

# MASKS

## A NEW GENERATION



**SECRETS OF A.E.G.I.S.**  
A SETTING SUPPLEMENT FOR MASKS: A NEW GENERATION

# **MASKS**

**A NEW GENERATION**

## **SECRETS OF A.E.G.I.S.**



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“The Dragon,” by Brendan Conway

“[Expletives Deleted],” by Eric Mersmann

“Halcyon Plaza Disaster,” by Julia Ellingboe

“The MPDG,” by John Wick

“The Astral Guardians,” by Shoshana Kessock

The Brain playbook, by Cam Banks

The Soldier playbook, by Mark Diaz Truman

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```
[0.000000] Booting Linux on physical CPU 0x0
[0.000000] Initializing cgroup subsys cpu
[0.645001] dev:f1: ttyAMA0 at MMIO 0x20201000 (irq =
  83, base_baud = 0) is a PL011 rev3
[1.026171] console [ttyAMA0] enabled
[1.089428] SCSI subsystem initialized
[1.093582] usbcore: registered new interface driver
  usbfs
[1.099370] usbcore: registered new interface driver
  hub
[2.332171] mmcblk0: mmc0:b368 SMI    15.0 GiB
[2.343287]  mmcblk0: p1 p2
[2.395467] EXT4-fs (mmcblk0p2): INFO: recovery
  required on readonly filesystem
[2.404706] EXT4-fs (mmcblk0p2): write access will be
  enabled during recovery
[2.472867] EXT4-fs (mmcblk0p2): mounted filesystem
  with ordered data mode. Opts: (null)
[2.484425] usb 1-1: new high-speed USB device number
  2 using dwc_otg
[2.492779] UFS: Mounted root (ext4 filesystem)
  readonly on device 179:2.
[2.810617] random: nonblocking pool is initialized
[3.167722] i2c /dev entries driver
Opening connection...
Connection opened.
Incoming data surge detected.
Engaging <Nope.exe>
Data surge shunted to bodyguard servers.
Querying existing servers...
Encrypted server detected. Server name: "ODIN"
Accessing "ODIN" server...
Data link required. Link connection encrypted.
Establishing data link through <HAHA> protocol...
```

Data link established.

<HAHA> protocol uploaded.

Receiving authorization request 583293758293841938400

Sending authorization <inyourface.exe>...

Sent.

Authorization accepted.

Access granted.

Detecting 19283947532 data structures.

Awaiting data query...

- welcome to A.E.G.I.S.'s files. the most advanced encryptions available and i cut through them like a hot turd. roflmao
- but i didn't do this to show off even though you should really appreciate just how amazing i am
- i did this for you
- A.E.G.I.S. may not be straight up evil. but they're not good, either. and they creep me the heck out.
- i've read their files, i know a lot of the things they've stopped. i grudgingly grant that they have a purpose and they've done good. every now and then. sometimes by accident.
- but i've read the bad stuff too. they're scary, bro. scarier than the bad guys sometimes. lotta times.
- someone's gotta do something about them. and i choose you, superchu.
- i think you're can do some good, and i definitely think your moral judgment stat is higher than mine.
- i mean i only hacked the NSA like three times but i probably should've stopped after two.
- so i'm giving you access to their secrets. read them, learn them. do with them as you choose.
- i trust you.
- but don't screw up.
- i'll be watching, kiddos.
- #hackerout

# WHAT IS SECRETS OF A.E.G.I.S.?

Halcyon City and the whole of the world are protected by superheroes. People with great abilities and great drive, who rose up to the challenge of defeating the greatest dangers that anyone had ever seen. They do what they believe to be right, and they suffer greatly for it. They're heroes.

But they're not the only force protecting the world.

A.E.G.I.S., the Advanced Expert Group for Intervention and Security, is filled with a different kind of hero. Not the kind who wears bright colors and catches people falling from planes (although they might sometimes do that last). But the kind who wears a uniform and goes where they're sent. The kind who stops threats before they even have a chance to cause harm. The kind who sits in front of monitors and gazes right into the abyss, and dares it to gaze back.

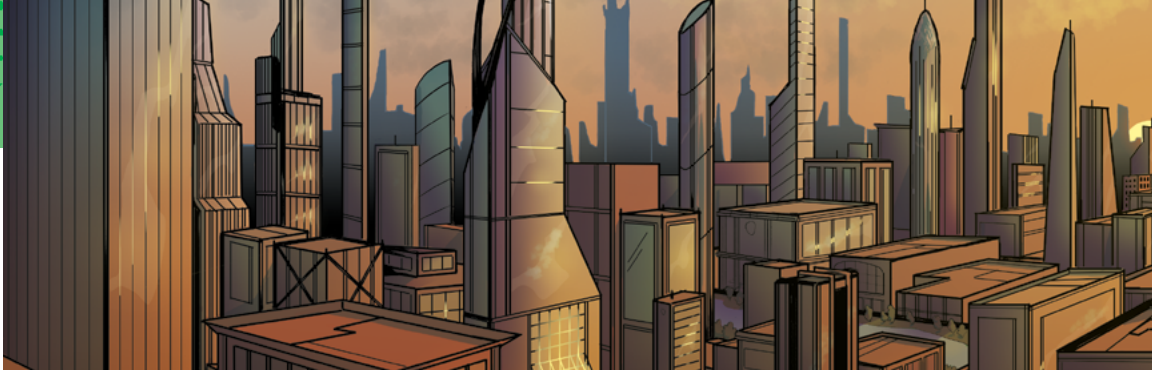
**SECRETS OF A.E.G.I.S.** is the second supplement for **MASKS: A NEW GENERATION**, a tabletop roleplaying game all about playing young superheroes in Halcyon City. In these pages you'll find the stories of A.E.G.I.S., this extra-governmental super-spy law enforcement agency devoted to keeping the world safe from superhuman dangers. You'll find plenty of plot hooks, new characters, and information on their place in the world. You'll find rules to play their agents and to play struggles over the soul of the agency. You'll find everything you need to flesh out the role of this sometimes dangerous, sometimes noble, and always powerful organization.

## HOW SHOULD I USE THIS BOOK?

**SECRETS OF A.E.G.I.S.** is here to help you expand your own game of **MASKS**. By default, when you play **MASKS**, you're assumed to have some kind of A.E.G.I.S. in your version of Halcyon City—after all, some law enforcement agency has to deal with all this superhuman nonsense. This book just fleshes out that place in the world and gives you plenty of tools to bring it to life in your game.

This book has three kinds of content in it:

- Reports, which are in-fiction pieces detailing the nature and situation of A.E.G.I.S.
- Playsets, which take the core game of **MASKS** into new and different directions, tweaking the rules significantly.
- Playbooks, which are brand new limited-edition playbooks to use in your game of **MASKS**.



## REPORTS

The reports in this book are actual reports taken from A.E.G.I.S. itself, detailing important incidents, individuals, and locations in Halcyon City and beyond. They're here to flesh out the world of **MASKS** and give you new ideas to draw from.

If you want to get some inspiration on the fiction of A.E.G.I.S., check out CHAPTER 1: A.E.G.I.S. REPORTS, and CHAPTER 2: A.E.G.I.S. MOST WANTED. The REPORTS include five different reports collected from A.E.G.I.S.'s own files, and MOST WANTED includes details on some of A.E.G.I.S.'s own most wanted villains.

## PLAYSETS

The playsets in this book are designed to take your game of **MASKS** in brand new directions. They change the game significantly, giving you new rules and techniques to play an awesome game.

If you're looking to play as agents of A.E.G.I.S., check out CHAPTER 3: AGENTS OF A.E.G.I.S. There you'll find plenty of information on the history of A.E.G.I.S., along with the details on how to put together a game of A.E.G.I.S. agents.

If you're looking to play a struggle for the soul of A.E.G.I.S., check out CHAPTER 4: THE SUITS. There you'll find the details on a secret struggle for the people of A.E.G.I.S., where extradimensional entities are trying to subvert and corrupt the whole organization into the worst version of itself.

## PLAYBOOKS

The playbooks are new kinds of characters you can bring into any game of **MASKS**, but especially suited to games using the content in this book. They are a little more complicated than the baseline playbooks, but manageable.

These playbooks include:

- The Brain, a genius-level intellect who created their own worst enemy.
- The Soldier, a young hero directly tied to and working for A.E.G.I.S.

Each playbook comes with its own section of advice for players and the GM.



# A.E.G.I.S. REPORTS



# CHAPTER ONE

- greetings, meatbucket. having a good time so far?
- hope so. i'd hate to think you weren't enjoying the fruits of my labor. these are some choice fruits, bro.
- seriously, take a moment, appreciate how hard it is to hack the deepest servers of an organization with access to like all the alien technology this planet has ever confiscated. like that's a lotta tech, bro.
- moving on.
- i've got more presents for you. and out of all the hacks i did, this may be my favorite.
- you'd be surprised how easy it is to pretend to be director russell sun, and have hard copy files delivered to a "secret dead drop" for "agency operations" and other bs. lol
- should've ordered a fruit basket and had it expensed to him. get it? fruits of my labor?
- so yeah. got these suckers delivered to me, complete with staples, post-its, and manila folders.
- and then i had them sent on to you.
- yes i knew your address, get over it, bigger things at stake. but srsly that's where you live? with that couch and those curtains and everything? jeez
- these files not only point at some of the more significant goings-on in our city of late. they also point at how A.E.G.I.S. sees the world. assessing weaknesses. figuring out how to destroy enemies. like the world's a chessboard and we're just pieces.
- yeah. ticks me off, too.
- read on, macduff, and learn your enemy's stuff
- #hackerout

## CLASSIFIED REPORT: THE DRAGON

**A.E.G.I.S. File #87-D-15359**

**SUBMITTED BY:** B. Kowalski

**FILENAME:** The Dragon

**STATUS:** Active

**CODE CLEARANCE:** lo Green

### REPORT ON THE DRAGON

**PREPARED BY:** [REDACTED]

**NAME:** Unknown

**CODE NAME:** The Dragon

**GIFTS:** Invulnerability; fear aura

**WEAKNESSES:** Long distance psychic offensives (?)

**AGE:** Unknown; estimated 40s

**FAMILY:** Unknown

**RELATIVES:** Unknown

Intel on the Dragon's powers is somewhat spotty and imprecise. Metahistorians and biologists analyzing reports of the Dragon's corroborated powers believe he may have gained his abilities during the Avatar incident in the '80s. (For a full account, see File #889-Z-53: The Avatar Expulsion.) In short, a series of powerful mystical entities were released from the physical instantiation of a compacted metadimensional prison (the Pantheon Jewel) hidden in the ocean near Halcyon City. They each sought hosts out in the world. The Dragon's affinity for draconic iconography, his invincibility, and his ability to project fear all indicate that he is one of these escaped Avatar entities.

According to corroborated reports, the Dragon's skin has proved ultimately resistant to violent assault ranging from fists, knives, and bullets to incredible incendiary force, plasma bolts, and gravitic concussion. Uncorroborated reports suggest that the Dragon has withstood suffocation, the force and pressure of a mountain collapsing upon him, and more.

The Dragon additionally qualifies as a Pyramid-type Threat. He is in command of the Nine Scales Syndicate, a criminal organization with operations spread out across the globe. Their exact organizational structure is known only through the reports of A.E.G.I.S. operatives infiltrating their bases (see Files #44-P-83921 through 83935). All reports suggest that the Dragon exists at the top of this organizational structure.

The Dragon additionally qualifies as a Midas-type Threat. He and the Nine Scales Syndicate at his command appear to be collecting numerous magical artifacts and phenomena from throughout the world, including the Avataric Conduit used in the original Avatar Expulsion incident and the Scepter of Eternal Fire, AKA the Helios Rod, AKA the Infernal Scepter (see File #89-A-9730).

## PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Only three agents have successfully infiltrated the Nine Scales Syndicate and achieved sufficient proximity to the Dragon to provide any kind of information on his psychology. Out of these three agents (Codenames ARGO, BULWARK, and CASPER), only one, BULWARK, is currently still with A.E.G.I.S. as an active agent, allowing for further interviews and confirmation of assessment. ARGO is presumed dead. Based on further surveillance, intercepted communiques, and telepathic probes, CASPER had been placed under suspicion of compromised action. CASPER has since disappeared, and all efforts to apprehend the agent have been unsuccessful, lending credence to suspicion of CASPER's corruption.

The reports of these three agents are inconsistent with each other. A.E.G.I.S. has not yet successfully determined why there are such discrepancies among the three reports.

### REPORT: ARGO

According to ARGO's report, the Dragon's temperament is cold. He speaks in short sentences. He never exhibits any degree of pleasure, happiness, or excitement. He communicates through looks and mannerisms. He expresses his displeasure through icy bursts of indictment. Such mannerisms suggest a calculating and careful mind, with high levels of precision and focus.

### REPORT: BULWARK

According to BULWARK's report, the Dragon's temperament is dangerously explosive. At surprising and unexpected moments, the Dragon will burst forth with a barrage of insults and physical violence. BULWARK suggests that the Dragon may have greater physical strength than a normal human being, but could not be sure. BULWARK reports that the Dragon used bare fists to kill at least one underling who disappointed him.

### REPORT: CASPER

According to CASPER's report, the Dragon's temperament is casually sadistic and cruel. He picked out underlings seemingly at random to berate and torment, and he appeared to take open glee in victory. He especially exhibited a kind of magpie-like glee over the objects, relics, and artifacts that his syndicate would capture. CASPER reported that the Dragon used his fear aura to regularly intimidate the room as soon as he entered.





## REPORT ANALYSIS

CASPER's report is considered potentially unreliable, due to that asset's disappearance and believed defection to the Nine Scales Syndicate. On the other hand, CASPER's defection does not explain the discrepancy between BULWARK and ARGO. Other analysts believe the Dragon may always have known that he was under observation, and that he was purposefully exhibiting different personas in order to prevent the reports from being useful.

A.E.G.I.S. has been left with no other option than to deem all the reports as potentially valid, and to incorporate analysis based on all three to any response for the Dragon's actions. This has understandably delayed and complicated A.E.G.I.S.'s attempts to further infiltrate or respond to the Nine Scales Syndicate.

## ALLIES/FRIENDS

The Dragon's primary allies are the agents and operatives of the Nine Scales Syndicate. Other than those, neither ARGO, BULWARK, nor CASPER were able to determine any kind of personal connection to anyone else. A.E.G.I.S. considers that the Dragon may have additional ties to the Avatars, considering his supposed origins.

## **GHOSTLIGHT**

The Nine Scales Syndicate operative known as “Ghostlight” is the Syndicate’s top assassin. Ghostlight has been traced back to a VENOM laboratory, during their paranormal ectoplasmic experiments (see File #09-G-4839: VENOM—Soul Experimentation). Ghostlight was the only successful subject, originally named [REDACTED]. But Ghostlight’s existence was reported unstable according to recovered VENOM files. Analysts suggest that the Dragon, whether through acquired means or his own Avataric power, was able to stabilize Ghostlight’s ectoplasmic existence. Ghostlight’s loyalty is presumed to be a direct result of this stabilization, and the threat of having it withdrawn. Ghostlight’s powers of intangibility, invisibility, and possession make Ghostlight a powerful asset.

## **AMITA PELGRANE**

All three agents, ARGO, BULWARK, and CASPER, report Amita Pelgrane as the next most powerful member of the Nine Scales Syndicate. Amita has risen based purely on her skill, talent, and tactical brilliance. She has run many of the Nine Scales Syndicate’s most important operations, and she is spearheading their recent incursion into Halcyon City (see Recent Events below). ARGO reports that Amita displays ambition and interest in more power. BULWARK uncovered some evidence that Amita has undertaken secret endeavors to obtain fragments of the Avatar artifacts lost since the original incident. Analysts presume that Amita seeks a way to take the Dragon’s powers away from him.

## **HELLDRAKE**

Dai Ushi, AKA Helldrake (see File #72-H-91028: Helldrake), is another crime lord within Halcyon City. Her own empire is not insignificant, but she has had difficulty growing it in the face of opposition from the Spider (see below). However, her hatred of the Spider, interest in power, and attachment to a similar draconic imagery all have made her a likely, if tenuous, ally for the Dragon. The Nine Scales Syndicate has worked with Helldrake’s organization from time to time, most often in opposition to the Spider.

## **THE AVATARS**

The exact relationship between the Dragon and the other observed Avatars, including the Flower, the Moon, the Glacier, and the Knight, is unclear. Due to the Avatars generally having originated in the same incident, sharing similar vulnerabilities, and being connected by the same power, A.E.G.I.S. considers the Avatars to generally be allies of the Dragon. If the Dragon’s own status as an Avatar were directly in jeopardy from an attack or enemy, they would likely band together to prevent any of them from being endangered by a threat to their very natures.

## ENEMIES/RIVALS

### THE SPIDER

The Spider, AKA Sebastian Ibañez, is well-known as the pre-eminent crime lord in Halcyon City, in control of the criminal organization/area of the city known as “The Spiderweb.” He has been involved in metahuman crime from time to time, but by and large A.E.G.I.S. has determined the Spider to be a concern for other law enforcement agencies. His criminal organization is a clear rival for the Nine Scales Syndicate, especially considering its recent incursion into Halcyon City (see Recent Events below). Out of all other criminal forces, the Spider is the strongest and most capable of outright opposition to the Dragon and the Nine Scales Syndicate.

### MAGUS EVERARD

Magus Everard, the current Magus of Earth, is ostensibly charged with the duty of protecting Earth against supernatural threats (see Halcyon City Files: Magus of Earth). Everard has not shown a diligence or attention to his duty, however, and indeed has selfishly fought against any who sought to take his Agate Staff from him. However, the Agate Staff is one of the few artifacts that A.E.G.I.S. has determined might be capable of banishing the Avatars back to their prison. A.E.G.I.S. suprologists believe that an older Magus may have created their prison in the first place. BULWARK reported on the Dragon monitoring Everard’s movements and looking for opportunities to steal the staff.

### THE RED HUNTER

The Red Hunter is a street-level vigilante in Halcyon City, interested in taking down the Spider, Helldrake, and now the Dragon. The Red Hunter uses a specially designed collapsible/expandable lance to fight, supplemented by her impressive martial abilities. She has long stood against and curtailed the efforts of the Spider. After the Dragon moved into the city, she appeared in several brawls against Nine Scales Syndicate forces.

## WEAKNESSES

At the moment, A.E.G.I.S. has been unable to determine any concrete weaknesses in the Dragon’s personal abilities or powers. Likely sources of further information include Magus Everard or the other Avatars, as well as decryption of additional Avatar-related texts.

Outside of finding weaknesses in the Dragon’s own power set, A.E.G.I.S. has identified some weaknesses in the Nine Scales Syndicate itself. In particular, the tension between the Dragon and Amita is possibly exploitable, as is the Nine Scales Syndicate’s battle against the Spider.

## RECENT EVENTS

The Nine Scales Syndicate has recently taken substantial Halcyon City territory for itself. Linked incidents include shootouts and limited metahuman conflicts. On more than one occasion, the Dragon himself became involved in a conflict, corroborated by eye-witness accounts of an individual of his description appearing on-scene and shrugging off physical harm. Bystanders further reported experiencing an overwhelming urge to flee upon his approach (presumably his fear aura).

The Nine Scales Syndicate appears to have taken control of the Docks district entirely. It now controls the majority of illegal imports and exports to the city. The Syndicate continues to advance into other parts of the city through a combination of outright violent action, bribery, and threats. Observation of the Dragon places him throughout the city, and suggests that he is planting bribes and threats with individuals of importance, ranging from District Attorney Minu Dhebar to the COO of Quantum Trionics, Alan Haspel.

The Nine Scales has struggled with several criminal organizations, but most fall before the Syndicate, either bloodily (the Giancarelli Family) or by capitulation (the Fourth Streeters). The Spider and his Web have put up the most successful resistance to the Syndicate, preventing the Syndicate from finding a foothold in the city's business district. Investigation indicates that the Spider's defense was primarily based on blackmail of important city officials. But it is only a matter of time before the Dragon turns to direct open conflict with the Spider. The repercussions could be drastic.

In the long run, A.E.G.I.S. analysts predict that the Spider will not be able to triumph over the Nine Scales Syndicate, with its international power base, unless the Spider makes an alliance with another force. Such an alliance could have similarly disastrous repercussions for Halcyon City.

## EVALUATION

The Dragon is a Class 1 Peril. Between his intense personal powers and his control of a major international crime syndicate, he poses a threat to Halcyon City at the very least, and could easily wield his power to cause significant damage to A.E.G.I.S.

Recommendations include continuing surveillance and planting additional agents within his organization for now. More information, especially on the personality and history of the Dragon, is necessary before we can determine any concrete plans of action. In the event of catastrophic action by the Nine Scales Syndicate, however, we recommend a full deployment of A.E.G.I.S. resources to quash the action.



# CLASSIFIED REPORT: [EXPLETIVES DELETED]

A.E.G.I.S. File #09-L-72771

SUBMITTED BY: D. Wolcott & J. Durham

FILENAME: [Expletives Deleted] STATUS: Active

CODE CLEARANCE: Persephone Grey

## REPORT ON [EXPLETIVES DELETED]

PREPARED BY: Analysts Wolcott & Durham

NAME: [Expletives Deleted]

ALSO KNOWN AS: Heights Kids, Ex-Ds

MEMBERS: Bolt, Crash, Ogre

**ADVANTAGES:** In addition to their significant individual gifts (see individual reports), the team has moderate community support and some indicia of tactical training above and beyond what would be expected from a relatively informal team such as this.

**WEAKNESSES:** Limited geographical scope (confirmed activity thus far is restricted to The Heights); hostile relationship with press, law enforcement, and organized crime in surrounding neighborhoods.

## TEAM DESCRIPTION

This team first garnered public attention six months ago from a livestreamed video of them engaging with a swarm of robotic insects (see File #66-G-12129 regarding the Reclaimer technology confiscated from Solitek Fabricating). The video captured a moment when two of the individuals (T. Gutierrez, AKA Crash, and H. Chen, AKA Bolt) demonstrated a lack of familiarity with each others' powers, resulting in collateral damage and bystander injury.

Weeks later, the trio disrupted an undercover law enforcement operation intended to halt the import and sale of weapons by the Goodacre family (see File #47-J-79002 regarding the Goodacre Global bust). A year's worth of undercover work on the part of one of our sister agencies went up with a series of explosions.

This incident also attracted the attention of a news team who attempted to get a statement. The transcript of that exchange is reprinted here in its entirety:

**K.D.:** Kevin D'Agostino with HNN reporting from a warehouse beneath the Palisades Overpass where the three powered humans from last month's "Heights Kids Bugzap Fail" video just destroyed... Wait, here they come! Hello! Hello! Bolt! Crash! Uh... other one! Who are you? What are you doing here?

*(Simultaneously)*

**Ogre:** OGRE!

**Bolt:** [REDACTED] outta here go [REDACTED] yourself.

**Crash:** Who are we? [REDACTED], that's who we are, who the [REDACTED] are you?

**K.D.:** I'm Kevin D'Agostino with H...

This hostile relationship with the press has continued to this day.

This incident is considered the source of the team's name, as all news reports repeating the incident deleted the expletives Crash used in answer to the team's identity. The team has since adopted and repeated the name.

The team's relationship with HCPD started out bad and has gotten worse. On multiple occasions, the trio disrupted standard law enforcement stop-and-question encounters with area youths. HCPD compstat concluded the [Expletives Deleted] must be allied with the criminal underworld of The Heights. Our own investigation has yielded a different conclusion (see File #83-K-95281 re HCPD community policing standards).

During their recent capture of the villain Transpo over the Palisades Suspension Bridge, [Expletives Deleted] displayed advanced coordination and tactics. Our one-on-one investigations revealed no outside influence, but the synergistic power use and practiced combat maneuvering must have been taught by someone experienced with superhuman combat. We must identify this individual and determine if they are attempting to harness this team's anti-authoritarian streak to no good end (see Files #33-T-90432 Fisher King; #21-T-98354 Octavia; #49-I-92027 The Outfit).



**PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT:** The team as a whole has an intense distrust of authority and a lack of patience. These aspects of each individual’s personalities seem exacerbated when they are together.

**EVALUATION:** A.E.G.I.S. must identify the team’s benefactor to determine its intentions. If possible, the optimal solution is to continue the psyop to recruit the trio as agents (allowing for training and control). Secondary solution is to apprehend and separate to continue individual psyops. Tertiary solution is to leak incriminating information to HCPD.

**INDIVIDUAL REPORT: BOLT**

<b>A.E.G.I.S. FILE #97-J-12912</b>	<b>PREPARED BY:</b> Analyst Darlene Walcott	
<b>NAME:</b> Harriet Chen	<b>CODE NAME:</b> Bolt	<b>AGE:</b> 19
<b>GIFTS:</b> Gross manipulation of electrical impulses, superhuman mental reflexes, able to perceive electrical fields		
<b>WEAKNESSES:</b> Lack of fine control over gift, impatience, potential reliance on metal to channel her abilities		
<b>IMMEDIATE FAMILY:</b> Wei “Walt” Chen (father), Judith Chen (mother), Robert Chen (elder brother), Kevin Chen (elder brother)		
<b>OTHER RELATIVES:</b> Diane Chen (sister-in-law, wife of R. Chen), Ophelia Chen (niece, daughter of R. Chen & D. Chen)		

**HERO DESCRIPTION:** Chen’s Bolt costume primarily consists of repurposed protective motorcycle gear with metallic accents. Her face is always concealed by a matte black full-face moto helmet with a jagged metallic line running from the faceplate to the back. When she uses her gifts, this line and other metallic accents on her costume glow and spark.

Out of costume she appears as a young Chinese-American woman of average height. She wears a simple ponytail and inoffensive clothing in contrast to her costumed persona.

**HERO BACKGROUND:** Chen grew up in St. Charles, and moved to Halcyon City last year to attend Melville University. A.E.G.I.S. first began observing Chen following the localized blackout shortly following her matriculation (see File #72-B-21098 re Melville University blackout). Using a UAV-mounted voltmeter network, an intake team was able to trace the source of the blackout to the West Charfeld Dormitory and to Chen.

Rather than attempt to insert an undercover operative, the intake team subverted one of Chen’s dormmates, Sofi Aswad. By offering additional scholarship money and smoothing over issues with Aswad’s student visa, the intake agents secured Aswad’s help in keeping close tabs on Chen.

Chen initially confided in Aswad about her gifts, but maintains that she does not know their source. Chen implied that the “Bugzap” incident with Solitek’s

Reclaimer swarm was the first contact between Bolt and the other members of the team. Aswad has repeatedly asked for more information about the team, but Bolt has steadfastly refused to supply her with information and, in general, appears to be growing more reticent to discuss her gifts with Aswad at all.

Her increasing involvement with [Expletives Deleted] has adversely affected Bolt’s academic career, which in turn has put strain on her relationship with her parents and siblings. A.E.G.I.S. may be able to exploit this tension to draw her back into a more “mainstream” fold.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT:** Chen displays an incredible ability to mentally react to new information, an ability enhanced by her gifts. She shows impatience with those around her, who might take minutes or hours to process new or changing information she can process in seconds. A.E.G.I.S. may be able to make inroads by introducing a super with compatible abilities (see Files #45-T-90494 re Tarot; #29-S-42863 re Cassandra; #30-W-07003 re Everywhen).

**ALLIES/FRIENDS:** S. Aswad, [Expletives Deleted]

**ENEMIES/RIVALS:** Dr. Sol

**WEAKNESSES:** Reliance on metal for some gifts, antisocial tendencies

**EVALUATION:** Isolate and recruit following capture of other team members.

**INDIVIDUAL REPORT: CRASH**

<b>A.E.G.I.S. FILE #21-L-70021</b>	<b>PREPARED BY:</b> Analyst Jarius Durham	
<b>NAME:</b> Tomas “Tommy” Gutierrez	<b>CODE NAME:</b> Crash	<b>AGE:</b> 15
<b>GIFTS:</b> Limited invulnerability, supersonic flight, exponential acceleration		
<b>WEAKNESSES:</b> Lack of fine control over gift, collateral damage, inability to communicate		
<b>FAMILY:</b> Laurence Gutierrez (uncle/adoptive father), Flora Gutierrez, née Ruiz (aunt/adoptive mother), Sonya Suarez, née Ruiz (mother - DECEASED), Joel Suarez (father - DECEASED)		
<b>RELATIVES:</b> Francis “Frankie” Gutierrez (cousin/adoptive brother), Rosa Gutierrez (cousin/adoptive sister)		

**HERO DESCRIPTION:** Crash initially presented himself in street clothes with a scarf tied over his face. After numerous incidents where these clothes were destroyed, he has adopted a more “traditional” meta-weave unitard in blue and black, presumably a gift from the team’s unknown benefactor. He continues to wear a mask styled as a scarf to conceal his identity.

Outside of his costume he tends to wear slightly ragged clothing with a “punk” aesthetic. Skulls, jeans, fingerless leather gloves, combat boots, and black and white colors dominate his choices. He is identifiable both in and out of costume thanks to his distinctive half-shaved-head haircut.



Crash has the ability to launch himself in a given trajectory, accelerating exponentially until he comes in contact with another object, at which point his total kinetic energy is transferred to his target. He is invulnerable to the force of the impact. He cannot alter trajectory after launching. His longest arc on record, near 50 feet, resulted in damage roughly equal to an 80 mph car collision. Crash's limits are unknown; extrapolative analysis suggests he might be able to cause an extinction level event if he launches himself at the planet from space, but such force may be beyond Crash's capabilities.

**HERO BACKGROUND:** Gutierrez's mother, an HCPD officer, died shortly after Gutierrez's birth, although no body was recovered (see File #12-K-44091 re Whiplash Incident). His father Joel Suarez, also an HCPD officer, was killed in the line of duty when Tommy was 5 (see File #32-O-54578 re Goodacre Massacre). After, he was sent to live with his aunt and uncle.

Laurence Gutierrez, his uncle, is a known anti-police activist; Tommy appears to share his uncle's politics. In addition, Crash appears to be the source of the vendetta [Expletives Deleted] has pursued against the Goodacre family, and on several occasions has pursued solo operations against Goodacre operatives in and around The Heights. A.E.G.I.S. surveillance indicates that Val Goodacre has placed a sizeable bounty on Crash's head or identity.

Tommy Gutierrez attends Campus High School, and is expected to graduate next year. His academic performance is satisfactory.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT:** Gutierrez's disciplinary record indicates a severe distrust of authority. This combined with his anti-law enforcement politics makes him a likely candidate for anti-hero or even villain slippage.

**ALLIES/FRIENDS:** Gutierrez is close with his family. He has a few school acquaintances, but no close friends we have been able to identify. Chen believes him to be very close to Ogre, and both Chen and Ogre can be considered allies.

**ENEMIES/RIVALS:** Val Goodacre; Goodacre Family; HCPD

**WEAKNESSES:** Halting initial acceleration appears to be the only way to prevent Crash from using his gift. Assigning operatives with subduing gifts may prove effective (see Files #98-G-69743 Viscous; #16-R-66266 Kong Krete). Based on current information, launching him into space should remove him from considerations for the foreseeable future, but should be considered a lethal option. Furthermore, were Crash to land on a stellar object and re-launch himself at the planet, he might be able to cause an extinction level event (see Description above).

**EVALUATION:** Capture or eliminate. Gutierrez's politics combined with his power level make him far too unpredictable to remain on the loose.

INDIVIDUAL REPORT: OGRE

<b>A.E.G.I.S. FILE #77-Y-96601</b>	<b>PREPARED BY:</b> Analyst Jarius Durham
<b>NAME:</b> Farrah Criner (unconfirmed)	<b>CODE NAME:</b> Ogre
<b>AGE:</b> Unknown (approximately 16-20)	
<b>GIFTS:</b> Alternate form; invulnerability; strength	
<b>WEAKNESSES:</b> None confirmed (hypothesized: involuntary transformation)	
<b>FAMILY:</b> None known	<b>RELATIVES:</b> None known

**HERO DESCRIPTION:** In Ogre’s alternate form, she appears as a twelve-foot-tall blood-red creature with a thick fur covering her body. She bears three sets of jet-black horns on her head and her hands end in inches-long serrated claws. In this form, she is also unguligrade, her feet replaced with cloven hooves.

In her human form, Criner is often a young red-haired white woman with blue eyes. The specific details of her human appearance change, suggesting additional shape-changing ability. Facial recognition is only able to match two confirmed pictures taken on different days at a 75% confidence level.

**HERO BACKGROUND:** A.E.G.I.S. is so far unable to identify any information on Criner prior to last year. The name “Farrah Criner” was acquired from sigint on Gutierrez’s home. Analysis has proved the name a counterfeit identity.

Intake agents have been able to track her into the Olive Hill Woods following public incidents, but have not been able to pinpoint domicile further.

Ogre’s alternate form bears similarities with the Caco-mercenaries active in the Baltic region last year. The mercenaries exhibited increased strength, crimson skin, six horns, and cloven hooves. A.E.G.I.S. is negotiating for the extradition of the leader of the captured mercenaries, currently waiting to stand trial in the Hague for war crimes (see File #67-M-47834 re Col. Baphometh). All other mercenaries were dimensionally banished, and the banisher requests certain unacceptable pledges in exchange for his consultation (see File #01-V-97375 re Aaofax Guardian of the Watchtower of the West).

**PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT:** Although appearing rageful and destructive, Ogre’s behavior indicates the opposite. Her ability to quickly tend to the needs of bystanders and teammates suggests her rage may be a facade.

**ALLIES/FRIENDS:** None, aside from [Expletives Deleted]

**ENEMIES/RIVALS:** None known, possibly Col. Baphometh and/or Aaofax

**WEAKNESSES:** Criner’s human form exhibits no particular strength. If she is related to the Caco-mercenaries, she may also be vulnerable to mystical rites.

**EVALUATION:** Continue attempts to locate Criner’s domicile and make contact with her human form.

**CLASSIFIED REPORT: HALCYON PLAZA DISASTER**

<b>A.E.G.I.S. FILE #88-D-63986</b>	<b>SUBMITTED BY: T. Iskandar</b>
<b>INCIDENT NAME:</b> Halcyon Plaza Disaster	
<b>CODE CLEARANCE:</b> Orpheus Yellow	
<b>LOCATION:</b> Halcyon Plaza	<b>DATE/TIME:</b> June 18, evening

**EVENT DESCRIPTION**

On Saturday, June 18, three members of independent superhero group Team ‘Aylah (also known as “The Family,” see File #65-A-28739) responded to a suspicious activity call outside Halcyon Plaza:

- Field leader Malcolm Abdullah (Codename: Tayf)
- Colleague Jihad Sinno (Codename: Uncertain. She was formerly known as Jihad, and more recently Djinn)
- Former team leader Reginald Lynn (Codename: Ramesses the Great).

Current team leader Nabra Abdelghani (Codename: Gazelle) did not participate in this mission. She remained at Halcyon City Community Center where past and current members of ‘Aylah gathered in celebration of the 50th anniversary of ‘Aylah. Agent Lady Ashika (on scene at the celebration) reported that she saw Tayf, Ms. Sinno, and Ramesses the Great leave the party in Ramesses’ 1978 Datsun 280z Black Pearl at 22:57.

By 23:38, Halcyon Plaza lay in ruins. The amphitheater, known for its bright, clear acoustics, was reduced to rubble. The HUM, AKA Halcyon Unity Monument, unofficially known as “The ‘Um,” was completely destroyed. The HUM had been considered a jewel of Halcyon City, a joyful sculpture depicting people forming a human chain around the earth.

And Ramesses the Great had disappeared without a trace.

On June 20 (two days post-incident), ‘Aylah team leader Gazelle released the following statement:

“Two days ago, ‘Aylah responded to a distress call at Halcyon Plaza. We went there prepared to protect our fellow Halcyonites from whatever faced us, be it natural disaster, criminal mastermind, soulless brigands, or any combination of those, just as we have faithfully done over the past 50 years. We assisted the brave women and men of the Halcyon City police and fire departments in ushering citizens to safety.”

We were not expecting an attack from The Dark Presence. They came in pursuit of a young metahuman whose identity must remain classified until we are certain that The Dark Presence will not return. Djinn, Tayf, and Ramesses the Great fought The Dark Presence in a destructive battle that resulted in significant damage to Halcyon Plaza. Our one human casualty is our dear colleague Ramesses the Great who disappeared in the wake of the destruction...

The Dark Presence (see restricted File # 99-Z-91909) had not darkened the corners of Halcyon City in the four decades prior to incident. My supervisor's supervisor does not have access to unredacted reports on The Dark Presence. Most veteran A.E.G.I.S. agents know them only as a highly secretive organization of assassins who target metahumans. Some older declassified reports state The Dark Presence are not even human.

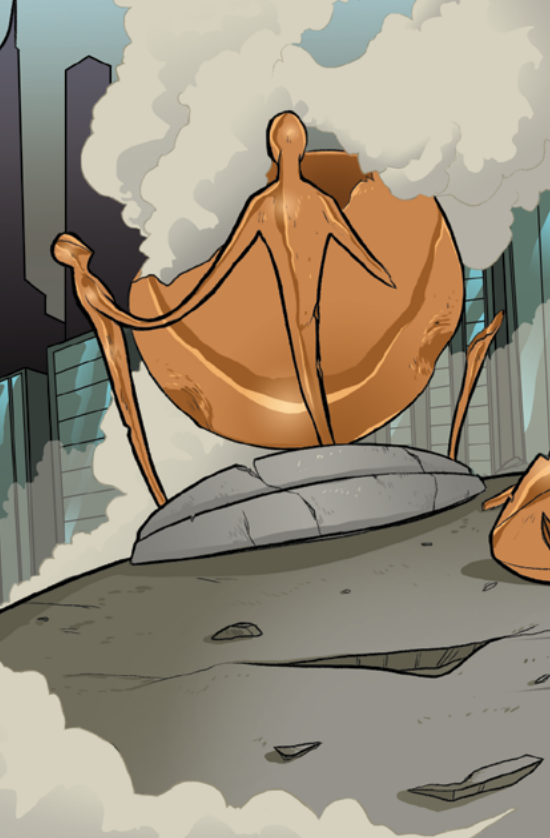
(Analyst addendum: One of the younger agents, Agent B. Ordin, told me that he heard that among metahumans, The Dark Presence is another name for A.E.G.I.S. That is a new one to me.)

In her report to the Halcyon City Police Department, Ms. Sinno described bursts of black smoke erupting along the path leading to the HUM. In mere seconds, these bursts transmuted into humanlike forms of pure white flames. Tayf banished the flame beings with Arrows of Oblivion. Those that Tayf could not hit brandished flaming scimitars and attacked the other 'Aylah members. Ramesses the Great, considered one of Halcyon City's most skilled and knowledgeable masters of the arcane arts, was hit by a flaming bolt and vanished into thin air. His disappearance dealt a significant blow to 'Aylah's Metaphysical and Arcane research abilities.

HCPD shared one odd eyewitness account from Charlotte Woodside:

"It looked like a bunch of people were on fire. They used their swords to block Brother Tayf's arrows. Or maybe they were catching them. It was hard to tell. I was looking at Tayf with his fine self. He looked bored. Like he wasn't even trying. I know he's got it in him. I saw him in the Olympics. Three gold medals and a silver in Archery. He did our city proud.

"The new 'Aylah girl. Gigi? Jeanie? Ginnie? [Jihad Sinno, one assumes] She kicked ass. She kicked The Um's ass. She recited something I couldn't understand, but The Um did. The stone people came to life! They fought the people on fire, Gigi helped the fire people. Then one of the fire people picked up this really pretty bottle and held it over its head. Gigi yelled something again and it was like her words brought down giant balls of fire. And POOF! The Um was broke, just a pile of rocks. But standing in the middle where that awful globe used to be was this blue woman who seemed to float on faint smokeless flames. Then the fire people took fragments of The Um and threw them at the amphitheater. I thought that went too far. Everyone hated The



Um, gave me migraines, but the amphitheater? I saw Cat Stevens there decades ago.”

My agents have determined that Charlotte Woodside is an ‘Aylah groupie and thus an unreliable witness, but her report clarifies certain elements:

- Jihad Sinno destroyed The Um while in battle with The Dark Presence.
- She also freed a metahuman entity of unknown identity during the incident.

My agents have uncovered something of the young metahuman whom ‘Aylah rescued/retrieved from the rubble of Halcyon Plaza. Her

face appeared for just seven seconds on surveillance cameras, long enough for the face recognition program in the A.E.G.I.S. database to register a hit: Maryam Alimi, codename Djinn (see File #66-J-63461)—not to be confused with Ms. Sinno. Born and raised in New Orleans, LA, before arriving in Halcyon City, Ms. Alimi was a busking contortionist and prestidigitator, stage name: Floating Mary. Ms. Alimi was affiliated with the Ninth Ward Posse, who were most active in Hurricane Katrina rescue. Djinn has been missing for some time now, and the Halcyon Plaza incident was her first registered reappearance.

Djinn (not Ms. Sinno) is now considered The Dark Presence prisoner whom Ms. Sinno inadvertently freed from the “really pretty bottle.”

## **EVENTS AND INFORMATION LEADING TO INCIDENT**

Two years ago, Ms. Jihad Sinno, the heir to Sunburst Publishing, fled Halcyon City, carrying a sensibly packed North Face backpack and \$90,000 that she stole from her sister’s home safe. She embarked on a journey across the Sahara. She recently tweeted, “I went in search of the answers to the questions that my soul screamed out to the night.” On the trip, Jihad discovered her gift of fiery



destruction while visiting her grandparents in Lebanon. A.E.G.I.S. agents in Beirut took her into custody after she threw a fireball in a tea shop.

The details on Jihad's transfer from an A.E.G.I.S. containment cell just outside Beirut to Ramesses' arcane laboratory beneath an ancient and unassuming pyramid in the Saqqara Necropolis of Memphis, Egypt, have been put at Code Midnight clearance. The information accessible to me indicates that Ramesses the Great trained Jihad in Saqqara for eleven months. Jihad's flair for the dramatic makes the local police casefile of the incident an entertaining read.

As of June 10 of this year, Jihad has been part of 'Aylah for six months, and she has remained off our radar for nearly two months, around the time she changed her codename to The Djinn. Ramesses the Great returned to Halcyon, bought that classic 280Z, and started accompanying 'Aylah on calls.

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, the day of the incident, we intercepted this text exchange between Gazelle and Angela Andrews (Codename: Dragonfly of the Pantheon of Dreams). We were unable to decode it until July 9th:

**Gazelle:** Sorry I had to leave the party. Jiji was all freaked out.

**Dragonfly:** I missed your goodbye kiss. Who's Jiji? What's their codename?

**Gazelle:** <3 Jihad. The Djinn. Not sure who she is this week, so we're just calling her Jiji like we always do.

**Dragonfly:** Don't you know someone whose actual name is Jihad?

**Gazelle:** Yeah. That's Jiji. What's the point of a codename if you use your actual name as your codename?

**Dragonfly:** Jihad is such a great name for a superhero. Anyway, go on.

**Gazelle:** Yeah... Jiji seems to invite... struggle. Anyway, she had dinner with Uncle Reginald--Ramesses. Their weekly mentor-mentee meeting.

**Dragonfly:** I think it's so cool that you all do that. I wish we had some kind of mentorship program.

**Gazelle:** Doesn't the Pantheon do "dream field trips" or something bonding like that?

**Dragonfly:** Not in 10 years. Not since they built The Um on top of the only exposed earth in a 500 mile radius. The Um has an Argonculite core. It mutes the earth's pulse and dampens a lot of metapeeps' earth-drawn power. Group dreams require a lot of earth power.

**Gazelle:** It sure isn't stopping Jihad from setting fires and blowing shit up. Uh, I didn't mean that. ;)

**Dragonfly:** Is it okay to lol?

**Gazelle:** :) Yes, you can lol.

**Dragonfly:** Jiji's not an earth mama. She calls upon dark sources from other dimensions.

**Gazelle:** Figures. I draw my power from common sense and reality. Moving on, tho'. Jiji was really freaked out. Ramesses the Great has a final task. A test. A trial. She said that Ramesses told her that it was time "to call upon the ones who drink the stone, and restore the Well of Whispers."

**Dragonfly:** LOL!

**Gazelle:** He talks like that all the time. I mean, they say he's actually Ramesses from ancient Egypt. That he keeps his organs in canopic jars in a curio cabinet in his house. He's under an ancient curse and can never die. He's always got a covenant or ancient decree to invoke. Curses, covenants, and contracts. That's his thing. I once saw him take down a 30 foot super bear with a whispered curse and a side eye. Not even an evil eye, a side eye. I digress.

So Ramesses gives Jiji this ornate vase-thing and tells her to take it to the Plaza and place it next to the girl in The Um missing her left hand. And that's where Jiji is now I guess. She's probably planting someone's canopic jars under a one-armed statue of power dampening synthetic marble.

**Dragonfly:** No trouble there.

**Gazelle:** Nope. Trouble is on its way, inshallah.

## CONSEQUENCES/CASUALTIES

Halcyon City Herald reporter Alicia Shandra encapsulated public sentiment: "The entire population of Halcyon City is devastated by the loss of our beloved HUM and the amphitheater." However, private opinions about the HUM were many and varied.

From an agency perspective, the sculpture and its effects helped keep the peace in this city for ten years. Furthermore, it was a harmless way to contain the power of some of our less disciplined Halcyon City residents. Recommend monitoring the Well of Whispers and associated individuals to limit damage.

Although the loss of property and cultural icon is profound, and the loss of the cap on the Well of Whispers may have unforeseen effects, I report no loss of life in the Halcyon Plaza Disaster. Ramesses the Great is a powerful arcanist. I do not believe this is the end of Ramesses the Great.

## ONGOING EFFECTS

- Jihad Sinno has yet to choose a new codename.
- While there is no general interest in rebuilding the HUM, our mayor has vowed to rebuild it. A.E.G.I.S. is negotiating the financial details of realizing the mayor's wish.

- Friends of ‘Aylah and several other Friends of hero teams co-sponsored a Disaster Relief crowdfunding campaign that has raised \$900,000 to date to replace the amphitheater.
- ‘Aylah, has a new member: Maryam Alimi, codename Djinn, not to be confused with The Djinn, formerly Jihad, now just *undecided* or Jiji.

## EVALUATION

We have not seen the last of Ramesses the Great or The Dark Presence. If we are to anticipate their re-emergence and prevent another more disastrous attack, A.E.G.I.S., ‘Aylah, and any other team who has had contact with The Dark Presence must work together, share knowledge, and vow to bring down this menace. A good start would be removing high-level security protocols from existing Dark Presence files.

There is some speculation that Ms. Alimi claimed the codename Djinn because she is actually a djinn. A.E.G.I.S. has dealt with djinni before. Ms. Alimi seems harmless enough.

A.E.G.I.S. must be proactive in dealing with the constant duplication in codenames. I included the intercepted conversation between Dragonfly and Gazelle in my report to once again illustrate the dangerous confusion caused by unregulated naming policies (cf. Incident Report #HCH-9873298J “Mountain God Defeats The Mountain God: Read My Report and Find Out Whether the Good Guy Won”).

It remains to be seen what effect the loss of the HUM will have on Halcyon City. We expect more hooliganism and destruction of property. The HUM provided a small measure of behavioral management for our less disciplined metahuman Halcyonites, particularly those who draw power from the earth. The sooner the Well of Whispers beneath the former monument is silenced, the safer Halcyon City will be.

## CLASSIFIED REPORT: THE MPDG (MEGAN DALTON)

**A.E.G.I.S. File #25-B-77356**

**RECOVERED FROM:** J. Carter encrypted files

**FILENAME:** MPDG

**STATUS:** Active

**CODE CLEARANCE:** Apollo Blue

### REPORT ON MANIC PIXIE DREAM GIRL

**PREPARED BY:** Agent C. Volstag

**NAME:** Megan Dalton    **CODE NAME:** MPDG (non-voluntary)    **AGE:** 22

**GIFTS:** Access to Dreamtime/Ideaspace; super speed; intangibility

**WEAKNESSES:** Power attracts nightmares; empathy; romantic relationship with Johnny Chance; vulnerable to mundane weapons

**FAMILY:** Deceased    **RELATIVES:** None

Facial recognition software confirms the vigilante known as the Manic Pixie Dream Girl is Megan Dalton. Considering her connection to Dreamtime/Ideaspace, we assume she is one of The Oenomancer's "chosen ones." Hiro Reckard of the Trumpet Blast was the first to call her "The Manic Pixie Dream Girl." Reports suggest she detests the name and does not use it herself.

She can slip in and out of Dreamtime which makes her intangible, but also allows her to see the world differently: she sees people as they see themselves. Megan can also see hopes and fears. She can see the night terrors that haunt the unfortunate as shadowy ghosts, following them. She can see desires. This power made her responsible for our failure with Senator Dandridge. (For a full account, see File #236-C-77: Dandridge & Pape.)

Also, when she enters Dreamtime, her speed increases dramatically, up to 77 APS (Acts Per Second), making her the fourth fastest human on Earth. When she enters Dreamtime, she can attract the attention of Nightmares and other creatures (see File #533-B-28: The Grinning Man Incident.) She has not yet discovered how to utilize a Morpheus Cloak. (See File #21-A-1: Morpheus Phenomenon.)

This is a Valentine Opportunity. On or around August 2<sup>nd</sup>, Megan entered a romantic relationship with Johnny Chance (File #88-A-12), but it ended on or around September 17th. Details we may exploit include:

- Chance's recklessness;
- Chance's relationship with his "mother," the entity known as "Clotho" (File #1-C-235);
- Chance's affair with August d'Winter, AKA Bella Donna (File #33-E-2947).

From a June 17<sup>th</sup> conversation, recorded with The Shade (File #122-A-77):

**MD:** I can't help it. I still care for the idiot. He's got so much potential. He just squanders it.

**SH:** You must focus. Your own energies can draw Darkness.

**MD:** My energies?

**SH:** Your own Darkness calls to things. You must be careful.

**MD:** Great. If I get depressed, I summon the Boogeyman.

**SH:** Your flippancy does not diminish your accuracy.

**MD:** Of all the nights I draw night duty, I draw it with someone who came straight out of a Shakespeare play.

More details can be found in File #25-B-77356a: The Chance/MPDG Affair.

This is an Obsidian Opportunity. Megan's family died on March 17. The Shangri-La sorcerer Doctor Zen (File #1-B-882) kidnapped her parents in an effort to lure Megan into a trap. This coincides with Zen's other attempts to kidnap The Oenomancer's chosen ones. During the rescue attempt, Megan's parents fell into a pit of "eldritch quantum broth" (File #1-B-882a) as a result of a mishap. It is notable that Doctor Zen attempted to save Megan's parents when he realized the error. Regardless, she still blames Zen for her parents' death. She has not been seen on subsequent anniversaries, and we assume she retreats into Dreamtime to visit the memories of her parents.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Like all the Oenomancer's chosen, Megan demonstrates a great deal of willpower. She is capable of withstanding a tremendous amount of pain and has resisted temptations—both supernatural and mundane—with little effort.

We recruited Qemetial the Qliphothian (File #55-X-77) for this very purpose. Despite his abilities, he was unable to tempt Megan. Our recording of the incident showed her zeta waves dipped lower than .001%. She dispatched the Qliphothian with little effort.

*This can't be the only copy. This information is out there and we have to do something about it. This woman is a hero. If we don't find the leak and destroy every copy of this file, we're the ones putting the gun up to her head. Also, someone get this to The Shade, ASAP.*

However, Night Terrors taking the form of her parents have been demonstrated to be effective. A recent experiment showed us the Terrors were able to increase her adrenal input by 3% and lower her mana usage by 22%.

On October 15<sup>th</sup>, she faced Gamchicoth the Devourer (File #55-X-81). This encounter nearly killed her. It was only when she was close to death that she realized her own “impure emotions” fed the entity. After she defeated Gamchicoth, she sought the advice and tutelage of The Shade. She now practices meditation and emotional centering techniques.

## ALLIES/FRIENDS

Megan sees herself as a loner, unable to make new friends because she has such easy access to their true desires. Lying to her is almost impossible and she has learned that many see deception as necessary to maintain relationships. While she has found others she trusts, she tends to keep them at arms’ length.

### JOHNNY CHANCE

Chance is a magical vigilante with a history of short-term relationships. One of his first, after appearing on the scene, was Megan. Always a show off, as indicated by his “reality TV show,” he’s careless, reckless, and easy to track. Chance makes a good candidate for kidnapping and extortion except his probability control would most likely come into play, thwarting even the most carefully laid out plans. However, that can be used to our advantage. Chance’s power makes him lucky, not anyone else. In fact, putting him with Megan may make acquiring her skills easier.

### CLOTHO

Megan’s relationship with Chance’s mother is more complicated and obscure. We





know she approved of the relationship and was sad when it ended. A recording from December 26<sup>th</sup>:

**CLOTHO:** I'm sorry it didn't work out.

**MD:** Thanks. But it's probably for the best.

**CLOTHO:** No. It was not.

**MD:** Don't talk cryptic to me, please. I get enough of that from Shade.

**CLOTHO:** You two are bound by something more powerful than infatuation and lust.

**MD:** Tell him that.

**CLOTHO:** I did.

**MD:** Well, if he doesn't listen to his mom, there's no way he's going to listen to me.

**CLOTHO:** He will.

**MD:** When he's done <REDACTED> that Bella Donna <REDACTED>...

**CLOTHO:** You are important to each other. Your fates are tied. And I...

<pause>

**MD:** What?

**CLOTHO:** I would have liked to call you daughter.

**MD:** That's... I mean... Wait. What do you mean "liked"?

**CLOTHO:** I have said too much.

**MD:** What is that supposed to mean? "Liked"?

**CLOTHO:** I shall see you again.

**MD:** Don't you <REDACTED> vanish! Don't you... DAMMIT!

## THE SHADE

Megan sees The Shade as a kind of mentor, guiding her through the world of supernaturals. Our files on The Shade are limited; he (we are assuming The Shade is male) has "adopted" Megan as a kind of pupil and treats her with the kind of cruel affection you would expect from a sensei. From our observations, we have noted he has used some of the teaching techniques we've seen from Shangri-La, although he may have learned them elsewhere.

The two share a student/teacher relationship. We have seen her try to extend romantic interest toward The Shade, but he has rejected her. She left his tutelage for 17 days after that rejection but returned shortly thereafter. Their relationship has strengthened since then.

Using The Shade against Megan is possible, but dangerous. Because we know the location of his wife's soul—7°, 34°, 19° Harab Serapel—we can use that to force him to betray Megan. However, this information is one use only.

## ENEMIES/RIVALS

### THE GRINNING MAN

Megan gained the attention of the entity known as “The Grinning Man” (File #72-C-15) after she banished him back to Dreamtime/Ideaspace. We know the entity has sought revenge before and can be goaded into seeking revenge against Megan with little effort and minimal risk to ourselves.

### DOCTOR ZEN

Doctor Zen (File #1-B-882) is currently held in the prison in Shangri-La. We have a contact there (File #77-S-238) who may be able to release Zen with the proper bribe. While Megan is responsible for Zen’s incarceration, we suggest against using him in any capacity. Zen is the very definition of a loose cannon, acting without any regard to consequence in his absurd struggle to gain control over Shangri-La. Not recommended.

### BELLA DONNA

The semi-reformed criminal Bella Donna (August d’Winter; File #33-E-2947) is our best choice for use against Megan. Both August and Megan (though primarily August) have demonstrated jealousy, mistrust, and outright anger whenever the two are in the same place. August sees Megan as a threat to her current relationship with Johnny Chance. Megan sees d’Winter as a threat as well, but more of a corruptive influence on Chance’s character. A conversation recorded on May 1<sup>st</sup>:

**MD:** I don’t trust you.

**BD:** You don’t trust me with him.

**MD:** No, I just don’t trust you.

**BD:** You think I used a spell to ensnare him?

**MD:** No, I think you just flashed your <REDACTED> at him. He’s easy to distract.

**BD:** Is that how you lured him in, hm? Manic Pixie...

**MD:** Don’t <REDACTED> call me that.

**BD:** You threw him away. I picked him back up. And he’s happier than he’s ever been.

**MD:** I don’t care about any of that. I’m just here to tell you that if you hurt him...

**BD:** I’ll have you to deal with? Oh, isn’t that romantic.

**MD:** <REDACTED>, you <REDACTED> him up, what I do to you won’t be romantic. It’ll be <REDACTED> tragic.

**BD:** My, my. Profane little mouth, isn’t it. Perhaps if you used it for more...

**MD:** <REDACTED>...

**BD:** Careful. You never know who might be listening...

## WEAKNESSES

Unlike the other Oenomancer chosen, Megan seems susceptible to mundane weapons. This creates the possibility she is not one of his chosen as we assume. She is very fast and can shift into an intangible form, but while she is unaware, she is vulnerable.

### CODE BLUE

If capturing and releasing Megan (without her knowledge) is the priority, we suggest The Sleeper (File #7-C-8821). His formula is invisible and nearly impossible to detect.

### CODE RED

If deterring Megan from taking action is the priority, we suggest The Shade (File #122-A-77). He has established himself as an ally; use his wife as leverage. The Shade may regret the choice, but analysis suggests he will not hesitate to make it.

### CODE BLACK

If eliminating Megan is the priority, we suggest Sharpshooter (File #1-A-23). He can put a bullet in her from seven miles away.

## EVALUATION

Megan Dalton is a Class 1 Peril. She can read the desires of others and perceive how they perceive themselves. She can also enter the dreams of any subject she knows. This creates the possibility of a massive security breach.

Contact with Megan requires a Medallion of Thoth, which should mask true intentions and forbid her powers from true perception. Unfortunately, this will also mark the wearer as an anomaly and arouse suspicions. We suggest as little contact with Megan as possible. She has demonstrated suspicion when dealing with figures she cannot read.

Use proxies to deal with her. Recruitment into any A.E.G.I.S. branches not suggested at this time.

# CLASSIFIED REPORT: THE ASTRAL GUARDIANS

**A.E.G.I.S File #67-D-11541**

**SUBMITTED BY:** A. Beckett

**FILENAME:** TAG

**STATUS:** Reactivated

**CODE CLEARANCE:** Ganymede Red

## REPORT ON THE ASTRAL GUARDIANS

**PREPARED BY:** A. Beckett

**NAME:** The Astral Guardians

**MEMBERS:** Turboblast, Professor Titanium, The Astral Stranger

**ADVANTAGES:** Experience in combat, working together, and with individual powers; surprising degree of public support.

**WEAKNESSES:** Old age and ensuing consequences; fractious internal relationships; inexperience with modern superhero practices and enemies.

This Silver Generation team appeared in Halcyon City 45 years ago, in the wake of attacks by the duo of mystic Nightmare Woman (File #1-A-66691) and the so-called ruler of the astral plane King Phantasm (File #1-A-66692). The Astral Guardians told reporters in their first interview they were drawn together by the Astral Stranger to defeat NW and KP (File #2-B-45531). Afterward, the Astral Guardians stayed together for around 15 years.

They locked away the Ghost Storm (File #2-B-99899) which devastated most of the East Side of the city 30 years ago. In the incident, Professor Titanium lost an arm, Nightmare Woman suffered deep psychological trauma, and Turboblast killed King Phantasm. After the crisis, the team disbanded.

The Astral Guardians made no other appearances for 30 years, until they popped up on social media on July 28<sup>th</sup> with a new AstralGuardian InstaSpace account. After assorted incidents caught on cellphone cameras, the team reappeared in public on November 9th after the attack by the Obsidian Fox (File #6-D-87710), and issued a joint statement about returning to action.

All three heroes have aged considerably. Their history and recent successes, plus their use of social media, has inspired a revival of interest in “vintage heroes.” They’ve been on 12 news programs, have over 25,000 followers on InstaSpace, and Parlorline Toys is set to reissue Astral Guardians action figures.

Current base of operations is Guardian Tower, likely in the astral plane.

In the opinion of this agent, the Astral Guardians’ reappearance indicates either the rise of a new threat from the astral plane, or that these three found retirement too boring. In the first case, the problem should not be left in the hands of such an out-of-practice team. In the second case, they should be discouraged from action to limit harm in the face of their diminished abilities.

*Had to dig this one out of the old archives and really do some research. Cross-referenced with their new social media pages and it looks like they're the real Guardians. We ought to nip this in the bud before someone gets hurt. Enclosed are profiles on all three heroes involved. Let's get on top of this. Isn't Nightmare Woman still in the psych ward?*

*- Beckett*

## INDIVIDUAL REPORT: THE ASTRAL STRANGER

### A.E.G.I.S. FILE #1-A-79920 (AMENDED)

**NAME:** Unknown    **CODE NAME:** The Astral Stranger    **AGE:** Unknown

**GIFTS:** Shadow control, teleportation through shadows hidden inside his coat, access to the astral plane through shadow gateways

**WEAKNESSES:** Bright lights, loud noises, disruption of astral energy, removal of his coat all dissipate his form

**FAMILY:** Max Reynolds (son), Sarah Reynolds (mother of Max – deceased)

The Astral Stranger first appeared alongside Turboblast and Professor Titanium as the shadow-controlling third member of the Astral Guardians when they faced down Nightmare Woman and King Phantasm. All attempts to document the life of the Astral Stranger prior to that appearance 45 years ago have failed. Those few reports A.E.G.I.S. collected indicate the Stranger was the one who brought the team together.

When he first appeared, the Astral Stranger was a man in a blank mask and a long, dark trenchcoat. Shadows rose from inside the coat and moved like water to attack others. The Stranger could also fold in on himself and disappear, only to reappear in shadows elsewhere. His most important ability was to open shadow doorways into the astral plane.

Over time, eyewitnesses reported the Stranger's shadows were overtaking parts of his body. His recent appearances post-comeback seem to bear out those reports, as the Stranger now seems nothing more than a man-shaped shadow inside the same trenchcoat, still wearing that same blank mask. He was always quiet, but now he speaks even less than before.

Beyond the cryptic answers given during various interviews, Astral Stranger's origins are a mystery. However, interviews with Nightmare Woman upon her incarceration at the Woodsley Psychiatric Facility (File #6-B-88952 Incident: Woodsley Occupation) indicate that he and she may have had an intimate relationship of some sort, and that the Astral Stranger has a son, Max, with a waitress from the East Side, Sarah Reynolds (now deceased). Max Reynolds (File #6-D-99411) is 31 and has not yet shown any sign of any powers, nor does he seem to be in contact with his father. Further investigation indicates Reynolds may not know the Stranger is his father.

## INDIVIDUAL REPORT: TURBOBLAST

<b>A.E.G.I.S. FILE #1-A-78822 (AMENDED: #1-A-79922)</b>		
<b>NAME:</b> Karim Rashal	<b>CODE NAME:</b> Turboblast	<b>AGE:</b> 61
<b>GIFTS:</b> Light blasts, repulses kinetic attacks with turboarmor, flight via light ray propulsion, light shields		
<b>WEAKNESSES:</b> Darkness, damage to suit creates vulnerability to his own power (burning), prone to crashing		
<b>FAMILY:</b> Nayima Rashal (wife – deceased), Ammad Rashal (son), Nessa Tolliver (daughter), Johnny Tolliver (grandson)		

Turboblast is regarded as one of the most respected heroes of the Silver Generation. An outspoken African American civil rights advocate as well as prominent and open member of the Muslim community in Halcyon City, Turboblast used his celebrity status to promote prison reform and education programs for the underprivileged while fighting alongside the Guardians to protect against supernatural threats. Recruited by the Stranger from the short-lived team the Halcyon Saviors (File #1-B-55572), Turboblast became the de facto leader of the Guardians. Upon joining the Guardians, Professor Titanium gave Karim his TurboArmor (File #1-C-49241) to insulate him against his own light blasts.

Turboblast lived as a hero in the open, endangering the life of his wife Nayima and son Ammad for years. Nayima died in a car accident 30 years ago, just before the Ghost Storm Incident. King Phantasm's death at Turboblast's hands during that same incident has haunted the hero since, as has King Phantasm's son Edward taking up his father's mantle as Prince Phantasm (File #8-D-44982).

After heroic retirement, Turboblast remained active in advocacy and wrote two books, *The Ethics of Heroics* and *Banding Together: Heroes and Team-Building*, which became best-sellers. His mentorship of young heroes such as Hexa (File #6-A-99992) of the Mystic Seven (File #6-A-99999) is well known.

Since his return, Turboblast has been outspoken against ageism, often demonstrating his strength and speed to allay concerns about his health. Medical reports acquired by A.E.G.I.S. operatives indicate Turboblast survived skin cancer, suffers from hypertension, and relies on a heavy medical regimen. Recent intercepted emails indicate severe concern on the part of his family, especially his daughter Nessa. Further email digging indicates possible previous romantic relationship between Turboblast and Professor Titanium during a period of separation from his wife. Their current relationship is tumultuous at best.



## INDIVIDUAL REPORT: PROFESSOR TITANIUM

**A.E.G.I.S. FILE #1-A-78821 (AMENDED: #1-A-79921)**

**NAME:** Nechama Shechter    **CODE NAME:** Professor Titanium    **AGE:** 64

**GIFTS:** Hyper-intelligence, metallic skin, army of drones and mini-robots, rides armored robo-raptor

**WEAKNESSES:** Arrogance, electric shocks, EMP

**FAMILY:** Helena Gomez (wife), Jacob Gomez-Shechter (son), Holly Gomez-Shechter (daughter-in-law), Mina Gomez-Shechter (granddaughter)

Earning a double PhD in Robotics and Molecular Biology by the time she was fifteen, Titanium developed her hyper-intelligence from exposure to an Advancement Serum (File #1-B-432). The rest of her gifts are the result of her own invention, including her silver-metallic skin which can harden at will. Her skin earned her the name Professor Titanium, along with the media's modern, less pleasant moniker, "the Iron Grandma."

Titanium started out as an inventor for the Alpha Sentinels, only to be recruited by the Stranger. Titanium created the Containment Cubes (File #1-C-93748) which halted the spread of astral doorways during the team's first mission. She also created the TurboArmor protecting Turboblast from his own abilities, and her TitanArm to replace the left arm she lost during the Ghost Storm incident. Her fleet of robots and nano-drones, as well as the Robo-Raptor she rides into combat, are all patented to TitaniaCorp, her LLC.

Upon retirement, Titanium became a tenured professor at Halcyon University and settled down with her wife Helena Gomez to raise a son, Jacob. Her only other romantic interlude involved Turboblast during his brief estrangement from his wife just before her death. Since leaving the team, Titanium has invented countless devices for other teams and heroes, including the Cat's Eye Glasses for Leopardo (File #4-C-82827) and the Mystic Seven's Hex-Mobile (File #7-C-22729). In recent years Titanium has become paranoid and protective of her technology and has refused to share. All schematics are stored on her quantum computer, the Titanium Drives, which are unbreachable.

Titanium is the focus of our recruitment efforts, and acquisition of her technology schematics is top priority. To that end, we have successfully placed Annabelle Morris in position as Titanium's trusted assistant (File #8-A-11118).

## PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Regarded as a team, the Astral Guardians present as driven to recapture their old spotlight through reintegration with social media and new technology. Each of them shows strain, however, in the face of the pace of modern celebrity.

### THE ASTRAL STRANGER

The Astral Stranger's psychology has been in question since his first appearance. He speaks in short sentences, avoids lights, and restrains all signs of emotion. This agent wonders, based on evaluating reports, whether the Stranger remembers much of his early life.

### TURBOBLAST

Karim Rashal is and has been the backbone of the team, but he now exhibits signs of exhaustion. Turboblast tries to keep up with media appearances, social justice functions, family obligations, and combating supernatural threats. His overtures to Nightmare Woman and Prince Phantasm have been fruitless, but Turboblast refuses to give up, indicating a sense of guilt over their situations.

### PROFESSOR TITANIUM

Of all three Guardians, Titanium has been longest in the heroics business. The years have left her jaded, a little paranoid, and bitter. Titanium admits publicly she needed convincing to return to the spotlight as a hero. The Iron Grandma is certain other heroes are poaching her ideas, and her narcissism has driven her to create redundant security. We were fortunate to be able to place recruit Agent Morris in her offices to gain her trust.

## ALLIES/FRIENDS

### CARLA VANHUGHS

Celebrity manager to the stars, VanHughs has uncharacteristically taken on the team. Previous interactions (File #7-C-00004 Incident: Death of Omnibus One) indicates VanHughs will provide sensitive information for the right price.

### NESSA TOLLIVER

Turboblast's daughter, Tolliver is dedicated to her father but reports indicate she disapproves of his return. The doctor is upside down on her student loans and struggling to raise a son, Johnny (File #6-D-44827), alone. Early reports indicate Turboblast's grandson may be powered.

### ANNABELLE MORRIS

Lab assistant to Professor Titanium and robotics expert, recruited from Halcyon University and recently brought into A.E.G.I.S. It is a priority to maintain Morris's loyalties to us over Professor Titanium, as Morris has shown wavering towards her new mentor.

## ENEMIES/RIVALS

### THE MYSTIC SEVEN

A team of seven young mystics (File #6-A-99999). Marshal Rune, Hexa, Mortessa, Witchknight, Wolf Wrecker, Dead Woman, and Paranaut (Files #6-A-99991 thru 99997 respectively) were fans of the Guardians, but the teams have clashed publicly over the Pharoah Invasion and the Possession Wave.

### PRINCE PHANTASM

Son of old nemesis King Phantasm, the Prince (File #8-D-44982) has vowed revenge against Turboblast for the death of his father. Prince recently dropped out of Halcyon U. Prime for Vengeance Opportunity.

### NIGHTMARE WOMAN

Primary nemesis of the Guardians, still in treatment for PTSD after the Ghost Storm incident. Recanted her criminal behavior. Hospital cameras recorded dreaming prophecies about “the doom of the Guardians.” Confessed hatred of Turboblast and Titanium, easily manipulated by affection for the Stranger.

## WEAKNESSES

The Guardians stand fractured, even if they hide it for the cameras. The strain of embracing new technology and recapturing celebrity status, coupled with continued personal conflicts, suggest the team will not last long. Recommend recruiting Titanium while driving others back into retirement.

### CODE BLUE

If disbanding the Guardians is priority, use Morris to recruit Titanium or steal her Titanium Drives for schematics. Use Mystic Seven to overwhelm the Stranger, and Nessa Tolliver to manipulate Turboblast back into retirement.

### CODE RED

If incapacitating the Guardians is priority, plant false stories about the Guardians with VanHughs, then use the Mystic Seven to confront the team publicly. Send in Morris to steal the Titanium Drives while team is distracted.

### CODE BLACK

If eliminating the Guardians is priority, release Nightmare Woman and provide her with Chaos Stones. Make sure Morris is in position before confrontation.

## EVALUATION

The Astral Guardians represent a Class 2 peril to themselves, if not others. Turboblast’s distraction, Professor Titanium’s obsession with recognition, and the Stranger’s continued detachment from the human race all together create a distinct lack of team cohesion and effectiveness.

# A.E.G.I.S. MOST WANTED



# CHAPTER TWO

A.E.G.I.S. maintains files on nearly every dangerous villain and entity throughout Halcyon City and the world(s) beyond. What follows is a collection of assembled files, each one written by Agent Delphi, AKA Brian Burnham, one of A.E.G.I.S.'s top analysts.

## HOW TO USE THIS CHAPTER

These files are here to give you a fully fleshed out set of details on some major villains in Halcyon City. Mine them for motivations, for events, for new hero and villain names, for plot hooks. Use them as you will.

Every villain here is taken from the Deck of Villainy, so if you are looking for more information on them, you can find it there.

## THE VILLAINS

Within these pages, you will find files on:

- Brass Brilliant, a former hero, presumed dead but operating secretly from the shadows, with enough power to easily manipulate and circumvent A.E.G.I.S.
- Carbine, a former A.E.G.I.S. agent turned dangerous anti-superhuman vigilante and trainer of new vigilantes.
- Cold Snap, a former superhero out for vengeance on those she blames for the death of her team.
- Doctor Infinity, an incredibly powerful android with time-traveling ability, apparently interested in maintaining the timestream's continuity.
- The Dread Queen, ruler of Vyortovia and utter genius, capable of creating incredible objects of power.
- Farlander, an alien of surprising luck and capability, pursuing all-powerful objects called Keynomes.
- Ilijah Intrepid, a traveler of time and space now locked into Halcyon City and willing to do anything to escape.
- Rosa Rook, the CEO of Rook Industries and suspected culprit behind countless supervillainous incidents.
- Satin, an anarchic bio-modified superhuman with an interest only in chaos and destruction.
- Vanquish, an alien tyrant lord with vast armies and fleets at his command, interested in taking control of the earth once and for all.

## BRASS BRILLIANT

**NAME:**  
Bryce Brilliant

**ALIAS:**  
Brass Brilliant

**THREAT LEVEL:**  
Red

### KNOWN ABILITIES

Bryce Brilliant is the recipient of the Titan Elixir, a specially designed formula capable of enhancing a human's physical abilities to peak levels. Bryce still functions at the absolute peak of human ability in terms of strength, reflexes, endurance, and durability. He also heals far faster than a regular human. Bryce himself has been clocked as a genius, one of the ten smartest people in the world. He has honorary doctorates from 20 universities across 15 fields. His cunning combined with his physical prowess makes him a terrifying combatant, especially if he has time to prepare for an enemy's appearance.

### APPEARANCE

Bryce appears to be approximately 50 years of age, despite being closer to 120. He is bald, very well-muscled, black, and usually wears some variation on his simple costume, including a button down shirt with rolled up sleeves, slacks, and two brass wristbands.

### ORIGINS

Bryce Brilliant invented the first version of the Titan Elixir along with his partner, Dr. Samantha Jones, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. After their funding was canceled, Bryce used the Elixir on himself to prove its efficacy, and found himself imbued with incredible strength. He and Dr. Jones were given enormous funding by government agencies interested in mass-producing the Titan Elixir, only to have the laboratory attacked by the early supervillain Doom Lord. In the attack, their work was destroyed.

While Doom Lord did not succeed in stealing the Titan Elixir, Dr. Jones and Bryce Brilliant agreed to cease their work on the Elixir for fear of its theft—and because Dr. Jones had no interest in being a part of the superhuman world. The prospect of being attacked by masked villains made her disinterested in the work.

Bryce and Dr. Jones parted ways, although they would periodically work together when Bryce needed help in a dire situation, or when they needed to tweak or update the Titan Elixir for Bryce.

Where Dr. Jones left her work behind, Bryce plunged deep into the superheroic world, becoming one of the earliest superheroes and taking the name “Brass” Brilliant. He ventured throughout the world fighting villainy and crime wherever he went, always returning to his laboratories in Halcyon City. He was widely considered one of the world's greatest heroes.



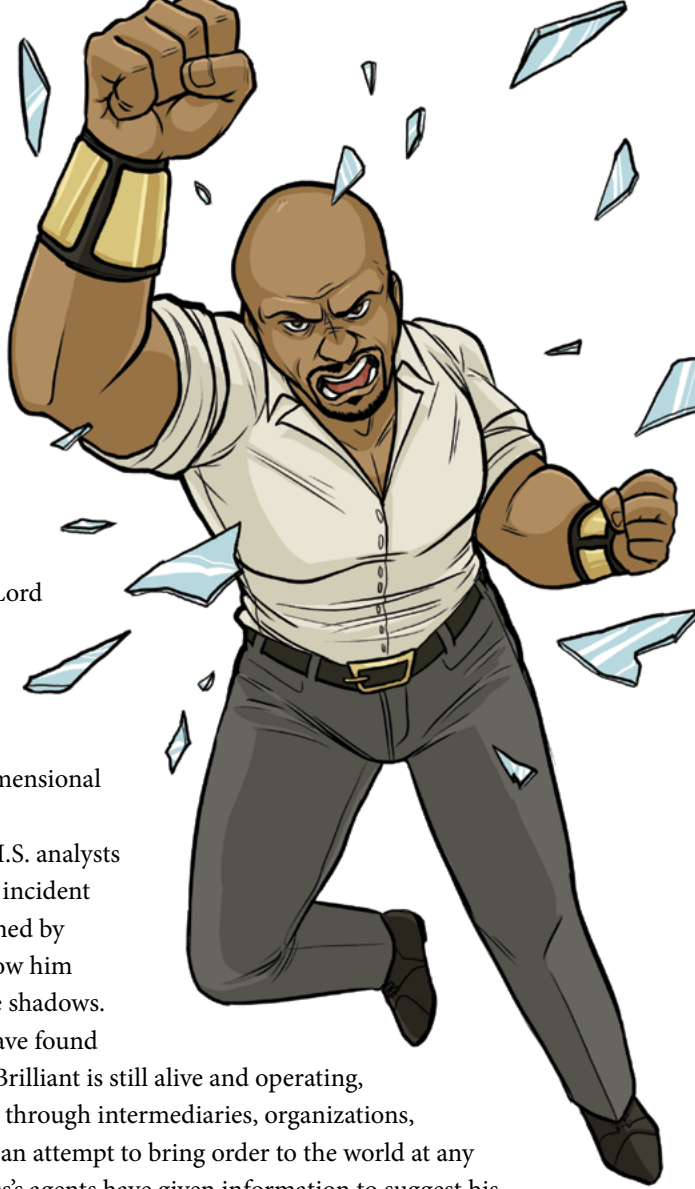
In 1965, Bryce Brilliant was publicly killed along with Doom Lord when the latter attempted to vanquish Bryce in one final attack involving zeppelins, mutated beast-soldiers, and clockwork zombies. Brass personally engaged the Doom Lord at his “doom base,” and both of them were presumed destroyed by an explosion of interdimensional energies at the base.

However, A.E.G.I.S. analysts now believe that the incident may have been planned by Brass Brilliant to allow him to disappear into the shadows. Since then, agents have found evidence that Brass Brilliant is still alive and operating, manipulating events through intermediaries, organizations, and other means, in an attempt to bring order to the world at any cost. Enough of Brass’s agents have given information to suggest his continued existence that A.E.G.I.S. no longer considers it a theory.

## INCIDENTS

Bryce Brilliant has been operating from the shadows since 1965. A.E.G.I.S. agents have successfully traced several incidents back to him, however, including at least two that involve superhero teams who appear to have covered up Bryce Brilliant’s involvement of their own accord—analysts speculate a desire to keep untarnished the image of one of Halcyon City’s greatest heroes.

Brass Brilliant was linked to the destruction of the Panopticon of Oculus in 1983. Oculus was a powerful artificer who styled herself a vigilante hero. She



had constructed her Panopticon prison structure, secretly, out in the middle of the ocean, camouflaged well with her advanced chameleon plating. She had taken it upon herself to single-handedly incarcerate the criminals of Halcyon City, super-powered or not. In her estimation, the city had not been doing enough to deal with the crime of the 1980s. While the heroes of Halcyon City worked to locate the Panopticon, its chameleon plating suddenly dissipated, revealing it out in Halcyon's own Wolfman Bay. While the Exemplars were headed straight for the base to take it down, it was suddenly enveloped in a beam of coruscating light, and promptly disappeared entirely. Further tests proved that it was not merely hidden, but actually gone.

A.E.G.I.S. agents investigating the incident found evidence of dimensional-shift technology. The energy signature was deemed similar to that of the explosion that destroyed Doom Lord and Brilliant, and upon further investigation, matched devices similar to those found in Brilliant's public laboratory after his disappearance in 1965.

The Panopticon was deemed destroyed, and the prisoners lost, until some of them reappeared within city limits. Those prisoners were all low-risk/low-power individuals, many of whom were in fact heroes Panopticon had simply decided were dangerous. They had no recollection of anything that happened between the Panopticon's disappearance and their own reappearance, although some referred to having seen an individual with brass wristbands fighting the Panopticon's autoguards.

While the public explanation is that the Panopticon must have overloaded some dimensional matrix at its core, modern A.E.G.I.S. analysts have assembled a better theory. Bryce Brilliant attacked and took the Panopticon, successfully teleporting it into a pocket dimension or alternative location. Presumably he is still using it as a base, and a way to incarcerate those he deems dangerous. The most dangerous and powerful individuals that Oculus incarcerated were never found, and analysts believe they are still held there. Current theories suggest Oculus may even still be alive and working with Bryce.

The next most important incident occurred in 1998, during the overwhelming assault of the temporally displaced Baron Sanguinus, a warlord and a vampire from centuries previous. Baron Sanguinus successfully created an army of servants and took control of Halcyon City, defeating all the heroes arrayed against him and hypnotizing even them into becoming further forces for his army. A.E.G.I.S. was preparing an all-out tactical strike against him and the city, expecting significant casualties and collateral damage, only to find it unnecessary when all of his servants were freed of his hypnotic power.

A.E.G.I.S. gave the credit to the superhero Longbow, an unpowered Exemplar who took it upon herself to single-handedly take down Baron Sanguinus. In truth, however, many of those involved in the incident reported seeing covert teams active in the area. These teams were marked by their advanced technology, their interdimensional teleportation devices, and their brass wristbands. Some (unreliable) witness reports suggest that they may have armed Longbow with weaponry specifically catered to kill Baron Sanguinus. Specifically, the level of expertise involved suggests massive experience and knowledge, and evidence suggests the bolt that killed Baron Sanguinus may have been based on a design previously used by Brass Brilliant himself in a battle against Dracula.

Furthermore, the body of Baron Sanguinus did not dissipate to dust, as was expected based on prior encounters with vampires. Rather, the bolt used by Longbow left behind Sanguinus's body, which A.E.G.I.S. analysts now believe to have merely been in a state of torpor. A.E.G.I.S. records suggest that the body was taken and held in hazard storage centers beneath the Spike, but upon further review, the body appears to be missing. Security footage revealed a notable manipulation and gap in time shortly after the battle. After attempting to reassemble the footage, analysts determined that the same brass-banded special forces took the body.

A.E.G.I.S. has given a name to the special forces teams and apparent organization associated with Brass Brilliant: "Alloy."

## **ASSESSMENT**

Brass Brilliant's guilt, involvement, and continued existence are all based on a patchwork quilt of evidence, analysis, and theory. In the end, A.E.G.I.S. has yet to find any direct evidence that Brass Brilliant still lives. That said, it is the opinion of this agent and all analysts involved in the Alloy investigations that Brass Brilliant is the most likely culprit. Between the modus operandi, the level of knowledge and expertise involved, and continued inconsistencies in all the incidents, we believe that Brass Brilliant is active and taking extralegal action.

It seems that his interest lies in ensuring the destruction of the greatest threats and acquiring still more resources for Alloy, but the mere fact that he is able to operate on a level that far surpasses A.E.G.I.S. agents makes him a possible threat. Should A.E.G.I.S. agents come into contact with Alloy operatives, or Brass Brilliant himself, they are encouraged to document the incident as best as they possibly can, but to keep their distance for their own safety.

## CARBINE

**NAME:**  
Jessica Miles

**ALIAS:**  
Carbine

**THREAT LEVEL:**  
Orange

### KNOWN ABILITIES

Jessica Miles possesses incredible tactical prowess, proficiency with a vast array of weaponry, perfect aim, hand-to-hand expertise at the limit of human ability, and any number of other skills learned through years as an A.E.G.I.S. agent.

### APPEARANCE

Jessica hides her identity well when not in action, taking on costumes, new clothing, and new mannerisms. When on a mission, she usually adopts a dark black and gray uniform (though she will vary the colors to blend in with the environment). The uniform is similar to A.E.G.I.S. tactical wear, including reinforced kinetic-kevlar plating. She typically carries numerous weapons and tools, many of them hidden in pocket-dimension pouches on her person. She has accumulated a miscellany of tactical and super-science devices over the years, so her exact armament at any given time varies wildly.

### ORIGINS

Jessica Miles entered the military at a young age and excelled as a special forces soldier. She was recommended for promotion into A.E.G.I.S. After entering the agency she executed countless successful missions around the globe, ranging from infiltration to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Her work with advanced anti-superhuman task forces was exemplary.

However, her psych evals began to note a trend. Jessica had expressed a healthy ability to make friendships and partnerships within the agency. But as the list of friends who were KIA grew longer and longer, she began to resent the force she saw as the primary cause for her friends' deaths—supers. (Most A.E.G.I.S. fatalities are sourced to dangerous supers, see Personnel Report 85-B.)

When her team at the time (Codename: Shardflight) was tasked to capture known metahuman criminal power broker Ahriman, she led them to success at the cost of three of her four teammates' lives. The fourth teammate, Agent Ophelia Distani, reported having to physically restrain Jessica Miles from executing the subdued Ahriman. (Ahriman is still imprisoned in the Spike, see Current Incarceration Report.)

Jessica's psych eval after the last Shardflight mission suggested a full-blown hatred of superhumans, which led to her removal from active duty for further evaluation and help. She almost immediately fled A.E.G.I.S. and disappeared, reappearing two years later under the alias "Carbine."

## INCIDENTS

The first appearance of alias “Carbine” came during the noted Hammerhead/ Shockwave incident of the ’90s. Villain Hammerhead and hero Shockwave battled in front of an apartment building in downtown Halcyon, ultimately leading to the leveling of the building and the death of four who were not evacuated from the building in time. The public outcry was enormous against both hero and villain.

When Hammerhead was eventually brought to stand trial, she barely made it up the stairs of the courthouse before a specialized drill-shot, fired from a customized kinetically enhanced sniper rifle from the other side of the city, tore its way through her throat. Later, when Shockwave was similarly brought to court, Carbine distracted the HCPD escort with random gunfire, drew them away from Shockwave’s truck, and triggered a gravity bomb she planted under the street, crushing the truck and Shockwave together.

Since then, Carbine has intermittently cropped up on A.E.G.I.S.’s radar, almost always in an incident involving supers, and almost always attempting to kill one or more of them. Sometimes, A.E.G.I.S. has been able to track her involvement back to a job request; other times, it seems she is involved of her own free will. She has never targeted a non-super since leaving A.E.G.I.S., and in those confrontations when A.E.G.I.S. agents have managed to catch up to her, she has made certain not to kill any of them.

Perhaps her most notable attempted attack was against the superhuman Pulsar (common name Shawn Rian), a hero known to periodically lose control of himself and become a much

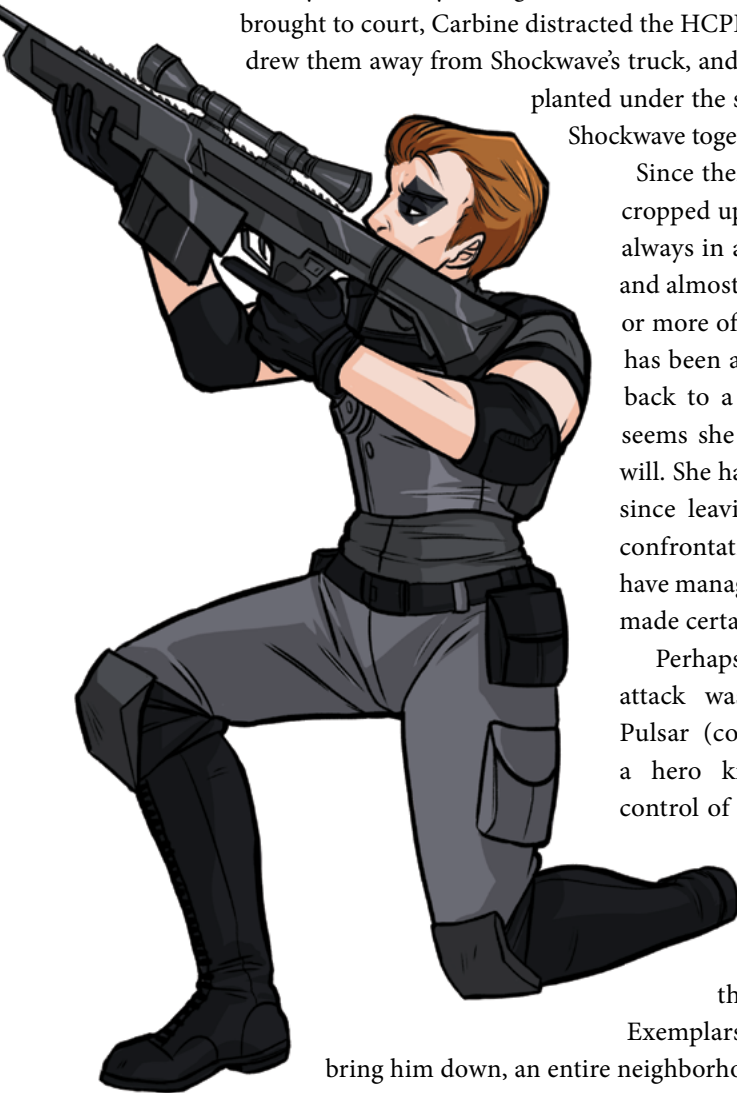
darker, much more terrible creature—Black Hole.

After his latest bout as Black Hole, when it took

the combined strength of the

Exemplars and the Silver Saviors to

bring him down, an entire neighborhood lay in shambles.



Pulsar recovered from the incident, receiving psychological and physical help, in a stay at Ruiz Wakefield Hospital for Metahumans. When he finally made his way outside, a fan approached, asking Pulsar for an autograph. While he was distracted, Carbine came up behind him with a single lens of white dwarf star, designed to drain his powers and weaken him so she could drag him into a nearby alleyway. The “fan,” a young woman later identified as a survivor of the latest Black Hole attack named Alysha Jones, assisted Carbine—the two were clearly in league with each other.

In the alleyway, Jessica had prepared an advanced railgun loaded with shards of white dwarf star perfectly calibrated to nullify Pulsar’s powers. The two appeared to be prepared to execute Pulsar, but when Carbine asked Alysha to pull the trigger, Pulsar begged for mercy, mentioning his wife and child. Alysha balked at firing, and at Alysha’s request, Jessica agreed to flee. The two left behind the advanced weaponry and a living, bound Pulsar.

While this incident is troubling in that it suggests Carbine is recruiting and/or training new vigilantes to work beside her, it also suggests that these new vigilantes may be helping her to form new connections and exhibit mercy. A.E.G.I.S. psych analysts believe this suggests there is some potential for Carbine’s rehabilitation.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Jessica Miles was one of the greatest agents A.E.G.I.S. had ever known. Now, she is an assassin and a terrorist, and directly targets the superhuman population of the world. She seems to primarily target those she deems dangerous or threatening, especially those responsible for clear attacks. She also seems to attempt to minimize collateral damage, but she is not above using crowds to her advantage as distractions or easy cover, for example.

With the most recent incident involving Alysha Jones, A.E.G.I.S. now believes Carbine is recruiting additional aid. It is currently unclear exactly what effect these new partnerships will have on Carbine. Psych assessments with available data suggest that Carbine may have a pathological need to confirm that her position is the right one by convincing others, especially the young, to join with her; such an assessment is largely speculative, however.

Jessica Miles may not be a world-ending threat, but she represents something specific for A.E.G.I.S.—the corruption of an agent gone rogue. Agents are advised to consider her armed and dangerous at all times and to approach with extreme caution; take any opportunity to apprehend or incapacitate the target. While analysts currently believe Jessica Miles may be rehabilitated, protocol is to take all necessary measures to subdue her, up to and including lethal force if required.

## COLD SNAP

NAME:	ALIAS:	THREAT LEVEL:
Luisa Cardoza	Cold Snap	Orange

### KNOWN ABILITIES

Cold Snap can channel heat away from herself and create subzero temperatures in an instant. She can pull water out of the air to create ice, and has shown incredible expertise at shaping that ice. She is also an experienced superhero combatant, with impressive tactical acumen and skill at fighting.

### APPEARANCE

Cold Snap's common outfit is a white jacket over a blue t-shirt, with loose white pants and sneakers. This outfit is the same she wore as a Protector, and over time it has grown damaged and dirty through use. Her eyes are rimmed with white, and her lips are blue. Frost tips her hair, lines her t-shirt at the neck and waist, and creeps across her hands. In combat, her hands are totally covered with ice, and she leaves a trail of frost from her shoes.

### ORIGINS

Luisa Cardoza used to be a member of the superhero team known as the Protectors. Composed of Cold Snap, the Silver Owl, Mastodon, Sparkplug, and Scimitar, the Protectors were an up and coming force, with no ties to larger organizations. They were each largely considered street-level heroes, mostly involved in fighting general criminal activity and uninvolved in the larger crises that afflict Halcyon City. But over time, their team's successes raised their profile. They actively participated in the defense of the city during the One-Day Invasion of the Allscarab, and Halcyon City news media covered them favorably.

Despite their rising profile, however, the Protectors wanted to avoid ties to any organization greater than themselves. They didn't want to act under the purview of A.E.G.I.S. or the city government, let alone a corporation. As the team's star continued to rise and they were bombarded with offers for sponsorship, they successfully remained independent. Ultimately, this desire for independence is Luisa's explanation for the tragedy that befell the team.

On June 8, 1998, the Protectors were caught in running battle against gunmen, assessed later to be part of the Spider's organization. They had the situation well in-hand, until additional cars pulled into the chase from side roads. Each car seemed full of more gunmen, and they opened fire on the Protectors. The Protectors were taken by surprise and tried to pull away, but the gunmen followed them. When the Protectors engaged head-on, the gunmen revealed additional weaponry, including RPGs and power-suppressing grenades.



The Protectors fell, one by one, to the onslaught. The last to fall was the bullet-proof Mastodon, for whom the gunmen had brought hyper-metal bullets. According to eye-witness accounts, a bleeding Mastodon implored Cold Snap, the only other teammate standing, to run. And then Mastodon charged the gunmen, creating a distraction and an opportunity for Cold Snap to escape. Mastodon was gunned down, but Cold Snap escaped.

The entire city mourned the loss of the Protectors, and a city-wide manhunt began for the perpetrators, but to no avail. When Luisa resurfaced after spending time in hiding and healing from her wounds, she was enraged and set about attacking those she blamed. She first targeted one of the Spider's warehouses and killed everyone she found inside with razor sharp icicles.

Over time and further interactions between her and law enforcement, superheroes, and A.E.G.I.S. agents, analysts put together a clear picture of her intentions. She blames the Spider, but also fully believes that the attack couldn't have come entirely from him; the gunmen were too well armed, and the Spider had too little to gain. She assumes that the gunmen were supplied and equipped by other forces, forces that did not like how independent the Protectors were. She remains unsure of exactly who these forces are, but is more than ready to place the blame upon any target that seems likely, ranging from the Exemplars to Rook Industries to A.E.G.I.S.

## INCIDENTS

After the initial incident at the warehouse, Cold Snap has gone on to attack many other targets, both to gain information and in pursuit of direct vengeance.

A notable incident involved her direct assault on an Exemplar base, Champion Tower, three years ago on March 23. The Tower was a public front for the Exemplars, a place where they could host most of their public relations and public facing activities. It was well-defended, but widely considered tactically unimportant. Luisa Cardoza, however, had learned about the teleporter within the Tower's base, allowing for easy transfer to the Exemplars' primary (and hidden) headquarters at the time, the Cloud.

Cold Snap came into Champion Tower through the front doors and nonlethally dispatched the defense force and automated systems. The first Exemplar to arrive on the scene, Raptor, tried to attack her only to find herself outmatched by Cold Snap's skill, powers, and anger. Raptor later reported that Cold Snap threatened her with an icicle before deciding not to kill her. Cold Snap claimed that Raptor couldn't have been with the Exemplars at the time of the Protectors' deaths, so Luisa would let Raptor go, this time.

Cold Snap made her way to the teleporter and jumped up to the Cloud, where she applied a pre-made hacking device to the Exemplars' computers.

As the other Exemplars attacked Cold Snap and A.E.G.I.S. agents responded to the incident, she was downloading their files. Once the program had run its course, Cold Snap snatched it up and dove off the Cloud. The Exemplars pursued, leading to an aerial battle, until Cold Snap used her ice powers to slow her descent and escape into the city.

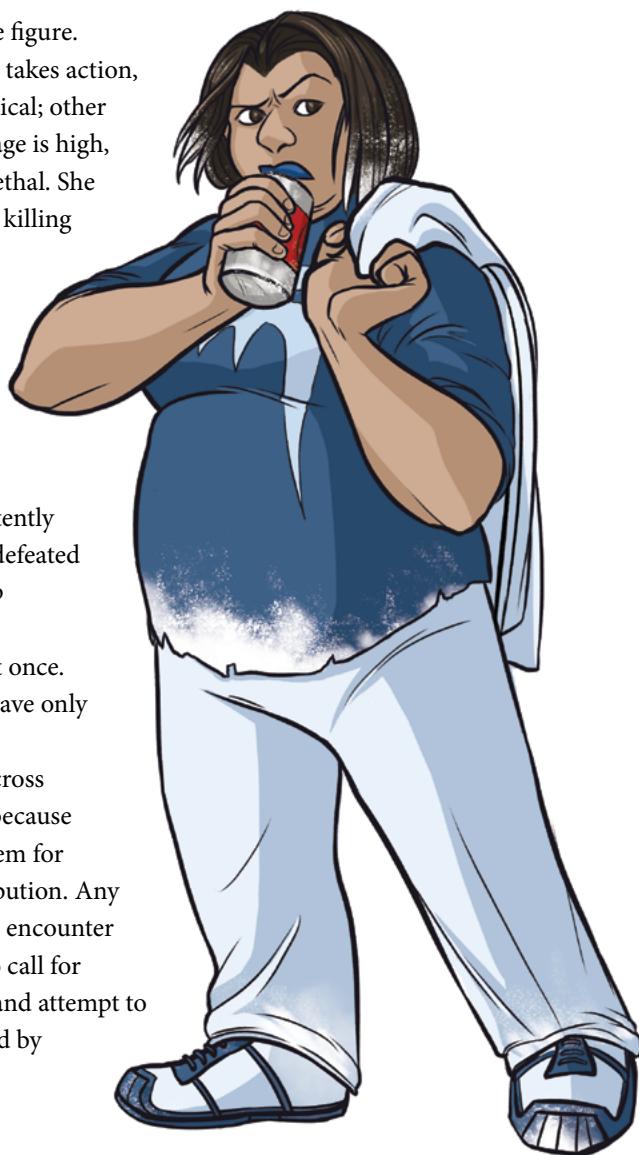
A.E.G.I.S. analysts were not able to determine exactly what files Luisa took from the Exemplar computers, though they assume the files concerned the death of the Protectors.

## ASSESSMENT

Cold Snap is a volatile figure. Sometimes, when she takes action, she is precise and tactical; other times, collateral damage is high, and the attack often lethal. She restrains herself from killing those she deems innocent, at least for now, but psych analysts believe she will cross that line soon.

Most noteworthy, Cold Snap has consistently escaped capture and defeated those who've come up against her, including multiple Exemplars at once. Her skill and power have only grown with time.

If an agent runs across Cold Snap, it's likely because she wanted to find them for interrogation or retribution. Any A.E.G.I.S. agents who encounter her are encouraged to call for backup immediately and attempt to escape until supported by appropriate force.



## DOCTOR INFINITY

**NAME:** Metatemporal  
Director ∞ (aka MD ∞)

**ALIAS:**  
Doctor Infinity

**THREAT LEVEL:**  
Red

### KNOWN ABILITIES

Time traveling, temporal manipulation, chronal vortices. Doctor Infinity evidences significant control over time, with abilities ranging from time travel to targeted rapid aging to temporarily removing objects from the time stream. Doctor Infinity's powers have never been fully codified.

### APPEARANCE

The android known as Doctor Infinity (first dubbed by Erwin Pylot of the Halcyon City Herald, 1948) appears to have a feminine, humanoid form. They are obviously inhuman, made of some form of flexible biosteel composite.

The android's body is mostly blue and silver, with a single notable point. A large blue octagon glows at the center of the android's chest. Analysts have theorized that this octagon is an exhaust port for the android's central power core, though there is no concrete evidence of such.

The android is often surrounded by chronal vortices, floating blue-white bubbles of temporal energy. These vortices appear to be under Doctor Infinity's control, and move around the android at their whim. In many incidences, they have deployed these chronal vortices as a form of attack.

### ORIGINS

Uncertain. The information A.E.G.I.S. has on Doctor Infinity has come from second-hand reports on Doctor Infinity's own admissions. The android claimed their full designation was Metatemporal Director ∞ (ultimately shortened to MD and then to Doctor), and they have referenced three significant versions of their origin:

1. Doctor Infinity was created by a far-future transhuman civilization to preserve the timeline that led to their own existence.
2. Doctor Infinity was created by an alien mind absorbed into an ancient craftsman of some kind. The craftsman proceeded to create an alien version of a statue or religious artifact imbued with the power to travel through time, who then took it upon themselves to protect the timeline of reality as a nigh-divine figure.
3. Doctor Infinity was created in the modern day (approximately), the product of a super-scientist attempting to deal with a chronal incursion of the very variety that Doctor Infinity can cause, thereby creating a causality loop centered on Halcyon City.

There are many variations across these three broad trends, however. For example, within the first overarching version, Doctor Infinity sometimes claims to be the product of the descendants of superhumanity, a noble utopian world worth protecting; other times, Doctor Infinity claims to have been built by a selfish race of cyberminds interested only in protecting themselves, an urge which the Doctor himself has evolved beyond. Within the second overarching version, sometimes Doctor Infinity alludes to having been a creation of a great Renaissance era sculptor, imbued with an alien intelligence. Other times, Doctor Infinity implies they were created by a divinely inspired craftsman of the Yombe, as a kind of super-science charged nkisi nkondi. And so on.

The only truths that remain clear are that Doctor Infinity was created by other entities, and that they perform a protective role with regard to the timeline, at least from their own perspective.

## **INCIDENTS**

There are many anecdotal or potentially apocryphal records of Doctor Infinity's appearances throughout history. Ranging from appearing as a god-like figure to an ancient civilization to appearing as the savior of singularly important individuals, rescuing them and depositing them elsewhere in the timeline, these appearances are often outlandish and nearly impossible to confirm. That said, Doctor Infinity has had a great number of recorded appearances and incidents in Halcyon City from the '40s on.

The first sighting of Doctor Infinity on record in A.E.G.I.S. files occurred in 1948, when Doctor Infinity appeared on the front steps of Halcyon City Hall, in the midst of a ceremony to honor Champion. Doctor Infinity focused upon Mayor Halwell, attempting to permanently eliminate him from the timeline with a concentrated blast of chronal energy. They were thwarted by Champion. Champion later reported during a debriefing that for some time during the fight, he was sent to an alternate timeline, in which Mayor Halwell had established martial law in Halcyon City using deputized and cybernetically controlled superheroes as shock troops.

Agents at the time confirmed the existence of research into such cybernetic implants. After Champion gave a speech following his conflict with Doctor Infinity, the program was shuttered and Mayor Halwell actively changed some of his rhetoric. A.E.G.I.S. analysts have proposed that either Doctor Infinity failed at an extreme method of dealing with Mayor Halwell, or succeeded at a roundabout method of derailing the alternate future that Champion visited.

Doctor Infinity appeared several times between the 1948 incident and the 1977 city-wide chronal distortion that brought the time traveler back

into the public consciousness. Those incidents were relatively small scale and involved individuals or specific locations, with reports always emphasizing that Doctor Infinity appeared driven to eliminate some kind of threat to the timestream, and was always ultimately “defeated” by Halcyonian heroes. In all such incidences, analysts have plausibly argued both that Doctor Infinity’s actual plans were thwarted, and that Doctor Infinity had *counted* on such interference in the first place, so as to avert a greater disaster.

In 1977, Doctor Infinity appeared floating over the center of Halcyon City, streaming with chronal energy and surrounded by a constellation of chronal vortices. Before any of Halcyon’s defenders could put out a unified response, the android exuded a net of chronal energy over the entirety of the city, knocking it out of phase with the rest of the world. The city was overrun by anachronistic anomalies ranging from the appearance of cybernetic dinosaurs to legions of Roman soldiers trooping down Longstreet.

During the week of the city’s imprisonment, the superhero team known as the Bastions discovered a temporal parasite leeching time from the world around it, trapped within Doctor Infinity’s phase net. The creature had been draining time from Halcyon City and the rest of the Earth, until Doctor Infinity’s phase-net trapped it and cut it off from the larger timestream. When the Bastions successfully defeated the creature in a pitched battle (leading to the loss of one of their own, Razorback, to the creature’s temporal maw), Doctor Infinity lifted the phase-net from over the city and disappeared.

The most significant new trend around Doctor Infinity’s actions has been the attempted abduction of young individuals from Halcyon City. The android has abducted Alice Hare, the child of known supervillain and superhero Red Queen and Mad Hatter; Paolo Gomez, the child of mundane citizens Esteban Gomez and Vanessa Petrie; and Sienna Marks, winner of Halcyon City’s prestigious Minds of Tomorrow competition. In all known cases of abduction, the victim was eventually saved by one of Halcyon City’s superheroes or teams.

While no obvious pattern arises around these abductions, interviews with the victims suggest that Doctor Infinity explained their purposes, to greater or lesser extents. The victims claim that Doctor Infinity was looking to recruit and train more defenders of the timeline, in particular by removing individuals who might be dangerous if left in their current timeline.

A.E.G.I.S. analysts have found no further direct evidence of Doctor Infinity having successfully abducted or recruited new allies in their crusade across time, but that does not actually mean much when dealing with a time traveler.

## ASSESSMENT

Doctor Infinity is very powerful and largely unknown. Every one of their appearances seems to have ended with a more stable timeline, but the android has shown a tendency to deploy whatever means and tactics they deem necessary to ensure such outcomes. Reports that the android would never have actually gone through with some of the more dangerous “threats” they have made, that those threats were just as much a part of an overall attempt to repair the timeline, cannot be confirmed.

A.E.G.I.S. deems Doctor Infinity a dangerous threat to Halcyon City and the world due to their unpredictability and excessive power. Agents are advised to treat the android with extreme caution, but to capture, interrogate, or sample them if at all possible.

## ADDENDUM

The Temporal Department at A.E.G.I.S. has made it a top priority to trap and restrain Doctor Infinity. Their power has been deemed far too dangerous to the city and the planet to be allowed free rein over the timestream. They are already creating devices to predict Doctor Infinity’s next appearance and to restrain the android’s significant chronal powers.



## DREAD QUEEN

**NAME:** Queen  
Kseniya Tsvetnovadred

**ALIAS:**  
The Dread Queen

**THREAT LEVEL:**  
Red

### KNOWN ABILITIES

Kseniya Tsvetnovadred displays a genius-level intellect, matched only by the topmost minds of the entire world. She regularly invents new and terrifying weapons or devices. In particular, she is never without her Quantum Circlet, a device which taps into her own mind to subtly influence probabilities at the quantum level in her favor. She has at her disposal a legion of cybernetic soldiers (her Dreadborgs). She displays a cunning mind and strategic prowess, often out-thinking her enemies by several moves.

### APPEARANCE

Kseniya Tsvetnovadred is almost never seen outside of her ceremonial garb as queen of Vyortovia. She is hairless (bald and no eyebrows), with light grey eyes. She wears upon her brow a coronet in the shape of Vyortovia's traditional badge of office, which doubles as her Quantum Circlet. She also wears a cuirass of an unknown dark metal over her tan-green robe. A long cape hangs from her shoulder guards. She always wears metallic gauntlets upon her hands, often concealing new weapons or devices.

### ORIGINS

Kseniya Tsvetnovadred was made queen of Vyortovia at the age of 8. Her country was an island nation in an alternate reality from our own, characterized by endless battles between out-of-control metahumans, leftover alien weapons and warmachines, and demonic magical creatures spewing from rents in existence. Vyortovia was, of necessity, a hard nation equipped to defend itself as best as possible from these threats. But still, it constantly stood at the brink of annihilation; as such, its new queen plotted to save Vyortovia from its own world by sending it to another.

According to widely disseminated reports (the Dread Queen displays more than a bit of hubris and pride, and actively propagates her history), she was always a genius, capable of assembling and disassembling powerful alien weaponry without difficulty from before she was crowned. At the age of 18, she assembled her trans-dimensional grappling hook, a device that would connect to another viable reality and drag the whole of her nation through the netherspace between worlds. She activated the device, and although Vyortovia and Halcyon City were both damaged in the cataclysmic transfer, the island nation now sits in the waters near Kingfisher Bay.



## INCIDENTS

The initial transfer of Vyortovia into our reality was itself cataclysmic, displacing massive amounts of water and threatening Halcyon City with a tidal wave. Afterward, the Dread Queen wasted no time in claiming Halcyon City as her own and deploying her Dreadborgs to conquer it. Her forces were ultimately beaten back by Halcyon City's defenders, but not without causing significant damage. Fearing an unending hot war, the superhero Queen Mab of the Mystic Circle was able to negotiate terms by which Vyortovia would keep its own sovereignty and existence despite being so close to Halcyon City, in exchange for disarmament.

Despite the agreement, the Dread Queen did not disarm her nation, hiding Vyortovia's advanced weaponry from A.E.G.I.S. inspectors and ultimately deploying Dreadborg fliers and Feartroopers into Exemplar headquarters to steal one of heroes' trophies: a shard of crystal recovered from the Crystalline Palace of the Omquasar. With the successful acquisition of the crystal shard, the Dread Queen reconstructed Vyortovia's buildings and citadels from crystal-steel alloy, nearly indestructible, and put them on levitation platforms capable of floating into the air. Afterward, she made reparations to Halcyon City in order to maintain peace and officially turned over all remaining Dreadborgs and Feartroopers to A.E.G.I.S. Our agency believed the matter over, only to discover later that she had designed the newly crystalline buildings of Vyortovia to act as resonators for a massive sonic cannon.

This pattern exemplifies most of Vyortovia's relationship to Halcyon City, superheroes, A.E.G.I.S., and the rest of the world. Claims of peace and truce, followed by the revelation of some dire plan, followed by the foiling of that plan, followed again by claims of peace and truce. Analysts suggest that a more directed, all-out conflict with Vyortovia could be catastrophic for Halcyon City and the whole world—a Dread Queen with her back against the wall would stop at nothing to defeat her enemies. So the city and our agency are forced into this cycle of conflict and peace.

The Dread Queen's most recent "attack" upon Halcyon City involved the creation of a Vyortovian force of metahumans, granted abilities (and controlled) through the Dread Queen's technology. She named this force "The Icons" (in contrast to the Exemplars), and deployed them to act as superheroes. The Icons regularly upstaged the Exemplars at every turn, earning the support of public opinion and even taking on younger heroes as new Icons. The city of Halcyon grew complacent and trusting of the Icons, until the Dread Queen triggered a subroutine in their cybernetic modifications.

With one sudden surge of action, the Icons banished the Exemplars to Vyortovia's home dimension, besieged the HCPD stations of the city, and

took martial control over Halcyon. The Dread Queen claimed her victory over the conquered city, even successfully holding it despite A.E.G.I.S. and military action, until the Exemplars were able to return to our world through a quantum tunnel, bringing with them a slew of tamed alien beasts they used to defeat and subdue the Icons.

The Dread Queen pulled her forces out of Halcyon City, but refused any further conditions of surrender. Her new Icons fiercely protect the island nation from any attempts to come closer.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Currently, Halcyon City (and the rest of the world) and Vyortovia stand at a tenuous truce, with Vyortovia too dangerous to assault directly, and Halcyon City too well protected to be overcome by Vyortovia. A.E.G.I.S. analysts suggest it is just a matter of time before the Dread Queen launches her next scheme or attack, which could be anything from an all-out assault to a subversive invasion to a quantum-motivated reality shift.

The Dread Queen is defined by her hubris and confidence. She is incredibly competent and a truly dangerous foe, but despite failing time and again in her attempts to seize total control of Halcyon City, she continues to try, believing that it belongs to her. A.E.G.I.S. analysts believe that the mere fact that it has resisted these attempts makes it a more desirable target for her, and to satiate her own desire for supremacy she must conquer it. She is not irrational, and she will ultimately make the smartest tactical choice at any given time, allowing superheroes and A.E.G.I.S. agents to communicate with and even persuade her.

But she remains a constant threat to the city and the rest of the world as long as she is in power. All attempts to remove her from power permanently have ultimately failed. A.E.G.I.S. warns all agents traveling within proximity to Vyortovia, or interacting with its agents, to use extreme caution. All agents encountering the Dread Queen herself should retreat until certain they are in a superior position.



## **FARLANDER**

**NAME:**  
Farlander (the)

**ALIAS:**  
N/A

**THREAT LEVEL:**  
Orange

### **KNOWN ABILITIES**

Farlander has teleportative abilities granted by his alien technology belt (called “The Everbelt!” by Farlander himself), as well as myriad other devices of unknown function. Farlander has used these devices as everything from weaponry to lockpicks to computers to holographic projectors. Furthermore, Farlander appears able to exude pheromones, hormones, and other chemicals capable of inducing false sight in biological beings around it. These illusions can fool even the strongest of security measures.

### **APPEARANCE**

Farlander is an alien with the appearance of a large blue-black-gray beetle. His body is plated with an exoskeleton for the most part. He has four eyes, mandibles, antennae, and six limbs. Farlander wears the Everbelt around his waist, with myriad pouches upon it.

### **ORIGINS**

Farlander is a known extraterrestrial, though A.E.G.I.S. agents have not as of yet encountered any other alien of a similar species. Farlander has deflected any inquiries about his species or people. His age, similarly, is unknown, though his first contact with the Earth came in 1972, when Farlander arrived on the planet to seek a Keynome. At some point in his past, Farlander became obsessed with finding treasures, and in particular with collecting the Keynomes. He claims that they are the ultimate prize, and that they will fetch him a fine price “at the galactic markets of K’Zar.” Again, A.E.G.I.S. agents have yet to confirm the existence of the galactic markets of K’Zar. In general, agents have reported a consistent skepticism around any of Farlander’s claims.

Further interactions with Farlander and other space-worthy creatures aware of Farlander’s existence seem to suggest that he has been on a quest to obtain the Keynomes for a very long time. The interstellar hero known as Magnetar reported that Farlander has, at most, held a single Keynome at a time, and usually loses them in short order, either to attempts to find the others, or as quick sales to continue to pay for his quests. He always claims that he will come back to obtain the Keynomes he sells off and, according to Magnetar, has made several such attempts.

## INCIDENTS

In the initial appearance of Farlander, his spherical ship landed in Halcyon City Plaza. He emerged, struck a pose, and gave a speech in which he claimed that he only came to “this meager dirt ball of a planet” to obtain the Keynome that he knew “you puny simians have hidden somewhere.” He demanded the Keynome be brought to him, and began to fire twin laser-pistols wildly.

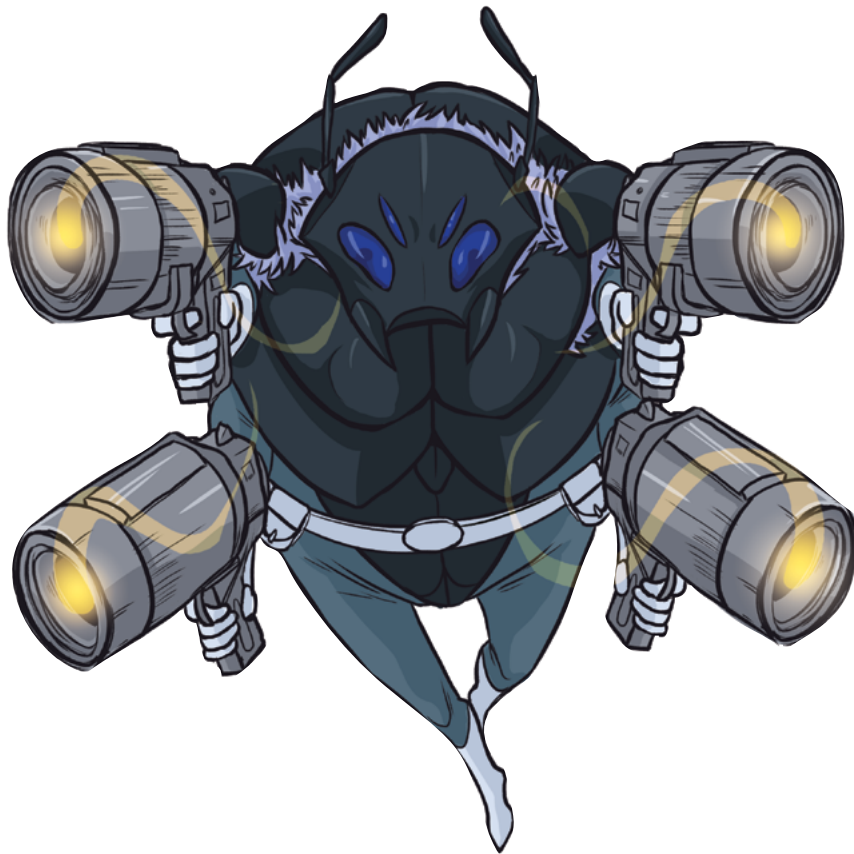
When the Exemplars arrived to stop him, Farlander was promptly defeated when Jetstream stole his guns and Silver Savior trapped his arms in bonds of liquid silver. The Exemplars took him into custody, only for Farlander to teleport away—claiming all the while that it had all been part of his plan.

He appeared shortly thereafter at the astronomic laboratories of Onyx Science and Technologies, where scientists Dr. Laura Hagar and Ulvid Patrick had been examining a Keynome without any concept of what it actually was. They successfully fooled him into leaving with a facsimile of the Keynome, and Onyx S&T agreed to put greater security around the interstellar device.

After at least three further attempts, Farlander successfully stole the Onyx S&T Keynome and escaped to space. In that incident, he inadvertently took the superhero team/family known as the Bright Futures with him. Farlander then successfully used the Onyx Keynome to find another Keynome on the alien planet Vine, and then a third on the abandoned space station Skeleton.

These incidents would normally be beyond A.E.G.I.S. remit, but with three Keynomes in his possession, they began to resonate, calling out to the other Keynomes across all of space. Hope Future, of the Bright Futures, later suggested that Farlander was changing into an emissary of the Star Minds, the mythical cosmic entities the Keynomes were purported to awaken if ever fully united. As the Star Minds took greater possession of Farlander, he gained new cosmic powers, and his interest in selling them vanished.

Eventually, after acquiring another Keynome in an attack on Vanquish (see Vanquish report), the fully-possessed Farlander returned to Earth to find the Keynome that had been hidden on the planet’s surface eons ago. The Bright Futures followed him back to Earth, and alerted A.E.G.I.S. and all other available superheroes to his attempt to take the last Keynome. All the collected superheroes of Earth were unable to defeat the cosmically empowered Farlander during a confrontation in the Earth’s Antarctic—he was only stopped when the un-powered hero Sly Peter tricked him into firing his own cosmic blasts into himself. Farlander was separated from the Keynomes and taken into A.E.G.I.S. custody. The Keynomes were split up, several of them sent back into space to be harbored by appropriate authorities such as the Star Wardens and the Legionnaires. A.E.G.I.S. kept a Keynome to hold in safety, and to study.



Farlander eventually escaped from A.E.G.I.S. and returned to pursuing the Keynomes. The most noteworthy recent incident came ten years ago when he attacked Rook Industries's teleportal laboratory and used teleports to directly access the Keynomes across the cosmos. He was stopped when the superhero Circuit shut down the teleports. The incident nearly provoked an interstellar war, as the Legionnaires assumed Earth had stolen their Keynome (see Legionnaire War). A.E.G.I.S. holds a Keynome, and believes at least one other to be on Earth, under the control of Rook Industries (see Rosa Rook).

## **ASSESSMENT**

Farlander himself is a strange enemy. He is given to grandiose speeches and always refers to himself in the third person. He is easy to distract and get talking. He seems to get by thanks to either brilliance or sheer luck. A.E.G.I.S. has never successfully incarcerated Farlander for more than a month.

The Farlander has evaded all our attempts to keep him at bay. What's more, A.E.G.I.S. is deeply concerned about the potential for disaster should the Keynomes ever successfully be united. As such, Farlander is considered dangerous. A.E.G.I.S. agents are encouraged to inform the agency of any Farlander appearance, and to approach him with utmost caution and suspicion.

## ILIJAH INTREPID

**NAME:**  
Ilijah Intrepid

**ALIAS:**  
N/A

**THREAT LEVEL:**  
Orange

### KNOWN ABILITIES

Ilijah Intrepid is equipped with technology from countless worlds across reality. This includes devices he carries upon his person, devices placed subcutaneously in his body, and devices he can access via extradimensional storage. His coat is known to be made of an impenetrable substance containing myriad pocket dimensions and miniaturized portal devices, allowing easy access to his arsenal. Furthermore, analysts have determined that his coat is laced with quantum-phase circuitry, allowing Ilijah to teleport, though the greater the distance he teleports, the longer it takes the coat to acquire the appropriate quantum charge.

### APPEARANCE

Ilijah Intrepid usually wears a casual outfit, some form of button down shirt, slacks, and boots. He is never seen without his longcoat, the color of which can change with a button press but is usually a dark blue-green. He often carries a satchel or messenger bag, as well as additional devices or relics upon his person, ranging from articles of jewelry to computerized gauntlets. Analysts approximate his age as about 40, with brown hair and a beard, although he has been known to alter his appearance using his devices.

### ORIGINS

Ilijah Intrepid is not from this dimension, but we have been unable to trace him back to another specific home dimension. His first appearance in our dimension came some 30 years ago. He appeared with an aim to acquire the Iridium Servitor, a powerful golem-like creature that had, at the time, been ensconced within the Exemplars' headquarters. His attempt to steal the creature was thwarted by the efforts of then-Exemplars Switchback and Rocket Yellow, and he vanished back into another dimension.

He has since become trapped within our dimension, according to the best of A.E.G.I.S. reports. It appears that an incident involving a massive shift in the multiverse, thanks to an attack by the Infinite Jester, led to Ilijah Intrepid's own dimensional signature being tied entirely to this world. Based on agent observation, he cannot depart to other dimensions, and analysts report that his most recent acquisitions have mostly been geared to create means of egress from this dimension.



## INCIDENTS

Incidents involving Ilijah Intrepid have ramped up excessively since he has become tethered to this reality. Initial incidents were mostly attempted thefts or burglaries, including the aforementioned attempt against the Iridium Servitor, and additional attempts at such artifacts of value as the Sword of Zeus, Da Vinci's Clock, and a shard of the Ultracite. All such attempts were foiled and are noteworthy only for the outlandish means by which Ilijah Intrepid perpetrated the crimes.

Since becoming trapped here, his attempts and attacks have become far more dangerous. Ilijah Intrepid seems hellbent on escaping this dimension, and his attempts have grown more desperate the longer he has remained here.

About 13 years ago, Ilijah Intrepid attempted to break the dimensional tether connecting him to this dimension by detonating the aforementioned shard of the Ultracite, a crystalline creature known to extend its existence across all the planes of reality.

Ilijah Intrepid broke into the Rook laboratories, deploying devices to create chaos and bedlam in the area and phasing through walls to find the Ultracite shard. Once he had it in his hands, Ilijah Intrepid added the shard to a resonance detonator, a device he had cobbled together designed to shatter his anchor in this dimension. A.E.G.I.S. agents investigating the break-in and Intrepid were able to determine, fairly quickly, that the resonance detonator would actually detonate the whole of Halcyon City in the process.

A.E.G.I.S. put out an all-hands bulletin, and the superhero team known as The Wanderers successfully found Ilijah's workshop, hidden in an invisible sphere floating over the city. They attacked, and the hero Redshift successfully phase-shifted the Ultracite shard slightly out of this reality, so the detonation did not affect Halcyon. The incident placed Redshift into a phase-variant version of Halcyon, however; A.E.G.I.S. scientists have yet to successfully restore Redshift to our Halcyon City. Ilijah Intrepid has sometimes tried to offer assistance in returning Redshift to our world as a bargaining chip when dealing with A.E.G.I.S., but current orders are to refuse any such deals; Intrepid has proved himself untrustworthy.

About 9 years ago, Ilijah Intrepid endangered the whole of the city yet again when he created Resonance, the enormous dimensional aberration that defeated the entire Exemplars team. Ilijah, in a new workshop located in the Docks district, experimented upon clone-slug bodies he had stolen from [REDACTED]. After analysis, A.E.G.I.S. determined that each body would have its own dimensional signature, and he was trying to swap his own with one of those bodies.

In the process, however, he altered one of the bodies to absorb interdimensional energies, and it began growing into what amounted to a sentient cosmic tumor. The creature, Resonance, fed on the interdimensional resonance around it, and assaulted Halcyon City seeking interdimensional artifacts to consume. When the Exemplars fought the beast, it absorbed their own resonance, leaving them all incapacitated and at its mercy.

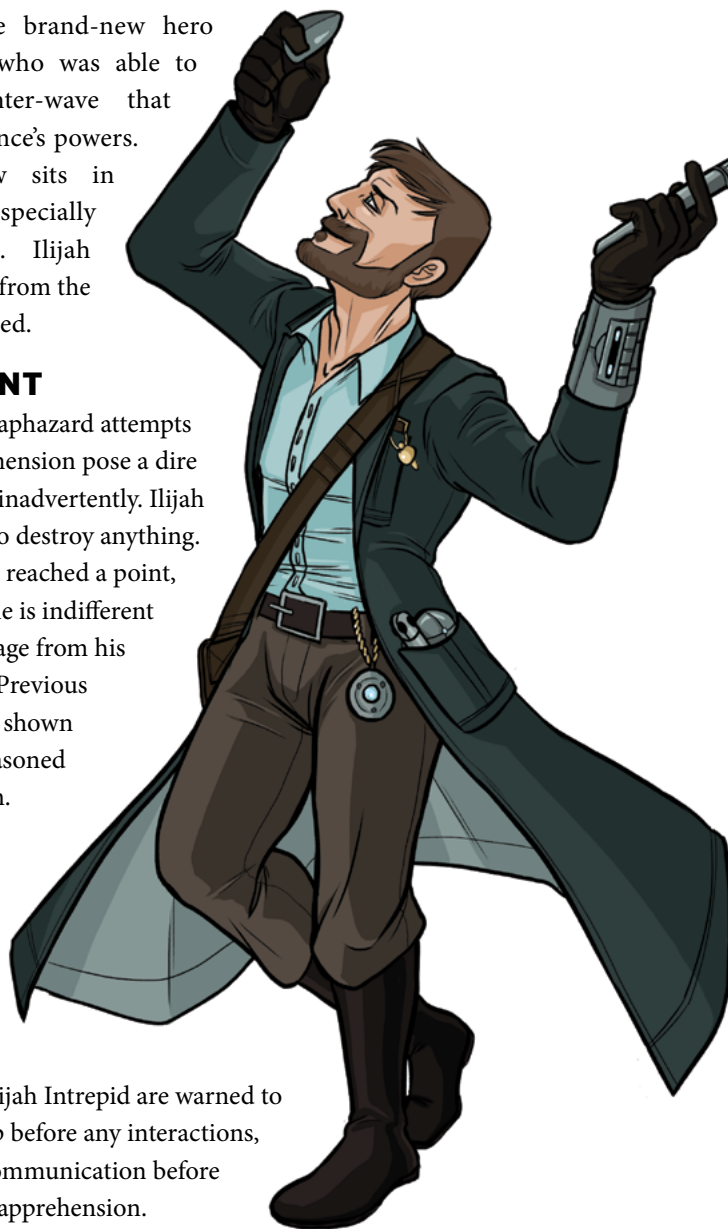
Fortunately, the creature was defeated by the brand-new hero String Theory, who was able to create a counter-wave that nullified Resonance's powers. Resonance now sits in the Spike in a specially modulated cell. Ilijah Intrepid escaped from the incident unharmed.

## ASSESSMENT

Ilijah Intrepid's haphazard attempts to escape our dimension pose a dire threat—but only inadvertently. Ilijah does not intend to destroy anything. He seems to have reached a point, however, where he is indifferent to collateral damage from his escape attempts. Previous interactions have shown that he can be reasoned or bargained with.

But his obsession with escape will drive him to take action without regard for collateral harm. Agents

who encounter Ilijah Intrepid are warned to summon back-up before any interactions, and to attempt communication before violent action or apprehension.



## ROSA ROOK

**NAME:**  
Rosa Rook

**ALIAS:**  
N/A

**THREAT LEVEL:**  
Red

### KNOWN ABILITIES

Clever, canny, cunning on a personal level; armed with wealth, favors, debts, and connections on a social level. Rosa Rook is not, in and of herself, a match for any single A.E.G.I.S. agent; but in her element, she is a match for the entirety of A.E.G.I.S.

### APPEARANCE

Rosa Rook always wears perfectly tailored suits. She usually keeps her hair in a stylized bun. Most of her suits are some shade of red or gray.

### ORIGINS

Rosa Rook started off her life with very little. She was born in Halcyon City, the Silver Run neighborhood, the child of a grocer and a teacher. She excelled at school until she realized that doing so made her a target for her peers' animosity, at which point she maintained a perfectly calculated level of mediocrity (as reported by one of her teachers who noticed, a Mr. Jose Alvarez). As a child she began running small business ventures, including illegal ones, buying and selling stolen goods to her fellow students. And eventually, when she decided it would help more than hurt, she brought her grades back up and won a scholarship to the prestigious Halcyon University. From there, it was a track up and up and up, graduating valedictorian, getting into a business graduate school, earning her MBA, and starting her own technology company with the initial aid of one of her own professors, Adrianna Petrov.

Records show that from a young age she was always interested in superhumans, though the manifestations of that interest don't track with a simple understanding. She wasn't just enamored of them; she wasn't just afraid of them. It seems as if she wanted to understand them, to know how they existed, and learn how to reproduce them. And when she started her own technology company, she translated that interest into a business plan. By investigating superhuman phenomena and replicating it, she would create devices to propel humanity into a new era.

She was no slouch at engineering herself, but she was far better at planning, organizing, at bringing together exactly the right people to get the job done. She lured leading scientists and engineers to her new company with myriad promises. With their help and under her leadership, they managed to crack

the mechanisms behind a Sevritri multi-phasing computer system, and suddenly Rook Industries was flush with money. From then on, it has only risen in prominence. It is the leading company in the entire world for creating technologies based on superhuman or alien abilities, and it has a number of contracts and partnerships with the military and law enforcement throughout the world.

A.E.G.I.S. also considers Rook Industries a significant threat.

## **INCIDENTS**

Rosa Rook's actions are characterized by subterfuge, obfuscation, and an avoidance of guilt. While A.E.G.I.S. has reason to believe she has been involved personally in any number of super-powered incidents over the years, she has always kept herself well-protected and without any provable connection, thanks to her company, countless employees, and well-placed bribes and allies throughout the city.

Usually, Rosa Rook takes advantage of some new player or power that attacks Halcyon City to then create and roll out a new line of products. She will not hesitate to test those products through unscrupulous means, and always she and her company come out on top.

Approximately two and a half decades ago, a massive robotic creature, Scrapyard, attacked Halcyon City. It embedded any technology it ran across into its own body, growing in size and strength every time. After its destruction, HCPD and A.E.G.I.S. put out a concerted effort into finding the creature's central core, as most of its body was made up of collected technology, but to no avail.

A year later, a group of ex-soldiers wearing enhanced armor began robbing banks across Halcyon City. Their armor allowed them to meld with and take over any technology they ran across—just like Scrapyard. When these soldiers, calling themselves the Technocorps, were ultimately defeated (a programming flaw in their suits allowed A.E.G.I.S. agents to paralyze their suits' motor functions), they were taken into custody and interrogated. They claimed to have been contractors hired by Rook Industries personnel, and to have stolen the suits after not being paid as much as they had liked.

Further investigation by A.E.G.I.S. agents Diggs and Poldark revealed circumstantial or inadmissible evidence that they had in fact been provided with the armor and told to steal from banks by Rosa Rook directly, so as to test out the armor's capabilities. The soldiers' families reaped the financial benefits. The claims that they were disgruntled contractors were lies fabricated by Rosa Rook herself. But Diggs and Poldark were only at best able to legally implicate some mid-level managers, and ultimately pressure from elsewhere in the government led to the investigation being dropped altogether.

Rosa Rook did, however, give a public statement decrying the actions of the Technocorps and the Rook Industries personnel who hired them. At the same time, Rook Industries began selling Technocorps suits (whose patents Rook Industries held) to extreme response units and the military, using the incident in Halcyon City as “proof” of their efficacy. Scrapyard’s central core was never recovered, and A.E.G.I.S. believes it is held within Rook Industries.

Immediately after the third Sevriti invasion about 20 years ago, the city was left in chaos. Alien technology lay strewn throughout the streets, a number of heroes had gone missing, and A.E.G.I.S. was preoccupied with crowd control, triage, and incarceration of captured forces. During this time, the robotic hero Difference Engine had gone missing, and was presumed destroyed.

A year later, Rosa Rook launched a press conference to roll out new robotic protection units called Guardians, each one touted as completely obedient, dutiful to a fault, and as powerful as mid-tier superhumans. They sold these robotic protection units to the HCPD and to A.E.G.I.S., among other law enforcement agencies and private companies.

Later that same year, the Guardians went haywire and began attacking everything around them without restraint or thought. Numerous lives were lost in the mayhem, including that of CEO Orwell Crane of Crane Pharmaceuticals. The entire line was junked by court order, and upon further investigation by our own analysts, the cause appeared to be a shared linking system that matched records of Difference Engine’s own neural net.

Analyst Triege theorized that Rook had captured Difference Engine after the invasion, taken him apart, and based the whole Guardian line on his design. When Difference Engine managed to reconnect himself to his own uplink capabilities, his pain must have broadcast to the Guardians and driven them all mad. After illegally obtaining files from Rook servers, Triege further theorized that Rook had purposefully connected Difference Engine’s uplink to the Guardian connected to Orwell Crane, so as to ensure his death. The overall system cascade failure was an unintended side effect.

Of course there was no clear, admissible proof of the involvement of Rosa Rook or anyone at a high level within Rook Industries, and any evidence of any kind soon disappeared into bureaucratic limbo. Rook was indemnified from the catastrophe by clauses in the buyers’ contracts. And shortly after the whole incident, Rosa Rook announced that she would be acquiring Crane Pharmaceuticals, whose stock had been in a freefall since the death of its CEO.

Across the board, what evidence we have been able to obtain suggests that Rosa Rook was behind all of these actions, and more besides. She whplanned out such perfect strategies, and who ultimately okayed all the immoral actions involved. And consistently, she and her company have come out on top.

## ASSESSMENT

A.E.G.I.S. theorizes that it is only a matter of time before Rosa Rook and Rook Industries take some kind of drastic, overt action to exert their own dominance over the city. In particular, we have noted Rook's continued involvement in the law enforcement agencies of Halcyon, and we believe that Rook may focus her efforts on attempting to privatize and control those agencies. After that, we are certain that it would only be a matter of time until she attempted to privatize and control the superhumans themselves.

Unfortunately, there is no actual evidence to convict Rosa Rook or to justify actions against her. Our reports require us to keep watch on her and her company, but she has avoided any kind of retribution or punishment. What's more, her contacts in the government shield her, and whenever A.E.G.I.S. actions against Rook require consent from our superiors outside of the agency, they are denied.

Agents are warned to approach Rook Industries and Rosa Rook herself with extreme caution, and to avoid any kind of overtly hostile activity towards her without 100% certain proof of misdeed. Politeness is recommended, though not required, especially in the face of direct resistance.



# SATIN

**NAME:**  
Unknown

**ALIAS:**  
Satin

**THREAT LEVEL:**  
Red

## KNOWN ABILITIES

Superhuman speed, strength, and athleticism, as well as a devious mind and cunning. Satin is more than a match for any individual human or near-human agent. Superhuman agents and operatives have had more success, but still encounter tremendous difficulty; Satin nearly always has contingencies and traps set in advance to ensure victory against even the most powerful of opponents.

## APPEARANCE

Satin always wears bespoke suits with a satiny vest underneath the jacket. They are always bright, vibrant colors—purple or green or yellow. Satin carries an oak cane at all times. Notably, Satin does not appear to have a face at all, simply a smooth expanse of skin. Satin has never displayed any signs of impaired sense, however, despite having no visible eyes. Satin speaks audibly, despite not having a mouth or lips.

## ORIGINS

Our knowledge of Satin is far from complete, pieced together from multiple accounts, seemingly significant reports and files, and more. Most of our information points us toward the notion that Satin was a test subject for a secret super soldier program conducted by alien agents of Vanquish, the extraterrestrial warlord. Post-invasion reviews and reports indicated that Vanquish did undertake experimentation upon human subjects to discover more information about humanity's propensity for paranormal abilities, and at least some of these experimentations (notably in 1971, 1984, and 2001) led to the production of superhuman agents of Vanquish.

When questioned about their origins, Satin has not been forthcoming. Samples of Satin's DNA recovered from scenes of combat indicate some level of alien gene-code and manipulation, although that does not prove that Vanquish and his agents were the actual cause of the modification. Alternative theories suggest that Satin may have been produced by the Acolytes of Science, VENOM, Rook Industries, or even the Dread Queen.

## INCIDENTS

Satin first appeared publicly before Halcyon City in 1987. A.E.G.I.S. holds reports that indicate Halcyon's superhuman defenders may have been dealing with Satin for some years before then, but always in a covert capacity, and with Satin using some alias or disguise; indeed, Satin's facelessness led them to use



facial prosthetics in those early years, making identification very difficult.

During Satin's first public appearance, they hijacked Halcyon City's broadcast media and addressed the entirety of the city. They claimed that this city was:

"My home city! My *favorite* city. Joy and chaos and murder and death and agony and spices, wrapped up in steel and concrete. But they want to ruin it! Strip it of everything that makes it *special*. Well, I for one won't let them. I'm your city's guardian, Halcyon! Defending you and your loved ones from boredom and mediocrity! You can trust me, Halcyon. I won't let you down."

Satin then revealed that they had planted mutagenic bombs throughout the city. Each one, when detonated, would introduce mutagenic inhalants into the air, creating mobs of mutants driven mad by sudden transformations.

The Exemplars intervened, and thanks to their timely action, the bombs were caught and defused, save for the single detonation in the Corridors District [See A.E.G.I.S. FILE #1-Z-9467]. Satin remained at large.

The exact intent of Satin's scheme remains unknown. Psychoanalysts believe that Satin sought nothing more than to create chaos; that they thrive upon the disorder of Halcyon City's many attacks, fights, and dangers.

Satin's next most significant appearance was in 1995, when Satin challenged Anomaly, AKA Juliet Houghton, then a powerful up-and-coming member of the Exemplars, to public battle. Satin had abducted the entire staff of the Halcyon City Herald to ensure Anomaly's compliance, including journalist Drake Houghton, later revealed to be Anomaly's brother.



Anomaly agreed to the battle, despite A.E.G.I.S. and Exemplar warnings against it, and met Satin in the street in front of the Halcyon City Herald building. A.E.G.I.S. and HCPD kept the area cordoned off from civilian access, while attempting to position to take Satin out with a sniper. All attempts were unsuccessful, however, as Satin had set up a stolen kinetic shield around the area as well, to ensure that all attacks from outside were ineffective.

Anomaly engaged Satin, but they used quantum-bleed devices (stolen from A.E.G.I.S.'s own armory) to drain her powers, and then proceeded to break her bones one by one. With the Exemplars and A.E.G.I.S. held at bay by the kinetic shield, Anomaly was at Satin's mercy. It was only a final desperate burst of power that allowed her to triumph. Unfortunately, that burst left Anomaly depowered. She soon retired her heroic identity and became a public politician instead.

In 2005, Satin attacked the Spike in an attempt to free the prisoners inside. Psychoanalysts posit that Satin was simply pursuing the chaos that would come from the release of many of the most dangerous prisoners in Halcyon City. They attacked using a large collection of hired guns, in addition to carefully placed bombs and EMP projectors placed throughout the Spike itself, suggesting that Satin either had help on the inside, or had previously infiltrated the Spike.

The attack temporarily knocked out A.E.G.I.S. communications and put our command structure into disarray while freeing the prisoners in Blocks A through T. The incident, afterward known colloquially as Satin's Breakout, led to a substantial increase in superhuman attacks and incidents within the city for the next five years. Satin disappeared into the shadows again after the incident, apparently satisfied with the chaos created by the prison break.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Satin is a dangerous, criminal x-factor. Analysts have found Satin's patterns incredibly difficult to predict. Satin's goals are elusive, and Satin's means varied. As a result, it is nearly impossible to preemptively handle them. Attempts to find Satin have met with limited success at best, and nearly always lead to futile assaults upon heavily trapped lairs.

Agents are advised to treat Satin with all due caution, and to summon backup and superhero teams as soon as contact is made. Agents should never pursue without at least two to three strike teams available.

A.E.G.I.S. agents have been given full leeway to use all necessary force to apprehend or detain Satin, or prevent the loss of life from Satin's attacks.

If an agent ever finds herself at Satin's mercy, she is advised to keep them talking and interested. Satin shows a penchant for speechmaking and chatter. Agents who play along with Satin's verbal games have a 60% greater chance for survival than those who do not.

## VANQUISH

NAME:	ALIAS:	THREAT LEVEL:
Unknown	Vanquish	Red

### KNOWN ABILITIES

Vanquish has practically unmatched strength, invincibility, and flight speed. He has also evidenced the ability to fire powerful tachyonic radiation from his eyes, functioning as an eye blast capable of slicing through metal. He is also a military leader of great skill, and almost always comes accompanied by his forces, ranging in form from alien troopers to robotic death machines.

### APPEARANCE

Vanquish appears to be a middle-aged human, with the only noteworthy difference being his pointed ears and pure white eyes. He is dark-skinned, with white-blonde close-cropped hair and beard. His suit is a dark black armored color, and he wears purple-red gloves, boots, and belt buckle. He also bears a purple-red stylized “V” upon his chest.

### ORIGINS

Vanquish comes from the species of aliens known to the rest of the galaxy as Royals. The Royals (self-named) were well-known for their extreme power and their tendency to seize rulership of solar systems they visited. But they were also well-known for their tendency to fight against one another. Royals craved dominance, and after taking control of a star system, they would then try to turn their new forces against each other, sending armies across the void to show their dominance over their fellow Royals.

Over eons and eons, the Royals winnowed each other down. Their species was notoriously infertile, and they rarely liked each other or could stand each other long enough to actually produce new children, let alone raise them. (A.E.G.I.S. exobiologists have wondered how they came to exist in the first place if all this is true; their best answer has to do with genetic engineering on the part of the Star Minds.) They would gladly kill each other, however, to express dominance.

Vanquish is the last known Royal in the galaxy, the survivor of countless battles between him and his brethren, and the most successful Royal conqueror of all time. He is thousands upon thousands of years old, has ruled countless stellar kingdoms, and still seeks dominance over the entirety of the galaxy. Without his fellow Royals to act as rivals, he has turned to relying upon the other great powers of the galaxy, including the metahumans and super-powered individuals of Earth.

## INCIDENTS

Vanquish first attacked Halcyon City on January 28, 1961. He tracked the interstellar power of Silver Savior to the city, seeking to claim it for his own, and discovered “a whole planet’s worth of wonders and powers to conquer,” as he said at the time. He attacked with a cruiser created by the Ardanian Autowarriors, crewed by legion upon legion of the robotic soldiers. As the robots spilled from the ship into the streets of Halcyon below, Vanquish himself descended, giving a speech about how the planet was now his, and he would be a benevolent ruler as long as the people did not forget their place beneath him.

The invasion was met with the full force of Halcyon’s defenders, from A.E.G.I.S. to all its superheroes to its law enforcement and more. When the fight was over, the Ardanian Autowarriors littered the city, and Vanquish had been defeated by Champion himself, driven back to his Ardanian warship and forced to flee. Reports claim that Vanquish was furious in defeat, unbelieving that this planet had successfully halted his invasion.

It seems that Vanquish’s desire to own the planet only increased after this defeat, as he returned time and time again. Interstellar contacts report that he converted many of his interests in conquest away from other places to focus on attempting to take Earth. Apparently he only conquered new places that would give him the forces necessary to overcome Earth’s defenders. The Royal realigned his entire appetite for conquest around Earth.

Vanquish attacked many more times, employing techniques ranging from genetic engineering of humans to create super soldiers; a slow invasion via intelligent bacteria to take control of important personages in Halcyon City; a teleportation strike, sending Halcyon City to an entirely different planet so he could subjugate it separately from the rest of the planet; a coalition with many of the most dangerous entities on Earth, using them as weapons, shock troops, and cannon fodder in his attempt to conquer Earth; and an invocation of the galactic law body, The Infinite Court, claiming a right of ownership based on ancient property deals, and demanding a legal arena challenge to cement the ownership.

One of Vanquish’s most significant attacks upon the Earth came in 2009, when Vanquish went so far as to deploy advanced cloning technology from the planet Wuuw to actually produce an army of himself. He kept the many Vanquishes subdued via cerebral implant, linked to the control module in his own brain. His army, each one as strong as him, seemed undefeatable, and he successfully blasted past every hero, team, and agency that stood against him, taking full control of Halcyon City and throwing those who stood against him into the Spike.

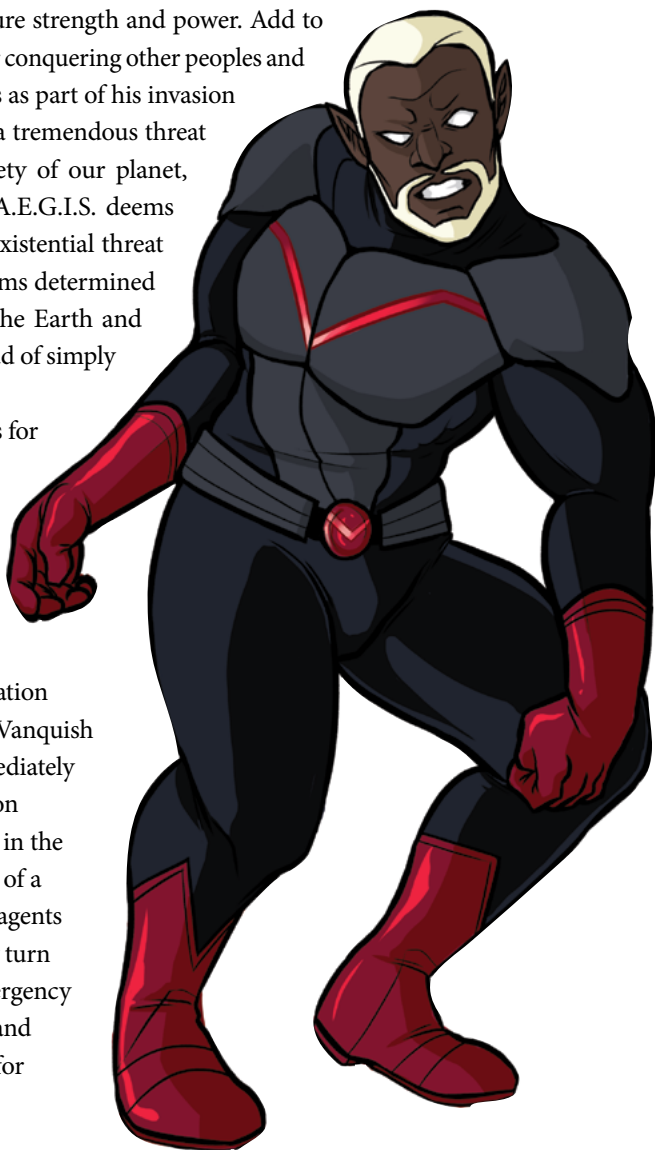
His defeat was a near thing, and came only thanks to the emergence of a brand new young hero named Patricia Marquez, going by Wifi. Wifi successfully

hacked into Vanquish's cerebral implant with her own powers, and broke its control. The action nearly devastated Halcyon City still further, as the myriad Vanquish clones began to wage war against each other for dominance, until the original Vanquish triggered a failsafe mechanism that dissolved the clones. Afterward, Vanquish retreated back to space, but rumors abound of at least one Vanquish clone that successfully turned off the failsafe before he was dissolved.

## ASSESSMENT

Vanquish is one of the most physically potent enemies Halcyon City and the Earth has ever faced. He is the equal of any hero in Halcyon City for pure strength and power. Add to that his penchant for conquering other peoples and using their weapons as part of his invasion force and he poses a tremendous threat to the ongoing safety of our planet, let alone our city. A.E.G.I.S. deems him as a less than existential threat only because he seems determined to take control of the Earth and Halcyon City, instead of simply destroying them.

But preparations for a Vanquish assault will always take precedence over any other A.E.G.I.S. duties. Agents who receive information about an incoming Vanquish assault should immediately share the information with their superiors in the agency. In the event of a Vanquish invasion, agents should immediately turn their comms to emergency Diamond channel, and follow instructions for proper response.



# AGENTS OF A.E.G.I.S.



# CHAPTER THREE

When the Sharalakh-Khan and her army of infinite bugborgs attacked Halcyon City, yes, the Exemplars defeated her in a head-on fight...but who protected countless citizens across the city? Agents of A.E.G.I.S.

When a dimensional shockwave cracked open the Crystalline Prison, yes, the Silver Saviors saved the Prison...but who took the time to examine every single Halcyon citizen and find escapees? Agents of A.E.G.I.S.

When Blood Opal's secret team of immortal warriors snuck into Halcyon City to trigger a fusion bomb, yes, Blood Opal was ultimately defeated in a duel with the Swashbuckler...but who tipped off Swashbuckler to the incident? Who found the bomb and disarmed it? Who prevented three similar bombings across the world? Agents of A.E.G.I.S.

Whether they're under cover, in uniform, or anywhere in between, the agents of A.E.G.I.S. are all over the world, defending it, spying on it, and fighting for it. Sometimes they're noble and heroic. Sometimes they dirty their hands with tactics no hero would ever condone. No matter the case, though, they're always out there, the final line between the world and disaster, doing whatever it takes to make sure that there's a tomorrow.

## **THE SECRET HISTORY OF A.E.G.I.S.**

A.E.G.I.S. The Advanced Expert Group for Intervention and Security. The front line of Halcyon City, and indeed of the human species itself, against the strangest and most outlandish threats of the universe.

Or at least, that's what it says on the tin.

A.E.G.I.S. was founded with the best of intentions, by people who did their best to serve and protect their city and their world. But like all things, the reality of what it became was somewhat different than those best of intentions could allow. Not necessarily better or worse, but...different.

## **THE FOUNDING DIRECTOR**

A.E.G.I.S. has its origins in the Cold War. Governmental metahuman forces had been in action for some time, ever since World War II (and some reports account for metahuman individuals in action during World War I, as well). Those forces were all part of a military structure.

But different times called for different needs, and General Otis Carson saw that more clearly than anyone else.

During World War II, Carson commanded forces into battle against the Iron Flag during the siege of Schloss Wahnsinn. He saw firsthand the need for



metahuman fighters, and the danger that unchecked superhuman exploitation could present to the world.

But Carson's ideology crystallized only when he witnessed firsthand the demonoid attacks upon Halcyon City in 1947, two years after the war. The demonoids were summoned by a small group of infiltrators, cultists who had uncovered a book of dark magic, the *Demonologicon*, during the war years. Those cultists turned out to be agents of the nascent secret organization, VENOM—a perennial opponent of A.E.G.I.S. throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The demonoids looked just like human beings, right up to the moment that they sprouted monstrous appendages and attacked those around them. For months after the initial summoning, the population of Halcyon City feared demonoid attack. The city was in a state of terror, and if it weren't for a few strokes of luck with the newly formed Exemplars, the demonoids might have actually destroyed the whole city.

The entire experience changed how Carson came to understand superhuman conflicts. The demonoids were an entirely different form of weapon, a secretive one. Yes, Halcyon City survived, but barely. And Carson wasn't going to let his home be threatened like that again.

When Carson first pitched his new agency to President Truman, he encountered skepticism and raised eyebrows. Not only would his agency be given full permission to act unilaterally within its remit, but it would hold sole jurisdiction over metahuman matters? It seemed too much, especially when Halcyon City was full of superhero teams who'd saved the world plenty of times before.

And then a demonoid secret service agent nearly killed President Truman. All of the powerful agencies of the United States of America had been unable to prevent the creature from infiltrating the most secure location in the country.

There would always be rumors that there was no way the creature could have come so close to its target without help. That someone must've vouched for the creature and helped move it up the ranks. That perhaps the attack was all part of a deeper strategy to prove the nature of a threat...and ensure the creation of appropriate defenses.

If that was the case, then it worked. Truman signed the order to create A.E.G.I.S. three days after the attack, on June 2, 1948. And General Otis Carson became the new agency's first Director.

## **A.E.G.I.S. THROUGH THE AGES**

A.E.G.I.S. began its existence entirely in the shadows. Its facilities were hidden; its agents entirely unknown. The vast majority of the time, the world was unaware of A.E.G.I.S.'s activities, though rumors abounded. There were stories of strange, well-armed government agents working together to stop secret doomsday weapons or to take powerful artifacts into safekeeping... and there were stories of similar agents interfering in government elections, nullifying the powers of up-and-coming metahumans, or assassinating potential supervillains before they could even arise.

Over time, however, A.E.G.I.S. moved into the light, as more public-conscious agents and managers pushed from within and journalists and investigators dragged it from without. Its name became more than just a story, and soon newspapers were regularly referring to A.E.G.I.S., despite the absence of official commentary from the agency.

With its newfound publicity, however, A.E.G.I.S. faced a new threat. As stories about A.E.G.I.S. and its deeds, both good and terrible, accrued over the years, public sentiment turned against the shadowy organization. Most people understood very little about A.E.G.I.S. or how it operated, and had only rumor and conspiracy to go on. Protests against purported A.E.G.I.S. actions were commonplace in the '70s.

## **THE ANGELWEB BOMBARDMENT**

Everything came to a head during the Angelweb Bombardment incident in 1972. The Angelweb, a cosmic creature that extended itself into any biological life forms it found, fought against the Exemplars in orbit. In the final blow, Silver Savior shattered it. Pieces of the Angelweb fell to Earth, bombarding the planet with a cosmic energy capable of giving superpowers to any human it touched. Suddenly, a new wave of superhuman beings arose, worldwide.

The A.E.G.I.S. Director at the time, Anne Quell, immediately pushed A.E.G.I.S. into the largest action it had ever undertaken. She sought to catalogue and tag every single metahuman affected by the Angelweb Bombardment...and to incarcerate any she found dangerous.

The action couldn't go unnoticed, however, and many superheroes of the era sought to stop A.E.G.I.S. Agents clashed with costumed heroes all over the globe, and in Halcyon City especially. Many well-known heroes took stances against A.E.G.I.S. and its actions. From the August directly battling A.E.G.I.S. agents in Halcyon's streets, to the Silent Fang taking out whole teams of A.E.G.I.S. agents abroad, to Champion coming out of retirement to speak publicly against the actions of A.E.G.I.S., the agency found itself stymied and under attack from countless directions.

## A NEW DIRECTION

Director Quell was prepared to continue supporting her actions to the bitter end, until, by executive order, she was removed from power and discharged from the agency. The new Director, Janelle Sopa, immediately pushed a major course correction through A.E.G.I.S.'s bureaucracy.

Under Sopa's lead, A.E.G.I.S. officially shifted from shadowy, misunderstood international spy agency to a peace-keeping, law enforcement agency with a major public face. She never abolished all of A.E.G.I.S.'s operations across the world—its core mission of acting as a last line of defense for humanity never went away, and that required it to sometimes operate in secret or abroad. But she did bring A.E.G.I.S. officially into the light.

She was responsible for the construction of the Spike, a massive, hyper-advanced structure to act as both a prison and public headquarters for the agency in Halcyon City. She created a post for an official A.E.G.I.S. press secretary. She put the official stamp on the creation of A.E.G.I.S. uniforms, requiring all non-covert agents to wear uniforms while on duty.

What's more, Sopa began the A.E.G.I.S. tradition of incorporating not just superhuman agents, but active superheroes, into its actions. She sought partnerships with the leading superhero teams of the time, and she actively wooed some costumed heroes to become officially sanctioned by A.E.G.I.S. Thanks to her, A.E.G.I.S. ceased to be a force that superheroes might oppose, and instead became an organization that they might work with.

While there would always be critics, most agreed that A.E.G.I.S. became something far better under her reign. The modern incarnation of A.E.G.I.S. is largely attributable to the changes she wrought.

## A.E.G.I.S. TODAY

A.E.G.I.S. is known throughout the world as the leading law enforcement authority for superhuman issues. While it is still theoretically an American organization, its directors since Sopa have actively cultivated strong relationships internationally. A.E.G.I.S. is able to act worldwide to help dampen extreme superhuman situations thanks to these relationships...although none of this means its more covert actions have ceased.

As it stands, A.E.G.I.S. is larger and more powerful than ever before, replete with countless hidden facilities, advanced technologies held for its own use and benefit, a nigh-unlimited budget, and an army of agents superhuman and mundane. But as A.E.G.I.S. has grown, so has its bevy of enemies. VENOM, the Acolytes of Science, Quell, the Mechanized Liberation Front, CROW—all are more dangerous today than ever before. If it truly aims to protect the whole of the world, A.E.G.I.S. has its work cut out for it.

## THE SPIKE

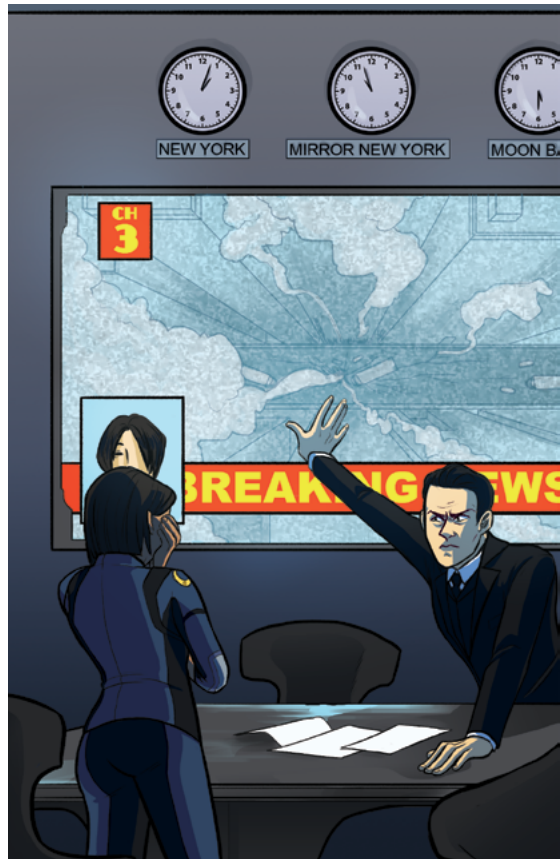
A.E.G.I.S. is headquartered in the Spike in Halcyon City. The Spike is an enormous tower jutting above the rest of the skyline. A.E.G.I.S. has had to expand the building over the years, and the only option has been to build upward via confiscated alien technology and advanced materials. The building is one of the most well-defended in all of Halcyon, and serves secondarily as a high-security prison for some of the most dangerous entities in the world.

Many have criticized A.E.G.I.S. for keeping its holding facility for world-conquering space tyrants and extradimensional monstrosities in the center of the city, and A.E.G.I.S. has tried to take steps to remedy the situation. But time and again, prisoners have escaped from other facilities, or those prisons have been flat out destroyed. Meanwhile, the Spike doesn't have a spotless record, but thanks to the high density of both A.E.G.I.S. agents and local superheroes, there are fewer escapees from the Spike than any other facility.

## RUSSELL SUN, DIRECTOR OF A.E.G.I.S.

The current Director of A.E.G.I.S., Russell Sun, has done many a press appearance, putting a pleasant and smiling face on the front of A.E.G.I.S. His public projects include integration programs for alternate reality duplicates left in Halcyon City; the diplomatic accords with the Dread Queen of Vyortovia; and the apprehension of the metahuman terrorist Phobos.

Unknown to the public, he has also endorsed more covert operations than the past two Directors. He sent teams to disable cells of the Acolytes of Science on foreign soil. He secretly apprehended and incarcerated villains like Satin, to hold them without trial. He gave the go ahead to form Explorer Teams, designed to infiltrate the furthest reaches of threats on other planets, dimensions, and even times.



Sun is a master of keeping one hand in the light and another in shadow. He has a kind face and a good smile, and he has a steely determination to keep the world and his city safe. And while he has no desire to seize power or violate the protocols that have reined A.E.G.I.S. in over the years, he finds himself caught up in the modern day struggle between security and freedom. Superhuman threats are more frequent, and more cunning, capable of attacking from nearly any direction without warning...but the means to stop them may be more insidious than the threats themselves.

## **FORCE TEAMS AND CLOAK TEAMS**

A.E.G.I.S. has a variety of different teams and designations throughout the agency, but two of the most common (and most well-known) are its Force Teams and its Cloak Teams.

Force Teams are the sword of A.E.G.I.S. When the situation gets completely out of hand and the odds are stacked against it, A.E.G.I.S. sends in Force Teams. Staffed with the most experienced peacekeepers and soldiers in its ranks, Force Teams are somewhere between heavy military units and SWAT teams. They're armed to the teeth, armored with the latest in defense systems, and driven by endless determination.

Cloak Teams, on the other hand, are A.E.G.I.S.'s feared covert operative teams. Usually Cloak Teams consist of a handful of individuals, working together in perfect harmony. A.E.G.I.S. calls in a Cloak Team when acting under the radar, when secrecy is of the utmost importance. Ostensibly, its Cloak Teams are still not allowed to undertake many illegal actions...but when they're so quiet, one can never know what they actually do.

## **THE SIRIUS PROGRAM**

A.E.G.I.S. has always had an interest in helping to foster, raise, and support new generations of superhumans. The motivation is somewhere between the desire to control up-and-coming superhumans and the desire to help them become the kind of heroes who have protected the world for almost a century.

The Sirius Program is a new entrant in the list of A.E.G.I.S.'s programs for novice heroes. It is nothing less than a program explicitly designed to create and foster new teams of young superheroes under the purview of A.E.G.I.S. authority. They benefit from A.E.G.I.S. resources and technologies; they receive the best possible training; they are protected from the worst attacks and the most dangerous mistakes by A.E.G.I.S.'s watchful eye; and they are shaped into a new generation of noble heroes.

And in the meantime, A.E.G.I.S. has teams of powerful young superhumans running missions on its behalf. The agency never pursues a single benefit when it can pursue two.

## PLAYING THE AGENTS OF A.E.G.I.S.

In this playset, the PCs are all members of a Sirius Team. They operate as part of A.E.G.I.S., with A.E.G.I.S. leadership and resources. They undertake A.E.G.I.S. missions, and they answer to A.E.G.I.S. when things go wrong.

While the heroes on a Sirius Team are, officially, agents of A.E.G.I.S., they're also not permanently attached to the organization. Functionally, they're on probation. The story of an *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* game still contains many of the same conflicts as **MASKS**, but with an added important angle: whether or not the PCs will choose to join up with A.E.G.I.S., or abandon it permanently.

A Sirius Team isn't a motley collection of individuals brought together by circumstance or friendship. They're a group of possible agents, purposely assembled by A.E.G.I.S. to work together. So a lot of the elements of character creation and team creation involved with creating a normal **MASKS** team are a bit different for a Sirius Team.

### PLAYBOOKS

The *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* playset works with all the playbooks, but some will require a bit of special consideration to make them work appropriately.

**The Beacon** is normally the hero who doesn't quite seem to belong with the rest of the group. That said, the Beacon can still be a part of a Sirius Team—after all, A.E.G.I.S. can decide that putting them on a Sirius Team is the best way to prevent them from getting themselves killed. If you're the Beacon, ask yourself why A.E.G.I.S. put you on the team, and expect the GM to make moves that reveal additional reasons.

**The Delinquent** almost certainly didn't choose to be here. That's just fine! A.E.G.I.S. has the power to compel individuals to action through legal measures, especially if the Delinquent has caused some trouble previously. If you're the Delinquent, think about what forced you to be on the Sirius Team, or why you accepted the offer to join.

**The Janus** adds additional complications to a Sirius Team. A.E.G.I.S. should always have full knowledge of the Janus's secret identity, though any individual agent may not. If you're playing the Janus, remind the other players and the GM about the important people and places of your second life. The more you can do to connect your two lives, the better.

**The Protégé's** Mentor should not be a major part of A.E.G.I.S. They can be a part of the organization, or friendly with it, but they should not be giving the team orders officially. If you're playing the Protégé, keep in mind that your Mentor and your A.E.G.I.S. superiors are two different masters, and the resources they offer you are distinct and separate. It matters whether you rely more on A.E.G.I.S. or your Mentor, and they'll both make sure they comment on it.

## HANDLERS

This is a new step in the character creation process, inserted right after you choose initial playbooks. Your Sirius Team doesn't just act on its own, of its own volition; it is assigned missions by the A.E.G.I.S. agents put in charge of it. These handlers are some of the most important NPCs in your *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* game, and your group needs to know who they are to fully flesh out the details of your particular game.

Right after every player has chosen a playbook, use the questions below to determine your three handlers. If, in answering these questions, your team would have more than three handlers, then the GM decides which three handlers to use at their discretion.

### Do you have a Delinquent or a Bull on your team?

*Agent Warren Brody* is one of your team's handlers. Warren Brody is one of A.E.G.I.S.'s intense combat experts. He led one of its Force Teams for years. He brooks absolutely zero dissent, and has no time for disobedience. He has a soft spot for anyone expressing loyalty or *esprit de corps*.

### Do you have a Nova or a Doomed on your team?

*Agent Portia Karelios* is one of your team's handlers. Portia Karelios

is one of A.E.G.I.S.'s expert suprologists, in its Research Division. She's responsible for many advancements in the science of metahuman abilities. But she's more likely to want to test a metahuman's abilities than listen to their problems.

### Do you have a Transformed or an Outsider on your team?

*Agent Lamar Brinks* is one of your team's handlers. Lamar Brinks is one of A.E.G.I.S.'s negotiators, diplomats, and counselors. He has been part of the team helping A.E.G.I.S. make contact with any new alien species in the past decade, and he's an expert in communication and persuasion. He is known for saying whatever gets the job done, truth be damned.







## BUT I WANT A DIFFERENT HANDLER

Don't feel restrained by these handlers if the PCs have given you the idea for one through their character descriptions, or if you have a really good idea for one. Change them! Or invent new ones whole cloth! For example, if the Janus says that one of the handlers could be her real-life sister, don't stymie that impulse—go with it, and either modify one of these handlers or create a new one to suffice!

### Do you have a Janus or a Beacon on your team?

*Agent Anisha Sai* is one of your team's handlers. Anisha Sai is one of A.E.G.I.S.'s top trainers, a former field agent and expert in hand-to-hand combat. She left the field after some difficult missions, and claims not to miss it. She has since been trying to get back into a more civilian-style life while training the next generation of agents.

### Do you have a Protégé or a Legacy on your team?

*Agent Viviana Sara*, AKA Monopole, is one of your team's handlers. Viviana Sera is a former superhero turned A.E.G.I.S. agent. Monopole could manipulate magnetism, but not carefully or gracefully. She has contacts and friends in the superhero community, but tends to find many of them, especially the top tier, to be a bit too arrogant for her tastes.

Once you have your initial handlers settled, you know who will be overseeing the team and assigning them missions. Players should proceed to fill out their characters and now they can incorporate their handlers into their backstory questions.

## BACKSTORY QUESTIONS

All of the backstory questions in the playbooks are still used, and players are encouraged to aim the answers at A.E.G.I.S. agents and their handlers if possible. They can invent new A.E.G.I.S. agents, or use unchosen handlers.

In addition, every player should answer the following backstory question:

- How were you asked to join the Sirius Team?

This question lets each player speak to their individual experience joining A.E.G.I.S. and the Sirius Team.

## “WHEN OUR TEAM FIRST CAME TOGETHER...”

In the *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* playset, the team didn't come together by virtue of a sudden, explosive conflict, but was instead put together as a Sirius Team by A.E.G.I.S. agents. Replace this section of character creation with the following.

**First, the GM tells the team who A.E.G.I.S. has named the team leader.** This is entirely at GM's discretion; A.E.G.I.S. chooses the official team leader, not the team. The GM uses what the players have said about

their PCs so far, and the characteristics of the handlers of the team, to determine the team leader.

**Then, the GM asks the team leader what the team's first mission was.** The team leader chooses their first mission from the list below. The team leader's player can discuss their choice with the other players, but they have final say.

**Next, go around the table, starting with the team leader, with each player answering one question for that mission.** Questions don't need to be answered in order, and not all questions need to be answered. Each player chooses one question from the list and answers it. They cannot choose a question someone else picked. The GM does not answer any questions.

*Our first mission was a covert operation to destroy the base of a dangerous metahuman criminal/terrorist organization here in Halcyon City.*

- What was the name of the organization, and what do they want?
- How did we ultimately destroy the base?
- Why did the mission need to be covert? Why couldn't Halcyon City find out?
- Who found out about the mission beforehand and holds it against our Sirius Team, specifically?
- Which handler of ours thought we did a terrible job on the mission? Why?
- Which handler of ours thought we did a great job on the mission? Why?

*Our first mission was to stop a revolutionary supervillain and their followers in the middle of their attack on Halcyon City.*

- Who was the supervillain, and what were they trying to do?
- What collateral damage did we inflict upon the city during the mission?
- How did we subdue and capture the villain and their followers?
- What ally, student, or creation of the villain escaped us?
- Which handler of ours thought we did a terrible job on the mission? Why?
- Which handler of ours thought we did a great job on the mission? Why?

*Our first mission was to covertly collect a powerful and strange artifact from a cult here in Halcyon City.*

- What was the name of the cult, and what do they want?
- What special powers does the artifact have?
- What was the origin of the artifact?
- Why did we have to obtain the artifact covertly?
- Which handler of ours thought we did a terrible job on the mission? Why?
- Which handler of ours thought we did a great job on the mission? Why?



## ONLY ONE MISSION?

The Sirius Team has been together for some time since their first mission, and may have gone on further missions, but answering questions about the first is enough to get you started and to give the GM plenty of information about the setting. If you want, you can fill in more information about the next mission by answering an additional set of questions.

*Our first mission was to free one or more captives from an invading force infiltrating Halcyon City.*

- What was the name of the invaders, and what do they want?
- Who were the captives, and why did they warrant A.E.G.I.S. attention?
- Why couldn't the superheroes of Halcyon City save the captives?
- How did we get inside and free the captives?
- Which handler of ours thought we did a terrible job on the mission? Why?
- Which handler of ours thought we did a great job on the mission? Why?

*Our first mission was to confront and subdue a team of dangerous and excessive "superheroes" operating within Halcyon City.*

- What was the name of the team, and who was on it?
- What had they done to warrant such a take-down?
- Why didn't any other forces try to stop this team?
- How did we ultimately subdue them and take them into custody?
- Which handler of ours thought we did a terrible job on the mission? Why?
- Which handler of ours thought we did a great job on the mission? Why?

When the team has answered all the questions, move on to Relationships.

## RETIREMENT

Instead of the advance, "Retire from the life or become a paragon of the city," all PCs instead have the advance, "Quit A.E.G.I.S. permanently or become an official A.E.G.I.S. agent." The ideas are the same—taking this advance means the PC is no longer a leading part of the story of your *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* game.

A PC who is no longer willing to be associated with A.E.G.I.S. in any way is no longer the focus of an *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* game.

Similarly, a PC who becomes an official A.E.G.I.S. agent outside of a Sirius Team has resolved their connection with A.E.G.I.S. and is no longer the focus of an *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* game.

## RUNNING THE AGENTS OF A.E.G.I.S.

If you're the GM for a game of **MASKS** set in the *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* playset, your job is largely similar to the one described in the core book. Those agendas, principles, and moves still apply; the rules for creating individual villains still apply; and the rules for hooks and arcs still apply.

But there are some tweaks involved, along with new tools to ensure you focus on the most important elements of an A.E.G.I.S.-centric game.

### THREATS

A.E.G.I.S. is designed to stop major threats to Halcyon City and the world. Each of those threats is much larger than any individual villain—they encompass numerous dangerous foes, forces, weapons, and bases. As such, those threats are a little different than what you'd see in a regular **MASKS** game, which focuses more on individual villains.

### CREATING A THREAT

First and foremost, **you should never have more than four threats created at a time**. At the start of play, you likely only need one or two, and should feel free to add more over time with additional missions. When you're putting together a threat, you need to choose its **type, desire, name, faces, and intensity**.

#### TYPE

Start creating your threat by picking its **type**. A threat's type dictates its general mode of action—how it accomplishes its goals—and the basics of its shape. There's plenty of leeway in each type for you to establish specifics, but the type acts as a blueprint for the overall structure of the threat.

The types of threats are:

**Invaders:** A threat that attempts to take over, not destroy, existing resources and locations of value using a combination of force and guile. Invaders may invade subtly or overtly, through infiltration and corruption or through direct attack. Aliens, extradimensional parasites, and robots make classic invaders. *Impulse:* To take control of a powerful resource.

**Terrorists:** A threat that attempts to destabilize existing structures and sources of power. Their strikes almost always come from the shadows, but land in brilliant explosions. Dark mirrors of A.E.G.I.S., combined groups of supervillains, and angry forces seeking retribution make classic terrorists. *Impulse:* To destroy the structures of power in which others place faith.

**Cultists:** A threat that attempts to create or summon new and dangerous sources of power. Cultists don't necessarily have to be mystical, or "cult-like" per se; a group of mad scientists building robots works just fine. The key to cultists is that they are not the primary actors on their own; they create or



summon something else, and then that becomes the immediate danger. Secret laboratories performing illegal experiments and worshippers of otherworldly beings make classic cultists. *Impulse*: To create or summon a new danger.

**Excessives: A threat that takes the existing system and allowable action to dangerous extremes.** Excessives always appear on the surface to be attached to existing and acceptable systems of power. Extreme superhero teams and overbearing government agencies make classic excessives. *Impulse*: To take extreme action pushing what is allowed.

**Revolution: A threat that aims to change the existing system by any means necessary.** The leaders of revolutions claim goals with the best of intentions, but a revolution is only truly a threat when it goes beyond those intentions. Radical ecological warriors and mutant liberation fronts make classic revolutions. *Impulse*: To change the system by any means necessary.

I'm putting together a threat for my next *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* game, and I'm interested in one of the dangerous pro-robot groups a PC mentioned during character creation. I take a look at the types of threat to start. They could be cultists, trying to build new and more powerful machine life; they could also be terrorists, interested in bringing down the biological establishment. Ultimately, though, I settle on a revolution as their threat type. This group is ostensibly interested in trying to change the system to give robotic citizens a place in it...although they may not actually know when to stop.

## DESIRE

Next, pick your threat's **desire**. A desire is a statement of the particular aims of this threat, but it is not a specific goal—it's an overarching generalized desire. Phrase your desire as an action sentence starting with a verb, and ending with a target; "Destroy \_\_\_\_\_," or "Seize control of \_\_\_\_\_."

Example desires:

Destroy _____	Seize control of _____
End the reign of _____	Create _____
Change _____ to _____	Replace _____ with _____
Restore _____	Recruit _____
Obtain _____	Undermine _____

Don't pick a target that limits your threat. A desire that's too specific means there's the potential for the threat to either simply succeed or fail to achieve it. A good desire allows for many methods of pursuit, and is never clearly accomplished or failed. Even after success or dramatic failure, a good desire should still afford the threat the opportunity for pursuit.

For example, a bad desire is "Take control of the Spike," because it's actually too specific to serve as the desire of the threat, seeing as it's a desire about one specific location. If the threat attempts to take over the Spike and fails, it could theoretically try again, but that starts to become repetitive and boring. (A bit too "Next time, Gadget, next time.") But "Take control of A.E.G.I.S." could work, because there are many different ways it could be interpreted or come to fruition.

A good desire should always be pursuable in some form, extreme or otherwise. Neither success nor failure should mean the threat's pursuit of its desire is over.

In thinking about the desire for my robot revolutionary threat, I consider the idea that they simply want to get their leader elected as Mayor of Halcyon City...but that's too precise and clear. It could be one way for them to accomplish their overarching desire, but that action shouldn't be the desire itself. I briefly consider a desire of "Transform the citizenry of Halcyon City into cyborgs or robots," but that doesn't feel quite right to me.

I settle on a desire of "Seize power for the robot citizens of Halcyon City." It fits the revolution threat's style of pursuing a possibly noble end, but with potentially dangerous or excessive action, and it's open-ended enough to allow for various actions and moves.

## NAME

Pick a **name** for your threat. Keep in mind that your threat is larger than any one individual, so this needs to be the name of the organization, group, or larger force involved.

Keeping in mind it's the name of the organization, not an individual, I pick the name "Mechanized Liberation Front" as the name of the threat.

## FACES

Pick two to three **faces** for your threat. These aren't the only faces; they're just to get you started with a few important individuals to represent your threat. For the moment, just pick some names and basic descriptions. Down the line, you should write these faces up as villains; you'll find the rules for that process in the **MASKS: A NEW GENERATION** core book (page 155).

Pick one face who is the ostensible "leader" of the threat, and one or two who are important lieutenants, advisers, or agents. These roles aren't static—the leader might be captured or deposed, it might turn out the adviser is the real power behind the threat, and so on. Use the faces to contrast with each other. If one face is sinister, make another seemingly noble; if one face is angry, make another hopeful.

One of the faces of my Mechanized Liberation Front is its public leader. I decide they've taken the name Talos, after the mythological figure. They're a bright, golden, beautiful robot, a perfect public face. Noble and impressive, and determined to fight for the rights of other robots, cyborgs, and artificial intelligences.

The other face I choose is a lieutenant. I want to contrast with Talos, so I decide that the second face isn't some noble, beatific figure, but an artificial life form specifically designed to be a soldier. They have a body built heavy with armor and hidden weapon systems, and not at all designed to appear appealing. I think they've chosen the name Achilles.

I think that's enough faces for now; I can always add more later. I'll write up Talos and Achilles as villains after I'm finished with the threat.

## INTENSITY

The **intensity** of a threat represents its overall danger level. It's a number between 1 and 5, with 1 being a threat that's barely stirring in the background, largely incapable of acting, and 5 being a threat that's about to upend the entire structure of Halcyon City with a massive attack. Start each threat's intensity at 2.

I set the Mechanized Liberation Front's intensity at 2.



## USING THREATS IN PLAY

Threats are used to keep track of the most important opposition that A.E.G.I.S. (or at least the Sirius Team) is currently focused upon. Each threat is too big to be handled entirely in a single endeavor or mission, and each threat is an active antagonist that doesn't stop moving simply because they're off screen.

You will have between two and four threats to track at a time.

Threats are frequently used with missions. Whenever you are creating a mission for the PCs, you first pick a threat as the target or opposition for that mission. Find more on that process on page 95. However, whenever threats are left alone, or when they achieve success, they become more dangerous.

**Whenever time passes**, every threat you've created (up to 4) makes one move of its intensity or lower. **When the Sirius Team goes on a mission**, that mission can only target one threat; every threat not involved in that mission makes one move of its intensity or lower. For example, if the team goes on a mission against CROW, then they're not working against the Acolytes of Science. To represent the Acolytes still taking action, they get to make a move representing their actions contemporaneous to the team's time on-mission.

These moves occur off-screen, at the same time that the Sirius Team is either undertaking its mission, or in the time skipped over. Tell the players only what effects or consequences they observe whenever a threat makes such a move, but take note of whatever moves the threats take, so as not to lose track of resources or advantages they have gained.

For some moves, such as **launch a city-wide major attack**, you may decide to pick up play in the middle of the move at your discretion, giving the PCs a chance to both intervene and experience the danger firsthand.

Whenever the threat makes a move that says to "raise intensity," its intensity goes up by one. A threat's intensity can never go above 5.

Whenever the threat makes a move that says to "reset intensity to 2," its intensity goes back to 2. The threat has vented its strength and resources in a sudden burst of action.

### INTENSITY 1

- Put on a public show of strength and raise intensity
- Steal valuable information and raise intensity
- Add a powerful new face

### INTENSITY 2

- Steal a valuable item and raise intensity
- Infiltrate a single location and raise intensity
- Defeat a foe

### INTENSITY 3

- Steal a crucial or extremely powerful item and raise intensity
- Infiltrate an organization and raise intensity
- Destroy a foe

### INTENSITY 4

- Create a dangerous new resource and raise intensity
- Drastically injure an enemy force
- Launch a single major attack and reset intensity to 2

### INTENSITY 5

- Create an overwhelming new resource
- Utterly demolish an enemy force
- Launch a city-wide major attack and reset intensity to 2

Here is a simple explanation of each of these possible moves:

**Put on a public show of strength and raise intensity:** The threat makes a public show of strength (like taking over the city's screens or staging a major protest) that ultimately doesn't do any harm or overly affect the situation.

**Steal valuable information and raise intensity:** The threat learns something important and dangerous of your choice.

**Add a powerful new face:** Add a new face to the threat, created as a villain with 5 full conditions.

**Steal a valuable item and raise intensity:** The threat takes something valuable from any other individual or group of your choice. The item in question should be important, but not necessarily unique or world-changing in scope.

**Infiltrate a single location and raise intensity:** The threat places its hidden agents within a single location of its choice.

**Defeat a foe:** The threat overcomes and defeats an individual opponent, such as a single superhero or a single Force Team. The defeated opponent isn't destroyed, simply defeated and temporarily out of action.

**Steal a crucial or extremely powerful item and raise intensity:** The threat takes something extremely valuable from any other individual or group of your choice. The item in question should be unique or world-changing in scope.

**Infiltrate an organization and raise intensity:** The threat hides its agents throughout an organization of its choice.

**Destroy a foe:** The threat overcomes and eliminates an individual opponent, such as a single superhero or a Force Team. The opponent is destroyed.

**Create a dangerous new resource and raise intensity:** The threat creates a new resource, anything from its own powerful new item, to a strike team, to a weapon. The new resource shouldn't be unique or world-changing.

**Drastically injure an enemy force:** The threat severely damages and depletes the resources of an enemy force, like a team of superheroes or a whole division of A.E.G.I.S. The enemy force isn't destroyed, but is knocked out of action for some time.

**Launch a single major attack and reset intensity to 2:** The threat openly launches a major attack against a single target of its choice, wielding all its resources and weapons to achieve victory. If successful, the attack will substantially reshape the overarching situation in any way the threat chooses. Launching the attack means A.E.G.I.S. and the Sirius Team will almost certainly have a chance to stop it.

**Create an overwhelming new resource:** The threat creates its own new resource of tremendous strength. A resource can be anything from its own overwhelming new tool, an army, or a superweapon. The new resource should be unique or world-changing.

**Utterly demolish an enemy force:** The threat destroys an enemy force, like a team of superheroes or a division of A.E.G.I.S. The enemy is gone entirely.

**Launch a city-wide major attack and reset intensity to 2:** The threat openly launches a city-wide major attack against many targets throughout Halcyon, wielding all its resources and weapons to achieve victory. If successful, the attack will utterly reshape the overarching situation however the threat chooses. Launching the attack means A.E.G.I.S. and the Sirius Team will almost certainly have a chance to stop it. At the end of the attack, reset intensity to 2, no matter what the outcome of the attack is.

## DEFEATING THREATS

Every time a Sirius Team undertakes a mission against a particular threat and achieves their goal, reduce that threat's intensity by one. If a threat would ever be reduced to 0 intensity, then that threat makes a final last ditch play for its desire, staging an attack with whatever resources it has left. Dealing with that attack should take immediate precedence for A.E.G.I.S. If the Sirius Team succeeds in stopping the threat's last ditch attack, then the threat is defeated once and for all; any remaining forces aren't strong enough to continue fighting, or are absorbed into other threats.

Alternatively, if a threat would be totally defeated in the fiction, then it's defeated, and you can stop tracking it. This is a rare occurrence because of the size and power of threats as major organizations, but in theory, if the Sirius Team manages to stop it all at once, then let them have their victory.

## MISSIONS AND BRIEFINGS

The structure of an *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* game is a bit different from the structure of a normal **MASKS** game. In *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.*, A.E.G.I.S. gives the PCs explicit orders. It commands them to undertake specific **missions** based on the agency's goals and which threats are the most pressing. As such, you put together missions for the Sirius Team to undertake on behalf of A.E.G.I.S.

### CREATING MISSIONS

To put together a mission, assign it **opposition**, a **goal**, and **parameters**.

#### OPPOSITION

First, determine who the opposition to the mission is by either picking an existing threat or making a new one. (Remember that you should never have more than four threats running at a time.)

If you're unsure of which threat A.E.G.I.S. would engage, then pick the threat with the highest intensity. Break ties in favor of the threat seen least recently. But if the fiction suggests a particular threat as opposition, use that instead of the intensity.

I'm creating a mission for my Sirius Team. No threat's intensity is higher than 3. But because the Mechanized Liberation Front recently made a public display of their power, seizing control of every computer monitor in the city to shout their credo, I decide that A.E.G.I.S. would pay the most attention to the them, even though they're only at intensity 2. I choose them as the opposition for the upcoming mission.

#### GOAL

A mission's goal is a very clear achievement serving as the purpose of the mission. Goals are always phrased as "To \_\_\_\_\_." If there could be any confusion about whether the goal was achieved, then rephrase the goal. Make goals refer to a specific action, as opposed to an intent—instead of "To prevent the threat from hurting the city," use "To destroy the threat's supertank."

Choose a goal that fits the fiction, and would either bolster A.E.G.I.S. or reduce the strength of a threat. Bolstering A.E.G.I.S. increases the agency's strength and resources; reducing the strength of a threat takes resources away.

Because they're reacting to the hacking of all those computer screens, I think A.E.G.I.S. would want to prevent any such action in the future. I state the goal of the mission as "To prevent the Mechanized Liberation Front from hacking Halcyon City computers," but realize that goal isn't good enough. It wouldn't be crystal clear if the Sirius Team had accomplished that mission or not. Instead, I change the goal to "To plant a virus in the hacking programs of the Mechanized Liberation Front." That way, I will know if the goal is achieved—either the virus is planted, or it is not.

## PARAMETERS

A mission's parameters are the rules A.E.G.I.S. sets for the mission.

When picking parameters, choose up to three from the list below, or invent your own. Just like with goals, parameters should be clear. There should be no question as to whether or not a parameter has been upheld or violated.

A.E.G.I.S. doesn't assign parameters frivolously. Only assign parameters that actually make sense for the fiction and the mission, to serve A.E.G.I.S.'s interests. Don't pick parameters that double up on the mission's goal. For example, if the mission's goal is to capture the villain Satin, then it shouldn't also have the parameter, "Don't allow the loss or escape of Satin."

Possible parameters include:

- Don't allow yourselves to be seen
- Don't engage in open combat
- Don't leave any evidence of your mission
- Don't be identified
- Don't allow anything outside of mission boundaries to suffer harm
- Don't let the targets warn any allies
- Don't allow the loss or escape of \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't speak to any opposition

This mission is covert, and A.E.G.I.S. doesn't want the Mechanized Liberation Front to know about the viruses planted in its programs. I choose the parameters "Don't leave any evidence of your mission" and "Don't engage in open combat." I think about "Don't allow yourselves to be seen," but A.E.G.I.S. would worry less about that than ensuring the MLF wouldn't know what the Sirius Team had done.

Once you have these elements chosen, you're ready to give the briefing.

## MISSION BRIEFING

Instead of the normal opening action scene of a **MASKS** game, start a game of *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* with a mission briefing. Use it to introduce the handlers, and the concept of the team and working for A.E.G.I.S.

When the Sirius Team receives a new mission, the team members are called to a briefing room at an A.E.G.I.S. facility, where the team's handlers explain the mission to them. Play out these briefings as normal scenes.

Your goal as GM for every briefing is to make clear to the PCs what the goal and parameters of the mission are, while continuing to play the handlers towards your GM agendas, as you would all NPCs. The handlers still bring their particular perspectives and judgments of the PCs, even as they are giving official missions, so don't hesitate to shift labels and wield influence.

## MISSION ASSESSMENT

After the mission is over, the team returns to A.E.G.I.S. for debriefing. They wind up back in that room with their handlers again, and are told how their mission was received by the higher-ups.

First, the team leader rolls to determine A.E.G.I.S.'s reaction to their work.

**When you have finished a mission and returned to A.E.G.I.S. for debriefing,** your team leader rolls:

- +1 if you accomplished the mission goal
- +1 if you achieved substantial success beyond the goal and parameters
- -1 if any mission parameters were violated
- -1 if any of you were taken out during the mission

On a hit, A.E.G.I.S. is satisfied with your mission success. On a 7-9, the team chooses one. On a 10+, the team chooses two.

- Gain a powerful A.E.G.I.S. resource for its next mission; the GM will tell you what it is.
- Receive greater access to A.E.G.I.S. files; after the debrief each team member may ask one question about a character, place, or object, and the A.E.G.I.S. files will answer it honestly.
- Receive intense training; after the debrief each team member earns two potential.
- Take validation from your success; each team member can immediately shift their own labels two times.
- Recover; after the debrief each team member can clear up to two conditions.

On a miss, the mission had major consequences for A.E.G.I.S. The GM raises the intensity of the opposition by one, and makes a threat move. The handlers will tell you how your team's mistakes strengthened your opposition.

If there is any dissent in choosing options, the team leader has final say.

During the debrief, have the handlers go over the mission, describing successes and failures from A.E.G.I.S.'s perspective, giving them more information about the consequences of the mission, and wielding Influence.

## REFUSING A MISSION

Eventually, the Sirius Team will probably refuse some aspect of their mission. If the Sirius Team wants to break with A.E.G.I.S., let them! Of course, there will be consequences, but they should already be well aware of that.

If some (not all) PCs decide not to show up for the briefing or the debriefing, the handlers go out to find the missing team members themselves, or dispatch the rest of the team to do so. If the whole team fails to show up, then A.E.G.I.S. will dispatch resources to bring them all back in.

Threats will continue to advance in intensity and make moves. If the rogue Sirius Team takes successful action against a threat, reduce its intensity, but continue to take moves with the other threats at the same time.

## AGENTS OF A.E.G.I.S.: AGENDA

The *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* playset adds one new agenda to your list from the **MASKS: A NEW GENERATION** core book (page 126).

- Make A.E.G.I.S. complicated and gray

A.E.G.I.S. is a complicated institution. Its ultimate aims may be good, but its means are often questionable at best and flat out wrong at worst. It has saved countless lives, and it has taken more than its fair share. It stops terrible dangers, but it doesn't do so without great cost.

Your job as a GM is to prevent A.E.G.I.S. from ever being simple to categorize as good or bad, right or wrong. Any time a PC feels like they have a clear understanding of where A.E.G.I.S. falls on the continuum of good and bad, your job is to challenge that understanding the same way you challenge the PC's self-identity.

## AGENTS OF A.E.G.I.S.: PRINCIPLES

In addition to the new agenda, you have some new principles to follow for an *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* game. Remember that an agenda is your purpose in playing, and principles are how you achieve that goal.

- Balance threats against the dangers of fighting them
- Make A.E.G.I.S. agents complex and varied
- Provide many different perspectives on A.E.G.I.S.
- Reward the PCs for skepticism

### BALANCE THREATS WITH THE DANGERS OF FIGHTING THEM

Make the threats so dangerous that the actions required to fight them are frightening or dangerous in their own right. Give the threats enough credence to their arguments that fighting them is morally or at least publicly costly. A.E.G.I.S. doesn't fight the fights that can have clear, utter victories without cost, so always make sure that the need for the fight and the costs of it are balanced to make the struggle complicated.

### MAKE A.E.G.I.S. AGENTS COMPLICATED AND VARIED

Emphasize the differences of A.E.G.I.S. agents, whether differences of opinion, of ability, or of tactics. Each individual agent can be as interesting or cool as a superhero—so don't hesitate to make them unique. But never lose sight of the fact that they are all A.E.G.I.S. agents, committed to the organization and its fights. As individual as they are, they all agree that A.E.G.I.S. does something of value, and that agreement should complicate them further.





### **PROVIDE MANY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON A.E.G.I.S.**

Outside of the agency, people have tremendously varying opinions about it. Make sure the PCs hear those opinions. From people who find A.E.G.I.S. distasteful and gross to people who believe it is crucial to keeping the world safe, it's important that everyone the PCs come into contact with shares some opinion on A.E.G.I.S. And as agents of a Sirius Team, those opinions can adjust the PCs' Labels as much as anything else.

### **REWARD THE PCS FOR SKEPTICISM**

When the PCs express doubt as to the motivations of a superior, reward that skepticism by showing their superior's motivations aren't what they appeared to be. When the PCs express doubt about A.E.G.I.S.'s true reasons behind a mission, then reward that skepticism by showing A.E.G.I.S. with ulterior motives on the mission. Don't let the PCs' doubts ever go unnoticed or unfounded. Create a sense of paranoia among the PCs by consistently rewarding their suspicions.

## AGENTS OF A.E.G.I.S.: MOVES

Finally, you have a few new moves added to your repertoire for *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.*

- Deploy overwhelming A.E.G.I.S. resources
- Demand questionable action from agents
- Show the dramatic consequences of an unstopped threat
- Reveal dangerous secrets

### DEPLOY OVERWHELMING A.E.G.I.S. RESOURCES

A.E.G.I.S. has tremendous resources at its disposal, from alien technologies to superpowered agents and more. If there is ever a time when A.E.G.I.S. absolutely must accomplish an objective, have it deploy those forces without reservation...and show the consequences of such a deployment.

Agent, as you're trying to leave the building, you watch as six different A.E.G.I.S. carriers pull up outside, the Force Teams pouring out of them and pointing their laser rifles at you. You're surrounded and utterly outgunned. What do you do?

### DEMAND QUESTIONABLE ACTION FROM AGENTS

A.E.G.I.S. may have good intentions, but the agency has a history of solutions that get its agents' hands dirty. Even though they aren't permanently committed to the agency yet, the PCs on the Sirius Team are still considered agents of A.E.G.I.S. The agency will ask them to do what it deems necessary, and that will further complicate their relationship to it.

Agent, the Director sits you down in front of his desk. "I know this is hard, but you have to understand...we can't trust your teammate. They're an alien. Can we depend on you to plant this tracker on them?" What do you do?

### SHOW THE DRAMATIC CONSEQUENCES OF AN UNSTOPPED THREAT

Any threat not yet defeated is exactly that—a true threat. Dangerous and capable of causing catastrophic damage. Especially when such a threat is left alone without attention from A.E.G.I.S. or the heroes. This is a bit like thinking off screen, but more dangerous—these threats don't play around, and take actions with major consequences.

Agent, while you're training, the TV flips to a news report showing the Exemplars' flying headquarters as it tips and falls from the sky, smashing into buildings on its way down. Behind it, you can see VENOM air cruisers firing upon it. What do you do?

## REVEAL DANGEROUS SECRETS

A.E.G.I.S. is full of secrets. Even the Sirius Team's own missions are likely swamped with myriad secrets and mysteries. When the time is right, reveal those secrets to the PCs. Show them that the person they thought was a supervillain was instead just the supervillain's daughter. Show them that their beloved sister, the one they thought was an accountant, is secretly another A.E.G.I.S. agent. Show them the world beneath the world.

Agent, you sneak into your house late at night, and you hear your parents talking downstairs. They're talking to someone over a radio, it sounds like...and you hear them say something like, "No, the asset doesn't suspect a thing. We have successfully formed an emotional bond with him." What do you do?

## THE WORLD'S ARMOR

Playing an *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* campaign is much more focused and directed than a regular **MASKS** game. The mission system means that individual sessions or episodes will be more structured, and the nature of threats will bring constant attention to the same enemies and dangers. The overall arc of the story will force PCs to contend with difficult questions about what actions should be allowed in the face of tremendous danger. And all the while, the core of the **MASKS** game will still be there, forcing the PCs to think about who they really are in the face of the pressures around them. Except this time, they must ask, "Am I really an A.E.G.I.S. agent?"

Play to find out who the PCs are, whether they can save the world from terrible threats, and whether they think A.E.G.I.S. is something worth serving. Good luck.

# THE SUITS



# CHAPTER FOUR

## IF YOU FIND THIS, PLEASE READ—WE NEED YOU HELP

Listen. If you're reading this, and you're not one of them, then there's a chance. A chance to save lives...to save the city...to save the world. You have to listen. You have to believe me. It's the only hope we have.

And if you are one of them...then just know, we're coming for you. I've put out copies of this file in hidden caches all over the Internet. You will not win.

You can call me the Hacker. And I'm going to tell you about a secret war for the soul of our protectors...and for our survival.

It's a war fought in the shadows and the dark alleys and redacted files and destroyed records. The enemy—the Suits—came in dreams and visions. They offered aid and power to A.E.G.I.S. operatives, all claiming it was to save lives. And all they ever asked for in return were little things. A dangerous person, whose dreams they could nibble on. A body to ride in. Some help in bringing more of their kind to this world. And those they corrupted in A.E.G.I.S. were all too happy to keep making those exchanges. They sold their souls to monsters from the dark.

I know this sounds mad, but you have to trust me. Before they take over.

Time is crucial, but you need to know about the enemy I'm asking you to fight. Because you might be our only hope.

## ***A.E.G.I.S.'S WEAKNESS***

A.E.G.I.S. aims to help Halcyon City and the world. I believe that.

The agency defends those who can't defend themselves. Saves lives. It represents a force for good that, for all its power, is ultimately answerable to the government and elected officials. It serves the regular people of the world.

When A.E.G.I.S. agents used lethal force against the ancient god-thing Charnel, they were held to account for their actions, submitted to an internal affairs investigation, and ultimately exonerated by an actual trial. When A.E.G.I.S. agents invaded the (at the time) sovereign and officially recognized nation of Vyortovia, they were held to account for their actions and sentenced to jail for violating another nation's sovereignty.

It has boundaries, and rules, and structures, and order. It isn't some freewheeling power, answerable only to itself.

Except...

A.E.G.I.S. operates in the shadows. It has more power than nearly any other government institution in the world. It takes unilateral action in times of crisis, and while its operatives and officers may later pay some price for their actions, those actions have immediate consequences that can't be undone. And A.E.G.I.S. files are sealed with top secret clearance—so the average citizen has no way to even find out what actions they've taken, let alone truly hold them accountable.

When the dictator of the island nation Kayesha unleashed a mutagen on his population and transformed them all into aberrations and mutants, superhero teams intervened—but the dictator himself disappeared, and most attribute it to A.E.G.I.S. When the superhero Golden Vigil was transformed into Onyx Strife, A.E.G.I.S. agents interceded using a drug cocktail designed to shut down her specific powers—a drug cocktail they could only have put together after having taken samples of her biology in secret.

A.E.G.I.S.'s internal structures can hide the true depths of the organization's power and activities. And between its bureaucracy and its enormous power, A.E.G.I.S. is deeply susceptible to a particular kind of attack—corruption.

All it would take is some force capable of pushing A.E.G.I.S.'s leaders and agents just a bit too far...and the entire organization might become as dangerous as those it fights.

For enemies who needed invitations to come into our world...who could offer power and intelligence in exchange for "acceptable costs"...A.E.G.I.S. was the perfect target.

## **HOWL DIVISION**

We all know that there are countless other dimensions, worlds, and forms of existence around us. The number of reality-breaking crises, spatial overlaps, and extradimensional visitors has made that clear. And Halcyon City's defenders are well aware that for every plane of good, kind, thoughtful allies, there is a plane of dangerous, infectious, mutant vampires.

A.E.G.I.S. set up Howl Division to deal with that second kind of place.

Howl Division was not subordinate to the Interdimensional Monitoring and Relations Agency under A.E.G.I.S. jurisdiction. The IMRA was (and still is) public, political, and largely peaceful. They handled relocation of interdimensional duplicates after cosmic crises, the tracking and cataloguing of dimensional coordinates, and interplanar diplomacy.

Howl Division was built to handle the dimensions full of danger and monsters, and the things those worlds spawned. It operated secretly and with



institutional impunity. It had its own hidden installations. Its agent roster was top secret. And the actions it took were designed to be decisive and effective. From preemptive strikes to unilateral destruction to assassination. If IMRA was the public face of diplomacy, Howl was the dark shadow, the knife in the night.

Since its secret founding in 1976, Howl Division has undertaken countless actions, none of them open to the public, ranging from assassinations to tactical sabotage to straight-up planar destruction. It protected the world from a dimension controlled entirely by a collective of sentient bacteria; it prevented an invasion of parasitic mindworms hiding inside their controlled interdimensional refugees; and it assassinated at least three individuals planning to bring elder god-things into our world.

Its agents are uncelebrated, its job thankless. Its power is nigh unlimited, and its oversight is non-existent. And it regularly deals with alternate dimensions and other worlds.

All of which meant that, out of all of A.E.G.I.S., Howl Division was the perfect target for the Suits.

## ***THE SUITS***

They have many names. Shadow-men. Men in black. G-men. Suits. In alien documentation, they've been the Sittorix, or the Olcom, or the Wyxmyst, or the Kyrust.

None of those names are entirely accurate. Certainly none of them are what they call themselves. But it's all we have. I stick with Suits.

Reports on appearance vary, but when they do manifest in dreams or in reality, they most often appear as spindly, blanched white, thin, black-suited agents. But when they get excited, or when they drop their facades, the black suit becomes their body, their faces become blank stretches of translucent flesh, and their mouths distend with mismatched razor teeth.

From what I've been able to gather, the Suits don't come from a single world. They come from somewhere between, some interdimensional shadow space. Best I can tell, they used to feed on echoes of the worlds around them. Probably that's how they know so much; they're always watching, peering in, and siphoning off bits of energy from the places where sentient life would press up against interdimensional barriers.

For us humans, that place was in our dreams. I don't have concrete proof for it, but I think they've been invading our dreams for eons. They're probably the source of many of our nightmares. They break in to our subconscious minds while we're dreaming, and feast upon our imaginations and our emotions,





ultimately twisting our dreams in the process. Heck, it's even possible they purposely made our dreams terrifying, just to evoke more emotion from us.

For centuries, I think that was all they could do. They were too far removed from us to do more than nibble at our minds and give us nightmares. All that changed, though, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

There were always breaks between our world and others, but ever since the massive uptick in metahuman activity and attention focused around Halcyon City, our dimensional barriers have been perforated. And the Suits have taken advantage to slip into our world. If eating our dreams is like getting crumbs or table scraps, then being able to feed on us directly would be like a feast.

Again, I don't have concrete evidence, but I'm willing to bet that they tried a whole bunch of different forms of getting to us, thanks to their newfound access. I think some of the monsters that wrecked our city—things like Deimos and the Morphotaur—were probably manifestations of the Suits. But at some point, they figured out a surefire way to feed directly upon humans, without endangering themselves. And that was by working *with* humans, instead of against them.

## INFILTRATION AND PARTNERSHIP

When I cracked some of Howl's deep servers, I found the keystone pieces I needed to make sense of everything I'd been seeing. Hidden, encrypted, and redacted digital records of some of the first internal messages Howl ever had concerning the Suits. So here they are. The best way to show how all this started, cleaned up as best as I could manage. There are holes I've had to fill in, around the edges, but these paint a picture of the start of it all.

**To:** Director Arthur Ingram  
**From:** Agent Samuel Quinn  
**RE:** Dream-Contact with Unknown Entity

Per protocol, this is written documentation informing you of contact with a heretofore unknown entity, likely of interdimensional origin. Based on current data, I believe the entity to be a spectral-class, incapable of manifestation, perhaps even pure mental projection.

First contact occurred while I was asleep in the duty-rotation bunker at Base [REDACTED]. The entity appeared within my dreams. I had previously taken standard issue Hypnos to ensure a steady, effective, dreamless sleep, but having particularly disturbed or strange dreams was a known side effect of the drug. The entity took on the appearance of a black-suited figure with distended anatomy.

We exchanged communication through a combination of words, emotions, and images. I cannot provide a transcript.

It "spoke" specifically about my most recent investigations into the interdimensional parasite Omnivore. It directly mentioned my failure to find useful intel, and then suggested that it knew the location of my target. The dream ended immediately after.

My initial assumption was that the entity was merely a manifestation of my usage of Hypnos, and that no knowledge it had was anything other than subconscious belief.

Second contact was one week later, under similar circumstances (usage of Hypnos and sleep in the bunker). The entity this time suggested that I specifically investigate geolocal coordinates [REDACTED]. Upon deploying satellite resources to take pictures, I was able to confirm the relevance of those coordinates to my investigation, leading to the ultimate capture of Omnivore.

However, upon further review, I came to the conclusion that those coordinates were unconnected to any previous investigation or evidence. It was extremely unlikely that my own subconscious would have been able to determine those coordinates were of any relevance. The entity provided information that could not have come from my own mind.

The entity does appear to be inhuman in origin, and based on its repeated dream-contact methodology, I assess that it must be incapable of making other forms of contact. Furthermore, I believe that the combination of Hypnos and the location of sleep may have been necessary for contact, further indicating steep limits to its specific abilities. I request advisement on further contact procedures.

Then, a short time later...

**To:** Director Arthur Ingram

**From:** Agent Samuel Quinn

**RE:** Further Contact With the Spectral Dream Entity

As per official order, I made contact with the spectral entity, reenacting the same conditions as the first contacts. The entity appeared more quickly and solidly in my dream in this instance, suggesting that repeated contact may make the connection stronger, or that the entity is growing in power.

The spectral entity this time offered up intel as to the plans of known metahuman terrorist and interdimensional escapee Kira Amalure, AKA Indigo Night, AKA Parallel Threat 489-A. It told me of the portal that Indigo Night was building to link to a dangerous dimension filled with mutagenic monstrosities. Howl Division had no corroborating evidence for the portal's creation or for the location the spectral entity pointed me towards, but per prior directive I tasked satellite assets to investigate and found signs that the spectral entity's intel was correct.

Due to the severity of the situation, I immediately dispatched a full response team to the site. They dismantled the portal, but did not catch Indigo Night.

After this intelligence exchange, I again made contact with the entity, and thanked it for its continued help. It informed me that it would be happy to continue providing information, but it would require something in exchange: sustenance. The spectral entity informed me that it fed upon some kind of reverberation of emanations arising from sentient beings.

The spectral entity was able to communicate that all it would require is a sentient individual, brought into my own proximity, and made vulnerable to it, preferably through sedation. My own physical presence would act as a conduit to provide the entity access to its sustenance. Furthermore, the spectral entity informed me that the individual upon which it fed would not be physically harmed, but their mind would be reduced. They would be left docile and placid, for an amount of time commensurate to the level of consumption. The spectral entity suggested it could feed upon dangerous individuals being held by Howl Division or A.E.G.I.S.

My assessment at this juncture is that the spectral entity's advice has proved invaluable, and if providing it with sustenance would ensure further aid, then I am inclined to give it what it needs. Such action could further help to maintain control over dangerous inmates.

Request approval to continue dealings with the entity.

I've been able to piece together a few other bits and pieces from around this time. Seems that the Suit suggested it was weak, and that's why it could only appear in dreams. It, and its people, were dying in the space between worlds, and Howl Division giving them people to feed on was keeping them alive. With the added bonus of saving an entire species, how could the pragmatic do-gooders of Howl Division say no?

**To:** Director Arthur Ingram

**From:** Agent Samuel Quinn

**RE:** Exchange with Spectral Entity

The exchange occurred as planned. The spectral entity was able to feed upon the sedated mind of Thomas Amal, AKA Crossbow, after he was given Hypnos and I came into the room. Physical signs of the feeding were minor. Breathing and pulse slowed, but never to dangerous levels. Upon waking, Thomas Amal exhibited signs of perfect compliance and did not resist in any way as he was led back to his cell. This behavior is markedly different from Thomas Amal's behavior up until the exchange.

I made contact with the entity without the use of Hypnos, and confirmed that it had fed. The entity did appear more solid during contact. It then provided me with intel about Parallel 545-A, the closed off world to which all prior expeditions had been lost. The entity informed me of a likely invasion force being prepared there, and informed me of likely weaknesses (contained in separate report).

At this juncture, I endorse continued exchanges with the entity. Furthermore, it informs me that others of its people would be willing to provide us with aid in similar exchanges. I recommend taking advantage of this new intelligence gathering apparatus.

Now, the relationship is solidified. Howl Division is working with multiple Suits now, using them to pacify dangerous elements in our world, and getting intel to defend us from multiversal threats. They even started using codenames to differentiate the Suits, usually things like Manager or HR or CEO. That's when the Suits made another offer.

**To:** Sub-Director Samuel Quinn  
**From:** Agent Mira Hanover  
**RE:** New Offer from Spectral Entities

During regular exchange, received new offer from spectral entity contact (codename: CEO). CEO expressed gratitude for continued relationship. Confirmed growing power. Confirmed ability to project presence directly into world. Confirmed that projection is easier through a willing contact point.

CEO suggested that it could make a strong connection by attaching to a willing human mind and projecting influence into our world. Would not harm human contact point. Would provide human with the equivalent of metahuman abilities.

Suggest test case and then re-examining after study.  
Request further advisement.

So there it is. The Suits can poke into our world directly, but it's still tough. If they get invited into a human mind, though, they can project their power way easier. So a Howl agent just has to invite a Suit into their head, and voila, you've got superpowered Howl agents. And it's not possession, oh no. The Suit just rides along, no cost to the agent whatsoever. What's there to lose?

**To:** Sub-Director Samuel Quinn  
**From:** Agent Mira Hanover  
**RE:** First Tests of Spectral-Agent Symbiosis

Tests of first Spectral-Agent symbiosis concluded. Subject in question is Agent Brodeur. Medical test results attached.

Agent Brodeur proved stronger, faster, and hardier than any other individual agent in competition with her. Brodeur exhibited high-speed regenerative abilities and superhuman strength. No sign of ill effects through observation or query. Brodeur expressed only happiness with the symbiosis.

Only noticeable effect: Agent Brodeur stated that the spectral entity needed sustenance after such a display. Authorized use of prisoner 86-Alpha-5 as sustenance

Successful test. Recommend proceeding with new subjects.

That's how we get the Howlers (my word for them, not theirs). The hybridized, part-Suit part-human super-powered agents of Howl Division. The only price? Feeding the Suits, and it's not as if A.E.G.I.S. doesn't have a vast menu of dangerous prisoners to offer. If the Howlers' personalities changed, if the Suits exerted more control over them, who cares? They're just so darn useful. Soon enough, Howl Division was the most successful division in all of A.E.G.I.S.

## THE HOWLERS, REVEALED

I was able to pinpoint the moment in 1996 when all of A.E.G.I.S. turned its attention to Howl Division. Dominus came back in time and started reshaping the city to build an Eschaton Engine again. Trouble was, this time it brought along a slew of mind-controlled or bribed villains to help out, right along with an army of stunted clones of itself. You had Doctor Infinity and Ilijah Intrepid leading squads of Dominites. The whole of the Earth was in danger. All hands on deck kind of thing.

The super teams came out, A.E.G.I.S. engaged, massive battle, yeah yeah. They won, of course. But in the after-action-analysis, it turned out that Howl Division's operatives were not only the most effective during the crisis, but may have tipped the balance in favor of our side. Teams of Howler agents punched through the Dominites and created a hole so Ultracore could smash apart the Eschaton Engine. Without them, the day maybe wasn't saved. And no other A.E.G.I.S. team was showing anywhere near as much success.

The eyewitness accounts I found suggested the Howlers were using their superhuman abilities, but keeping it on the downlow. Surviving hits that should've pasted them, but ultimately selling it as "glancing blows." Throwing enemies around with TK, but calling it "concussive grenades." Shutting down enemy powers, giving credit to "experimental dampeners." Etc. Point is, it was easy for elements in A.E.G.I.S. to say that the Howlers did great work, and to overlook exactly *why* they were so effective. Who cared? They got results.

And that's when the *de facto* function of Howl Division started to change. Yeah, they were still supposed to deal with multiversal incursions and the greatest of extradimensional threats, but they'd already made such substantial headway there, there were fewer threats to handle. So instead, A.E.G.I.S. started deploying Howlers to major crisis points across the spectrum of incidents. When the situation became dire, A.E.G.I.S. could call in Howlers to stomp all over opposition. And Howl Division was only too happy to help out—every successful mission earned them more accolades within A.E.G.I.S., more resources in the budget, and more prisoners to feed to the Suits.

That's where we are today. Howl Division is more powerful than ever, and I'm willing to bet the majority of agents there, if not all of them, are joined with Suits. They're only getting more power in A.E.G.I.S. and Halcyon. They've got their connections all throughout A.E.G.I.S.'s incarceration forces, so they can keep feeding the Suits, and they've probably got their own blacksite holding facilities. It's only a matter of time before Howl Division starts to offer Suit symbiosis to higher-ups within A.E.G.I.S., too.

## WHY'S IT MATTER?

So what, right? What's the problem? Howl Division is helping take down threats. They're pacifying monsters. And they keep saying the agents are completely unharmed by symbiosis with the Suits. There's no mind control, no possession. Who's hurt? Why's it matter?

Let me tell you how I found out about all this.

A friend of mine, let's call him the Torch, was a young guy from the Canyon Straights. Halcyon born and raised. He got caught in a mutagenic bomb, like you do, and developed some solid pyrokinetic abilities. For a minute, he thought about using them to get some money quick and easy. He could move his whole family out of the Straights with some good flamethrowing money, he figured. Never a shortage of well-supplied villains looking to hire on some new metahuman help.

But all it took was one meeting with El Caballero, and that was it. He was hooked. He wanted to be a hero—and not just a “save lives” hero, but a “change the city” hero. He wanted to make the city see *why* the Straights were poverty stricken and crime ridden. He didn't want to just preserve the city—he wanted to make it *better*.

He put together a costume, sure, but he never hid his face. That was the whole point. He wanted to stand for something, and he figured he could only do that if the city knew who he really was, where he was from, what he was doing. He stopped a few crimes, and every time he let both victim and perp see his face, hear his name. He made sure they knew who he was, and he stuck with them, followed-up with them. Even the guys he wound up putting in jail, he found and visited. Last time we spoke, he told me all about the life story of this one guy he put away, and how he thought everybody needed to hear it.

Then he disappeared.

It took some doing to find him. Howl Division had hidden him well in a facility they'd built, dimensionally woven into an abandoned tenement building in the Straights. Hacking in was kind of like trying to scale Everest if you couldn't actually touch the mountain. But I managed it, and found the secure feed showing him in his cell. 10' x 10', bed, sink, toilet, cold metal. No adornments. Forcefield. And he was sitting on his bed, not moving, not looking around, not doing anything. Just...sitting.

I didn't understand, and wouldn't for a little while. It took a lot of work to piece the whole puzzle together. Accounts of A.E.G.I.S. agents seeing weird shimmering figures in the halls. Psychics having nightmares about dark-suited eyeless monsters with too many teeth. The rise of Howl Division. But eventually I figured out what was wrong with him.



Someone had fed him to the Suits.

He hadn't been famous or popular. Some people might have noticed his absence, but there were a hundred reasons he might've disappeared, and most of those around him would be unable to search for him meaningfully. He was powered, and he was young—best I can tell from what I've pieced together, that makes a tastier meal for the Suits.

And he was starting to agitate, to push against the status quo. He probably got on their radar after he gave an interview to a city politics blog and said that he didn't trust A.E.G.I.S. That they should be under way more oversight. That they misused their power.

So they picked him up and ate his soul. Because they were hungry. Because it made them more powerful. Because partnership with extradimensional monsters was more important than the life of a young man who might've made things more difficult for them.

Since then, I've found additional incidents of a similar nature. Potentially dangerous young heroes...gone. Reformed criminals trying to lead civilian lives...gone. Scientists with advanced knowledge on metahuman capabilities and forms...gone.

Kids they thought no one would miss...gone. Gone. Gone.

Whether it's because the Suits are changing the personalities of those they're in contact with, or just because power corrupts, it doesn't matter. They've gone too far. We're all at risk...and no one even knows. No one *wants* to know.

When I tried to share intel with the Exemplars (anonymously, of course—gotta protect myself), they deleted it as far-fetched, ridiculous, and unsubstantiated. When I tried to send it to choice elements of A.E.G.I.S., in hopes of finding *someone* not under the Suits' thumb, I got no response—maybe they just wanted to protect themselves, or maybe they thought I was crazy, or maybe they were part of it. When I sent it to a Halcyon City Herald reporter, she started looking into it, and promptly disappeared. I found her later, in another secret facility. Drained.

So that's why I made this file. They might be onto me, and I can't let this information disappear. And I'm hoping to reach someone—anyone—who can and will do something about this.

If you found this report—then I hope you're that someone.

Halcyon City's people need you to save it.

Good luck.

## PLAYING THE SUITS

In this playset, the PCs have found the Hacker's message, and may be the last line of defense protecting the city from being dominated by the Suits. The PCs are connected to A.E.G.I.S., and care about the people in it, but they may or may not be under A.E.G.I.S. jurisdiction officially.

This playset retains many of the same conflicts as a core **MASKS** game, but with a great deal more subterfuge and skullduggery, along with an added threat—the adults in this playset are telling the PCs that nothing is wrong and there is no problem. The adults may be saying that out of ignorance, or because they're colluding with the powers that be. The playset puts emphasis on the PCs striving to fix major problems in the face of stagnation and opposition from the adults.

A team in the *Suits* playset is still assembled much like a regular **MASKS** team, but every PC must have a **connection** to A.E.G.I.S. This could be anything from working for A.E.G.I.S. to caring about someone who works for A.E.G.I.S. to having been granted powers by A.E.G.I.S. PCs must not be apathetic or uncaring towards the organization—the entire city is at risk, but much of the battle they

fight will be about the people, actions, and soul of A.E.G.I.S.

It's possible to play the *Suits* with an existing **MASKS** team and campaign. An existing **MASKS** team might discover the Hacker's broadcast and become aware of the infiltration into A.E.G.I.S. If you use an existing group of PCs, you can use the connections presented here, or you can use existing NPCs, as long as each PC has at least one connection to someone inside A.E.G.I.S., and one connection to someone outside A.E.G.I.S.

### PLAYBOOKS

The *Suits* playset works with all the playbooks as they stand, seeing as the team in this playset can still be an independent young-hero team.



## CONNECTIONS

**This is a new step in the character creation process, inserted during the background step and the character introduction step.** Every PC in a *Suits* game has to have connections to A.E.G.I.S. and the people in that organization, as well as to people outside of A.E.G.I.S. who might be affected by the Suits' infiltration. To ensure that the PCs are woven into this web of relationships, use the lists of A.E.G.I.S. and A.E.G.I.S.-adjacent characters below.

Each PC must have a connection to at least one character from each list (though they may have more) to start, and it's the GM's job to further set up triangles and relationships between multiple PCs and the same NPC.

A *connection to these characters* means that they are involved in the answers to one of the PC's background questions, including the two new background questions (page 118) that all PCs should answer.

### A.E.G.I.S. AGENTS

The A.E.G.I.S. agents include (in general order of rank and seniority):

#### DIRECTOR RUSSELL SUN

The director of A.E.G.I.S. A good agent, but a better mastermind and coordinator. An expert at secret-keeping and putting on a positive public image, and a master of juggling the myriad priorities of A.E.G.I.S., from prevention to defense to clean-up. Director Sun may ultimately subscribe to a utilitarian perspective, but as best as anyone can tell, he's done far more good than harm in his tenure. (See *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* for more information.)

#### DEPUTY DIRECTOR DAEVA GILL

Director Sun's right hand. Daeva would love to be director herself, but she also believes in A.E.G.I.S., and she is well aware of Director Sun's leadership acumen. She follows and serves him well, while keeping a watchful eye for when she might take on his role. She is a veteran of countless A.E.G.I.S. operations, and is predisposed to solving problems via direct, forceful action.

#### CHIEF SUPERVISOR ALEXANDRA MARINOS

A leading officer for mission assignment and ops control. Alexandra Marinos does not go on missions, but she assigns them, determines objectives, monitors agents, and assesses success or failure. She is very tactical and pragmatic, with a fundamental mistrust of superpowered individuals not under A.E.G.I.S. jurisdiction. She brooks no discord or dissent from her operatives.

#### **JUNIOR SUPERVISOR KURT EVERHART**

The newest supervisor in A.E.G.I.S., most likely to be assigned to low-priority or low-danger missions. Kurt operates in much the same role as Alexandra, but without anywhere near as much authority or even responsibility. He is very ambitious and would desperately like to move up the ranks. His ambition outweighs his competence, however, and his prospects without patronage or support from another party are not terribly strong.

#### **CHIEF SPECIAL AGENT FIONA CROSS**

The highest ranking special agent on publicly accessible records. The Director sees her experience as vital. She deeply believes in A.E.G.I.S. and its goals, and above all cares about saving the lives of innocent civilians. As special agent, Fiona has both arrest power and legal authority, and is expected to conduct full-scale A.E.G.I.S. investigations and operations. She can be a harsh taskmaster with her agents, but she will also go to extreme lengths to avoid losing any again.

#### **CHIEF FIELD AGENT CARLOS BENITEZ**

The highest ranking field agent in A.E.G.I.S.—a role kept internal to A.E.G.I.S.'s own operations. Carlos is an expert at covert operations. His name is mostly redacted from operational reports. He does not talk about the missions he's undertaken. In general, Carlos seems very friendly and open in appearance. But Carlos has never failed a mission yet, no matter what it took. He is the perfect loyal agent.

#### **AGENT MALAK AHMAD**

One of A.E.G.I.S.'s currently operating agents with jurisdiction in Halcyon City. Malak is noteworthy for having liaised with the Exemplars, as well as the HCPD and more mundane law enforcement agencies. Malak operates within A.E.G.I.S.'s primarily law-focused side, taking into custody dangerous meta-criminals and supervillains, or conducting investigations into superhuman crime. Malak could have been promoted multiple times, but has chosen to remain in this position—he likes the work, and doesn't want to lead.

#### **AGENT EKATERINA KOZLOV**

One of A.E.G.I.S.'s newest operating agents with jurisdiction in Halcyon City. Ekaterina Kozlov is young and relatively inexperienced on real missions, but her actions led to the arrest of several Renegades (villains focused on crime and burglary). For her own part, she sees A.E.G.I.S. as a font of possibility—the good it could do throughout the world is enormous. She'd love to be the Director who goes down in history as fulfilling the potential of her agency.

## A.E.G.I.S. ADJACENT CHARACTERS

The A.E.G.I.S. adjacent characters include:

### BAILEY HALE - AKA SOLAR FLARE

Bailey is barely out of her twenties, but she's already an experienced hero. She started with a team of young heroes, the Paladins. But one by one, the members of her team were either picked off or disappeared, until she too officially left the team behind. She doesn't check in on her team to keep from thinking about her losses...so she has no idea of how many may be missing.

### TIMOTHY TUCKER - AKA TITANI-MAN

A former superhero. Titani-Man had the power to grow to enormous sizes. He was too brutal for teams like the Exemplars. He tried to prove his worth fighting lower-level villains and criminals, but his power was overkill when used against gun-wielding thieves or hitmen. A.E.G.I.S. eventually sent agents to tell him to retire or be incarcerated. Since then, he's kept the Titani-Man mantle retired...but he has been spending his free time snooping around A.E.G.I.S. operations, looking for any signs of wrongdoing to get back at them.

### MARISOL NAVARRO - AKA LA ARQUERA FANTASMA (THE PHANTOM ARCHER)

A young, burgeoning superhero attempting to uphold her family's legacy. Marisol's grandmother acted as La Arquera Fantasma back in Mexico, before she died at the hands of El Cielo Rojo. Marisol inherited her grandmother's powers, and decided to honor her *abuela* by fighting against crime and villainy in the streets of Halcyon as La Arquera Fantasma. She's only just begun to fight; by and large, she is still unknown to the world.

### ROMAIN CALDWELL - AKA FREEFORM

Romain is a young metamorph, capable of shifting his body into all manner of shapes at will. Romain decided to help people and do some good, only to run up against the entrenched ideologies of existing heroes. After the third adult hero told him to leave the job to the professionals, he made it his priority to reinvent heroism in Halcyon, focusing on activism and politics as much as superheroics—and continuing to upset the powers-that-be.

### JAIME GAYOSO

Jaime comes from the Spiderweb, the area of Halcyon home to the crime lord known as the Spider. Jaime knows his home well. He and his friends know who to talk to, and who to steer clear of. When his friends disappeared, despite having played by the rules of the Spiderweb, Jaime knew something was wrong. And weirdest of all, these A.E.G.I.S. agents showed up right around when his friends disappeared. So Jaime decided to investigate and find his friends.

## WHAT IF I WANT A DIFFERENT CONNECTION?

These connections are here to prime the pump with some good NPCs directly tied into the action of the Suits playset, but they aren't here to be a straitjacket. If you want to modify an element of the NPCs, or if you have another idea for an NPC that fulfills a similar purpose, feel free to use them instead. The key is that every PC needs to have a connection to someone on both sides of A.E.G.I.S.—someone who works from within, and someone who might be a target outside.

### KATAGIRI AGASA

Katagiri was once an A.E.G.I.S. special agent, and is now a shadow of her former self. She investigated anomalies within the agency, specifically surrounding Howl Division. She ignored orders to cease her investigation and found a secret Howler holding facility. Howl Division agents caught her, and she was discharged from A.E.G.I.S., with a warning that the agency would destroy her if she spoke of what she knows. She now runs a small private investigation firm, but she's broke and has become an alcoholic.

### KIRIT BHUTA

Officer Kirit Bhuta of the HCPD signed up to do the job, but he never wanted to be a hero. He wanted to pull a paycheck, serve his community, and leave the big stuff to the supers. He seemed to be the only one who really cared when kids started to disappear from the Redrows neighborhood; then those investigations were strangely transferred to A.E.G.I.S. and shut down. And now he's in a place where he's not sure what to do—or what he can do.

### MALAYA WOODS - AKA MAYHEM

Malaya has the power to phase through walls, which isn't on its own terribly dangerous—but she's clever and determined to bring down A.E.G.I.S. She infiltrates their facilities, steals and leaks their files, and generally makes their lives more miserable. All the while, she broadcasts her actions as loudly as she can. Others have started to pick up on Mayhem's work and that she may have a point—A.E.G.I.S. may be far more corrupt than it seems.

## BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

Read these questions out loud during the character creation process, so every player is aware of them and ready to answer them.

The new background questions are:

- When did A.E.G.I.S.'s actions and operatives help you, personally?
- When did A.E.G.I.S.'s actions and operatives hurt you, personally?

## RUNNING THE SUITS

If you're the GM for a game of **MASKS** set in the *Suits* playset, your job is largely similar to the one described in the core book. Those agendas, principles, and moves still apply; the rules for creating individual villains still apply; and the rules for hooks and arcs still apply.

But there are some tweaks involved, along with new tools to ensure you focus on the most important elements of the Suits.

### THE BATTLE

The Suits, those strange extradimensional alien parasites, want to turn the Earth into an endless source of food. They don't care particularly about the guilt of those they feed on—just that they have a supply, and continue to be well-fed. And the more food they have, the more of their own kind they can bring into this world, until they've turned it into little more than a farm.

But the first step to that nightmarish dystopia is simple—it's to take over A.E.G.I.S. The Suits don't have the power to take over the Earth by force, and they know that their foothold is tenuous—all it would take is some of Earth's defenders to really tune in, pay attention, and the whole invasion could be brought to a screeching halt. So the Suits have to move slowly, subtly, and quietly.

They've already taken over Howler Division, completely subverting A.E.G.I.S.'s first line of defense against threats like them. And now they're trying to take over the rest of the organization. If they succeed, they will use A.E.G.I.S. to attack vulnerable people, people who can't defend themselves, people who won't be noticed missing. A.E.G.I.S. will become nothing more than a tool of oppression and a feeding trough for the Suits.

The PCs are here to stop that nightmare. Maybe they need to take down A.E.G.I.S. Maybe they can just purge the Suits. Either way, they're the last line of defense.

This system is here to help you track the PCs' fight against the Suits, so you can follow their progress and determine how dire the situation is at any given moment.





# THE BATTLEGROUND

The fight to save Halcyon and maybe A.E.G.I.S. from the Suits is a fight for individuals. As individuals in A.E.G.I.S. are either removed or corrupted, and individuals outside of A.E.G.I.S. are similarly made victims of the Suits or corrupted, the invaders' foothold becomes stronger and stronger. To save the day, the PCs will have to protect the people who matter to them and the people who can help them make a difference.

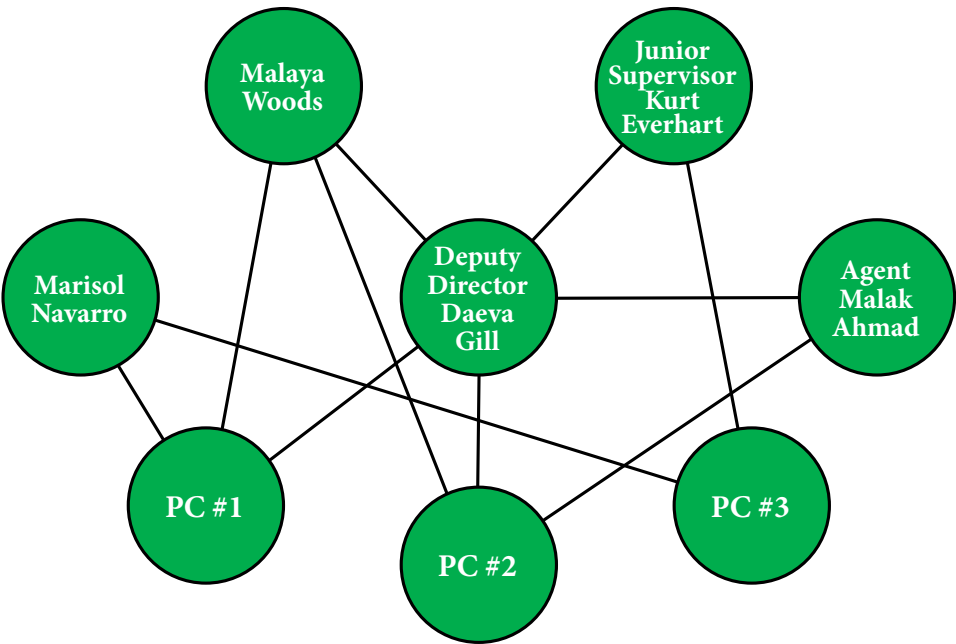
## RELATIONSHIP MAP

At the start of a game using the *Suits* playset, create a list of important NPCs connected to the PCs, up to 3 per PC. The list must include the connections—the NPCs selected during character creation, both within A.E.G.I.S. and A.E.G.I.S.-adjacent. Other crucial NPCs could include mentors, loved ones, dear friends, and important enemies.

On a blank sheet of paper, write the name of each NPC and PC, and circle it. Then, draw a line between each NPC and any other characters with whom they have a connection, writing a one or two word description of that connection over the line.

Each NPC should have at least two connections to other NPCs. If an NPC isn't connected enough, invent new connections to flesh them out.

Eventually, you should have a relationship map that looks like this:



## TARGETS

Now pick three targets for the Suits: one for corruption, one for feeding, and one for elimination. Over the course of play, the Suits may gain additional targets, and may change their goals for any given target, but you should always try to have at least one each for corruption, feeding, and elimination.

Use the following criteria to help you make your selection:

- **Corruption:** The Suits look for someone who can give them unique capabilities, additional power over other people, or a position of authority. The NPC with the most connections coming from them to other characters is often the best target for corruption—an NPC at the center of a web gives them more opportunities to sweep others under their power.
- **Feeding:** The Suits look for someone who is vulnerable and not connected strongly to feed upon. The NPC with the least connections between them and other characters is often the best target for feeding—the Suits go after someone unprotected, or who won't be noticed missing.
- **Elimination:** The Suits look to eliminate someone who is dangerous and threatening, someone they can only deal with via direct (if covert) action. The NPC with the most connections and the greatest awareness of the Suits, the Howlers, and the overall struggle is the best target for elimination—the Suits will not risk being exposed and eliminated by taking the time to corrupt someone who knows too much.

I pick out three of my connected characters. For the elimination target, Malaya Woods seems a good choice—she's too much of a thorn in the side of A.E.G.I.S. for the Suits' tastes. For the corruption target, Deputy Director Daeva Gill has the most connections to other characters, and is in a good place to be bribed and corrupted. I've got a couple choices for the feeding target, seeing as there is a tie in number of connections, and I pick Marisol Navarro—she's especially vulnerable, and at least one of the PCs will care deeply about her disappearance.

When you pick your three targets, spend some time writing a one sentence description of how the Suits will go after each target.

The Suits will eliminate Malaya Woods by having A.E.G.I.S. trace her hack to find her location. They will then use overwhelming force, including Howlers, to destroy her.

The Suits will corrupt Deputy Director Daeva Gill by offering her the Directorship of A.E.G.I.S. and the power she needs to conduct operations how she chooses.

The Suits will feed on Marisol Navarro by luring her into A.E.G.I.S. with an offer of official A.E.G.I.S. sponsorship, only to apprehend her and place her into their holding facility to feed on her at will.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND ADVANCEMENT

During each session, the Suits move against each of their three next targets, following the plan you have outlined. All three plans are moving at once. As GM, think between panels and use the PCs' connections to these characters to alert them to *something* going on, even if the PCs don't know exactly what's happening. The Suits' plans will advance, which then will ultimately lead to those plans coming to fruition once they have earned the requisite number of advancements.

Each plan requires a different number of advancements to come to fruition. A corruption plan requires 2 advancements; a feeding plan requires 3 advancements; and an elimination plan requires 4 advancements. Track your advancements on the same sheet where you have written the plans themselves.

- If, by the end of the session, any of the three Suits' plans were not affected at all by the PCs' actions (use your judgment), those plans each earn 2 advancements.
- If, by the end of the session, any of the three Suits' plans moved forward despite PC interference (again, use your judgment), those plans each earn 1 advancement.
- If, by the end of the session, any of the three Suits' plans was stymied in progress, those plans earn no advancements.
- If, by the end of the session, any of the three Suits' plans was completely overturned—meaning that it is now no longer possible for the Suits to proceed as planned—erase that plan and all its advancements. The Suits will choose a new target and a new plan, accordingly.

When any plan comes to fruition—meaning that it has earned enough advancements for the plan to be fulfilled—the Suits have accomplished their plans and their target is affected, accordingly. That character is now eliminated, fed upon, or corrupted, according to the Suits' initial plan. On your relationship map:

- Cross out any eliminated characters with a large X
- Slash out any fed upon characters with a single \
- Star any corrupted characters with a \*

Any crossed out character is gone, out of play, barring superhuman or supernatural events or resurrection.

Any slashed out character is fed upon, made docile, no longer active or themselves; in theory, there may be ways to get them to recover, but it will be no easy feat for the PCs.

Any starred character is corrupted, meaning that they have become complicit with the plans of the Suits in some capacity, even if they may not have a full understanding of exactly what they have agreed to. They can become uncorrupted, if sufficiently convinced or freed from their bonds, but again, it is no mean feat. After a character is corrupted, their drive should change to match their new corrupted purpose.

At the end of a session of play, the PCs successfully protected Malaya Woods when she called them for help during a massive attack on her hideout. They also convinced Marisol Navarro to at least be cautious in heading over to A.E.G.I.S. But they did nothing to avert Daeva Gill's corruption, not even after she had mentioned how a known Howler had offered her clandestine aid. The plan to eliminate Malaya Woods was thwarted entirely, so I need to come up with a new elimination target, or a brand new plan the Suits would use against Malaya. The plan to feed on Marisol has moved forward, but it was slowed thanks to the PCs' actions, meaning I put 1 advancement on that plan. The plan to corrupt the Deputy Director suffered no interference at all, meaning that I put 2 advancements on that plan and that's what it needs to succeed. Deputy Director Daeva Gill is now corrupted, meaning she is in some way complicit with the Suits' plans and goals; I put a star next to her name on my relationship map.

Use the fiction and the state of the world and characters to guide you throughout this process. If you can't believe a certain character would be corrupted by the Suits, then there's a good chance that no corruption plan would ever work on them, and the Suits wouldn't start one. Similarly, if the PCs successfully convince an NPC about the horrors of Howler Division and the Suits, that NPC might become immune to attempts at corruption, depending upon the specific situation.

When any plan has been stymied or completed, the Suits choose a new plan and a new target. Use the relationship map to do so. Instead of picking from the full list of possible NPC targets, advance along one of the prior target's connections to a new target.

With Deputy Director Daeva Gill corrupted, I advance along one of her connections to a new target—Junior Supervisor Kurt Everhart. The Suits will attempt to corrupt Kurt next. I write down their new plan: the Suits will offer Kurt immediate advancement up the chain and over his peers in exchange for his advancement of the Howler agenda.

## VICTORY

When the Suits have eliminated, fed upon, or corrupted approximately two-thirds of the relationship map, they move into their end-game. At this stage, they act directly against the PCs, targeting them for feeding, elimination, or corruption instead of any NPCs. They also act openly, relying upon the support of Howler Division and the allies they have made in the city. The final confrontations with the Suits last one or two sessions at most. At the end of those confrontations, either A.E.G.I.S. and Halcyon City are now under major Suit control and the story becomes one of underground resistance, or they are defeated and exposed openly.

When the PCs have successfully thwarted or undone the success of five or more of the Suits' plans, the Suits similarly enter their end game, acting directly against the PCs to deal with them once and for all.

## SESSION STRUCTURE

The structure of each session with the *Suits* playset is not all that different from the standard structure of a **MASKS** session. The standard GM moves and agendas apply, and the PCs encounter threats and dangers that they have to deal with in the face of a world that is also telling them who to be and how to act.

The core difference in the structure of a *Suits* game is simple: **everything plays a role in the overarching secret battle.**

In regular **MASKS** it's entirely possible to have an alien invasion, a time-traveling warlord, a demon from another dimension, and a criminal empire all play a role. They're all totally disconnected from each other, each a piece of their own plans and plots, connected only by virtue of affecting Halcyon City and the PCs.

In *Suits*, everything that happens ties into the larger conflict. That alien invasion? Howler Division plans on using it to advance their own importance to the defense of Earth. The time-traveling warlord? He'd make a great source of food for the Suits, so they lured him here with temporal anomalies. The demon from another dimension? A competitor and predator of the Suits who needs elimination. And the criminal empire? How better to exert control over Halcyon City than by corrupting its own criminal forces?

In a *Suits* game, the PCs are their own team. They might be working for A.E.G.I.S. (see *Agents of A.E.G.I.S.* in this book for more on how you could do that), but this playset only works if they are loyal to each other and the team more than they are to the agency. They will still be responding to threats and dangers, but they primarily get embroiled in the plans and agendas of the Suits.

As a GM, your job in supporting the structure of the *Suits* game is to always have in mind what the Suits' current plans are, and how the current action plays into those plans. You are ultimately responsible for weaving everything together into a grand conspiracy.

## THE SUITS: AGENDA

The *Suits* playset adds one new agenda to your list from the **MASKS** core book (page 126).

- Make the Suits' invasion complicated, dire, and threatening

The *Suits* playset is all about a slow, dangerous invasion of one of the institutions designed to keep the world safe. This threat is more insidious and more dangerous than some of the more obviously dangerous superhero-comic-book style threats, like alien invasion fleets. A.E.G.I.S. has real power, and while it's supposed to be using that power to do good, it has real potential to do harm. The Suits represent the temptation and urge to use that power easily, without hesitation or regard for the people A.E.G.I.S. is supposed to be protecting.

So the stakes of the war against the Suits, for the soul of A.E.G.I.S. and the safety of the innocents of Halcyon City, couldn't be higher.

Make the Suits' invasion complicated by emphasizing their corruptive influence and the spread of their power. Not all of A.E.G.I.S. is corrupted—at this point, Howler Division is the only one that is fairly irretrievably corrupted. And A.E.G.I.S. still stands as one of Earth's best lines of defense, with a great potential to do good. Its agents are a mix of dangerous and noble, ambitious and generous, petty and heroic. Similarly, those on the outside of A.E.G.I.S. are a mix of good and bad, heroic and dangerous, stubborn and forgiving. The Suits themselves are the only real evil here—in all other cases, the situation isn't as simple as "good versus evil."

Make the Suits' invasion dire by emphasizing the connections and the constant advancement of their plans. The Suits are here, and they're working already. In fact, the actions of A.E.G.I.S. for the past who-knows-how-many years may have been influenced by the Suits. If they aren't stopped soon, they'll have more and more opportunities to cause harm. Their plans aren't a danger to be handled tomorrow—they're dangerous *today*.

Make the Suits' invasion threatening by targeting the characters that matter to the PCs. The Suits are also an existential threat in the long run, but for right now that makes them too big to really comprehend. They aren't abstractly dangerous. Right now, they're dangerous to your cousin, your sister, your father, your best friend. They're dangerous on a personal level, and the stakes of the fight against them may have larger implications, but the PCs will feel these stakes directly.

## THE SUITS: PRINCIPLES

In addition to the new agenda, you have some new principles to follow for a *Suits* game. Remember that an agenda is your purpose in playing and principles are how you achieve that goal.

- Make connections wherever plausible
- Show the players ripples and echoes of plans
- Reveal hidden agendas and secrets
- Move in shadows

### MAKE CONNECTIONS WHEREVER PLAUSIBLE

Everything is connected. People know each other in ways that are surprising. Plans fit together to form pieces of a larger puzzle. Make those connections between people, places, things, and events whenever it's plausible. Note that it's not whenever *possible*, but *plausible*. If the connection is too far-fetched for anyone to believe, then that's not a good connection. Revealing that the Director is actually the Outsider PC's alien dad may be a bit too far; revealing that the Director once upon a time used to date the Janus's father, however, is plausible. Making these connections creates a complex and devious web around the PCs, and constantly makes them feel like there is a larger world moving around them, just out of sight.

### SHOW THEM THE RIPPLES AND ECHOES OF PLANS

The Suits are always moving on their plans. But they try to stay unnoticed, beneath the watchful eyes of Halcyon's more prominent defenders. So most of the time, the signs of their work are hidden. The PCs see only ripples and echoes filtered through their connections to other characters and their understanding of context. They don't receive a message that the Suits are trying to kidnap someone—instead, a friend calls them up, nervous about being followed. They don't get called in because the Howlers have started a fully-fledged firefight—instead, they receive a notification that A.E.G.I.S. has flagged a major villain living in a local building and are calling in back-up.



## PROVIDE HIDDEN AGENDAS AND SECRETS

Everybody is hiding something, and everybody is after some goal or agenda that they're not sharing. Even the noblest of heroes have something they want that they're not talking about. In the *Suits*, make sure every NPC has a drive that pushes them to action and that refers to their secret or less than public desires. And always have in mind the potential for every NPC to be hiding an important secret. You don't have to decide what those secrets are in advance, but when the opportunity comes to reveal a terrible truth, every NPC is fair game.



## MOVE IN SHADOWS

The Suits do not act openly. That means when they make themselves known, it's never direct. It's through proxies, or through shadowy figures, or cryptic messages. The truth of what's going on is never accessed directly, but there are always clues that point to some future catastrophe or dangerous plan. The confrontations between the PCs and the real threats should be rare, and the actual tensions should almost never surface, but there should always be signs of something else going on.

## THE SUITS: MOVES

You have a few new moves added to your repertoire for the *Suits*.

- Send in the Howlers
- Reveal shocking but inevitable truths
- Endanger an unexpected target
- Make a desirable offer

### SEND IN THE HOWLERS

Howl Division and its forces are allied entirely with the Suits. The Howlers are quickly rising to be one of the most powerful divisions in A.E.G.I.S. and are fulfilling more and more of a heavy deployment/emergency forces kind of role within the organization. The net result is that the Suits are in command of one of A.E.G.I.S.'s most powerful divisions. Deploying the Howlers in force is a strong move, one that the Suits do not undertake unless they've already provided themselves some cover, or it's a grim situation. But when the Howlers do go out in force, their targets find themselves in dire straits, under fire from superhuman soldiers.

You grab Marisol and move towards the door, just as three agents come bursting through the ceiling in a shower of debris. One of them has flaming hands; another, skin made of metal; the third, glowing green eyes. Each one has a Howl Division emblem on their uniform. What do you do?

### REVEAL SHOCKING BUT INEVITABLE TRUTHS

Everyone is hiding something, and in any good story, secrets are made to be revealed. When the opportunity arises, reveal a shocking truth that resets the way the PCs understand the world, the current situation, other characters, or even each other. These can tie into the secret connections between other characters, or the true intentions and desires of other characters. These truths have to simultaneously be exciting and interesting, and in retrospect entirely suited to the fiction.

You break into the Howl Division armory, only to find yourself face to face with a squad of Howlers, weapons out and pointed at you... And Marisol, standing next to them, with a thin-lipped smile on her face. "Hello," she says. "We've been waiting for you." What do you do?

## ENDANGER AN UNEXPECTED TARGET

The Suits act obliquely. They only come directly at their targets and their goals when there is no other option; the rest of the time, they try to weave around, find alternate means in, subtler means. They act against the least expected targets, especially when they want to take someone down or bring them to heel—they go after the people their targets thought were safe, the people their targets care about, instead of their targets directly.

You come home to your house, costume back in your gym bag, only to see flashing lights and A.E.G.I.S. vehicles on your street, even parked on your lawn. A.E.G.I.S. agents, many of them Howlers, are standing around, watching you as you approach. And then you see your mom being led out, with power-cuffs around her wrists. What do you do?

## MAKE A DESIRABLE OFFER

The Suits came this far by offering power to Howl Division. They are a corruptive force, first and foremost, and they still rely on that tactic to achieve their ends. A.E.G.I.S. is liable to use lures and promises as much as force, and even the people outside of A.E.G.I.S. will try lure the PCs to their side with gifts or help. The PCs will be bombarded with offers and promises of power, and will have to choose who to listen to and who to ignore.

Romain Caldwell pulls out a file and slaps it down in front of you. “Look, I don’t like to do this kind of cloak and dagger stuff, but here it is. I’ve pulled some strings, and...I think I found out where your brother is. But before I give you this, I need you to promise me that you’ll show up to the rally in full costume. We need your public endorsement to stand against A.E.G.I.S.” What do you do?

## THE HIDDEN BATTLE

Playing a *Suits* game changes the nature of a game of **MASKS** by adding a dangerous, underlying current. In most **MASKS** games, the emotions, the punches, the action is on the very surface. But in a *Suits* game, secrets abound, hidden goals drive the action, and the true enemy is hidden. The overall arc of the story forces PCs to fight a battle for which they may not be equipped at the start, and ultimately involves them deciding whether or not it’s more important to stop the Suits at all costs, or save A.E.G.I.S. The core question the PCs have to face: “What am I willing to do to stop such a dire threat?”

Play to find out who the PCs are, whether they can save the world from the Suits, and whether they can save the people closest to them. Good luck!



# NEW PLAYBOOKS

In this section of the book, you'll find two new limited-edition playbooks for your game of **MASKS: A NEW GENERATION**. Each one adds new and different mechanics, while pointing the game's focus at different issues.

These limited-edition playbooks are:

- **The Brain:** A genius who inadvertently created a terrible danger.
- **The Soldier:** A devoted agent of a larger law enforcement organization, constrained by their rules and supported by their resources.

Here are some key notes for using these limited-edition playbooks:

**Take care when using more than one limited-edition playbook.** Each one skews the game significantly, and having too many limited-edition playbooks and not enough core playbooks can unbalance your game. It's not impossible to play that way, but it certainly will require more work from all players at the table. GMs in particular have to put out extra effort to attend to all the particulars of the limited-edition playbooks at the same time.

**The new moves are available for any playbook to take with their “take a move from another playbook” advancements.** But the new extras, such as the Soldier's A Higher Calling, are just that—extras. They still remain largely inaccessible through advancement, but if a PC ever earns those extras in the fiction, then they should take those mechanics.

**The limited-edition playbooks answer their “When our team first came together” questions after every core playbook.** If you're using more than one limited-edition playbook, they answer their questions in clockwise order around your table.

You've always been the smartest kid in the room. Your inventions are world-class, your tactical plans are flawless, and your mind is a steel-trap memory palace of extraordinary ideas. If only the others knew how sometimes, none of that seems to matter. None of that keeps the shadows at bay. None of that can make up for what you did...or might do.



## THE BRAIN

**HERO NAME**

**REAL NAME (IF DIFFERENT)**

### /LOOK

- ambiguous, man, shifting, transgressing, woman
- Asian or South Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latino, Indigenous, Middle Eastern, White
- tall and skinny body, short and round body, tight and trim body, artificial body
- vintage clothing, scientific clothing, geeky clothing, futuristic clothing
- no costume, colorful costume, adaptive costume, robotic exo-suit, sleek costume

### /ABILITIES

You don't have any powers of your own, besides your incredible intellect. All of your amazing abilities come from inventions that you have created. You're best known for one particular invention that you use regularly; choose one.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prosthetic self-altering limbs | <input type="checkbox"/> size-change device | <input type="checkbox"/> force field belt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> power armor or cyborg body     | <input type="checkbox"/> robotic sidekick   | <input type="checkbox"/> hi-tech vehicle  |



## **LABELS**

(at character creation, add +1 wherever you choose)

<b>DANGER</b>	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
<b>FREAK</b>	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
<b>SAVIOR</b>	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
<b>SUPERIOR</b>	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
<b>MUNDANE</b>	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

## **CONDITIONS**

- ☐ **Afraid** (-2 to directly engage a threat)
- ☐ **Angry** (-2 to comfort or support or pierce the mask)
- ☐ **Guilty** (-2 to provoke someone or assess the situation)
- ☐ **Hopeless** (-2 to unleash your powers)
- ☐ **Insecure** (-2 to defend someone or reject others' influence)

## **BACKSTORY**

- How did you first reveal your genius to your friends or family?
- Why did you decide to use your intellect for the benefit of others?
- What accident or misfire taught you some sense of humility or responsibility?
- Who helped you realize you need other people?
- Why do you care about the team?

Once you've finished your backstory, introduce your character to the other players, and then determine what happened when your team first came together, the relationships between you and your teammates, and who has Influence over you.

## **WHEN OUR TEAM FIRST CAME TOGETHER...**

I created something lasting and beneficial for the whole team. What was it?

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

You told \_\_\_\_\_ about your shame and asked them for their confidence.

You wish you could be a better hero, more like \_\_\_\_\_.

## **INFLUENCE**

You need these people as much as they need you. Give Influence to two of your teammates.



## BRAIN MOVES

(Choose three)

- ☐ **Above the fray:** When you **enter battle as a Team against a dangerous foe**, if you have Influence over the leader and provide tactical input, add 1 Team to the pool. When you **contradict the leader during the battle**, you may return Influence over the leader to add an additional 1 Team to the pool.
- ☐ **Mission debrief:** During a debrief, when you **downplay your role in helping a teammate during the mission**, mark potential and shift Superior down and any other Label up. When you **exaggerate your role in helping a teammate during the mission**, clear a condition and either give them Influence or lose Influence over them.
- ☐ **Logical angle:** When you **comfort or support someone** by rationally pointing out their mistakes so they can do better next time, roll + Superior instead of + Mundane. If they do not open up to you, mark a condition.
- ☐ **Scientific insight:** You have achieved mastery over a field of science and technology. Name it:
  - Whenever you **assess the situation** and your field of study is directly relevant, you may ask a single follow-up question.
- ☐ **Always prepared:** When you have a chance to restock your supplies, hold up to 2-gadgets. When you **unleash your powers** by producing a brand new minor invention or gadget from your supply, spend 1-gadget and roll + Superior. When you reach 0-gadgets, mark a condition.
- ☐ **Tactical genius:** When you point out the obvious flaw in a known foe's plan, roll + Savior. On a hit, you're right, and another teammate (your choice) can take advantage; they get +1 ongoing to act on your information. On a 7-9, pick one:
  - *You missed something important. The GM will tell you what.*
  - *You look like a showoff. Your chosen teammate takes Influence over you, and you lose Influence over them.*
  - *You make your teammates feel like little more than pawns. Your chosen teammate marks a condition.*On a miss, you've played into your enemy's hands; watch the trap spring.

## YOUR SHAME

You have a deep and abiding sense of guilt for something you have created or had a hand in creating. It could have been something you invented when you first came into your genius, or something you set into motion that you no longer have the power to stop. It may even be something beyond your ability to achieve again, this once-in-a-lifetime creation. Just as you are a world-class intellect, your shame is a world-class problem. Whatever the case may be, your role in its creation is not publicly known...yet.

**What is your shame?**

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A prototype AI      | <input type="checkbox"/> A catastrophic weapon | <input type="checkbox"/> A living monstrosity   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A cosmic phenomenon | <input type="checkbox"/> A dangerous chemical  | <input type="checkbox"/> An altered former ally |

**Whenever you are confronted with your shame**, either mark a condition or shift Superior down and Danger up. If your shame is an NPC, they can never lose Influence over you.

**At the end of every session**, answer the question:

- Did you take steps to make amends for your shame?

If the answer is yes, mark potential. If the answer is no, give Influence to one of your teammates.

## **MOMENT OF TRUTH**

Sooner or later, all the super powers, elite training, and experience are helpless in the face of evil or disaster. That's when somebody like you, gifted as you are with a peerless intellect, can rise to the occasion. Your plan, your invention, or your lightning-fast thought processes save the day, in a way no one else could have foreseen. Of course, after you've shown how different you are from them, that distance between you and the others is now that much greater. And the world is only going to pull you farther apart...

## **TEAM MOVES**

When you share a triumphant celebration with someone, ask them if they felt they could have done it without you. If they say yes, give Influence to them and mark a condition. If they say no, they give Influence to you.

When you share a vulnerability or weakness with someone, hold 2. Spend the hold 1-for-1 to clear a condition or add 1 Team to the pool when you are with them.

## **POTENTIAL**



Every time you roll a miss on a move, mark potential.

## **ADVANCEMENT**

When you fill your potential track, you advance. Choose from the list below.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take another move from your playbook      | <input type="checkbox"/> Someone permanently loses Influence over you; add +1 to a Label |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take another move from your playbook      | <input type="checkbox"/> Rearrange your Labels as you choose, and add +1 to a Label      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take another move from your playbook      | <input type="checkbox"/> Unlock your Moment of Truth                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take a Sanctuary from the Doomed playbook |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take Drives from the Beacon playbook      |  |

When you've taken five advances from the top list, you can take advances from the list below.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unlock your Moment of Truth after it's been used once               | <input type="checkbox"/> Take an adult move  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confront your Shame on your terms; if you survive, change playbooks | <input type="checkbox"/> Lock a Label, and add +1 to a Label of your choice          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take an adult move  | <input type="checkbox"/> Become a paragon of the city for however long you have left |

## **OTHER MOVES**

## PLAYING THE BRAIN

Brilliant, guilty, impulsive, obsessed. The Brain is a once-in-an-era kind of mind, and they know it. They have the potential to completely change the world. It's a terrible burden and an invigorating hope.

Maybe once upon a time, the Brain could invent, create, and remake the world without thinking of the consequences or costs. But now the Brain is aware of both their responsibility to better the world, and the potential risks of their inventions gone awry. Play with these three poles of the Brain—the wanton inventor, the burdened world-fixer, and the guilty creator.

You may think you should automatically be going after your Shame, but every time you are confronted with it, you are likely to suffer. Don't worry that it won't come into play if you avoid it—you can rest assured that your GM won't miss out on an opportunity to bring your Shame to bear.

With that said, you should definitely try to solve every single other problem you can get your hands on. You're a genius, after all! The Brain is expected to butt into other people's problems. You don't want to become obnoxious to your fellow players, but trying to intervene in your teammates' affairs on their behalf will draw attention to their story, while also giving them ample opportunity to tell you off and adjust your Labels.

Finally, the Brain's abilities work a bit similarly to the Nova's in general concept—your brilliance is such that you can normally bend it to solve any given super-problem with gadgetry and invention. That said, keep in mind that your body is not particularly powerful, and with all your gadgets stripped away, you're largely at the mercy of more physically powerful enemies.

## NOTES ON YOUR MOVES AND EXTRAS

For **Above the fray**, none of those triggers work if you are the leader.

For **Mission debrief**, deciding when you are “debriefing” is down to you and your group. If someone is telling you how you could've done better in a fight, then you're probably in a debrief.

For **Logical angle**, “rationally pointing out their mistakes so they can do better next time” means that, from your perspective, you are genuinely trying to help. If they don't like your help, they can just refuse to open up to you.

For **Scientific insight**, you may invent a crazy name for your scientific discipline if you so choose. If you don't take this move, that doesn't mean you are not a genius—it just means you don't have mastery over a specific field.

For **Always prepared**, you can only restock when you would reasonably have access to supplies and equipment. It doesn't have to be access to your

own personal workshop, but it has to have supplies and parts that you can use, at minimum. When you restock, you only hold up to 2-gadgets—so if you already have 2-gadgets, you don't get any more. Also, you can only spend 1-gadget when you introduce a new gadget—not when you reuse one you've already introduced. You should constantly be inventing new gadgets.

For **Tactical genius**, the “obvious flaw” can be something you, the player, make up in that moment. It's only “obvious” to the genius mind of the Brain... and on a miss, it was never a true flaw at all.

## INSPIRATIONS FOR THE BRAIN

Shuri, **BLACK PANTHER**

Riri Williams and Tony Stark, **IRON MAN**

Lunella Lafayette, **MOON GIRL AND DEVIL DINOSAUR**

Nadia Pym, **THE UNSTOPPABLE WASP**

Amadeus Cho, **CHAMPIONS**

Reed Richards, **FANTASTIC FOUR**

## GM ADVICE

- Confront them with their Shame
- Complicate their solution or gadget
- Present an impossible problem to solve
- Judge them for their overconfidence
- Show them how they need others

The Brain is built upon a fundamental dichotomy—that they can solve nearly any problem with their incredible intellect, and that only caring about “solving a problem” will always lead to new consequences and problems.

Play into the Brain's tendency to rely on their genius intellect as the Swiss army knife solution to all problems. If they jump in and try to create brand new solutions, let them—and then show them the hidden or unforeseen costs and consequences of those decisions. If they think they can handle an entire villain all by themselves, show them how they can only do so much without help. Don't try to take away the Brain's incredible abilities and problem-solving capacity—that's taking away what makes the Brain cool. Instead, let them try to solve problems, and then complicate the results.

And the most direct tool in your toolbox for doing this is the Brain's Shame. No matter what it is, it will always come back, and it will always complicate their life. Never let them get out from under the guilt, and do your best to connect their Shame to new and different problems. Their Shame is definitively the one problem they will never be able to solve—until they take that advancement and change playbooks.

You're an agent of something greater than you—a real force fighting to make the world a better place. Through them, you stand for something important. You just hope that, when push comes to shove, you stand for the right thing.



## THE SOLDIER

**CALL SIGN**

**REAL NAME**

### /LOOK

- ambiguous, man, shifting, transgressing, woman
- Asian or South Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latino, Indigenous, Middle Eastern, White
- average body, bulky body, lean body, trained body, surprising body
- stylish clothing, comfortable clothing, simple clothing, casual clothing
- modern costume, iconic costume, military uniform, no costume

### /ABILITIES

A.E.G.I.S. found you before you got full control of your abilities. They helped you master your gifts, maybe even augmented them with some new tech. Now you have an opportunity to do some good, using your powers to protect and serve humanity. Choose any two of the following.

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> superstrength and durability | <input type="checkbox"/> enhanced senses    | <input type="checkbox"/> augmented/mechanical limbs  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> energy blasts                | <input type="checkbox"/> a signature weapon | <input type="checkbox"/> an alternate/monstrous form |

## **/LABELS**

(at character creation, add +1 wherever you choose)

<b>DANGER</b>	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
<b>FREAK</b>	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
<b>SAVIOR</b>	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
<b>SUPERIOR</b>	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
<b>MUNDANE</b>	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

## **/CONDITIONS**

- ☐ **Afraid** (-2 to directly engage a threat)
- ☐ **Angry** (-2 to comfort or support or pierce the mask)
- ☐ **Guilty** (-2 to provoke someone or assess the situation)
- ☐ **Hopeless** (-2 to unleash your powers)
- ☐ **Insecure** (-2 to defend someone or reject others' influence)

## **/BACKSTORY**

- What tragedy or disaster led to you gaining your abilities?
- What inspired you to officially join A.E.G.I.S.?
- What does A.E.G.I.S. do for the world that no one else can?
- Who, outside of A.E.G.I.S. and the team, connects you to the civilian world?
- Why do you care about the team?

Once you've finished your backstory, introduce your character to the other players, and then determine what happened when your team first came together, the relationships between you and your teammates, and who has Influence over you.

## **/WHEN OUR TEAM FIRST CAME TOGETHER...**

Our victory secured an important resource for A.E.G.I.S. What was it?

## **/RELATIONSHIPS**

\_\_\_\_\_ is crucial to the long-term success of A.E.G.I.S. I must protect them.

\_\_\_\_\_ isn't always thrilled with the way A.E.G.I.S. handles things. I've come to value their critiques, even if I don't agree with them.

## **/INFLUENCE**

Respect is earned, soldier. Tell two of your teammates what they did to earn your esteem and give them Influence. Everyone else will have to match their efforts.

## SOLDIER MOVES

(You start with Before we get started and one more)

- ✓ **Before we get started:** When you have time to closely observe your opposition before a fight, roll + Savior. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 2. On a miss, hold 1 and mark a condition. During the fight, you can spend your hold to name a character you observed and...:
  - ...*redirect their attack to another character or nowhere—into a wall or the sky.*
  - ...*cross a distance between them and you.*
  - ...*stun them, close up or from a distance.*
  - ...*ignore all harm from one of their attacks.*
  - ...*escape any bindings or impediments they attempt to place on you.*
- ❑ **No, you move:** When you demand that an NPC live up to a higher moral code, roll + Savior. On a hit, they have to meet your standard or mark a Condition. On a 10+, take Influence over them as well. On a miss, they reveal that the conflict in question is more complicated than it seems; give them Influence over you.
- ❑ **I can do this all day:** When something causes you to remove yourself from a fight, you can shift Savior down (and another Label up) instead. If shifting Savior down would move it below -2, you have to leave the fight instead of shifting Labels.
- ❑ **It kinda feels personal:** When you discover that someone has misled you or betrayed your cause, mark a condition to take +1 ongoing against them until they are brought to justice.
- ❑ **Mission first:** When you secure a valuable resource by defeating a powerful foe, you can shift your Savior up and any other Label down. If you (and your team) managed to avoid causing any collateral damage, clear a condition as well.
- ❑ **More than a shield:** When you **directly engage a threat** by heading directly into danger without regard for your own safety, roll with Savior instead of Danger. On a miss, your focused attack leaves someone in grave danger; the GM will tell you what it takes to keep them safe.

## A HIGHER CALLING...

You work for a metahuman law enforcement agency (A.E.G.I.S.) that keeps the world safe from all manner of superhuman, supernatural, and extraterrestrial threats. You volunteered to work with a team of young superheroes as part of a new A.E.G.I.S. program designed to keep Halcyon City safe.

You have an additional Label:

SOLDIER	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
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Soldier functions like any other Label. Characters with Influence over you can shift it, and you mark a condition if it would ever shift above +3 or below -2. You can only cancel the influence A.E.G.I.S. holds over you with the appropriate advancement. You cannot lock Soldier with a Moment of Truth.

When you're **acting on orders and relying on your training**, give A.E.G.I.S. influence to use Soldier instead of any other Label when you make a basic or playbook move.

When you **invoke your authority over civilians, Halcyon City personnel, or A.E.G.I.S. staff**, roll + Soldier. On a hit, your words carry weight. On a 7-9, someone will push back against your instructions or orders...sooner rather than later. On a miss, your attempts to control the situation create an opportunity for your enemies within A.E.G.I.S. to act against you.

When you **ask A.E.G.I.S. for additional resources, equipment, or information during a mission**, roll + Soldier. On a hit, they'll resupply you as best they can. On a 10+, the resources are highly classified or experimental; take +1 ongoing to deploying them throughout the mission. On a miss, A.E.G.I.S. sends what they think you need, regardless of what you actually requested.



## MOMENT OF TRUTH

Freedom isn't free. But not every mission ends in tragedy. When things look bleakest, when your back is against the wall, when it seems like the dawn will never come...you find a way forward *without violence*. Your enemies lay down their arms and surrender; your allies step back from the brink of chaos. Of course, the people you've saved aren't going to forget what you've done here today; they may even come to see you as a symbol of the higher cause you claim to serve...

## TEAM MOVES

When you share a triumphant celebration with someone, tell them what they need to do to achieve their full potential. If they accept your advice, take Influence over them and add two Team to the pool. If they reject what you have to say, mark a condition.

When you share a vulnerability or weakness with someone, ask them what cause they serve. If you find it to be a worthy cause, tell them how you will fight for it, clear a condition, and add a Team to the pool. If they don't have a cause (or you find it unworthy), mark a condition.

## POTENTIAL



Every time you roll a miss on a move, mark potential.

## ADVANCEMENT

When you fill your potential track, you advance. Choose from the list below.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take another move from your playbook | <input type="checkbox"/> Someone permanently loses Influence over you; add +1 to a Label |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take another move from your playbook | <input type="checkbox"/> Rearrange your Labels as you choose, and add +1 to a Label      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take another move from your playbook | <input type="checkbox"/> Undergo enhancement: take two new abilities                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take a move from another playbook    |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unlock your Moment of Truth          |  |

When you've taken five advances from the top list, you can take advances from the list below.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lock Soldier, and add +1 to a Label of your choice                | <input type="checkbox"/> Take an adult move  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take a Mentor and any move from the Protégé playbook              | <input type="checkbox"/> Take an adult move  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A.E.G.I.S. permanently loses Influence over you; change playbooks | <input type="checkbox"/> Retire from A.E.G.I.S. to a civilian life or join the upper echelons of A.E.G.I.S. as a Senior Director |

## OTHER MOVES

### PLAYING THE SOLDIER

Devoted, commanding, competent, conflicted. The Soldier is a member of a powerful organization, supported and aided by their resources and personnel, but beholden to their orders and beliefs. Note that the Soldier must commit to A.E.G.I.S., but the other members of the team do not—the “new A.E.G.I.S. program designed to keep Halcyon City safe” does not require that the whole team be an A.E.G.I.S.-assembled unit.

The relationship between the Soldier and A.E.G.I.S. is complicated, but it's grounded in real support, both ways. When you're playing the Soldier, you've received meaningful help from A.E.G.I.S., and you believe in the organization and its purpose. You're a part of A.E.G.I.S. because you want to be.

The question before you is not “What will the last straw be?” as if the Soldier is guaranteed to break with A.E.G.I.S. eventually. Instead, the question is “How do I balance my own beliefs and morality with that of the organization?” You do not want to leave A.E.G.I.S. If you did, you wouldn't be a soldier anymore! You want to find a way to both keep true to yourself and your beliefs, and to remain a part of the organization that helped you and does good in the world.

Make sure you keep yourself actually believing in A.E.G.I.S. and its mission. If you find yourself refusing every order you get, that's a sign that something is wrong. Your relationship with A.E.G.I.S. is both the source of your strength and the source of your dramatic tension—embrace it, and play with it.

### NOTES ON YOUR MOVES AND EXTRAS

For **A higher calling...**, you have a whole other Label—Soldier. “Soldier” here means seeing yourself as devoted, committed, driven, and obedient. Other people see you as a soldier when they think of you as duty-bound and focused, or thoughtlessly and dangerously obeisant. You see yourself as a soldier when you think you're committed and motivated to serve a higher cause.

**Acting on orders and relying on your training and asking A.E.G.I.S. for additional resources, equipment, or information during a mission** both require all those clauses to be true—meaning that to get A.E.G.I.S.'s aid, you have to be doing A.E.G.I.S.'s work. If you're not both acting on orders and relying on training, you can't perform the Label swap to Soldier. If you're not on a mission for A.E.G.I.S., then asking them for help is as risky as asking anyone for help.

**Giving A.E.G.I.S. Influence over you** means that it will immediately be able to shift your Labels (seeing that you cannot get rid of A.E.G.I.S.'s Influence without switching playbooks). The GM gets to make that Label shift immediately, from the perspective of A.E.G.I.S. as an organization.

For **Mission first**, you must both **secure a valuable resource** and **defeat a powerful foe** to trigger the move. Only the Soldier and team have to avoid causing collateral damage to qualify for that clause—if the villain causes damage, then that’s just the way it is.

Generally speaking, **Before we get started** and **More than a shield** are mutually exclusive—most times you cannot closely observe your opposition and head directly into danger without regard for your own safety, both.

## INSPIRATIONS FOR THE SOLDIER

Quake, **SECRET WARRIORS**

Captain America, **THE AVENGERS**

Bombshell, **TEEN TITANS**

Hellboy, **HELLBOY**

Cyclops, **X-MEN**

Captain Marvel (Carol Danvers), **THE AVENGERS**

## GM ADVICE

- Give them new orders, active and tense
- Endanger their allies in the organization
- Reward their faith and commitment
- Reveal signs of corruption
- Review their performance

The Soldier is a bit like a supercharged version of the Legacy or the Protégé in terms of GM responsibilities. You are in charge of bringing a whole organization to life. You need to give the Soldier missions, supply them, and judge them.

Play up A.E.G.I.S.’s complicated nature at all times, and never let the Soldier or the other PCs forget it exists. When they’re about to go into battle, A.E.G.I.S. contacts the Soldier with new objectives—and always active objectives, never “do nothing” or “sit tight.” When the PCs are in dire straits, A.E.G.I.S. shows up to bail them out. And when the Soldier counts on A.E.G.I.S., they discover some evidence of corruption that resets their relationship all over again.

The Soldier’s relationship with A.E.G.I.S. is founded on tragedy—all Soldiers earned their abilities through a disaster or tragedy, and then were inspired to join A.E.G.I.S. That relationship defines the kind of emotional support that A.E.G.I.S. supplies the Soldier, as opposed to that of a mentor or legacy. A.E.G.I.S. gives the Soldier direction, focus, and resources to pursue goals, and then expects the Soldier to fulfill their duties. Many individuals in A.E.G.I.S. (particularly higher-ups) are going to try to keep the relationship just in that form, with a highly devoted Soldier rooted in tragedy, and a detached agency providing support through direction.

- aaaaaand that's all she wrote.
- congratulations, you now know more than basically anyone about one of the most powerful organizations on the planet.
- feels good, right?
- i did my part, and now i'm outtie. i was only here to make the information flow like spice. down to you to do something with it.
- if i'm being honest i kinda hope you'll topple their whole thing.
- but i guess if you decide they deserve to keep operating i'll just have to live with that.
- until i hack you too and find out you've been corrupted by space aliens. and then you can bet your ass i'll take you down.
- until then, heroes.

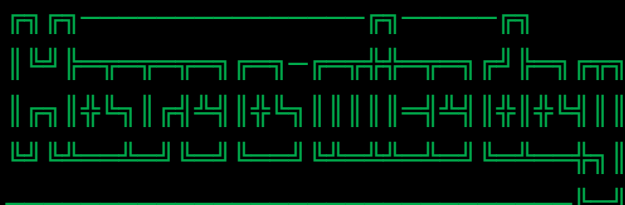
Engaging {kthxbai.exe}

Closing data link.

Closing remote terminal.

Closing connection.

ΣЖЗ...О\*ЯЯ~ЯЯ\*О.ΣЖЗ...О\*ЯЯ~ЯЯ\*О...ΣЖЗ.О\*ЯЯ~ЯЯ\*О...ΣЖЗ



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