

OOO Ref Note - Whilst generating a character, one Resource Point may be spent to acquire a Bounty Hunting License.

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## 1: Why bounty hunters?

*“Because there are places the police can’t or won’t go. Because there are things they can’t or won’t do. Because it’s there. Because I can. Because it’s fun. Because it’s that time of the month. But mostly because it gets me laid.”*

Applejack, Licensed Bounty Hunter

In 2036, the existing law enforcement agencies cannot cope. Overstretched and underfunded police forces do not have the resources to maintain public order, investigate crimes *and* apprehend every individual who is known to have committed an offence - all their manpower is tied up in maintaining some semblance of control; the law is enforced unevenly, if at all.

After killing in self defence was effectively legalised in the aftermath of the Federal Criminal Justice Act (FCJA) of 2028, a whole host of other law enforcement reforms were considered by the Global Senate. One proposal which found a great deal of support but that wasn’t passed as Primary Legislation was the Incentive Linked Private Enforcement Bill. This allowed existing law enforcement agencies to place prices (through an official system of what became known as bounty offices) on the heads of known but not yet apprehended offenders, encouraging private individuals to track them down instead. This made a great deal of economic sense as no police time or money is wasted if the subject is not successfully captured or terminated.

Such controversial legislation did not make it through the Global Senate. However, several major corporations which backed the bill had enough clout to ensure that it was introduced on a domestic level by many countries, notably including those of the European Economic Tripartite Nation. While the scheme attracted a great deal of criticism from many sources, the way that it enabled the redistribution of law enforcement budgets generated a level of support that remains in place to this day.

## 2: Why bounty hunting licenses?

*"BHLs exist because the wrong people keep trying to get into the trade. Far too many fucktards with big guns, too much fucking testosterone and a bad case of penis envy kept getting the wrong people - hostages, innocent bystanders, the police, themselves - shot full of holes."*

Commissioner DeGiorgio, NRC Bounty Office

Bounty hunting licenses, designed to keep a tight restriction on the numbers of private individuals attempting to claim bounties, are a comparatively recent innovation introduced after the events of Berlin in 2033.

While always having been a major corporate centre, Berlin is also known for being consistently plagued at street level by various criminal gangs. Such groups are an accepted hazard in any large population center (witness Nightbreed in NRC and the Black Mavericks in Amsterdam), but by 2032 the situation was almost out of control. The various neo-Nazi organisations which had been little more than a nuisance for so long finally put aside their differences and united under the banner of the Iron Fists gang. This was of no major concern to the corporations with their private security forces until it emerged the offences deliberately targeted against corporate personnel had risen by a disproportionately huge 73%. Refusing to give the Iron Fists the level of acknowledgement that would have been generated by openly moving against them, the corporations allegedly donated large sums of money to the Berlin Bounty Office and higher prices began to be posted for the heads of known members. When the 'Fists retaliated by raiding several major corporate installations in the Outer Berlin territories, this was increased - allegedly by the weapons manufacturer Thornberg - to a minimum 250 credits bounty posted on "any and all members of the Iron Fists, dead or alive".

Overnight, every gun-owner in Northern Europe who fancied their chances converged on the city. The neo-Nazis were well-prepared, heavily armed and on their own turf. The over enthusiastic amateurs got slaughtered by the truckload. The situation on the streets began to slide into total anarchy, with the police, the Iron Fists, the other gangs and the "bounty hunters" fighting one another almost indiscriminately. Luckily, events came to a resolution before things boiled over into open war. Once the Iron Fists were no longer a threat, the corporations simply used the Berlin Bounty Office to put a price on the head of everyone who'd claimed bounties on more than five Iron Fists. The intention was for the hunters to take the hint, leave the city and stop causing trouble, but it didn't quite work that way. Instead the hunters began to eradicate each other and it was some time before order was eventually restored.

The corporations and the German government were deeply unimpressed; the whole affair had made their introduction of the Incentive Linked Private Enforcement Bill look extremely foolish.

There were calls from some quarters to scrap the whole idea, but the corporations refused to give up. Instead they rushed through an amendment to the original Bill, calling for the introduction of a screening and licensing scheme - also administered by the local bounty offices - to prevent any "unsuitable individuals" from trying to collect bounties and posing a threat to themselves or anyone else in the process. After a little fine tuning, the Bounty Hunting License as we now know it was introduced in February 2034.

## 3: Getting a license

*"From the quality of hunters in NRC, I'd say they're giving them away in cornflake packets."*

Ratfink, NRC information broker

Licensing was introduced with several aims in mind. These include minimising the fatality rate amongst non-targets by preventing unsuitable individuals from attempting to pursue the profession, and maintaining public order and social stability by reducing the number of so-called bounty hunters to a manageable quantity of regulated individuals.

Contrary to popular belief, not just anybody off the street can get themselves a BHL. Being a hunter is a very highly skilled profession, and procuring a license to legally call yourself one is an expensive, long and somewhat arduous procedure:

1. The candidate must make an application to the local Bounty Office. This costs 1500 credits and is non-refundable if the application is unsuccessful.
2. If the application is accepted, the candidate is subjected to a battery of psychiatric tests to assess their suitability for the role.
3. If they pass the psychiatric examination, the candidate is issued with a Probationary Bounty Hunter's License. Whilst on probation, they have to take up a contract on a target of a set Danger Level or above and bring it to a successful conclusion. While on probation, the would-be bounty hunter is authorised to employ lethal force. However, if they subsequently fail any stage of the application process, they are liable for criminal proceedings for any unlawful use of force they undertook whilst on probation.
4. If the candidate successfully completes their probationary kill/capture, they are then subjected to another round of psychiatric tests, to ascertain whether or not it has had any detrimental effect to their mental state.
5. If the candidate passes this final battery of tests, they are issued with a full Bounty Hunting License and are legally entitled to all that it entails.

#### 4: Licensed bounty hunters

*"There's a certain mindset that only hunters seem to have. Give the wrong sort of 'tard a bit of paper saying they can use lethal force and a lot of people who just happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time end up in the fucking morgue. Gives the few real pros a bad name."*

Commissioner DeGiorgio, NRC Bounty Office

The holder of a valid BHL is:

1. Sanctioned to Terminate with Extreme Prejudice  
It is fully acceptable to employ lethal force in the pursuit and apprehension of an individual whom has been designated "Wanted: Dead or Alive" or who is subject to a Compulsory Termination Order.
2. Licensed to Carry a Lethal Weapon  
Every responsible adult is entitled to own a weapon for personal defence; in practice, this usually means firearms up to and including a Medium Handgun in size. A standard Firearms License entitles an individual to possess any firearm carrying a Universal (U) legality rating. The holder of a BHL, however, is legally authorised to possess and discharge in public firearms up to and including Law Enforcement-only (LE) rated weaponry.
3. Identification Exempt  
The BHL is a fully legal form of identification. In practice, this means that a Licensed Bounty Hunter is not legally obliged to disclose their SIN when asked for ID. The production of a valid BHL is an acceptable substitute for a showing a SIN card in any given situation, no matter who asks for it. Nobody - not Home Guard, Talon Security Incorporated or any NRC: PD unit (including the Carabinieri) - has any legal right to compel a Licensed Bounty Hunter to show their SIN if they can show a BHL instead.
4. Search Exempt  
It is an offence to search or attempt to search a Licensed Bounty Hunter's person without their explicit verbal consent. Any law enforcement agency wishing to do so must secure a search warrant in advance. However, it is worth noting that most police forces have at least one elite division (such as the Carabinieri in NRC or the *Omon* in Moscow) that have a Standing Warrant to search whomsoever they like - including Licensed Bounty Hunters - as part of their mandate.
5. Holder of an Integrated Bank Account (IBA)  
Every Licensed Bounty Hunter has access to an anonymous, numbered account held on their behalf by the local bounty office. This works in exactly the same way as the integral bank account attached to a SIN card,

but in this case the account is held with the local bounty office, rather than an independent bank or financial organisation. Any bounty collected by the individual Licensed Bounty Hunter is paid into this account as soon as a given kill/capture is confirmed.

#### 5: Unlicensed bounty hunters

*"There has to be easier ways of getting you licensed for hideously sized firearms..."*  
Ratfink, NRC information broker

Before the debacle in Berlin in 2033, any SINned individual was entitled to claim bounties. While that is still indeed the case, individuals who do not carry a BHL are no longer entitled to use lethal force. (Except in self defence of course, in concordance with the FCJA) If they do they are liable to criminal proceedings.

However, ever since the original bounty hunting legislation was introduced, there has grown up a substantial "unlicensed hunting scene", where individuals who do not hold a BHL collect bounties not posted through the official channels of the Bounty Office system. This is bounty hunting in no more than name; the perpetrators of it are simply murderers and kidnapers for hire, and anybody who offers money for the death or abduction of an individual can be charged with incitement. Despite this, reports indicate that this "unlicensed hunting" is on the increase, especially in some of the more lawless population centers.

It is somewhat disturbing to note that there is a substantial body of evidence indicating that properly licensed hunters occasionally moonlight, accepting illegal bounties and contract killings. This is, of course, illegal, and can result in anything from having their license revoked to becoming subject to criminal proceedings.

#### 6: Posting bounties

*"The bounty system works. A runner can avoid the helmets, the patrols and the gunships. They can dodge cameras, not use the phones and keep out of the matrix. They can even ditch the SIN card. But they can't do jack shit about having their face plastered up on every lamp post and blank bit of wall. There are seventy million people in this city. At least one of them will have seen something, and enough of them will fancy their chances of taking you down to make things very sticky indeed."*  
Commissioner DeGiorgio, NRC Bounty Office

Originally, anybody could try to post a bounty - all they had to do was submit an application to the local bounty office along with a small (non-refundable) administration fee. It is a common misapprehension that this is still the case when it most definitely is not. In the wake of the Berlin incident, the legislation was changed and now only recognised governmental law enforcement agencies can do so. When one decides that an individual needs to be apprehended or terminated but does not want to expend its own resources and manpower in the process of doing so, they put in a request to the local bounty office. The reward amount, capture status and danger level are also submitted at this stage, subject to later modification. If the application is approved - and they are rarely refused - a direct line of credit is established between the law enforcement agency and the bounty office, so that the reward amount can be paid directly into a hunter's account as soon as the claim is verified. The bounty is then "posted". This synopsis of the target, situation and desired resolution is disseminated amongst the hunters; it will appear on relevant matrix node message boards and old fashioned wanted posters, as well as being broadcast on HunterNet. It will look something like this:

Subject name: Frost  
Reward: 8,000  
Capture Status: Dead or Alive  
Real Name: Unknown  
Age: 23  
Gender: Male  
Criminal Record: The murder of police officer Richard Gill  
Danger Level: Rating 5+. (Subject is ex-NRC bounty hunter and should be considered armed and extremely dangerous)

Known Whereabouts: Subject was last recorded in the docklands and RIM territories  
Known Affiliations: NRC Bounty Office. Subject has no other known contacts in NRC  
\*\*\*Situation Update::: ID: [Applejack] accepted offer\*\*\*  
\*\*\*Situation Update::: **Bounty Rescinded**\*\*\*

This summary, known as a bounty post, is subject to real-time updates as events warrant. The bounty office is not responsible for the accuracy of the information which is supplied to it by the recognized governmental law enforcement agencies. In the case of the post above, for example, the subject evaded both death and capture long enough to establish his own innocence, leading to the bounty being rescinded and the price on his head annulled.

## 7: Accepting bounties and "tags"

*Tag 1. A contract killing.*

*2. A declaration by a bounty hunter to pursue a specific target. It infers that any other bounty hunters should leave the target alone. However, only very prestigious hunters can make a true "tag". E.g. "Firefly is my tag – back off,"*

*From the Oxford Dictionary of New Rome City Street Slang*

A distinction has to be made here between bounties, which are legal, and contract killings, which are most certainly not. A contract killing is an agreement entered into whereby one individual is exclusively hired by second individual to murder a third individual. Bounties, on the other hand, are much more open ended. There is no limit on who can claim a bounty - any SINned individual can do so, although only Licensed Bounty Hunters are legally entitled to use excessive or lethal force. This has given rise to an environment in which bounty hunters attempting to bring down a subject can often find themselves in competition with others. There is no formal regulation governing these situations, other than professional courtesy.

However, there has arisen in the bounty hunting community the convention of "tags". If a given hunter desperately wants a given subject to themselves with no intervention from others, they can make it known, either through the grapevine, the local bounty office or more commonly both, that they are "tagging" the given target. This is an indication that they intend to pursue the subject alone and will brook no interference. However, only very well-respected (or feared) individuals can make true tags, as tag is not binding in any way. Other hunters are free to violate declared tags, although if they do so it will be reflected in their reputation.

*"If a low level hunter - say Lettoli or the Chameleon - makes a tag, you're probably okay to ignore it. Chances are they've bitten off more than they can chew and you're doing them a favour. With the midfield ones like Harcourt or the late Saracen, it's fifty-fifty; they may or may not punch you out next time they see you. But the very top hunters are another matter. Breaking an Applejack tag will land you in a whole world of hurt..."*

*Commissioner DeGiorgio, NRC Bounty Office*

## 8: The bounty hunting culture

*"No hunter is completely sane. I've known dead-eyed psychopaths who never had a live Casey and I've known hippies who only packed non-lethals and couldn't even fire the real steel. Some are grandstanding attention junkies who can't work without an audience, while others are such goddamn loners that they can't string a sentence together when confronted with a normal person. There's something fundamentally wrong with all of 'em - that's common knowledge. But what a lot of people don't grasp is that whatever it is that's up with them is what makes them hunters."*

*Commissioner DeGiorgio, NRC Bounty Office*

Although bounty hunting in its modern form has only existed as a profession since 2028, the heady mixture of extreme violence and media interest in big-name hunters has already caused a significant body of study to grow up around it. The findings of these studies are diffuse and still subject to much debate, argument and other academic hair-pulling, but the gist of them can be summarised here.

There is no official rank structure amongst bounty hunters, but it is patently clear that a distinct meritocratic hierarchy has developed. A new hunter starts out at the bottom and can only ascend by claiming bounties; the number and difficulty of which - coupled with the degree of professionalism that operations are performed with - dictates their rise or fall in standing. Newly licensed, as-yet-unproven hunters are often jealous of established figures' reputations, and the old hands look down on the newcomers as wet-behind-the-ears nobodies. There is a level of healthy competition between individual hunters and these rivalries have been known to escalate into full-scale vendettas. There is, however, a twisted sense of community amongst them; as a rule, all hunters know each other by name and reputation, if not by sight. That being said, if ever a hunter "falls" and ends up with a price on their own head, the rest of them will fall over themselves in an attempt to be the first to nail him. The speed with which a fellow hunter can become prey is astonishing.

*"There's nothing worse than one of our own gone rogue."*

Applejack, Licensed Bounty Hunter

All this talk of a "community of hunters" is somewhat misleading. Although it is not unknown for hunters to work in pairs or even in teams, most are solitary individuals. Almost all prefer to work alone, by their own methods; there is no central controlling organisation. Even the local bounty office has minimal influence on the individual hunters, save perhaps for an iron grip on their IBAs. While some find this disquieting, it has been put forward by more than one respected source that this degree of autonomy is why the system works so well.

#### 9: Having a reputation

*"So do you fancy yourself as a 'hunter, Blank? You'll need a damn sight more than being able to hit someone or shoot them. You need the contacts to find people, the skills to gain information you should not have, ability to track your target, to get inside their head and know what they are going to do next, the resources to pay off informants..."*

Ratfink, NRC information broker

Like it or not, word about a newly-licensed bounty hunter soon spreads amongst the established figures on the scene. Licensed bounty hunters are a comparatively rare breed, and as a rule it is impossible to claim (or even attempt to claim) a bounty without attracting attention.

A newcomer's standing amongst existing hunters is dictated by the extent of their professionalism and their success - or lack of it. Some hunters take up one low risk contract after another, earning their living by collecting a large number of small bounties. Others concentrate their energies on claiming a few, highly dangerous but well paying bounties. Either way, these tendencies will soon become common knowledge and affect their reputations accordingly. A bad bounty hunter - perhaps one who bodes every attempted kill/capture, or who repeatedly poaches subjects out from under the nose of other hunters - will become well known just as fast as a good one.

#### 10: Bounty hunters and the law

*"Hunter named Luthor lost the plot once and accepted an illegal contract. Somewhere along the line he managed, fuck knows how, to cap a couple of Carabinieri. You know what the helmets are like when someone whacks some of their own - Luthor had ticked the box marked "bloody vendetta". But they couldn't find him so they had us put a price on his head. Within thirty seconds of the post being released, another hunter had put a bullet through Luthor's thick skull. Now that's inter-service respect."*

Commissioner DeGiorgio, NRC Bounty Office

The relationship between the bounty hunting and law enforcement communities is a complex one to say the least.

## 10.1: The Hunters and the Helmets

*"Once, a couple of years back, I saw Applejack - yeah, the Man himself - get caught up in a gang-bang out on the RIM. He'd dropped so many of the fuckers that he'd zeroed out his SPAS and was pinned down behind a couple of burned out cars. It looked like he was on the phone; I remember thinking to myself that he was probably ringing his publicist to arrange a big, fancy funeral. Then this big, black armoured bug with flashing lights on it thundered right overhead and greased everything within two hundred yards. First time I'd ever seen what a helicopter-mounted Kalashnikov 30mm rotary cannon does to ground troops and possibly the only time I've ever seen a Carabinieri gunship outside the political centre."*

West Harcourt, Licensed Bounty Hunter

Licensed bounty hunters are - technically, at least - entitled to call for support from the local law enforcement agencies, though most hunters are loath to do so unless they are in a very sticky situation indeed. It cuts into their profits to call in the cavalry, and any hunter who tries it to often will soon gain a reputation for being unable to hack the job.

It is rarely mentioned - although widely recognised among smart hunters - that the law enforcement agencies are only bound to respond "at their own discretion". Unless it is a very well known and highly respected hunter, the police and other organisations will usually just ignore such calls for assistance. Bounty hunters are there to take some of the workload away from overstretched law enforcement agencies, not to increase it. It is not uncommon to find that the police especially regard the majority of bounty hunters as flashy, over-the-top pretty boys who get all the media attention without doing a fraction of the hard work that they do. In New Rome, for example, more than ninety percent of the calls for assistance from hunters to police go unanswered. More than eighty percent end in the death of the hunter concerned, often because the electromagnetic signature of whatever communication device they used gave away their position. As a rule, you're on your own out there.

That being said, there are a number of hunters who are very well respected amongst the law enforcement community. The very rare calls for assistance that these individuals make are answered with alarming promptness.

The convention of bounty hunters being able to call on support from the law enforcement community also operates the other way. Police and other recognised organisations are also entitled to call for support from whatever hunters are in the vicinity. However, the hunters too are only bound to respond "at their own discretion" - though the possible consequences for a hunter who fails to aid the police are often much more serious than they are for a police officer who does not aid a hunter.

## 10.2: The Federal Criminal Justice Act (FCJA) 2028

*"The Sanction is possibly the only bit of legislation the Global Senate got right first time. Nobody, not even the most hardcore hunter, wants to get dead. When someone points a gun at your face, you don't fucking wait and see what they're gonna do with it: You invoke the Sanction and save yourself the trouble of finding out whether they were going to pull the trigger or not."*

West Harcourt, Licensed Bounty Hunter

The Federal Criminal Justice Act (FCJA) of 2028 – also known as "The Sanction", from the legal term Sanctioned Killing - is arguably the most important law relating to bounty hunting apart from the original Incentive Linked Private Enforcement Bill of the same year. It established the right of the citizen to kill in self defense, and it overrides all other obligations on the part of the hunter.

## 10.3: Hunters vs. Bodyguards

*"Originally there was a whole bunch of fancy-pants laws about who was allowed to shoot who. They all got scrapped because it boils down this: When the shit hits the fan, that the bodyguards don't have time to find out the profession of the assailant, and the hunter doesn't have time to politely ask the bodyguards to get out of the way so he can shoot their boss. Result: Large body count. But that's okay because the legal angle is nice and tidy..."*

Commissioner DeGiorgio, NRC Bounty Office

In the eyes of the licensed bounty hunter, the distinction between a designated target and any bodyguards they have employed is a minimal one: They are all part of the same target. This is due to the way the laws regarding bounty hunters and bodyguards work in light of the FCJA.

The bodyguard considers any threat to his principal to be a threat to himself. Therefore, if anyone - including a hunter - poses a threat to the principal, the bodyguard responds in accordance to the Sanction: With lethal force. From the bounty hunter's point of view, this means that the bodyguards pose a threat to him and he also responds in accordance with the FCJA: With lethal force.

Neither side is doing anything illegal here: The hunter is legally allowed to attack the designated subject; the bodyguards are legally allowed to protect both their principal and themselves; and the hunter is legally allowed to protect themselves from the bodyguards.

#### 10.4: Dead or Alive?

*"Their choice."*

Frost, Licensed Bounty Hunter

One of the most frequently asked legal questions concerning bounty hunting is: "What happens if a subject who is wanted alive is killed?"

There are a number of answers to this, depending on the precise situation that it occurs in. The most common of which is when the subject resists arrest with a lethal weapon. In cases like these, the FCJA - the right to kill in self defense - overrides the hunter's obligation to bring the subject in alive.

*"Famous example: The Channel Seven 'reality TV' stunt. A production company released a bunch of subjects - mostly wanted alive - into a crowded nightclub so they could film the hunters coming after them. Good idea. Ratings winner. Or at least it was up until the subjects got spooked and opened fire indiscriminately. The hunters invoked the Sanction and bodybagged the lot of them. If the subjects had just chilled, they would have survived; nobody needed to die that night. Least of all the kids out for a good time who got caught in the crossfire."*  
Commissioner DeGiorgio, NRC Bounty Office

Whether or not the hunter will be able to claim the bounty in situations like these varies on a case-by-case basis, so it is in their interest to get it right. However, things can be more difficult if the subject is very specifically wanted alive; it is not unknown for bounties to be posted on missing persons or kidnap victims in an effort to have these people rescued unscathed. Should one of these subjects not survive, the consequences for the hunter vary depending on circumstance. They can range from not getting paid, a stern reprimand - either of which can reflect very badly on a hunter's rep - to having their BHL revoked, legal action, or in extreme cases, a price being placed on their own head. There is great deal of professional pride amongst hunters, and if a bounty goes out on one of them the rest will pull out all the stops to claim it. The life expectancy of a bounty hunter with price on them is very low indeed.

*"Applejack himself publicly vowed to take down this other hunter who'd murdered a cop and a bunch of civilians. AJ chased him - Frost, I think his name was - down under the base plate, and somehow ended up in the river. If I'd got footage of that, the networks would have let me name my own price. Turned out that Frost had been framed so there was never a rematch. But there's a lot of residual bad feeling there. You mark my words: One day that's going to blow up. It'll be a ratings extravaganza, and I'm gonna be there with a camera."*  
Robin Banks, Channel Seven

## 11: Typical bounty hunter hardware

*"Nothing but the very best, of course. I have people who make things to my personal specs. For instance, take a look at my huge weapon, baby: My personal signature SPAS-12AJ, custom built for yours truly by those good people at Franchi. Smoothly stroke the pump action, tickle the hair trigger and bang, it's all over in fifteen seconds. Wanna hold it?"*

Applejack, Licensed Bounty Hunter

Since bounty hunters tend to be fearsomely individualistic, it is of limited usefulness to discuss the wide range of equipment they employ to achieve their ends. However, there is enough of a tendency amongst the majority of hunters to utilise some common items that several - admittedly artificial - categories can be drawn up.

### 11.1: Weapons

*"Whatever comes to hand."*

Frost, Licensed Bounty Hunter

It is bordering on impossible to be a bounty hunter without resorting to some kind of weaponry. Although there are reports of hunters who only employ "non-lethals" such as tasers and shock sticks, most resort to good old guns. A massive spectrum of firearms are employed; hand guns (often used in pairs), machine pistols and pump-action semi-automatic shotguns seem to be the weapons of choice, although sniper rifles do appear amongst some more patient hunters. Edged weapons too are enjoying a resurgence in popularity, especially since the development of blades with monomolecular cutting edges. Similarly, recent advances in bio-augmented personal cybernetic combat systems have made it increasingly common to meet bounty hunters who employ no weaponry at all - other than their own wired reflexes, pumped-up musculature and armoured skeletons, that is...

### 11.2: Transport

*"I'm telling you, I saw this Frost dude - and get this - 'borrow' some rich kid's flash motorbike, deliberately crash it through the front of this restaurant and then waste everybody inside. He didn't even break a sweat - the guy's a fucking psycho!"*

Anonymous personal account, New Rome City

Given the sheer size of most major population centres these days, it is impractical to only get around on foot. Given the virtual uselessness of public transport when chasing down a subject, increasing numbers of hunters employ some sort of vehicle to get from A to B. Motorcycles of varying descriptions are the most common; cars are less so, although there is at least one well-known hunter who owns a customised, armour-plated four-by-four. However, it is also worth noting that too much ostentation in this area can be counterproductive; a mercenary group calling themselves "The Brotherhood", who were active around New Rome City in 2034, repeatedly returned to find their humvee flipped onto its roof every time they left it unattended.

### 11.3: Clothing and Armour

*"Tactical vest, combat boots and trousers, shades, ponytail and sometimes that sexy little beard. All in black. And no underwear. If it's good enough for Applejack it's good enough for every real man."*

Tabs Dickinson, President of the Applejack Fan Mafia (South NRC Division)

Again, there is a huge range of variety here, although leather, tactical nylon, kevlar and the colour black are almost universal. Surplus military gear - especially combat trousers and boots - are widespread. Black leather trenchcoats are always popular, due to the limited armour protection they offer and the amount of hardware it is possible to conceal within them. Tactical vests, webbing and body armour are also common, although hunters tend not to wear anything that restricts their movement.

The one item of clothing worn by more bounty hunters than any other are pairs of fingerless leather gloves. Why this is has never been satisfactorily established, although the most plausible explanation is that it they offer improved grip and significant protection to the majority of the hand (when discharging firearms, fighting, driving etc.) while the exposed fingertips minimise the loss of dexterity and sensitivity.

There are also documented cases of female hunters who would wear whatever it took to seduce their subjects, gaining the target's confidence and then luring them into a position where they could strike.

#### 11.4: Communications

*"The subject had gone to ground in a warehouse down on the docklands. He'd been smart enough to shoot out the lights; it was completely dark and I had no idea where he was. My personal camera crew hadn't been able to keep up so I couldn't rely on their floodlights. On the off chance I called up a decker acquaintance; within three minutes I had the subject's mobile number. I dialled it and, what do you know, the dumb bastard's phone rang. He was dead by the second ring."*

Applejack, Licensed Bounty Hunter

Communications are an important part of the bounty hunting system. The hunters have to be told who they're after, and the bounty office has to be told when a subject is brought down. "Bone phones" - tiny cellular phone implants which enable the user to make private telephone calls by conducting subvocalised sound vibrations through the jaw bone - are popular. However, standard mobile phones are still the most widespread, mainly because they can also display the text-based HunterNet updates.

#### 11.5: Shades

*"Always, but always, keep one eye on HunterNet. You don't wanna whack someone and then find out the bounty was rescinded three seconds before you pulled the trigger. Me? I got it patched through my shades..."*

West Harcourt, Licensed Bounty Hunter

It has been often remarked that the vast majority of hunters are rarely seen without a pair of sunglasses - often designer ones - perched across the bridge of their nose. At first, this was purely for the look, although there were always individual hunters who claimed that it was advantageous to prevent their opponent from being able to see their eyes.

However, these days there is a far more tangible reason: HunterNet. HunterNet is a real-time information service operated by local bounty office, whereby newly posted bounties and information updates are forwarded directly to the hunters. At first this operated purely as SMS updates sent to mobile phones, but as the technology has become more accessibly priced, a lot of hunters now have a Heads-Up Display wired into a pair of shades. The HUD eliminates the need for a handset, especially as the new generation of HunterNet-capable shades use the same acoustic vibration technology employed in so-called "bone phones". This is built into one or both of the arms of the sunglasses; minute vibrations travel down the arms of the shades to the bones around the ear, only audible to the wearer. Effectively, a pair of new HunterNet capable shades eliminates the need for mobile phone, except for one important respect: The shades can only receive, not transmit: A handset is still required to send communications outward.

12: Bounty hunter's vocabulary:

*"I flashed my BHL to show I was no psychout and followed the subject into the club. He was DL:3 - good for my rep - so my tag mightn't stand, but then NWA popped up on HunterNet. I pulled the killware and served the CTO fast. Bang, Just another Casey."*

West Harcourt, Licensed Bounty Hunter

Here are a few technical terms, colloquialisms and other expressions you might hear an NRC bounty hunter use:

BHL	Acronym; stands for Bounty Hunter's License.
Bottom feeder	A disparaging term for a hunter who only ever takes up low paying, relatively safe contracts. Such an individual is said to be "bottom of the food chain".
HunterNet	An information service which the vast majority of bounty hunters subscribe, allowing them to keep abreast of the latest developments. Usually, the bounty updates are sent as a text message to a mobile phone, but it is increasingly common for hunters to have it built into their shades so that these messages are displayed within their field of vision as soon as they are received
Casey	From K/C, the acronym for kill/capture. A 'Casey' is what a subject becomes after they have been apprehended or terminated.
CTO	Compulsory Termination Order. A CTO is a death warrant; a subject served with a CTO will be executed even in the unlikely event of them being brought in alive. See also NWA.
DL	Acronym; stands for Danger Level. Followed by a numeral from one to five, indicating how hazardous an individual is believed to be. An ordinary man in the street is considered to be DL:1.
DL:5+	Danger Level: 5+. That is, very very deadly indeed. Only individuals known to have a personal bodycount well in excess of three figures are ever designated DL:5+.
Hunter	A bounty hunter.
IBA	Integral Bank Account; the anonymous, numbered account held on behalf of each individual Licensed Bounty Hunter by local Bounty Office, rather than an independent bank or financial institution. Any bounty collected by the individual Licensed Bounty Hunter is paid into this account as soon as a Casey is confirmed, and otherwise works in exactly the same way as the integral bank account attached to a SIN card.
K/C	See kill/capture.
Kill/capture	1. The act of terminating or apprehending a subject, or 2. what a subject becomes after they have been apprehended or terminated. See also Casey.
Killware	Most commonly applied to firearms, but strictly referring to any item of equipment designed with lethal intent. Handguns and swords are killware; tasers and daysticks are not.
NWA	Acronym. Stands for Not Wanted Alive. See CTO.
Subject	A wanted individual who has had a bounty posted on their head; one of these individuals being targeted by a specific hunter. See also runner.
Tag	1. A contract killing or 2. A declaration by a bounty hunter to pursue a specific target. It infers that any other bounty hunters should leave the target alone. However, only very prestigious hunters can make a true "tag". E.g. <i>"Firefly is my tag - back off,"</i>

Psychout	An applicant for a BHL who failed any of the psych tests during the application process.
Psych test	Contraction of Psychiatric Test. Refers to the screening process undergone by all applicants for a BHL.
Rep	Contraction of "reputation".
Runner	A fugitive. A subject who is trying to evade capture by fleeing.
Sanction, the	From the legal term Sanctioned Killing. The Federal Criminal Justice Act of 2028, which effectively legalised killing in self defence

13: A few statistics to bear in mind

*"Bounty hunting is a dangerous profession. For fuck's sake, these guys have a higher mortality rate than cops!"*  
 Enforcer Kyle Series, Talon Security Incorporated

- 45% of would-be hunters are rejected at the application stage
- 52% of applicants fail the initial psychiatric test
- 78% of probationary bounty hunters are killed while attempting their first kill/capture
- 69% fail the subsequent psychiatric examination
- 34% of unsuccessful applicants are killed by loan sharks after defaulting on the 1500 credits they borrowed to cover their application fee
- 92% of calls for assistance from licensed bounty hunters to the police go unanswered
- 84% of calls for assistance end in the death of the hunter concerned
- The average life expectancy of an NRC bounty hunter is 26
- The average length of a bounty hunter's career is two years