost or have visions of sights best left unseen, including visions of the inhabitants of other dimensions. In the worst of these sites, a few of the people who become lost never return, either because something crawls out through a dimensional weak-point and eats them or because they wander through a brief tear in reality and end up in another dimension.

Although 'grounding' accumulated thaumic energy is harmless if all safety precautions are taken and the process goes exactly as planned, in the more extreme cases the amount of thaumic energy present is so high that if the grounding goes even slightly wrong an impressive amount of thaumic energy is released in an instant. These energy releases can do everything from sucking any unprotected people or objects into another dimension to briefly letting

Thaumic Resonance or 'Haunting': Cause and Effect Table

Level	Causes	Effect *
1	Old, well-used gallows, old cemetery or asylum.	Cold spots and creepy feelings.
2	Huge necropolis, very old and especially horrific asylum, ritual space of a small magical cult that endured for a few decades.	People easily become briefly lost or turned around. Anyone sleeping here has strange and very disturbing dreams. Visitors occasionally have brief visions of ancient events or half-seen glimpses of extra-dimensional creatures.
3	Ritual space of a large and old magical cult, an ancient cemetery used as a ritual site by a small cult.	Occasional poltergeist activity moves small objects or causes them to vanish. On rare occasions, small fires may mysteriously start. People occasionally become lost and wander around for hours, seeing no one and no way out.
4	Repeated trips to other dimensions or the site of one long-term level 4 or many level 3 gates.	Lone visitors occasionally see extended visions of other dimensions, temporary spontaneous possession occasionally occurs. On very rare occasions, the dead walk as they too are possessed.
5	Site of level 5 magic, site of multiple enduring level 4 gates, home of several powerful extra-dimensional entities.	Spontaneous level 3 gates to other dimensions briefly open, sucking visitors through or releasing extra-dimensional entities into our world.

* Effects listed at one level are also found in all lower levels

some powerful creature into our reality, to simply killing any unprotected living thing within a few dozen metres; see Exorcism (page 137) for further details on grounding thaumic energy. Hauntings are divided up into levels like spells; the table above details the effects of various levels of haunting, as well as their possible causes.

Learning Magic

These days no one learns magic by memorising spells. There is an excellent reason for this: spells never make any sense – literally. Magic does not work according to any of the laws or principles that we are familiar with in our daily lives. Even more than quantum mechanics, and that is saying a lot, magic is utter nonsense when examined from the viewpoint of our ideas of how the world works. As a result, trying to reason out why a spell works as it does is doomed to failure. There may be sorcerers who are literally insane enough to manage this sort of thing, but they are all sufficiently insane and magically twisted that they are no longer fully human, so asking them to explain their understanding will not help you much and might drive you insane too.

The rituals necessary to perform magic are quite complex. Even in the pre-computer era would-be sorcerers (or at least those who did not die trying to perform their first spell) kept their grimoires open during rituals to help keep from making what was usually a fatal mistake. These days, a skilled computational sorcerer with a keen survival instinct starts out knowing a whole lot about computers and writing code and then goes on to learn lots of theory about how magic works. They learn that the Dho-Na curve is a vital part of any summoning ritual, and all manner of similar facts. Then they learn what magic can do, roughly how it works, how to use pre-written spells and how to compile a set of magical code into a personalised spell that does exactly what they want. What they will not be learning is why any of this works – it is not a necessary part of being a sorcerer and, beyond a few half-mad R&D types, no one knows. Computational sorcerers also will not be writing any new spells – that is the job of the same half-mad R&D sorcerers, not field agents.

Instead, field agents learn how to draw rapidly and accurately with a conductive pen, as well as how to properly align a laser pentacle and how to set up a portable Faraday cage. The precise details of the various diagrams, chants, computations and whatever else they need to perform spells will be conveniently housed on their PDA, smartphone, laptop, netbook, iPod or whatever other nifty piece of tech they are carrying around. This tech also runs the computations, speaks the chants with error-free precision and displays the diagrams that need to be drawn. Over time, experienced sorcerers may learn a couple of spells that they use all the time, but only the crazy or the utterly desperate try magic without some sort of electronic support – it is too easy to forget one tiny step amidst all the complex insanity needed to perform actual magic.

Learning the Sorcery skill

The Sorcery skill does not improve through experience. There are two ways to learn it – through training or by piecing together disassociated bits of knowledge. Training used to be a long and painful apprenticeship but now it is a series of standardised courses (see **Chapter 11: Budgets, Requisitions and Training** and the Advanced Occult Computing courses).

Learning sorcery indirectly is a harder process. Whenever a character passes a skill level in other key skills, he may check Sorcery. The character gains one check whenever a relevant skill passes 50%, 75% or 90%, as his greater understanding of how reality works informs his growing knowledge of sorcery. The skills that provide Sorcery checks are:

- Cthulhu Mythos
- Computer Use (Magic)
- Knowledge (Occult)
- Science (Thaumaturgy)
- Science (Mathematics)

Magic and the Multiverse

The most important truth of magic is that ours is not the only universe. We do not understand the nature of the multiverse, but what we do know is that there are many millions of other universes out there. According to our best theories, the actual number of other universes or dimensions, or whatever you want to call them, is infinite. Some of them are almost identical to our own. Yes, Everett's many-worlds hypothesis is true. There are universes out there where the Nazis won, as well as probably at least one where you invented something marvellous and are now a billionaire living in a lavishly tacky mansion. You will not see any of those worlds: the closer one universe is to another, the more energy it takes to open a gateway between them. This is a good thing too or every sorcerer would go around playing a version of *Being John Malkovich* with their billionaire counterparts.

However, while there is an infinity of universes almost identical to our own out there, there is a larger infinity of very different universes. Most of them have radically different physical laws – on some your molecules would evaporate into clouds of protons and electrons the instant you set foot there. On others, the iron in your bloodstream would begin to radioactively decay or you would collapse into a tiny black hole under the force of the gravity generated by your instantly dead body. Needless to say, visiting a dimension that you have not carefully checked out beforehand is exceptionally inadvisable.

Working magic involves opening gates between one of these universes and our own. As is discussed later, there are five types of these gates (see page 138). Three of these types actually create physical openings through which people and other things can travel and are described under the entry for the 'Gate' spell. Such gates are rarely used and difficult to create. The vast majority of magic involves

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the other two types of gate, which move energy from one universe to another. All inter-dimensional gates, regardless of whether they move matter or energy, do so by first moving information from one universe to another. In fact, the formal definition of magic is moving information from one universe to another using advanced mathematics. The important question is what type of information you want to move.

Learning Spells

The process of becoming a sorcerer involves a combination of learning a great deal of the theory of magic, while also learning the details of how to cast all of the common spells. All characters with a sufficiently high score in the Sorcery skill can cast all common spells of a particular level. See the following table for further information.

Spell Level	Sorcery Skill Required to Know and Cast Spells of that Level
1	15%
2	30%
3	45%
4	60%
5	90%

If you have access to the instructions for a spell (say, a grimoire), you can try casting it even without having the requisite Sorcery skill level – you do not understand *how* it works, but you *can* mutter the words or run the code. This is generally very unwise. Any failure when casting a spell that you do not have the Sorcery to work means a roll on the Spell Failure table.

Spell Variants

There are hundreds of variations on every spell, each of which has its own quirks and title. The *Incantation of Naar'gh Ti'che* and the *Wheel of Eibon* and *Occult Firewall v1.3* may all be Level 2 Entropy Manipulation spells under these rules, but a practising sorcerer might refer to each spell by its proper name instead of using the general term.

Rare Spells

There are more spells – infinitely more – than are listed in this chapter. New spells may be learned through research or experimentation. This is the type of research and experimentation best performed in a Faraday cage, in a deep mine shaft, far away from any centres of population and by someone you do not like. Cultists and demons may throw unusual spells at you in the course of a mission – rather than stopping to ask if that is a variation on *Defensive Ward IV*, try dodging and running away before the thing eats you.

Casting Spells

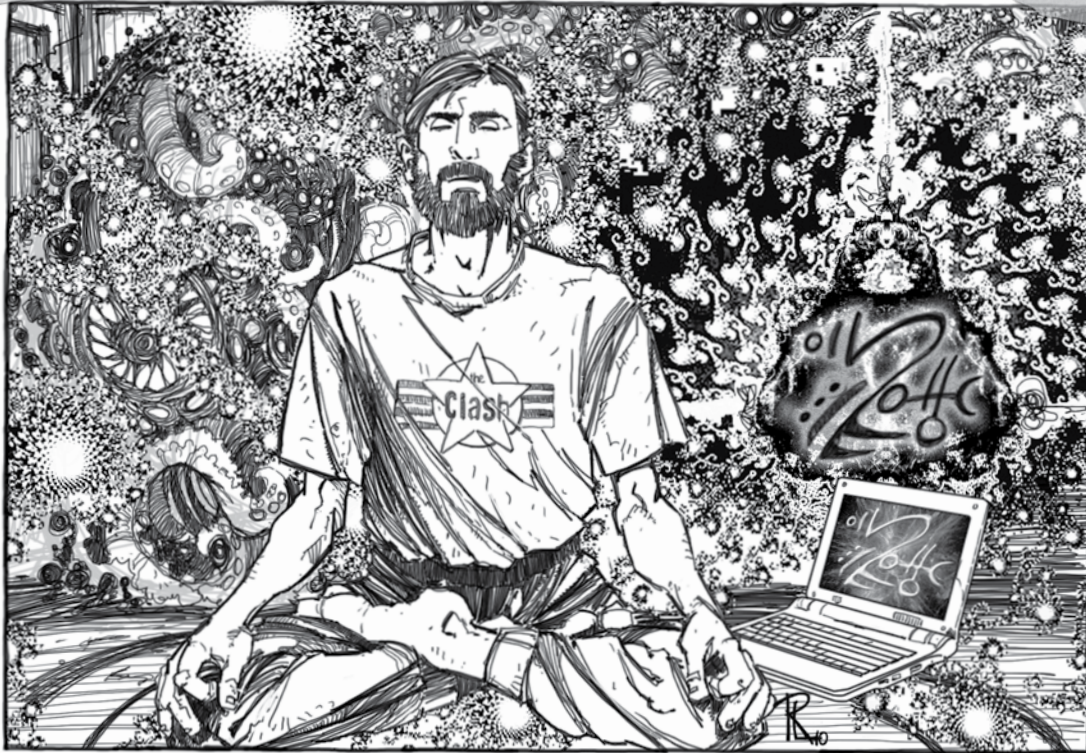
Unless you are crazy, desperate or using a previously enchanted item like a Hand of Glory, all sorcery requires some sort of ritual to perform. This ritual can be anything from old-school fripperies involving a dozen people in robes chanting in unison or it can be performed by a single computational sorcerer with a signal generator, a PDA and a pen that writes in conductive ink.

All of these methods require a certain amount of time as well as specific equipment, which can be anything from a dozen chanting cultists in elaborate costumes, to a new laptop and a conductive pencil. The nature of the sorcerer's equipment determines the POW the sorcerer has available. If this POW equals the POW needed to cast the spell the sorcerer wishes to cast, then they can immediately cast it. If, as is often the case, this POW is below the POW needed to cast a spell, then the sorcerer can augment their available POW through a variety of means (see Increasing Spell POW, page 132). There are five ways to use magic. Except when using a magical device, all of these methods of performing magic require a skill roll but the skill rolled depends upon the type of magic.

Spell Level	POW required to cast it
1	12
2	14
3	16
4	18
5	24

Available POW - Master Table

POW	Equipment	Time Modifier
11	Traditional Sorcery pencil and paper computation scientific calculator	20 x for traditional sorcery 60 x for pencil and paper sorcery 10 x for using a scientific calculator
12	Relatively recent PDA, smartphone, or MID	Listed Time
13	New netbook or older laptop	Listed Time
14	New laptop or desktop	Listed Time
15	Modern supercomputer	1/5 the Listed Time
INT	Mental Magic	10 x Listed Time



POW AND MAGIC

One of the obvious facts about this magic system is that the POW of a spell has absolutely nothing to do with the Sorcerer's POW. This is intentional and deliberate. POW is a measure of mental fortitude and durability, both of which are very useful when dealing with magic but which have absolutely nothing to do with casting especially potent spells. All that matters for spell casting are two factors - hardware and software. If you are casting the spell using a Cray Jaguar, you are going to get a lot more bang than if you are using a PDA made in 2003. Also, the more peripherals and other sorts of elaborations you add on to the spell, the more powerful it is going to be. Having a high POW can often keep a sorcerer alive, but it will not make them a better sorcerer.

Spell Failure Table

When spells fail, most often nothing happens. However, when spells go badly wrong, they can have all manner of unintended negative consequences. As stated previously, some types of sorcery are considerably safer than others, but all carry at least some risk.

Type of Magic	When to Roll on the Spell Failure Table
Computational Sorcery	Only on a Fumble
Old Style Ritual Sorcery	On all Failures
Mental Sorcery	On all Failures

When a spell goes wrong, or any time a spell is interrupted in the middle and the sorcerer fails an Occult roll to keep control of the spell, the sorcerer must make a roll on the table on the next page.

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Roll	Result
01–30	One or two delicate pieces of equipment used in the spell are ruined.
31–50	There is a small explosion of thaumic energy. All electronics within 10 metres require resetting or restarting before they work again and all potentially fragile ritual paraphernalia is ruined. Also, everyone within 10 metres takes 1d3 points of thaumic energy damage due to nose bleeds, serious headaches and minor cell damage.
51–60	There is major poltergeist activity for the next 1d3 minutes. Objects with a SIZ equal to or smaller than the level of the spell fly through the air, smashing breakable objects and possibly striking anyone within 10 metres. Everyone within this range must make a POW x 3 Luck roll every turn that they are within the affected area to avoid suffering 1d6 damage due to being hit by small flying objects like cell phones, circuit boards or candlesticks.
61–70	There is a moderate explosion of thaumic energy, everyone within 10 metres suffers 1d6+2 damage from thaumic energy, all electronics within range are utterly ruined.
71–80	The spell acts as a summoning spell and summons a single non-physical entity. This entity attempts to possess any person or complex piece of electronics (like a computer or a phone) that is not warded.
81–90	There is a massive explosion of thaumic energy, everyone within 10 metres suffers 2d6+2 damage from thaumic energy, all electronics within range are utterly ruined and all digital data is unrecoverable. Also, the region is now affected by a Haunting (see page 126) of a level equal to the spell that was being cast.
91–00	A type three gate (see page 138) is opened to a random dimension (or possibly one that the sorcerer was trying to summon a being from). This gate remains open for 1d3 hours and during this time extra-dimensional entities can come through it, including both non-physical entities that can possess humans or animals and extra-dimensional physical beings. The exact nature of the beings depends upon the particular dimension. Also, the region is now affected by a level four haunting, unless the spell being cast was level five, in which case the area now suffers from a level five Haunting.

Note: In all cases, wearing or previously casting a personal ward of a level at least equal to the level of the spell that went wrong protects the user from any damage caused by thaumic energy, but does not protect their equipment. Also, unless the level of the ward is higher than the level of the spell that went wrong, the ward is destroyed.

Also, if the spell accidentally summons entities or opens a gate to another dimension, it only allows through entities that could be summoned by a summoning spell of a level no greater than the level of the spell that went wrong. If the sorcerer attempted to cast a level three spell and had to roll on the Spell Failure Table, then the most powerful beings that could be summoned or come through a gateway are those that could be summoned by a level three summoning spell.

Using Magical Devices

The simplest and safest way to use magic is by requisitioning a magical device from Q Division. Magical devices always work, at least if they are intact and properly activated. They may break or they may be overloaded with powerful magic but they do not fail and they do not backfire. If you light a Hand of Glory and do not drop it, you will always be invisible until the hand burns itself out. Best of all, you do not need to know much about magic to use the vast majority of these devices. The limitations are obvious, you need to have a magical device with you, you usually need to dig it out of your pocket in order to use it and it does exactly one thing.

Rules: There is no need to roll or calculate the base POW of the device, since it works and this POW cannot be used for anything else.

There are some more powerful artefacts, like an Erich Zann violin, which can cast multiple spells. These items have a listed POW and a note of the skill used to manipulate them.

Activating Pre-Written Magical Apps

Many skilled sorcerers have contempt for magical script-kiddies, who use pre-written magical code, but these script-kiddies do not have to worry about ending up possessed or brain damaged because they mispronounced an eldritch syllable. Also, like magical devices, the app does the work and so the user need not know much about magic. They are also relatively fast to use. If you have a device configured properly, you can activate a magical app with the push of one user-defined button, or one or two touches on a screen. Although not quite as solidly reliable as a physical magical device, pre-written magical apps almost always work.

Best of all, magical apps are well-tested spells and never backfire. Unfortunately, they are also no more versatile than magical devices and are quite limited in power.

Magical apps are designed so the user does not need to tweak the code. This makes them faster and safer, but limits them to the exact function they were created with. There is usually a trade-off between safety and raw power, so that these apps are not nearly as powerful as something that a

skilled sorcerer could design on their own, which is the price you pay for push-button sorcery. You can use a glamour app to make you look sexy if you want but you will not look all that sexy and it will mostly only affect people who are easily conned.

Rules: Magical apps always work and require no rolls to use. The sorcerer pushes the button and the spell works. The major limitation of these apps is that the basic POW of the spell cannot be augmented. It depends solely on the equipment that the character is using. This POW is as follows:

POW	Equipment	Time Modifier
12	Relatively recent PDA, smartphone, or MID	Listed Time
13	New netbook or older laptop	Listed Time
14	New laptop or desktop	Listed Time
15	Modern supercomputer	1/5 the Listed Time

Computational Sorcery

This is the real thing, actual magic performed by a (hopefully) skilled computational sorcerer. For the sake of safety and sanity (see Old-Style Sorcery) all of the computations and many of the other details of the ritual are handled by the sorcerer's technology. If you need a series of eldritch phrases chanted perfectly, you can memorise them and practice a lot and hope that you do not forget a line when you have got a demon trying to break out of its summoning grid and eat your brain, or you can use a speech synthesiser program and worry about other details of making the spell work. There are very few new spells. The vast majority of computational sorcery is not about doing something new, it is about doing something powerful that works exactly the way you want it to.

There are four ways to perform computational sorcery: by hand; using pencil and paper; using a scientific calculator, a pencil and a whole lot less paper; and using some form of computer, smartphone or similar device. Performing computational sorcery using only pencil and paper is an exceedingly arduous and demanding task. The sorcerer must make one successful INT x3 roll for every spell level to avoid a variety of mathematical errors. Failure requires the individual to start again, and any fumbles require an immediate roll on the Spell Failure Table. Performing spells in this fashion requires 60 times the listed time for spells.

Spells can also be performed using a scientific calculator. The character must make one successful INT x 5 roll for every spell level to see if any calculation mistakes were made. Failure requires the individual to start again, and any fumbles require an immediate roll on the Spell Failure Table. Performing spells in this fashion requires 10 times as long as the listed time for spells.

Performing spells using a smartphone, MID, netbook, laptop or desktop takes the listed time and uses no special rules. However, if the character is lucky enough to gain access to a modern supercomputer then they can reduce the listed time for spells by a factor of five. The base POW of the spell also depends upon the equipment the sorcerer is using. However, when performing computational sorcery, the sorcerer also has the option of augmenting this POW through various means (see Increasing Spell POW, page 132).

POW	Equipment	Time Modifier
11	Pencil and paper computation, Using a scientific calculator	60 x for pencil and paper sorcery 10 x for using a scientific calculator
12	Relatively recent PDA, smartphone, or MID	Listed Time
13	New netbook or older laptop	Listed Time
14	New laptop or desktop	Listed Time
15	Large Modern supercomputer	1/5 the Listed Time

Rules: The sorcerer rolls Computer Use (Magic) (or Science (Mathematics), for calculations by hand). If this roll succeeds, the spell functions normally or at least as normally as any spell functions. If the roll fails, then the spell fails but the magician can try again, assuming that nothing drastic has happened to them in the meantime. However, if the spell casting roll is a fumble, then the sorcerer must roll on the Spell Failure Table, which generally means something very bad has happened to them.

Traditional Magic

This is pre-computer magic using magic squares, painstakingly drawn sigils and complex chants that must be pronounced with great care, lest creatures from beyond the walls of the universe devour the magician. Traditional magic is slow, and any remotely powerful ritual demands the participation of several people, since there is far more than one person can accomplish at once. There is chanting and drawing and there may even be an animal sacrifice, or on rare occasions a human one. In short, traditional magical rituals are long loud affairs that can go spectacularly wrong if interrupted at the wrong moment and any moment from when they start to when they are over is usually the wrong moment. Traditionalists and the more backwards cultists still practice traditional magic, but it is getting rarer by the year as fewer people decide that this sort of magic is worth the risk. The primary reason that traditional magic still exists is that some of the old grimoires actually contain useful information. A few of these books remain in private collections or on sale by obscure used booksellers and occasionally someone picks one up and decides to try out one of these spells.

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Rules: The sorcerer makes a spell casting roll. This roll is made against the lower of Sorcery and some other skill, usually Art, Knowledge (Occult), Perform or a specific ancient foreign Language. So, if a character has a 50% in one and a 40% in the other, the roll would be against a skill of 40%. If the spell casting roll succeeds, the spell functions normally. However, if the spell casting roll fails, then the spell automatically backfires and the magician must roll on the Spell Failure Table. If the sorcerer is unfortunate enough to roll a fumble, they must roll on the Spell Failure Table twice.

The basic POW of traditional sorcery is 11 and all spells require 20 times more than the listed time to perform because of the necessity of performing lengthy and complex rituals without electronic assistance.

Mental Magic (True Sorcery)

This utterly insane variety of sorcery is a particularly suicidal subset of traditional sorcery. Instead of relying upon carefully drawn sigils, chants and other aids, the magician processes the symbolic content of the spell in their own mind. Although not as fast as computational sorcery, it is somewhat faster than traditional sorcery and anyone who understands how sorcery works can perform it anywhere under any conditions, as long as they can think clearly and are not interrupted. Unfortunately, it is also by far the most dangerous form of sorcery. Attempting to run what amounts to the operating system of the universe through your own brain is not merely risky, it is actively suicidal. This type of sorcery is best left to the insane, the insanely desperate with nothing to lose, and those hoping to save others through their sacrifice.

Unlike any other variety of magic, the question when performing mental magic is not whether or not something bad will happen to the sorcerer, but merely how bad a disaster are they in for. Amnesia, strokes, minor brain damage or at best temporary insanity are all possibilities even if the spell works. If it fails and the occult energies find other channels, then the problem is that these channels are inside the neural structure of the sorcerer's brain, and that is usually that.

Rules: The sorcerer makes a *Difficult* Sorcery roll – working without any sort of external aid makes sorcery vastly more difficult. If the spell casting roll succeeds, the spell functions normally. However, if the spell casting roll fails, then the spell automatically backfires and the magician must roll on the Spell Failure Table. If the sorcerer is unfortunate enough to roll a fumble, they must roll on the Spell Failure Table twice. Also, regardless of whether the sorcerer succeeds or fails in casting the spell, they must also roll on the Mental Magic Side Effect table.

On the positive side, this is a very powerful way to work suicidal magics. The POW of the spell is the sorcerer's INT. Of course, the risks involved mean that there is a non-trivial chance that the sorcerer's INT is going to be lower when the spell is done. However, someone smart enough can pump out some awesome magic – for a short while. Mental magic requires 10 times the listed amount of time to perform.

Mental Magic Side Effect Table

Roll	Effects	SAN Loss
01–30	The subject loses 1d6 x 10% from any single skill for 1d6 days and then recovers fully.	1d4
31–50	The subject loses 1d6 INT for 1d3 days and then recovers fully.	1d6
51–60	The subject loses 1d8 INT for 1d2 weeks and 1 INT permanently.	1d10
61–70	The subject suffers total amnesia for 1d6 days and then loses 1d6 x 10% from 1d3 skills permanently.	2d6
71–80	The subject loses 2d6 INT for 1d3 weeks and 1d3 INT permanently.	2d10
81+	The subject is now a brain damaged vegetable incapable of caring for themselves.	All

Modifying Spells

There is only so much that you can do with off-the-shelf equipment. Mobile personal electronics simply do not have the capacity for high POW work, at least not without help, and even a high-end desktop cannot manage the powerful spells. So, if you want to work the serious mojo and you do not have access to anything more than your cheap netbook, you need additional aid. This aid can come in many forms.

Additional Processing Cycles

Every spell has a listed time. Taking extra time to cast a spell can net the sorcerer a small amount of extra POW, though repetition and extra care. The bonus is not much but sometimes it is enough. To gain the listed bonus, multiply the time needed to perform the ritual by the listed multiplier.

POW Bonus	Time Multiplier
+1	x2
+2	x10

Location

Just like in real estate, location matters. Locations associated with certain types of magic work better for performing that type of magic. The use of magic affects the local fabric of reality and makes it more conducive to related types of magic. Also, locations that have been repeatedly used for tasks related to a type of spell can enhance that spell. So, a crypt where necromancers regularly worked is a great place to perform necromancy, as is an old graveyard or the site

INTERRUPTING SPELLS

Interruptions occur. Sometimes the police knock on the door in the middle of a powerful ritual and sometimes they break in and start breaking your equipment. Regardless of the type of interruption, if the sorcerer or their equipment is interrupted or disturbed during a ritual, then the sorcerer must make an immediate Occult roll to either continue with the ritual or to safely stop it. If the interruption is minor and does not continue, then the sorcerer can choose which of these two options they wish to do. If the interruption destroys any of the necessary ritual equipment or continues, then the sorcerer can only attempt to safely end the ritual. If this roll succeeds, then all is well and the ritual either continues or is safely ended. If this roll fails, then the sorcerer must roll on the Spell Failure Table, even if the initial roll to cast the spell was successful.

of an old gallows where many dozens of prisoners were executed over the course of several hundred years.

The one limitation on this tactic is that it is fairly specific. Different types of magic have different sorts of resonance. If you want to cast a glamour to increase your sex appeal, then doing it in a crypt where necromancers worked is a very poor idea, unless you only want to be attractive to necrophiliacs. Not only do such cross resonance attempts not help but if the location is in any way antithetical to the type of spell being cast, then the POW of the location is subtracted from the spell's POW.

Location Examples:

Cemetery or site of many executions: +1 POW for spells associated with death or the dead, -1 POW for spells strongly associated with life.

Huge and ancient necropolis or site of mass genocide: +2 POW for spells associated with death or the dead, -2 POW for spells strongly associated with life.

Insane asylum: +1 POW for spells associated with fear, confusion or deception. -1 POW for spells associated with enhancing perception or knowledge.

Courtroom or seat of government: +1 POW for binding and geas spells.

Site traditionally associated with magic in popular stories: +1 POW for all spells.

Haunted Location: + Level of Haunting for all summoning and gate spells, with an equivalent penalty for banishing spells.

Outsourcing

Demonic aid is one of the oldest methods of magical enhancement and is also the most powerful. It is also by far the most dangerous. When working with extra-dimensional beings, there is most definitely no such thing as a free lunch. There are entities out beyond the rim of space that can perform spells with a POW in triple digits. However, if you are stupid enough to try to work with them, you will never be working with anyone else again, except perhaps as a residual human resource - if you are lucky. You can summon and control a relatively minor entity to help with your spell and while the additional POW you get is not all that great, if you are careful you are able to make certain that helping with your spell is all that it will be doing. At this point, the only issues are making certain that you have got secure wardings and a powerful geas to keep the creature on task, and also making certain that the entity is the right one for the job. As with locations, different entities have different associations and different proclivities. If you choose the wrong sort of being, then the spell's POW goes down and not up.

However, for really powerful magic, you need the sort of entity that you are not going to be able to control or place a geas on. Instead, you either have to bargain with it, ask it to help with a task that it wants to do anyway, or you have to make going against your wishes too much trouble for it to bother. None of these techniques are particularly foolproof, which is why such major summoning normally require special permission, and operatives are strongly advised to find alternative methods of obtaining the necessary POW for their spells.

The aid of an extra-dimensional entity adds 20% of the entity's POW (round down) to the spell. Alternately, the sorcerer can ask or attempt to order the entity to cast the spell, which can be very powerful, but unless the entity is very carefully controlled, this method can also be disastrous. If the entity is performing the spell, then use the rules for Mental Magic, except that the entity does not suffer the negative consequences that humans do for performing this sort of magic. Except in emergencies, using extra-dimensional entities to actually cast spells requires prior approval from the operative's superiors.

Parallel Processing

If your hardware is limited, then one answer is adding more of the same sort of hardware. If you have several sorcerers working on the same spell, each using their own hardware, then you are going to boost the spell's POW. Of course, each sorcerer needs to know what they are doing. You only need to make one roll for the entire spell but the roll is made by the sorcerer with the lowest skill and everyone involved suffers any ill effects. If you are going to be trying this method, you need to make certain your colleagues know what they are doing. Alternately, sorcerers can employ assistants. These assistants do not need to understand how to perform the ritual; they merely need to perform a single action that is part of it, such as chanting a particular chant. The Keeper should make a single INT x 5 roll for all assistants, in addition to the normal roll needed to perform

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the spell. A single spell can benefit from either additional sorcerers or assistants, not both.

POW Bonus	Additional Sorcerers	Assistants
+1	1	5
+2	4	25
+3	16	125
+4	64	625

Peripherals

One obvious method involves the use of various peripherals. Sorcery is all about using the correct mixture of complexity and precision. A pentacle made of laser light is more precise and thus more powerful than one drawn in chalk and having the chants come out of high-end stereo speakers works better than having them come out of a speaker phone. Similarly, various physical props also work and the more precise they are the better. If you want to glamour yourself to come off to people as a super spy, then using a Hi-Def video of the latest Bond film and one of the better made action figures works better than playing a low-res copy of the film on your phone and using a sketch you made of Mr. Bond.

POW Bonus	Type of Peripheral
+1	A single complex diagram or other single object, including off-shelf electronics that have been re-purposed for sorcerous use, like a speech synthesiser or MP3 player playing recordings of chants.
+2	Half a dozen simple but appropriate objects, like candles, drawings and ritual knives or a set of several moderately complex peripherals that can all fit into a small suitcase, such as lasers and a set of mirrors used to make a laser pentacle. Alternately, a single highly specialised and custom made piece of electronics that plugs into the sorcerer's PDA or computer.
+3	A full laboratory set up, complete with several pieces of expensive, highly specialised equipment, or a collection of large and exceedingly elaborate ritual gear that seems more appropriate on the set of a movie.

Increasing Number of Targets

All of the following spells are designed to affect a single target. Whether summoning several demons at once or placing glamours on multiple targets, sorcerers sometimes wish to affect more than one target with the same spell and doing so *increases* the POW needed to cast it. The relationship between additional targets and increased POW is as follows.

POW Requirement	Number of Targets
+1	3
+2	9
+3	27
+4	81

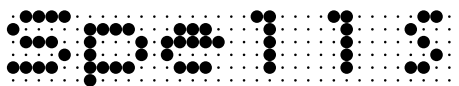
Increasing Area of Effect

Spells that affect an area typically only affect a few metres in diameter. Unless otherwise listed, this diameter is two metres per level of the spell. Increasing this diameter increases the POW needed to cast the spell by the following amount.

POW Requirement	Increase Diameter By a Factor of
+1	3
+2	9
+3	27
+4	81

Reducing Casting Time

Spells take time to cast and sometimes a sorcerer does not have the necessary time. However, skilled sorcerers can speed up this process. By taking a penalty of -20% to their skill roll, a sorcerer can reduce the listed casting time by half. This penalty can be taken twice; reducing the casting time to one third normal and reducing their skill roll by -40% . However, sorcerers cannot reduce casting time by more than this. When reducing spell casting time, round up to the nearest round. No spell can ever be cast in less than one full Combat Round.



Here are descriptions of the most common types of spells used by various intelligence agencies. Additional spells can be created, but operatives who do not work in the Research and Development department are not cleared for experimental sorcery. The development of a new type of spell (as opposed to a variation on an existing spell) is a major endeavour, requiring years of work by brilliant, highly trained and often half-mad researchers. This process is also highly dangerous – all spell research takes place in heavily warded facilities, fitted with double protective wards, to both prevent outsiders from gaining physical or magical access to the interior and (often more importantly) to prevent anything that goes wrong inside from getting out. All spells that are available for use by field operatives have been extensively tested and debugged.

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RESISTING MAGIC

A great many stories about magic involve the hero resisting the affects of malign magics due to his great strength of will. That is all well and good for stories, but real magic does not work that way. Real magic calls energy from other dimensions and hits you in the face with it. You are not going to wilfully resist the affects of being hit in the face with this energy any more than you are going to wilfully resist the affects of being hit in the face with a brick. Other than getting out of the way rapidly, there is no way to avoid the affects of the vast majority of magic. If you want to avoid the affects of magic, the best policy is to be elsewhere and failing that, use a powerful protective ward.

However, there is something to be said for mental fortitude and self-discipline. It will not change how magic affects you but it can change how you react to it. The laser blast of a mirrored Hand of Glory is not something you can resist, nor is the fat-sizzling crackle of electricity arcing through your body after you touch a particularly nasty offensive ward. However, some magic affects minds instead of bodies and that is the sort of magic that it is possible to resist, at least to a degree.

For example, the more powerful glamours have two effects: they alter perceptions and they produce emotional reactions. If someone has glamoured an extra-dimensional shambling horror to look, sound and smell like a super-model, you are not going to notice anything if you are not specifically looking for a glamour. Even if you are, you may know that there is an extra-dimensional horror under the glamour of a leggy anorexic but you will still see a supermodel. However, spells like geases and glamours often also attempt to cause targets or viewers to react in a particular manner - speak all you know about a particular topic, follow the glamoured individual around like a lovesick puppy... Resisting these effects is a matter of willpower. Even if you can hold off on doing this, you will still feel the compulsion and if the spell is designed to kill you if you do not go along with it, you are going to die - but you will die without revealing your mission, or otherwise obeying the compulsion. It is pretty cold comfort, but humans at least have a chance of resisting most mental compulsions. That said, protective wards work far better.

Spell Levels

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 Spells have levels that range between one and five. More powerful spells have higher levels. So, an Entropy Manipulation spell to prevent eavesdropping is a level one spell, while a Gate spell to open a large and enduring gate to another dimension is a level four spell. The primary reason that sorcerers need to use various methods to increase the POW of their spells is that you need a certain minimum POW in order to perform spells of a particular level

The POW needed to perform a particular spell depends on its level and in some cases on some additional modifier. The POW associated with various levels can be seen in the following table.

Spell Level	POW
1	12
2	14
3	16
4	18
5	24

As can be seen in the table, level five spells are an exception to the rules. The reason for this is that level five spells are exceptionally powerful reality warping spells and are

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significantly more difficult to cast than lesser spells. Level four spells are very powerful, but a single level five spell can change the fate of an entire planet. Some of the spells listed here can only be cast at one or two different levels; others can be cast at all five. The levels that a spell can be cast at are noted immediately under the spell's name.

The following is a non-inclusive list of the most common spells used by sorcerers, computational and otherwise. The levels that a particular spell can be cast at are listed immediately below the spell name and below that is the casting time.

Defensive Bindings

Level: One to Four

Casting Time: One minute per Level

This spell protects a single target against a specific type of direct physical harm, like kinetic impact, heat, cold, electricity or acid. Defensive bindings provide five points of armour per level. However, this damage is ablative – the spell provides an entropic void that the damage eventually fills and when this entropic void is full, the spell is over. If someone shoots a target wearing a level three kinetic impact binding (which provides 15 points of protection) and does 12 points of damage, the binding absorbs all 12 points but the protection provided by the spell is reduced to three points. If the bullet had instead done 17 points of damage, the target would have taken two points of damage and the binding would have been eliminated.

Defensive binding provides protection from all sources of damage of the listed type. A kinetic impact binding protects the target from bullets, punches and falling, while a heat binding protects the target from flamethrowers and dangerously hot temperatures like those found in the middle of the Sahara desert at noon. A character protected by such a ward will not necessarily be comfortable, but they are unharmed by that particular source of damage – at least until the damage overcomes the ward.

Destiny Entanglement Geas

Level: Three or Four

Casting Time: 30 minutes (Level 3), 1 hour (Level 4)

This powerful and risky spell joins the destiny of an individual with that of either another individual or with a specific archetype.

Personal Destiny Entanglement (Level Three)

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This spell mentally links two individuals. Until the spell is undone, the two individuals can mentally communicate, exchanging thoughts, memories and sensory perceptions at will and in a fashion that cannot be overheard by anyone else. Distance is not a factor in this communication, which is always instantaneous. The only ways to cut off communication between the two individuals are either to

end the ritual or to put these two subjects on either side of a protective ward of at least level four. Otherwise, the two individuals can mentally communicate at will. Ending this spell requires either a level three Exorcism spell or casting the Destiny Entanglement spell in reverse.

Individuals who are destiny entangled can also share skills. If one character either possesses a skill at a higher level than the other or simply possesses a skill that the other does not, then the character with the lower skill can use the higher skill instead. However, skills never add – a destiny entangled character can use either their own skill or the same skill possessed by the other entangled individual, not a combination of the two.

The results of this spell are uncomfortable and unnerving, since the individuals also begin unconsciously sharing their dreams and daydreams. They also share all strong emotions and physical sensations. In addition, personality traits and other quirks can also occasionally end up being shared by both participants. While this can be an invaluable spell, it is never a comfortable one and most operatives refuse destiny entanglement unless ordered to undergo it.

Destiny entanglement is also not recommended for more than two weeks. After approximately three weeks, a destiny entanglement progresses beyond shared thoughts and the two individuals become a single permanently linked mind with two bodies. After this point, attempting to un-entangle the two minds typically results in permanent insanity for both.

Performing this spell is fairly complicated, requiring custom-made circuitry, a laser and a beam splitter as well as the two participants each being inside a conductive circle. Both individuals must be present for the spell, but they do not need to be willing volunteers. Also, the ritual is fairly lengthy. Set-up takes at least 25 minutes and the actual destiny entanglement requires approximately 5 minutes, during which time both participants are distinctly uncomfortable and experience all manner of strange and unpleasant sensations, typically including both extreme synaesthesia and pounding headaches. Sorcerers are strongly advised to restrain even voluntary subjects due to the risk that the subject will attempt to stop this spell in the middle, causing all of the usual problems of interrupted sorcery.

Archetypal Destiny Entanglement (Level Four)

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This spell combines the individual's destiny with that of a powerful and well known archetype. This spell is considerably more complex than personal destiny entanglement and also more difficult to use. Even once the target has been destiny entangled they must, to some degree, dress like and act in accordance to the archetype for the spell to work. Once the target has acted in accordance with the entangled archetype for two full days, the destiny entanglement spell begins affecting them. At this point events surrounding the target fit in to the framework of a story involving that archetype or character. For example, brilliantly cinematic criminal masterminds are never simply shot by a stray bullet or successfully arrested by a random customs agent who finds

something suspicious in their luggage. Similarly, less elegant and less heroic spies can never successfully catch the elegant superspy's chosen villain in any way that would deprive the elegant superspy of the chance to apprehend this villain.

Once an archetypal destiny entanglement has fully established itself, anyone who is attempting to actively work against the archetype's story – such as a police sniper attempting to shoot the villain before the elegant superspy confronts the villain for the final time, must make a *Difficult Luck* roll every time they directly act against the archetype's story. This roll is in addition to any skill roll the individual must make. If this Luck roll succeeds, then the individual may act normally. If the Luck roll fails, then some bad luck or coincidence prevents them from acting – their gun mysteriously jams, their cell phone suddenly drops a call. Unlike personal destiny entanglement, the subject of an archetypal destiny entanglement does not need to know that a spell has been used upon them. In fact, the spell can be cast so that the specific target is undetermined. Instead, the first person who fits the spell's parameters in terms of both behaviours and goals will be unwittingly and unknowingly thrust into this role.

Common Archetypes:

- The 'James Bond' geas used in *The Jennifer Morgue*, where the villain could only be killed by a debonair British superspy.
- The 'Hero's Journey' geas, where the target fulfils the steps of Campbell's quest.
- The 'Year-King' geas, where the target enjoys a year of good fortune and adoration before being sacrificed to renew the land at midwinter.
- The 'Jesus mojo' spell, where the target becomes a Messianic figure who is inevitably betrayed.

Entropy Manipulation

Level: One to Four

Casting Time: One round per level

Because magic involves shuffling energy between dimensions, it can be used to perform a variety of odd tricks with this energy. One of the oddest is locally modifying entropy. Magic can increase or decrease local entropy. This is tricky stuff and so it is mostly used for fairly simple purposes. One common use for people who do not like the idea of being overheard is throwing a sound-randomising bubble around them. Even the best directional microphone located outside this bubble is not going to pick up anything but static and white noise. You can also use a similar procedure to affect light, but doing this ends up with you looking blurry or wandering around in a bubble that is opaque from the outside and the second is a clear violation of the Official Secrets Act if used where civilians could see it. Another option is a bubble around one or more people that is slightly blurry but which causes all coherent light to de-cohere, meaning that laser mikes cannot be used to listen in on the individuals and turning the deadly laser blasts from mirrored Hands of Glory into nothing more than annoyingly bright spotlight beams.

Low level entropy manipulation can be accomplished simply by running the correct program on a PDA, smartphone or laptop. However, the more powerful forms of entropy manipulation spells often require conductive diagrams be drawn around the targets, unless the sorcerer has access to powerful computers that need no such augmentation.

The following are examples of different levels of Entropy Manipulation:

Level One: Create a spherical interference pattern in the air around a stationary target, so no one outside this sphere can overhear what that individual is saying. Blur the image of a person so that they are difficult to recognise and facial recognition software cannot identify them. Cause an area around the target to harmlessly de-cohere.

Level Two: Make a single stationary target invisible. Create a zone of interference around a mobile target, so that no one outside this radius can hear the target, even if the target is running over a corrugated tin roof.

Level Three: Start or douse a small fire, no larger than that from a propane torch. Make a single object no larger than a briefcase too hot or cold to comfortably touch. Allow a mobile target to become invisible. This spell can do a maximum of 1d8 damage.

Level Four: Freeze a living target solid, ignite a bonfire. Cause a target to spontaneously combust. This spell can do a maximum damage of 2d6+6.

Exorcism

Level: One to Four

Casting Time: One minute per level

Exorcism is the process of either removing thaumic energy from objects and places, in effect removing 'hauntings', or of dispelling an existing magical spell. The rituals needed to perform these two different types of exorcisms are fairly different.

Exorcising Thaumic Energy

Exorcising thaumic energy is always a somewhat risky procedure. If the sorcerer rolls badly enough to need to make a roll on the Spell Failure Table (see page 129), they also suffer the effects on uncontrolled thaumic energy release (see page 132). In addition, this energy is automatically released if anyone disturbs the exorcism apparatus while the exorcism is occurring. This uncontrolled energy release also happens if two or more objects containing thaumic energy are closely connected and the sorcerer only performs an exorcism on one of these objects. In the case of such objects, the thaumic energy is released by each of the connected objects that are not currently undergoing an exorcism. The most common reason for an object to be so connected is if they were originally part of the same object or were always used together, like a sword and its sheath. Exorcising thaumic energy always requires the use of a specialised grounding strap or cable to drain off and ground the residual thaumic energy.

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Rules: The level of the exorcism must be at least equal to the level of the 'haunting'. If this is the case and there are no other problems (including a roll bad enough to cause the sorcerer to roll on the Spell Failure Table), then the thaumic energy is automatically exorcised and the object is now completely free of thaumic energy. If the thaumic energy is accidentally released all at once, the results depend upon the level of the 'haunting'.

Level	Effect of A Rapid Thaumic Energy Discharge
1	There is a small explosion of thaumic energy. All electronics within 10 metres require resetting or restarting before they work again and all potentially fragile ritual paraphernalia is ruined. Also, everyone within 10 metres takes 1d3 points of thaumic energy damage due to nose bleeds, serious headaches and minor cell damage.
2	There is a moderate explosion of thaumic energy, everyone within 10 metres suffers 1d6+2 damage from thaumic energy and all electronics within range are utterly ruined.
3	There is a massive explosion of thaumic energy, everyone within 10 metres suffers 2d6+2 damage from thaumic energy, all electronics within range are utterly ruined and all digital data is unrecoverable.
4	The explosion of thaumic energy literally disintegrates every unprotected living being within 10 metres and does 2d6+2 damage to everyone within 20 metres. Also, all electronics within 10 metres are utterly ruined and all digital data is unrecoverable.
5	The same effects as for a level four energy release, except that the explosion also opens a temporary level four gateway to another dimension associated in some way with the haunting. This gateway remains open for 1d6 hours.

Exorcising Magic

Exorcising magic is a somewhat simpler, but no less risky, affair. Exorcisms are often used to remove offensive wards, and any exorcism that requires the sorcerer to roll on the Spell Failure Table or any failure to overcome the power of the other spell automatically sets off the offensive ward. In this case, the sorcerer performing the exorcism becomes the target of the offensive ward – even if this sorcerer would not normally be targeted by this ward.

Rules: Dispelling a spell is always easier than casting the same spell. To dispel a spell, the sorcerer need only cast an exorcism with a level of one less than the spell (with a minimum level of one). However, in this case the sorcerer must make a Resistance Roll, rolling the POW of the sorcerer's spell vs. the targeted spell's POW. For greater

OVERCOMING OTHER SPELLS

When sorcerers come into conflict with one another, they often end up casting spells designed to overcome their rival's spells. The result of these contests are usually perfectly obvious. Spells of a higher level always automatically overcome spells of a lower level. Thus, a level three spell always automatically overcomes a level two spell. Also, some spells like protective wards automatically overcome spells equal to their level and automatically either fail or burn out protecting the user when attempting to stop higher level spells. However, when two sorcerers are using spells of the same level and neither of these spells is a protective ward, then compare POW vs POW on the Resistance table to determine the chance of one spell overcoming the other.

safety, the sorcerer can cast an exorcism spell of the same level as the spell they wish to exorcise. In this case, the exorcism automatically dispels the targeted spell. Sorcerers always treat exorcism spells targeted on any spell they cast previously as being one level higher.

Gates

Level: One to Five (in practice, Three to Five)

Casting Time: Variable

Gates are physical openings to other universes. Although all magic involves opening some sort of gate, most of them are not physical openings but are instead conduits through which various forms of energy can travel. These are technically level one and level two gates and are not considered actual gates.

Energetic and Informational Gates (Levels One and Two)

In most cases there are two options as to what sort of information you can move: relatively unordered information and complexly ordered information. Moving relatively unordered information from one universe to another is a relatively simple process that requires a level one gate. A Hand of Glory opens exactly this sort of gate, as do all entropy manipulation spells. Doing so is a relatively easy process because one of the ways that universes differ is in relative energy. There are millions of ancient and bleak low energy universes hundreds of billions of years older than ours, where the stars all burned out aeons before and all that remains are decaying black holes and decaying protons. If you need a place to dump energy, these are perfect, just make certain that your gate is one-way, since these ancient universes are often inhabited by ancient, powerful, energy

hungry beings that would love a chance to snack on you or perhaps our entire universe.

There are also millions of young universes, some no more than a few seconds old, filled with particles, forces and interactions that we do not have names or concepts for and which contain more energy in any cubic centimetre than is in the heart of a star. If you want huge amounts of energy, say enough to transform carbon into silicon, these universes are where you go. Of course, if you are insufficiently careful, you could release a torrent of nameless energies that could vaporise a few city blocks. Spells that utilise level one gates may be higher than level one because of other considerations, such as the complex ways that this relatively simple energy and information is utilised.

Spells that send relatively simple information and relatively chaotic or at least not complexly ordered energies take less effort and less care than those that transfer complexly ordered information, like computer programs or sentient minds. To transfer this sort of information and energy, a sorcerer needs to create a class two gate. Spells that transfer complex information are used for possession, non-physical summoning and mental projection to other dimensions. Since it is a whole lot easier and usually far safer to summon just the mind of a creature to this dimension than their body, these types of spells get used a great deal. Regardless of whether you are summoning something nearly mindless to animate a zombie or a brilliantly inhuman mind to inhabit a computer, you are doing the same sort of summoning. Summoning spells and other spells that utilise class two gates may have a level greater than two if they are especially complex or use the summoned being in elaborate ways. However, no spell that creates a level two gate can ever be lower than level two. This is why level one summoning spells are theoretically impossible.

In any case, when discussing summoning minds, many inexperienced sorcerers start wondering if that means that some alien being in some other universe suddenly falls over as its mind is snatched into our dimension. The answer is that this sometimes happens. However, the reality is usually quite different. One of the other useful things about summoning minds is that they're patterns of data that can exist in any universe, assuming that they have someplace to go. So, we can summon minds from and send our minds to universes where human bodies would die instantly because the physical laws are nothing like ours.

The truth is that the infinity of worlds with radically different physical laws is a whole lot larger than the infinity of worlds with similar physical laws and the radically different worlds are a whole lot easier to contact. As a result, we are mostly summoning things that do not have bodies in any sense that we understand them. I know a few sorcerers with backgrounds in theoretical physics who claim they can understand what such universes are like but I am not certain that I believe them.

Naturally, it is also possible to send things physically from one universe to another. This is trickier - you don't want to show up somewhere you will evaporate, or bring something here that will detonate as its atoms spontaneously fission.



Physical Gates (Levels Three, Four and Five)

When sorcerers discuss gates, they usually mean the real thing – passageways through which someone can travel to another universe. These are technically called level three, level four and level five gates.

Level Three Gates: Level three gates allow the transfer of a single physical object up to the size of a train car or a commercial passenger jet. Sorcerers can transfer a person or a jet from our world into another dimension or they can physically summon a single physical entity of moderate size and power, which means anything other than weakly godlike entities. The gate remains open only briefly, to allow the passage of the target, and then it closes. To return the target home, the sorcerer must open another level three gate. Level three gates are regularly used for reconnaissance of other dimensions as well as for physical summoning.

Casting Time: Level three gates require two minutes to create.

Level Four Gates: Level four gates are large bi-directional gates capable of remaining open for extended periods of time. Maintaining a class four gate for extended periods of time requires substantial energy but, once open, class four gates typically last for between 24 and 48 hours before they naturally close. Unlike lower level gates, class four gates require a minimum of several human sacrifices or an energy source roughly equal in power to a neutron bomb.

Casting Time: Level four gates require at least 20 minutes to create.

Rules for Level Four Gates: The smallest of these gateways are only two metres across; use the increasing spell area table on page 134 to create larger gateways.

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Level Five Gates: Level five gates are enormous gates that are between 500 metres and 10 kilometres in diameter, and are only used to transport huge and vastly powerful entities between dimensions. Mass human sacrifice and the detonation of hydrogen bombs are the only known methods of opening level five gates. There are no approved circumstances that warrant opening a level five gate and all attempts to do so are not only forbidden but are automatic grounds for immediate capture or execution by fellow Laundry operatives.

Casting Time: Level five gates require at least three days of continuous work to create.

Geas

Level: Two for a temporary geas, three for a lasting geas; +1 Level to the spell if the geas is used on an extra-dimensional being

Casting Time: Two turns for a temporary geas, two minutes for a lasting geas. Multiply this time by three for geases cast on extra-dimensional beings – six turns for a temporary geas and six minutes for a lasting geas

A geas is a spell that compels the target to obey a particular directive. The simplest type of geas requires the sorcerer place the subject in contact with a summoning grid (see page 134). Once there, a partially summoned demon forces the target to obey the directive, which usually includes a prohibition against breaking contact with the summoning grid.

The target's cooperation is unnecessary, all that the sorcerer needs do is place the subject in physical contact with the summoning grid, which can be concealed, such as by placing it under a rug. The spell only lasts as long as the subject remains in contact with the summoning grid but during this time the geas can be designed to cause the target to perform almost any action. Temporary geases are always level two spells.

More powerful, level three geases can be performed so that they last until they are removed or modified. These lasting geases can only compel targets not to perform a particular action. So, a lasting geas could make the target avoid talking with someone but could not force the target to talk to someone else. Removing or modifying a lasting geas requires the geas spell be cast upon the same target again, unless the caster included the ability to modify the details of the geas later in the original wording of the geas.

The three types of geas that employees of the Laundry are likely to be most familiar with are the truth geas, the silence geas and the geas placed on summoned beings. Laundry Warrant Cards are specially enchanted items that perform a silence and an obedience geas on the reader (see Warrant Cards, page 98).

Truth Geas

This spell is used by the Auditors for reviews involving serious regulation breaches or other incidents, such as deaths of civilians. Truth geases are also used to interrogate important hostiles. This spell compels the subject to tell the truth and causes extreme pain and eventually death to targets who refuse to answer truthfully. The subject cannot remain silent and must actively resist telling the whole truth. However, if the subject can successfully make a POW vs. POW roll vs. the POW of the spell, then they can lie. However, doing so causes the subject pain and will eventually kill them. Truth geases are only advised for use on hostiles who are deemed to be unlikely to sacrifice themselves to avoid revealing sensitive information.

Subjects who avoid answering an indirect question or who tell a partial truth suffer intense pain and must make a POW vs. POW roll vs. the spell's POW every minute until they tell the whole truth, but the subject suffers no harm. Subjects who lie or otherwise attempt to avoid answering a direct question first experience excruciating pain for one minute, then the spell begins to literally crush their bones and rend their muscles, doing 1d3 damage to the target every round. This damage and pain stop the instant the subject tells the truth about the subject that they lied about.

Casting this spell involves summoning an entity to touch the target's mind. This entity compels the truth and punishes lies. Performing this spell is relatively simple; the subject is typically restrained and placed in contact with a specially prepared summoning grid. The summoning grids used in official inquiries are specially made items, but occultists can also create their own impromptu summoning grids. When they cast this spell, the sorcerer can set parameters under which the subject can safely refuse to tell the truth. In addition, at any time during the ritual, the sorcerer can command the entity to cease harming the subject for refusing to answer fully and truthfully.

Silence Geas

The silence geas is one of the most basic and essential spells for any intelligence organisation. This lasting geas prevents the subject from talking about certain topics with anyone other than individuals with the correct security clearance. All Laundry employees are subjected to a basic silence geas that insures that they do not share the information they learn with the press or the general public. In addition, Laundry silence geases are designed so that they can be added to by the target's superior, enabling the superior to place various topics off limits to anyone not of a particular security clearance. Like all geases that forbid certain actions, the character can make a POW vs. POW roll to admit that they physically cannot act in a particular fashion (in this case, discussing a certain topic openly) but doing so causes them significant pain and beyond that admission, the geas does not permit the subject to talk at all about anything they have been ordered to keep silent about.

Binding Geas

Only fools or cultists summon extra-dimensional beings and do not attempt to place a geas on them to control their behaviour. If the summoned being is not required to leave the summoning grid, as is often the case with incorporeal summoned entities, then the geas can be placed on the same summoning grid and it affects the entity as long as the summoning lasts. For beings that are summoned in such a way that they can leave the vicinity of their summoning grid, a lasting geas must be used. Typical geases on summoned beings include obeying the summoner, not attempting to harm the summoner, and performing whatever action the summoner wishes the summoned being to perform.

Special Rules: Casting this type of geas adds one to the level of the geas spell. Placing a geas on an extra-dimensional entity in a summoning grid is a level three spell and placing a lasting geas on a summoned extra-dimensional being is a level four spell. Careful and exact wording is a necessity when placing a geas on an extra-dimensional entity, since most are far better than humans at finding loopholes in sloppy wording. The difficulty of casting this type of geas also triples the normal casting time.

Other Geas

Geases can be used for purposes other than compelling truth or silence, but all uses of geases for other purposes must be specially approved – the only exception being the use of geases on enemy operatives in order to further the success of a mission, and even these uses will be subject to at least cursory review. The use of sorcery to compel the will of others is not to be taken lightly and, other than preventing violations of the Official Secrets Act or directly acting to save civilian lives, the use of geases on civilians is generally forbidden and can only be performed with special permission.

Glamour

Level: One to Four (and rumours of Five)
Casting Time: One minute per level

Glamour spells distort perceptions. Like many other spells, glammers have different effects at different power levels. Low level glammers only produce subtle changes in appearance. Higher level glammers can provide a highly effective disguise, while also creating emotional impressions that are almost overwhelming in their power. The most powerful commonly used glammers can completely change the user's appearance, making a short, stocky, pale-skinned man appear to be a woman who is tall, dark and slender. Unfortunately, as a number of operatives have discovered, glammers can also disguise all of the characteristic signs of possession, including the distinctive glowing worm-filled eyes. As a result, without careful occult scanning there is no way to be certain that someone is not possessed. The different levels of glammers provide different effects.

Level One Glamour: This minor glamour can only provide a minor degree of visual disguise, including masking

tattoos, scars, wrinkles or other distinctive features. It can provide a similar level of disguise for other senses, covering up mild bad breath or slightly rough skin. Alternatively, the user could change one physical feature, such as nose shape, eye colour or hair colour. These changes can make the user more difficult to recognise but do not allow the user to impersonate someone else, unless that individual looks exceptionally like the user. The most problematic use of level one glammers is that they can be used to mask the distinctive glowing eyes found in almost all cases of possession, allowing the possessed individual to look like a normal, mentally uncompromised human. This level of glamour has no emotional effects on viewers.

Level Two Glamour: This glamour allows the user to appear to be someone of roughly the same build. Unless the user's body is fairly androgynous in appearance, level two glammers do not allow the user to appear to be a member of the other sex, but would allow a slender Asian woman to appear to be a slender but highly athletic black woman of approximately the same height. This level of glamour has no emotional effects beyond a mild suggestion to accept the user's appearance as accurate. Level two glammers specifically allow an individual to disguise themselves as a particular other person. To perform an accurate impersonation, the sorcerer must have a blood or skin sample of the person being impersonated or a full readout of their genetic code. This spell can make a fresh zombie possessed by an entity that is experienced at operating a human body appear to be a normal person but cannot disguise non-human entities as human or make a shambling and rotting zombie appear to be a normal human.

Level Three Glamour: This potent spell allows the user to disguise themselves as anything humanoid. A short, fat half-breed BLUE HADES could look, sound and feel like a tall and slender normal human, as could a rotting, shambling zombie. Also, this spell can include significant emotional manipulation, causing viewers to view the target in a particular fashion. The user could become exceptionally beautiful and sexy, impressively intimidating, wise and fatherly or horrifyingly hideous. Viewers must make a POW vs. the spell's POW roll to avoid responding to this emotional influence. Viewers who succeed in this roll still recognise that the individual appears in the desired fashion but can control their reaction to this impression. Characters who fail this roll react to the target as they would to anyone else who was exceptionally sexy, intimidating, horrifying or whatever. The one limitation on level three glammers is that they cannot do more than change appearances and convey impressions. They cannot attempt to force anyone to take a particular sort of action.

Level Four Glamour: This level of glamour is as much a compulsion as an illusion. In addition to disguising writhing multi-tentacled horrors as a person or a motorcycle, a level four glamour can also be used to cause people to have a specific reaction. A piece of electronics can be glamourised to cause people to buy it or a person glamourised so that people worship and adore them. As with level three glammers, viewers can make a POW vs. POW roll vs. the spell's POW to resist this effect, but even people who resist feel the compulsion and want to give in to it, they can just,

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barely, keep themselves from doing so. Level four glamours are the most powerful glamours that human sorcerers know how to create.

Level Five Glamour: There are rumours of level five glamours but if they exist, only powerful extra-dimensional entities can cast them. Such glamours are rumoured to completely rewrite someone's loyalties and affections, making the target sincerely love or worship an enemy or hate their best friend.

Rule & Modifications: Glamours normally only last for one full day. Creating a glamour that lasts indefinitely increases the level of the spell by one.

Prognostication

Level: Four

Casting Time: Five hours

This spell allows sorcerers to catch glimpses of the future. It is primarily used by the Laundry's Predictive Branch and similar departments belonging to other intelligence agencies. These departments run the necessary computations on state of the art supercomputers. The results are not definite, in large part because the future is not fixed. Instead, their results are expressed as probabilities and are focused on potential risks or advantages. For example, one prediction about a mission might be that the operative has a 30% greater chance of success if she wears a gold wrist watch on her left arm and a 20% chance of hideous death if she carries a gun anytime in the next two days. Even using dedicated Predictive Branch supercomputers, these predictions can provide no more than a few useful hints and require one hour to perform.

Sorcerers can also attempt their own predictions. To accomplish this, the computational sorcerer must run the predictive computations on a high end PC of the sort that is suitable for the latest graphics-heavy gaming. It is simply not possible to run these predictions on a netbook, phone or any other device less powerful than a recent laptop or desktop. Naturally, the process works better if you have access to a supercomputer.

Rules: Characters with access to a supercomputer can make reasonably reliable predictions for events that occur during the next week. However, predictions made on a laptop or desktop PC can only concern events occurring in the next 24 hours. Also, these calculations require approximately five hours to run, limiting their practical predictions to 19 hours. However, there are times when the information is more than sufficient.

Each prediction must be focused on a single operative who is currently on a mission. The spell then returns 1d3 predictions on actions likely to increase or decrease the operative's chances of success or survival, as well as a rough gauge of how much this action is likely to increase or decrease the operative's chance of success or survival.

Scrying

Level: One, Two or Three

Casting Time: One round per level

Scrying magic is magic designed to obtain information about a target. The capabilities of a scrying spell depend upon its level.

Level One: This spell can only reveal the general level of thaumic energy that is present in the location and can localise unusually powerful sources of thaumic energy. This spell locates any source of thaumic energy within four metres of the caster. Use the Increasing Spell Area table on page 134 to increase the range of this spell.

Level Two: This spell magically scrutinises the target and looks for any and all active magic. A scrying spell will reveal glamours on individuals as well as all protective and Offensive wards. Scrying spells can also be used to tell if a spell has been successfully circumvented. If an operative is attempting to break through an Offensive ward, then a scrying spell will allow them to tell if the attempt has succeeded, without the necessity of risking setting off the ward. A level two scrying spell can also automatically pierce any level one or level two glamours, clearly revealing the subject's actual appearance. However, while a level two scrying spell will reveal the presence of level three or four glamours, it will not reveal what the subject looks like underneath the glamour.

Level Three: If desired, a level two scrying spell can be cast as a level three spell. When cast at level three, scrying spells allow the caster to automatically see through any level three or four glamours, for as long as the scrying spell is active.

Rules: Scrying spells last only as long as the sorcerer is actively using them. Casting a scrying spell requires one minute.

Sympathetic Magic

Level: One to Three

Casting Time: Two minutes per level

One of the old-style pre-computer 'laws' of magic was the law of sympathy and contagion – objects that had been in contact with one another remained connected. The truth behind this 'law' is that quantum entanglement is very real and thus part of an object can be used to locate or view the whole, just as an object that has been in proximity to the target can be used to view the target or the individuals who have touched it. A page from a report can be used to find either the rest of the report or whoever read the report. A paperclip or staple that was used on a document also can be used to find the document, as can a paperclip or staple from the same packet as the paperclip or staple used in the report.

There are three versions of the sympathetic magic ritual, depending upon the level that the spell is cast. Each of these different versions of the spell requires a different casting of the ritual.

Level One: The lowest level sympathetic magic can locate the target. All the sorcerer needs is a map and a sympathetic link to the target and the procedure works as well as a locator bug (see page 100) on the target.

Level Two: This spell allows the sorcerer to see current images of the target and whatever the target is attached to or touching. Recording magically created images on the screen they manifest on is often very difficult and so the sorcerer usually uses some type of camera to record these images. Using this spell, a single paperclip could be used to allow the sorcerer to read an entire report.

Level Three: This spell allows the sorcerer to see images of the most recent individuals that touched the target. The sorcerer can specify the spell so that it only shows individuals who touched the target during a certain time period. This spell only reveals an image of the individual when they touched the target but if they touched the target multiple times during the time period being investigated, then all of these images appear.

Depending upon what it is being used for, this level three spell can be dangerous. Offensive wards (see page 146) can be set to be triggered by sympathetic magic used to attempt to view or locate the subject. This type of countermeasure will almost certainly damage or destroy some of the equipment used for the sympathetic magic ritual but will not harm the sorcerer, if they are sufficiently well warded. However, sorcerers who attempt to save time by foregoing wards or using lower-power wards can end up injured, dead or worse if they attempt to use this spell on someone with a sufficiently powerful offensive ward.

Summoning & Banishing

Level: Two to Five (for summoning) or One to Four (for banishing)

Casting Time: Two minutes per level for level two to four summonings. Level five summonings require three days to complete.

Banishings require two turns per level for level one to three banishings and three hours for level four banishings.

These spells all involve either bringing entities from other dimensions into our own universe or forcing such entities to swiftly depart back to their home dimension or, in any case, to depart to someplace that is not here. Like many spells, summoning spells can be performed at different levels, with a minimum level of two. Sorcerers must cast a spell equal to the level of the entity they wish to summon. A sorcerer wishing to summon a level three entity must perform a level three summoning.

One of the most useful facts about summoning is that the nature of trans-dimensional mathematics is such that most summoned entities are bound to obey certain strictures when they are summoned. Most cannot lie and also must abide by the terms of any deal they make. In general, these entities loathe such limitations and do their best to follow

them to the exact letter and no further. Also, it is not only possible but highly recommended that summoners place one or more geases on any summoned entity to force it to obey orders and to keep it from exceeding the parameters of its mission. The type of entities that can be summoned depends upon the level of the spell.

Level Two Summonings: Summoned creatures have simple but powerful needs and desires and can inhabit animals, corpses or humans. These creatures can be given simple commands but are typically no more intelligent than a particularly smart dog or cat. In many cases, possession by a level two entity is temporary and can be reversed. The Feeders in the Night are an example of this type of entity. When they possess humans, type two entities are usually clumsy and very inexperienced at using human bodies and cannot speak.

Level Three Summonings: This level summons powerful entities of nearly human intellect. These creatures are highly dangerous. They can speak and understand all normal human speech and operate human bodies with ease. Alternately, this level of spell can be used to physically summon entities with relatively normal physical bodies. This later use is identical to a level three gate.

Level Four Summonings: Summon powerful and highly intelligent creatures capable of complex planning. They are at least as intelligent as humans and can be exceptionally dangerous to deal with but also exceptionally useful. Alternately, this level of spell can be used to physically summon exotic entities that have physical bodies made of energy or which cannot exist fully in our dimension. This second use of this spell is simply a level three gate that has been adapted to physically summon beings made of exotic and (in our universe at least) unnatural forms of matter.

Level Five Summonings: Summon weakly godlike entities capable of ruling or destroying the entire world. Any attempt to summon such a being is a serious violation of Laundry regulations and all such attempts are subject to review by the Auditors. Unlike previous types of entities, there is no difference between an attempt to physically or non-physically summon a weakly godlike entity, because they can either bring their physical body along with them or create it from local materials. Level five summonings always require seven full days of work to complete.

Summoning Non-Physical Entities

Non-physical entities normally require an active summoning grid to maintain their presence in this dimension. In effect, the sorcerer keeps the entity in this world by continuing to power the same summoning that brought it here. This works out well if the sorcerer has both a battery backup and an emergency generator in case the power fails briefly. Otherwise, if the summoned creature is doing something vital, then a blown circuit breaker or bad storm could suddenly leave the sorcerer with something vital being undone. If the summoning grid is disrupted or turned off, the entity instantly vanishes.

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Once summoned, non-physical entities require a 'home', which can be anything from an old soda bottle to an advanced super computer. The sorcerer can summon a non-physical extra-dimensional entity into almost anything. Once in its new home, the entity can operate, controlling the computer and its peripherals or cause the soda bottle or office chair to bounce around or roll, unless restrained. If anyone was foolish enough to summon a non-physical entity into a car, it could operate the car, at least as long as the summoning grid continued to operate.

Possession

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There is, unfortunately, one place where many summoned entities can find a stable and comfortable home where they need not fear being sent back if the power fails or someone spills coffee on a circuit – inside good old human brainmeat. The downside of doing this is that the being usually needs to evict the body's original occupant. A few extra-dimensional beings can happily inhabit the same brain as a human mind and others temporarily shut down the human mind while taking over the body. However, most destroy the owner's mind in the process of taking over the body.

Once safely ensconced in a human brain, level two through four entities can happily reside in our reality indefinitely. Most of them can also jump from one body to another and gladly do so, unless restrained by a geas or other binding. Tattooing a body with such a geas or surgically implanting a small titanium plaque containing the geas before summoning an entity into that body is highly advisable. The only other options to inhabiting a person is inhabiting an animal or a corpse.

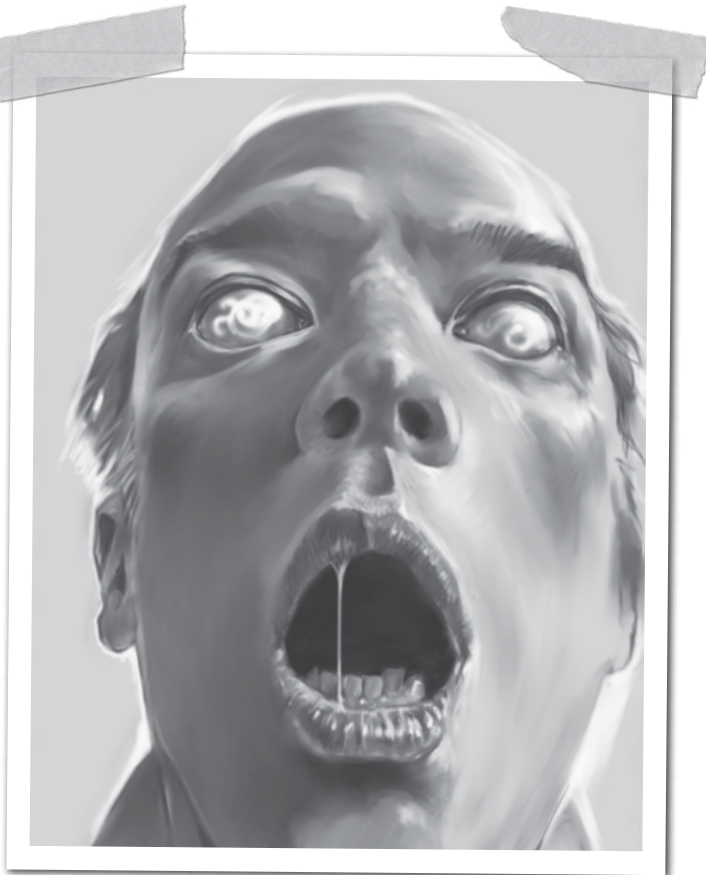
Only level two and level three entities can inhabit corpses or non-human mammals. Level four entities can only possess creatures with complex, fully intact neural structures. However, entities like the Feeders in the Night can inhabit almost any mammal, dead or alive, and a few summoned beings can only inhabit animals.

One of the more disturbing facts about possession is that some of entities physically transform the creature they are possessing. The exact details of how and why this process occurs are matters best left to half-mad theoreticians, but the practical fact is that after an entity has inhabited a body for somewhere between a few days and a few weeks, the body often begins to transform, becoming something strange and disturbing. Such transformations can include growing poisonous fangs, scales or similar details of appearance. These transformations do not change the basic shape and structure of the possessed individual – a possessed human will always remain an upright, four-limbed biped. However, it can transform someone into something truly hideous. Also, these changes usually persist after the entity has been banished from the body.

Consequences of Possession

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Most level two entities merely shove the original occupant, aka the person who normally lays claim to that body,



off to the side. If such beings are banished, then the original inhabitant recovers, although a fair amount of psychotherapy and perhaps some anti-psychotics are likely involved. Surviving being possessed by a level two entity requires a SAN roll. Failure costs the subject 1d10 SAN and success still costs 1d6 SAN – being possessed is serious business.

A few level three entities can also either temporarily take over human bodies or share the body with the original owner. However, most level three and all level four entities core humans like apples and, if they are banished, usually only an empty husk remains. If you are lucky enough to be possessed by a level three or four entity that does not eat your soul, it still costs 1d10/3d10 SAN. The Laundry acquires more than a few of its residual human resources this way. Class Five entities are weakly godlike beings and are fortunately far too large and hideously complex to inhabit a human brain.

Summoning Physical Entities

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Summoning physical entities is inherently more difficult, since it requires opening a level three gate. Also, as was mentioned earlier, most physical entities cannot survive in our reality without the presence of an active summoning grid to maintain a zone that is subject to the physical laws of both dimensions and thus where it can exist. The only exceptions are a few specific entities like Black Dogs that can exist in our dimension on their own. Most of these powerful entities require level four summoning spells.

Banishing

Banishing is the act of forcing an extra-dimensional entity, either physical or non-physical, to depart from our world. All banishings require the creation of a banishment grid or diagram, which is essentially a somewhat simpler inverse of a summoning grid. The difficulty is that the possessed being or summoned entity must come into physical contact with the banishment grid in order to be banished. This is a simple matter if the sorcerer has the creature or possessed person trussed up like a Christmas goose, but rather more difficult if it is running loose. However, various options like hiding the grid under a rug, printing it onto a glove or even bullets micro-tooled with banishment grids all work quite well, except that the bullets are strongly not recommended when dealing with any sort of temporary possession.

Many entities do not need to be banished; in fact, the problem is keeping them from spontaneously returning home, either because they wish to do so or because they are sufficiently alien to our cosmos that they cannot remain without help. Most summoned physical entities are kept in our world using some magical construct like a carefully drawn circle containing a Dho-Na curve or, more commonly these days, a Dho-Na circuit connected to a computer. These entities either die or vanish (depending upon how alien their home cosmos is, anything too alien vanishes) the instant the diagram or circuit keeping them here is disrupted. Banishing spells affect both physical and non-physical entities.

Rules: Banishing spells are easier than summoning spells, because they work with, rather than against the physical laws keeping universes and their inhabitants separate from one another. As a result, banishing an entity requires a banishing spell with a level that is one less than the level of the spell needed to summon them. A sorcerer attempting to summon a level two spirit, like one of the Feeders in the Night, would only need to use a level one banishing spell.

A creature may not resist a banishing spell of equal or higher level; however, it may try to resist a lower-level banishing spell. Match the creature's POW against the spell's POW on the Resistance table. If successful, the creature clings to this reality.

Wards

Level: One to Four

Casting Time: One turn per level for personal and offensive wards, two minutes per level for area wards.

Wards are one of the most commonly used types of spell. Wards have two uses: they protect the user, or an area, against hostile magic; and they actively defend areas against unwanted intrusion. These two different types of wards are referred to as protective and offensive wards respectively.

Protective Wards

Protective wards are an essential part of performing almost any type of magic. When performing almost any powerful magical operation, especially summonings, sorcerers are strongly advised to use some form of protective ward. This ward keeps an angry, hungry or overly ambitious extra-dimensional entity from eating a sorcerer's body or their soul. Protective wards do this either by protecting the sorcerer from attack or by trapping the entity into a confined space. In addition to being useful when summoning, protective wards protect the target from hostile magic or uncontrolled releases of thaumic energy.

Area Wards

Area wards are both easier to construct and almost always more powerful than personal wards, but they only ward a single enclosed area. Everyone inside the area is protected, but stepping outside the warded area instantly removes the ward's protection. The most well known type of stationary protective ward is the warding pentacle. However, larger stationary wards are possible, including protective wards that surround entire buildings. Buildings occupied by occult intelligence agencies are almost always protected by area wards. Casting an area ward requires the magician to mark out the area to be warded in some fashion, such as by drawing a line around the location with a conductive pen, stringing a loop of telephone cable in a circle around a room or adding additional circuits to a building's interior wiring.

Rules: Area wards are very simple affairs. Each ward has a POW score. Protective wards automatically and fully protect against all magic with a POW that is less than or equal to the ward's. Higher level spells pass without hindrance but the wards remain operative even after being penetrated by such a spell and continue to protect the location against lower POW spells. Area wards protect against all spells, hostile or not. Area wards also protect against the thaumic energy released by an uncontrolled grounding of a haunting. Area wards have a maximum diameter of 10 metres multiplied by their level; use the Increasing Spell Area table on page 134 to create larger area wards. Area wards last until the markings that the sorcerer made to designate the area are physically broken. These markings are protected from magical attacks by the warding they create. If the warding marks are physically built into a structure, then they persist until that building is destroyed.

Protective Pentacles

One common variant of the area ward is the protective pentacle. This type of ward protects against extra-dimensional entities. These wards are often pentacle-shaped, and regardless of their actual shape are normally called pentacles or protective pentacles. Protective pentacles do not protect against magical attack. Also, these wards only protect against such intrusions in one direction. One protective pentacle could be designed to keep extra-dimensional entities inside it, while another could be

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designed to keep such entities from entering. When casting Summoning spells, careful sorcerers always summon the entity into a protective pentacle designed to keep it inside, while they stand in a protective pentacle designed to keep extra-dimensional entities from entering. It is possible to stack protective pentacles, so that an area can be protected by two, one that keeps extra-dimensional entities from entering and another that keeps them from leaving.

Rules: Protective pentacles automatically stop the passage of any extra-dimensional entity that can be summoned by a spell with a level no higher than the pentacle's level. So, a level three protective pentacle can imprison a being summoned by a level three summoning but does nothing to stop the progress of a being that can only be summoned using a level four summoning spell. Protective pentacles always require a source of power to operate and fail the instant that the power is cut or the physical structure of the ward is damaged. Entities stopped by the ward cannot attempt to damage the ward's physical structure.

Personal Wards

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Personal wards are weaker but they are also mobile. If you cast a personal ward on yourself, it protects you wherever you go, thus making them an essential part of the occult repertoire of the field operative. Most experienced field operatives carry manufactured wards and only use this spell when they happen to be without this item.

Rules: As with area wards, every personal ward automatically and fully protects the subject against all spells and thaumic energy releases with a level that is equal to or lower than the ward's level. However, if the level of the spell is equal to the level of the ward, then the wearer must make a Luck roll. If this roll fails, then the level of the ward is reduced by one. Personal wards can also protect against higher level spells and thaumic energy releases but they automatically fail immediately after doing so and must be recast. Because personal wards must be mobile, they are inherently unstable and last no more than their level in hours before they must be recast. Like area wards, personal wards protect against all spells, regardless of whether the spell is hostile or helpful. Casting a personal ward requires one turn per level.

Personal wards also protect against non-physical entities in exactly the same way; a level two demon cannot break through the protection of a level three ward and a level three demon would force the wearer to make a Luck roll to prevent the ward from degrading.

Offensive Wards

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Offensive wards guard regions against unwanted intrusion by producing some sort of magical effect if they are breached. Employees of the Laundry must obtain prior approval for all offensive wards that harm or otherwise directly affect human intruders. Laundry regulations only allow sorcerers to cast level one and two offensive wards without prior approval. These spells do not harm intruders, they either notify the caster of the fact that a location experienced an unwanted intrusion or provide the sorcerer with the identity of the intruder. Any use of unauthorised offensive

wards that causes injury to any innocent civilians or loyal Laundry personnel is grounds for an immediate inquiry by the Auditors and may result in serious consequences. In other words, do not put dangerous wards in your workspace or your computer unless you get approval or you have excellent reason to believe that your co-workers are traitors or possessed.

Of course, there is another name for offensive wards – curses. The room or gadgets you place a ward on need not be your own. It is just as easy – assuming the sorcerer can get access to it – to place an offensive ward on someone's bed or on their favourite shirt. Such a ward might cause anyone who touches either to have their head burst into flame. More careful magicians craft the ward to only kill the next person who touches it and hope they do not incinerate someone's housekeeper by accident.

The only differences between an offensive ward and a curse are how it is targeted and how difficult it is to get official approval for casting it. In the case of curses, unless they are tasked with magical network, the chances of operatives getting approval to use a lethal curse on someone is essentially nil – the Laundry frowns on murderous sorcerers, unless it has employed them specifically as a murderous sorcerer, and I do my best to avoid spending time with those sorts of people.

Spell Modifiers: Offensive wards normally affect only the next target that touches them. It is possible to cast such a ward so that it affects everyone who touches it and lasts until it is dispelled but doing so increases the level of the spell by one.

Rules: Offensive wards are designed to affect a single object – the door of a room, a computer, a car... If a door is protected by an offensive ward but the wall next to it is not, then breaking a hole in the wall is perfectly safe and will not set off the ward. Wards can be designed to affect everyone who touches them, or to only affect humans or extra-dimensional beings, but they cannot be made more specific than that. Also, sorcerers are free to include a list of individuals who can safely touch the object and not set off the ward. Sorcerers typically include themselves on the list, and sorcerers working for the Laundry usually also include everyone carrying a warrant card, or a specific list of high-ranking individuals. Casting an offensive ward requires one minute per level.

The effects of the ward depend upon the level.

Level One: The ward can only notify the sorcerer that an intruder has passed through it.

Level Two: The ward can also provide the sorcerer with an image of the intruder and a record of anything they said or did when passing through the ward.

Level Three: The ward can completely paralyse the intruder's voluntary muscles for up to one hour or cause them to suffer 2d6 damage – the type of damage depends on the wishes of the sorcerer.

Level Four: The ward can instantly kill any human intruder or do 3d6+6 damage to any extra-dimensional being. Alternately, the ward can create an explosion that causes 2d6 damage to anyone within four metres of the ward. Use the Increasing Spell Area table on page 134 to increase the area of this damage. This effect can be designed to affect everyone within this distance of the ward or only everyone on the same side of the ward as the individual who activated it.

RTFG – Tomes, Grimoires and Magical Texts

Any self-respecting occultist has a whole shelf of impressive-looking occult tomes, bound in blackened leather or human skin and written by long-dead and long-winded madmen. The fabled *Necronomicon*, Von Junzt's *Unspeakeable Cults*, the *Book of Eibon*, the blasphemous *King in Yellow* and the deeply confusing *Bumper Book of Bugg-Shash*... read them all and you have got a headache and not much else. Most of the people who wrote about the Mythos were insane, which means the books jump around, contradict themselves, use nonsensical metaphors and tend to go off on wild paranoid tangents, usually about the Jews or lizard people or aliens from Sirius talking through the author's fillings. The Laundry has collected many such occult tomes and researchers have done their best to extract actual useful information from the occult ramblings.

There is another set of modern grimoires, which are a lot more comprehensible and useful; these were written by serious, pipe-smoking mathematicians and computational sorcerers, like Alan Turing and Donald Knuth. Modern occult textbooks are incomprehensible to anyone without a strong knowledge of mathematics but are not quite as deranged and rambling as older books.

Reading a grimoire may increase the reader's Cthulhu Mythos or Sorcery score and grant experience rolls to other skills (such as Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Occult) or a Language). It takes days or weeks to read a book thoroughly.

A character may skim a book in a few hours; skimming a book gives no Cthulhu Mythos or Sorcery increases but does give an idea of what the book contains and can reveal important clues.

Some books list a minimum skill requirement; a character without the listed skill cannot read the grimoire but can skim through it. Books in a foreign language can only be read by a character who knows that language.

Notable Grimoires

Necronomicon: Written in the 8th Century by the 'Mad Arab' Abdul Al-Hazred (who was famously devoured by an invisible monster in Damascus), the original *Necronomicon* (*Al-Azif*) was a treatise on symbolic logic and language, algebra of the mind prefiguring Boole by 1,000 years. Later writers added a lot more nonsense and speculation but the original book was a milestone in computational demonology.

Nameless Cults: Von Junzt's encyclopaedia of cults and sorcerers; starts off fairly stable but goes severely Stockholm Syndrome towards the end.

Cthaat Aquadingen: A treatise on BLUE HADES; far too much information on the mating practices of the Deep Ones for comfort.

De Vermiis Mysteriis: 'Mysteries of the Worm'; contains the earliest known references of K-Syndrome and the use of computation-by-hand as a method of reducing risk.

The Art of Computer Programming, Volume 4: The fourth instalment of the series, discussing the Turing Theorem and its implications. The original version was suppressed; a severely expurgated version was released in 2005, where the original content is hinted at in Section 7.9.

Weird Tales Collection: All of HP Lovecraft's tales of horror, including the suppressed stories like *The Invisible Planet* or *What Was Beheld*.

Memoirs of SOE: A collection of essays and interviews with SOE staff, compiled by a unit historian. Never published outside the Laundry.

Atrocity Archive Collection: Copies of documents and reports relating to the Ahnenerbe occult research, together with interviews with captured German researchers.

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Book	Year	Language	Time	Sanity Loss	Mythos	Sorcery	Skill Requirement
Al-Azif	730	Arabic	68 weeks	1d10/2d10	+15%	+20%	Knowledge (Linguistics) 60%, Knowledge (Occult) 30%
Necronomicon (Theodoras Philetas)	950	Greek	68 weeks	1d10/2d10	+17%	+8%	Knowledge (Occult) 50%
Necronomicon (Olaus Wormius)	1228	Latin	66 weeks	1d10/2d10	+16%	+8%	Knowledge (Occult) 50%
Necronomicon (Dee)	1586	English	50 weeks	1d10/2d10	+15%	+10%	Knowledge (Occult) 50%, Science (Mathematics) 50%
Necronomicon (Online)	2003	English	30 weeks	1d6/2d6	+10%	+5%	Computer Use (Magic) 30%, Knowledge (Occult) 30%
Unaussprechlichen Kulten	1839	German	52 weeks	1d8/2d8	+15%	+10%	Knowledge (History) 30%, Knowledge (Occult) 50%
Nameless Cults (Bridewell text)	1845	English	48 weeks	1d8/2d8	+12%	+5%	Knowledge (History) 30%, Knowledge (Occult) 50%
Nameless Cults (Golden Goblin Press)	1909	English	30 weeks	1d8/2d8	+9%	+0%	Knowledge (History) 30%, Knowledge (Occult) 50%
Cthaat Aquadingen	11/12 th century	Latin	46 weeks	1d8/2d8	+13%	+6%	Knowledge (Natural history) 30%
Cthaat Aquadingen	14 th century	Middle English	29 weeks	1d4/2d4	+6%	+4%	Knowledge (Natural history) 30%
De Vermiss Mysteriis	1542	Latin	22 weeks	1d4/1d10	+12%	+10%	Knowledge (Occult) 40%, Science (Thaumaturgy) 25%
Art of Computer Programming, Vol. 4	1982	English	25 weeks	1/1d4	+5%	+10%	Computer Use (Programming) 25%
Art of Computer Programming, Vol. 4	2005	English	16 weeks	0/1d4	+0%	+5%	Computer Use (Programming) 25%
Weird Tales Collection	1939	English	4 weeks	1d6/1d10	+12%	+0%	
Memoirs of SOE	1950	English	4 weeks	1d4/1d6	+5%	+5%	
Atrocity Archive Collection	1966	German	8 weeks	1d6/2d6	+10%	+10%	Science (Thaumaturgy) 30%

Security

Best Practice Guide



'In the Laundry we supposedly pride ourselves on our procedures. We've got procedures for breaking and entering offices, procedures for reporting a shortage of paper clips, procedures for summoning demons from the vasty deep, and procedures for writing procedures. We may actually be on track to be the world's first ISO-9000 total-quality-certified intelligence agency. According to our written procedure for dealing with procedural cluster-fucks on foreign assignment, what I should do at this point is fill out form 1008.7, then drive like a bat out of hell over Highway 17 until it hits the Interstate, then take the turnoff for San Francisco Airport and use my company credit card to buy the first available seat home. Not forgetting to file Form 1018.9 ('expenses unexpectedly incurred in responding to a situation 1008.7 in the line of duty') in time for the end of month accounting cycle.'

— The Atrocity Archives

Human Resources Advisory #2008-432

This document replaces HRA #2003-654 and HRA #1999-332

This document is intended for personnel of all levels, with a special emphasis on field operations. If you are certificated for field operations and have completed the requisite courses (see *Field Operations Certification Requirement (Revised)*), you must confirm your reading of this document by filing a signed form TH-433 with your line manager before you will be registered as an active field officer.

Security For...

Security is paramount! You must be aware of security and safety regulations at all times. Never reveal information to any individual without the requisite security clearance. If in doubt, check first. Always be aware of any confidential documentation or material and keep it under lock and key.

You:

- Keep your personal ward on hand at all times. While the probability of being subjected to hostile magic is remote, your exposure to thaumic fields may result in minor supernatural incidents outside of working hours. For more information, see the advisory on thaumic field exposure and the need for annual exorcisms.
- Keep your warrant card on hand at all times. The warrant card should be kept inside a wallet or purse and this container should then be closed so the card is visible only when in use. Leaving the card exposed is a security breach and can be dangerous – the low-level glamours that cause non-sanctioned individuals to perceive the card as a passport or other conventional identity card are rated only for 60 seconds of exposure. Never enter a secure premises without your warrant card – you will NOT be recognised by security and force may automatically be exercised in response.
- Personal hygiene and grooming is vital for all Laundry personnel. Your appearance must meet approved dress codes and hygiene requirements. You must also track any bodily fluids (blood, semen, urine and so forth) or other biological matter (hair, sanitary towels, soiled tissues and so forth) that might be used as a link for sympathetic magic. Only use approved medical facilities; log any injuries or other fluid losses with your manager. Only use bathroom facilities in cleared premises, such as the workplace, secure homes or high-traffic public locations where any sympathetic trace would be instantly diluted. If convenient secure disposal facilities are not available, then place the matter in a sample bag and bring

to waste management. Please note that bags of waste should be brought to the Waste Management, Recycling, Incineration and Dispersal Office and not left at Human Resources.

- Never discuss your work with civilians. Approved cover stories should be used at all times. Non-secure workplace-related matters may be discussed with other personnel. Secure matters (covered by codeword) should obviously only be discussed with other personnel who share that codeword.
- If you are trained in mathematical mapping of Dho-Na curves, commonly referred to as 'sorcery', then the contents of your mind are considered classified under the Official Secrets Act, Section III and may not be exported without permission. Furthermore, you are asked to remain focussed at all times; excessive mental rumination on such topics may result in accidental invocations or summonings within the confines of your skull (see H&S Directive 2061.1, 'Dealing with K-Syndrome'). It is advised that you keep your mind occupied at all times; why not fill in your timesheet instead of idly contemplating the mathematical abyss?
- Document everything! Provide written reports of any field operations or travel within two weeks and circulate copies to your superior, the Archives and any stakeholders. Documenting ensures there is a continuity of operational knowledge and also provides early warning of possession or K-Syndrome cases.

At Home

Your home has been checked for:

- surveillance devices
- hazards, including asbestos, electrical faults, gas leaks, structural problems
- glyphs, gateways, thaumic resonances,

and your immediate neighbours have been vetted.

- Your home has been equipped with:
 - a deadbolt and a reinforced lock on all exterior doors.
 - an alarm system that will automatically alert security if triggered.
 - a level two Warding spell.
 - a telephone line and broadband connection.

If any of these are damaged, they must be repaired by an approved contractor and costs may be billed to the resident.

- Inform Internal Security of any changes to your home. These include:
 - any building work, extensions or repairs, including plumbing, heating and so on.
 - any new electronic devices, especially telecommunications devices, which might conceal a listening device .
 - any changes to neighbouring buildings or public works within close range of your home.
- Inform Internal Security of any deliveries, unusual visitors, potential surveillance or unexplained events. Ensure you check the identity of any callers (and remember, a 'trusted friend' could be an enemy agent under a glamour). Be especially wary of any workmen who could be installing listening devices.
- Personnel are strictly forbidden from invoking entities of class two or higher.
- Personnel are strictly forbidden from bringing Residual Human Resources home under any circumstances, especially dinner parties.

At Work

All department facilities are considered **Sensitive** as per the Security Management Working Group designation. This means the following security protocols are in use:

- Employees must present their warrant cards to the desk officer. Failure to present a valid warrant card may result in detention or other consequences.

- All visitors must be accompanied by an employee and must sign the visitors' book immediately upon arrival.
- All entrances are monitored by security cameras.
- Metal detectors and true-seeing scanners are in place at all entrances.

- Some facilities are considered **Secure**; this category includes but is not limited to management offices, records department, armouries, summoning chambers, executive bathrooms, storage vaults and security checkpoints. This means the following security precautions are in use:
 - Doors must be kept locked at all times when not in use.
 - Class III offensive wards are in place, keyed to the standard warrant card. Entering such a location without a warrant card will trigger the ward.
 - The location may be under 24 hour surveillance by security cameras.
 - The location may be under 24 hour protection by lamia or other summoned entities.
 - Visitors are not permitted in High-Security locations.
 - Personnel may be subject to random identity confirmation checks.
- Some facilities are considered **Highly Secure**; this category includes but is not limited to the secure archives, director's manor and codeword clearance locations. This means the following security precautions are in use:
 - All access is controlled from inside or by invocation.
 - All personnel entering the location will be subject to identity confirmation.
 - Class four offensive wards are in place, keyed to passphrases, titles or tokens. Entering a location without ritual precautions may result in dire consequences including, but not limited to, death.
 - The location is under 24 hour armed guard.

- The location is under 24 hour surveillance by security cameras.
- The location is under watch by intercessor entities of Class three or higher.
- Keep your desk and workplace tidy at all times. A messy cubicle is an insecure cubicle. Secure documents should be kept inside a folder or document safe when not in use.
- All computers should be password-protected using a password of at least 2⁶⁴ bit entropy. When using email, do not open unknown attachments or click on unsolicited links. Use of external storage devices (floppy disks, CDRW, usb drives and so on) is forbidden.
- All phone calls should be made through the Switchboard. This helps ensure that personal calls are correctly billed to you instead of your departmental budget and also protects against demonic possession via the telephone network.
- Your warrant card may be used to place a temporary geas on any individual, compelling them to keep silent or even forget.
- Excessive use of the warrant card geas may cause unwanted side effects and/or mental trauma. Relying on the warrant card for significant psychological reorientation is not recommended.
- Use of the warrant card for personal gain or amusement is not permitted.
- Do not fold your warrant card.
- Do not write on your warrant card.

Personal Ward

Your personal ward is your first line of defence against hostile effects. Depending on the configuration and rating of your ward, it may protect you against spells, possession, summoned entities, offensive weapons and or other hazards. Use of the ward will drain its protective properties; you are responsible for ensuring that your ward is fully functional. Failure to wear an active ward in Secure or Highly Secure areas is both hazardous and an admission of liability.

How to use your...

All assigned equipment remains the property of your department and you are responsible for its care and maintenance. In the event that an item of assigned equipment is lost or damaged, you may be liable for the cost of replacement. You are also responsible for the proper use of assigned equipment.

Warrant Card

Your warrant card is your official identity card. Without it, you may not be perceived as an authorised individual and subject to security precautions such as brain-eating demons.

- Keep your ward on your person at all times, ideally in contact with your skin.
- If your ward becomes *unnaturally* warm, it is because the ward is actively defending you against a magical effect or because it is short-circuiting. Either way, raise the alarm as soon as possible. (Please ensure first that the ward is actually unnaturally warm and not simply heated by your body heat or external heat sources such as radiators.)
- When your ward is defending against sudden magical attacks, you may experience a 'thrill' or 'shock'. Employees with heart conditions or who are pregnant should inform Security Management of this, so that a correctly dampened ward may be issued instead. (Pregnant employees should read H&S Directive 4002.1 'Pregnancy & Related Arcane Conditions' and possibly H&S 4002.2 'Firstborn Children & the Teind'.)
- Your ward will protect you *fully* against spells rated below the ward's strength.
- Passively, your warrant card will appear to be a passport or other unremarkable identity card if glimpsed by a member of the public (i.e. someone who has not signed the Official Secrets Act, Section III).
- If presented forcefully, your warrant card will appear to be a document granting you authority over observers. This is coupled with the geas effect compelling obedience.

It will give you *some* protection against spells rated equal to the ward's strength. It will only give *marginal* protection against spells rated above the ward's strength.

- Remove your ward when requested by superiors and when required by procedures, such as exorcisms, audited meetings, sensitive summonings and so forth.
- Do not wear multiple wards without first confirming their compatibility. Some wards may interfere with each other, reducing your protection instead of providing a layered defence-in-depth.

Assigned Palmtop Computer or Smartphone

If assigned a palmtop computer or smartphone, you are responsible for its protection and maintenance. All security patches must be installed as soon as possible. Make no changes to the software on the device without authorisation from Technical Support. If you are certificated to install Dho-Na rasterisation applications on your device, it must be blood-bound or otherwise warded to ensure security.

- All computer safety protocols should be observed, such as password strength, email promiscuity and so on.
- Do not download any unsecure third-party applications.
- Do not install any unsigned digital media files such as MP3s or ringtones. They may contain viruses or trojans.
- While you are permitted to use your device for personal tasks such as personal phone calls or storing recipes, you are liable for any costs incurred. Be aware that any data stored on the device may be deleted without notice.
- While you are permitted to use the device to generate Dho-Na effects ('spells') in the field, you are enjoined not to use magic for personal use or do anything that would cause undue alarm, upset, distress or confusion to any member of the public.
- If you are assigned a smartphone or palmtop computer with a 3G dongle or integrated 3G networking, you are not

permitted to bring said device outside its designated network and thus incur 'roaming' charges without written permission from Financial Control.

Assigned Firearm (Conventional)

If you are certificated to carry a firearm for personal protection, it must be stored carefully. As a government employee with firearms clearance, you are exempt from the provisions of the 1987 Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997 but you still must ensure that any lethal weapons are kept strictly secure.

- Keep your weapon unloaded when not in use.
- Keep your weapon's safety catch engaged when not in use.
- Remember, you can use a firearm effectively without discharging it; it can be used to cow or threaten a hostile without the need for lethal force.
- Your firearm may be equipped with magical protections (personal wards, invisibility, trigger guards, demon-banishing rounds) – consult with Armoury.

What to do in case of...

Employees should consult the appropriate procedural manual for full details on each of the following situations – this document constitutes only an emergency reference and should not be considered a fully documented manual. At all times, follow the LEAP methodology – Look, Evaluate, Assign Priorities.

LOOK – Look around, orientate yourself, gather information.

EVALUATE – Evaluate the situation. What do you know? Are you in danger? Are other employees or civilians in danger? What are the problems that must be resolved?

ASSIGN PRIORITIES – Determine the most urgent problem. Can you resolve that immediately? What needs to be done before you can resolve it? Break down the problem into simple tasks and tackle them in order.

Accidental Disclosure

If you reveal sensitive or secure information to a third party:

- First attempt to take back the disclosure with a suitable cover story.
- Second, if the breach was a minor one, ascertain the subject's patriotism, fear of official retribution or other willingness to remain silent. Hinting that the matter is a question of state security or that there will be unspecified but dire consequences for disclosure may be enough to ensure silence.
- Third, consider using your warrant card to compel silence. Can all other evidence of the disclosure be erased?
- Fourth, if the disclosure is limited in extent but beyond the scope of a warrant card geas, call in a Plumber to erase the subject's memory.
- Fifth, if the subject has signed the Official Secrets Act or possesses skills or talents of potential use, they may be subject to the Special Recruitment Provision. Please note that abuse of the Special Recruitment Provision is curtailed by clause 5 – if you recruit someone, you have to find them a role in our organisation or their salary for life comes out of your department's budget.
- Sixth, if the subject is not suitable for recruitment, contact your superiors for guidance on how to proceed.
- In all cases, a file should be opened on the subject, including a full written report of the disclosure. This report should be circulated to your line manager, monitor the press and internet for information related to the breach.

Witnesses to Supernatural Incident

See *Accidental Disclosure* and follow those procedures, modified as follows:

- First, if the witnesses can be mollified by a cover story, that cover story should be backed up with documentation (such as a newspaper report) within seven days.
- Second, do not attempt to appeal to the

patriotism or other better impulses of a crowd. Judging the individual characters of those within a group is impossible.

- Third, do not attempt to use your warrant card to cast a binding to silence geas on a group – it is rated for single-target use only.
- Fourth, Plumbers should be called to deal with the witnesses. Please ensure that all witnesses are kept in the same area until the Plumbers arrive and ensure they are unable to communicate with others if possible. An entropy generator field in the 600-1200 MHz radio band can disable mobile phone signals. Note that Plumbing costs for multiple subjects require a manager's signoff.
- Fifth, as per accidental disclosure but note that under Financial Control's Recruitment Cost Control Directive 07-22, no department may increase its staff total above those at the end of the 05-06 financial year without board approval.
- Sixth, if you have not already informed your line manager that you have blown operational security wide open in front of multiple witnesses, then now might be a good time. You may also wish to review your life assurance and related documents.

Ritual in Progress

While the conventional casting method for most spells uses a computer or other microprocessor and an electrical power source, field officers should be aware that *any* computational method can be used to draw a Dho-Na curve through platonic space and *any* power source may be used to invoke the many-angled ones. 'Traditional' spell-casting methods involve the sorcerer performing the computation (or reciting a formula or mnemonic that is isomorphic to the computation) and powering the spell with his own will or physical health. Other known methods of invocation:

- Singing or performing music.
- Drawing symbols on paper.
- Manipulating physical objects or tokens.
- Filling out paperwork.

Any computation can create a disturbance in platonic ideospace, termed a Dho-Na curve, that can then be perceived by entities in other dimensions. With the addition of sufficient energy to establish a link between our continuum and theirs, it is possible to use computation to cast a spell. This formulation (the Dee-Turing Theorem) is the foundation of modern occult theory.

'Traditional' or analogue spellcasting is usually obfuscated by what is termed 'cruft' – unnecessary ritual elements. There may be no need for the spellcaster to smear himself in fox dung, wear a particular emerald amulet or sacrifice 13 children by feeding them arsenic and foxglove potions in order to cast the spell but the occult tradition that the caster mistakenly subscribes to believes these elements are required.

Spells can even be cast with *no* external signs, if the sorcerer is capable of performing the requisite calculations in his head. Never assume the absence of magic – use a thaumic reading if you suspect magical activity.

When a spell is disrupted, the magical energy has to go somewhere and this may result in a dangerous and violent discharge or other supernatural phenomena. Unqualified personnel should not attempt to terminate an active spell unless there is no other course of action.

- Always wear a fully charged personal ward when dealing with active spells.
- Never touch any element of an active spell, including the caster, the summoning grid or any unnaturally glowing objects. Never look into the light. Pay no attention to the voices. Wear non-conductive gloves.
- A spell may be grounded by creating a connection between the active element and the earth.
- If the spell is being performed by a computer or other electronic device, shut down or unplug the device.
- If no other option is available, then disrupt the locus of the spell by destroying the computation device or incapacitating the operator.

- Never cross the line of a pentacle or summoning grid. Remember, *incomplete pentacles emit tentacles!*

Severe Injury or Trauma

Contact the emergency services immediately and call Switchboard immediately thereafter. Switchboard will monitor emergency services activity and ensure that security is maintained without endangering the life of the injured employee.

- Call for an ambulance.
- Secure the area. Make sure the ambulance knows where you are and has a route to get to you. Make sure that whatever caused the injury will not interfere with medical treatment.
- Make sure the victim has an airway. Make sure the tongue is not blocking the windpipe.
- Make sure the victim is breathing. If the victim is not breathing, use cardiopulmonary resuscitation by exhaling into the victim's airway and rhythmically compressing the chest.
- Apply pressure to any external wounds.
- If any wounds in the chest or neck are sucking air from outside, these wounds must be covered with an occlusive (air-tight) dressing.
- Treat for shock by laying the patient on the ground under a blanket and elevating the feet.

Possession

Possession is an extremely difficult situation for any employee. Once an External Intelligence has mapped the nervous system of a human victim and taken up residence in the victim's brain, there is no easy way to remove it. Your first priority, then, must be to ensure the possession does not spread. A single level three possessor entity could spread through tens of thousands of civilians in a major metropolitan area with ease unless correctly restrained.

A possessed individual may display physical symptoms such as: uncoordinated movement, stammering or slurred speech, excessive

blinking or drooling, glowing eyes, sweat, inappropriate physical contact or eating brains. Many of these symptoms vanish as the possessor entity learns how to control the host body.

- Never touch a possessed individual.
- Never look into the eyes of a possessed individual.
- Contact a Plumbing team immediately.
- If the possessor entity is an intelligent one, it may attempt to masquerade as the possessed individual or otherwise try to deceive you. Take no chances – if there is a chance that an individual is possessed, assume the worst!
- If possible, incapacitate the possessed individual but be aware that he or she may have enhanced strength or resilience.
- If no other options are available, end the possession by physically disabling the victim.

Services Guide

If you require specialist services from any department, you may contact them through the Switchboard. Any specialist service calls are billable to your departmental account at Rate A unless otherwise arranged.

Plumbers provide exorcism, counter-possession and geasing services.

Baggers provide entity containment, hazardous environment services and evidence collection.

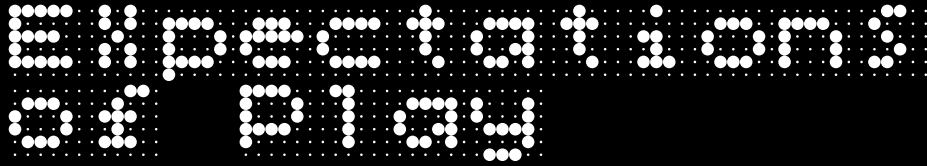
Cleaners erase physical evidence and erase records. They can also sweep for surveillance devices or provide technical support for surveillance devices.

Transport can provide vehicles and tickets to any destination, as well as arrange accommodation and documentation.

Divination can provide clues or suggestions on how to proceed.

How to survive in shared accommodation:

- Exercise regularly
- Get a laser-proof padlock for your room
- Never talk about work
- Never take your work home
- Develop a drinking habit



Role playing is a social activity and as geeks know, all social activities are best when there are openly stated rules to avoid misunderstandings, right?

We are not going to dictate every aspect of behaviour during the game, nor are we going to insult you by covering basic socialisation (deodorant is good), but there are a few things that players should bear in mind when playing.

Laundry games boil down to ‘a mismatched but more-or-less competent bunch of occult spies investigate Cthulhu-flavoured weirdness in the modern-day UK; horrible things ensue until they work out a clever way to stop the bad guys.’ For more on what the game should feel like, skip on to the example of play on page 161.

Roleplaying games work best when everyone in the group is enthusiastic about playing the game and shares a common idea of what sort of gameplay they want out of it. That does not mean that everyone has to want the same thing out of the game – some players play for the mystery, some for the thrill of cosmic horror, some to take out their frustrations on thinly disguised satires of their employers, some because it is a social night in with friends – but everyone should agree on the style of game that is being played.

A *Laundry* game includes some or more of these elements:

- **Espionage and Tradecraft:** From Len Deighton and John Le Carre to *Bourne* and *Spooks*; codenames, undercover identities, surveillance cameras tracking trench coat clad figures across railway platforms, throwing off tails, double agents, cynical handlers and a desperate twilight struggle for the future of the free world. Paranoia, secrecy and isolation are the watchwords for this sort of game.
- **Technothriller:** Emphasising the technology, the geopolitics, the process and the gunporn, with lavish info dumps about the exact calibre of the sniper rifle being used by Two-One SAS. Lots of acronyms, codewords and throwaway references.
- **Investigation:** Piecing together the truth of what is going on by following a trail of clues. In the *Laundry*, this often means delving into past operations and finding sealed documents that hint at some greater horror to come, until you finally fit together the pieces of dissociated knowledge which open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of your frightful position therein, that you shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light.

- **Humour meets Horror:** The *Laundry*-verse is one where henchmen joke about their upcoming IPO (Install Planetary Overlord), where you can find yourself trapped in a *Neverwinter Nights* game only to be rescued by your 15th level Courtesan hireling, where Santa Claus has tentacles and where paperclip audits are part of an occult conspiracy. Half of the characters are geeks of various flavours, living in a geek house that should be familiar to most readers. They act like Player Characters. Whether the humour is geeky (Apple users are brainwashed by glamour spells) or black (dead co-workers as zombie guards, official documents that conclude ‘*we remain convinced that this is the best defensive posture to adopt in order to minimise casualties when the Great Old Ones return from beyond the stars to eat our brains*’), it is important to keep the tone from getting too po-faced.

- **Magic as Science:** The Dee-Turing Theorem turns magic into something that can be quantified and studied scientifically (while also keeping the occasional medieval phrase and grace note). Extrapolation and creative use of magic is part of the fun – gadgets like the Basilisk Gun or the HOG come from thinking ‘ok, what can I do with this spell’ and running with it. You can also scale up or down – if Ephraim Waite can transfer his mind into the body of his daughter and then on to Edward Derby, then you can have elite forces of body-jumping Black Chamber commandoes who covertly insert behind enemy lines by possessing enemy soldiers.

- **Impending Doom:** The whole *Laundry* series plays out in the shadow of CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN, when the stars come right and reality breaks down, letting things from Outside back in. Each second brings the whole world closer to the brink of esoteric Armageddon. It is nuclear war or even worse. (*‘There is life eternal within the eater of souls. Nobody is ever forgotten or allowed to rest in peace. They populate the simulation spaces of its mind, exploring all the possible alternative endings to their life. There is a fate worse than death, you know.’*)

Not every game session will involve all of these elements. Communicate clearly with the other players. If you want to see more of a certain aspect of the game, tell the GM. Saying ‘*I want more office politics and funny stuff*’ works better than sending telepathic signals.

Have Fun

You would think this should be obvious, but it is worth restating anyway. Do not sabotage your own fun.

How do players sabotage their own fun? There are lots of ways.

THE LAUNDRY

- **Not Getting Involved:** Your *character* might quibble about being sent out on a mission to Somalia, or Yuggoth, or Swindon; he might hate life in the Laundry and mistrust his superiors and the other PCs but *you* are one who is actually playing the game. Be careful of playing a character who does not want to get involved. Grumble in-character; enthusiastically chase the mystery out of character.
- **Blocking The GM:** Game Master is not all-knowing, especially when it comes to abstruse technical fields. If the GM describes something you know to be impossible or implausible due to real-world knowledge (*'network firewalls do not work that way'*) then either bite your tongue and let the inaccuracy slide, or better yet, suggest a way that things could work (*'there's no way they could have got through our firewall that way... unless they had a sympathetic link in to our intranet or something. Maybe there is an enchanted USB stick somewhere.'*)
- **Blocking Other Players:** Similarly, do not block other players out of the action. Work with the other characters; involve them in your plans. Your SAS headbreaker may be the only character qualified to climb down into the Vaults of Zin and chuck demo charges at the Formless Spawn, but stick a webcam on your shoulder so the weedy boffin PC can tag along and give you advice on how not to die. If you do not trust another Player Character, then come up with an elaborate double-cross to make them show their true colours instead of knocking them out and leaving them behind.
- **Giving Up:** Sometimes, it seems as though the mysteries are unsolvable and the odds are impossible and to be honest, that is true. There are things you will never understand and the odds of humanity surviving in any recognisable form are a hell of a lot less than the chances of anything coming from Mars... but still, you have got to try. If you have stalled in an investigation, then try searching for more clues or forcing something to happen. If you do not know what to do next, then take a risk. A lull in the action is ok; giving up is not.
- **Tuning Out:** Similarly, pay attention to the GM and to the other players. There may be scenes that your character is not involved in but you should still stay focussed on the game. Do not drain the creative energy of the group by checking mail or reading a book. You could even start an in-character conversation with another PC or make everyone a cup of tea while the spotlight's on someone else. If you cannot make it to a game session, let the GM know well in advance if possible.
- **Not Taking Things Seriously:** Jokes to lighten the mood are fine. Muttering 'all your brains are belong to us' when fighting possessors – also fine. Using cutting-edge science and a bit of magic to turn a Smart car into an amphibious assault vehicle – pushing it but ok. If you crack a joke when your best friend gets eaten in front of you or take the piss out of Angleton during a deadly serious '*we're 24 hours away from the end of the world*' briefing, the mood of the game is damaged. Do not interrupt the GM when he is trying to get things back on

track. Do not call your character Herbert Finklebottom unless you want other people to treat you like the sort of person who gets named Herbert Finklebottom.

- **Taking Things Too Seriously:** Getting caught up in the game is good. Getting caught up in the minutia is less good. There is no need to describe all the security precautions your character takes when travelling every time he leaves the office or to make too much of a fuss if the GM gets some background detail wrong.

Life in the Laundry

The Laundry employs all sorts, from the terminally clueless to occult geeks to ambitious middle managers with business diplomas to Deep One hybrids to scary men with lots of guns. They are all crammed into a civil service bureaucracy that is more complex and mind-bending than any alien horror and forced to work together. The Laundry extends into every aspect of your characters' life – those middle management bureaucrats determine where you get to live, who you associate with, how many bathroom breaks you get and how many forms you have got to fill in before you can order a pencil (hint: all of them). At least focussing on the mindless tedium distracts you from the mind-numbing terror.

The only people you can talk to about the Laundry are other Laundry personnel. If your character has friends and family on the outside (and you should), then you have to lie to them about what you do and about what is coming.



The Laundry is vast and confusing. Your character knows a handful of departments – where you work, Human Resources, Financial Control, Internal Logistics, Internal Security, Operational Oversight, Arcana Analysis – and you have got phone numbers that you hope you will never have to ring for the Plumbers and the Cleaners. There are rumours of other sections, too. The Auditors. The Black Assizes. Counter-Possession.

The secrets of the Laundry are all locked away behind codeword clearances. If you do not have the right codeword clearances, you cannot read the secret files. (Well, you can try. It is just that most of them have wards that will eat your brain.) The organisation takes its security seriously. You may (ok, will) be dragged before the Auditors and interrogated under a truth compulsion geas.

There are benefits to being part of the Laundry. It is a job for life (and beyond). The pay is not great but there is a pension and subsidised housing that comes with all sorts of optional extras like thaumic dampers, intrusion wards, 24 hour surveillance and the Plumbers on standby. Plus, you just might be able to save the world.

The Civil Service

As a member of the Laundry, you will get to play with cool toys, flash your mind-warping warrant card around, cast death spells at interesting people and save the world (or at least parts of Luton) from alien monsters. You may not be James Bond but you are a mysterious and stylish Man in Black, right?

Not quite. The Laundry may technically be part of the intelligence services but it is also one step above the Department of Sewer Inspections and about six ranks below the post office. You may be fighting to save the world but your budget is approximately 50p and a pencil. It is important not to get delusions of grandeur – for most employees, the Laundry has all the glamour and style of the most menial office job you can imagine.

How does this affect your character? Remember to get receipts for everything. Worry about your budget and timekeeping and the legal aspects of your actions. You do not, for example, have a license to kill, or even a license to mildly inconvenience. You cannot arrest people either, at least not without an extremely good reason to do so. You should worry about trespassing, about invasion of privacy and about the legality of wiretapping and breaking and entering. You can do all of these things, but only with permission (or in extreme circumstances and, if circumstances are extreme, you are expected to act on your own initiative and get things done without waiting for the blessings of your superiors). A cruel Game Master may even dump actual paperwork on you.

Bizarrely, these restrictions add to the fun. It is very easy for a roleplaying game to degenerate into a power fantasy, where the Player Characters do whatever they want without consequence or a powerless fantasy where the characters are

doomed no matter what they do. The bureaucracy grounds the game in an approximation of realism, giving context to the weird events and bizarre missions.

The Chain of Command

'Bob, you can come along on this trip on one condition. The condition is that if you get any of my men killed by arsing around, I will personally shoot you. Do you agree and understand?'

— The Atrocity Archives

A wise man¹ said that roleplayers need to be able to make their own decisions and be masters of their own fates and screw-ups. In the Laundry, though, you have got two or more managers and any number of bureaucratic restrictions, advisories, guidelines and fully documented procedures telling you what to do.

That does not mean that you should run every decision past your managers. You are expected to have initiative and to be able to take action without asking for advice every five minutes. When on a mission, you should only contact head office when:

- You need backup or support of a specific nature (*'send in the Plumbers'*).
- The situation has changed (*'you sent us out here to look for kids playing with a downloaded copy of The Necronomicon, but we've got a class three entity loose in a school and possible evidence of a cult'*).
- You are about to escalate the situation (*'boss, we're about to break into the Israeli embassy. You may want to disavow all knowledge of us.'*).
- You are totally and utterly stuck (*'boss... any tips?'*).

Asking for support from your superiors every five minutes is a great way to annoy them in-character and annoy the GM out of character.

At the same time, you have to obey the chain of command. Ignoring orders or failing to inform your superiors of important details will get your character disciplined or transferred to some job that is even worse.

If other Player Characters are your superiors, you are expected to obey them. That does not mean that you unquestioningly follow their every whim, but decisions about how to proceed are theirs. (Disputes and grievances should be shelved until a Human Resources-mediated

¹ S. John Ross, in his seminal *Five Elements of Commercial Appeal in Roleplaying Games* essay. For the curious, the elements are Cliché (the players have to be able to grok the game easily), Combat (conflict is dramatic and lets the players work as a team), Fellowship (you need a reason to have a group of PCs working together), Anarchy (the players need to have space to make decisions) and Enigma (investigating weird stuff is fun).

resolution meeting can be arranged.) If you are placed in command of other Player Characters, then it is your job to lead the team forward, not use the others as your personal minions².

Your Character and Welcome to Him

So, who is your character? You have got some idea after rolling him up in Chapter 4; you know his skills and his weak points, his past experience and his approach to problems. You know how far he is from the brink of madness. You may even have a brief biographical sketch or concept (*'Bob Howard, darkside hacker. Mid-20s. Recruited after he nearly summoned Nyarlathotep.'*).

That is more than enough to get started. There is no need to write a 30-page biography of your character before you start and there is no need to come up with a detailed breakdown of his personality. There will be time to develop your character in play later on. The key is being consistent – if the first personality trait you establish for your character is that he is paranoid, stick with that. You can tweak traits over the course of the game (maybe your character did not trust the other Player Characters when he first met them but he is a little more at ease with them now), but do not change your character's personality without an in-game event to justify it.

Do not be afraid of mundanity. Not every Laundry character needs to be ex-Special-Forces supersoldiers or a professor of mathematics, or a sinister spook, or the subject of bizarre experiments by the Fungi from Yuggoth. Most of the staff are comparatively normal (or were, anyway). Make your character memorable by what he accomplishes over the course of the game, not by his back-story. (There are exceptions to everything of course and it may turn out that one of the Player Characters is a KGB deep cover mole or a Deep One or comes from a parallel universe where Zombie Margaret Thatcher rules with a bony fist. A single *outré* back-story is interesting but only if it provides a contrast to the normality of the other characters.)

Roleplaying

Try to have a clear distinction between in-character and out-of-character speech. You can use a specific accent³, cadence or verbal tic to make it clear that what you are saying comes out of your character's mouth. Alternatively, use your body language to convey that you are in character – you might lean forward in your chair and be more focussed and attentive when in character. Props can help show you are playing a techie character by playing with a smartphone

² Do not, for example, check for wards by ordering some intern to open the door of the evil wizard's lair. That is what Residual Human Resources are for.

³ Assuming you can do an accent that does not grate after 10 minutes. The GM is encouraged to feed officers with bad accents to the shogoths.

or a multitool, a bureaucrat should always have a pen in hand and a cloak-and-dagger spy might check his concealed shoulder holster every so often.

Think about what your character does when he is off duty. What is his home life like? How does he relax? Does he have hobbies? Relationships? Favourite drink? Favourite music? What about ambitions – does he want to climb up the ladder of promotions to a senior role or does he just want to survive? How does he cope with the knowledge that the world is a paper-thin façade over howling alien madness? Some of these will never come up over the course of play but consider the questions anyway – the answers will give you ideas on how you should portray your character.

Spotlight Time

'Spotlight time' means the time in which each Player Character gets a chance to shine and be the centre of the action. A good GM will keep the metaphorical spotlight moving from character-to-character – Phil the techie gets his scene where he hacks into the bad guys' network and steals their archives, then Andrea the occult reads the bad guy records and works out that they are about to summon something in an ancient ruin in Orkney and finally Jimmy the soldier gets to shine when the characters interrupt the cult ritual with extreme prejudice. Spotlight time does not mean the other characters are completely ignored, so Phil and Jimmy can still kibitz and help while Andrea is deciphering the cult records, but it does mean that this is a moment for your character to take the lead.

If you are in the spotlight, use it. Do something cool that makes the other players pay attention to you – and if possible, bounce the spotlight onto another character when you have had your moment of glory. Look at the climax of *The Atrocity Archives* – Bob figures out that setting off the nuke will let the entropic entity through into our world and works out a way to stop the bomb from detonating using the Basilisk gun. Bob then lets another Player Character, Alan Barnes, take the spotlight and be the big damn hero by actually disarming the bomb⁴.

When the spotlight is off your character, you should still participate – but remember that right now, you are effectively the sidekick to the other player's protagonist.

Spotlight time is especially important when the Player Characters are separated. While modern technology does mean that scattered characters can stay in touch (Player Characters love their mobile phones more than 13 year olds do), there will be time when the GM's attention is on one player or group of players. While the spotlight is off you, you can still engage the other Player Characters in conversation, discuss your next move, study the clues you have assembled or complain about Human Resources.

⁴ In retrospect, *'you get to be the guy who gets irradiated'* may not be the best example of spotlight time.

Subplots or When Work Comes Home With You

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 Most sessions of the *Laundry RPG* follow the framework of the mission. The characters are assigned a task by their superiors; they investigate the mystery, follow the clues and get attacked by things with N+1 tentacles, where N is the number of tentacles you are comfortable with.

Every so often, the GM may choose to deviate from this framework and that may mean a subplot focussed on your character's personal life or family. This is a chance to expand your character's background and history and to introduce your co-workers to your mother (probably as they try to exorcise her). Of course, not every subplot has to involve the occult; as your character develops, you will find that the mystery-of-the-week becomes less important and character-driven subplots become more common.

Example of Play

The Player Characters are following another Laundry agent, an NPC called Paul Earle (codenamed ASCOT FOUR). He was on an undercover mission to infiltrate a Neo-Nazi cult but the Laundry now suspects he has switched sides. Note that different players have different ways of referring to their characters.

GM: According to ASCOT FOUR's handler, he should be leaving his flat in about 10 minutes and walking to the Neo-Nazi headquarters.

Neil: Does the Laundry have any bugs or tracking devices on ASCOT FOUR?

GM: His flat is bugged but he's not wearing a wire or anything.

Chris: Ok, so we'll follow him when he starts walking from the flat to the cult headquarters. I'll start tailing him, then Neil's character will take over half-way through so he doesn't get suspicious.

Neil: Cooper requisitioned some throat mikes and radios, so we'll stay in contact.

Denis: I guess my character will stay with the car and be ready to provide backup.

GM: Cool. You drive over to ASCOT FOUR's residence and park nearby. A moment later, you see a tall guy with a shaved head emerge and start heading down the street.

Neil: One sec, I'll pull up a map of London on my phone.

GM: Er, sure, why not. *The GM hasn't bothered to determine exactly where ASCOT FOUR's residence is or where the Neo-Nazi cult is based but he can improvise.* Chris, your character is following ASCOT FOUR. Make a Stealth roll, please.

Chris: How busy is the street?

GM: Not very – it's a residential neighbourhood, and most people have gone to work. There are two or three other pedestrians and a few cars, but not much traffic overall.

Chris: In that case, I'll be really cautious to make sure he doesn't spot me. I'll stay on the other side of the road and watch him out of the corner of my eye.

GM: Hmm...if you're taking precautions like that, I'll give you a 20% bonus to your Stealth if you want – but if you fail and ASCOT FOUR runs, he'll have a big head start on you.

Chris: Sure. Ok, I roll a 55... and my Stealth is 40%, so I pass thanks to that bonus.

GM: You get a check for Stealth. ASCOT FOUR throws the occasional glance around, but you don't think he's made you.

Denis: Made him? What do you mean?

GM: It's a spy term – to identify someone undercover is to 'make' them. Chris, you follow ASCOT FOUR down the street for some time. There's a coffee shop up ahead and –

Neil: Can my character Cooper be waiting in the coffee shop, to pick up the tail? *The characters have split up, and the action was following Chris, but it's reasonable that Neil's character would be waiting here as he said he was going to follow ASCOT FOUR from half-way along his route.*

GM: Sure. Chris, you spot Martin Cooper sitting at the window of the coffee shop. As ASCOT FOUR approaches, Cooper gets ready to follow him – but then ASCOT FOUR turns and walks into the coffee shop.

Neil: Is he coming towards me?

GM: No, he just goes up to the counter and orders a coffee.

Chris: Does he get a receipt?

GM: Huh?

Chris: Hey, we're the Laundry. If he *doesn't* get a receipt, he's in breach of regulations.

GM: He doesn't get a receipt. Chris, are you following ASCOT FOUR in?

Chris: No, I'll keep walking until I'm out of sight.

GM: Neil, you see ASCOT FOUR pick up his coffee. He stops, cocks his head as if listening and then goes into the toilets.

Neil: Cooper will follow him in.

GM: Denis, you're still back in the car. Your phone rings.

16 EXPECTATIONS

THE LAUNDRY

Denis: Hello?

GM: It's your boss. (*putting on a gruff voice*): Reilly? What's your status?

Denis: We're tracking ASCOT FOUR now, sir.

GM: The police pulled a floater out of the Thames this morning, Reilly. It was ASCOT FOUR.

Denis: But we're... oh hell. I warn the others. Guys, ASCOT FOUR may not be what he appears to –

GM: Neil, you've just followed ASCOT FOUR into the toilet. As you enter, he grabs you and slams you up against the *ceiling* with one hand. You take four points of damage; give me a Luck roll.

Neil: Failed.

GM: Chris, Denis, you hear a crackle from Cooper's throat mike, then he goes dead. What're you doing?

Neil: Trying to struggle free.

Chris: I turn and run back into the coffee shop.

Denis: Drive like a maniac towards the coffee shop. If there's a back entrance, I'll head there.

GM: Ok, Neil, you see ASCOT FOUR's mouth open wider and wider, like the jaws of a snake. His teeth have become fangs and he's lowering you down towards his mouth. Give me a Sanity check.

Neil: Failed that too.

GM: Lose three SAN, then roll Grapple.

Neil: The dice hate me.

GM: You black out. Chris, you charge into the coffee shop and...?

Chris: I run into the toilet.

GM: Technically, you don't know that ASCOT FOUR and Cooper are in the toilet, but sure, you run up to the door. It's locked or held shut from the far side.

Chris: Can I force it open?

GM: What's your Strength again? 12? *ASCOT FOUR is holding the door shut from the far side; the GM compares ASCOT FOUR's strength to that of Chris's character, then consults the Resistance table to see what Chris's chances are.* Ok...you've a 30% chance of forcing the door. Roll.

Chris: I get a 47. Damn. I keep trying.

Denis: Am I there yet?

GM: Nearly – you're zooming down the street in the car. From inside the toilet, Chris, you hear a weird sound like bones cracking.

Neil: Should I mark off Hit Points?

GM: Nope. Step outside for a sec, I want to tell you secretly what happens to your character.

Neil: Cool! *The pair step outside for a moment, then return.*

Chris: I keep trying to force the door.

GM: Suddenly, whatever was holding it shut stops and you burst in. Cooper's lying on the floor, unconscious. There's no sign of ASCOT FOUR. Give me a Spot check.

Chris: I pass.

GM: You get a check for Spot and notice that there's a tiny window, only about a foot wide, at the back of the toilet that exits onto the alleyway at the back of the coffee shop. It's the only other way out of this room.

Chris: I radio Denis and tell him to check the alleyway. ASCOT FOUR must have gone that way!

Will Denis find ASCOT FOUR in the alleyway? How did it fit through the narrow window and how did it copy the appearance of the dead Laundry officer? Or did it? And what did happen to Neil's character? Could he now be the thing in disguise?

Prospective Players:

Jo Sullivan? (Real Man)

Brains (Roleplayer)

Peter-Francis (Munchkin)

Pinky (Loony)