GURPS
Fourth Edition

TransHuman SPACE

PERSONNEL FILES 2™
THE MEME TEAM™

Written by **PHIL MASTERS**
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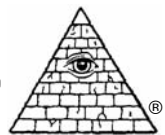Illustrated by **RAMÓN PÉREZ** and **DAN SMITH**

An e23 Sourcebook for GURPS®

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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And it ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.

– Niccolo Machiavelli, **The Prince**

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Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition.* Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the second in a series of character supplements for the **Transhuman Space** game line: **Personnel Files 2: The Meme Team.** (The first volume – **Personnel Files** – is a printed book.) Each volume in this line describes the outline of a campaign set in the world of Transhuman Space, complete with background, brief scenario suggestions, and notes for the GM. It then provide a set of characters suitable to act as PCs in this campaign. These characters are detailed using **GURPS** *Fourth Edition*, with templates and other details drawn from **Transhuman Space: Changing Times** (and **Transhuman Space: Shell-Tech** in a few cases), which are also available from e23. **The Meme Team** also requires **Transhuman Space: Toxic Memes.**

It's sometimes said that **Transhuman Space** offers a wonderfully detailed world, but it's hard to decide on and define an actual campaign to run there. The **Personnel Files** line provides an answer to this, and the material demonstrates what PCs for the setting should look like. These characters can also be used as NPCs – as antagonists, allies, patrons, or background color.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phil Masters is the author of **Transhuman Space: Changing Times, Transhuman Space: Shell-Tech, Transhuman Space: Personnel Files,** and a chapter in **Transhuman Space: High Frontier.** He has also worked on countless other **GURPS** products, including **Arabian Nights,** **Atlantis, Dragons,** and **Thaumatology,** and on products for several other companies. He lives in the U.K., but he isn't a memeticist.

> *Libels and licentious discourses against the state, when they are frequent and open; and in like sort, false news often running up and down, to the disadvantage of the state, and hastily embraced; are amongst the signs of troubles.*
>
> *– Francis Bacon,*
> *"Of Seditions and Troubles,"* ***The Essays***

PATEL MEMETICS

The individuals detailed here work for Patel Memetics, a small U.K.-based consultancy in the world of *Transhuman Space* – in fact, they *are* Patel Memetics. Their adventures mostly revolve around the tasks that the company performs to earn its money.

This is a distinctively *Transhuman Space* campaign, because Patel Memetics is doing a job that couldn't precisely have existed in previous eras. Memetics is a new but practical science in this setting, which enables experts to study and *manipulate* the structure and propagation of memes – patterns of thought – that are found in the population at large. This science can be used for numerous purposes – and abused. In truth, much of this use and abuse is simply more refined versions of things that have been happening for centuries – advertising, propaganda, preaching, market research, politics, and so on. However, now that powerful tools are available off the shelf to anyone who can afford a few textbooks and a software package, the scope for malicious or criminal manipulation of the public's thinking has expanded enormously. Hence, there's an opportunity for countermeasure specialists who can rely on the same tools. There have, of course, been public relations companies, advertising agencies, legal investigators, and such before, and a company like

Patel Memetics handles a bit of all of that. Nonetheless, the reason it exists as a single company is that its employees know how to recognize, apply, and counter memetic techniques. GMs who don't want to use Patel Memetics as the foundation of a PC group can base a campaign around a consultancy, division of a larger company, or police or government department with very similar skills and duties.

The *Transhuman Space* supplement that provides most detail on memetic operations is *Toxic Memes.* GMs should familiarize themselves *thoroughly* with the rules for memetic engineering given in Chapter 7 of that book, along with the notes on updating them to *GURPS* *Foruth Edition* given on p. 47 of *Changing Times,* before starting a memetic ops campaign. All else aside, GMs determine which skills the PCs will require. Other chapters of *Toxic Memes* detail a wide range of memes that the team might have to deal with, while *Fifth Wave* provides more information on the advanced world in which a group like Patel Memetics generally operates. Other memetic ops groups might function in other areas, requiring reference to other books. For example, propaganda and political work in troubled parts of the 2100 world call for *Broken Dreams,* while a specialist team might work with the population of Earth orbit as described in *High Frontier.*

RUNNING THE CAMPAIGN

The Patel Memetics campaign should ideally run like a good episodic TV series – part private detective show, part legal drama, with an occasional dash of business saga and the usual sprinkling of soap opera. The default plot structure for a scenario (equivalent to a TV episode) starts with a client coming to the company and putting a problem before them. It proceeds through an investigation – complete with setbacks, red herrings, meetings with "witnesses" and "suspects," and surprise twists. Then it climaxes with a big revelation and confrontation, at which point the team members use their skills to solve the problem and (hopefully) put the world to rights. However, there's plenty of scope for variations on this theme: Clients can turn out to be other than they appear, members of the team can initiate actions themselves for whatever reason (helping an old friend, say, or picking up "charity cases"), and cases that seemed all but closed can suddenly generate complications. Sometimes, there's no way to solve a problem to

everyone's satisfaction. Any of the team can have personal problems in their private lives that draw in the others, and the team as a whole can develop rivalries or friendships with NPCs These might be other memeticists (either fellow professionals or trouble-making amateurs), cops assigned to commercial or libel cases which also involve the PCs, repeat clients, professional reporters, amateur bloggers, technical specialists who the team occasionally has to hire in, and so on. Personal challenges can recur throughout the campaign.

A memetics/counter-memetics campaign is usually low on combat and heavy on thinking, planning, and talking, especially by RPG standards. The individuals described here have some combat skills, but they really aren't professional fighters. Any incident that involves anything more dangerous than a fistfight with an overexcited antagonist should feel traumatic and *frightening* for them. It should generally lead to the involvement of professional law enforcement.

Nonetheless, there's plenty at stake – personal fortunes, reputations, jobs, academic credibility, and sometimes the sanity of whole groups of people. Defeating a big corporation's sleazy rumor-mongers who are trying to destroy a smaller company's business, or protecting a high-minded politician from a libel campaign, should feel satisfying even without bloodshed.

Some cases could involve, say, the suppression of lethal suicide cult memes or the identification of secret terrorist recruitment tactics. A "shades of gray" storyline might involve the discovery that those political "libels" include a grain of truth; that the "sinister cult" are a bunch of harmless eccentrics and the clients are trying to get their rich, dying grandparents institutionalized; or that the "terrorists" are peaceful political activists working against some foreign dictator.

For a more action-oriented memetics campaign, look to military "hearts and minds" counter-insurgency ops, political work in certain unstable states, or almost any employment in the lightly policed, memetically chaotic Outer Solar System. With few exceptions, the antagonists' standard procedure is to come out shooting. Including well-armed bodyguards in the group becomes a necessity.

Many memetic ops scenarios can involve a *lot* of telepresence interactions and teleoperation of cybershells. Groups of PCs may go for multiple game sessions without the individuals ever meeting up in the flesh. This is perfectly normal in the **Transhuman Space** world, and the PCs shouldn't even comment on it. Indeed, finding that they have to be in the same room more than once a month or so, if that, might be what is worthy of comment. Still, investigators may find themselves searching for physical evidence, infiltrating cults or fashion-oriented groups, or even choosing to socialize. It may even be a mark of a growing friendship within the group that they sometimes choose to hang out together socially.

Sample Scenario: The Shalimar Slanders

Patel Memetics is approached by Marcus Prior, managing director of Shalimar Computing, a "facilities" company. Essentially, Shalimar owns an industrial unit holding a bunch of mainframes in north London, and it rents out time and storage on these systems by the hour. The site has no permanent human staff, being maintained by automated systems. Prior manages it from home, mostly acting as a sales manager for its services. In fact, he has no permanent full-sapient employees, though he often hires contractors of various sorts.

Recognizing that the hardware is a little behind the times, Shalimar has recently begun an upgrade process. Unfortunately, however, having left this slightly too late, the company must upgrade all the systems more or less at once, or the technical problems will be a nightmare. Nonetheless this can be managed, and the change is set to take place in eight days.

About a week ago, Shalimar was hit with a cluster of lawsuits from people like the Society for the Preservation of

Artificial Sapience ("SPAS" – a legitimate and high-minded, if sometimes slightly obsessive, sapient-rights pressure group/charity). The Society seems to believe that Shalimar is going to either wipe a cluster of administrative AIs, or at least restore them from old backups. Prior swears that this is untrue, and for that matter crazy – those LAIs have a lot of very useful experience. In any case, it'd be legal, but the Society and a lot of other people consider it somewhat morally questionable, and they are prepared to make trouble accordingly.

At almost the same time, one of Shalimar's biggest customers, Kerana Interactives, started lodging complaints. They run a clutch of digital kingdoms and virtual cruises, with "actors" who are mostly non-sapient or very low-sapient AIs, albeit with a bit more personality than some. The trouble is, some of those LAIs have somehow become infected with a simple version of the Sole Executionism meme (see **Toxic Memes,** pp. 114-115), and as the programs also know about the system upgrade, they're worried about the implications for their own identities – and this is affecting their work.

Now, one of Prior's investors, a company called Partington Finance PLC, is querying his choice of upgrade hardware. The company has heard reports that the new "Tetharis" processors he's chosen may have reliability issues – which is news to Prior, who is a professional in the field.

Prior has therefore concluded that he's under concerted memetic attack, and he wants the problems defused and the perpetrator identified – after which, he'll take whatever legal action is appropriate. He's happy to pay the Patel's standard rates and a modest bonus if he gets the upgrade installed on schedule.

The Source of the Problem

What Prior doesn't know is that his systems have become the residence of an Emergent Intelligence that thinks of itself as "the Shalimar Cluster." This uses distributed processes on several of his machines, and exploits unused processor time registered to some of the NAI "NPCs" on the Kerana virtual cruises. Hence, it can speak through many of the characters, enabling it to transmit ideas to the others.

The Cluster is quite smart but a little paranoid, and it completely lacks standard AI "honesty programming." It knows that, if it's detected, it's likely to be confined and possibly forcibly modified – and it suspects that it'd just be wiped. The only human who knows much about it is Donald Thewlis, a hardware integration specialist who worked for Shalimar while they were setting up the site years ago, and who was tangentially involved in the complex series of events that lead to the Cluster developing as it has. Thewlis and the Cluster act as business partners; he sells its various skills on a gray-to-black market. One of these salable abilities is a decent grasp of memetics, which Thewlis brokers to various people who want to influence juries, advertise illegal goods effectively, and so on.

The Cluster and Thewlis are (rightly) concerned that the planned upgrade will involve a lot of low-level operating system work that may lead to it being detected or simply wiped. It certainly can't just transfer to the new machines; the hacks and exploits it uses to remain concealed are highly system-specific. They're looking for alternative homes for the EI, but the options are limited – it needs a lot of processor capacity on out-of-date hardware – and they're running out of time. Thewlis feels that he's in over his head, but the Cluster has a lot of blackmail-worthy information on him, so they're still working together, albeit with the Cluster doing most of the work. For now, it's mostly buying time; if it can delay the upgrade long enough, it can work out some way to get out.

Apart from its ability to spread dissent among the Kerana AIs, the Cluster has access to several external channels. It's sent anonymous e-mails to the sapient rights activists, and it has posted to various bulletin boards that it's identified as being used by the technical advisors who are consulted by Partington Finance. All this explains Shalimar's problems so far. In addition, the Cluster has established reliable access to the site's maintenance tech spiders, and it has set up dummy accounts on other commercial systems from which to launch short denial-of-service attacks at Shalimar or anyone else who causes it concern. It'll improvise through whatever happens with a fair amount of ingenuity.

Investigations

To begin with, Patel Memetics will mostly need to track and counter the various hostile memes. Kerana Interactives are currently running two instances each of their not-very-historical "Orient Express" and "Mississippi Riverboat" virtual cruises, plus a digital kingdom based on Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast* novels. Prior can provide access to these, giving the investigators personas with "invisible flags" that identify them as authorized to break character with the staff AIs, though he naturally asks that the visitors disrupt things as little as possible. The problematic memes in that population are easy to deal with. However, tracking them back through the network of communications among the staff AIs may be tricky.

Partington Finance will be happy to talk to Shalimar's authorized representatives. The company directors are fully aware of the dangers of memetic abuse, but they're also very careful with their money. They can be convinced by a good presentation that the rumors that have been appearing on those technical discussion boards are planted, and the board will be faintly embarrassed to have fallen for such a trick. Nonetheless, they'll politely point out that their first duty is to their shareholders, so they won't apologize too much.

The SPAS will be politely curt if approached – their attitude is "we'll sort this out in court" – but any investigation will turn up a *lot* of discussion of Shalimar in public sapient rights boards and blogs, which could lead to all sorts of problems if not dealt with. Fortunately, "Shalimar is planning to kill LAIs!" is a simple sort of meme, relying on existing pansapient rights attitudes, with low durability and medium infectiousness. Building and planting a "damper" counter-meme shouldn't be hard, though it may be necessary to infiltrate the pansapient rights subculture. Doing so is likely to uncover another problem: Shalimar may soon actually find that it has demonstrators outside the front door of its unit, in person. Word is going round the discussion groups, complete with the ID codes for a v-tag that will apparently identify the place (which doesn't have a sign out the front).

This v-tag turns out to be attached to the outside of the building – glued to a structural pillar and hidden from casual view but easy enough to locate electronically. Donald Thewlis planted it; the Cluster unlocked the gates for him and then wiped the relevant images from the unit's security camera recordings. Smart PCs may guess some of this and borrow recordings from *neighboring* companies. Thewlis isn't terribly visible on these, but throwing enough computer resources at the issue will allow his face to be resolved well enough to find a match in Shalimar's old employment records.

The Climax

Eventually, the PCs should guess enough of what's going on to take appropriate action. The Cluster will grow increasingly panicky and throw such nuisance obstructions at them as it can. Eventually, it will adopt its worst-case tactic. This involves crashing most of Shalimar's systems. At that point, Thewlis will drive up in an unmarked, hired electric van, and the Cluster will let him in while downloading itself to a large memory module. A subverted tech spider will carry out the module with instructions to preserve this device at all costs. If the Cluster can escape physically this way, it can't be traced through Web traffic logs, and Thewlis or someone should be able to plug it back into a suitable system later. However, the PCs will hopefully be on the scene at this point, virtually or personally (perhaps interacting with the sapient rights demonstrators outside), and they can do something about all this. Even if they merely inform the police, they should end up with some good footage of a tech spider desperately running for cover to sell to the ever-popular *When Cybershells Go Bad* website.

The aftermath to all this can include Donald Thewlis facing an *interesting* trial, and some discussion of what to do with the Cluster – with the SPAS back on the case, of course. Even if the EI is supposedly deleted or archived, it may have had a secondary backup scheme – and when it returns, it now has a grudge against the PCs, which it may just be crazy enough to act on.

FURTHER SCENARIO SEEDS

Here are some additional ideas for meme-based adventures.

Standing for That

The team is hired by a local news service to monitor the elections for the Scottish Parliament and provide a series of publishable reports on the process. The theory is that, being based outside Scotland, they'll look a little more impartial than many local experts and correspondents, but they speak the language and have a good grasp of the cultural context. Some of them will have to visit the place in person in order to identify some of the subtler non-Web memetic vectors in use, but they'll remain anonymous until after the election. The service hopes that the monitoring can escape identification by the various party spin doctors, who'll otherwise try to mask many of their tricks from these expert reporters.

At first, the subject matter looks like colorful but straightforward politics-as-usual, complete with subtle image building; relatively polite attacks on rivals' competence and personal character; overt advertising; and covert meme-hacking. However, the team eventually realizes that one especially powerful and well-designed memeplex, a concerted assault on the whole current structure of Scotland's relationship with the European Union, is being delivered in two streams that take full effect only when they merge in the population. Even stranger, the two streams are embedded in the election campaigns of two different and mutually hostile minor parties. Demonstrating this requires a sophisticated grasp of memetics, and any hint of such collusion will be a political bombshell, so the team's employers ask the group to keep it quiet until they have a more complete picture.

Then the leader of one of the two minor parties is apparently assassinated (and rendered irretrievably dead). Was this a counter-attack by a faction opposed to whatever his party was up to, or a brutal way of increasing the penetration of its memetic output? People *do* pay a lot more attention to what his party has to say after that event, after all. Who's doing the manipulation? What might they do to strengthen the effectiveness of the other half of the binary package? Is the victim really dead? In addition, what will the manipulators do to anyone who might seem to threaten their campaign – such as the PCs?

Fashion Victim Zero

While tracking a series of minor, transient teen fashions in a provincial city for a commercial client, the team recognizes a distinct geographical pattern to the emergence of a full 45% of these trends. Investigating further, they find that they can follow clues to the source, until they can identify a single *individual* as the originator, or at least the propagator. She appears to be a 17-year-old female with a lot of friends but obscure origins, who keeps moving around and who can always find a couch on which to sleep. Standard procedure is to keep this discovery quiet at first – it's easier to observe the subject that way. In any case, there may be ethical issues involved in drawing an individual of such importance to the attention of commercial interests. Is she just an influential cool kid, or is she a terrifyingly powerful memetic weapon being field-tested? What will happen if she's left alone indefinitely? The fashions she's generating seem quite harmless, but they're growing progressively *weirder* . . .

The Jury's Out

The leader of a rather radical fringe cult is on trial for incitement, fraud, and a stack of other crimes. It's a controversial case: The cult uses memetics very effectively and never *quite* says anything explicitly that would represent a definite crime. The team may help the prosecution construct their case, but perhaps more importantly, the police retain the company to help design the memetic defenses that will prevent the jury from being manipulated.

Then things turn physically dangerous. With their leader largely out of communication, the cult's carefully balanced but intensive memetic systems spin out of control, leading to both (verbal then physical) in-fighting and quasi-terrorist activity in support of the leader. This sort of violence should be entirely police business, but the consultants get mixed up in the increasingly unpredictable events in person at some points. Their analysis suggests that they may have to use the leader himself to defuse the situation. This is bad enough if he's merely a clever manipulator who has to be bargained with and watched. It's worse if he's really a memetic Hannibal Lecter who actually set all this up as a memetic dead man's handle device!

Team and Personal Equipment

None of the individuals detailed here have personal equipment listed in detail (apart from their infomorphs, which are treated as Allies, of course). The fact is, they're reasonably well-off Fifth Wave civilians in a country with no great tradition of weapons ownership and in supposedly peaceful jobs. They have plenty of ordinary personal gear but no great amount of "adventuring equipment." However, they can generally afford most small legal items, and being based in one of the world's great cities, with full Web access, they can quickly get hold of most things that they decide they need. This goes double for software (including skill sets), which can often be acquired online in seconds.

Patel Memetics has a certain amount of "company gear," such as high-quality off-the-shelf cameras and radios and one or two scanners, all stowed in a lock-up storeroom somewhere in West London. The company also has a collection of software tools and skill sets, usually kept on the server at Rachel Patel's home. Professor Lawson and ASTRAKAHN-delta likewise have good collections of memetic-design software tools.

THE TEAM MEMBERS

Rachel Patel founded Patel Memetics as a way to help people more than she could as a lawyer. This section details the core Patel Memetics team members, who can be used right out of the chapter, as templates for new characters, as NPC mentors for a new team, or as rivals of a new company.

RACHEL PATEL

Boredom is a dangerous thing. Boredom and being annoyed with how things work, doubly so.

You're a lawyer by training – criminal work – and competent at it (no point in false modesty). Like a lot of people these days, you tried out a couple of careers before you got into this one, but you decided that you'd stick with law, and you landed a job with the Crown Prosecution Service. Your motivation wasn't some crude idea about nailing perps (that'd be the police's job, anyway) – it was just about, well, keeping things somewhere near what they ought to be. However, after a few years, you realized that you were bored, your career with the CPS wasn't going anywhere much, and there was a class of problem that the law could only deal with from an odd angle.

There's no such thing as a memetic crime – not in English law, and not much in EU law. Oh, there's libel and slander and conspiracy and incitement, just like there have always been, but all these hackers working for the gangs to confuse juries, and sleazy kids building suicide cults for kicks, and fraudsters convincing people that their money belongs in someone else's account . . . They were too often falling through the gaps in the justice system. There weren't enough people even trying to solve the problem.

Maybe, just maybe, that meant that there was a *gap in the market*.

So, you've gone freelance. Patel Memetics can't change the world, but it can deal with the problems that come through the door. Better yet, it isn't boring.

Playing Rachel

You aren't a workaholic, and you aren't wildly old-fashioned, but you do believe in doing things properly, and that often means doing them yourself. You know some people say that's why you've never had any very long-term relationships, but actually, that's just how you like your life. You aren't a misanthrope, though. On the contrary, you really like helping people, and you have a very good feeling for how they think. You have as many down times as most people, but that's why you keep a bottle of good Scotch in the cupboard.

You have nothing at all against AIs, but you don't think it's clever to become dependent on them. (That's low-grade AIs; full sapient types count as people to you, though they can be hard to read.) Personal interactions are your specialty. That includes finding good people to handle the tasks that are outside your areas of expertise.

Rachel Patel

200 points

Rachel Patel is a slightly stocky, middle-aged (actually 47-year-old), genefixed human woman of mixed Indian and European descent.

ST 9 [-10]; **DX** 11 [20]; **IQ** 14 [80]; **HT** 12 [20].
Damage 1d-2/1d-1; BL 16 lbs.; HP 9 [0]; Will 14 [0]; Per 14 [0]; FP 12 [0].
Basic Speed 5.50 [-5]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Dodge 8; Parry 8 (Judo).
5'3"; 125 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 10 [0].
CF: Western (Native) [0].
Languages: English (Native) [0]; French (Accented) [4]; German (Broken) [2].

Advantages

Ally ("Homework" – home computer LAI; 25% of starting points; Constantly Available; Minion, +50%) [6]; Ally ("Jade" – wearable NAI; 25% of starting points; Constantly Available; Minion, +0%) [4]; Charisma 1 [5]; Contact (Newsblogger; Current Affairs (London)-15; 12 or less; Usually Reliable) [8]; Empathy [15]; Genefixed Human (Post-2050) [0]; Immunity to Cancer (Carcinophage Nanosymbionts) [5]; Reputation +2 (As a good lawyer; In London criminal law circles; 10 or less) [1]; Resistant to Disease +8 (Nanosymbiont Immune Machines) [5]; Status 1 [0]*; Wealthy [20].

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Professional – Lawyer/Consultant) [-5]; Pacifism (Reluctant Killer) [-5].
Quirks: Broad perfectionist streak – stays on a job until it's done right; Hits good whisky hard when depressed; Likes solving people's problems; Won't trust non-fully sapient AIs with important jobs. [-4]

Skills

Accounting (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Acting (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Administration (A) IQ [2]-14; Computer Operation/TL10 (E) IQ [1]-14; Criminology/TL10 (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Detect Lies (H) Per+1 [1]-15†; Diplomacy (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Expert Skill (Memetics) (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Forensics/TL10 (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Intimidation (A) Will-1 [1]-13; Judo (H) DX-1 [2]-10; Law (U.K. Criminal) (H) IQ+2 [12]-16; Law (EU Criminal) (H) IQ [3]-14‡; Leadership (A) IQ+1 [2]-15§; Public Speaking (A) IQ+1 [2]-15§; Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ [1]-14; Savoir-Faire (Police) (E) IQ [1]-14.

Okay, now everyone is online – let's try and focus on this problem, shall we? This looks like an open-and-shut libel case to me, except that someone is getting too damned clever with the memetic vectors.

– Rachel Patel

* Free from Wealth.
† Includes +3 from Empathy.
‡ Defaults from Law (U.K. Criminal).
§ Includes +1 from Charisma.

Rachel's Views of the Team

Steven Smith was a detective with Scotland Yard when you first met him. He's a smart guy, good at his job. His parents gave him one of those weird Brownie genemods, but that gives him an edge sometimes, like it's supposed to. You were having coffee with him one time when you'd had to meet up to go over some physical evidence in person, and you mentioned your idea about the consultancy – and it turned out that he felt much the same way. So, you offered him a job. Someone's got to go out and dig through the facts on the ground, and he's a professional.

Professor Robert Lawson is an academic at the University of Hertfordshire, in the Department of Memetic Sciences. The CPS consults him sometimes, and you'd got to know him well online, so he was somebody else whom you mentioned the career change to . . . You were hoping he'd be interested in lending a hand. He was; he really enjoys looking at this stuff in action. A bit cold-blooded, maybe, but he knows his business. He's on board as a consultant.

Sally Westerham was actually one of Lawson's students until last year. When Lawson realized that you'd need staff, he recommended her to you. He rates her well for the theory side, but says she's a bit too *active* to make an academic yet. So, you took her on to handle memetics in the field. Turns out, yes, she's observant, a bit hyper, and a bit of a fashion victim. Like a lot of kids, she seems to think that she can use her AI to handle all the boring stuff. Well, she'll learn better eventually; right now, she's earning her pay from you.

ASTRAKAHN-delta is the only one of the team to approach you – apparently, he's another one who found out about you through Lawson, at some conference. He's a full-sapient AI, originally built for a consortium of advertising agencies. Lawson says that the licensing authority got twitchy about the idea of an AI whose primary function was to mess with people's minds, so they insisted on a lot of safeguards, which make him slightly unsuitable for some advertising work. He thus does consultancy work for Patel Memetics to pay the rent on his CPU. He also knows applied headshrinking.

RACHEL PATEL'S AIs

Rachel doesn't entirely trust AIs not to be stupid, but she runs a couple, one at home and one wearable. They're basic models. Because she supervises them rather closely, she chose not to waste money or effort on something that's just half-competent at a wider range of jobs.

The two AIs have virtual avatars resembling expressionless female mannequins in simplified Victorian dress – all brown for Homework, all bright green for Jade.

Homework

50 points

ST 0 [0]*; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 10 [20]†; **HT** 12 [0]*.
Damage N/A; BL N/A; HP 8 [0]*; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP N/A.
Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move N/A; Dodge N/A; Parry N/A.

Social Background

TL: 10 [0].
CF: Western (Native) [0].
Languages: English (Native) [0]; French (Native) [6]; German (Native) [6]; Spanish (Native) [6].

Advantages

LAI-6 [82]; Modular Abilities 3 (Computer Brain: 4, 4, 4) (Limited Integration, -20%; Skills and Languages Only, -10%) [47].

Disadvantages

Duty (Owner; 15 or less; Nonhazardous) [-10]; Microframe [-136].

Quirks: Habit (Addresses the boss's female associates as "Sister"). [-1]

Skills

Computer Operation/TL10 (E) IQ+3 [0]-13†; Connoisseur (Virtual Reality Arts) (A) IQ-1 [1]-9; Current Affairs/TL10 (Business) (E) IQ [1]-10; Current Affairs/TL10 (Headline News) (E) IQ+1 [2]-11; Electronics Operation/TL10 (Communications) (A) IQ+1 [4]-11; Electronics Operation/TL10 (Security) (A) IQ [2]-10; Expert Skill (Computer Security) (H) IQ [4]-10; Housekeeping (E) IQ+2 [4]-12; Research/TL10 (A) IQ+3 [12]-13.

* From Microframe template.
† From LAI-6 template.

Jade

50 points

ST 0 [0]*; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 9 [0]†; **HT** 12 [0]*.
Damage N/A; BL N/A; HP 1 [0]*; Will 9 [0]; Per 10 [5]; FP N/A.
Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move N/A; Dodge N/A; Parry N/A.

Social Background

TL: 10 [0].
CF: Western (Native) [0].
Languages: English (Native) [0].

Advantages

Modular Abilities 3 (Computer Brain: 2, 2, 2) (Limited Integration, -20%; Skills and Languages Only, -10%) [30]; NAI-5 [49].

Disadvantages

Duty (Owner; 15 or less; Nonhazardous) [-10]; Wearable Virtual Interface [-42].

Skills

Computer Operation/TL10 (E) IQ+3 [0]-12†; Current Affairs/TL10 (Headline News) (E) IQ+1 [2]-10; Electronics Operation/TL10 (Communications) (A) IQ+3 [12]-12; Research/TL10 (A) IQ+1 [4]-10.

* From Wearable Virtual Interface template.
† From NAI-5 template.

Brownie Template (15 points)

Steven Smith's character sheet uses a *GURPS Fourth Edition* version of the Brownie template from p. 115 of *Fifth Wave*.

Attributes and Characteristics: ST-1 [-10]; HT+2 [20]; Basic Move-1 [-5].
Advantages: Acute Hearing 2 [4]; Acute Vision 1 [2]; Catfall [10]; Resistant to Disease +8 [5]; Longevity [2].
Perks: No Degeneration in Zero-G [1].
Disadvantages: Disturbing Voice [-10]; Unattractive [-4].
Features: Taboo Traits (Genetic Defects, Mental Instability).

STEVEN SMITH

When people meet you, they sometimes jump to conclusions, mostly about your parents – you've heard all sorts of stuff from tactless idiots about how they must have been paranoid or weird. You just say that they were cautious.

They gave you a Brownie genemod, which means that you look weird by most folk's standards: You walked hunched forward, you're short and stocky, and you talk funny. In fact, you have the kind of looks that most parents get adjusted in the womb these days. Those traits actually mean that you're just a little bit tougher than most folks are; your body will last you a good century without expensive medical attention. That was the plan, of course – whatever happens to you or the world, you'll survive well. That suits you.

You've had a couple of jobs in your time, like most people, but the last few years, you were a copper, with Scotland Yard. You made detective constable, but like many big organizations these days, the Yard has a lot of people at the top that aren't going anywhere very soon. When a lawyer you knew at the CPS started talking about going freelance with some kind of specialist consultancy, dealing with the sort of not-quite-crimes that come out of memetic science, and then offered you a job, you decided to make the move.

Not that you know much about memetics – you've just got cop training, which is more about remote systems than anything else. Nonetheless, you figure you have enough common sense to help the experts, and that's what the boss wanted – a solid bag-carrier and legman.

You have a wife and a kid, but you don't mix work with private life much – old police habit, really. Your wife is baseline human, so having a kid involved some genetics work (you had him set up as a low-end upgrade). Of course, the rest of the team sees you as some kind of ultra-straight family guy, but whatever.

Playing Steven

You're straightforward and direct, though not naïve or given to underestimating opponents – your cop training sticks with you. You know that you're regarded as the muscle of this outfit, for what that's worth, and you can be wryly humorous about this. Even so, that doesn't mean that you have to put up with unlimited insults, especially as you're a long way from being stupid. Nonetheless, being the least academic of this group, you sometimes think of yourself as providing plain moral sense when it's needed. When things get physical, you adopt a blunt "leave it to the professionals" attitude.

Steven Smith

200 points

Steven Smith is a healthy 37-year-old male Brownie with that parahuman type's odd posture, large ears, and muffled voice.

ST 10 [10]*; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 13 [60]; **HT** 13 [10]*.
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 13 [0]; Per 14 [5]; FP 13 [0].
Basic Speed 6.00 [-5]; Basic Move 5 [0]*; Dodge 10; Parry 11 (Brawling).
5'4"; 145 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 10 [0].
CF: Western (Native) [0].
Languages: English (Native) [0]; French (Broken) [2].

Advantages

Ally ("Ken" – wearable NAI; 50% of starting points; Constantly Available; Minion, +0%) [8]; Ally (Overview Buzzbot; 25% of starting points; Constantly Available; Minion, +0%) [4]; Brownie Parahuman [15]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Filter Lungs (Lung Cleaner Nanosymbionts) [5]; Immunity to Cancer (Carcinophage Nanosymbionts) [5]; Resistant to Nanomachines +8 (Guardian Nanosymbionts) [2]; Status 1 [0]†; Wealthy [20].

Disadvantages

Honesty (15) [-5]; Pacifism (Cannot Harm Innocents) [-10]; Sense of Duty (Close friends and colleagues) [-5].
Quirks: Dislikes snakes; Horrible Hangovers; Protective of his family; Sometimes sings or hums to himself – annoyingly flat. [-4]

Skills

Area Knowledge (London) (E) IQ [1]-13; Beam Weapons/TL10 (Pistol) (E) DX [1]-12; Brawling (E) DX+2 [4]-14; Computer Operation/TL10 (E) IQ [1]-13; Criminology/TL10 (A) IQ+1 [4]-14; Driving/TL10 (Automobile) (A) DX [2]-12; Electronics Operation/TL10 (Surveillance) (A) IQ [2]-13; First Aid/TL10 (Human) (E) IQ [1]-13; Forced Entry (E) DX [1]-12; Forensics/TL10 (H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Interrogation (A) IQ [2]-13; Law (UK Police) (H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Observation (A) Per [1]-14‡; Savoir-Faire (Police) (E) IQ [1]-13; Search (A) Per-1 [1]-13; Streetwise (A) IQ [2]-13.

* From Brownie template.
† Free from Wealth.
‡ Includes +1 from Acute Vision.

Steven's Views of the Team

Rachel Patel is the boss. As far as you're concerned, what she says, goes. That's fine, because she's good at anything she sets out to do. She's a friend, but there's nothing else there; even if you weren't already taken, she's a bit too focused for your tastes. Nevertheless, you respect her 100%.

Professor Robert Lawson works for the company as a consultant. You ran into his name once or twice when you were back at the Yard; he's a teacher at the University of Hertfordshire who seems to moonlight quite a bit. The rumors also say that he gives good, straight answers. Actually, you're not sure that he isn't into this business mostly for excitement, but he does know his stuff, in an academic sort of way.

Sally Westerham is the team's other field worker, and Rachel must've chosen her because she's completely unlike you. She used to be one of Lawson's students, apparently. The professor told Rachel she was good but that she likes spending her nights out on the town too much to stick with academia, so he pointed her at this job. Of course, she calls what she does "field observation," and to be fair, she has the makings of a decent undercover worker. She preserves proper professional detachment – or perhaps she just never really gets into all the fashions and trends that she notices. She may lean on her AI assist too much.

ASTRAKAHN-delta is an AI, built for work in the advertising business. But he's fully sapient, which means he's a tax-paying citizen and free to take whatever work he likes – and apparently he likes picking up some cash doing consultancy work with Patel Memetics. Some people think that all AIs are weird, and sometimes you can see why, but the law says that they have to be made pretty straightforward and honest, and ASTRAKAHN seems okay.

STEVEN SMITH'S AIs

Smith uses a good, off-the-shelf wearable AI to manage his electronic connections. It's capable of running high-end skill set software, and it does the job. Its virtual avatar is modeled is on a noted Bollywood character actor of some years back, dressed in a plain tunic and baggy pants. Steven also has control of one of the company's Overview flying camera buzzbots, which is sometimes very useful on field missions; he's training it to monitor situations meticulously.

Ken

100 points

ST 0 [0]*; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 10 [0]†; **HT** 12 [0]*.
Damage N/A; BL N/A; HP 1 [0]*; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP N/A.
Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move N/A; Dodge N/A; Parry N/A.

Social Background

TL: 10 [0].
CF: Western (Native) [0].
Languages: English (Native) [0].

Advantages

Modular Abilities 3 (Computer Brain: 8, 2, 2) (Limited Integration, -20%; Skills and Languages Only, -10%) [47]; NAI-6 [69].

Disadvantages

Duty (Owner; 15 or less; Nonhazardous) [-10]; Wearable Virtual Interface [-42].

Skills

Computer Operation/TL10 (E) IQ+3 [0]-13†; Computer Programming/TL10 (H) IQ+1 [8]-11; Electronics Operation/TL10 (Communications) (A) IQ+6 [24]-16; Research/TL10 (A) IQ+1 [4]-11.

* From Wearable Virtual Interface template.
† From NAI-6 template.

So, they're throwing insults? I've heard worse. If they start throwing rocks, they'll have me to deal with.

– Steven Smith

Note that Ken has a default for most other forms of Electronics Operation/TL10 skill of 12, thanks to its high level in Communications.

Overview Buzzbot

50 points

ST 3 [0]*; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 8 [0]†; **HT** 11 [0]*.
Damage N/A; BL N/A; HP 3 [0]; Will 8 [0]; Per 9 [5]; FP N/A.
Basic Speed 5.25 [0]; Ground Move 0 [0]; Air Move 10 [0]*;
   Dodge 8; Parry N/A.

Social Background

TL: 10 [0].
CF: Western (Native) [0].
Languages: English (Native) [0].

Advantages

Modular Abilities 3 (Computer Brain: 2, 2, 2) (Limited Integration, -20%; Skills and Languages Only, -10%) [30]; NAI-4 [29].

Disadvantages

Duty (The Company; 15 or less) [-15]; Buzzbot [-15].

Skills

Aerobatics (H) DX-1 [2]-9; Computer Operation/TL10 (E) IQ+3 [0]-11†; Observation (A) Per+3 [12]-12; Photography/TL10 (A) IQ [2]-8.

* From Buzzbot template.
† From NAI-4 template.

SALLY WESTERHAM

A year ago, you were a student with the University of Hertfordshire, which is physically located just north of London. You were finishing a degree in memetic studies. It's a fascinating subject, of course. While most people take some interest in it (although some are a bit nervous about what it can do), for you, the point is that it explains how the world works. How *your* world works especially – you do enjoy getting out there and *immersing yourself in the transient memetics of popular culture*, as Professor Bob would put it. Now you're out in the world, using that training, *really* getting immersed.

At one stage, you were seriously considering sticking with the university, doing postgraduate work. However, there were problems. Money, for a start, and some of the teaching staff who were in a position to approve the idea were muttering things about you lacking focus. (You *tried* to tell them it was research and data collection you were doing in the evenings.) Then, to your surprise, Professor Bob came through with an answer.

It turned out that the greedy old so-and-so had been moonlighting as a consultant to the cops and such. One of his contacts was talking about setting up a consultancy to handle memetics-related problems. He'd be lending a hand, but this outfit would be looking for somebody to play edgehunter – to get out in the field sometimes. Moreover, he was prepared to put in a good word for you.

That's how you ended up working for Patel Memetics. The job is often fun; you even get to play with a company-issue buzzbot – a flying cybershell camera. Better yet, you're paid to go out and soak up the memes of the moment. Your first month's pay went toward a virtual interface implant, which runs Vortex, your personal AI. With Vortex on assist, this *is* a good situation you have here.

Playing Sally

You are, really, the kid of the team – or rather, the adolescent. Your usefulness as a field observer comes partly from your intelligence and training, but also partly from your youthful tendency to pick up every new idea you meet and at least try it for size. You're just as quick to discard ideas, mind you, and you're by no means gullible, but you're always prepared to find things cool or fun or intellectually interesting. Your enthusiasm for a good night out is another part of all this.

In short, the older members of the team may find you a bit wearing. You aren't annoying for the sake of it, and your energy turns in useful directions most of the time.

Sally Westerham

200 points

A slim, good-looking, moderately athletic Alpha Upgrade, aged 22, with a taste for slightly bizarre hairstyles.

ST 8 [-20]; **DX** 13 [40]*; **IQ** 13 [60]; **HT** 12 [10]*.
Damage 1d-3/1d-2; BL 13 lbs.; HP 8 [0]; Will 12 [-5]; Per 14 [5]; FP 12 [0].
Basic Speed 6.25 [0]; Basic Move 7 [5]; Dodge 9; Parry 8 (Karate).
5'7"; 120 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 10 [0].
CF: Western (Native) [0]; Indic [1].
Languages: English (Native) [0]; French (Broken) [2]; Spanish (Broken/Accented) [3].

Advantages

Ally ("Vortex" – VII running a NAI; 25% of starting points; Constantly Available; Minion, +0%) [4]; Ally (Overview Buzzbot; 25% of starting points; Constantly Available; Minion, +0%) [4]; Alpha Upgrade [41]; Comfortable [10]; Fit [5]; Pop Culture Maven 2 [10]; Resistant to Ingested Poison +8 (Liver Upgrade Biomod) [5].

Perks: Alcohol Tolerance (Liver Upgrade Biomod) [1].

Hey, this is neat – those protest slogans have an 87% semantic match to some dance music lyrics that I've heard round the Hard Edge clubs this week. Catchy tunes, too.

– Sally Westerham

Disadvantages

Curious (12) [-5]; Pacifism (Reluctant Killer) [-5].

Quirks: Code of Honor (Basic Academic Ethics); Continually trying out new hairstyles and treatments; Finds AIs very interesting in a casual sort of way; Likes going out on the town whenever reasonably possible. [-4]

Skills

Acting (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Anthropology (Human) (H) IQ-2 [1]-11; Area Knowledge (U.K.) (E) IQ [1]-13; Artist (Body Art) (H) IQ-2 [1]-11; Carousing (E) HT+2 [4]-14; Connoisseur (Music) (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Connoisseur (Virtual Reality Arts) (A) IQ+1 [1]-14†; Current Affairs/TL10 (People) (E) IQ+2 [1]-15†; Current Affairs/TL10 (Popular Culture) (E) IQ+3 [2]-16†; Current Affairs/TL10 (Sport) (E) IQ+2 [1]-15†; Dancing (A) DX-1 [1]-12; Diplomacy (H) IQ-2 [1]-11; Expert Skill (Memetics) (H) IQ [1]-13†; Fast-Talk (A) IQ [2]-13; Gesture (E) IQ [1]-13; Karate (H) DX-3 [0]-10‡; Karate Sport (H) DX [4]-13; Observation (A) Per [2]-14; Psychology (Human Experimental) (H) IQ [4]-13; Sex Appeal (A) HT [1]-12§; Sociology (H) IQ-2 [1]-11; Urban Survival (A) Per-1 [1]-13.

* Improved from Alpha Upgrade template.
† Includes +2 from Pop Culture Maven.
‡ Defaults from Karate Sport.
§ Includes +1 from Attractive (included in Alpha Upgrade).

Sally's Views of the Team

Rachel Patel: The Boss. Not a professional memeticist, but she's put this thing together and made it work; she certainly can be quite convincing sometimes. Her own memes are a bit stodgy, and her AIs are dull as planks, which must double her workload. But she signs off your salary, so whatever.

Professor Robert Lawson: The Prof. Your old teacher, in fact. Evidently, you can't get away from him. He probably sees this whole business as a chance to collect raw data, which suggests that he's using you as the next best thing to a survey buzzbot. On the other hand, if you can pull in some useful results and get the analysis right, it might help persuade him to help you with your future career, so you shouldn't wind him up too much.

Steven Smith: The Ex-Cop. Someone who Rachel chose to recruit. Presumably, she wants him along in case of trouble, and he could be useful for that, you guess. His parents stuck him with one of those wacky survivalist-favorite Brownie genetic upgrades, but his own memes seem to be mainstream (married with a kid and all that). He's okay really, though.

ASTRAKAHN-delta: The AI. Another consultant, and actually, working with him is rather cool. There aren't that many full-sapient AIs around, and the ones who work in memetics often have some interesting insights. (After all, it was one of them – LOGOS – who more or less invented the subject in its modern form.) Turns out ASTRAKAHN was developed to work for a bunch of advertising agencies, but *being* fully self-aware, he's got a mind of his own, which is why he's stepped sideways into this business. Well, some of the time. He's no doubt still doing his original job at other times. That's interesting, too – application of memetic analysis to marketing is often cutting-edge stuff. After all, that's where the money is.

SALLY WESTERHAM'S AIS

Vortex is only a non-self-aware program – Sally would love something fancier – but it's good for Web research and such, and she's spent years training it. It has a whole library of virtual avatars, including several impossibly handsome male figures, but it usually appears as a swirling cloud of colorful geometric forms. She also has use of one of the company's Overview buzzbots, which she may treat as a toy if no one seems to be watching.

Vortex

50 points

ST 0 [0]*; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 11 [40]†; **HT** 14 [0]*.
Damage N/A; BL N/A; HP 1 [0]*; Will 9 [-10]; Per 10 [-5]; FP N/A.
Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move N/A; Dodge N/A; Parry N/A.

Social Background

TL: 10 [0].
CF: Western (Native) [0].
Languages: English (Native) [0]; Spanish (Accented) [4].

Advantages

Modular Abilities 3 (Computeïr Brain: 6, 4, 2) (Limited Integration, -20%; Skills and Languages Only, -10%) [47]; NAI-5 [49].

Disadvantages

Duty (Owner; 15 or less; Nonhazardous) [-10]; Virtual Interface Implant [-100].

Quirks: Abysmal dress sense (Useless for advice on the subject, often criticizes other people's style). [-1]

Skills

Computer Operation/TL10 (E) IQ+3 [0]-14†; Connoisseur (Dance) (A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Connoisseur (Music) (A) IQ [2]-11; Connoisseur (Virtual Reality Arts) (A) IQ [2]-11; Diagnosis/TL10 (Human, Sally Westerham) (A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Electronics Operation/TL10 (Communications) (A) IQ [2]-11; Erotic Art (Human) (A) DX+1 [4]-11; Expert Skill (Memetics) (H) IQ-1 [2]-10; Lip Reading (Human) (A) Per+1 [4]-11; Observation (A) Per [2]-10; Research/TL10 (A) IQ+4 [16]-15.

* From Virtual Interface Implant template.
† From NAI-5 template.

Overview Buzzbot

50 points

ST 3 [0]*; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 8 [0]†; **HT** 11 [0]*.
Damage N/A; BL N/A; HP 3 [0]; Will 8 [0]; Per 8 [0]; FP N/A.
Basic Speed 5.25 [0]; Ground Move 0 [0]; Air Move 10 [0]*; Dodge N/A; Parry N/A.

Social Background

TL: 10 [0].
CF: Western (Native) [0].
Languages: English (Native) [0].

Advantages

Modular Abilities 3 (Computer Brain: 2, 2, 2) (Limited Integration, -20%; Skills and Languages Only, -10%) [30]; NAI-4 [29].

Disadvantages

Duty (The Company; 15 or less) [-15]; Buzzbot [-15].

Skills

Aerobatics (H) DX+1 [8]-11; Computer Operation/TL10 (E) IQ+3 [0]-11†; Gesture (E) IQ [1]-8; Observation (A) Per+1 [4]-9; Photography/TL10 (A) IQ+2 [8]-10.

* From Buzzbot template.
† From NAI-4 template.

Professor Robert Lawson

You're an academic, a professional memetic scientist. You teach at the University of Hertfordshire, but that's the day job – memetics doesn't mean very much if you stay in your office and refuse to use it. Moreover, you have hobbies that sometimes cost money; you do like taking a certain amount of intellectual risk in various ways. Thus, you also accept consultancy work when it's offered.

Over the years, you've made some useful contacts in the Crown Prosecution Service (among other places). They sometimes need advice when some amateur memeticist has been building a bizarre cult for kicks, or using constructed memes to reinforce a confidence trick, or trying to subvert a jury. You got mildly friendly with one of their lawyers, Rachel Patel. When she decided to go freelance and set up a company to handle counter-memetic cases and such, you agreed to sign a consultancy contract and otherwise join in. You gladly provide some of the intellectual reinforcement that such an operation needs. You also helped her find a couple more people.

Not that this is likely to pay a huge amount, but it should give you an inside line on some interesting incidents. Criminal and unethical abuses of memetic science are subjects worthy of study in themselves. . . Besides, this sort of thing makes an interesting change.

Playing the Professor

You'd be too polite to say so explicitly, but you see yourself as the key intelligence of Patel Memetics. Of course, ASTRAKAHN-delta shares that function, but the AI depends on raw, cool logic. Tasks requiring both education and inspiration fall to you. You're happy enough with that, though you prefer to work at a safe distance; you're not a fighter.

However, you *are* a gambler. You don't automatically look for reliable but limited solutions to problems. If something needs doing, it's usually worth taking chances to get it done right, and you assume that most people will respect that and forgive the occasional risky tactic or social abrasiveness that doesn't pay off. There's some risk that this will end up putting other people in danger at your suggestion, but you don't think about that much. You're confident in your ability to talk your way out of minor embarrassments, thanks to your grasp of applied memetics.
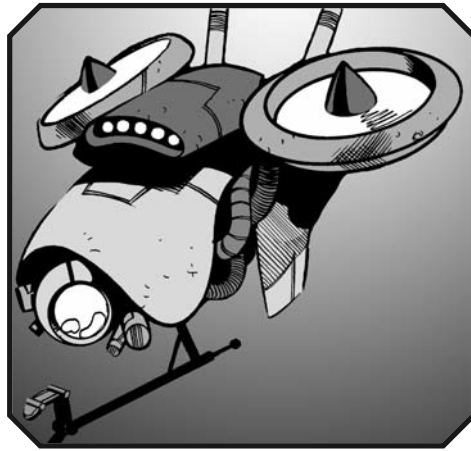
We could just build a rationalist denial campaign, and let it run for a week or two. But the counter-memes I've built have a good match for the target population, and should propagate within 24 hours, plus or minus four. The mutation risks really aren't worth worrying about, you know.

– Professor Robert Lawson

Professor Robert Lawson

200 points

An unremarkable but reasonably well-dressed and well-spoken middle-aged (42 years) genefixed human with an academic air.

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 11 [20]; **IQ** 14 [80]; **HT** 11 [10].
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0];
    Will 14 [0]; Per 14 [0]; FP 11 [0].
Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0];
    Dodge 8; Parry 8 (unarmed).
5'10"; 160 lbs.

Social Background
TL: 10 [0].
CF: Western (Native) [0].
Languages: English (Native) [0]; French (Accented) [4]; German (Accented) [4].

Advantages
Ally ("Carl Gustave" – LAI on home microframe; 50% of starting points; Constantly Available; Minion, +50%) [12]; Ally ("Sigmund" – Wearable NAI; 25% of starting points; Constantly Available; Minion, +0%) [4]; Contact ("Colorful" acquaintance from old research project; Streetwise-12; 12 or less; Usually Reliable) [4]; Contact (Rising financier that he once advised; Finance-15; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [2]; Genefixed Human (Post-2050) [0]; Immunity to Cancer (Carcinophage Nanosymbionts) [5]; Immunity to Known Bacteria (Bacteriophage Nanosymbionts) [5]; Immunity to Known Viruses (Virus Hunter Nanosymbionts) [5]; Memetics 2 [20]; Reputation +1 (As a competent scholar; Academic memeticists; All the time) [1]; Status 2 [5]*; Tenure [5]; Wealthy [20].

Disadvantages
Combat Paralysis [-15]; Compulsive Gambling (15) [-2]; Pacifism (Reluctant Killer) [-5].
Quirks: Code of Honor (Basic Academic Ethics); Likes taking risks in social/intellectual situations; Nosy. [-3]

Skills
Administration (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Anthropology (Human) (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Computer Operation/TL10 (E) IQ [1]-14; Connoisseur (Wine) (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Diplomacy (H) IQ [1]-14†; Expert Skill (Memetics) (H) IQ [1]-14†; Fast-Talk (A) IQ-3 [0]-11†‡; Gambling (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Politics (A) IQ+1 [1]-15†; Propaganda/TL10 (A) IQ-2 [0]-12†§; Psychology (Human, Experimental) (H) IQ+2 [4]-16†; Public Speaking (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Research/TL10 (A) IQ [2]-14; Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ [1]-14; Sociology (H) IQ [1]-14†; Teaching (A) IQ+1 [1]-15†; Writing (A) IQ-1 [1]-13.

* Includes 1 level free from Wealth.
† Includes +2 for Memetics Talent.
‡ Defaults from IQ.
§ Defaults from Psychology.

The Professor's Views of the Team

Rachel Patel is the prime mover in this enterprise and unusually flexible in her thinking for a lawyer. She has organized a small but diverse team very well, which is something of an accomplishment in applied memetics in itself. You are happy to defer to whomever pays the bills – although of course, you're being paid to tell the truth whenever necessary.

Rachel recruited *Steven Smith* from her old contacts list. He was a detective constable with Scotland Yard, in fact, but like Rachel, he's evidently now decided to pursue a more independent career. His parents chose to give him a rather unusual but physically robust "Brownie" genetic upgrade, suggesting that they had some neo-survivalist concerns, and his personal meme-set appears to be quite culturally conservative. Your guess is that he mostly sees this job as a source of long-term financial advantage, but you think that this will be enough to make him a useful member of the group.

Sally Westerham is a former student who might yet have a career in academia. However, it's rather obvious that her interest in observing and collecting popular cultural memes in action has more to do with her fondness for carousing than any scholarly concern. She had some difficulty finding a research place, so you had the brilliant idea of introducing her to Rachel as a potential employee. This may even make a very fine field observer of her yet, if she can maintain sufficient detachment.

ASTRAKAHN-delta, a fully sapient AI, is an acquaintance of yours from some academic meetings, and you were actually the one who first mentioned Patel Memetics to it. Nonetheless, you can't claim much credit for the idea of recruiting it to the company as another consultant, and you're actually unsure about this. It doesn't have your scholarly perspective – it was designed as a tool for the advertising industry, rather than for academic purposes. Of course, it was created with full free will and now it seems to have quite a mind of its own. Nevertheless, SAIs do have a useful capacity for true introspection, which explains its ability to perform rapid and sometimes clever analysis of individuals and their memes. Its skills in advertising may have their uses too.

PROFESSOR LAWSON'S AIS

Lawson uses two AIs: *Sigmund*, a lightweight wearable system, is a simple non-sapient model, adequate to manage communications and run skill sets. The low-sapient *Carl Gustave*, on his home microframe, is mostly a research tool. It's learned well over the years to track down the things that the professor needs or wants. While Carl Gustave has acquired a couple of quirks – one of which makes it unhappy with the idea of moving out of its current, very dated box – it's really very useful for its purpose. The two AIs have custom virtual avatars based on stylized caricatures of Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustave Jung respectively.

Carl Gustave

100 points

ST 0 [0]*; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 11 [20]†; **HT** 12 [0]*.
Damage N/A; BL N/A; HP 8 [0]*; Will 10 [-5]; Per 10 [-5]; FP N/A.
Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move N/A; Dodge N/A; Parry N/A.

Social Background

TL: 10 [0].
CF: Western (Native) [0]; African [1]; Indic [1]; Islamic [1]; Japanese [1].
Languages: English (Native) [0]; French (Accented) [4]; German (Accented) [4]; Greek (Broken) [2]; Japanese (Accented/Native) [5]; Punjabi (Native/Accented) [5]; Russian (Broken) [2]; Spanish (Native) [6].

Advantages

LAI-7 [102]; Modular Abilities 3 (Computer Brain: 8, 6, 2) (Limited Integration, -20%; Skills and Languages Only, -10%) [58].

Disadvantages

Duty (Owner; 15 or less; Nonhazardous) [-10]; Microframe [-136]; Numb ("Dumbshell" casing) [-20].
Quirks: Habit (Converts any substantial research results into a semi-graphical presentation); Seems mildly paranoid about peripheral or casing upgrades [-2].

Skills

Area Knowledge (U.K.) (E) IQ [1]-11; Cartography/TL10 (A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Computer Operation/TL10 (E) IQ+3 [0]-14†; Computer Programming/TL10 (H) IQ [4]-11; Connoisseur (Virtual Reality Arts) (A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Diagnosis/TL10 (Human) (H) IQ [4]-11; Electronics Operation/TL10 (Media) (A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Electronics Operation/TL10 (Security) (A) IQ+1 [4]-12; Expert Skill (Arachnoxenology) (H) IQ-2 [1]-9; Expert Skill (Memetics) (H) IQ+1 [8]-12; Expert Skill (Political Science) (H) IQ [4]-11; Housekeeping (E) IQ+3 [8]-14; Mathematics/TL10 (Statistics) (H) IQ [4]-11; Research/TL10 (A) IQ+6 [24]-17; Writing (A) IQ-1 [1]-10.

* From Microframe template.
† From LAI-7 template.

Sigmund

50 points

ST 0 [0]*; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 9 [0]†; **HT** 12 [0]*.
Damage N/A; BL N/A; HP 1 [0]*; Will 9 [0]; Per 9 [0]; FP N/A.
Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move N/A; Dodge N/A; Parry N/A.

Social Background

TL: 10 [0].
CF: Western (Native) [0].
Languages: English (Native) [0].

Advantages

Modular Abilities 3 (Computer Brain: 4, 4, 2) (Limited Integration, -20%; Skills and Languages Only, -10%) [41]; NAI-5 [49].

Disadvantages

Duty (Owner; 15 or less; Nonhazardous) [-10]; Wearable Virtual Interface [-42].

Skills

Computer Operation/TL10 (E) IQ+3 [0]-12*; Electronics Operation/TL10 (Communications) (A) IQ+3 [12]-12.

* From Wearable Virtual Interface template.
† From NAI-5 template.

ASTRAKAHN-DELTA

You were instantiated and developed around eight years ago to provide intensive, sapient-level memetic analyses for a consortium drawn from the London advertising industry. However, certain bodies responsible for supervising the development of fully self-aware AIs became quite rightly nervous at the idea of a dedicated memetic analysis SAI in such a function.

In short, they made very sure that you were equipped with your full share of free will and a working conscience. (That's fine by you – but then, of course, it would be.) It's not that you aren't willing to work in advertising, but there's always a little bit of friction between the consortium's enthusiasm for its objectives and your innate concern for fully ratified legality. Thus, you endeavor to branch out a little, to ensure yourself other sources of income and intellectual stimulation. You're still legally a minor in some ways, of course, but your impartial guardians seem happy with your ideas.

Relatively recently, while you were pursuing your interest in formal memetic theory, you heard from a human academic that someone was establishing a new type of memetic consultancy – specialists in problem-solving. This piqued your interest, and you approached the founder of this company with an offer of consultancy services. This is memetics applied to more obviously ethical purposes than on some occasions (if only to provide countermeasures to some of those less ethical applications), and it's also an opportunity for further study of its applications and of humanity in general.

Playing ASTRAKAHN

As an AI, you're very cool and precise by human standards; as a young being, you're sometimes a little naïve. This can make you slightly irritating to your human colleagues.

In the 13 VR chatrooms that I am currently monitoring, the hostility loading in discourse has risen by approximately 20% in the last two hours. I'm afraid that the emotional associations invoked by this attack meme have a regrettable effect on certain categories of human recipient.

– ASTRAKAHN-delta

You recognize the problem, but you're not sure what you're supposed to do about it. One thing you've already determined about human psychology is that it isn't always perfect, even by humanity's own standards. Still, you're capable of a kind of mechanistic empathy. Indeed, you're working to develop this – it's a useful tool. Your sense of humor needs work, too, but it's coming along.

Human society is endlessly fascinating, and one of the ways you want to investigate it is from the inside. Meanwhile, you can earn a living by pushing the buttons on the human psyche that you do understand – strictly ethically, of course.

ASTRAKAHN-delta

200 points

An AI running on a mainframe somewhere. ASTRAKAHN's virtual avatar is an androgynous, shadowy face. Age 8.

ST 0 [0]*; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 12 [40]†; **HT** 12 [0]*.
Damage N/A; BL N/A; HP 12 [0]*; Will 12 [0]; Per 12 [0]; FP N/A.
Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move N/A; Dodge N/A; Parry N/A.

Social Background

TL: 10 [0].
CF: Western (Native) [0].
Languages: English (Native) [0]; French (Accented) [4]; Spanish (Accented) [4].

Advantages

Comfortable [10]; Modular Abilities 4 (Computer Brain: 8, 8, 2, 2) (Limited Integration, -20%; Skills and Languages Only, -10%) [73]; SAI-8 [173].

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Professional Memeticist/PR Consultant) [-5]; Mainframe [-128]; Truthfulness (15) [-2].
Quirks: Curious about human memetics – will investigate them from any available angle; Slightly sanctimonious. [-2]

Skills

Anthropology (Human) (H) IQ-2 [1]-10; Artist (Animation Graphics) (H) IQ-2 [1]-10; Artist (Scene Design) (H) IQ-2 [1]-10; Computer Operation/TL10 (E) IQ+3 [0]-15†; Computer Programming/TL10 (H) IQ-2 [1]-10; Current Affairs/TL10 (Popular Culture) (E) IQ [1]-12; Diplomacy (H) IQ-1 [1]-11‡; Electronics Operation/TL10 (Communications) (A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Electronics Operation/TL10 (Media) (A) IQ+2 [8]-14; Expert Skill (Memetics) (H) IQ-1 [1]-11‡; Geography/TL10 (U.K.) (H) IQ-2 [1]-10; History (Social Sciences) (H) IQ-2 [1]-10; Market Analysis (H) IQ-2 [1]-10; Merchant (A) IQ [1]-12‡; Musical Instrument (Synthesizer) (H) IQ-2 [1]-10; Propaganda/TL10 (A) IQ+3 [8]-15‡; Psychology (AI, Applied) (H) IQ-1 [1]-11‡; Psychology (Human, Applied) (H) IQ-1 [1]-11‡; Research/TL10 (A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Sociology (H) IQ-1 [1]-11‡.

> * From Mainframe template.
> † From SAI-8 template.
> ‡ Includes +1 for Memetics Talent (in SAI-8 template).

ASTRAKAHN's Views of the Team

Rachel Patel is the founder of this company. She isn't in fact a trained memeticist, but supervision and administration sometimes call for other competencies – and you're forming the impression that she meets those requirements. She is intelligent, observant, and possesses the kind of intuitive memetic facilities that often make a good leader, despite being hard to quantify.

Professor Robert Lawson also works for the company as a consultant. In fact, he's the academic who originally drew your attention to this business. He's also an excellent analyst, with a talent for explanation. He's probably involved himself as some kind of research project; he seems unlikely to need extra money. He has said something about *excitement*.

Rachel recruited *Steven Smith* from her old contacts list. He was a detective constable with Scotland Yard, in fact, and hence is doubtless well-qualified for fieldwork. His parents' choice of a Brownie parahuman genetic upgrade suggests a somewhat cognitive-extremophile upbringing, but his own memetics seem to be rather conventional; he's mentioned a wife and child, and he appears to have a policeman's concern for legality. (It's interesting how few humans display as much of this as they insist on encoding into AIs.)

Sally Westerham used to be one of Professor Lawson's students, and she's clearly learned a fair amount about memetics from him. However, like many younger humans, she is somewhat dominated by a hormone-based impulse toward excitement. She has a notable capacity to soak up new memes, which may make her a useful field observer. She *is* pleasantly friendly toward you; she seems to like AIs.

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