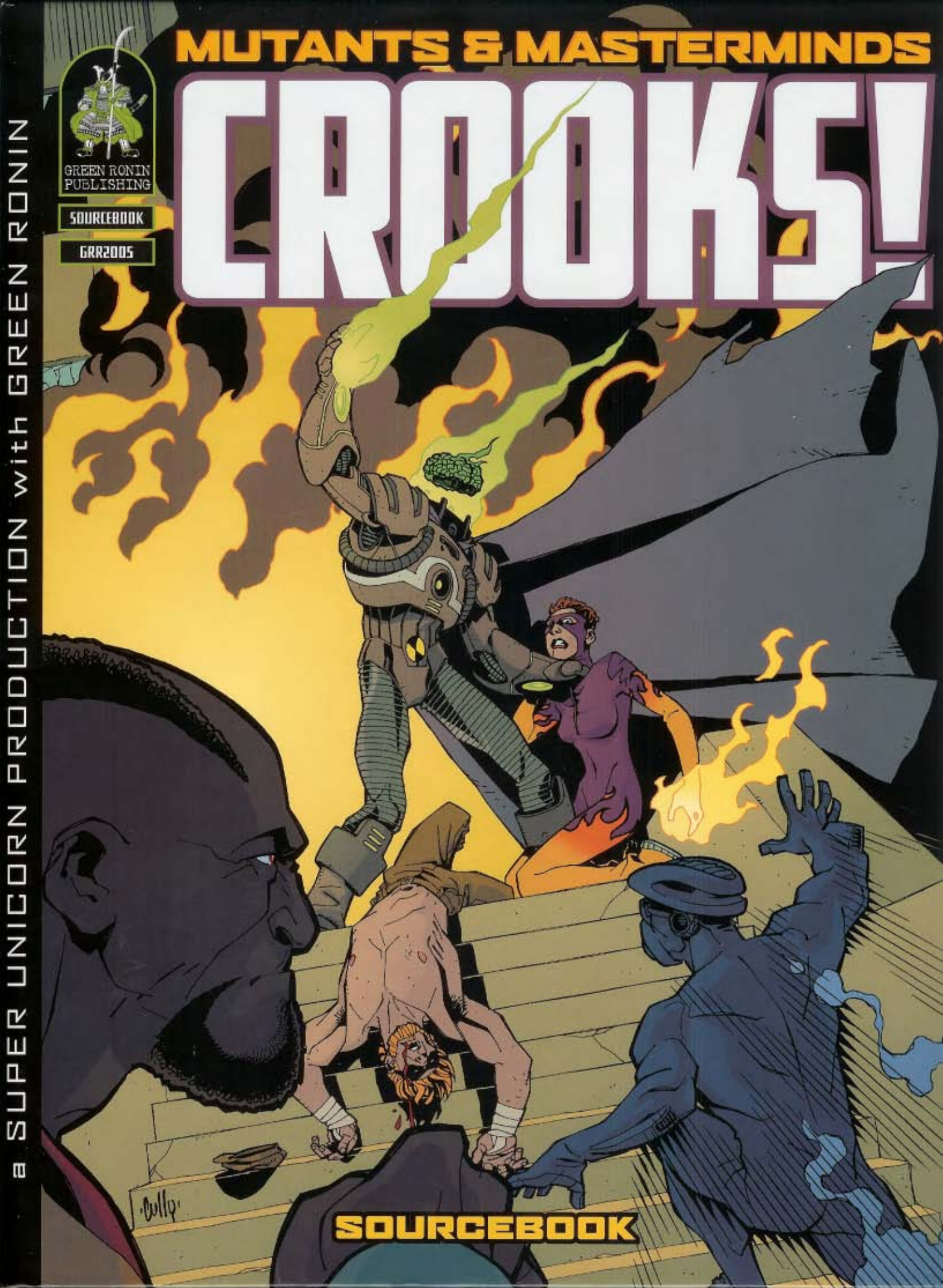

MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS
CROOKS!
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META·4



CROOKS!

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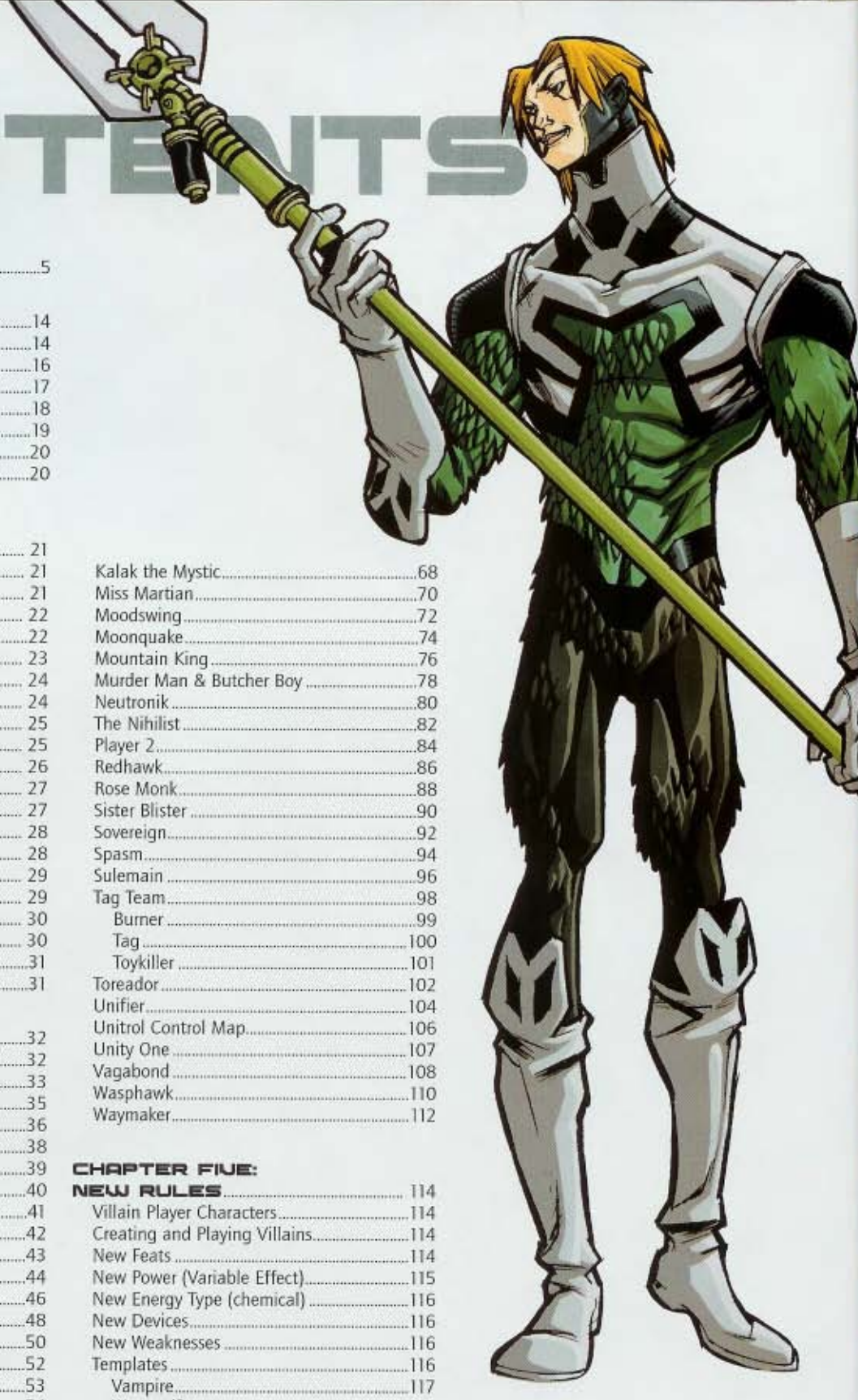
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ERIC CANETE
GEOFF ONG


1965
VOLCANO ISLAND
It all comes down to this. Eleven years of fearing he'd somehow do it. Steal launch codes, capture a Soviet warhead--
-- bring fire to the sky.
YOU'RE NO DIFFERENT THAN ANY GOVERNMENT LACKEY, EVERYMAN. RUIN MY PLANS AND LOCK ME IN CHAINS IF YOU MUST, BUT I WILL BE WITH YOU FOREVER.
ARMAGEDDON MAY NOT COME TODAY, BUT I ASSURE YOU, IT WILL COME.
Nooooooo
Eleven years of burying friends.
As the lava consumes him, I finally feel at ease. Exhilarated. This is what it's all about. Defeating the menace. Stopping the threat.
Saving the world.
I want to feel this way for the rest of my life.





TEARS FOR EVERYMAN

ERIK MONA
STORY

RAMÓN PÉREZ
PENCILS and INKS

SEAN GLENN
LETTERS

STEVE COBB
COLORS

a SUPER UNICORN
PRODUCTION












VOLCANO ISLAND
EVERYMAN IS DEAD.
BEFORE HE DIED, GAVIN PIERCE BROUGHT TOGETHER THE RESERVE, A NEW TEAM OF META-4-SANCTIONED HEROES.
I INTEND TO TREAT THE RESERVE TO A PERSONAL INTRODUCTION. TO SHOW THEM THE WAY OF THINGS IN THIS GLORIOUS NEW ERA.
"MINDCRIME, YOU WILL CAPTURE TALIA THORNE, EVERYMAN'S REPLACEMENT AS META-4 CONTROL. SECURITY WILL BE TIGHT.
"PLAYER 2, YOUR ASSIGNMENT IS MARATHON, A PARAHUMAN WHOSE POWERS MANIFESTED RECENTLY. BRING HIM TO ME.
WITH PLEASURE.
"BEAUTIFUL LINDINE. DELIVER INFERNA AND I SHALL CONSIDER YOUR MASTER'S OFFER OF MUTUAL ASSISTANCE.
"TOREADOR, YOUR TARGET WILL BE THE MINOTAUR. I WANT HIM ALIVE."
HE'LL BE HERE THE MOMENT I'VE VERIFIED THE ELECTRONIC TRANSFER WITH MY FRIENDS IN SWITZERLAND.
WHAT?! YOU WANT ME TO SNATCH META-4'S NEW LEADER JUST BECAUSE SOME OLD HERO KICKED THE BUCKET? IT SOUNDS TO ME --
-- LIKE YOU'RE JUST MAKING UP FOR THE FACT THAT YOU COULD NEVER BEAT THIS EVERYMAN GUY WHILE HE WAS STILL ALIVE!
I SUSPECTED YOU WERE NOT UP TO THE TASK. TALIA THORNE SEEMS TO HAVE INHERITED THE LUCK OF HER PREDECESSOR.
NOW, DOES ANYONE ELSE CARE TO QUESTION MY MOTIVATIONS?


BLACK ROCK DESERT, NEVADA
THIS NEW SUIT SHOULD STAND UP TO YOUR TOP SPEED BETTER THAN THE LAST ONE.
THAT'S A RELIEF! RUNNING MYSELF NAKED WAS A NOVEL WAY TO STUN THE CLIQUE INTO SILENCE,
BUT I DON'T THINK IT'LL DO MUCH GOOD OUT HERE!
WE ARE GOOD TO GO, SIR.
"I DON'T SEE ANY--"
CAREFUL, MARATHON! WE'RE PICKING UP AN UNIDENTIFIED ENERGY SIGNATURE *DIRECTLY* IN FRONT OF YOU!
DELICIOUS.
YOUR BODY'S HERE IN THE DESERT, BUT I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF DESIGNING A LITTLE MAZE FOR YOUR MIND.
"WATCH OUT FOR GHOSTS."


DOWNTOWN ARCADIA
MY GOD! HOW COULD THIS HAVE HAPPENED?
I'LL GIVE YOU THREE GUESSES.
UNDINE! STILL DOING CHIMERA'S BIDDING? MINOTAUR AND I MADE OURSEVLES CLEAR!
WE'LL NEVER JOIN THE BESTIARY!
IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN WATER TO BRING ME DOWN SEA-WITCH!
I'M SURE YOU'RE RIGHT. SO I INVITED MR. BUS TO GIVE ME A HAND.
THE BESTIARY DOESN'T NEED YOU ANYMORE, INF WE'VE GOT BIGG ALLIES NOW.


EAST BAY ARCADIA
YOU'RE SURE YOU WON'T RECONSIDER? THE RESERVE COULD DEFINITELY USE YOUR FISTS.
YOU'VE FISTS ENOUGH FOR THE WHOLE TEAM, MINOTAUR.
I'D LIKE TO HELP BUT ALL THIS CLOAK AND DAGGER STUFF... IT AIN'T FOR ME.
LIKE THIS THING FR'INSTANCE. I GUESS IT'S A COMMUNICATOR, BUT IT'S ALSO A TRACKING DEVICE.
I NEED TO LIVE MY OWN LIFE. THE GOVERNMENT CAN'T BE FOLLOWIN' ME INTO EVERY BACK ALLEY.
GAH!
A SCARF?
NOT JUST ANY SCARF--
MY SCARF!


TOREADOR! IF YOU'VE KILLED HIM, SO HELP ME GOD--
-- I'LL HAVE YOUR HEAD!
YOU'LL DO NO SUCH THING, OF COURSE. NO ONE IS DYING HERE TODAY--
-- NOT EVEN YOU. A PITY THE ATOMIC BRAIN ONLY ASKED FOR MINOTAUR--
I'D HAVE LIKED TO DOUBLE MY NORMAL FEE.
IF I MIGHT OFFER A SUGGESTION, ALWAYS KEEP AN EYE ON WHAT'S BEHIND YOU--
oh, THIS IS PRECIOUS. YOU SUPERHEROES REALLY ARE A TOUCHING LOT.
HOLD ON, MINOTAUR.
I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT MINOTAUR. HE'S GOING TO BE FINE.
EVEN YOU'LL LIVE.
"I NEVER KILL FOR FREE."


VOLCANO ISLAND
YOU'RE THE LAST TO ARRIVE, TOREADOR. I GUESS MAYBE A MILLION BUCKS DOESN'T GO AS FAR AS IT USED TO.
I'M WILLING TO LOWER MY RATE FOR PARTICULARLY *LOATHSOME* QUARRIES.
YOU, FOR INSTANCE.
ENOUGH BICKERING. OUR *ULTIMATE VICTORY* IS AT HAND. I WILL NOT TOLERATE SQUABBLING BETWEEN MY *UNDERLINGS!*
UNDERLINGS?
YOU ARE WELCOME TO REGISTER YOUR COMPLAINT WITH MINDCRIME.
IN THE MEANTIME, ASSIST TOREADOR IN PLACING MINOTAUR IN THE PREPARATION TUBE.
NOW THAT WE'VE MADE OUR POINT, WHY DON'T WE JUST *KILL THEM?*


THE HEROES SHALL REMAIN ALIVE, FOR THE TIME BEING. THEY MAY BECOME USEFUL AGENTS IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER.
THIS IS BUT THE FIRST STAGE OF MY MASTER PLAN. WITHOUT THE RESERVE, META-4 WILL BE IN DISARRAY.
WITHOUT META-4, AMERICA'S HEROES WILL FALL!
AND WHERE I LEAD,
ALL THE WORLD SHALL FOLLOW!
BEEP BEEP BEEP
TO BE CONTINUED

2: A HISTORY

WELCOME TO CROOKS!

On a secluded island in the South Pacific, the Atomic Brain plots nuclear armageddon from his volcano lair. In the darkest shadows of the city, the lifeless Nihilist scrapes a straightrazor against a rusty fire escape, impatiently waiting to strike a blow for his corporate masters. Far above, Wasphawk and the sky pirates of Unitrol patrol the American skies, while in the Antarctic, Iron Cross leads a colony of Nazi scholars, artists, and politicians, who await a victory foretold in prophecy. Only your heroes stand between these villains and their infernal designs upon your *Mutants & Masterminds* campaign.

This book presents more than 40 full-fledged supervillains and dozens of minions suitable for use in any *Mutants & Masterminds* campaign. Threats contained in this book range in difficulty from Power Level 1 to Power Level 20, ensuring that you'll be able to use *Crooks!* from the beginning to the end of your campaign.

THE META-4 UNIVERSE

The characters in this book are meant to be used in any *Mutants & Masterminds* campaign, and should be adaptable to your series with little difficulty. In order to tie all of the characters together into one entertaining volume, however, we've created a common set of assumptions and world history—the META-4 Universe.

Crooks! is not a campaign setting. The characters in this book were designed to be inserted into your campaign first and foremost, and fit into a common background simply to make the book more interesting to read. Instead of repeatedly saying "this villain lives in your main campaign city," we've created an "iconic" campaign city called Arcadia, which contains most of the features and character types common to superhero RPG home towns. "Arcadia" might be New York, Green Ronin Publishing's Freedom City, or a completely new metropolis of your own design.

Likewise, many of the backgrounds herein refer to specific superheroes to give the villains context. Dr. Dungeon, for example, battled a 1960s hero team called the Happening, but he just as easily could have fought whatever 1960s superheroes you've got filling the pages of your campaign notebook. Don't feel enslaved to the continuity of the META-4 Universe. It's there to provide some consistency, but shouldn't keep you from using a character because some element of his background "doesn't work that way" in your campaign. The villains are here for you. Change them as much or as little as you wish.

If you have the *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook, you're already familiar with the META-4 Universe. Core rulebook villains such as Gepetto, the Hyena, and the robotic Damocles haunt the world's streets and secret headquarters, while the masterminds Kalak the Mystic and the Atomic Brain hatch apocalyptic plots from the shadows. Many of the "iconic" heroes (Protonik, the Pugilist, Cyclone, Minotaur, and more) illustrated in that book belong to the Reserve, a brand-new government-sanctioned superteam.

The Reserve is really just a stand-in for *your* characters' team. Most references to the team in this book could easily be changed to your heroes, unless you like the idea of multiple hero teams running around your campaign world. In such a case, the Reserve might be allies or friendly rivals. In any case, the Reserve can't go it alone, and needs your campaign's heroes to help them keep the world safe from evil.

Like in many published comic book worlds, superheroes first emerged in the years immediately preceding America's involvement in World War II, and events during that vast conflict reverberate to the modern day. Since then, superheroes have waxed and waned in popularity, often mirroring the publishing history of the medium. While real world comic publishers phased out superheroes in favor of cowboys and funny animals in the 1950s, for instance, heroes had a tough time in the META-4 universe. As comic book readers grew older and developed more sophisticated tastes, the world of META-4 seemed to get a little bit darker.

It's your heroes' job to bring light back to the world, to foil the evil plans of dozens of criminal masterminds. To do that, it's best to understand where superhumans in the META-4 Universe came from, and where they're going. More detail has been provided for the early years of superheroics, leaving the relatively recent past open to so as not to conflict with your campaign.

THE 1940S

Although individuals of extraordinary character and abilities had existed for centuries in the form of mystics, psychics, and stylish adventurers, the first true "superhumans" appeared in the early 1940s. The United States, seeking a public relations response to the rise of extreme nationalism in Europe, initiated the top-secret Everyman Project, an effort to create through the miracle of science a new breed of "propaganda heroes" capable of stepping up pre-war production and instilling in ordinary Americans a sense of national identity and pride.

The details of how best to create the team fell to **Scorpio-2**, a top-secret government agency then tasked with investigating and studying paranormal phenomena and unconventional science. After a series of laboratory failures never revealed to the public, the U.S. War Department introduced the **Homefront**, a team of "Super Americans," on April 21, 1941. Radio stations announced the team's seven heroes as Americans packed theaters to see newsreel displays of the team's incredible powers.

The government had an edge in public acceptance of the heroes thanks to the inclusion of Richard Everleigh, a much-adored champion aviator who had become a national hero in the 1920s. The first successful subject of the government's tests, the patrician Everleigh became **Everyman**, a living metaphor of the best qualities of the common American. With a patriotic costume and stylish cape, Everyman gained instant status as a national icon. Although he was blessed by super-science with uncanny strength, flight, and invulnerability, Everyman's greatest weapons were his deadly red, white, and blue eyebeams, which granted him the ability to fight the good fight from a distance of more than 1,500 feet.

Despite their best efforts, the scientists of Scorpio-2 were unable to replicate the process that had transformed Richard Everleigh from man to super-man. Nevertheless, other members of the Homefront more than carried their own weight. Super-genius wunderkind Johnny Calhoun, a young inventor deeply enmeshed in the politics of Scorpio-2, became **Johnny-on-the-Spot**, a scientific dynamo with a technological marvel for any occasion. Turbaned sorcerer **Doc Mesmer** and his prescient teen sidekick the **Ouija Kid** (who historians quibble was never officially a member of the team) provided magical and psychic abilities respectively, while the costumed archer **Trick-Shot** always had a special gimmick arrow at the ready. The powerless but undoubtedly gifted aviator-adventurer **Hap Holiday** provided cover from the skies.

Two controversial members of the team brought more criticism than cheers, but are today considered important pioneers in the field of superheroics. A sailor in the U.S. Navy with an impressive but secret record of distinguished service, Charlie Cartwright had the strength, character, and dynamism to make him among the most popular of the new heroes but for one fact—Cartwright was black. Amid howls of derision from white Americans, Cartwright became the **Agrarian**, a powerhouse crimefighter strong enough to lift and throw a 2-ton tractor. Cartwright was given limited exposure to the greater public, instead spending most of his time fighting corruption and lawlessness in the American South, slowly gaining the trust and support the government would need from Southern blacks during the war that seemed all but inevitable.

America would need labor from more than just disenfranchised blacks to win the war. A munitions factory explosion in late 1940 took the life of Chicago organized labor champion Thurgood Hughes. Much to the chagrin of Chicago's politicians, the tragedy brought the public spotlight to his wife Esther, an adventuresome blue-collar firebrand who rallied local workers under her support and threatened a

general strike of Chicago's laborers unless factory conditions were improved. Although the government bristled at her tactics and message, they couldn't help but admire her tenacity, spirit, and ability to keep the newsreel cameras pointed in her direction. Scorpio-2 funded her factory reforms and hired her on the spot to take part in their Homefront initiative. At the end of her six-month training, the organization outfitted her with a versatile "rivet gun" complete with high-powered swing-line and grappling hook. Hughes became **Swing Shift**, the world's first superheroine and a symbol to the growing class of working American women.

INSPIRATION

In those early days, the team rarely saw much of each other save for rare public appearances and patriotic rallies. Between monthly meetings at which they shared information and received briefings from the Intelligence Arm of Scorpio-2, the seven members of the Homefront combated an array of petty criminals, Nazi-sympathizing German bundists, and Japanese fifth columnists.

The national media exploded with Homefront-related coverage. Government-funded radio programs tracked the exploits and adventures of Everyman and his fellows, focusing primarily on Everyman, Johnny-on-the-Spot, and Trick-Shot, the most popular members of the team. As the Homefront's profile rose, other law-minded men and women emerged from the streets and fields of America, eager to don a gaudy costume and strike out against criminals everywhere.

Some such figures, like the enigmatic occult investigator **Mr. Mystery** and his ghostly companion **Lady Hex**, had been fighting the good fight from the shadows for more than a decade. Others emerged anew, their spirits strengthened by each Homefront success.

The wave of so-called "Super Heroism" even touched the armed forces. Several programs designed to create the perfect soldier for the coming war had taken place parallel to Scorpio-2's Everyman Project. While none met with such staggering success, the military did manage to create a half-dozen heroes of their own through dangerous experiments involving chemical transfusions, deep psionic bacterial submersion, irradiation, drug regimens, and organ replacement. Foremost among these specimens was **Commander Courage**, a fearless Army operative who would become one of the military's most valuable wartime resources.

Tensions seethed across the globe, and growing desperation about Hitler's activities in Europe led to a climate of heightened ambition among the criminal element. The appearance of the Homefront and especially the fantastic inventions of Johnny-on-the-Spot for the first time revealed that the world was far more interesting than it had previously appeared, that the bounds of science had yet to be crossed and must be as distant as the horizon. Scores of discredited but undeniably brilliant scientists tinkered in labs creating all manner of robot champions, magnetic gizmos, and weather control devices, ultimately putting their artifice to the test against the Homefront, hoping to make a name for themselves by one-upping Johnny Calhoun and his do-gooder compatriots. Although newspapers and radio reports declared them "mad scientists," Scorpio-2 recognized their genius immediately. The Homefront dutifully turned over a host of defeated professors, doctors, and whizzes to the US government, where the imprisoned scientists would form Scorpio-2's burgeoning Science Arm.

The appearance of costumed superheroes inevitably led to the appearance of costumed cranks who opposed them on political or ideological grounds–or who simply wanted to hear their fanciful pseudonyms on the radio. Early examples of serious Homefront threats included the **Isolationist**, a fiercely nationalistic American who urged non-involvement in European problems with a device that allowed him to encase his enemies in an energy-based stasis field, and the **Silver Shrike**, a gifted but troubled inventor/thief who devised a set of metal wings that allowed him to fly with great agility and speed. The scheming ancient sorcerer **Kalak the Mystic**, an old foe of Doc Mesmer, troubled the Homefront on three occasions prior to the war, threatening to tip the world into chaos until his host body was destroyed by Everyman.

The greatest enemies, however, marched their brutal armies across Western Europe and plied warships across the waves of the Pacific Ocean. The Homefront had been created to bolster support for a war nearly everyone knew would come. The only remaining question was that of timing.

THE WAR YEARS

As the European situation grew more desperate, hawkish politicians urged President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to bring the "Homefront weapon" to bear against European fascists. On December 8th, 1941, one day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the president drafted the entire Homefront and several other heroes into one of three groups that would help America win the war. More powerful heroes like Everyman and Doc Mesmer joined British and French superhumans already on the front to form the **Victory Legion**. A smaller group consisting of little-known crimefighters and reformed super-criminals devoted their talents to defeating the Japanese threat in the Pacific theater. Led by the Army's Commander Courage, this so-called **Liberty Brigade** relied upon subterfuge and hit-and-run tactics to severely disrupt the Japanese Imperial Fleet. A third group, calling itself the Homefront but consisting of an almost entirely new line-up, remained stateside, watching over America's borders and protecting against domestic threats.

In America, newsreels proudly (and a bit saucily) announced the arrival of America's second heroine, **Miss Moxie**, the Cracker-Jack Girl. The country flocked to her wholesome "good girl" image, and it wasn't long before American bomber crews started painting her image on the sides of their planes. Thanks to X-15, a special chemical solution applied to her hands, Miss Moxie had literally explosive fists and loved nothing more than a good fight. The public adored her.

The presence of American superhumans tipped the scales in favor of the Allies shortly after the formation of the Victory Legion. At the time, Germany had only a half-dozen low-powered, unstable superhumans, and was forced to expend extraordinary resources to maintain their early gains. Nazi secret agents and sympathizers throughout Free Europe and America attempted to abduct superhumans, scientists, and mystics, forcing them to give up their secrets via torture or dissection.

The Reich's greatest biological breakthrough came in 1943, when Everyman disappeared during a reconnaissance mission over Berlin. America lost hope for its fallen icon several months later with the appearance of a trio of Nazi superhumans known as **V3**, who were tasked by Adolf Hitler himself to bring the city of London to its knees. Each of the three men possessed a limited form of Everyman's invulnerability, his ability to fly, and his deadly eyebeams. Although the Victory Legion prevented the city's destruction by trapping V3 in a Void Dimension, other Nazi superhumans appeared shortly thereafter, including the alluring but deadly speedster **Blitz**, the orgone energy manipulator **Bion**, the seemingly unkillable flying übermensch known as **Iron Cross**, and the demented sorcerer Kalak the Mystic, somehow returned from the dead and inhabit-

META-4 AND FREEDOM CITY

Mutants & Masterminds designer Steve Kenson's *Freedom City* is a 192-page historical and geographical overview of a super-studded metropolis with adventures, allies, and adversaries on every street. Because *Freedom City* focuses tightly on the affairs of one location, it's relatively easy to use that product in conjunction with *Crooks!*, which has a much wider focus.

In *Crooks!*, much of America's superhuman activity is centered around the city of Arcadia, a West Coast metropolis. If you're using *Freedom City* in your *Mutants & Masterminds* campaign, consider changing most Arcadia references to Freedom City.

Change references to META-4, the government agency tasked with monitoring superhuman affairs and combating superhuman menaces, to the similar Freedom City organization, AEGIS (American Elite Government Intervention Service). References to ANTAG, one of the ubiquitous "lurking in the shadows" mad science organizations so common in comics, should change to SHADOW, a somewhat similar Freedom City organization.

Pick and choose elements from both *Crooks!* and *Freedom City* that work for your campaign, and forget about anything you don't like. *Mutants & Masterminds* supplements exist to provide you with ideas to make your own, not to present a hard-core continuity that should be followed slavishly.



ing the body of a ruthless Nazi commandant. The war entered its most critical phase.

Back at home, the Homefront received word from the Liberty Brigade that a top-secret Japanese super-destroyer had managed to slip past the Navy's national defense security perimeter. Intelligence sources had known for years that instead of funding research into atomic weaponry, Japan had put their best scientific minds on Project Rising Sun, a theoretically possible missile that could, upon contact, unleash a microscopic star, upsetting local gravity and unleashing unthinkable radiation. With the help of the visiting Doc Mesmer, the Homefront teleported to the closing ship.

To their surprise, a dozen Japanese superhumans protected the destroyer, the products of shared scientific knowledge imparted by an increasingly desperate Nazi regime. Despite being outnumbered, the Homefront's superior training won the day, but not before the Japanese ship launched its missile at Arcadia, an American West Coast metropolis crucial to the nation's war production. As the missile made its way toward land, the quick-thinking Miss Moxie donned the flying harness of her friend Hap Holiday and gave chase. She outpaced the speeding missile and, several miles offshore, she punched the weapon with an explosive haymaker. The solar bomb detonated, killing Miss Moxie and instantly creating an American legend.

American heroes would shed more blood before the war came to an end. In 1945, after the surrender of his Japanese allies, Adolf Hitler engaged in a final, desperate gambit. He gathered all of his superhumans into a single fighting force and tasked them with one objective: destroy London. The ensuing battle on the streets of England's capital attracted dozens of Allied superheroes, all of whom were desperately needed. Hitler had an ace up his sleeve—V3, rescued from their dimensional prison by Nazi occultists.

Nearly 20 superhumans and hundreds of civilians died in the Battle of London, including V3 and Blitz. Several Allied heroes were killed, but none was mourned so heavily as Swing Shift, the original Homefronter, who was shot by Iron Cross before he fled the battlefield and entered a life of seclusion.

Although the Battle of London effectively ended World War II, the resulting destruction of property and loss of civilian life appalled the international community. A United Nations resolution passed in 1947 banned world powers from employing superhumans in war. America's heroes once again turned to fighting crime in the streets.

THE 1950S

Although international treaties kept them from actively participating in the Korean War, America's superhumans continued to fight for their government and people at home and abroad. Agents of Scorpio-2 worked with the intelligence services of other nations to track down Nazi war criminals in the decade after World War II. Time and again they ran into well-trained resistance armed with sophisticated weaponry beyond the scope of known technology. Referring to itself as ODESSA, this shadowy cabal of fascist superspies managed to evade Scorpio agents for most of the decade, always shaking their pursuers somewhere in the Southern Hemisphere.

In 1950, Soviet officials requested aid from American and European mystics regarding a situation that had gone out of control in Poland. Kalak the Mystic, the mask-bound diabolical ancient Mayan sorcerer prince who had fought for Germany, had been given rulership of a small region of Poland as a reward early in the war. When the Nazi regime fell, Kalak had erected a magical barrier around the city of Gorzow, preventing anyone from entering. The group, including Mr. Mystery, Lady Hex, British druidic legend Menhir, the immortal St. Germain, and Doc Mesmer, joined a trio of Russian psychics to put a stop to Kalak once and for all. After they defeated Kalak, the mystics argued over what to do with his possessed mask. Unable to reach consensus, they turned it over to Scorpio-2.

TRIALS & ERRORS

Just as some wartime heroes retired from public life, others found themselves back in the spotlight, victims of a torrent of paranoid congressional committee investigations headed by media-milking statesmen who saw communism in every shadow. Grotesquely invasive public inquiries into the private lives of American superhumans turned up the inevitable scapegoat in the form of the Homefront's Doc Mesmer, a mysterious magician who had covered up a pre-war life as a Russian-embracing socialist who fought against fascism in the Spanish Civil War. Whipped into a frenzy of Cold War terror and genuine fear of the occult, the American public demanded Doc Mesmer be

tried for treason, a potential robbed from the government by the uncooperative wizard, who vanished from plain sight at his arraignment.

Additional public inquiries also revealed Silver Shrike's shady past, turning America against the men and women who had defended its interests in the prior decade. Controversial propaganda heroes like the secretly lesbian **Victory Girl** and the still black Agrarian were pushed aside and offered healthy pensions with the understanding that they remain out of the public eye.

Disgusted with America's witchhunts and hypocrisy, wartime hero Commander Courage gathered several former teammates from the Liberty Brigade years to a special meeting place on a desolate mesa in Nevada. Doc Mesmer attended covertly, eager to follow where Courage hinted he could lead. Inventor Mack Bastion, the Commander's second-in-command during the war, activated his greatest device, the Difference Engine. With a touch of Mesmer's magic, the mechanical marvel opened a portal to another dimension. The heroes stepped through, leaving the fear and prejudice of Earth behind to explore the worlds between the planar folds as a team called **Courage Unlimited**.

Some costumed crimefighters continued to protect the innocent despite government inquiry and an increasingly hostile public. Longtime veterans like Mr. Mystery and the **Pugilist** kept to the cover of night, battling supernatural menaces preying off the fringes of society. One Homefronter, Donovan Ross (known to the world as master archer Trick-Shot) gained widespread popularity, in part because he relied on human skill rather than science or magic to produce miracle shots and in part because he was a handsome playboy used to getting what he wanted. After the war, Ross decided he wanted to be in the movies, and America responded by making him a millionaire Hollywood star.

A NEW HUMANITY

Communism wasn't the only thing Americans worried about. Instances of children bearing beneficial mutations ranging from functional gills to psychic aptitude to enhanced strength or intelligence exploded following the war. The phenomenon spread from coast to coast, ultimately touching nations throughout the planet. Scientists coined these miracle children "parahumans," a term that soon expanded in meaning to include all who possessed "natural" paranormal powers. National media swarmed to the birth of America's 100th parahuman, a blue-skinned preternaturally keen child nicknamed Adam Century.

Parahuman births seemed to represent the ultimate game of chance. Other than a higher concentration occurring in America's Pacific Northwest than elsewhere, no outside factors seemed to influence when human parents might bear unnatural young. The development troubled the religious community, who reluctantly viewed parahumans as the offspring of man's reckless relationship with science and contemptible obsession with playing God. Most Americans reserved judgement, silently fearing the day when innocent parahuman children became dangerous parahuman adults.

TWO BECOMES FOUR

Although Allied superhumans made the difference in the European theater, America won the war in the Pacific thanks in large part to the unholy devastation of its nuclear weapons program. The secret star of that program was Dr. Harold Hamilton, an unconventional nuclear scientist who had immolated himself in an early field test. His irradiated brain remained miraculously alive, however, and was taken to a Scorpio-2 lab for study. In short order, the organization developed a speaking machine for the brain, which supplied theories and data that led lesser scientific minds to the secrets of nuclear weaponry. After a time, Scorpio-2 technicians began to treat Hamilton (or what remained of him) as something of a joke, naming him the "Atomic Brain." In 1954, a team of agency scientists developed a robotic body to house Hamilton's mind, which would allow the genius to conduct experiments and move about Scorpio's underground Washington D.C. headquarters.

Hamilton turned on his benefactors immediately upon taking control of his new form. Jealousy of others who reaped the public benefits of his research and spending more than a decade submerged in a jar of nutrient fluid combined to create a spectacle of destruction. Gleefully calling himself the Atomic Brain, Hamilton collapsed Scorpio-2's underground headquarters, killing hundreds of special agents and maiming hundreds more. A young agent named Gavin Pierce watched in horror as a wall collapsed upon his scientist wife, swearing from that day forward that he would avenge her death and bring justice to the Atomic Brain.

The following year, a new government agency called META-4 assumed Scorpio-2's administration of superhuman affairs and paranormal investigations. The near-lunatic "mad scientist" fringe, many of whom had been captured as criminals by the Homefront prior to the war, was deemed responsible for the Atomic Brain disaster and officially relieved of their duties. Unofficially, the unconventional thinkers formed the basis of an ultra-secret government-sponsored organization called ANTAG (Applied Neural Technology Advancement Group), a black-budget operation nominally controlled by META-4 but in practice left largely to its own devices.

META-4 divided itself into four branches, or "arms" in the parlance of the agency. The Intelligence Arm (who wore yellow uniforms) was responsible for tracking superhuman and paranormal threats both at home and abroad, and dabbled in a fair amount of good old fashioned espionage to keep things interesting for its agents. The blue-clad members of the Science Arm continued Scorpio-2's origin programs, concerning themselves with understanding the medical science behind creating superhumans and executing their theories in the lab. META-4's Technology Arm (garbed in green) explored the boundaries of artifice, while the Security Arm (in red or black) served as both rank-and-file guards and highly trained investigators of paranormal crime.

Gavin Pierce, driven to excellence by his wife's sacrifice, became META-4's top operative, bouncing back and forth between service to the Security and Intelligence Arms. Pierce followed the orders of Control, a mysterious cabal in charge of META-4, and reaped a great reward in 1957, when he was granted the title Everyman in honor of Richard Everleigh and to emphasize Pierce's importance to American interests.

THE SPACEMEN LAND (IN HOLLYWOOD)

Everyman wasn't the only one honored in 1957. Homefronter Donovan Ross received a Best Actor nomination for his performance opposite Marlon Brando in *Three Hands Apart*, a moving film about World War II veterans coping with normal life nearly a decade after returning from the Eastern Front. He was tragically murdered while accepting the award on live television. The perpetrator, a communist would-be rival bowman named the **Marxman**, managed to evade justice for his crime.

The world didn't have too long to mourn, however, as it soon became obsessed with another Hollywood phenomenon, this time a 5'3" blue-skinned beauty named Nyra Gazz. Calling herself **Miss Martian**, the charismatic young alien spoke wistfully of life on the Red Planet, but pledged herself to defend the people of Earth from the sort of crime and evil that had undermined and ultimately destroyed Martian society. Everyone believed Miss Martian had super-powers, but almost nobody believed she was really an alien. Gazz herself remained coy about her background, often relating anecdotes about her home planet that didn't square with scientific knowledge. Most Americans considered her a friendly, amusing Hollywood make-up act.

In 1958, another alien gained the attention of American authorities. Freed from a self-made preservation chamber beneath a giant monolith of Easter Island, the so-called **Ancient Astronaut** helped Everyman, Johnny Calhoun, and a team of META-4 operatives defeat Iron Cross and a team of Nazi agents, who for mysterious reasons wished to see the Astronaut remain in containment. After the battle, the strange alien being departed for the stars, but he returned a year later with tales of a dangerous interstellar criminal who matched the description of Miss Martian. META-4 ruined Gazz's Hollywood career, appearing on the set of her third movie to bring her to justice. The televised battle, in which "America's sapphire sweetheart" wickedly murdered more than a dozen META-4 troops, struck yet another blow against costumed heroes, who were forced to take a much more subtle approach in the following decade.

THE 1960S

Villains like Miss Martian merely dominated the public consciousness for brief periods. The great threat, communism, remained strong. At the

dawn of the 1960s, President John F. Kennedy urged Americans to "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty." Nearly 60,000 Americans would pay the ultimate price in Vietnam between 1961 and 1975. The conflict dominated the politics of the decade, spurred social change in America, and showed in grisly color film the real human cost of a modern conventional war between nonpowered humans.

From swinging London, a light-manipulating superhuman called **Jack the Lad** kept his nation safe from supervillains with the full support of the British government. After suffering repeated defeats at Jack's hands, a shape-changing supervillain called **No-Man** bitterly went into hiding, hatching a long-term strategy by which he could exploit the world's discomfort with superhumans while at the same time plundering nations in plain sight and furthering his political power. No-Man would next appear on the public stage as the **Unifier**, mastermind of an "alternate United Nations" called **Unitrol**, which offered financial and military support to jeopardized governments around the world. Sever your ties to the UN, Unitrol offered, and we will solve all of your problems. By the end of the decade, Unitrol had marked its first victory in the West African nation of Zanika, which soon saw marked improvements in quality of life and public safety. Amid all the back-patting and raised eyebrows, no one noticed that Unitrol had quietly neutralized the nation's small superhuman population, a plan it would go on to initiate successfully again and again up to the modern day.

A NEW ERA FOR SUPERHUMANS

In 1963, San Francisco saw the birth of the decade's most memorable and socially influential superteam, a cadre of free-spirited countercultural adventurers called the **Happening**. Unlike the teams that had preceded it, the Happening had no government sanction, being merely a small organization of like-minded superhumans who banded together to fight for justice and all that they considered good. Although public officials distrusted the team and warned that they set a dangerous precedent for future superhumans, team members **Black Cherry Stone**, the **Clown Prince**, **Camo Kid**, the **Tantric Avenger** and parahuman icon **Adam Century** captured the attention of the alternative media, who propelled them into a superstar "cult" popularity that made them worldwide stars.

While battling menaces like **Stereotron**, the **Brass Dragon**, and the **Bad Trip**, the Happening made fighting evil look cool, and inspired the growing parahuman counterculture into action of their own. Powered teens across the nation and the world began to make themselves known, adopting fanciful code names and donning garish costumes that reflected the increasingly liberal times. America's political establishment hated the young heroes, of course, and initiated several covert plots to discredit the Happening and tear the team apart. Somehow, they realized, they had to turn public opinion back against the superhumans to prevent them from gaining true power.

It wasn't a purely imagined threat. Revolutionary supervillains like the illusion-casting **Red Queen** urged America's underprivileged parahumans to rise up against their government, threatening social order in a society already rocked by the traditional civil rights movement. In 1964, that movement came to a head with the resurgence of **Johnny Reb**, a Civil War-era supervillain who hatched numerous anti-minority plots designed to create a race war that would tear America apart. The Happening failed to defeat him, forcing Homefronters Ouija, Victory Girl, and the Agrarian out of retirement to take Johnny Reb out of commission.

The next year, the Atomic Brain once again emerged with a plan to bathe the world in nuclear fire. The Brain's 1957 plot, which involved nuclear timebombs in twelve American cities, had required the combined efforts of all active American superheroes to thwart, and had caused major psychological damage throughout the United States and the world. The prospect of going through a similar ordeal again threatened to upset a nation rife with race riots, where a sitting president had been gunned down in Dallas only three years before.

META-4 pulled out all the stops to defeat the Brain, at long lost discovering the whereabouts of his Volcano Island lair. An extended mission brought Everyman Gavin Pierce to the South Pacific hideaway, where he apparently destroyed the Atomic Brain by pushing the madman's robotic body into a bubbling pool of red-hot lava. The nuclear crisis averted, America fell in love with the new Everyman, who seemed a shining example of the very best nonpowered humanity had to offer.

By the end of the decade, the Happening had had disbanded after suffering a terrible defeat at the hands of **Dr. Dungeon**, Gavin Pierce had retired from META-4 field duty to accept a position as the department's leader, and the seemingly immortal Atomic Brain returned to menace the world once more. John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Medgar Evars, and Malcom X were dead. Hundreds of Americans died every week in Vietnam. Few had any enthusiasm for what the 1970s would bring.

THE 1970S

On May 20, 1973, lifelong occultist Cameron Friday sold his soul to the Devil, gaining immortality and a host of arcane powers he would use to combat crime and evil in his guise as the **Luciferian**, an intentionally controversial sorcerer who prowled the nighttime streets of Arcadia and enjoyed a strong relationship with the city's police commissioner. Over the last three decades, Arcadia had grown fat with corruption and crime, and the Luciferian's sometimes brutal methods and overwhelming wit and style gained him many allies in the city's government. In 1974, Arcadia's mayor relaxed laws against costumed vigilantes, and the West Coast metropolis became a haven for costumed heroes eager to make a difference. The heroes attracted superhuman villains, who flocked to the city's burgeoning high-tech industry, which created a seemingly endless string of state-of-the-art gizmos to steal and fence to the highest bidder.

The late 1970s saw the development of the first Soviet superhumans, the most powerful of which was undoubtedly Aleksandr Solokov, a brilliant research assistant who became the state-sanctioned **Proletarian** after being submerged in a psionically charged tank of electrolyzed heavy water. The process infused his immaterial soul with a limitless source of cold fusion, granting him flight, super-strength, and "Nuclear Vision" that allowed him to shoot tightly focused beams of radiation from his eyes. The Proletarian appeared to rival the first Everyman in power, which sent shivers through the government, who feared a massive advance in Soviet super-origin technology.

Unfortunately for the Russians, Solokov's creation had accidentally destroyed the science city of Akademgorodok, taking most of the Soviet supersoldier program with it. Nevertheless, other communist heroes, including the cosmic-powered **Blazing Star** and the loveable brute **Chapaev**, lent credence to American fears, and spurred commie-dreading government agents into action.

ENTER THE STATESMEN!

America's defeat in the Vietnam War sent a shockwave through the nation's power elite. Patriotic senators who bristled at the increasing relevance and power of the United Nations worked behind the scenes to undermine the international bans on using superhumans in military conflict enacted after the second World War. While the ultimate victor in the nuclear arms race remained uncertain, America clearly dominated the realm of superhuman development, with decades-old covert origin programs, a dedicated government agency in the form of META-4, and a young underclass of naturally occurring parahumans. Should the nation come under threat, the politicians reasoned, surely the government would view superhumans as military resources expected to aid in America's defense. Why not meet that day with a government-sanctioned team of superhumans ready-made to protect the nation from attack, and as a consequence have a highly trained force of powered operatives on hand in case they became necessary in the international arena?

Draped in the bicentennial fervor of 1976, the resulting team, the **Statesmen**, featured one superhuman from each state of the union. They based themselves in Arcadia, taking advantage of the mayor's lax supercrime prosecution laws and the public relations tie to the historic wartime sacrifice of Miss Moxie.

A core group of ten Statesmen formed the nucleus of the team. Nuclear-powered "triplicate hero" **Trinity** (New Mexico) led this core group on countless high-impact missions, with smaller

teams of less powerful operatives engaged in minor operations throughout the country. Trinity's core team also included the simian intellectual **Skyscraper Joe** (New York), aviatrix detective **Kittyhawk** (North Carolina), the danger-loving sharpshooter **Calamity Jane Doe** (South Dakota), and the man-beast **Bigfoot** (Washington).

The Statesmen attracted several notable enemies, but their most persistent foe may have been **Professor Panic**, a brilliant robotics pioneer who used an army of automated minions in a seemingly endless series of audacious crimes. In 1977, the team knocked Panic's orbital headquarters, the **Stargoyle**, from space, bringing it to a rough landing in Arcadia. The massive hyper-advanced structure became the team's headquarters, and remains a distinctive Arcadian landmark to this day, supplying the city with much of its power.

The Statesmen finally defeated Professor Panic on a 1979 caper that took them to the isolated parallel world known as Earth Adrift, where they abandoned the Professor in an alternate-American prison. The team didn't have long to celebrate, however, as one of their own members, an unstable lightning-casting religious psychotic named **St. Elmo** (Massachusetts) went rogue and brought controversy and heightened public scrutiny to the team.

Congressional investigations revealed gross financial wrongdoing related to the team's administration, and a series of bitter failures in the late 1970s and early 1980s sealed the doom of the Statesmen, whose final demise came in a blistering assault of red tape and bad luck.

THE 1980S

By any measure, the 1980s were terrible for superhumans. Major supers-related catastrophes seemed to come on an annual basis. By the end of the decade, the Statesmen would be disbanded, the Luciferian would depart Arcadia for a lost dimension, Soviet superhumans would make a play for the Kremlin, and thousands of innocent civilians would be killed during the greatest superhuman-related catastrophe known to history. In the last half of the decade, the American government would once again turn its back on its heroes, flirting with the idea of increased observation and incarceration for the nation's parahumans. But an era that ended in suspicion and tragedy began with hope, as America looked to the Statesmen to deliver them from danger and initiate another century of U.S. dominance.

EXIT THE STATESMEN!

Congressional scrutiny and media criticism of the team's methods wounded the Statesmen, but it took the Atomic Brain to destroy the team altogether. In 1982, the Statesmen battled the nuclear menace for the fourth and final time, hoping at long last to put an end to his villainy during a lengthy melee atop Arcadia's tallest skyscraper. At a critical moment, the Atomic Brain grappled one of Trinity's three bodies, tearing it nearly in half and absconding with the remains. Exposed to horrific levels of radiation, the Trinity third became **Singularity**, a dull-witted servitor creature whom the Brain kept around as a reminder of his victory over America's greatest superteam.

The creation of Singularity much diminished the remaining superhumans who had been Trinity, forcing the team leader into a life of deep depression and poor field decisions. Other team members, sensing the weakness, made power grabs of their own, and by the the end of the year the Statesmen were evicted from their Stargoyle headquarters and the team disbanded for good.

Several Statesmen retired from public service, at long last returning to their private lives. Others continued as individual heroes or in small, largely unsuccessful spinoff teams. A third group turned their attention to Southeast Asia, where they believed hundreds of unacknowledged prisoners of war still toiled in Vietnamese prison camps. An expedition including former Statesmen **Hotrod**, the **Jersey Devil**, **Bunyan**, **Babe**, and the **Connecticut Yankee** traveled to the region, where they discovered widespread evidence of illegal CIA-sanctioned wars in Laos and Cambodia. The team rescued more than 400 POWs from captivity, returning them to America. In thanks for this act of heroism, someone repaid the five superheroes with a bullet to the base of the skull by the end of 1991. All were killed at home, while they slept.

BANGKOK '85

World attention turned to Thailand on December 15, 1985, when a Duran Duran rock concert at Bangkok's 700th Anniversary Stadium turned into one of the bloodiest superhuman-related catastrophes in history. Shortly



STEVE SCOTT
IAN HANNIN

into the band's first set, dozens of terrorists repelled onto the stage, taking the 25,000-strong crowd hostage and demanding a ransom of $1,000 a head. Supported by two heavily armed attack helicopters and hundreds of allies outside the stadium, the terrorist force seemed utterly unstoppable. Thailand's prime minister saw little choice but to capitulate, but the nation's king, His Majesty Bhumibol the Great, had a different plan.

King Bhumibol had been assassinated weeks earlier by Unifier, who now posed as the honored sovereign, urging the nation's leaders to take decisive action with paramilitary "mediators" on loan from Unitrol, who had been courting Thailand for entry into their alternative United Nations. In fact, the entire situation played into Unifier's hands, as he had paid the "terrorists" to strike against the concert in the first place.

In a tragic coincidence, the hero team EXCISE (Extreme Crisis Intervention and Security Enterprise) arrived just as Unitrol's soldiers attempted to pacify the situation. More than 1000 civilians died in the ensuing crossfire, and by the time the dust finally settled, a large portion of the stands had been levelled and all the terrorists had either been killed or escaped. Ironically, the military discipline of the Unitrol teams allowed many civilians to escape with their lives.

Unitrol washed its hands of the affair and pulled out of Thailand. Media footage revealed that much of the collateral damage had in fact been caused accidentally by EXCISE members Moonquake and the Strobe, who died in the melee along with team leader Hype. The rest of the team returned to America battered and disgraced. Never before had the world witnessed their heroes so savagely defeated, not by a master criminal but by recklessness, poor tactics, and chaos. The dark event tainted the world's blind faith in "super" heroes and ushered in the Moratorium, a 5-year international ban on parahuman interventions.

THE MORATORIUM

The chaos of Bangkok '85 forced a sea change in the world's view of costumed crusaders. No longer sure where to draw the line between supervillains and superheroes, the public decided to cast them all in the same light. In nations around the world, governments considered plans to monitor and in some cases incarcerate superhuman citizens "just in case." Unitrol spurred on much of this anti-superhuman sentiment, pointing to its stabilizing role in the Thai crisis as evidence that ordinary humans could often take care of super-problems better than dangerous costumed thrillseekers.

The United Nations enforced a strict ban on superhuman involvement in natural disasters and terrorist interventions, and strengthened the World War II-era bans on superhuman involvement in military conflicts. Most superhumans abided by these new strictures, focusing on battling minor crime and supervillains at home and leaving widespread disaster management to the nonpowered experts.

RUSSIAN TROUBLE

The most famous exception to the ban was undoubtedly **Protonik**, the world-famous "hero of the people" who had been the Soviet Union's greatest hero, the Proletarian. In 1984, he shook off his KGB programming and took a new name, dedicating himself to the solitary pursuit of helping the world's ordinary citizens. Protonik swiftly became the exception that proved the rule during the Moratorium years, and soon became the world's most powerful superhero, even if his influence was less powerful in the United States than it was in nearly every other nation of Earth.

But things weren't going well in Protonik's original home. As the Soviet empire began to crumble, certain hard-line military elements sought to take matters into their own hands, and recruited a number of formerly loyal communist superhumans to their banner. Their most notable ally, the Blazing Star, managed to take the battle to the Kremlin itself, where he was accosted by a small consortium of international heroes led by Protonik. The two former friends resolved the conflict with words rather than fists, and the Blazing Star abandoned the plot, shamefully flying to the stars. The bloodless victory returned some measure of trust to the public, who once again appreciated their heroes (if somewhat guardedly) as they entered the new decade.

THE 1990S

While the world breathed a sigh of relief at the resolution of the Russian crisis, the fall of the Soviet Union ushered in a period of uncertainty in America's intelligence communities. They feared that the collapse of the Soviet Union might lead to a proliferation of "loose nukes" and ambitious, unaffiliated superhumans who might easily fall into the hands of terrorists. To this end, the government created the **Endgame Initiative**, a small strikeforce of powered and nonpowered operatives who would operate under cover behind the ruins of the Iron Curtain, ensuring the safety of American interests.

Members of the team included the up-and-coming META-4 Intelligence Arm operative **Talia Thorne** and a handsome young scientist named Chase Anthony, who represented the shadowy forces of ANTAG. During their battles across Eastern Europe, Thorne and Anthony became fast friends and later lovers, initiating a passionate relationship that would thrive until the modern day.

In 1992, Americans elected a progressive, futurist president named Ben Farmer, a New England Democrat who urged greater cooperation between "regular" Americans and the nation's superhumans. Quasi-terrorist organizations like the humans-first militia **Baseline** hated the president, of course, and every day seemed to bring a new death threat to the White House. In response, President Farmer created a new superteam, the **Front**, which would serve at the whim of the Administration, acting upon the personal orders of the president and serving as his bodyguards. The protection worked until 1995, when President Farmer was killed by a supervillain called the **Fuse** while the Front battled drug kingpins in Columbia.

The next elected president maintained the Front, replacing some members to fit his right-wing ideology, and established a pattern that has continued to this day. Each president now appoints his own favorite superhumans to the team, a duty seen by many heroes as the greatest honor possible.

In 1994, the mysterious multinational corporation **Octopus Umbrella** filed a patent for Kelvex, a nearly indestructible self-repairing wonder-textile that seemed likely to dominate the world's garment industry. Kelvex was just one of numerous world-changing patents filed by Octopus Umbrella, and untrusting elements within the government soon called the company to testify before a Senate investigative committee to account for its monopoly on several super-science and alien technological developments. Little came of the investigation, and those in the know assumed **Illuminati** involvement in the company's escape from further public scrutiny.

TODAY

In 2000, America elected President Bert Lando, a conservative former wartime journalist and superhero enthusiast who approaches the highest office in the world with a Rooseveltian bombast. Immediately after assuming office, President Lando stacked his Front with "activist" superheroes more than willing to fight dirty to get the job done. Current members of the Front include former NFL star turned popularity absorbing powerhouse **Alpha Male**, the chemically active metamorph **Primute**, and the satellite-connected battle-suited champion **Radiomega**.

Amid growing global chaos after the terrible terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, President Lando pushed through a revolutionary mandate designating a number of large U.S. cities, including Arcadia, as "Free Cities." In hopes of containing parahuman conflict, superheroes and private security forces receive unprecedented jurisdiction within these progressive cities, allowing the federal government to focus on providing relief and protection to the average non-parahuman citizen. The president and his administration encouraged America's heroes to flock to these districts, which have also attracted media and insurance corporations, tourists, and a host of supervillains.

Your campaign home town is one such Free City. Your heroes, along with the Reserve, the Front, and other teams, must fight the forces of evil and protect the innocent of Earth. Standing in the way will be the army of colorful adversaries, manipulative masterminds, and treacherous minions found in this book. To make the world safe, Earth's heroes are going to need to deal with its *Crooks!*

3: MOOKS

USING MOOKS

Set your heroes up against the likes of the Atomic Brain every week, and they're likely to hate you for it. Sometimes, you've got to let your players mow through hordes of ordinary joes, which sounds boring until you realize that in a superhero game, "ordinary joes" include ninjas, vampires, giant robots, and superspies.

Many supervillains work with a support structure of henchmen and less-powerful underlings who can cause lots of trouble for your player characters and their allies. This chapter presents statistics for scores of such villains, lovingly referred to as mooks, ranging in power level from 1 to 20.

Unless you've got a good reason to make them more durable, most mooks follow the rules for minions outlined on p. 127 of the *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook. This means they don't suffer hit, stun, and disabled results. If the mook's Damage save fails, the mook is knocked out or dead, not disabled. A successful attack can have a lesser effect (stunned for stun attacks, disabled, unconscious, or stunned for lethal attacks), if the attacker wishes to pull his punch. As minions, mooks don't benefit from the impossible Damage saves rule that allows a character to take only a single hit on a natural 20 Damage save roll.

With so many injured minions littering the battlegrounds of your campaign, the temptation is to make these minor characters faceless nobodies, living tenpins just waiting to be knocked down by heroes on their way to another fight. For a bit of added fun, consider fleshing out the backgrounds of certain mooks to make the campaign seem more vibrant and real.

Perhaps a security guard accidentally killed by an irresponsible hero has a superpowered relative eager to exact revenge. A high-level ninja might offer an impressive combatant the chance to pick up new fighting skills during campaign downtime, or a seemingly random encounter with a vampire might set off a new direction for the campaign, with the player characters coming to grips with becoming vampires themselves.

The mooks in this chapter represent a great variety of potential enemies, from mundane rent-a-cops to powerful nemesis demons. Flip through the chapter from time to time when you're stuck about where next to take your campaign, and consider the possibilities each type of mook offers. Great superhero comics always keep the reader wondering what's going to happen with each new issue, and liberal experimentation with mooks sells the same message in your campaign. Always err on the side of inclusivity, and your players should relish each new game session.

Each mook entry in this chapter begins with a general description of a broad category, and ends with statistic blocks for one or more examples of mooks fitting in that category. As with the supervillain descriptions in Chapter 4, feats or powers that originally appear in this book have been marked with an asterisk (*), saving you the trouble of looking for them in the *Mutants & Masterminds* core rulebook. New rules appear in Chapter 5 of this volume.

CRAIG TAILLEFER AFTER KYLE
STEVE COBB

ALIENS

Unknown to most of its inhabitants, Earth falls within the Axis, a region of space that serves as a directional compass-point to interstellar travellers. Countless alien races inhabit the Axis, but few pay the relatively primitive Earthlings any mind, preferring instead to focus on interstellar commerce or interplanetary conflict.

Warlike natives of an icy, inhospitable world, the **broan** control an immense empire far from Earth, and are rightly hated throughout the galaxy for their cruelty and greed. The reptilian **skoviaks** first came to Earth in the 1940s, and serve as the secret masters of a mysterious Nazi enclave in Antarctica. **Walorans** possess rudimentary psionic powers and belong to a largely benevolent interplanetary union known as the Myriad.



Broan: PL 3; Init +0; Defense 12 (+2 base); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +4 melee (+7L, battle axe), +2 ranged (+3L, blaster pistol); SV Dmg +6, Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.
Feats: Durability, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Immunity (pressure), Infamy, Toughness.
Powers: Natural Weapon (tusks) +3 [*Source:* —; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 6 pp]; Protection +4 [*Flaw:* One Type (cold only); *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 4 pp].
Equipment: Battle axe (+6L), blaster pistol (+3L).

Skoviak: PL 2; Init +0; Defense 11 (+1 base); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +1 melee (+5L, skoviak blaster-staff), +1 ranged (+5L, skoviak blaster-staff); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 15.
Skills: Computers +4, Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (space) +5.
Feats: Darkvision, Immunity (poison), Leadership, Unshakable Faith (Evak-nor)*.
Powers: Natural Weapon (beak) +2 [*Source:* —; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 4 pp], Sensory Protection +3 [*Source:* —; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 3 pp].
Weakness: Quirk (religious code against killing).
Equipment: Skoviak blaster-staff [+5L damage bonus (melee and ranged); *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 6 pp].

Waloran: PL 2; Init +0; Defense 12 (+2 base); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +1 melee (+1S, punch), +1 ranged (+3L, blaster pistol); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2wis; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 13.
Skills: Diplomacy +5, Sense Motive +6.
Feats: Attractive, Psychic Awareness, Trance.
Power: Mental Protection +1 [*Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 2 pp].
Equipment: Blaster pistol (+3L).



CRAIG TAILLEFER AFTER KYLE
STEVE COBB

ANTAG AGENTS

The heavily-classified government organization known as ANTAG (Applied Neural Technology Advancement Group) concerns itself with a two-pronged mission of exploring the boundaries of psionic research and developing miracle-working super-science devices by embracing unconventional technological theories, regardless of ethical or moral considerations. So secret has ANTAG become since its formation in the 1950s that not even META-4, of which it is nominally a part, knows the full details of its existence. In fact, the two organizations often work at cross purposes; many of the psychic renegades and outlandish constructs tracked by META-4 were born in an ANTAG laboratory.

The ANTAG operatives detailed below make excellent adversaries for psionic heroes, whom they may attempt to kidnap and analyze for further study. **Technicians** specialize in neutralizing psions, while **officers**, who also possess psychic abilities, lead field operations.

Technician: PL 6; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 16 (+5 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +5 melee (Drain (Wisdom) +6, sprayer), +6 ranged (+3L, light pistol); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5 (Mental Protection +6, Indomitable Will); Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills: Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (psionics) +7, Sense Motive +9.

Feats: Connected (ANTAG), Iron Will.

Equipment: Light pistol (+3L), Hed-Med™ sprayer [*Effect:* Drain (Wisdom) +6; *Range:* Touch; *Extra:* Area (30' radius), Slow Recovery; *Flaws:* Device, Range (touch), Limited (only works on characters with psionic-sourced powers); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 6 pp], braintrap harness [*Effect:* Absorption +6; *Flaw:* Device, One Energy Type (mental energy only); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 6 pp], eyeshield [*Effect:* Sensory Protection +4; *Power Stunt:* Psychic Awareness; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp], gas mask [*Effect:* Immunity (suffocation); *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* —; *Total:* 1 pp], mindblind hood [*Effect:* Mental Protection +6; *Power Stunt:* Indomitable Will; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 7 pp].

Officer: PL 8; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 19 (+6 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +8 melee (+2S, unarmed), +9 ranged (+5L, heavy pistol); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +6 (Mental Protection +8); Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 14.

Skills: Diplomacy +7, Listen +10, Spot +10.

Feats: Connected (ANTAG), Indomitable Will, Iron Will, Psychic Awareness, Trance, True Sight.

Powers: Mental Blast +8 [*Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 24 pp], Mental Protection +6 [*Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 12 pp], Super-Wisdom +6 [*Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 18 pp].

Equipment: Heavy Pistol (+5L).



COMBOTS

Designed by META-4 scientists in the late 1960s, combots served the organization ably for more than 30 years as guardian constructs and manual laborers. Their main function, however, was to spar with training agents, helping them to perfect their combat techniques.

Notoriously unreliable even in their prime, combots suffered from a handful of difficult-to-fix design flaws that saw them replaced in 1998 by the sturdier Whirlwind trainers. The mothballed combots were sent en masse to a warehouse in Montana, from which they vanished mysteriously in 2001. Since then, numerous supervillains have enlisted combots in their private armies and as guardians of their strongholds. No one knows who stole the robots or who's selling them, but the government has outlined their existence as a threat to national security and has ordered its agents to destroy them on sight.

Trainer (construct): PL 5; Init +3 (Dex); Hardness 10; Defense 18 (+5 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +8 melee (+3S, unarmed), +8 ranged (+5S, laser fist); SV Dmg +10, Fort —, Ref +3dex, Will +0; Str 17, Dex 16, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Feats: Darkvision, Immunity (aging, cold, critical hits, disease, exhaustion, heat, poison, pressure, starvation, suffocation).

Equipment: Detachable laser fist (+5L).

Weakness: Quirk (malfunctions)*.

Pawn (construct): PL 10; Init +3 (Dex); Hardness 15 Defense 23 (+10 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft.; Atk +12 melee (+4S, unarmed), +11 ranged (+15L, Energy Blast); SV Dmg +15, Fort —, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 18, Dex 16, Con —, Int 1 Wis 10, Cha 1.

Feats: Darkvision, Immunity (aging, cold, critical hits, disease, exhaustion, heat, poison, pressure, starvation, suffocation), Radio Broadcast, Radio Hearing.

Powers: Energy Blast (GM's choice) +15 [*Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 30 pp], Flight +10 [*Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp].

Knight (construct): PL 15; Init +4 (Dex); Hardness 20; Defense 13 (+2 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft.; Atk +20 melee (+25S, strike), +19 ranged (+10L, Energy Blast); SV Dmg +3, Fort —, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 20, Dex 18, Con —, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Feats: Darkvision, Immunity (aging, cold, critical hits, disease, exhaustion, heat, poison, pressure, starvation, suffocation), Radio Broadcast, Radio Hearing.

Powers: Energy Blast (GM's choice) +13 [*Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 26 pp], Flight +10 [*Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Strike +10 [*Source:* —; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Super-Strength +5 [*Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 20 pp].

CULTISTS

Cults serve an important function in a comic book world. While cult members frequently arm themselves with deadly weapons and even deadlier agendas, in their hearts they're ordinary people forced into extraordinary, often illegal activities by a charismatic leader. Accordingly, heroes interested in maintaining their public image and good conscience must pull some punches when fighting against cults, even as the cultists do their best to make the hero their latest sacrifice.

Consider introducing a cult that views superhumans as the next evolutionary step. Cult members might attempt to make themselves superhumans by draining powers (or slicing organs, depending on your campaign style) from heroes and implanting those powers into themselves. Perhaps such a cult has deified your campaign's "first" superhuman, and members wear strange costumes similar in color and style to the costume of a golden age great. How might a "legacy hero" with the name and costume of that original hero react to such a cult? How might the cult react to the hero?

In the real world, cults were very popular in the late 1960s and 1970s, as America dabbled with the drug counter-culture and the "New Age" movement. Consider the ramifications for modern era campaigns. A lot of those "summer of love" supervillain cult leaders are probably nearing the end of their incarceration in the early twenty-first century. What happens if the leader's cult grew in respectability while he took a state-enforced "contemplation period" for the past 30 years? Now out of prison with a fresh record and an appreciation for how to keep his hands clean, the formerly "nuisance-level" villain has an entire army at his command. What will he do with it?

Cults need not be religious. Johnny Reb (p. 66) is a good example of a secular cult leader, his "Incorruptible Society" trading the usual religious trappings for militant racism. The statistics below represent his cult, but can be used to model any outré personality sect you wish.

Initiate: PL 1; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Defense 11 (+1 base); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +1 melee (+2L, ceremonial dagger); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10.
Skills: Bluff +4, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +2, Innuendo +2, Profession (choose one) +4.
Feats: Connected (other cult members), Improved Initiative, Surprise Strike (+1).
Weakness: Quirk (fanatical)*.
Equipment: Ceremonial dagger (+2L).

Adept: PL 2; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 13 (+2 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +4 melee (+3L, ceremonial dagger), +3 ranged (+3L, light pistol); SV Dmg +3, Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12.
Skills: Bluff +4, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +2, Innuendo +1.
Feats: Attack Focus (armed), Attack Focus (ranged), Connected (other cult members), Improved Initiative, Surprise Strike (+1).
Weakness: Quirk (fanatical)*.
Equipment: Light pistol (+3L), ceremonial dagger (+2L).

Trusted Sibling: PL 3; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 14 (+3 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +6 melee (+5L, ceremonial dagger), +4 ranged (+5L, heavy pistol); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 16.
Skills: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +8, Innuendo +6.
Feats: Attack Focus (armed), Connected (other cult members), Improved Initiative, Leadership, Surprise Strike (+1).
Power: Super-Charisma +3 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 6 pp].
Weakness: Quirk (fanatical)*.
Equipment: Heavy pistol (+5L), ceremonial knife (+3L).

Highest Among Equals: PL 4; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 16 (+4 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +8 melee (+6L, ceremonial knife), +7 ranged (+5L, heavy pistol); SV Dmg +2, Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.
Skills: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Innuendo +6.
Feats: Attack Focus (armed), Attack Focus (ranged), Connected (other cult members), Improved Initiative, Leadership, Quick Draw, Surprise Strike (+2).
Power: Super-Charisma +4 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 8 pp].
Weakness: Quirk (fanatical)*.
Equipment: Heavy pistol (+5L), ceremonial knife (+3L).

Most Holy: PL 6; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 17 (+6 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +8 melee (+6L, ceremonial dagger), +7 ranged (+5L, heavy pistol); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 20.
Skills: Bluff +11, Diplomacy +11, Innuendo +11, Intimidate +11, Sense Motive +4.
Feats: Attack Focus (armed), Attractive, Connected (other cult members), Improved Initiative, Leadership, Minions (Loyalty 18: 1 highest among equals (PL 4), 1 trusted sibling (PL 3), 3 adepts (PL 2), 35 initiates (PL 1)), Quick Draw.
Power: Super-Charisma +6 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 12 pp].
Equipment: Heavy pistol (+5L), ceremonial knife (+5L).



CRAIG TAILLEFER
STEVE COBB





ART: CRAIG TAILLEFER
COLORS: STEVE COBB

DEMONS

Demons can fit into even the most "realistic" superhero campaign. In a world with no dimensional travel, they might be magical constructs from a bygone era, loosed from ancient tombs by the clever or the curious. "Traditionalist" demons might be the loyal servants of the Biblical Hell, or perhaps they're from one of countless hell-dimensions.

Enforcer demons revel in battle, and often manifest at the behest of a wicked sorcerer who needs someone killed or something broken. The supremely powerful **Nemesis** demons command respect throughout the cosmos.

Enforcer: PL 10; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 13 (+2 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft.; Atk +16 melee (+10L, claws) or +15 melee (DC 20 Fort save or stunned, horns), +13 ranged; SV Dmg +4 (Protection +10), Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 20, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills: Intimidate +6, Listen +1, Search +1, Sense Motive +1, Spot +1.

Feats: Attack Focus (claws), Darkvision, Infamy, Immunity (aging), Power Attack, See Invisibility.

Powers: Comprehend +1 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 2 pp], Dimensional Travel +5 [*Flaw:* Limited (One Dimension of GM's choice); *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp], Flight +10 [*Flaw:* Restricted (Wings); *Source:* —; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], Horns [*Effect:* Stun +10; *Flaw:* Range (touch); *Source:* —; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], Natural Weapon (claws) +10 [*Source:* —; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Protection +10 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp].

Weakness: Susceptible (items of faith)*: Demons suffer the effects of susceptibility when in sight of an item of religious significance wielded by a character with the Unshakable Faith feat.

Nemesis: PL 15; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 22 (+10 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 75 ft.; Atk +17 melee (+15L, claws), +15 ranged (+10L, Energy Blast); SV Dmg +4 (Protection +10), Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills: Diplomacy +2, Intimidate +4, Listen +2, Search +2, Sense Motive +2, Spot +2.

Feats: Darkvision, Infamy, Power Attack, Immunity (aging), See Invisibility.

Powers: Comprehend +1 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 2 pp], Dimensional Travel +5 [*Flaw:* Limited (One Dimension of GM's choice); *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp], Flight +15 [*Flaw:* Restricted (Wings); *Source:* —; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 15 pp], Natural Weapon (claws) +15 [*Source:* —; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 30 pp], Protection +10 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp] Sorcery +10 [*Spells:* ESP, Force Field, Illusion, Mental Blast, Possession, Telepathy, Teleportation; *Flaw:* Excluded Group (Transformation); *Power Stunt:* Extra Spell; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 6 pp; *Total:* 62 pp].

Weakness: Susceptible (items of faith)*: Demons suffer the effects of susceptibility when in sight of an item of religious significance wielded by a character with the Unshakable Faith feat.



GOBLINS

The term "goblin" describes any of a multitude of creatures who trace a common ancestry to a mystical dimension known as the Primal Sphere. In the distant past, areas of confluence between the Primal Sphere and Earth's northern Europe grew strong, and many "mythological" creatures pierced the veil between worlds. Ancient Vikings sealed the most significant confluence point, a cliffside portal called the Trollgate, behind a slab of dweomered iron in the Dark Ages. Kalak the Mystic, unsealed the Trollgate in 1942, hoping to enlist the swarms of dimensional aliens who emerged. Instead, the creatures plagued both the Axis and the Allies, and continue to infect Earth.

The luddite **gremlins**, bane of pilots and technicians, delight in destroying technology. **Henchlings** serve as the lowest of the goblin ranks, but their statistics double perfectly for cave-dwellers, mongrel men, or any other sort of diminutive servitor creature a GM might need. More powerful goblin creatures such as ogres and trolls occasionally surface in Europe, but are little known in America.

Henchling (goblin): PL 2; Small; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 13 (+2 base, +1 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; Atk +5 melee (+5L, hand weapon), +3 ranged (+3L, ranged weapon); SV Dmg +3, Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills: Intimidate +4, Listen +1, Spot +1.

Feats: Darkvision, Startle, Toughness.

Weakness: Susceptible (sunlight): Goblins suffer the effects of susceptibility when exposed to direct sunlight. If killed by sunlight, their bodies turn to stone.

Equipment: Hand weapon (GM's choice) (+3L), ranged weapon (GM's choice) (+3L).

Gremlin (goblin): PL 6; Small; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 19 (+5 base, +1 size, +3 Dex); Spd 20 ft., climb 30 ft.; Atk +10 melee (DC 16 Will save, Neutralize) or +9 melee (+7L, unarmed); SV Dmg +5, Fort +0, Ref +5, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills: Acrobatics +7, Disable Device +9, Escape Artist +6, Intimidate +4.

Feats: Attack Focus (unarmed), Darkvision, Evasion, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Disable Device), Startle, Toughness, Weapon Finesse.

Powers: Clinging +6 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 6 pp], Natural Weapon (claws) +6 [*Source:* —; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 12 pp]; Neutralize +6 [*Extra:* Nullification; *Flaws:* Limited (devices only), Range (Touch); *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 6 pp], Super-Skill (Disable Device) +6 [*Source:* —; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 6 pp].

Weakness: Susceptible (sunlight): Goblins suffer the effects of susceptibility when exposed to direct sunlight. If killed by sunlight, their bodies turn to stone.

MECHANAUTS

The gargantuan automatons known as mechanauts were first created about 40 years ago by the deranged but undeniably brilliant Professor Panic, still the world's foremost robotics expert. Until the professor's mysterious disappearance in 1979, the mechanauts served Panic exclusively, holding governments hostage and assaulting monuments in an attempt to blackmail sovereign nations into funding the bizarre experiments of a misguided genius. Since then, mechanauts have fallen into the hands of more than a dozen villains.

Ownership and use of a mechanaut is illegal by international treaty, and the United Nations considers the **Armageddon** mechanaut a weapon of mass destruction. All Armageddon mechanauts were thought destroyed as early as 1989, but recent schematics and parts unearthed at terrorist training camps in Alaska have rekindled old fears that previously unaccounted for or even brand new mechanauts might soon appear in the hands of America's enemies.



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Thunder (construct): PL 10; Huge (25 ft.); Init +0; Hardness 10; Defense 18 (+8 base, -2 size); Spd 40 ft., fly 50 ft.; Atk +10 melee (+12S/reach 15 ft., unarmed), +6 ranged (+10L, Energy Blast–sonic); SV Dmg +10, Fort –, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 18, Dex 10, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Feats: Immunity (aging, cold, critical hits, disease, exhaustion, heat, poison, pressure, starvation, suffocation), Radio Broadcast, Radio Hearing.

Powers: Flight +10 [*Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Growth +8 [*Extras:* Duration (permanent), Immovability, Super-Strength; *Flaw:* Limited (no Protection); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 7 pp; *Total:* 56 pp], Thunderous Scream [*Effect:* Energy Blast (sonic) +10; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp].

Armageddon (construct): PL 21; Gargantuan (50 ft.); Init +2 (Dex); Hardness 20; Defense 26 (+20 base, -4 size); Spd 60 ft.; Atk +21 melee (+17S/reach 20 ft., unarmed), +18 ranged (+20L/crit 19–20, Energy Blast–fire); SV Dmg +20, Fort –, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 14, Con –, Int –, Wis 14, Cha 1.

Feats: Immunity (aging, cold, critical hits, disease, exhaustion, heat, poison, pressure, starvation, suffocation), Improved Critical (Energy Blast), Power Immunity, Radio Broadcast, Radio Hearing.

Powers: Flight +10 [*Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Force Field +10 [*Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Growth +12 [*Extras:* Duration (permanent), Immovability, Super-Strength; *Flaw:* Limited (no Protection); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 7 pp; *Total:* 84 pp], Plasma Blast [*Effect:* Energy Blast (fire) +20; *Extra:* Explosive Blast (100-ft. radius); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 60 pp].

MILITARY PERSONNEL

Every two-bit dictator or power-mad terrorist has an army to do his dirty work. Soldiers display a wide range of motivations: honorable career military personnel, reservists saving up for college, deadbeats trying to pull their lives together, and even "I'd rather be drinking" draftees who were forced to enlist during a time of major political conflict. Training tends to homogenize these diverse groups, resulting in some common types.

Use these archetypes as terrorist pawns, mind-controlled killing machines, or even United Nations Peacekeepers (perhaps supporting a secret one-world-government agenda).



Soldier: PL 3; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 13 (+2 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +3 melee (+1S, unarmed), +3 ranged or -3/-3/-3 ranged (+5L, assault rifle); SV Dmg +3 (Protection +3), Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Listen +2, Profession (soldier) +4, Search +3, Spot +3.

Feats: Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Toughness.

Equipment: Assault rifle [+5L damage bonus; *Extra:* Autofire; *Flaws:* Device; *Source:* –; *Total:* 10 pp], Body Armor [*Effect:* Armor +3; *Source:* –; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 3 pp].

Sniper: PL 4; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 16 (+3 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +4 melee (+0S, unarmed), +5 ranged or +3/+3 ranged (+7L, rifle); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +2, Hide +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +2.

Feats: Accurate Attack, Attack Focus (ranged weapon), Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Surprise Strike (+2), Talented (Hide and Move Silently).

Equipment: Sniper rifle [+7L damage bonus; *Range:* Normal; *Flaw:* Device; *Power Stunt:* Darkvision; *Total:* 15 pp].

Officer: PL 5; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 17 (+5 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +6 melee (+1S, unarmed), +7 ranged or +1/+1/+1 ranged (+4L, light automatic rifle) or +7 ranged (+3L, light pistol); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +5, Climb +2, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +5, Intimidate +5, Listen +3, Profession (officer) +3, Spot +3.

Feats: Assessment, Connected, Iron Will, Leadership, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack.

Equipment: Light pistol (+3L), light automatic rifle [+4L damage bonus; *Extra:* Autofire; *Flaws:* Device; *Source:* –; *Total:* 8 pp].



CRAIG TAILLEFER
STEVE COBB



NINJAS

They manifest from shadows, silent killers who trace their murderous traditions to feudal Japan. Honorable but deadly warriors, they use stealth to their advantage, sneaking up on their enemies and defeating them quickly with flashing blades and a flurry of blows. They are the ninja, the silent killers of Japanese legend.

Japanese crime syndicates on the islands and abroad utilize ninjas in their illegal activities, and such activities occasionally bring the mysterious warriors to the attention of superheroes. A standard ninja is no match for a powerful superhuman, but the most powerful ninjas attain mystical powers themselves, and are easily the equal of any caped crusader.

Ninjas organize themselves into nine distinct clans (or *ryu*), each with their own traditions, dress, and quasi-mystical disciplines. A different **Master of Nine Winds** commands each clan, and receives absolute obedience from his or her followers. Most ninja clans use color-coded uniforms to distinguish between experienced and novice clan members.

Gray: PL 3; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 16 (+3 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +7 melee (+4L, ninja-to), +6 ranged (+3L, throwing stars); SV Dmg +3, Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Jump +2, Hide +3, Listen +1, Move Silently +3, Spot +1.

Feats: Attack Finesse, Attack Focus (armed), Dodge, Evasion, Surprise Strike (+2).

Equipment: Ninja-to (+4L), throwing stars (+3L).

Black: PL 5; Init +8 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 19 (+5 base, +4 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +10 melee (+6L, ninja-to) or +10 melee (+2S, unarmed), +10 ranged (+3L, throwing stars); SV Dmg +4, Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Jump+2, Hide +4, Listen +1, Move Silently +4, Spot +1.

Feats: All-Out Attack, Attack Finesse, Attack Focus (armed), Attack Focus (unarmed), Dodge, Evasion, Heroic Surge (1), Improved Initiative, Instant Stand, Move-By Attack, Power Attack, Stunning Attack, Surprise Strike (+3).

Equipment: Ninja-to (+4L), throwing stars (+3L).

Red: PL 8; Init +9 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 23 (+8 base, +5 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +14 melee (+11L, ninja-to) or +13 melee (+3S, unarmed), +13 ranged (+5L, throwing stars); SV Dmg +5, Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +6, Spot +2.

Feats: Accurate Attack, Attack Finesse, All-Out Attack, Attack Finesse, Attack Focus (armed), Dodge, Evasion, Improved Initiative, Instant Stand, Move-By Attack, Power Attack, Stunning Attack, Surprise Strike (+4).

Powers: Deflection +4 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 8 pp], Leaping +4 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 4 pp].

Equipment: Ninja-to (+8L), throwing stars (+5L), smoke pellets [*Effect:* Obscure +2; *Range:* Normal; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Total:* 2 pp].

White: PL 12; Init +14 (Dex, Super-Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 32 (+12 base, +5 Dex, +5 Super-Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +18 melee (+13L, ninja-to) or +18 melee (+3S, unarmed), +17 ranged (+8L, throwing stars); SV Dmg +10, Fort +2, Ref +10, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Escape Artist +10, Hide +18, Listen +3, Move Silently +10, Search +2, Spot +3.

Feats: Accurate Attack, All-Out Attack, Attack Finesse, Attack Focus (armed), Attack Focus (unarmed), Dodge, Evasion, Improved Initiative, Instant Stand, Move-By Attack, Power Attack, Stunning Attack, Surprise Strike (+6), Throwing Mastery, Track, True Sight.

Powers: Leaping +5 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp], Super-Dexterity +5 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Super-Senses +3 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 6 pp].

Equipment: Assassin Suit [*Effect:* Blending +8; *Extra:* Clinging +8; *Source:* Super-Science; *Total:* 8 pp], ninja-to (+10L), throwing stars (+8L), smoke pellets [*Effect:* Obscure +2; *Range:* Normal; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Total:* 2 pp].

Master of Nine Winds: PL 15; Init +14 (Dex, Super-Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 35 (+15 base, +5 Dex, +5 Super-Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +21 melee (+18L, ninja-to) or +21 melee (+3S, unarmed), +17 ranged (+15L, throwing stars); SV Dmg +10, Fort +2, Ref +10, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Escape Artist +10, Hide +18, Listen +3, Move Silently +20, Search +2, Spot +3.

Feats: Accurate Attack, All-Out Attack, Attack Finesse, Attack Focus (armed), Attack Focus (unarmed), Dodge, Evasion, Improved Initiative, Instant Stand, Move-By Attack, Power Attack, Stunning Attack, Surprise Strike (+6), Throwing Mastery, Track, True Sight.

Powers: Leaping +5 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp], Super-Dexterity +5 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Super-Senses +3 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 6 pp], Teleportation +7 [*Power Stunt:* Turnabout; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 14 pp].

Equipment: Assassin Suit [*Effect:* Blending +8; *Extra:* Clinging +8; *Source:* Super-Science; *Total:* 8 pp], ninja-to (+15L), throwing stars (+15L), smoke pellets [*Effect:* Obscure +2; *Range:* Normal; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp].

SECURITY AGENTS

In today's corporate world, you're nothing without a private police force. Retired or discharged police professionals often find solace in the private security industry, whether making some extra money watching a door for a weekend or working full time to protect a business mainframe or private museum from would-be thieves.

At the low end of the spectrum, the **rent-a-cop** generally has little or no training, and might even be unarmed. Most are around for show only, and buckle under pressure. They certainly won't put their lives on the line for what amounts to a minimum-wage salary.

The **bodyguard** and **security expert**, on the other hand, will take a bullet to protect their charge, and know their way around weapons and fistfights. Whether protecting a president, CEO, or movie star, they're cautious and on the lookout for any sign of trouble.



CRAIG TAILLEFER
STEVE COBB

Rent-a-Cop: PL 2; Init +0; Defense 12 (+2 base); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +3 melee (+3S, nightstick), +2 ranged (+3L, light pistol); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Intimidate +1, Listen +4, Profession (rent-a-cop) +1, Spot +4, Search +1.

Feats: Talented (Listen and Spot).

Equipment: Light pistol (+3L), handcuffs [*Effect:* Snare +5; *Total:* 5 pp], nightstick (+2S).

Bodyguard: PL 4; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 16 (+4 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +8 melee (+4S, brass knuckles), +7 ranged (+3L, light pistol); SV Dmg +2, Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Intimidate +2, Listen +3, Spot +5.

Feats: Attack Focus (armed), Attack Focus (ranged), Chokehold, Quick Draw, Take the Fall*, Talented (Listen and Spot).

Equipment: Light pistol (+3L), pepper spray [*Effect:* Stun +1; *Range:* Touch; *Source:* —; *Total:* 1pp], brass knuckles (+1S).

Security Expert: PL 5; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 18 (+5 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +8 melee (+4S, brass knuckles), +8 ranged (+5L, heavy pistol); SV Dmg +5, Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 10.

Skills: Disable Device +5, Listen +5, Sense Motive +4, Spot +6.

Feats: Assessment, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Talented (Listen and Spot), Toughness, Track.

Equipment: Heavy pistol (+5L), pepper spray [*Effect:* Stun +1; *Range:* Touch; *Total:* 1pp], brass knuckles (+1S), infrared goggles [*Effect:* Darkvision; *Range:* Personal; *Total:* 1 pp].

SKY PIRATES

The armored aeronaut known as Wasphawk serves as the Sky Marshal of Unitrol's impressive aerial armada. His massive flying fortress, the *Hivewing*, boasts a crew of 40 minions (35 PL 1 wingmen, 3 PL 2 pilots, 1 PL 3 rocket jockey, and 1PL 4 lieutenant) and appears with Wasphawk's statistics on p. 110.

Wingmen and **rocket jockeys** zip through the skies on stinger jet-cycles, single-seat fighter craft armed with the latest military technology. **Pilots** fly larger craft such as airplanes or Wasphawk's *Hivewing*.

Consider adding sky pirates to your campaign to challenge flying heroes and test their aerial combat skills or to throw an unusual twist into a standard chase or robbery.



Wingman: PL 1; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 12 (+1 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +0 melee (+0S, unarmed), +2 ranged (+6L, stinger gun); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skill: Pilot +5.

Feat: Combat Pilot.

Equipment: Stinger jet-cycle (see below).

Pilot: PL 2; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 12 (+0 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +0 melee (+0S, unarmed), +2 ranged (+5L, heavy pistol); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Computers +5, Pilot +7.

Feats: Combat Pilot, Dodge.

Equipment: Heavy pistol (+5L), bulletproof vest [*Effect:* Armor +5; *Source:* —; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp].

Rocket Jockey: PL 3; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 16 (+3 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +5 melee (+2S, unarmed or +4L, combat knife), +6 ranged (+3L, light pistol); SV Dmg +2 (Protection +5), Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Pilot +6.

Feats: Combat Pilot.

Equipment: Light pistol (+3L), combat knife (+2L), bulletproof vest [*Effect:* Armor +5; *Source:* —; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp], Stinger jet-cycle (see below).

Vehicle Type	Size	Movement	Hardness	Armor Bonus	Cost	Features
Air Vehicle						
Stinger jet-cycle	M	7 (35 fpr)	8	0	12	Gun +6L



CRAIG TAILLEFER

STEVE COBB

STELLAR GUARD

The Czar (p. 60) imposes his fascist rule on the unfortunate populace of his rogue nation through a brutally efficient secret police force. The Stellar Guard, composed of the Czar's most trusted agents, forms the nucleus of the organization. Although armed with less advanced technology than Unitrol's Parahuman Suppression Teams, the Stellar Guard remains a potential threat to even a well-prepared team of heroes adventuring in the Czar's homeland or interfering with his machinations abroad.

In keeping with his contempt for humanity, the Czar considers all of his minions expendable. "Humans will always be willing to throw their lives away for a leader they can truly and deeply fear," he often says.

Most members of the Stellar Guard are disenfranchised former Soviets, right-wing veterans of the wars in Eastern Europe, and skilled international mercenaries who have run out of places to hide. In return for unwavering loyalty, members of the Stellar Guard live as barons, free to do as they please on lands bestowed to them by the Czar. Their downtrodden subjects live in constant fear of interrogation.

Each guardsman commands a unit of up to 10 military personnel (p. 25) of assorted power levels.

Stellar Guardsman: PL 6; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 17 (+6 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft; Atk +8 melee (+2S, unarmed), +7 ranged (+8S, blaster rifle or +6S, concussion grenades); SV Dmg +3 (Protection +7), Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills: Demolitions +2, Gather Information +4, Intimidate +6, Listen +3, Profession (soldier) +4, Search +2, Spot +3.

Feats: Infamy, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Toughness.

Weakness: Quirk (fanatical)*.

Equipment: Blaster rifle (+8S), concussion grenades [+6S damage bonus; *Range:* Normal; *Extra:* Area (30' radius); *Flaws:* Device, Uses (six grenades); *Source:* –; *Total:* 6 pp]; taser [*Effect:* Stun +5 (DC 20); *Range:* Normal; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Total:* 5 pp], riot armor [*Effect:* Armor +7; *Source:* –; *Total:* 7 pp], jet pack [*Effect:* Flight +3; *Range:* Personal; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Total:* 3 pp].



SUPERSPIES

Superspies with fantastic gadgets and peerless style work for such varied organizations as America's Central Intelligence Agency, META-4, and the British MI-6 as well as criminal outfits such as ODESSA, Unitrol, and ANTAG.

Secret agents serve nearly every government and state agency, and can be encountered just about anywhere. **Archive agents** first appeared at the dawn of the twenty-first century; their subdermal circuitry and bio-technological radio systems make them flawless operatives. The best **archive agents** don't know they're agents at all thanks to psionic suggestion or hypnotic programming.

Secret Agent: PL 8; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 19 (+6 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +7 melee (+1S, unarmed), +9 ranged (+5L, pistol); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills: Acrobatics +5, Bluff +5, Climb +2, Computers +4, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +4, Disguise +7, Gather Information +9, Hide +5, Innuendo +5, Knowledge (geography) +4, Language (choose three), Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +5, Profession (choose cover occupation) +3, Read Lips +4, Search +4, Sense Motive +3, Spot +3, Taunt +5.

Feats: Connected, Diplomatic Immunity*, Heroic Surge (twice per day), Indomitable Will.

Equipment: Pistol (+5L), earpiece [*Effect:* Radio Hearing; *Extra:* Subtle; *Flaw:* Device; *Total:* 2 pp], transceiver cufflink [*Effect:* Radio Broadcast; *Extra:* Subtle; *Flaw:* Device; *Total:* 2 pp], wristwatch laser (+5L) [*Extras:* Delay, Subtle; *Flaws:* Device, Range (touch); *Total:* 5 pp], x-ray sunglasses [*Effect:* Penetration Vision (can't see through lead); *Extra:* Subtle; *Flaw:* Device; *Total:* 2 pp].

Archive Agent: PL 10; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 17 (+6 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +6 melee (+0S, unarmed), +7 ranged (+3L, break-down pistol); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +6, Disguise +6, Gather Information +10, Hide +5, Innuendo +4, Knowledge (geography) +6, Listen +11, Move Silently +3, Profession (choose cover profession) +6, Read Lips +4, Search +9, Sleight of Hand +3, Spot +9.

Feats: Assessment, Immunity (poison), Indomitable Will, Photographic Memory, Radio Broadcast, Radio Hearing, Ultra Hearing.

Powers: Comprehend +10 [*Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp]; subdermal pocket [*Effect:* Super-Skill (Sleight of Hand) +10; *Extra:* Subtle; *Flaw:* Limited–small objects only; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], Telescopic Sense +4 (sight; 50-ft. range increment) [*Extra:* Extra Sense (hearing); *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 8 pp].

Equipment: Break-down plastic pistol [+3L damage; *Range:* Normal; *Extra:* Subtle; *Flaw:* Device; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 6 pp].

TERRORISTS

Simply speaking, a terrorist is any counter-cultural villain willing to use violence against innocents in pursuit of a political ideology. While the label applies to numerous supervillains in this book, it also applies to the sort of non-powered religious fundamentalists, extreme nationalists, separatists, and nutjobs who haunt our real-world newspapers.

So devoted is the **martyr** to his cause that he's willing to sacrifice his life to further the movement. He arms himself with a single-use explosive or a vial of deadly chemical poison, maneuvers himself into the most destructive surroundings available, and detonates the bomb or opens his deadly canister, endangering the lives of bystanders and almost certainly killing himself in the process. The **revolutionary** is a leader or sub-leader who excels at both military and diplomatic arts. Revolutionaries often lead small terrorist forces, or serve as favored henchmen to a more powerful supervillain. For rank-and-file terrorists, use the **Soldier** stat block (p. 25).

Martyr: PL 3; Init +0; Defense 12 (+2 base); Spd 30 ft; Atk +2 melee (+0S, unarmed), +3 ranged (+3L, light pistol); SV Dmg +2, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Demolitions +3, Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +6, Language (any 1), Move Silently +3, Profession +4, Hide +3.

Feats: Attack Focus (ranged), Connected, Iron Will, Toughness.

Weakness: Quirk (fanatical)*.

Equipment: Explosive device [+10L damage bonus; *Extras:* Area (50' radius blast), Delay, Subtle, Triggered (when martyr loses consciousness or presses detonator); *Flaw:* Device, Uses (×4, 1 use); *Source:* —; *Total:* 10 pp] or poison gas [*Effect:* Drain (Con) +10; *Extra:* Area (50-ft. radius), Subtle, Triggered (when martyr loses consciousness or opens vial); *Flaw:* Device, Uses (×4, 1 use); *Source:* —; *Total:* 10 pp], light pistol (+3L).

Revolutionary: PL 6; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 18 (+6 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft; Atk +8 melee (+2L, knife), +8 or +4/+4/+4 or +2/+2/+2/+2 ranged (+5L, assault rifle); SV Dmg +3, Ref +2, Fort +1, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Skills: Diplomacy +8, Language (any 1), Intimidate +10.

Feats: Connected, Headquarters (communications, concealment, garage, holding cells, living space, workshop), Indomitable Will, Infamy, Iron Will, Leadership, Minions (Loyalty 16; 25 PL 1 bystanders, 2 PL 2 goons, 1 PL 3 soldier), Multishot, Rapid Shot, Toughness.

Equipment: Assault rifle [+5L damage bonus; *Extra:* Autofire; *Flaws:* Device; *Source:* —; *Total:* 10 pp], knife (+2L).



CRAIG TAILLEFER
STEVE COBB

THUGS

The very first superhero comic featured an astonishingly powerful hero facing off not against a horde of aliens, a squad of ninjas, or an irradiated glowing brain, but against a pack of powerless thugs. Ever since, regular joes with a club and domino mask have played a crucial role in comics and comic book roleplaying campaigns. That role? Victim.

Thugs pose no significant threat to a superhuman, but can do a lot of damage to bystanders and property. Most crumple from a single punch from a strong hero, and few have any notable powers or abilities. Exceptions exist in the form of the **boost-boy** and **assassin**. **Boost-boys**, common in underworld organizations, come equipped with an adrenaline injector melded to the skin near the left shoulderblade. **Assassins** have exceptional aim and come equipped with a garrote and sniper rifle. **Goons** fill out the ranks of standard thugs, as do the two thug types presented on page 154 of the *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook.

Goon: PL 2; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 13 (+2 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +5 melee (+5S, club), +3 ranged (+3L, light pistol); SV Dmg +5, Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skill: Intimidate +4.

Feat: Toughness.

Equipment: Club (+2S), light pistol (+3L).

Boost-Boy: PL 5; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 17 (+5 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +10 melee (+4S, unarmed); SV Dmg +5, Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Intimidate +5, Jump +6, Spot +2.

Feats: All-Out Attack, Attack Focus (unarmed), Chokehold, Improved Grapple, Improved Pin, Power Attack, Takedown Attack, Rapid Takedown, Toughness.

Powers: Boost (Strength) +5 [*Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp].

Assassin: PL 6; Init +4 (Dex); Defense 20 (+6 base, +4 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +9 melee (garrote), +10 ranged (+7L, rifle); SV Dmg +2, Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +4, Demolitions +4, Disguise +5, Hide +7, Move Silently +6, Spot +4.

Feats: Far Shot, Point Blank Shot.

Equipment: garrote [*Effect:* Suffocate +5; *Range:* Touch; *Total:* 5 pp], rifle +7L [*Power Stunt:* Silenced; *Total:* 9 pp].





ART ▲SEAN CHEN ▼CRAIG TALLEFER
COLORS STEVE COBB

UNITROL MEDIATORS

The mysterious international organization known as Unitrol serves the world as an "alternate" United Nations. When a disadvantaged nation falls victim to civil war or internal strife, Unitrol diplomats offer the assistance of an impressive mobile military force, which moves in and takes charge of the situation from behind an impenetrable media blackout. After the fighting ceases, the now-stable government grants Unitrol contractors exclusive development and resource exploitation rights and allows Unitrol advisors to implement a system of true *laissez faire* capitalism that funnels a great deal of the nation's wealth to Unitrol itself. Shortly thereafter, the government secedes from the United Nations (if it was a member in the first place) and Unitrol's symbol appears on the nation's flag.

Most Unitrol "mediators" are **soldiers** (p. 25) led by **officers** (below). The existence of highly specialized **P.H.S.T.** (Parahuman Suppression Team, pronounced "fist") units suggests an explicitly anti-superhuman agenda, and in fact large numbers of superhumans vanish during Unitrol's "mediation" efforts.

Officer: PL 6; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 17 (+4 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +9 melee (+3S, unarmed), +9 ranged or +3/+3/+3 ranged (+5L, assault rifle) or +9 ranged (DC 15 Fort save, stun grenades, 55' radius); SV Dmg +2 (Protection +5), Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Skills: Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +7, Profession (soldier) +6.

Feats: Connected (Unitrol), Leadership.

Equipment: AKS-74 assault rifle [+5L damage bonus; *Extra:* Autofire; *Flaws:* Device; *Source:* –; *Total:* 10 pp], stun grenades [*Effect:* Stun +5; *Extra:* Area (55-ft. radius); *Flaw:* Device, Uses (8); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 5 pp], body armor [*Effect:* Armor +5; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp], wrist-mounted computer [*Effect:* Datalink +5; *Power Stunts:* Detect (superpowers), Radio Broadcast, Radio Hearing; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 13 pp].

P.H.S.T.: PL 6; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 19 (+6 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +9 melee (+3S, unarmed), +9 ranged (+6L or Drain (powers) +6, dampener cannon); SV Dmg +3 (Protection +6), Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +2 (Mental Protection +6); Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills: Diplomacy +5, Listen +4, Spot +4.

Feats: Connected (Unitrol).

Equipment: Dampener cannon [*Effect:* Drain (powers) +6 [*Extras:* +6L damage bonus, All Powers, Slow Recovery; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 24 pp], body armor [*Effect:* Armor +6; *Extra:* Mental Protection +6; *Power Stunts:* Radio Broadcast, Radio Hearing; *Source:* –; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 14 pp].



VAMPIRES

Consider creating a vampire nemesis for a heroic mystic, giving the player an excuse for his character to poke around ancient tomes and forbidden lore.

The **bystander** was once human, but has since taken on more decadent appetites. Perhaps she was an acquaintance of one of your player characters, who hopes to lead the team into a vampire den where the heroes will be killed and transformed into allied bloodsuckers. Perhaps it's just another nameless minion hunting for food in a city gone mad after a solar eclipse.

The term **"Fanglord"** applies to any powerful vampire (PL8 or above) who, through ruthless deeds, has commanded respect from his fellow bloodsuckers.

Bystander (vampire): PL 1; Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 30 ft.; Atk +4 melee (+5L and Drain +5, fangs); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skill: Profession (choose one) +4.

Feats: Darkvision, Immunity (aging, disease, exhaustion, poison, starvation, suffocation), Into Thin Air (body becomes dust)*.

Powers: Clinging +3 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 3 pp], Drain +5 [*Flaw:* Limited (Con only); *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp], Leaping +2 [*Power Stunt:* Super-Leaping; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 4 pp], Mind Control +4 [*Flaw:* Restricted (gaze); *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 4 pp], Natural Weapon (claws) +2 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 4 pp], Natural Weapon (fangs) +2 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 4 pp].

Weaknesses: Susceptible (hunger, items of faith, sunlight), Vulnerable (stakes).

Elite Fanglord (vampire): PL 8; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 21 (+8 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft., Atk +11 melee (+12L and Drain +8, fangs), +3 ranged; SV Dmg +4, Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills: Intimidate +15.

Feats: Darkvision, Immunity (aging, disease, exhaustion, poison, starvation, suffocation), Improved Initiative, Into Thin Air (body becomes dust)*, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Startle, Toughness.

Powers: Clinging +3 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 3 pp], Drain +8 [*Flaw:* Limited (Con only); *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 8 pp], Leaping +2 [*Power Stunt:* Super-Leaping; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 4 pp], Mind Control +4 [*Flaw:* Restricted (gaze); *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 4 pp], Natural Weapon (claws) +2 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 4 pp], Natural Weapon (fangs) +8 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 16 pp], Super-Charisma +8 [*Extra:* Intimidating Presence; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 24 pp].

Weaknesses: Susceptible (hunger, items of faith, sunlight), Vulnerable (stakes).

WEREWOLVES

Hospital workers and police officers often joke that the full moon brings out the crazies. Mystics and occultists know to fear the full moon for the powerful bind it holds over werewolves. The template rules on p. 116 allow you to make any creature a werewolf, but these ready-made statistics provide the basic details for low-level werewolf adversaries.

Bystander (werewolf, masked): PL 1; Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 30 ft.; Atk +1 melee (+2S, unarmed); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.
Skills: Profession (choose one) +4, Survival +8.
Feats: Scent, Track.
Powers: Combat Sense +2 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 2 pp], Super-Skill (Survival) +4 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 4 pp].
Weaknesses: Transformation (full moon).

Bystander (werewolf, lupine): PL 1; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Defense 10; Spd 30 ft.; Atk +1 melee (+2S, unarmed); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.
Skills: Profession (choose one) +4, Survival +8.
Feats: Darkvision, Improved Initiative, Improved Pin, Instant Stand, Scent, Track.
Powers: Combat Sense +2 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 2 pp], Natural Weapon (fangs) +3 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 6 pp], Protection +5 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], Super-Skill (Survival) +4 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 4 pp], Super-Strength +4 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 16 pp].
Weaknesses: Berserker, Disturbing, Susceptible (hunger), Transformation (full moon), Vulnerable (silver weapons).

Soldier (werewolf, lupine): PL 3; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 13 (+2 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +7 melee (+4S, unarmed), +4 ranged; SV Dmg +3, Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.
Skills: Listen +2, Profession (soldier) +4, Search +3, Spot +3, Survival +4.
Feats: Darkvision, Improved Initiative, Improved Pin, Instant Stand, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Scent, Toughness, Track.
Powers: Combat Sense +2 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 2 pp], Natural Weapon (fangs) +3 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 6 pp], Protection +5 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], Super-Skill (Survival) +4 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 4 pp], Super-Strength +4 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 16 pp].
Weakness: Berserker, Disturbing, Susceptible (hunger), Transformation (full moon), Vulnerable (silver weapons).



CRAIG TAILLEFER
STEVE COBB

ZOMBIES

Mindless undead automatons, zombies can make excellent adversaries for even the most powerful superheroes. One zombie seldom poses much of a challenge, but a horde of a dozen or more can slow a hero down, or even pin him. For more on zombies and how to make any creature a zombie, see p. 118.

Bystander (zombie): PL 1; Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 20 ft.; Atk +9 melee (+8S, unarmed); SV Dmg +0 (Protection +12), Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 5, Wis 5, Cha 10.
Skill: Profession (choose one) +1.
Feats: Darkvision, Immunity (aging, critical hits, disease, exhaustion, poison, starvation, suffocation).
Powers: Protection +12 [*Flaw:* Degrades; *Source:* GM's choice; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 12 pp], Super-Strength +4 [*Flaw:* Limited (doesn't apply to carrying capacity); *Source:* GM's choice; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 12 pp].
Weaknesses: Disabled (dull witted*, mute, slow*), Disturbing.

Bystander (zombie–ravenous dead): PL 1; Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 20 ft.; Atk +9 melee (+8S, unarmed); SV Dmg +0 (Protection +12), Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 5, Wis 5, Cha 10.
Skill: Profession (choose one) +1.
Feats: Darkvision, Detect (life), Immunity (aging, critical hits, disease, exhaustion, poison, starvation, suffocation).
Powers: Natural Weapon (bite) +4 [*Source:* –; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 8 pp], Protection +12 [*Flaw:* Degrades; *Source:* GM's choice; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 12 pp], Super-Strength +4 [*Flaw:* Limited (doesn't apply to carrying capacity); *Source:* GM's choice; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 12 pp].
Weaknesses: Disabled (dull witted*, mute, slow*), Disturbing, Quirk (ravenous)*.

Soldier (zombie): PL 3; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 13 (+2 base, +1 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; Atk +6 melee (+4S, unarmed), +3 ranged; SV Dmg +4, Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.
Skills: Listen +2, Profession (soldier) +4, Search +3, Spot +3.
Feats: Darkvision, Immunity (aging, critical hits, disease, exhaustion, poison, starvation, suffocation), Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Toughness.
Powers: Protection +12 [*Flaw:* Degrades; *Source:* GM's choice; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 12 pp], Super-Strength +4 [*Flaw:* Limited (doesn't apply to carrying capacity); *Source:* GM's choice; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 12 pp].
Weaknesses: Disabled (dull witted*, mute, slow*), Disturbing.



THE ATOMIC BRAIN



20

I SHALL BE REMEMBERED BY NO ONE, FOR NO ONE SHALL SURVIVE MY GENIUS.

POWER-MAD NUCLEAR MENACE

REAL NAME	Harold Hamilton
KNOWN ASSOCIATES	Unknown to the general public
BASE OF OPERATIONS	Volcano Island, South Pacific
CREW COMPLEMENT	None
ARTIFACTS	U.S. citizen wanted by multi-national authorities

HEIGHT	8' 5"	SPEED	None
WEIGHT	310 lbs.	POWER	None
		IQ	92

BACKGROUND

In the early 1940s, America raced feverishly toward the development of a nuclear weapon that could bring a fast, conclusive victory to World War II. Numerous teams of scientists worked on cracking the problem. A young unorthodox atomic theorist named Harold Hamilton led the most controversial and radical team, which urged giant leaps forward without standard safety and testing procedures. In those desperate days, dynamism won out over caution, and money poured into Hamilton's ambitious operation. Hamilton threw himself into the job for personal reasons, believing that weaponizing nuclear fusion would be the ultimate accomplishment of mankind, the point when science at long last crafted the planet's demise.

Disaster struck in February, 1945, when Hamilton accidentally detonated an experimental nuclear device while inspecting ground zero of a pending test. The unexpectedly powerful blast rocked the test site, utterly destroying Hamilton's body. Somehow, the brain survived.

Realizing they were out of their league, the scientists who discovered Hamilton's green, glowing brain turned it over to Scorpio-2, a secret government organization tasked with investigating paranormal and superhuman activity. Scorpio scientists managed to save the brain, locking it in a clear container filled with nutrient solution. They developed a sophisticated machine that allowed the brain to communicate, and once again welcomed Harold Hamilton to America's nuclear weapons program.

From the Nest, Scorpio-2's subterranean Washington D.C. headquarters, Hamilton eagerly shared his insight with a rival scientific team led by Robert Oppenheimer. With Hamilton's spark of mad genius acting as inspiration, Oppenheimer's Manhattan Project tested the first successful nuclear bomb on July 16, 1945. Within a month, America dropped two nuclear bombs on Japan and the war was over in the Pacific Theater. A new era had been born.

Hamilton acted as a consultant throughout the late 1940s, working with Scorpio-2 scientists to improve the lethality of nuclear weapons and bringing his mind, greatly enhanced by the disaster, to bear on numerous national security and scientific issues. Hamilton's Scorpio-2 collaborators grew to resent his increasingly autocratic style, and jokingly began referring to him as the "Atomic Brain." Hamilton silently seethed at his confinement, jealous of others who had gained wealth and prestige from his brilliance. He petitioned his handlers to create a robotic body that

ARTIST: RAMÓN PÉREZ

would allow him to interact more effectively with fellow scientists. In 1954, his handlers finally agreed, constructing an automated casing attached to a powerful mechanical body. They couldn't have made a bigger mistake.

Immediately after plugging into his new body, Hamilton lashed out against his caretakers, firing blasts of radiation generated by his glowing brain. Announcing himself as the Atomic Brain, Hamilton bragged of revealing his creation's true potential to the world, so that all might appreciate the terrible majesty of his genius. Concentrated attacks upon the Nest's superstructure resulted in the collapse of Scorpio-2's headquarters and the death of hundreds of agents. A young special agent named Gavin Pierce lost his wife before his eyes in the disaster, and swore on the spot that he would avenge her senseless death.

The Atomic Brain survived the collapse, disappearing shortly after emerging from the rubble. The public at large knew that a government building had collapsed, but knew nothing of Scorpio-2 or its unusual mission. Most citizens remained oblivious of the scope of the tragedy. A frustrated and confused U.S. government made quiet scapegoats of the scientists who provided Hamilton with his new body. Many had been "mad" scientists captured by the Homefront in the prior decade, and their eccentricity no longer seemed so tolerable in a post-war world. The government retained the services of the most brilliant madmen, shunting them to the black budget ANTAG organization.

The government mourned Hamilton's meltdown not just because of the deaths in Washington. The nation's foremost nuclear science genius had escaped what had amounted to house arrest and was free to offer America's nuclear secrets to the world. Fearing that the Atomic Brain might defect to the Soviets, President Eisenhauer immediately approved a new organization that would rise from the ashes of Scorpio-2—a technological superspy service known as META-4. META-4's first assignment: track down and destroy the Atomic Brain.

But the Brain didn't go to Russia. Instead, he hid active nuclear timebombs in twelve U.S. cities, threatening to detonate them simultaneously if America didn't launch a nuclear attack on the Soviet Union within 48 hours. Emergency META-4 squads supported by nearly every active American superhero disabled the bombs with only seconds to spare, but the nation grappled with psychological damage for much of the rest of the decade, and began to view superhumans with increasing suspicion. Gavin Pierce, the star agent who orchestrated the Atomic Brain's defeat, became the nonpowered darling of META-4. In 1957, he was given the code name Everyman in recognition of his importance to national security and to hearken back to the legacy of World War II's most famous superheroic martyr.

Bitter rivals, the Atomic Brain and Everyman fought time and again until 1965, when Pierce tracked Hamilton to his Volcano Island lair for a final confrontation. After a lengthy battle, Everyman pushed the wounded Atomic Brain into a pool of lava, apparently destroying him. At the last moment, however, Hamilton's mutated brain detached itself from its powered body and flew to safety and a long recuperation.

The Brain reemerged from hiding five years later, vexing Gavin Pierce immediately after his retirement from field duty and assumption of the role of META-4 Control. He battled the state-sanctioned Statesmen several times, finally defeating them utterly in 1982 by permanently splitting triplicate team leader Trinity into three distinct entities. He abducted one third of the trio, exposing the nuclear-powered hero to overpowering radiation that warped his mind as well as his spirit. The resulting creature, Singularity, serves the Atomic Brain like a brutal, unimaginative robot.

By the 1980s, the Brain had grown tired of his repeated failures to gain control of America's nuclear arsenal. He finally turned his attention to the Soviet Union, hoping that the communists would be more susceptible to his nihilistic schemes. But the communists had their superheroes, too, and the Atomic Brain found himself in a titanic struggle against two extremely powerful foes, the Blazing Star and Protonik. The Brain especially disdained the nuclear-powered Protonik, whom he viewed as an unworthy inheritor of his personal scientific legacy. He twice attempted to make Protonik a slave like Singularity, but the Russian "Protector of the People" escaped his clutches each time. In 1993, Protonik and the Endgame Initiative thwarted a scheme by the Brain to hold the world hostage after capturing eleven Soviet ICBMs.

No matter how much he hates Protonik, however, no enemy had ever quite commanded his hatred and respect the same way Everyman did. With the recent death by natural causes of META-4's storied leader, the Atomic Brain has become listless, feeling that he must make a coordinated move against the world now, while he holds the upper hand. With Pierce's death, some of the "game" has gone out of the Atomic Brain, who now feels that it's time to bring the biography of the world's greatest scientist to an explosive finish.

USING THE ATOMIC BRAIN

The Atomic Brain is one of the most powerful supervillains on Earth. Whenever he's involved in a caper, it's a good bet that the fate of the world hangs in the balance. Consider foreshadowing an Atomic Brain appearance early in the campaign. Perhaps the PCs see a more powerful superhero team defeated by the Brain on live television, proving that he's out of their league (at least for now). Later in the campaign, a veteran superhero tells war stories about his old team's encounters with the Atomic Brain, including mentions of grave losses suffered at the hands of the nuclear mastermind. Try to make your players nervous about facing off against him—they'll know it's their duty to take him down when the time comes, but they should go into the fight wondering if maybe they aren't ready.

The Atomic Brain likes to think big. He believes that the man whose technology destroys the world proves himself the world's supreme scientist. Prolonging life through medicine has no true scientific victor, being merely a game of cumulative minuscule contributions inching forever toward an unattainable goal. Yet the world will be destroyed but once. He who determines the finish line wins the race, rendering life-giving science meaningless. Harold Hamilton is out to destroy the world and every living thing on it to prove to everyone and to himself that he is the greatest scientific mind the world will ever know.

And not just any world destruction will do. For it to "count," the world must be consumed in nuclear fire. The Atomic Brain frequently targets nuclear test sites (especially in the South Pacific, near his lair on Volcano Island), capturing armed warheads to add to his personal arsenal. Once he's gathered a handful of nukes, he likes to pick a nation at random and hold it ransom as the timer ticks down to launch. Nuclear weapons will destroy the world, he reasons. The people should be forced to fear his creation appropriately.

Because he has fought the world's superheroes for longer than almost anyone else alive, the Atomic Brain is greatly respected by the supervil-

SINGULARITY

Exposed to deadly radiation early in his career, brilliant nuclear physicist Matthew Archer would have died if not for the Statesmen project, in which every American state contributed a superhuman to a large patriotic team. The government heavily subsidized New Mexico's program, which stabilized Archer's mutating body and granted him the name Trinity, in recognition of the site of the Manhattan Project's first successful nuclear test. Trinity could split into three distinct superhumans for limited periods, each with his own distinct personality and powers. Archer made the perfect team leader for the Statesmen, as his triplicate nature allowed him to oversee three teams of field operatives at once.

The Trinity "third" known as Singularity has lost much of his humanity, and serves the Brain without question or regret. His growth powers and stunning brutality make him an efficient overmaster for the Atomic Brain's sizable staff. Singularity's body seems to melt and warp at all times, making the former hero seem even more unstable than he actually is. Singularity is not technically a sidekick, as he usually serves his master on solo missions and is encountered with the Atomic Brain only on Volcano Island.

Singularity: PL 10; Huge (30 ft.); Init +0; Defense 18 (+10 base, -2 size); Spd 40 ft.; Atk +16 melee (+15L/crit 19–20/reach 10 ft., unarmed), +10 ranged; SV Dmg +5 (Protection +10), Fort +5, Ref +0, Will -2; Str 20, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 6, Cha 8.

Skill: Intimidate +15.

Feats: Attack Focus (unarmed), Immunity (pressure, radiation, suffocation), Improved Critical (unarmed), Improved Grapple, Improved Pin, Power Attack, Power Immunity, Takedown Attack.

Powers: Dazzle +10 [*Range:* Personal; *Extra:* Dazzle Burst (50-ft. radius); *Flaws:* Range (×2); *Cost:* 1 pp; Total: 10 pp], Growth +10 [*Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 6 pp; *Total:* 60 pp].

lain community. More often than not, the Brain holds a nation ransom in secret, so more standoffs end in massive cash payouts than in defeat at the hands of superheroes. Many supervillains consider working for the Atomic Brain a "sure thing" in terms of payment. An invitation to join the Brain in a caper is viewed as a major status symbol by many supervillains.

Surviving an alliance with the Atomic Brain is another matter entirely, as the nuclear-powered madman frequently disintegrates subordinates who fail him. His minions (soldiers, scientists, technicians and the like) fare even more poorly, and most attempt to stay out of his direct attention. Many of Volcano Island's scientists are kidnap victims forced to work for the Atomic Brain under threat of death.

The Atomic Brain particularly hates superheroes who derive their powers from nuclear energy or who owe their careers to some sort of atomic accident. He prefers to make examples of such characters by capturing them, torturing his captives to encourage them to join in his crusade toward nuclear annihilation.

TACTICS

The Atomic Brain prefers to let his minions and allies fight for him, but he's not above stepping into the fray when he's left little choice or when he sees a good opportunity for a crushing attack. He begins combat by using his Energy Control to envelop himself in an Energy Field of radiation. Anyone who touches the field must make a Damage save against a bonus of +18L.

Although he is not a psychic, the nuclear explosion that granted Harold Hamilton his powers also endowed him with Mental Protection and Sensory Protection, which grant him limited resistance to psychic and Dazzle attacks.

If engaged by a superior hand-to-hand combatant, the Atomic Brain takes to the air, thereafter peppering his enemies with deadly blasts of radiation. When in extreme danger, he sometimes detaches his brain from the robotic body apparatus, whisking himself to safety via his Flight power.

GAME STATISTICS

The Atomic Brain: PL 20; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 17 (+15 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 100 ft.; Atk +18 melee (+13S, unarmed), +19 ranged (+18L, Energy Blast–radiation); SV Dmg +3 (Protection +20), Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2 (Mental Protection +10); Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 20, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills: Computers +30, Science (nuclear physics) +30, Science (robotics) +30.

Feats: All-Around Sight, Darkvision, Headquarters (communications, computers, concealment, defense system, dock, fire prevention system, Gadgets +20, hangar, holding cells, infirmary (Healing +20), isolated location, laboratory, library, living space (×2), power system, reinforced structure, security system, staff, workshop), Immunity (radiation, starvation), Infamy, Into Thin Air*, Minions (Loyalty 30), Photographic Memory, Power Immunity.

Powers: Energy Control (radiation) +18 [*Extras:* Energy Blast, Flight; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 72 pp], Sensory Protection +10 [*Extra:* Mental Protection; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Super-Intelligence +20 [*Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 40 pp].

Equipment: Robotic body [*Effect:* Armor +20; *Extra:* Super-Strength +10; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 4/1 pp; *Total:* 50 pp].

Weakness: Disturbing. Little more than an irradiated brain attached to a robotic body, the Atomic Brain cannot pass in normal society. He suffers a -5 penalty on Bluff and Diplomacy checks.

CAPER

Tears for Everyman: After the death of Gavin Pierce, the Atomic Brain decided to press his advantage against META-4, striking out against several members of the Reserve, a brand-new META-4-sponsored superhuman team. Hired mercenaries Player 2 (p. 84), Undine (p. 43), and the Toreador (p. 102) managed to capture Reservists Marathon, Inferna, and the Minotaur (*Mutants & Masterminds*, p. 11–16), using them to lure new META-4 Control Talia Thorne into attacking Volcano Island. Thorne recruits the PCs along with additional reservists Cyclone, Gimmick, the Pugilist, Lady Hex, and Headcase for the assault. This is an "all hands on deck" battle royale against at least five supervillains, one of whom is more than capable of taking out a hero in a single blow. Heroes who manage to survive gain the appreciation of Talia Thorne, who may extend invitations to join the Reserve or to set up a regional branch of the team in the heroes' hometown.



VOLCANO ISLAND



BEHOLDER



12

SNIP-SNIP, MY PRETTY, LET ME MAKE YOU TRULY BEAUTIFUL!

TWISTED CELEBRITY ARTIST

REAL NAME	Humberto
REAL IDENTITY	Public
PLACE OF BIRTH/BASE	Global
GROUP AFFILIATION	None
CITIZENSHIP	Mexican citizen

HEIGHT	6' 2"	EYES	Blue
WEIGHT	190 lbs.	HAIR	Black
		AGE	27

BACKGROUND

For a time, Mexican conceptual artist Humberto was the darling of the world's avant garde art movement. Years of professional pressure and the party circuit took their toll on the formerly religious young man, who became increasingly more edgy and paranoid. He pushed himself constantly to shock the public into enlightenment and explode the conventional boundaries of beauty. In this pursuit, he became obsessed with pain and body modification. Humberto traveled South America, studying the scarification and altered-consciousness techniques of indigenous tribal shamans.

Many of these seers sensed a shadow on the artist's soul, and would have nothing to do with him. Others who detected the mark simply regarded it as a sign of his destiny, and shared their knowledge in the hope that his evil might be mitigated. Some depraved and twisted shamans assisted Humberto because they envied his power and sought to share in it. One such mystic sent the artist on a narcotic-fueled vision quest where, in his astral form, Humberto encountered a cabal of cultured demons.

The fiends had been following his career, and considered themselves fans of his outré art. In exchange for entry into his social circles and admittance to future showings, the demons enhanced his sense of stimulation through pain, broadening his artistic horizons. Before awakening, Humberto had slaughtered the entire village with his bare hands and teeth and arranged the gore in complex decorative patterns. Invigorated by his latest creation, he set about redefining the artistic process through violence.

Humberto kept the South American incident secret, but his burgeoning obsession with mutilation soon began to find its way into his work. He disfigured his own face with a box-cutter, brick, and tattoo needle, symbolically severing his ties to humanity.

Thereafter, he set about systematically dismantling his stardom. Each experimental piece became increasingly offensive and inaccessible. His projects, though depraved, had a hauntingly beautiful aesthetic. The populace was horrified, sociologists were disturbed, and art critics were delighted. In many alternative circles, his popularity only grew.

Ever evolving, Humberto crossed a line at a 1998 fashion premiere in Milan. He slashed the faces of some of his models, and stapled

and stitched high-fashion garments directly to their bodies. Luckily, the android heroine Tangerine was scheduled to walk the catwalk that night. She and the enigmatic hero Savant, also coincidentally in attendance, saved many lives, but Humberto escaped. He proclaimed himself the Beholder, ultimate arbiter of the new beauty, and continued to commit terrorist acts in the name of art.

Since that horrific event, the Beholder has traveled the world, opening disgusting private exhibits that cater to humanity's most jaded tastes. He considers himself an artist first and foremost, and reacts bitterly to any suggestion that he is a supervillain, seeing his crimes as statements of high artistic purpose meant to spur the world into reconsidering how it defines beauty.

USING THE BEHOLDER

The twisted crimes of the Beholder fit particularly well in low-powered, "grim and gritty" campaigns. The heroes might be called in to mediate a tense hostage situation—the artist's latest "performance" has endangered terrified art patrons. The PCs must make tough choices—whether to apprehend the deviant mastermind or rescue an endangered innocent.

Especially now that he plays to a more sophisticated, demonic audience, Beholder considers the masses mere cattle to be slaughtered and served up in delicious works of art. It is likely that a number of disguised demons have infiltrated a Beholder show, and won't hesitate to defend their cause célèbre.

Use the demon statistics on page 24 of this book to model Beholder's demonic patrons, but consider making them characters (rather than minions) and fleshing out their backgrounds. With a little preparation, you can bring them back long after your heroes have defeated the supervillain, opening opportunities for further play.

Regardless of the final body count, Beholder's crimes always contain an ironic element, or some declaration of political or social agenda. Humberto always wants to make a point. Because of his pop culture popularity, the media frequently downplays his antics, and the general public has no concept of the depth of his depravity. His fans, who frequently track his movements in *Bizarre Magazine* and the like, take his atrocities in jaded stride.

TACTICS

Should the heroes penetrate the Beholder's coterie of demonic and human fans, they face a psychotic visionary fueled by pain and suffering. Humberto is so accustomed to pain that wounds energize him. His Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution all jump to 20 while his nerves are enflamed.

He fights ferociously with an ornate dagger, and is also handy with an automatic heavy pistol. His most sinister weapons are the stock of syringes he conceals in his gloves, each loaded with a debilitating concoction of conventional drugs and demonic tinctures.

He uses muscle relaxant and anesthetic syringes to subdue hostages and enemies taken by surprise. His psychotropic syringes, which help his victims to better appreciate his masterworks, activate an array of emotions from horror to rapture to isolation. He can withstand a great deal of punishment, but is more interested in affecting the lives of the banal masses than facing off against powerful superheroes.

GAME STATISTICS

Beholder: PL 12; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Defense 24 (+10 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +11 melee (+2S, syringe or +4L, dagger), +11 ranged (+5L, heavy pistol); SV Dmg +12, Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +6, Language (Spanish), Performance (performance art) +10, Taunt +6.

Feats: Human Shield*, Infamy, Motif (performance art)*, Trance.

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +10 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], Astral Projection +3 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 5 pp; *Total:* 15 pp], Boost +6 [*Extras:* All Attributes (physical abilities), Triggered (suffering a hit); *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 24 pp] Super-Charisma +10 [*Flaw:* Limited (avant garde art fans/poseurs); *Source:* Training; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp].

Equipment: Anesthesia syringe [*Effect:* Fatigue +8; *Extras:* Drain (Constitution, Strength); *Flaws:* Device, Range (touch); *Source:* —; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 16 pp], dagger (+2L), heavy pistol (+5L), muscle relaxant syringe [*Effect:* Slow +8; *Extras:* Drain (Dexterity), *Flaw:* Device, Range (touch); *Source:* —; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 8 pp], psychotropic syringe [*Effect:* Mind Control +10; *Flaws:* Device, Limited (emotion control), Range (touch); *Source:* —; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp].

Weakness: Disturbing. The Beholder's most brazen and sacrilegious art crime to date has been the theft and desecration of the famous Shroud of Turin. After handing a humiliating defeat to a drugged Luciferian, Humberto cut out the Christlike visage, performed a profane act with it, and sewed the cloth permanently over his own face. Over the years, it has become stained with blood, sweat, and filth. Needless to say, it's a wretched sight, and horrifies even the most jaded observer. Beneath the shroud is no better. Over the course of his mastery of pain, Beholder has ritually mutilated his face, removing his nose and most of the flesh. He suffers a -5 penalty on Bluff and Diplomacy checks and cannot pass in public.

CAPERS

Joanie *is* Chachi: Dissatisfied with the latest wave of flash, young Hollywood celebrities, Humberto is certain he can do better. While pondering the secret pornographic constellations, he was struck by the notion of a binary superstar. There is nothing sadder than waning stardom, and the masses seem to be so fond of retreads. Why not give them what they really want? Mix the chocolate and peanut butter. Force Bing Crosby and David Bowie to sing Christmas carols together *together!*

The Beholder immediately abducted and murdered both Marilyn Manson and Drew Barrymore, stitching their bodies together into a fabulously horrible, asymmetrical, lurching composite. Once animated with demonic assistance, the thing retained its minimal awareness and drive to please. The third of the audience that didn't run vomiting from the performance found it fresh and innovative. After the creature's vaudevillian song and dance number, the Beholder took suggestions from the audience as to who he should composite next.

Needless to say, these performance pieces are private, and staffed by a security force of formidable demons. Human VIPs attend them, but are unaware of, or simply are too jaded to care about, the supernatural elements. Heroes may be exposed to one of Beholder's shows while infiltrating an unrelated criminal organization, or may be called in to act as security for a targeted celebrity.

Parking is a Bitch: An insanely wealthy group of art enthusiasts, suspected to have ties to the Illuminati, approaches the heroes with an unusual job offer. The Beholder's latest show is sure to be a blockbuster gala, featuring a who's who of interdimensional high society. The networking opportunities in pan-axis transit, proto-elemental mining, and time stream trade are mind-blowing. The connections the wealthy artists stand to make could catapult mankind into a new age of astral travel and planetary migration.

Of course, it is still the Beholder's show and anything could happen. According to the invitation, horrible demonic predators will ravage and consume those whom they telepathically determine are enjoying the show the least. To further complicate matters, the gallery is in a squalid neighborhood on the negatively charged exterior of the extra-planar Primal Sphere, a region commonly known as Hell.



THE BESTIARY

Concept: Rogue Military Super-soldiers
Members: Chimera (leader), Behemoth, Manticore, Undine.
Area of Operation: American Northwest

In 1999, a team of three psi-sensitive metanauts flung their spirits into Astral Space, abandoning their bodies in sensory deprivation tanks beneath top-secret ANTAG facilities in Arcadia. After drifting briefly in a vast sea of milky white oblivion, they came across a massive strand of pulsating energy cords that filled the sky and extended on an axis into eternity. Arcs of liquid electricity surged along the strand, and within seconds a massive blast of myth energy jolted the trio, snapping their spirits back to Earth in a forceful psychic blast. The strain killed two of the psionic explorers, but the third survived. That survivor, a brilliant ANTAG super-agent named Chase Anthony, gained the ability to create and transmute liquids within his stomach, allowing him to breathe liquid fire like the mythical chimera from which he took his new code-name.

Anthony's transformation gained the attention of the United States military and intelligence communities, who viewed the astral monument as a means by which to create an army of super-soldiers. Chimera took charge of the so-called Man-Myth Project, hand selecting ten candidates from several of the nation's military and espionage branches. After months of training, the candidates were subjected to myth energy tapped directly from the Axis Strand.

Each candidate developed unusual powers, and each selected a name from folklore to fit their new powers and appearances. Like Chimera, the transformation of the powerhouse Minotaur and the voice-powered Manticore left those operatives more or less physically unchanged. Others, such as the waterborne Undine and the albino stonemaster Cockatrice, developed an almost alien beauty. The Griffon gained talons and wings, while the chameleon-skinned spy known as Snipe developed a prehensile tail. Behemoth, to his dismay, became a monster, and no words could quite describe the Jabberwock.

Minotaur, the candidate with the greatest control over his new powers, soon found himself drafted into service with META-4, the government organization tasked with monitoring America's superhuman population. The others continued to train as a single team, finally getting a chance to put themselves to the test with the outbreak of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

After several early successes in which they devastated Special Republican Guard outposts on the outskirts of Baghdad, the team's military handlers ordered it to infiltrate a heavily defended Iraqi stronghold built into ancient ruins southeast of Nasiriyah. Deep within the catacombs below, the eight superhumans made a discovery so mind-blowing that it forever changed the way they viewed the world. When Chimera radioed word of the discovery to superiors at Central Command, his handlers responded by initiating an immediate missile strike against the site, killing Griffon and Jabberwock and trapping the Snipe beneath thousands of tons of rubble. Enraged at the betrayal and stunned at the lengths to which the government would sink to protect the unearthed secret, Chimera and his agents turned against America, the survivors fleeing Iraq to regroup and plan their revenge.

The team, now calling itself the Bestiary, surfaced several months ago in Arcadia, when they attempted to kidnap the visiting Attorney General. Three cars in the target's motorcade exploded when struck with an errant scream of the overzealous Manticore, accidentally killing seven civilians. The Attorney General escaped the team's clutches when the heroes Minotaur and Inferna arrived, and the defeated Bestiary fled the scene, hunted both by their former military masters and by the Arcadia police. They finally found refuge in an abandoned zoo along the coast, from whence they've since staged minor attacks against corporate and government interests. Three weeks ago, the Cockatrice fled the zoo and went on a downtown rampage, turning several vehicles, structures, and bystanders into stone. Brought to justice by Knock-Off and the Minotaur, he now sits in a cell at Abaddon Asylum, whispering to padded walls the secret once buried beneath ancient desert sands.



USING THE BESTIARY

The Bestiary's secret is left deliberately unstated, and should be used to facilitate a shift in the campaign to a new plotline of your choosing. When they first meet, the player characters will likely consider the Bestiary worthy opponents, more than likely battling them to standoff on more than one occasion. As the campaign continues, however, the PCs will accumulate more and more power points, making the Bestiary less and less threatening. When this occurs, bring back the Bestiary for one last fight. After the battle, one of the team should reveal their dangerous and potentially Earth-shattering secret, propelling the campaign to its next stage.

If you think it might be fun to explore high-level political corruption in your campaign, perhaps the Bestiary discovered hard evidence that the United States entered the war for distinctly corrupt business reasons. For crazy Silver Age comic goodness, perhaps they discovered that the President of the United States is in fact a supervillain robot! If you don't care for politics, perhaps the Bestiary unveiled an item of religious or historical importance that casts doubt upon accepted beliefs... or just say they found some weird aliens and call it a day. Whatever you decide the secret should be, use it to your advantage in taking the campaign to a higher level.

BESTIARY HQ: THE NEW ZOO

Once a top regional entertainment destination, the so-called "New Zoo" now lies ruined and dormant. Overgrown weeds and vines consume the park's welcome sign, adorned with the likeness of zoo mascot Terry the Tapir. Aside from a few exotic creatures imported by the Bestiary, only ordinary wild animals dwell on the zoo grounds. Crows and grackles swarm near the holed aviary roof, and numerous snakes, rodents, and small mammals inhabit the once cutting-edge habitats and enclosures. Chimera manages the team and the park from a secret subterranean laboratory reached by passages scattered throughout the zoo. Several park locations deserve further comment:

1. Monorail Track: A 40-ft.-tall concrete track surrounds the zoo grounds, with raised boarding platforms positioned throughout the park. The monorail still functions, but the track itself is in disrepair, having collapsed over the tiger habitat several years ago. The Bestiary might trap prisoners on a monorail car, sending them hurtling toward the broken track and certain doom. Crash victims must make a Damage save against a +10S damage bonus. Survivors find themselves trapped within the...

2. Endangered Tiger Habitat: Manticore dwells within the structure at the northeast corner of this natural enclosure, which now contains five ill-treated and starving siberian tigers stolen by Chimera and given to Manticore as a gift. The cats know Manticore as their only source of food, and follow his commands implicitly. (See p. 119 for tiger statistics.)

3. Dolphin Pool & Paradise Lagoon: A set of rusty bleachers overlooks the drained, filthy dolphin pool, which now serves as home to three enraged gorillas used (against their will) as sparring partners for the brutal Behemoth. The ravenous primates attack anyone foolish enough to enter the pool. Six large circular windows of reinforced plexiglass allow for safe observation from a room below the Aquatic Adventures building. Two grooved and sealed-over passages connect the dolphin pool to the massive Paradise Lagoon, where Undine lives with five shark companions. (See p. 119 for gorilla and shark statistics.)

Behemoth

10

IF FATE MADE ME A MONSTER, A MONSTER I MUST BE.

UNSTABLE BESTIAL POWERHOUSE

Real name:	Brock Majors
Real identity:	Secret
Base of operations:	Arcadia
Group affiliation:	The Bestiary, Delta Force (former)
Nationality:	U.S. citizen
Height:	8' 1"
Eyes:	Red
Hair:	Black
Weight:	450 lbs.
Age:	34



BACKGROUND

Throughout the 1990s, Delta Force captain Brock Majors led numerous covert operations in Somalia and the Sudan, during which he was personally responsible for the deaths of countless assumed terrorists. As the political situation in those nations grew more and more dangerous, Majors personally assassinated dozens of foreign civilians, under order from his superiors, to increase the pressure on local warlords who were "uncooperative" regarding U.S. interests. Despite his excellent psychological training, the emotional strain soon caught up with him and he filed for discharge, hoping to put his military life behind him. Instead, his overseers transferred him to ANTAG's Man/Myth Project, where he came into contact with the operation's charismatic leader, Chimera.

Majors eagerly listened to the scientist's theories about the myth energy to which the team would be subjected. He came to believe, as Chimera did, that the coming experiment would unlock some inherent quality of each Man/Myth agent, triggering a physical transformation that would reveal their true selves. To Majors' horror, the energy apparently focused on his inner rage, warping his body into an unstoppable bestial juggernaut and twisting his personality into that of a constantly enraged psychopath who breaks into a fit of rage at the slightest provocation.

USING BEHEMOTH

The physical backbone of the Bestiary, Behemoth seldom operates without his teammates, preferring to follow Chimera's lead. As time goes on, he becomes more and more animalistic, losing rationality and intelligence month by month. He hates himself and what he has become, often putting himself in extraordinary mortal danger to assist a teammate or to prove the superiority of his seemingly peerless strength. He loathes his former companion Minotaur, who received very similar powers from his exposure to myth energy but who maintained his natural looks and intelligence.

TACTICS

Hand-to-hand combat is one of Behemoth's few pleasures, as punching, scratching, and wrestling allow him to burn off the nervous energy and anger engendered by his transformation. Happiest at the center of a fray, Behemoth does whatever he can to get himself to the most intense part of any battle, often seeking out the most physically intimidating of potential opponents. He believes his transformation was given form by self-loathing and guilt over his terrible crimes while part of Delta Force, and his desire to defeat super-strong enemies stems in part from a pathological need to prove that his guilt and self hate exceeds the strength of even the mightiest foe.

Behemoth: PL 10; Large; Init -1 (Dex); Defense +13 (+5 base, -1 size, -1 Dex); Spd 30 ft; Atk +13 melee (+20S/crit 19-20/reach 10 ft., unarmed), +6 ranged (+25S, thrown car–destroyed on impact); SV Dmg +5, Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +0; Str 20, Dex 8, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +16, Demolitions +1, Pilot +1, Language (Arabic), Survival +2.

Feats: Attack Focus (unarmed), Blind-Fight, Durability, Endurance, Immunity (pressure), Improved Critical (unarmed), Improved Grapple, Improved Pin, Indomitable Will, Infamy, Power Attack, Psychic Awareness, Rapid Takedown, Takedown Attack, Toughness, Track.

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +10 [*Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], Growth +6 [*Extras:* Duration (permanent), Immovability +6, Super-Strength +10; *Flaw:* Limited (no Protection); *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 7/3 pp; *Total:* 54 pp], Strike +5 [*Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 10 pp].

CHIMERA

12

THERE'S MORE TO THE WORLD THAN THE COMMON MAN IS ALLOWED TO SEE. WE SHINE BLINDING LIGHT IN THE EYES OF THE COMPLACENT.

REVOLUTIONARY CHEMICAL COMMANDO

Chase Anthony
Unknown to the general public
Arcadia
The Bestiary, ANTAG (former), Endgame Initiative (disbanded)
U.S. citizen

6'1" Hazel Blond
160 lbs. 36



BACKGROUND

Chase Anthony was the pride of ANTAG (Applied Neural Technology Advancement Group), a top-secret, scientific thinktank run by the government and tasked with exploring the limits of technology and the psychic sciences without the fetters of public scrutiny or anything resembling morality. As an ANTAG field technician, Anthony joined the Endgame Initiative, a covert American espionage unit formed in 1990 to track loose nukes and unstable superhumans in the deteriorating Soviet Union and its former vassal states. While serving with the Initiative, Anthony fell in love with Talia Thorne, the team's META-4 representative and a natural rival for the leadership of the squad. A series of fabulously deadly encounters with the likes of the Atomic Brain and the Czar strengthened their intense romantic bond, which seemed able to withstand any hardship.

After the Man/Myth team's betrayal in Iraq, the government tasked META-4's Espionage Arm with hunting down and wiping out the Bestiary. It was the ultimate test the lovers had always feared would come. After an emotional encounter with Talia, Chimera bitterly accepted his fate. Believing that the politicians who betrayed his team were but the puppets of captains of industry, he's molded the Bestiary into a political revenge society. So far, they've destroyed property owned by wealthy industrialists (perhaps including one of the PCs, in a secret identity), corrupt politicians, and corporate criminals with ties to the current White House administration, as well as masterminded the jailbreaks of dozens of supervillains, all in an attempt to draw media attention to (real or imagined, your choice) government corruption and to destabilize the system that turned its back on them.

USING CHIMERA

Chimera fills the role of "noble villain." He'll kill innocent bystanders if he must, but he's seldom so callous toward fellow parahumans, whom he attempts to sway to his way of thinking.

Consider altering his background to include a PC substitute in the role of his former flame. Perhaps the PC worked with Chimera before she became a hero, and still has fond memories of his kindness, direction, and sense of purpose. Can the PC forgive Anthony for his terrible crimes? Should she?

TACTICS

At range, Chimera strikes with his corrosive chemical breath, a product of his exposure to the Axis Strand. His powers also allow him to transmute his internal fluids into any chemical, which he can then vomit forth in endless quantities. His Variable Effect (p. 115) power allows him to simulate nearly any power thanks to these chemicals, including the creation of flame retardant foam shielding, lighter-than-air gasses that allow him to fly, or even specific blood types to aid battlefield transfusions. When using Chimera, be liberal with the Hero or Villain Points to provide an impressive number of quirky Variable Effects.

Chimera: PL 12; Init +3 (Dex); Defense +23 (+10 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +8 melee (+10L, spittle-covered punch), +11 ranged (+10L, Energy Blast–chemical); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 18.

Skills: Acrobatics +7, Balance +5, Diplomacy +8, Languages (French, Russian), Knowledge (the planes) +5, Read Lips +5, Science (genetics) +8, Sense Motive +4.

Feats: Attractive, Headquarters (communications, computer, concealment, defense system, holding cells, infirmary, laboratory, living space, pool, power system, security system, workshop), Infamy, Inspire, Leadership, Photographic Memory, Psychic Awareness.

Powers: Energy Control (chemical) +10 [*Extra:* Energy Blast (chemical, fire), Snare +10; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 5 pp; *Total:* 50 pp], Variable Effect +10 [*Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 24 pp].

ERIC CANETE
GEOFF ONG

MANTICORE

11 NONE CAN DENY THE MIGHTY ROAR OF THE MANTICORE!

ARMORED SONIC SOCIOPATH

	Chuck Rollins
	Secret
	Arcadia
	The Bestiary, U.S. Marine Corps (former)
	U.S. citizen
6' 1"	Brown / Brown
210 lbs.	32



BACKGROUND

When Chimera hand-selected the ten Man/Myth candidates, his first choice was Chuck Rollins, a Marine who had battled the decaying corpse of Soviet communism with him in the Endgame Initiative. Rollins had proved time and again that he could handle the most difficult military assignments, was fiercely loyal to his nation, and was sarcastic and self-interested enough to keep some of Chimera's stranger plans rooted in reality. Chimera knew that placing Rollins on the team would lead to arguments and maybe even some internal division at times, but he hoped the unrest would serve to keep the team on its toes.

Seconds after Rollins was subjected to myth energy, he let out a terrible scream of concussive force that burst the walls of his birthing chamber and destroyed another candidate across the room. Worse, Rollins couldn't turn the scream "off," having lost even the ability to close his mouth as his face contorted and twisted in agony. The horrified Chimera began working with ANTAG scientists to develop a mechanical means by which to control his friend's terrible scream. Within three weeks, they'd developed a protective battlesuit, jetpack, claws, and sonic regulator that granted Rollins the ability to speak. With the final addition of two wrist-mounted "quill casters," Rollins became the Manticore. Ostensibly, Manticore is Chimera's second in command, but lately the sonic centurion has developed plans of his own.

USING MANTICORE

Manticore cares nothing for Chimera's politics, and didn't feel the same sense of betrayal the others did after discovering the terrible secret in Iraq. Uninterested in politics, Manticore thinks the Bestiary should focus on crimes that will make them all rich. He can't believe that the team is living in an abandoned zoo when they could be living it up anywhere in the world.

Perhaps Manticore offers your heroes an opportunity to strike against Chimera during an orchestrated power outage that disables the New Zoo's security system and defenses. In such a case he won't let any of his teammates in on the operation, preferring instead to double-cross the heroes after they have defeated Chimera and assume leadership of the team himself.

TACTICS

Manticore relishes the powers granted to him by the Man/Myth Project while at the same time despising the fact that he can never again pass for a normal man. He's content to play the role of supervillain, blasting individual enemies from the air with a sonic attack or paralytic quill or closing to melee to slice flesh with his powerful claws.

Manticore: PL 11; Init +2 (Dex); Defense +20 (+8 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +12 melee (+12L, claws), +12 ranged (+10L, Energy Blast–sonic) or +12 ranged (+10L/50-ft. area, explosive quill) or +12 ranged (DC 20 Will save or become paralyzed, paralytic quill); SV Dmg +3, Fort +3, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Intimidate +3.

Feats: Aerial Combat, Infamy, Psychic Awareness.

Power: Energy Blast (sonic) +10 [*Extra:* Deflection; *Flaws:* Full Power, Limited (Deflection works against ranged attacks only); *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 30 pp].

Equipment: Armor [*Effect:* Protection +10; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], clawed gloves [*Effect:* Weapon +10; *Range:* Touch; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* —; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], explosive quills [*Effect:* Weapon +10; *Range:* Normal; *Extras:* Area (50-ft. radius), Delay, Multifire; *Flaws:* Device, Uses ×2 (4); *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], paralytic quills [*Effect:* Paralysis +10; *Range:* Normal; *Extra:* Multifire; *Flaws:* Device, Uses (8); *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], rocket pack [*Effect:* Flight +10; *Extra:* Super-Flight; *Flaw:* Device, Reduced Maneuverability (clumsy); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], voice modulator [*Effect:* Moderates sonic scream to instant duration; *Power Stunt:* Immunity (suffocation); *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Total:* 11 pp].

10

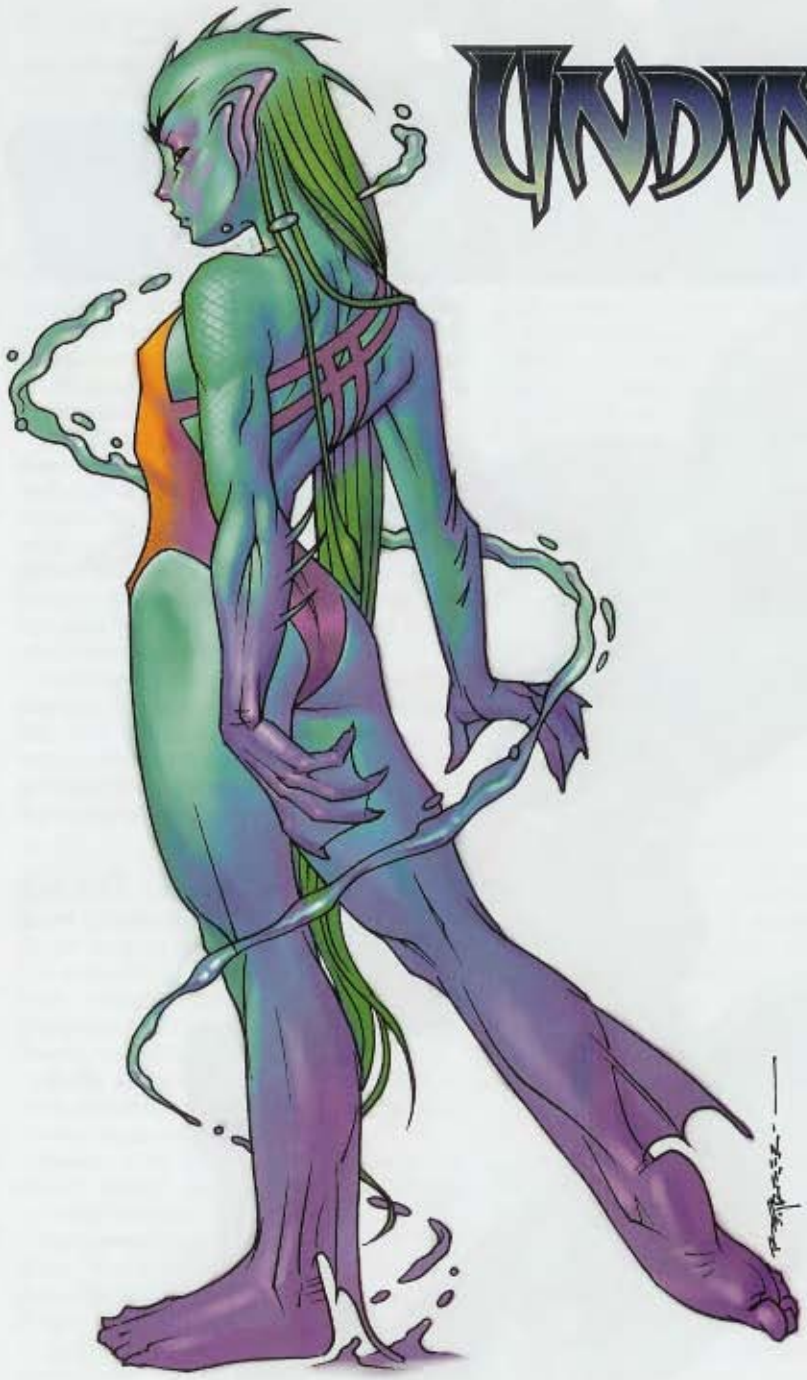
I'VE GOT A MESSAGE FROM CHIMERA. NOW SIT STILL AND DON'T MAKE ME USE MY CLAWS.

AMPHIBIOUS WATER MANIPULATOR

Rachel Wallace
Secret
Arcadia
The Bestiary, Central Intelligence Agency (former)
U.S. citizen with criminal record

5' 2" | Blue | Green
120 lbs. | 27

UNDINE



BACKGROUND

As a young CIA operative, Rachel Wallace spent most of her post-graduate years tracking down suspected Muslim extremists throughout Western Europe, presenting herself as the daughter of a wealthy American industrialist sympathetic to the plight of Palestinian militants. Her cool demeanor, natural charisma, and extensive knowledge of Middle Eastern history, culture, and politics allowed her to infiltrate terrorist cells despite her gender and nationality. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the government's priorities for the Man/Myth superhuman team shifted overnight from combating parahuman criminals to tracking down and destroying terrorist threats. Wallace fit the new program perfectly.

Exposure to myth energy transformed Wallace into the green-skinned aquatic agent Undine, named for the water spirits of ancient legend. Undine developed fantastic control over water, allowing her to blast or bind enemies from afar, breathe underwater, and even condense ambient water molecules, granting her the ability to fly. Despite her new (and apparently swiftly increasing) abilities, Undine's greatest asset remains her intelligence and diplomacy, two traits that come in handy in her role as the Bestiary's official emissary to other supervillains.

She and Chimera currently share a convenient romance, although she rightly suspects that the team's leader would dump her in an instant if he could ever convince his true love, META-4 Control Talia Thorne, to join the side of the Bestiary. Still, Chimera trusts her more than anyone else on the team, and she has yet given him any reason to doubt her loyalty.

USING UNDINE

Consider using Undine as an introduction to the entire Bestiary by placing her in an encounter with a villain already familiar to your heroes. This works particularly well if the villain isn't expecting the player characters' arrival, making it logical that they may have interrupted an important meeting between the villain and potential allies in the Bestiary. After proudly sending her to prison, the heroes later learn to their horror that she has been freed by Behemoth, Chimera, and the Manticore, all of whom now know of the PCs and might decide to plot revenge.

Undine attempts to woo newly met superhumans to the side of the Bestiary, promising that Chimera and his followers are on the side of right. Depending upon the terrible secret unveiled in Iraq, she may or may not be lying. If left to circulate in the dark corners of parahumanity, she might soon rally dozens of additional agents to the Bestiary.

TACTICS

Undine would rather flee than fight out of her element, so she's most often encountered near a large body of water. One of her favorite tricks is to catch a submerged enemy in a Snare, forcing him to make successful DC 10 Constitution checks or begin to drown. Though she doesn't consider herself a killer, she had to do a lot of nasty things as a spy, and isn't above taking someone out to protect her life or her mission. When faced with an obviously superior physical combatant, Undine takes to the sky and attempts to Snare the powerhouse, opening the victim to attacks from her teammates.

Undine: PL 10; Init +3 (Dex); Defense +22 (+9 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 45 ft., swim 75 ft.; Atk +8 melee (+9L, claws), +11 ranged (+9S, Elemental Blast–water); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills: Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +5, Knowledge (geopolitics) +5, Languages (Arabic, French, Russian).

Feats: Amphibious, Animal Affinity*, Infamy.

Powers: Element Control (water) +9 [*Extras:* Elemental Blast, Elemental Movement (Swimming +9), Flight +9, Shape Element; *Power Stunts:* Elemental Snare, Suffocate; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 6 pp; *Total:* 58 pp], Natural Weapon (claws) +9 [*Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 18 pp].

ARTIST: BRIAN STELFREEZE

BLACK DIAMOND



IF YOU THOUGHT THAT WAS SICK, WATCH ME RIP THIS!

MISGUIDED FLYING SHREDDER

REAL NAME: Danny Nash
DUAL IDENTITY: Secret
BASE OF OPERATIONS: American Northwest
GROUP AFFILIATION: None
NATIONALITY: U.S. citizen

HEIGHT: 5' 9" EYES: Hazel HAIR: Blond
WEIGHT: 140 lbs. AGE: 24

BACKGROUND

Harrison Nash groomed his son from birth to eventually assume control of the family business, an aggressively amoral high-technology research and development firm called Nash Teletronics. With the vast proceeds generated by the company, Nash lavished young Daniel with a staggeringly expensive education. A cadre of tutors worked day and night to instruct the boy on the intricacies of international finance, computer science, and the budding field of robotics. The boy excelled at his studies, finishing high school at the age of 11 and completing his undergraduate studies just two years later.

Shortly after achieving his doctorate in 1994, Daniel's life fell apart. For the past decade, government regulators had been sniffing around Nash Teletronics, suspecting widespread corruption on the board of directors and collusion with several terrorist organizations.

The suspicions turned to outright indictments in 1995, when the Justice Department accused Harrison Nash and his company of providing material support to terrorists in the form of privately contracted super-science devices wielded by a handful of supervillains. The indictment cited several similarities between the illegal technology and Nash methodology, igniting a media explosion and several months of televised trials.

Nash Teletronics stock plummeted, hundreds of scientists and technicians fled to competing firms, and the money that once sustained Daniel's education and lifestyle was diverted to the company's legal defense. Harrison Nash became obsessed with protecting his "good name," and all but ignored his son.

Disdainful of his father's new priorities, Daniel abandoned his position as a 17-year-old junior executive to dedicate his life to the one pastime his father had always considered his most wasteful indulgence--snowboarding.

Daniel became "Danny," and embraced his new life as a pro-am shredder without any responsibilities beyond keeping his board waxed and his bed warmed with the bodies of numerous female admirers. Unfortunately, he wasn't quite good enough to make it as a professional snowboarder, and never achieved ultimate success on the slopes despite his affinity for the sport. His embittered father turned off the money spigot, forcing Danny to return to Nash Teletronics or take up honest work.

The young man resentfully returned to his father's side, where he was assigned to a top-

secret coolant suit project. With access to bleeding-edge computers and manufacturing resources, Nash completed the armored coolsuit in record time, spending most of his time on a project he kept secret from even his father—a flying snowboard that at long last would allow him to make a name for himself, either as a hero or a villain.

USING BLACK DIAMOND

Beneath his helmet, Black Diamond is a spoiled, bitter young man, but he isn't evil. The PCs first encounter him near a bank, expensive museum exhibit, diamond delivery, or other high-potential theft site. Perhaps the heroes have been hired by an owner or insurance agency to safeguard the site. They soon come across Black Diamond, looking very much like a supervillain, lurking in the shadows nearby, apparently waiting for an easy heist. Whether he's there to guard the site as a wannabe vigilante or to rob the place blind is up to you. Consider not deciding until your PCs make the first move. In this way, you can write Black Diamond's "origin" story on the fly, giving yourself more flexibility.

Later, the PCs' treatment of Black Diamond could harden his villainous resolve or convince him to turn his back on crime and attempt life as a hero. He knows all the secrets of Nash Teletronics, and might help the PCs expose his father's crimes. Doing so might lead to encounters with a whole host of Nash-aligned supervillains who want revenge against the do-gooders who cut off their supply of illegal technology.

No matter how "reformed" he gets, Danny's more interested in getting revenge on his father than he is in acting against him out of a sense of justice. He still feels some family pride regarding Nash Teletronics, however, and secretly imagines that he might one day take over the firm anyway, just to spite his father. That day is several years away, in any event, and Danny's interaction with the player characters will determine whether the future president of Nash Teletronics continues to use the organization for evil or turns its focus and goals toward something a touch more benevolent than supplying expensive technology to supervillains and terrorists.

Danny's sheltered life has distanced him from the struggles of real people, and he tends to examine problems from a mathematic or economic point of view, forgetting the emotions involved. Emotion over being betrayed, of course, fuels his desire for revenge, but he's especially blind to his own failings.

With his flying snowboard and spoiled kid origin, Black Diamond is a touch goofier than many of the villains in this book. Be sure to include "goofball" supervillains in your own campaign from time to time—if your players feel like the safety of the world rests on their shoulders each and every time you play, even saving Earth is bound to get boring eventually.

TACTICS

Black Diamond's inherent showmanship shines through on the battlefield, and while his skills weren't enough to make it on the professional snowboard circuit, they more than suffice in combat. He incorporates his flying snowboard into melee, often bouncing it off an opponent's head or grinding an edge against an enemy's skin. The board flies at a speed of 45, and built-in gyros effectively grant him the Move-By Attack feat, allowing him to move before and after an attack as a half action, provided the total distance moved does not exceed 45 feet. While mounted on his board, Black Diamond enjoys the benefits of Immovability.

Black Diamond designed his own coldsuit armor, which grants him Darkvision and Immunity to cold, pressure, and suffocation. Powerful flashfreeze units built into each palm allow him to manifest sharp ice daggers and project them to normal range. He uses the ice daggers primarily to discourage enemies from following him, and relies more heavily on his snowboard when engaged in combat.

Despite his vast wealth and life of ease, Black Diamond is convinced he's extremely unlucky. Use your best judgment when handling his Unlucky weakness. Look for failures that inconvenience him rather than take him out of a fight completely.

GAME STATISTICS

Black Diamond: PL 9; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 21 (+8 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 45 ft.; Atk +11 melee (+11L, snowboard slam), +11 ranged (+9S, Energy Blast—cold); SV Dmg +1 (Protection +9), Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 19, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills: Balance +4, Bluff +2, Computers +6, Craft (super-science) +13, Language (French, German, Japanese), Science (robotics) +7.

Feats: Aerial Combat, Attack Focus (snowboard), Dodge, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Lightning Reflexes.

Equipment: Coldsuit [*Effect:* Armor +9; *Extra:* Energy Blast (cold) +9; *Power Stunts:* Darkvision, Immunity (cold, pressure, suffocation); *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 31 pp], Snowboard [*Effect:* Flight +9; *Extras:* Immovability +9, Weapon +9; *Power Stunt:* Move-By Attack; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 28 pp].

Weakness: Unlucky. Once per game session, something goes terribly wrong for Black Diamond. He fails an important saving throw, an enemy's unconfirmed critical hit is instead confirmed, his snowboard fails at the worst possible moment, etc.

CAPERS

Diamond in the Rough: The heroes are enjoying some much-deserved R&R at a Rocky Mountain ski resort when their vacation is interrupted by outrageously excessive security procedures. Uniformed rent-a-cops poke around in the guests' private affairs and cause lines and inspection delays that put a serious damper on the heroes' fun.

The reason for all the security soon becomes clear with the appearance of Gino Catella, a world-famous resort mogul who turns the local resort into a media studio for a press conference announcing his purchase of the Ice Maiden, a bright blue, geologically-perfect diamond the size of an apple. The PCs discover Black Diamond lurking on the slopes and most likely suspect the worst.

But he's not after the stone. Instead, he wants a greater prize—Catella's daughter Sonja, an old flame from his snowboarding days. Whether he wants to liberate a former girlfriend from her domineering, wealth-obsessed father or whether he wants to get back at her for a bad breakup by ransoming her depends upon your take of the character. Either way, try to work in at least one ski/snowboard chase down a mountain during the adventure.

The Spy Who Stayed Out in the Cold: Even Black Diamond might be surprised at the extent of his father's collusion with evildoers. The coolant suit Danny created for the company was, in fact, a custom job for agents of ODESSA, who hoped the suit would grant its operatives complete safety in the Antarctic environment surrounding the secret stronghold of Neu-Schwabenland, a cavernous cultural capsule founded by the Nazis in the years following World War II (p. 64).

Perhaps agents of the Central Intelligence Agency, META-4, or another organization contact the heroes about a strange body found in Antarctica. The unidentified body appears to be European, and aside from the lack of a snowboard, his costume is identical to that of Black Diamond. The heroes have fought the villain before, so the contacts leave it to them to get to the bottom of the mystery.

Christmas in July: After the PCs have unwittingly pushed Danny Nash into a life of supervillainy, he pays a visit to their home town as a way of saying thanks. He plants seven Nash Teletronics-designed super-science "weather dominators" atop strategic locations downtown and flips a switch that turns a balmy summer afternoon to a chilling winter wonderland filled with snow and ice. He spends the day shredding an enormous half-pipe on Main Street and awaiting the arrival of the PC heroes.

Black Diamond positions the devices all over town, forcing the heroes to split up to take care of them as quickly as possible. He then flies to confront each hero individually, starting with the weakest team member and moving all the way to the leader.

Blitz



12

YOUR PARENTS DON'T UNDERSTAND YOUR ANGER. I DO. JOIN ME, AND I GUARANTEE THE ADULTS IN YOUR LIFE WILL NEVER UNDERESTIMATE YOU AGAIN.

FASCIST PUNK PRINCESS

	Eva Brawn
	Publicly Known
	Europe (especially Germany)
	Third Generation
	German citizen

	5' 6"	Blue	Blonde
	120 lbs.	25	

BACKGROUND

At puberty, Eva Klien inherited the super-speed and electricity field powers of her grandmother Hansi Klien, the World War II-era German superhuman who faithfully served the Nazi party as the first Blitz. Although Hansi died at the hands of Doc Mesmer in 1945's bloody Battle of London, her family has maintained a life of luxury based upon her lofty financial legacy.

Eva's mother never developed powers of her own, but spoke of her long-lost sister, Anna, who did. As she told it, Doc Mesmer paid a personal visit to the Klien home shortly after their mother's death. While Eva's mother, then a five-year-old, watched in horror through a cracked closet door, the American wizard compelled Anna to leave with him, casting a hex upon the children's grandparents to completely erase Anna from their memories. Later, Eva's mother pleaded with her guardians to rescue her abducted sister, but they acted as if she spoke of an imaginary friend and paid her no heed. By the time the spell wore off in 1954, Anna was long gone, and nothing could be done to save her.

Eva developed a hatred for America early in life, nurtured by her controlling mother who saw the gifted child as the last hope of reviving and championing the Nazi ideology that had brought the Klien family wealth and prestige. Her mother instilled in young Eva an unabiding hatred of her racial inferiors, reciting with nightly prayers a litany of curses and historical nonsense about the evils of Jews in particular. Lastly, she told Eva of a little-known prophecy made by Adolf Hitler himself minutes before his death at the end of World War II. The salvation of the Aryan people, and indeed of the world itself, would not come from contemporary Nazis, or even their children, but from the rise of the "Third Generation." That was all Eva Klien needed to hear.

Upon entering her 20s, the charismatic young woman rebelled against her mother's cosmopolitan society without abandoning its racist ideology. Already a controversial public figure due to her family's wealth and infamy, Eva took the step into outright celebrity when she formed (with silent drummer Mime Kampf) the Euro-punk skinhead band Third Generation. The band's name hearkened back to Hitler's final words, which in the decades since they were uttered had become a sort of mantra for disaffected European Aryan

youth. In a Europe plagued with difficult economic times and massive job losses to non-white immigrants from Africa and elsewhere, Third Generation became incredibly popular and served as the "voice of a generation," so to speak.

Fusing Eva's natural charisma, stunning good looks, and alluring fashion sense with powerful chord progressions and clever (if deeply offensive) lyrics, Third Generation blitzed through the Scandinavian and Eastern European charts, becoming an overnight sensation so popular that radio and television stations could not afford to ban the group from the airwaves.

Throughout her rise, Eva never revealed her uncanny powers to the public, fueling an "is she or isn't she" debate that dominated tabloids and the music media, further enhancing her notoriety. In the last year, she's taken to wearing a modified version of her grandmother's costume, fueling speculation that an upcoming American tour—the band's first—will feature the premier display of her incredible powers. When that happens, her fans smirkingly state, the new generation of Hitler Youth will march upon the tainted governments of the world and reignite the fires of the Thousand-Year Reich.

USING BLITZ II

There's no moral ambiguity about thwarting the plans of clearly evil opponents, but it's sometimes nice to give villains an ideology more sophisticated than "I hate good guys" without granting them some measure of sympathy. In the 1940s, comics writers solved that problem by setting their costumed protagonists against Nazis, then a very real menace that seemed poised to dominate the world. "Nazi" is like shorthand for "irredeemably evil," and there's no reason to limit the satisfaction of kicking the crap out of goose-stepping bastards to adventures set in the Golden Age of comics. There's plenty of pro-white racism to go around in modern-day Europe, including a resurgence in popularity of racist and (especially) anti-Jewish beliefs.

Blitz has big plans for her North American tour, which starts in small clubs catering to skinhead punks but soon spreads to larger, more mainstream venues. Part of the problem for the PCs is that, despite its message of intolerance, Third Generation is a genuinely good band with a frontwoman who seems headed for superstardom in an age increasingly less interested in politics. While touring in America, the band releases a taunting single called "Make the First Move," which mocks America's impotent superhumans and all but dares them to strike against the group before they capture the hearts and minds of the nation's youth. Politicians and clerical figures hate the band, of course, which only makes them more popular with the kids. Superhumans who serve the establishment (such as heroes draped in the American flag or old enough to be seen as "dad's superhero") risk lending Blitz youthful credibility by standing against her, and must tread very carefully.

TACTICS

Although Eva's powers exceed even those of her grandmother, she's had very little practical training against actual superhumans. She's therefore unlikely to anticipate advanced enemy tactics and hasn't quite figured out how to cooperate with other supervillains. She makes up for this with legions of loyal fans (treat as PL 1 bystanders) who constantly get underfoot and support her as if she's some kind of rock messiah. While heroes might have little philosophical difficulty targeting Blitz with blasts of fire or thrown vehicles, they're likely to think twice if such an attack might take out five or six teenagers.

At top speed, Blitz can reach 37,236 miles per hour, which means you can effectively move her anywhere you wish each and every round. Thanks to the Deflection extra of her Super-Speed, Blitz has little to worry about from most targeted attacks, which she bats away with a Deflection power check (+14 power bonus) opposed by the offending attack roll.

On the battlefield, Eva's uncontrollable bigotry manifests in a preference for attacking those she perceives as her racial inferiors with Energy Field punches. She's not above killing a wounded foe, especially if doing so furthers her racist agenda.

GAME STATISTICS

Blitz II: PL 12; Init +18 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative, +10 Super-Speed); Defense +36 (+12 base, +4 Dex, +10 Super-Speed); Spd 80 ft., Atk +10 melee (+0S, unarmed and +10L, Energy Field—electricity); SV Dmg +14, Fort +2, Ref +14, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 18.

Skills: Intimidate +9, Language (English), Perform +15, Sense Motive +2.

Feats: Attractive, Evasion, Fame, Improved Initiative.

Powers: Super-Speed +10 [*Extras:* Deflection, Energy Field (electricity) +10; *Power Stunts:* Wall Run, Water Run, Whirlwind; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 8 pp; *Total:* 86 pp].

Weakness: Quirk (racist). Blitz will never willingly cooperate with or assist non-white individuals, and holds Jews in particularly low regard. If offered multiple targets, Blitz chooses to attack non-whites over white opponents, even if doing so means putting herself at a tactical disadvantage. It takes great effort for her to tolerate the presence of her "racial inferiors" even in social situations.

CAPERS

Get this Party Started: About halfway through Third Generation's North American tour, the band comes to the heroes' home town with the intent of making it the site of their criminal debut. During the thunderous finale of a particularly rousing show, Eva whips the arena crowd of 10,000 into a frenzy which spills onto the city streets and soon becomes a full-fledged riot. The police can't handle the uprising alone, and call in your heroes' team when the rioters start upturning cars, looting minority businesses downtown, and setting fire to various houses of worship.

If you have a difficult time believing so many angry teens and young adults would buckle under such an anti-American message, throw in a Nazi-era mass Mind Control device to justify the crowd's eagerness. Either way, the team will have its hands full keeping a lid on the violence without accidentally killing any rioters.

Amidst the tumult, Blitz has her own designs, robbing a number of local banks to finance a crime spree unparalleled in American history, with the goal of upsetting the political foundations of the nation itself.

For added realism, seed news of Eva Brawn's North American tour weeks, or even months, before she arrives in the team's home town. A celebrity controversy like this won't pass without a lot of sensationalistic media coverage, so your PCs should have fair warning of what to expect.

All Axis Pass: Once established in America, Blitz goes underground, contemptuously manipulating the celebrity-obsessed media into making her the ultimate symbol of youthful rebellion. Teens who once were content to disgrace their parents by turning to drugs or pseudo-satanism instead come to embrace Nazism, revolting their parents and convincing an already terrorism-obsessed government to take some kind of action.

In this scenario, the PCs get word of an illegal Third Generation performance in an oversized sewer complex below the city. Their conscience or government contacts urge them to take action, but they're not getting into the performance without dressing up as disaffected Nazi punks. Just as the PCs are set to strike, an envoy of Johnny Reb's Incorruptible Society (p. 66) appears onstage to offer alliance to the next generation of bigots.

CARRION QUEEN



16

COME, MY CHILD. LET US SEAL YOUR WORLD'S FATE WITH A KISS.

AVATAR OF DECAY

REAL NAME	Alamandra
DUAL IDENTITY	Unknown to the general public
BASE OF OPERATIONS	Larval Lands
GROUP AFFILIATION	None
NATIONALITY	Extraplanar
HEIGHT	5'7"
WEIGHT	100 lbs.
EYES	Violet
HAIR	Gray
AGE	Unknown

BACKGROUND

Past the dimensional folds, past the endless subspace storms of the Ethereal Seas, the Primal Sphere encircles the birthplace of all life in the multiverse. While living creatures of all varieties teem within the sphere, the orb's exterior is a pitted wasteland inhabited by demonic spirits and legions of the undead. Somewhere between these extremes lies an extraplanar alcove known as the Larval Lands, where life and death are as one.

In the Larval Lands, vast pustules of nutrient ichor cover the landscape like putrescent superglaciers. Countless insects, arthropods, and vermin scuttle about the surface of these fleshy monuments, draining sustenance from within and eventually leaving the vast carcasses to rot. An overpowering stench of decay dominates the plane. Interminable insectan keening and the screams of enormous, festering beasts echo through turbid skies choked with winged pests.

The Larval Lands are one of three primary conduits that connect the interior and exterior of the Primal Sphere. As a result, a great deal of merchant traffic must negotiate the plane, making the Larval Lands the seedy, unrepaired interstate of the outer planes. It's a dangerous trek made survivable only by the supreme influence of the plane's ruler, a cold, beautiful immortal known as Alamandra, the Carrion Queen.

The Carrion Queen enjoys complete command of the creatures that inhabit the Larval Lands, bending them to her will as if they had been created with the sole purpose of serving her. Alamandra values the undead of the Primal Sphere's exterior, seeing them as "balanced" creatures with the qualities of both life and death. She likewise values truly living creatures, such as insects and rats, which flock to the recently deceased, seeing them as the agents by which the life-death cycle continues. She herself appears as a lithe, bewitching mummy, at once terrible and beautiful to behold.

About 400 years ago, the Carrion Queen grew dissatisfied with her small realm, and decided upon an elaborate plan of conquest that would draw other worlds into her web of control, allowing her to spread the message of transformation and life-death change to all corners of the cosmos. Opening portals to numerous worlds by focusing mystical power into the diamond-like Oblivion Lens, Alamandra dispatched legions of disease-carrying vermin from her realm, hoping to terraform defeated planets into buzzing, decaying reflections of her perfect home.

ART: ERIC CANETE
COLORS: GEOFF ONG

One portal opened on Elizabethan London, where it soon came to the attention of the Invisible College, a society of thinkers, adventurers, and mystics that included Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, Dr. John Dee, and Francis Bacon. With the assistance of an Enochian angel summoned by Dr. Dee, the College managed to thwart the Carrion Queen, destroying all her planar gates and trapping the bulk of her diseased colonizers on distant worlds (including our own).

Alamandra seethed for nearly 200 years, until another of her schemes fell victim to an explorer from Earth, in this case the aristocratic bon vivant St. Germain. In order to collect a massive gem from a confidant within the Primal Sphere, St. Germain traveled from Earth to a hell dimension on the Sphere's exterior, and from there through the Larval Lands. Alamandra captured him, hoping to learn what it was that had made Earth so resilient to her prior plan.

St. Germain charmed his hostess, who invited him to rest from his journey in her palace. St. Germain rewarded her hospitality by stealing the Oblivion Lens and fleeing to the interior of the Primal Sphere, where he would go on to battle the Mountain King (p. 76).

Twice the Carrion Queen had encountered mystics from Earth, and twice she had been humiliated. She resolved to make Earth the first world in her planar empire, and hatched a number of schemes to gain a toehold in the realm of her most hated adversaries. Without the Oblivion Lens, however, she had difficulty leaving the Larval Lands. Her plans grew much more subtle. Next time, she reasoned, she would go to Earth herself.

Next time turned out to be in 1934, when a cabal of occultists accidentally summoned the Carrion Queen to a New York cemetery. She made short work of the two-bit mystics. Using their grimoires, she cast a pall of unlife over the graveyard, beckoning its entombed residents to rise and serve as the first vanguard of her invasion army. The undead activity quickly gained the attention of the ghost-hunting vigilante Mr. Mystery, who trapped Alamandra in an ensorcelled mausoleum, where she remained until 1978, bitterly scheming her revenge on the planet.

She was released by Cameron Friday, a sorcerous hero who called himself the Luciferian. The Luciferian, fearing a major conflict with a rival wizard, freed Alamandra in hopes of convincing her to entrance a bizarre extraplanar insect known as the Moebius Beetle. Consuming the beetle, he believed, would give him the power to defeat his foe, but pacifying the creature had proven beyond his potent capabilities. In an uncharacteristic moment of kindness, Alamandra enthralled the creature for her rescuer and offered him the chance to return to the Larval Lands and serve as her consort. Friday politely turned down the offer, but opened a portal back to the Larval Lands in thanks for Alamandra's generosity.

It's taken the Carrion Queen nearly 30 years to return her noisome kingdom to order. Now that the vermin legions once more bow to her will, it's time that she brought her message of decay and rebirth to the multiverse, starting with an annoying little world called Earth.

USING CARRION QUEEN

The Carrion Queen offers GMs the opportunity to introduce a character who is both alluring and revolting at the same time. More a force of nature than an outright supervillain, the Carrion Queen might even become an ally to less-than-four-color superheroes, provided the circumstances are correct and there's something in it for her. She's drawn to heroes who have a "dangerous" air about them, particularly those who have the Attractive feat. Consider a scenario in which the Carrion Queen falls for one of your PCs, offering him (or her) an opportunity to act as her consort during the terraforming of Earth.

No one knows when the Carrion Queen first came to rule the Larval Lands. Some claim she's an extension of the plane's will itself, and that her recent interest in expanding her dominion reflects a greedy sentience, a statement of manifest destiny spoken through the dry lips of a decaying emissary. Either way, her aspirations extend beyond her home plane, providing a perfect excuse to insert her into your campaign.

Alamandra's previous contacts with Earth happened a long time ago, which gives you the opportunity to introduce subplots that go back centuries. Perhaps one member of the Invisible College became obsessed with the Carrion Queen, and started a secret society in London that, over the centuries, has developed into a full-fledged cult. Perhaps these Earthbound worshippers find a way to summon the Carrion Queen to Earth, offering her tribute in a festival of blood and undeath.

The Carrion Queen's 1978 benefactor need not have been the Luciferian. If you've got an appropriate mystical villain or anti-hero, change Alamandra's backstory to involve that character. Weaving the backgrounds of characters in this book with those of your own villains will make everything seem to fit together as a whole to your players.

TACTICS

The Carrion Queen can summon forth vast waves of rats, insects, and arthropods from the folds of her linen body wrappings, using the creatures to manipulate objects (Telekinesis) or even carry her through the air (Flight). Her Energy Blast (kinetic) manifests as a ray of winged, stinging insects. These vermin are merely the visual manifestation of her powers, and cannot be killed or harmed in any way.

In combat, Alamandra prefers to Snare an enemy in a swirling vortex of vermin. Thereafter, she tenderly caresses the bound victim's cheek, initiating her powerful Drain attack. She does not shirk from killing, seeming to gain pleasure from the act of offering up more fodder for her verminous subjects.

GAME STATISTICS

Carrion Queen: PL 16; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 23 (+13 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +17 melee (DC 25 Will save, Drain touch), +17 ranged (+15L, Energy Blast–kinetic); SV Dmg +4, Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +2 (Indomitable Will); Str 10, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 20.

Skills: Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (the planes) +4, Spot +4.

Feats: Attack Finesse, Attractive, Darkvision, Detect (life), Dodge, Evasion, Immunity (aging, disease, exhaustion, poison, pressure, starvation, suffocation), Indomitable Will.

Powers: Drain +15 [*Range:* Touch; *Extra:* All Attributes (physical), Contagious; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 60 pp], vermin horde [*Effect:* Telekinesis +15; *Extras:* Energy Blast (kinetic), Flight, Force Field, Snare; *Flaw:* Obvious; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 5 pp; *Total:* 75 pp].

Weakness: Disturbing. Despite her chilling beauty, the Carrion Queen's dry, dead skin flakes away at the touch, and numerous maggots and insects nest in the holes and folds of her mantle. She cannot pass in normal society and suffers a -5 penalty on Bluff and Diplomacy checks. These factors are somewhat mitigated by her high Charisma and Attractive feat–the Carrion Queen's is a disturbing beauty, but it is beautiful nonetheless.

Susceptible (items of faith). The Carrion Queen's tie to the elemental forces of unlife make her susceptible to items of faith wielded by characters with the Unshakable Faith feat.

CAPERS

St. Germain's Legacy: The immortal arcanist St. Germain claimed to have lived since Biblical times, and survived at least until the end of World War II. During his incredible adventures throughout Earth and the planes, St. Germain amassed numerous artifacts of occult importance. He retained items only so long as they kept his interest before trading them to other scholars (usually for outrageously expensive liquor or gemstones, his two greatest vices). Mystical baubles once owned by St. Germain litter the artifact collections of Europe and the Americas.

Somehow, one of St. Germain's greatest treasures, the Carrion Queen's Oblivion Lens, fell into the hands of a sorcerer enemy of your player characters. After they've defeated the unwitting foe, your heroes come across a plate-sized lens of pure black crystal. Shining a light through the crystal opens a mystical portal to the Larval Lands, where the Carrion Queen is at war with a rival warlord. Only Alamandra can close the portal, which allows countless extraplanar vermin to flood into our world. But the Carrion Queen is not a fan of the planet Earth, and getting her to cooperate will involve some tender negotiations...

CHOKE CHAIN



11 #1 DISNEYLAND/ #2 THE FREEDOM LEAGUE/ #3 FIX YOU, AMERICA!!

CHAIN-WIELDING ANARCHIST

REAL NAME	Molly Duncan
FIRST APPEARANCE	Publicly Known
BASE OF OPERATIONS	United States
GROUP AFFILIATION	G.A.N cell leader (former); Associate of the Crime Union
NATIONALITY	U.S. citizen with criminal record

HEIGHT	5' 2"	EYES	Brown
HAIR	Purple
WEIGHT	100 lbs.	AGE	21

BACKGROUND

Molly Duncan's earliest years were an all-too-common litany of unfortunate circumstances. After leaving an abusive husband, Duncan's mother died from lung cancer, leaving Molly an orphan at 6. The child was hardened by a series of less-than-ideal foster homes. In short, Molly had it about as hard as it gets. She grew into a bitter and troubled teen, who, despite her hardships, possessed a keen intelligence and indomitable sense of self.

Molly set off on her own at 15, and made her way from Northern California to Portland, Oregon, where she fell in with the local street-kid scene. The drugs, music, and politics sharpened her focus, and she evolved into a major figure. She orchestrated staggering acts of vandalism, generally targeting the usual suspects: bio-research facilities, logging consortiums, Starbucks, McDonalds, and other multinational corporate businesses at odds with environmentalists and liberal activists. Within 2 years, she had taken the reigns of the local cell of GAN (Global Anarchy Now!), an anti-globalization network, and made a name for herself as lead guitarist for the thrash-punk band, Sissy Cyst. But the blossoming punk princess's days of wine and roses would shortly come to a terrible end.

During the chaos of Seattle's 1999 World Trade Organization riots, Molly encountered the enigmatic criminal demigod, Mr. F. He doted on the young woman like a proud father, and the two chatted while lighting dumpsters ablaze in an isolated alley. All street-kids knew of the legendary figure, who supposedly watched over them, and Molly was deeply honored. Before vanishing, Mr. F consecrated Molly with sour, olive-colored garbage-water, and warned her of dark times to come. The vague warning didn't settle long in the young anarchist's ears.

The next day, she led her friends on a raid on a local Arby's, splashing anarchic symbols on the windows with glass-etching fluid and spraying down patrons with old-style fire extinguishers full of rancid cow blood. The chaos attracted the attention of the Front, a parahuman government anti-terrorist squad that had been called in to quell the civil unrest. The volume of blood from the prank led to a grave misunderstanding, and Front members Radiomega, Primute, and Alpha Male went in guns-a-blazing.

The attack killed two of Molly's close friends and confined two more to wheelchairs for life. The attack also killed an innocent Arby's patron, a

crime unjustly pinned on the surviving anarchists. The Front apprehended Molly and detained her as a terrorist. Denied legal counsel, she languished 9 months waiting to be brought before a federal judge, a glacial ordeal during which she feared she might rot forever in custody.

One strange morning, Molly was transferred to new quarters in her detention facility's Block F. While being escorted to her new cell, she began to notice an unusually high frequency of occurrences related to the letter F. An arrogant guard shoved her and chided her about her laconic pace. She pushed back, and a fight ensued.

Coming to the aid of their fellow guard, the prison staff mobbed the punk, violently beating her into submission. When a guard attempted to handcuff her, Molly heard a strange low tone that increased in volume and pitch until she somehow released a powerful burst of psionic energy that coruscated along the metal restraints and shocked her attackers into unconsciousness. With a little effort, she was able to discharge the same energy through the jail's bars and metal railings.

The melee had unlocked Molly's latent parahuman abilities, and she felt an incredible surge in strength. The guards were reduced to gibbering vegetables in short order, which didn't prevent Molly from stomping the living crap out of them. Capitalizing on the opportunity, she made good her escape.

Her months in custody served as a criminal graduate school, and Molly reemerged on the streets as a far more dangerous individual than she'd even been before the Seattle riots. The ordeal left her with a deep grudge against both superheroes and the government, and wielding new superhuman abilities, it seemed logical to join the ranks of villainy. She outfitted herself with a length of chain and a makeshift costume, and assumed the name Chokechain.

Duncan maintains her ties to GAN and other organizations labeled "eco-terrorist" by the media. She has even been seen playing alongside her old band in shady and out-of-the-way nightspots. She splits her time between small-time heists that keep her living comfortably, and supplying backup on GAN raids. Advanced biotech research is an extremely robust trade in a world of parahumans, and a superhuman ally allows the opponents of such research to get their message heard. In addition to her federal record, a number of secret hi-tech think tanks, such as Octopus Umbrella and ANTAG, have bounties on her head, angered by her protests or sabotage of important experiments.

During a recent riot in Portland, Chokechain met Moonquake (p. 75), who invited her to join Player 2's Crime Union. Although she appreciates the Union's views on organized "labor," and their gracious pay-outs, she prefers working alone. Memories of her activist friends' deaths still haunt her.

USING CHOKECHAIN

Chokechain is relatively inexperienced as a super criminal, but her appetite for destruction more than compensates. She generally directs her energy toward large-scale acts of vandalism. A blow against corporate America is a blow against globalization, and slows (in her mind) the country's slide into corruption and fascism.

While her goals might not be far from those of more liberal heroes, her destructive methods aren't likely to earn her many moderate allies among the superhero community, or among the public at large.

Chokechain is bull-headed, reckless, and mean. Regardless of their true intentions, she dismisses costumed do-gooders as symbols of a media-driven status quo that must be completely obliterated before true social progress can be made. She may hesitate if she's convinced that her criminal actions are harming innocent citizens, however, especially if her crimes bring woe to the poor and disadvantaged folks she claims to speak for.

Chokechain is the anti-hero of choice for many disaffected youths, and it's not uncommon to see her wandering the crowd at large counter-cultural happenings such as protests and political demonstrations.

Despite all of her bluster, Chokechain is lonely, and bitterly longs for the day when survival is not her top priority. Despite her solitude, Chokechain secretly harbors a crush on Moonquake, and may develop similar feelings for a "cool" dark horse superhero with a political agenda similar to hers. Predictably, she utterly despises the women of the Clique (p. 52), and will interfere with their agenda purely out of contempt. This hatred extends to any player characters who remind her of that group or who seem too pretty or materialistic for her extremely biased taste.

The purpose of Mr. F's benediction remains a mystery. Homeless street sages prophesied the coming of a great savior, a hero who will stand against friend or foe to protect the interests of the weak. The mother of this savior will be chosen by the "Prince of Thieves," and will herself be a revolutionary. Evidence certainly suggests that Duncan is a possible candidate for ushering in this age of social justice. Despite her cryptic encounters with Mr. F, Chokechain dismisses such talk as urban mythology.

TACTICS

Duncan is a brutal hand-to-hand combatant who rarely backs away from a fight. Rather than immediately engaging an enemy powerhouse, she prefers to "teach a lesson" to flying heroes and energy projectors who think they can stay out of the fray. She uses her uncanny strength to reel in such characters for a more intimate stomping.

Chokechain prefers to save her Mental Blasts for surprise attacks and more tenacious foes. If she can't pummel a foe into submission, she wraps him up in a Chokehold with her chain, subjecting the foe to repeated shocks. In addition to her stainless-steel chain, Chokechain wears numerous rings through which she can discharge her mental blast with a touch.

Duncan's luck is a manifestation of Mr. F's blessing. The role she plays in his master plan, if he has one beyond spreading chaos, remains a mystery. She'll usually use this bonus to guarantee an unexpectedly lucky attack against the most self-righteous and untouchable enemy available.

GAME STATISTICS

Chokechain: PL 11; Init +4 (+4 Dex); Defense 12 (+8 base, +4 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Reach 15 ft.; Atk +16 melee (+17L/15-ft. reach, chain), +15 melee (+9S/L, unarmed); SV Dmg +6 (Protection +4), Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Feats: Accurate Attack (chain), Attack Focus (chain), Iron Will, Toughness.

Skills: Bluff +6, Demolitions +5, Knowledge (street lore) +7, Perform (punk rock) +4, Sense Motive +2.

Powers: Luck +4 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 5; *Total:* 20], Mental Blast +8 [*Source:* Mutation; *Flaws:* Range (touch), Restricted (transmitted through metal); *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 8], Super Strength +4 [*Extra:* Protection; *Power Stunt:* Lethal; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 5 pp; *Total:* 22 pp].

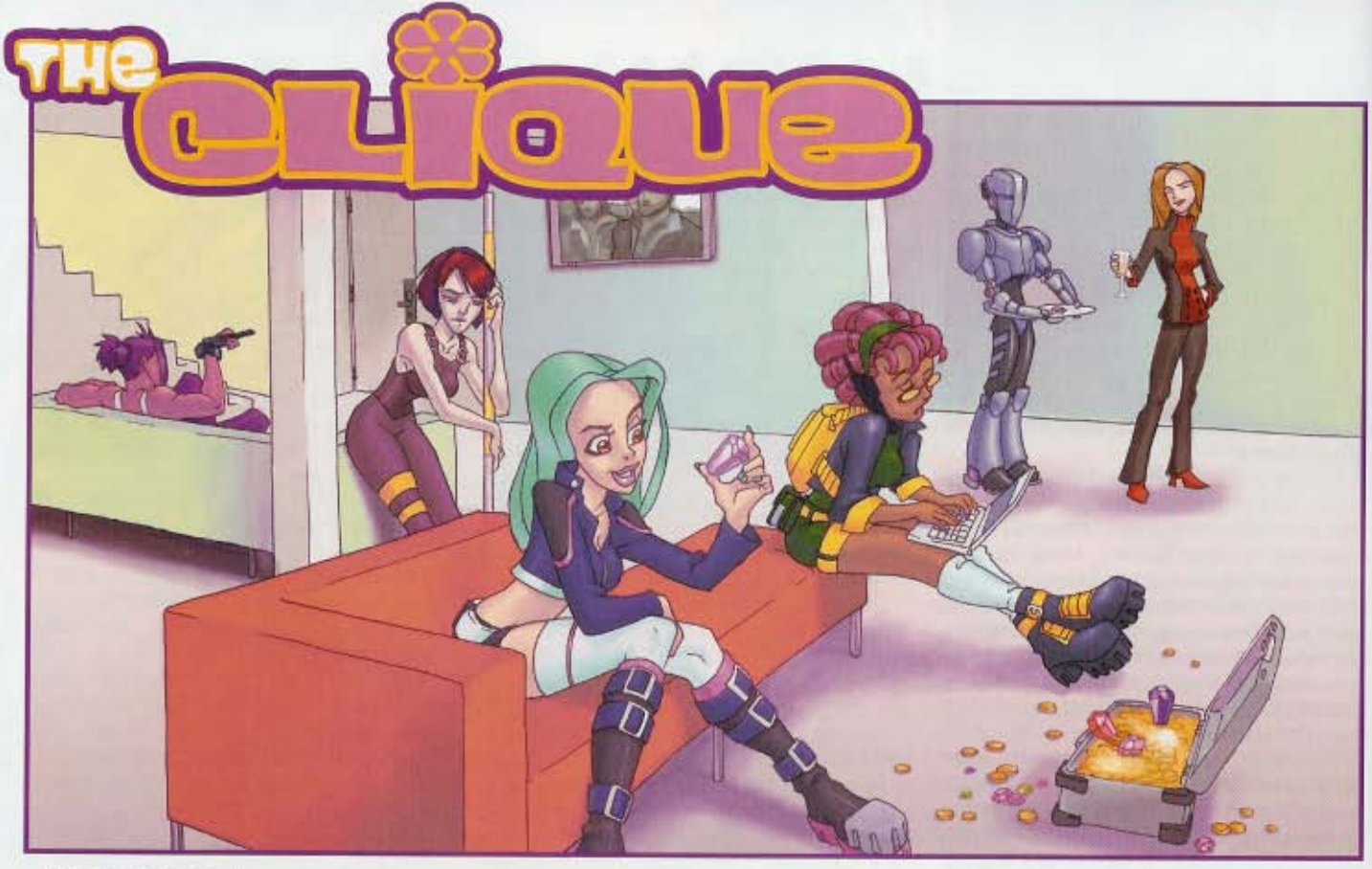
Equipment: Chain [*Effect:* Weapon +8L; *Power Stunts:* Chokehold, Extend Reach ×2* (+10 ft.), Extra Attack (Snare); *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* –; *Cost:* 1; *Total:* 12 pp].

CAPERS

The Dogs of War. Chokechain has led her GAN comrades on a raid on an animal experimentation lab during which the subjects of unknown experiments, mostly dogs, are released from their quarantined cages and set free. This proves a grave mistake, as the animals possess horrible paranormal abilities. In addition, many carry dangerous weapon-viruses and have been driven mad by the experimentation.

The heroes are tipped off by an well-meaning but naive young acquaintance who has fallen in with the eco-terrorists. Rescuing the friend and preventing the escape of the violent animals should prove challenging with the interference of Chokechain and the facility's well-armed security. This adventure can have considerably dark repercussions when harm comes to the PCs' friend and a little crime scene research links the illegal labs to the United States government.

White Laces. At Bumbershoot, Seattle's annual music and arts festival, a number of controversial acts have been booked. In an incredible demonstration of poor judgment, two particular punk acts go onstage back-to-back, neo-nazi Third Generation, and anarchist Sissy Cyst. The already ugly situation is compounded by the fact that both Blitz (p. 46) and Chokechain are sitting in with their respective bands. If its going to be a real party, the Clique or Sister Blister could be in the audience as well. Shake well, and you have a cat-fight that could destroy the Emerald City. Racial tension, innocents in harm's way, heavy politics, and broken nails...good luck sorting this one out!



THE CLIQUE

Concept: Fashionable Femme Felons
Members: Boy Toy, the Crush, Jawbreaker, the Other Woman, Pixie, Wallflower
Area of Operation: U.S. West Coast

If you're talking felony and fashion, you're talking about the glamorous girl gang, the Clique. The team is a tight-knit sorority of surprisingly efficient and elusive parahuman thieves. Neither mercenaries nor dissidents with a clear agenda, the Clique is motivated almost entirely by materialism. They simply take what they want, when they want it.

Despite this bevy of beauty's dedication to each other, they are a contentious lot. Catty comments and seemingly cruel practical jokes are common within their ranks. Each member is required to maintain the strictest standards of fashion and grooming. Camera-shy they are not. Despite their dubious pursuits, they seem to enjoy copious attention from the press and public. Each member enjoys the perks of a high-profile celebrity.

Despite these benefits, however, internecine tension contributes to an unusually high turnover rate. Few can handle the social pressure in addition to the life of crime. On a heist, however, these babes support each other like sisters.

Generally, these brash brats are not out to hurt anyone. They simply do as they please, and rely on their diverse powers to make a clean getaway. With the exception of the dynastic assassin Pixie, none of the Clique take their life of crime seriously enough to die for it. None have served any prison time.

The Clique was formed in 2002, when the duplicate villainess Other Woman began gathering her dispersed flock of doppelgangers. One Other Woman clone, a flight attendant, had met and befriended a young parahuman named Betsy Barcal, who had been operating as a petty criminal powerhouse called Jawbreaker. The clone offered Jawbreaker her San Francisco flat as a place to crash when she was away, explaining that she simply hated being bored. The clone arranged to fly Jawbreaker down to southern California to meet with the original Other Woman, who sought thrills and power and needed muscle to back up her intrigue. Barcal pledged in, and the two continued to scout for recruits.

After attracting a beautiful female android from the future named Tangerine and a young techno-genius named Gimmick, the Clique set their sights on drawing in the Crush, a seductive new sensation sweeping the criminal underground. Despite the girl's abrasive personality, the Other Woman was willing to step out of the limelight and hand over the reigns of the team. The Clique needed the financial resources brought by the affluent Crush, who also brought with her the vehicle/robot Boy Toy and a lavish penthouse headquarters. The Crush proved an adequate leader, but a brash decision soon fragmented the team.

The team's robotic mascot Boy Toy inexplicably began to develop a rudimentary, child-like sentience. The robot developed a close friendship with Tangerine and Gimmick, both of whom began to see him as a full-fledged member of the team rather than a nonsentient robotic underling. The Crush considered this increased personality a defect in her favorite toy, and worse, a liability to the team's heists. She instructed Gimmick to purge Boy Toy's software. Jawbreaker couldn't have cared less, and the Other Woman slyly deferred to the new leader's judgment. In a brutal final row that demolished their headquarters, Gimmick and Tangerine both quit the team and reformed, becoming superheroes and frequent adversaries of their old teammates.

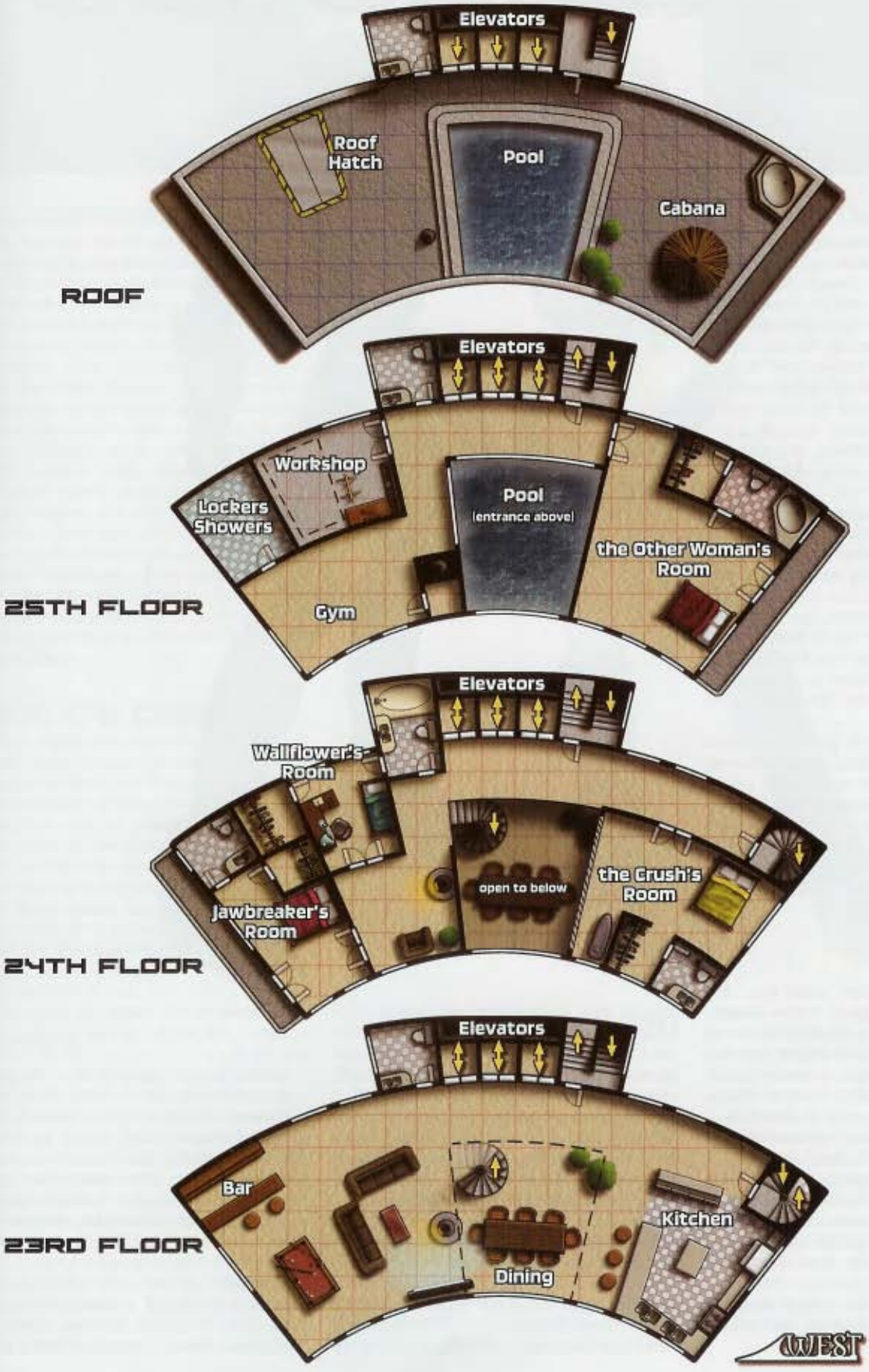
Recently, the Clique moved to a new headquarters in your player characters' home town. They've also recruited two brand new members, a tech specialist named Wallflower and a fierce enforcer called Pixie.

THE CLIQUE HQ: THE PENTHOUSE

Thanks to the machinations of both the resourceful Crush and the devilishly clever Other Woman, the Clique has taken up residence, rent free, on the top three stories of Sebastian Belle Plaza. The 25-story commercial property features high-end retail stores and a theater on the bottom four floors, and architectural, fashion, and design offices on the other floors. The Clique maintains an empty 21st floor, and their staff of highly trained handlers, agents and lawyers work on the 20th.

The girls' HQ itself is a comfortable and well-appointed living space. Other than the top floor, which contains a rather extreme workout room, Wallflower's workshop, and Boy Toy's garage, the apartment is normal, albeit rather posh. The team's home holographic entertainment and communications system and automated kitchen appliances are all advanced technology lifted from Octopus Umbrella.

PENTHOUSE HQ



BOYTOY

10 BZZZT. WHERE TO, LADIES?

THE PERFECT MAN

AMV-2 Ifrit
Unknown to the general public
U.S. West Coast
The Clique, Unitrol (prototype)
Made in the U.S.A.

5' 11" | Lavender | None
1500 lbs. | 4



BACKGROUND

Earlier this year, the power-draining android Damocles (*Mutants & Masterminds*, p. 173) tore a swath of destruction through Washington, D.C. in an attempt to lure in unsuspecting heroes to be culled. The Front administered a sound beating to the robot on the lawn of the White House, leaving a "clean-up crew" to clear away the debris and rubble left by the hard-won fight. An infiltrator agent of the super-science consortium Octopus Umbrella salvaged a tiny fragment of Damocles' circuitry, and after his masters had decoded its technology they auctioned it off to Unitrol (p. 104).

Unitrol used the technology to design highly mobile weapons platforms known as Anthropomorphic Mechanized Vehicles. Dubbed Ifriti after the fire-wielding demons of Arabic mythology, AMVs can not only transport troops into a variety of environments, but also transform into androids to fight beside them. Possible vehicle configurations range from a banal sports-car to a one-man submarine to a spacecraft capable of seating six–the permutations are nearly limitless.

Unitrol's development of the AMVs ended embarrassingly when the fledgling supervillainess the Crush used her emotion-manipulating powers to simply walk into the suburban industrial park where her father managed the Ifriti program and cruise out with her first big haul. When she saw the AMV prototype's lustrous pink-and-purple paint job and slick modern design, she knew she'd found a partner for life.

TACTICS

In addition to acting as their "wheel man," Boy Toy adds depth to the Clique's frontal assaults. Typically, Jawbreaker pilots Boy Toy directly into melee, priming targets with blaster fire. The Clique is hesitant to squander the android's missiles on soft targets, saving them to disable enemy vehicles and penetrate fortifications. If aerial support is required, Boy Toy remains in jet-mode and provides covering fire.

Remaining in vehicle form saves time should the Clique need to beat a hasty retreat. In these cases, and when the situation calls for stealth, Boy Toy emits a unique electromagnetic signal that Obscures both vision and radar. With Wallflower's help, Boy Toy has been able to narrow the frequency such that it does not affect the senses of certain individuals, such as the Clique themselves.

USING BOY TOY

The Clique regards Boy Toy as part valet, part high-tech toy. He speaks in clipped, direct statements, as would a butler or cartoon mountie.

Since the Crush purged his personality last year, Boy Toy has demonstrated some strange traits. He seems inexplicably able to differentiate the Other Woman from her doppelgangers, and is particularly protective of Wallflower. It is possible he is more sentient than he appears, and wisely hides it from the girls. His true nature and agenda are anyone's guess.

Boy Toy: PL 10; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 10 (+10 base, +1 Dex); Hardness 10; Spd 30 ft; Atk +15 melee (+14S, unarmed), +11 ranged (+9L/45-ft. area, missile or +5S, blaster); SV Dmg +10, Fort –, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 20, Dex 12, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills: Drive +11, Listen +6, Pilot +13, Spot +6.

Feats: Take the Fall*, Talented (Spot, Listen).

Powers: Obscure +6 [*Extra:* Selective; *Power Stunt:* Extra Sense (radar); *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Shapeshift +9 [*Extra:* Continuous, Growth, Mimic, Movement; Super-Speed; *Flaw:* Limited (signature–color scheme), Limited (one type–vehicles), Limited (Super-Speed increases base speed only), Slow (full round); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 5 pp; *Total:* 45 pp].

Equipment: Blaster +5S [*Source:* Super-Science; *Total:* 5 pp], missiles [*Effect:* Energy Blast (fire) +9; *Extra:* Explosive Blast (45-ft radius); *Flaw:* Device, Uses (×8); *Total:* 9 pp].

THE CRUSH

10

HEY SEXY, I'VE GOT A JOB FOR YOU.

LOVE EM AND LEAVE EM IT-GIRL

Real Name	Deidre Pawlowski
Code Identity	Secret
Base of Operations	U.S. West Coast
Group Affiliation	Leader of the Clique
Nationality	U.S. citizen

Height	5' 6"	Eyes	Orange
Weight	107 lbs.	Hair	Blue
Age	19		



BACKGROUND

Deidre Pawlowski was always daddy's little girl. Unfortunately for the law-abiding world, daddy was a mid-level project manager at an independent suburban laboratory underwritten by Unitrol, a crypto-terrorist subversive government organization with designs on global politics.

As an only child, Deidre occasionally accompanied her father to work. By the time the flirtatious girl manifested the parahuman ability to manipulate sexual orgone energy at 16, she literally had the run of the place. Between permissive parents and thralls under her mind-control powers, no one ever told her "no." She got whatever she wanted, and what she wanted was power and celebrity.

Not long after looting her way across Southern California, Deidre came to the attention of one of the Other Woman's doppelgangers. The devious cloner saw a great deal of potential in the sassy brat, and chose her to be the face-girl of her new Clique.

USING THE CRUSH

The Crush regards her outlaw life as tremendous fun, and rarely contemplates the consequences. An incredible narcissist, Deidre is easily distracted by flattery. As far as she's concerned, she is the Clique, and all other costumed femme fatales aspire to her image. Not surprisingly, other women tend to resent her.

The Crush is petulant when crossed, and capable of severe cruelty. She has never heard of orgone energy or its pioneer Wilhelm Reich, but is aware that she possesses parahuman abilities. She never admits it, however, and claims to be simply irresistible to men.

TACTICS

Though she's spent enough time with Unitrol instructors to qualify as a crack-shot with a blaster, the Crush prefers to sit back and let big, sweaty boys do the fighting. Even if directly threatened, there will likely be an "admirer" nearby ready to step in and protect the damsel in distress. When on a gig, the Crush acts both as a distraction and to soften up targets for her teammates. She first "sucks the life out" of a room, Draining men's Strength and Wisdom. Ideally, this leaves them less than fighting fit, oblivious to teammates infiltrating elsewhere, and more susceptible to the Crush's Mind Control. Even more tenacious foes will find it difficult to fight their way through both Boy Toy and Pixie to lay their mitts on Pawlowski.

The Crush: PL 10; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 13 (+10 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +10 melee (+2S, unarmed), +11 ranged (+5S, blaster); SV Dmg +8, Fort +2, Ref +3, Will -1; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 13.

Skills: Bluff +1 (+8 vs. men), Computers +4, Diplomacy +5 (+12 vs. men), Innuendo +5 (+12 vs. men), Sense Motive +3, Taunt +5 (+12 vs. men).

Feats: Attractive, Dodge, Evasion, Headquarters (see p. 52), Leadership, Sidekick (Loyalty 15, Boy Toy).

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +5 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp], Drain +10 [*Extras:* Area (50-ft. radius), Range (normal) Second Attribute (Wis); *Flaw:* Limited (one attribute–Str), Limited (one target–men); *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 30 pp], Mind Control +10 [*Flaw:* Limited (one target–men); *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp]; Super-Charisma +7 [*Flaw:* Limited (one target–men); *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 7 pp]..

Equipment: Kelvex body armor [*Effect:* Armor +5; *Extra:* Immunity (fire); *Cost:* 1 pp, *Total:* 6 pp], custom Vera Wang blaster +5S [5 pp].

Weaknesses: Quirk (flirt). By the end of the Crush's first encounter with the heroes, she develops "creepy girl feelings" for one player character. From that point on, she must make a successful Will save to harm that character, even if her inaction puts the rest of the Clique at a tactical disadvantage.

JAWBREAKER

PUCKER UP, SPANDEX BOY!

CANDY-COATED HARDBODY

Betsy Barcal
Secret
U.S. West Coast
The Clique (founding member)
U.S. citizen

5' 6" | Blue | Violet
250 lbs. | 22



BACKGROUND

Betsy Barcal came into the world protected by a giant rainbow-colored egg. Her mother died in childbirth, and the egg passed into the hands of researchers. For 3 years it grew, occasionally changing colors, and acting as something of a lab mascot. Finally, the shell fractured, revealing a healthy 3-year-old girl. Betsy's skin soon hardened into a pink candy-like shell, and tests revealed that the toddler had the strength of a teenager.

Because of her abnormally long gestation, Betsy was schooled alongside younger children at the West Coast Talented Child's Center. Even at a young age, this left her feeling frustrated yet powerful, a callous child eager to bully her peers. She demonstrated little empathy, and shrugged off the most formidable punishments.

The first thing to penetrate her hard exterior was a crush she harbored for another student, Rhett Berlin. The mysterious and aloof Berlin's own secrets collided with his student life on the day of his graduation, when commandos from Baseline, a humans-first socio-terrorist organization, raided the commencement. The genocidal mercenaries traced Berlin to the school from his extra-circular life as Emo, leader of the teen hero team the Upstarts.

During the carnage, Berlin appealed to Barcal to defend the institution, but self-preservation remained her top priority. Disappointed and desperate, Emo used his emotion manipulation powers to force her to fight. The invaders were repelled, but Barcal was furious with the hero, more for forcing her to confront her selfish cowardice than for forcing her into the melee. Convinced that Berlin had been manipulating her into liking him all along, she fled the institution and lived on the street for years before the Other Woman offered her a new life with the Clique.

USING JAWBREAKER

Barcal is the Clique's enforcer. Ironically, given her experience with Emo, she is content to sit back and let others give the orders. While her closest friend remains the Other Woman, who taught her an appreciation for the finer things in life, Barcal admires the Crush's confidence and bravado. At her worst, this desire for acceptance makes her a bit of a wannabe.

TACTICS

Jawbreaker is brave to the point of recklessness, in the hope of erasing the cowardice she demonstrated at the Talented Child's Center. She is incredibly strong and resilient. When confronted with the rare individual who can match these traits, Jawbreaker levels the playing field with incredibly filthy trash-talk. She gets a huge kick out of being underestimated, and often invites heroes to "trade" blows.

It takes Jawbreaker about a week to induce a chemical change in skin color, though the actual change itself happens overnight. Grievous wounds reveal an internal strata of rainbow colors.

Jawbreaker: PL 8; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 9 (+8 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +11 melee (+ 6S/L /crit 19–20, unarmed), +9 ranged (+5S, blaster); SV Dmg +3 (Protection +8), Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills: Innuendo +4, Intimidate +5, Taunt +7.

Feats: All-Out Attack, Attack Focus (unarmed), Attractive, Durability, Indomitable Will, Improved Critical (unarmed).

Powers: Deflection +4 [*Extra:* Reflection; *Flaw:* Limited (energy attacks only); *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 8 pp] Super-Strength +8 [*Extra:* Protection, Immunity (cold, critical hits, electricity, fire, poison, pressure, sonic, suffocation); *Stunt:* Lethal; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 6 pp; *Total:* 50 pp].

Equipment: Custom J. Otto blaster +5S [5 pp].

Weaknesses: Disabled (no sense of touch). Jawbreaker cannot feel any physical sensation through her protective lacquer. Consequently, she has poor manual coordination. She suffers a –5 penalty on all Dexterity-based skill checks.

Disturbing. Jawbreaker suffers a –5 penalty on Bluff and Diplomacy checks.

10

I'M EVERYWHERE YOU WANT TO BE.

DUPLICITOUS DUPLICATOR

Real Name: Wendy Wallace
Dual Identity: Secret
Base of Operations: U.S. West Coast
Group Affiliation: The Clique
Nationality: U.S. citizen

Height: 5'7" Eyes: Blue Hair: Blonde
Weight: 120 lbs. Age: 23

the other woman



BACKGROUND

Wendy Wallace[1] was engaged to a man she didn't really like, and worked dutifully at a job that didn't particularly interest her. Like many intelligent young women, she felt that life had more in store for her, and that her destiny was always just around the corner. Regardless, she continued to go through the motions, including getting together after work with tedious friends at the local corporate watering hole.

One night, she left a little more drunk than usual, and this time, it caught up with her. Less than a mile from the restaurant, she dozed off at the wheel, and awoke to half-consciousness with the sickening thud of her head smashing into the windshield. She reeled under the sobering realization that she had run her car off the road and smashed into a telephone pole. Although she assumed that this moment would end her life, it proved instead to be a perplexing rebirth.

Her body was twisted unnaturally up against the dash, and a slurry of ruptured organs churned beneath bruised skin. Through a veil of pain and her last choked breaths, a familiar hand reached into the car and touched her gently. Outside the car stood an identical twin she never knew she had.

As life faded from Wendy Wallace[1], it coursed into the the strange "imposter," Wendy Wallace[2]. The "new" Wallace had all the original's memories and none of her own. Over time, she realized that she'd been unwittingly creating duplicates her whole life, and that these clones lived their own lives, completely unaware that they were connected to a greater sisterhood. She proceeded to instinctively seek out other strays, and in short order, learned to create more. Armed with this "army of me," she turned her wiles toward carving out a more exciting life.

TACTICS

Although armed and dangerous, the Other Woman eschews combat. She generates as many clones as she needs to bog down an opponent, allowing her to escape. She is much more effective as a tactician, and is skilled at sowing confusion with gambits such as masquerading as a imperiled bystander. With at least two doppelgangers always in reserve, Wallace shows little concern for her doubles, sacrificing them if the going gets tough.

USING THE OTHER WOMAN

Wendy Wallace can crop up where she is least expected. She never produces more than 18 duplicates in an encounter, as at least two are always assigned as sleeper agents living normal, boring lives. In case of an emergency, the sleepers can be called into service, absorbed, or (in a worst-case scenario) taken over as Wendy Wallace[1]. It's possible that a PC's long-time coworker or girlfriend is one such doppelganger.

Although she allows the Crush to lead the team's day-to-day operations, other members of the Clique defer to her pronouncements as a matter of course, realizing where the true power lies.

The Other Woman: PL 10; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 10 (+8 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +10 ranged (+ 5S, blaster); SV Dmg +2, Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +7, Disguise +10, Innuendo +4.

Feats: Attractive, Connected.

Powers: Duplication +10 [*Extra:* Absorption Healing, Duration (continuous), Horde, Survival; *Source:* Secret (GM's choice); *Cost:* 6 pp; *Total:* 60 pp].

Equipment: Kelvex body armor [*Effect:* Armor +5; *Extra:* Immunity (fire), *Cost:* 1 pp, *Total:* 6 pp], custom Chanel blaster +5S [5 pp].

Artist: JASON MARTIN
Sculptor: HEATHER MARTIN

PIXIE

7

SUCH PRETTY PLAYTHINGS... ALL MINE!

DEADLY DOLL

	Leiko "Leah" Mingei
	Secret
	U.S. West Coast
	The Clique
	U.S. citizen of Japanese descent
5'3"	Green / Purple
100 lbs.	20



BACKGROUND

Pixie's father, Yoshi Mingei, paid dearly for the naive belief that he could abandon his family's tradition as enforcers for the Yakuza. Despite his own parahuman abilities, the elder Mingei was killed by a car bomb, leaving his young daughter in the care of his brother, a Yakuza loyalist. The brother, long jealous of his sibling's superhuman gifts, was quick to exploit the mutant child. He taught her the basics of murder and theft, information his brother had attempted to shield from her.

Leiko lived comfortably on the spoils of her adoptive father's work, and romanticized the lifestyle it afforded her. She had no compunction over burglary and even more violent crimes, as they earned her great respect and riches.

Despite the Yakuza's protection, the authorities eventually caught up with the Mingei clan, and Leiko's uncle was killed in a bloody shootout with a police task force. Rather than labor under the Yakuza's strict and exploitative hierarchy, Leiko decided to make her own way. At 16, she easily smuggled her diminutive frame aboard a jet bound for America.

USING PIXIE

Despite her moniker, Pixie is the most dangerous and unpredictable member of the Clique. She is disturbingly capable as an assassin, though her stint with the girls rarely gives her an opportunity to flex these muscles. Unlike the Clique's other members, she is generally very demure and respectful, though prone to "spazzing out" when she sees something she really likes. Leiko is especially fond of Kowaii, elements of pop culture that are equal parts scary and cute, such as the work of the illustrator Junko Mizuno. Pixie is jaded to the point that even the most graphic violence fails to phase her. Much to the distress of her sisters in the Clique, she really seems to enjoy hurting people and giggles freely when bashing in skulls.

TACTICS

Pixie acts as the Clique's scout and expert thief. Her favorite trick is to masquerade as a small doll, and have herself shipped to the homes of her victims. In a brawl, Pixie stays hidden until she can make an opportunistic and decisive strike. Rather than sticking around to slug it out, Pixie prefers to dazzle her quarry, escaping to hit-and-run again.

Pixie: PL 7; Init +4 (Dex); Defense 11 (+7 base, +4 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +11 melee (+ 9S, Pixie-Stick), +11 ranged (+ 7L, Energy Blast–electricity); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +4, Will -1; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 13.

Skills: Acrobatics +11, Escape Artist +9, Hide +8, Language (Japanese), Move Silently +7, Open Locks +9.

Feats: Attack Finesse, Attractive, Dodge, Lay Low*, Surprise Strike.

Powers: Shrinking +6 (Tiny minimum) [*Extra:* Mighty Mite; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 18 pp].

Equipment: Pixie-Stick [*Effect:* Weapon +7; *Power Stunts:* Dazzle, Energy Blast (electricity); *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 9 pp], Kelvex body armor [*Effect:* Armor +5; *Extra:* Immunity (fire); *Cost:* 2/1 pp, *Total:* 6 pp].

Weaknesses: Quirk (fanatical). Partially due to gratitude, partially due to an unhealthy obsession, Pixie is hopelessly devoted to the Crush. The Crush is not bisexual, but encourages the attention as it increases her mystique. Her orgone energy manipulation has no effect on Pixie's female physiology. Nonetheless, Pixie will do anything the Crush says to prove her dedication to the Clique.

JASON MARTIN
HEATHER MARTIN

WALLFLOWER

"QUANTUM SPANNER, EXPLOSIVE BOLTS, METRIC-PHASE DISTORTION UNIT, AND CREME SODA LIP-GLOSS. I'M ALL SET.

ADORABLE GHOST IN THE MACHINE

	Shayla Bingham
	Secret
	U.S. West Coast
	The Clique
	U.S. Citizen

	5' 2"	Brown	Magenta
	120 lbs.	17	

BACKGROUND

Shayla Bingham was a beautiful wunderkind, working on a post-graduate degree in physics at UC Irvine at the tender age of 17. Despite her exceptional gifts, she impatiently longed for popularity and recognition by the world at large. In a world of parahumans, she was merely bright, and even her parents, both skilled physicians, seemed to get invited to more parties.

She found a kindred spirit when she was invited into a program were she could study the parahuman phenomenon alongside superheroes themselves. She acted as a lab assistant to Trixie Meadows, better known as super-genius Gimmick, the Gadget Girl. The two became fast friends. Gimmick even revealed many details of her private life, including her brief stint with the villainous Clique.

While studying quantum cotangencies together, Shayla activated a new experimental device that caused her to slip between dimensions. Trixie encouraged her protégé to master the technology, and try her own hand at crime-fighting. Unfortunately, Gimmick's life yanked her in many directions, and she was called away on an extended assignment. Left without a mentor, Shayla came to the attention of the Other Woman, in the guise of a lowly TA. The Other Woman had been keeping tabs on Gimmick since she'd quit the team, and saw potential in the young Bingham.

To Gimmick's disappointment, Shayla was seduced by the team's glamour, and signed on at her first opportunity. Though she lacks the sophistication of the other girls, she fills an invaluable niche. Jawbreaker and Pixie seem to resent the youngster's energy, but with both the Crush and Other Woman watching her back, her position on the team seems safe enough.

TACTICS

Wallflower stays out of combat, and prefers letting her more robust comrades wield her gadgets. She grows a little more bold with each adventure, however, and will now go as far as sneaking up behind a hero with her phasing device to attach a device that will screw with the enemy's powers. She does not carry a gun, and her devices are generally non-violent, focusing on defense and misdirection. She is currently perfecting a teleportation fail-safe device for Boy Toy, for whom she feels great affection.



USING WALLFLOWER

Although Wallflower is the Clique's youngest and least world-weary member, she is by no means the goodie-two-shoes she appears. Now that she's in the in-crowd, she'll bite, kick and scream to stay there. Shayla has a hard time filling Gimmick's shoes, and thus is eager-to-please to a fault. She is smart enough to realize that the Other Woman wears the pants in the family, but knows better to antagonize the more vapid Crush. Wallflower is not particularly confident or courageous, and would likely fold under serious pressure.

Wallflower: PL 7; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Defense 9 (+7 base, +2 Dex) (Incorporeal +5, ineffective vs. Energy Blast); Spd 30 ft., fly 25 ft.; Atk +4 melee (+6S, Gadgets), +7 ranged (+ 7S, Gadgets); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills: Computers +10, Craft (electronics) +10, Disable Device +8, Open Lock +8, Repair +10, Science (quantum physics) +10.

Feats: Attractive, Heroic Surge, Improved Initiative, Talented (Craft, Science), Talented (Computers, Repair), Talented (Disable Device, Open Lock).

Equipment: Phase belt [*Effect:* Incorporeal +5; *Extras:* Float, Scramble Electronics; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 15 pp], utility backpack [*Effect:* Gadgets +7; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 7 pp].

JASON MARTIN
HEATHER MARTIN

CZAR



17

"HUMANS? BAH! I WILL CRUSH THESE TREACHEROUS ANTS I ONCE FOOLISHLY PROTECTED."

POWER LEVEL

TYRANNICAL COSMIC DYNAMO

REAL NAME	Piotr Gregov
DUAL IDENTITY	Unknown to the general public
BASE OF OPERATIONS	The Burning Protectorate
NATIONALITY	Russian

HEIGHT	12'	EYES	White
WEIGHT	2000 lbs.	HAIR	N/A
		AGE	47

BACKGROUND

The history of the former Soviet Union has bequeathed the title of "People's Defender" to the legendary Protonik, but he was by no means the USSR's only superhero. Another powerful hero frequently fought alongside Protonik, loyally serving his nation as well as his communist handlers. Piotr Gregov wore the mantle of Пламя (PLAAM-ya, "Blazing Star") from the early 1980s through the collapse of the Soviet Union. One of many parahuman mutants born in the USSR during the 1950s, Gregov could tap and manipulate intense cosmic energy, manifesting it in fiery blasts, flight, and a radiant force field. Handsome and popular with the people, Gregov acted as the poster hero for a reinvigorated Soviet space program.

Upon the fall of the Soviet Union, Gregov did not go gently into that good night. Small splinter cells within the Soviet government believed that, with the assistance of the country's numerous superhumans, the military could seize power and stem the collapse.

Gregov, who had been coddled by the state from a young age due to his mutant abilities, was fiercely loyal to his government sponsors. Unlike Protonik, who many hard-liners saw as too attached to his charges, Gregov cared little for the people in the streets.

The Blazing Star displayed a disturbing affinity for destruction as the vanguard of the attempted coup. Because of the grave and complicated political repercussions, only a small handful of the world's heroes followed Protonik to confront Gregov's nuclear-armed forces. Although the world teetered on the edge of annihilation, the heroes managed to solve the standoff diplomatically with surprisingly little bloodshed. The defeat marked only the beginning of Gregov's descent into darkness.

With Protonik's approval, Gregov disappeared in self-imposed exile, flying into space for what seemed like the last time. Returning from Deep Space, the Blazing Star made an unexpected final heroic appearance in southern Belarus in 1992. In an attempt to avoid a nuclear catastrophe, Gregov penetrated the destabilized core of a nuclear power plant, using his cosmic powers to contain an imminent meltdown.

While the Blazing Star struggled in the underground facility, Belorussian officials bickered in closed staterooms. The nation had suffered terribly from the dire effects of the Chernobyl disaster in neighboring Ukraine, and the reactor's proximity to the heavily populated city of Mazyr forced everyone to fear the worst. The

ERIC CANETE
GEOFF ONG

officials rashly decided to bury the reactor site under a haphazard bunker of steel and concrete, entombing Piotr Gregov within the contaminated facility.

Gregov's mind remained active, despite being buried under 40 tons of radioactive dust. He seethed over what he perceived as the ultimate betrayal. For five years, the Blazing Star burned silently. The intense radiation twisted both his mind and body, further enhancing his profound powers. In 1997, Belarussian scientists detected strange energy fluxuations at the plant site. Preparing for the worst, the government deployed a large specialized military force. They need not have bothered.

The facility's protective bunker shattered in an immense explosion felt as far away as Warsaw. A hideous creature, Piotr Gregov, emerged, proclaiming himself czar of all he surveyed. The Czar demanded that the Belarussian soldiers join him or die, punctuating the order with a wave of his hand that destroyed a quarter of the amassed forces. The rest immediately surrendered.

With the world's protests received as little more than annoyances, the Czar has carved a well-defended state, the Burning Protectorate, from radioactive lands of southern Belarus and northern Ukraine. Few governments in the region can muster the unconventional forces necessary to depose the autocrat. In addition to his own nearly boundless power, the Czar fields a formidable conventional army composed of local thugs and mercenaries from the Balkans to the southeast. He frequently offers sanctuary to the world's most loathsome criminals, including Cryptomax, Kalak, and agents of Unitrol. Even Protonik himself has failed on numerous occasions to bring his former comrade to justice.

USING THE CZAR

As the Blazing Star, Gregov was callous and flamboyant, but sincere in attempts to fulfill his obligations as a hero. He strove to please his superiors. His honorable defeat at the hands of Protonik forced him to confront his greater responsibility to the world, a spirit that manifested itself in his intervention in Belarus.

His peoples' fearful abandonment during his most heroic moment, however, emotionally destroyed the former hero. Left to contemplate this bitter moment for five years in a horrid toxic tomb while undergoing nerve-shattering mutations has warped Gregov irrevocably. He views himself as beyond human and seeks nothing less than to dominate man under his heel. He is deeply misanthropic, and only barely tolerates his human minions.

The Czar is governed by rage, and endures no insult. Though not particularly cruel by nature, he does not hesitate to deliver the most heinous and painful end to those he believes have wronged him. When most calm, the Czar is a brooding and deeply isolated figure. Because of a clash during his days as a hero, the Czar holds a great deal of hostility toward the Atomic Brain (p. 33), and will not aid him.

TACTICS

The Czar is a living nightmare of destruction capable of slugging it out with the mightiest of heroes. Though denied the cosmic awareness of a true god, the Czar has mastered the primal forces that bind reality sufficiently to Transmute 50 cubic feet of matter. He often utilizes this ability to liquefy the weapons of his enemies, or to suffocate foes outright. Gregov's metamorphosis within his steel and concrete sarcophagus greatly increased his size, strength, and mass, allowing him to lift 12 tons. Years spent burning in the reactor core tempered his spirit and hardened his heart. His bitterness and strength of resolve have made him superhumanly tough in body and mind, and obliterated any sense of human compassion. It simply isn't worth his while to snuff out all life on the planet, though the idea has crossed his mind. His flight speed and resilience allow him to seek solitude in the peaceful vacuum of space, or exorcise his personal demons by obliterating primitive inhabited planets.

GAME STATISTICS

The Czar: PL 17; Size Large; Init -1 (Dex); Defense 23 (+15 base, -1 Dex, -1 size); Spd 40 ft., fly 90 ft.; Atk +19 melee (+11L/reach 10 ft., unarmed), +12 ranged (+10L, Energy Blast—radiation); SV Dmg +5 (Protection +6), Fort +15, Ref -1, Will +13; Str 20, Dex 8, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 20.

Skills: Languages (Russian, Polish), Knowledge (history) +7, Intimidate +11.

Feats: Headquarters (see below), Immunity (aging, critical hits, disease, exhaustion, fire, poison, pressure, radiation, starvation, suffocation), Indomitable Will, Infamy, Minions (Loyalty 31), Power Attack, Stoic*, Takedown Attack, Trance, Wealthy.

Powers: Amazing Save (Will) +10 [*Extra:* Fortitude; *Source:* Training; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Cosmic Power +11 [*Extras:* Energy Blast (radiation), Suffocation; *Power Stunts:* Space Flight, Super-Flight; *Flaw:* Missing Effect (sense cosmic forces); *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 9 pp; *Total:* 103 pp], Growth +6 [*Extras:* Duration (permanent), Immovability +6, Protection +6, Super-Strength +6; *Power Stunt:* Lethal; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 6 pp; *Total:* 38 pp].

Weakness: Disturbing. The Czar stands over 12 feet tall, and appears to be a massive, gnarled and calcified skeleton supported by crude iron robotics. Half of Gregov's face appears as a milky silver corroded metallic skull, the other as a featureless iron plate. No sign of human compassion shines from his single white eye. The Czar suffers a -5 penalty on Bluff and Diplomacy checks and cannot pass as normal even in a world full of parahumans.

Berserk. Gregov bears a staggering hatred of humanity for abandoning him in his greatest moment of heroism. Were he a stronger man, he would forever depart his home planet and seek peace in the stars, but something keeps him tethered here. Tragically, he has grown too accustomed to the poison whispers of sycophantic underlings, and would never again subject himself to the terrible isolation he felt in the reactor core.

A cosmic storm brews within him. His only outlet for this rage is the annihilation of his enemies. He demands utter subservience, and any perceived insolence sends him into a berserk rage (see *Mutants and Masterminds*, page 106). In such a state, he has destroyed his palatial estate on more than one occasion.

Minions: More than 2 million toil like serfs to serve the Burning Protectorate's military/industrial complex. The Czar rules tyrannically from the state palace he calls home, dispatching any internal unrest with a highly efficient state police called the "Stellar Guard" (p. 28). His subjects are not free to travel, and are given little access to media from the outside world. Although they enjoy little freedom, the citizens are adequately fed, sheltered, and cared for by the state. Ironically, the Protectorate's aged receive some of the finest care in the world.

Headquarters Features: Communications, computers, defense system, fire prevention, Force Field +17, gym, hangar, holding cells, infirmary, laboratory, library, living space, museum, power system, reinforced, security system, staff.

CAPERS

Thirst for Humanity: In a strange turn of events, human rights within the Burning Protectorate have improved dramatically. The state has taken to distributing food and resources, and even the most remote mountain village is receiving quality healthcare. The Czar proclaims that he has seen the light, and has forgiven humanity its past transgressions. He longs, once again, to be a hero of the people. This new behavior seems lasting and carries on for a year before META-4 decides to send the heroes in to serreptitiously investigate the former tyrant's sincerity. The organization's patience may prove costly. By the time the heroes unravel the plan, it may be too late to intercede.

In a bid to regain his lost humanity, the Czar has entered an infernal alliance with Kalak the Mystic (p. 68). On the anniversary of Gregov's social reform, the population has planned an enormous parade and feast in his honor. Kalak plans to sacrifice the thousands in attendance in a dark ritual that will infuse the Czar with their human essence, cleansing his body of radioactive mutations.

In exchange for this purification, Gregov will abdicate his throne to either explore the stars or reintegrate into society. Kalak will then turn the state into a twisted nation of undead. It's possible Gregov, still a potent cosmic powerhouse, could be the heroes' only hope of putting down this ghastly new kingdom.

DR DUNGEON



11 YOU LOOK LIKE YOU COULD USE A VACATION--*IN HELL!*

LIVING DIMENSIONAL GATEWAY

REAL NAME	Marvin Sneed
DUAL IDENTITY	Publicly known
BASE OF OPERATIONS	United States
GROUP AFFILIATION	None
CITIZENSHIP	U.S. citizen with criminal record

HEIGHT	6' 1"	EYES	Brown
WEIGHT	150 lbs.	HAIR	Black
		AGE	70

BACKGROUND

Ohio's Serpent Mound State Memorial holds one of North America's most puzzling and enduring ancient mysteries. An earthen mound shaped like a giant uncoiling snake extends nearly a quarter mile, its huge mouth ready to swallow a solitary mound resembling a massive egg. The huge structure has confounded experts since its 1885 discovery and subsequent preservation. Many believe it was constructed by the Adena Indians some time between 800 B.C.E. and 1 C.E., but its true purpose has never been discovered. Scientific curiosity gave way to outright greed in the sweltering summer of 1964, however, when community college history professor Marvin Sneed convinced two of his students to excavate the egg mound under cover of darkness.

With little difficulty, the three penetrated the surface of the mound and discovered a small hollow within. Amid bones and artifacts consistent with previous findings, Sneed and his students found something wholly unexpected—a futuristic blue and white bodysuit made of unknown cloth-like fibers. The suit bore an unusual cowl and a chestpiece of obvious technological origin, although it resembled no technology the graverobbers had previously encountered. Either someone had hidden the suit within the monument to keep it safe, Sneed reasoned, or it had laid undisturbed for centuries since the era of the Adena. Either way, the suit would be unthinkably valuable. Either way meant trouble. Sneed shot both of his students and absconded with his illicit gains.

When curiosity eventually got the better of him (about 12 minutes after returning home from the mound), he donned the costume, feeling an almost euphoric high that instantly cooled his nervousness regarding the theft and double murder. The suit felt "right" to him, and within a week he discovered that he possessed several superpowers while wearing it. He could lift thousands of pounds, fly through the air nearly twice as fast as he could run, and blast bolts of energy seemingly summoned from the air around his hands. He added gloves, a cape, and a high collar to liven up the suit and fit the elaborate costume conventions of the day. Private experiments with knives and guns revealed the suit's near-indestructibility and convinced him that he need never teach community college again. Instead, he would make history of his own.

Sneed's selected the First Municipal Bank of Columbus, Ohio as his primary target, crashing

through the building's elaborate glass skylight in the middle of a busy noontime rush. When two security guards attempted to apprehend him, the suit responded to his mental panic, and the mechanical chest apparatus began to whirr and glow with a bizarre red intensity. As Sneed watched apprehensively, the guards' bodies warped in swirls of colorful energy that flew into the chest apparatus as if drawn down by a vicious whirlpool. Taking an academic title he hadn't earned, Sneed declared himself "Dr. Dungeon," and left the bank with $1 million.

Throughout the latter half of the 1960s, Dr. Dungeon battled dozens of superheroes, becoming one of America's most wanted villains. He reveled in the media attention, spending most of his ill-gotten fortune to finance more and more daring capers, often with the assistance of other costumed criminals like Insano and the Red Queen. A group of iconoclastic heroes known as the Happening often foiled Dr. Dungeon's plans, sending him to jail time and time again, only to see him back on the streets within months thanks to a mixture fabulously expensive legal counsel and unbelievably good luck.

In 1966, Dr. Dungeon encountered the Ancient Astronaut, a mysterious cosmic-powered alien who resembled the giant statues of Easter Island. Over the course of a titanic battle above the streets of Arcadia, the Astronaut revealed to Sneed some of the powersuit's mysterious origins. The suit, he explained, opened a conduit to a transdimensional prison planet known as Hellworld, a hopeless, violent dumping ground for the galaxy's vilest criminals. The Astronaut didn't know how it had come to Earth, but spoke of a 1000-strong alliance of interstellar police called the Gatesmen, who used similar suits to patrol the spaceways and keep them safe from evil. Exile to Hellworld, he said, was reserved only for the very worst, most powerful galactic criminals, and amounted to a virtual death sentence for anyone else. He begged Sneed to put aside his criminal career for the sake of his victims.

The ploy didn't work. Instead, Sneed absorbed the Ancient Astronaut into the costume's chestpiece, cynically telling the alien that if he cared so much about his victims he should go to Hellworld and protect them himself. The televised battle brought Sneed to the attention of the Astronaut's friend Gavin Pierce, the leader of META-4, who tracked and attempted to capture him throughout the decade.

Pierce and several META-4 agents, determined to put Marvin Sneed out of commission forever, attacked Dr. Dungeon in late 1970, while he was distracted in battle with the Happening in Arcadia. During the fight, Dr. Dungeon absorbed a full squad of META-4 agents and two members of the Happening, the Tantric Avenger and Adam Century. The demoralized Happening fell apart later that year, about the same time Dr. Dungeon received a life sentence for his crimes.

In court, however, Dr. Dungeon's lawyers revealed an astonishing fact–Sneed had become obsessed with the costume in 1965, and had not removed it in the five years since. In that time, he had not slept, had eaten only seldomly, and appeared not to have aged a day. Forcing him to remove the costume, they charged, would be a violation of his civil rights and, since no one knew what effect it would have on his physiology, would classify as cruel and unusual punishment. The judge (later imprisoned on bribery charges in an unrelated case) agreed, sending Sneed to a special prison and placing a META-4-built lock on the costume's chestpiece. There he remained until just last month, when he finally was released from prison on parole. But Dr. Dungeon has no intention of reforming. Once, America's newspapers told his glorious story in daily updates. Sneed longs for a rebirth of those bygone days.

But first, he'll need some money.

USING DR. DUNGEON

Dr. Dungeon provides Gamemasters the opportunity to insert a Silver Age-style supervillain into a modern campaign without resorting to time travel. Sneed was little changed by his lengthy prison stay, and his motivations remain cardboard as ever–get rich, get in the papers, repeat. He's jealous of most modern mega-villains, and seeks to regain his former post as the nation's most wanted supervillain (something that's extremely unlikely to happen given the existence of powerhouses like the Czar, Atomic Brain, and Kalak the Mystic).

If you use Dr. Dungeon, you'll probably end up sending one or more characters to Hellworld, a difficult-to-escape prison planet in the far reaches of the dimensional cosmos. Details on this world have been left deliberately vague, allowing Gamemasters to create the place as best suits their campaign. Possible denizens of Hellworld from this book include Sovereign (p. 92), the Carrion Queen (p. 48), Waymaker (p. 112), Sulemain (p. 96), and the Mountain King (p. 76), to say nothing of the hordes of demons (p. 24), aliens (p. 21), cultists (p. 23), goblins (p. 24), and thugs (p. 29) that infest the place and make life there a living Hell.

Whether Hellworld becomes a major set-piece for the campaign depends largely upon preference and upon how many characters have been absorbed. If Dr. Dungeon managed to trap the entire party, perhaps a brief campaign arc is in order, with the characters attempting to find some means of escape (perhaps with the help of previously marooned heroes like the Ancient Astronaut and the Tantric Avenger). If only a few characters have been absorbed, the campaign might take a short detour as half the group tries to find some way to free their friends, either by enlisting the help of a dimensional traveler like Vagabond (p. 108) or by setting off on a physical journey to Hellworld.

TACTICS

Dr. Dungeon isn't totally malevolent, and has taken the Ancient Astronaut's warning about his suit's chestplate seriously enough that he no longer absorbs bystanders and security guards as a matter of course. He won't hesitate to absorb a troublesome superhero, however, and is eager to try it soon to make sure that the META-4 power lock recently disabled (for a fee) by Player 2 (p. 84) didn't damage his ability to send enemies to Hellworld (it didn't). Although he's far from a genius, Sneed is smart enough to realize that it's easier to absorb big, dumb enemies than it is to absorb smart foes (because resisting the Dimensional Travel power check requires a Will save), and plans his battles accordingly.

Despite the power of the chestpiece, Dr. Dungeon prefers to take out enemies with a combination of his Energy Blast and powerful melee blows bolstered by his terrific Super-Strength.

GAME STATISTICS

Dr. Dungeon: PL 11; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 17 (+5 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft.; Atk +6 melee (+10S, unarmed) or Atk +6 melee (DC 20 Will save, Dimensional Travel touch), +8 ranged (+10S/L, Energy Blast–light); SV Dmg +2 (Protection +10), Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Knowledge (history) +6, Search +6, Spot +4.

Feats: Above the Law*, Attack Focus (Energy Blast), Attack Focus (unarmed), Human Shield*, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot.

Equipment: Dr. Dungeon's powersuit grants him the following powers:

Alien Powersuit [*Effect:* Armor +10; *Extra:* Immunity (aging, cold, disease, exhaustion, fire, poison, pressure, starvation, sonic, suffocation); *Power Stunts:* All-Around Sight, Amphibious, Darkvision, Rapid Healing, See Invisibility, True Sight; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 26 pp].

↘ Dimensional Travel +10 [*Extras:* Ghost Touch, Range (touch); *Flaws:* Device, Limited (Hellworld only), Others Only; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp].

↘ Energy Blast (light) +10 [*Extras:* Deflection; *Power Stunt:* Dual Damage; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 22 pp].

↘ Flight +10 [*Extras:* Super-Flight; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp].

↘ Super-Strength +10 [*Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 30 pp].

CAPERS

Attica! Attica!: Dr. Dungeon's disregard for bystanders and penchant for slipping through the fingers of justice combine in a karmic revenge plot! The technologist wife of an innocent man Dr. Dungeon absorbed years ago captures the villain in a devious mechanical trap and tortures him until he produces her long-lost lover. Since the good doctor doesn't understand how the gate function of his powersuit works, the vigilante decides to conduct painful experiments aimed at unlocking the suit's secrets. In the process, she manages to free dozens of galactic villains and hideous monsters, which draws the player characters to the scene.

iron cross



17

THE THOUSAND-YEAR REICH LIVES WITH THE BIRTH OF THE THIRD GENERATION, AND THE THIRD GENERATION LIVES BY MY LEAVE/

NAZI ÜBERMENSCH OVERLORD

REAL NAME	Unrevealed
OTHER IDENTITY	Secret
BASE OF OPERATIONS	Global
GROUP AFFILIATION	Nazi Party, ODESSA
NATIONALITY	German (Neu-Schwabenland) citizen

HEIGHT	6' 6"	EYES	Blue
WEIGHT	280 lbs.	HAIR	Unknown

BACKGROUND

While the Americans created their first superhumans through scientific experiment, Germany's Third Reich took a more cost-effective approach. In the early years of World War II, Nazi scientists and secret agents skulked around the United States and Western Europe, kidnapping foreign superhumans for dissection and replication in German labs. This grisly craft gained its greatest success in 1943 when Everyman, the original American superhuman, vanished while flying a reconnaissance mission over Berlin. Months later, a demented Nazi trio called V3 appeared, boasting the powers of America's foremost champion. Later that year, another apparent Everyman offshoot took the field, a masked aristocratic übermensch who called himself Iron Cross.

Iron Cross *(Eisenkreuz)* clothed himself in the regalia of Nazism, his features concealed by an elaborate mechanical iron mask. He spread his fame thwarting crimes on the German homefront, casting rumors about his identity to every state of Germany. Popular legend considered him a top Luftwaffe flight leader disfigured in combat and granted fabulous power in remembrance of his brave sacrifice to the Reich. His legend soon reached the ear of Adolf Hitler, who made Iron Cross his personal bodyguard and special consultant in 1944.

With allied soldiers on Berlin's d rstep, the Führer struck out desperately at L don itself, sending all of his superhumans to England with orders to destroy the British capital. The Nazi team encountered a well-prepared Victory Legion of American and European heroes, and the resulting battle soon became history's bloodiest superhuman conflict. A dozen combatants and hundreds of civilians lost their lives. Realizing a lost cause, Iron Cross quit the field, vanishing completely from public life.

For much of the next decade, he worked behind the scenes as the supreme commander of ODESSA, a secret society of German special agents who ensured the safe passage of Nazi war criminals and German artistic and scientific geniuses from occupied Germany to a secluded Antarctic refuge called Neu-Schwabenland. Iron Cross and his agents ferried their charges away from the public eye using "flying saucer" vessels developed too late to tilt the war against the Allies. Later, he came to the rescue of migrating Nazis in South America, giving birth to a cottage industry of Iron Cross sightings that saw the United States and Israel dispatch agent after fruitless agent in an impossible mission to catch

ARTIST: ERIC CANETE
COLORIST: GEOFF ONG

him in the act, or even to confirm that he was still alive.

Confirmation arrived in full in 1958, when META-4 agents Gavin Pierce and Johnny Calhoun encountered Iron Cross and a cadre of Nazi goons on Easter Island. The Americans had come to Rapa Nui to investigate a mysterious chamber discovered by archeologists beneath one of the island's largest monoliths; the Nazis presumably came to destroy that chamber. Iron Cross made short work of Pierce and his allies, brutally dispatching them with stunning displays of super-strength. Before the Nazi supervillain could kill Johnny Calhoun, Pierce pried open the chamber's seals, releasing a powerful alien being named Aton, trapped on the island since his vessel crashed there centuries ago. Aton routed Iron Cross and went on to become the celebrated Ancient Astronaut. Iron Cross once again vanished from history, returning to the solitude of Neu-Schwabenland.

Connecting rumors of Nazi flying saucers to their apparent interest in the Ancient Astronaut revealed that the Antarctic Germans were interested in outer space and alien races, but couldn't hope to hint at the extent to which Neu-Schwabenland had become immersed in the world of the extra terrestrial. After finally reaching the Nazi compound, loyal Germans were informed that their government had, since the mid-1930s, received technological assistance from the skoviak, a reptilian alien race who wished to see Germany dominate Earth. Caring nothing of human politics, the skoviak valued only Aryan genetic stock, which bonded easily with skoviak DNA to create perfect "invisible" agents. Aligned to Nazi ideals, these deep cover spies would insinuate themselves into human society, achieving positions of importance and awaiting the opportunity to turn the planet over to the skoviak without shedding unnecessary blood or wasting natural resources in a violent invasion.

Immediately before his death at the end of the Second World War, Adolf Hitler predicted that the "Third Generation" of Nazis would rise once again and claim the world as its own. While angry militant twentysomethings throughout Europe follow the career of the Nazi rock diva Blitz, arrogantly thinking themselves fulfilling Hitler's prophecy, the true third generation of German/skoviak crossbreeds are just being born in Neu-Schwabenland, already preparing for the day when they will join their parents and grandparents in the world beyond the Blizzard Doors. When three generations of skoviak moles hold positions of influence in world governments and the boards of directors of multinational corporations, the coup will be complete, and Adolf Hitler's final words will ring true from his unmarked grave.

USING IRON CROSS

Don't fancy mixing your Nazis with your aliens, but like the idea of a World War II-era menace reaching forward from history to touch the lives of your heroes? Ditch the alien element and make Neu-Schwabenland a very terrestrial compound developed by ODESSA following the war. In this scenario, even the best Nazi engineering couldn't keep a community as large as Neu-Schwabenland alive for so long without a healthy dose of obligatory comic book catastrophe. Some time in the 1950s, the subterranean city's Blizzard Doors collapsed, plunging the compound into deadly cold. Neu-Schwabenland's citizens died within hours. Somehow, Iron Cross survived, although his body entered a cold-induced torpor that lasts until the modern day.

The player characters become involved when contacts in the government or scientific community discover the entrance to Neu-Schwabenland while conducting a geological survey of Antarctica. Opening the damaged Blizzard Doors only to discover once-opulent swastika-emblazoned hallways, the authorities decide to enlist superhuman help. Once discovered and thawed, Iron Cross attempts to escape, taking control of existing pro-Nazi subcultures (possibly with the help of Blitz, p. 46) to reignite the fires of the greatest war the world has ever known.

Whether you prefer him as noble scion of a new order of alien-infused Nazism or as a thawed-out throwback to a lost age of heroes and villains, Iron Cross' demeanor and mannerisms remain constant. A calculating, self-interested genius, Iron Cross cloaks himself in Nazi ideology but is most interested in maintaining and expanding his leadership role and life of privilege.

The skoviak known their plan will fail if Earth develops meaningful space travel before the Third Generation achieves maturity, predicted about 2020. Accordingly, Iron Cross and his ODESSA agents work to thwart experiments into space travel and to hunt down and destroy all evidence of extra terrestrials in order to shepherd a skeptical populace. Characters from other planets or those who benefit from alien technology might encounter a surprise visit from Iron Cross, which could put the player characters on a trail that leads straight to high adventure in Neu-Schwabenland.

Iron Cross dislikes American and European superheroes, particularly those who clothe themselves in patriotic garb. He peppers battle banter with references to how current opponents could never cut it in the "golden age" of heroics. If one of your heroes maintains a legacy that goes back to the 1940s, Iron Cross presents an interesting opportunity to provide an alternate viewpoint of the player character's predecessor. Perhaps Iron Cross reveals something unflattering about the character, maintaining that the hero always ended a fight unconscious, or that he or she once confided in him that they agreed with Nazi sentiments. (Depending upon how darkly your campaign views the world, perhaps some of these insinuations are true.)

TACTICS

Iron Cross has been in the superhuman business since the 1940s, and he fights like a man who has benefited from decades of experience. He seldom puts himself in unnecessary danger, frequently shooting grounded opponents from the safety of the air. An arrogant braggart, he has trouble resisting a one-on-one fight with a similarly powerful character or a character who represents a legacy that goes back to the so-called Golden Age. In melee combat, he prefers to bash opponents with foreign objects such as cars, street signs, or steel girders. He occasionally peppers his fight commentary with bad puns and pithy quips in the tradition of other 1940s superhumans.

GAME STATISTICS

Iron Cross: PL 17; Init +4 (Dex); Defense 29 (+15 base, +4 Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft.; Atk +20 melee (+15S, unarmed), +19 ranged (+15L, blaster pistol); SV Dmg +4 (Protection +10), Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +8, Language (French, German), Listen +12, Pilot +14, Search +12, Spot +12.

Feats: Durability, Immunity (aging, cold, electricity, exhaustion, pressure, radiation, suffocation).

Powers: Flight +10 [*Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Super-Senses +10 [*Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Super-Strength +10 [*Extra:* Protection; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 5 pp; *Total:* 50 pp].

Equipment: Blaster pistol (+15L), iron mask [*Effect:* Sensory Protection +10; *Power Stunts:* Radio Broadcast, Radio Hearing; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 12 pp].

CAPERS

Seven Priceless Paintings!: Recently, several previously unknown masterpieces by the World War II-era German painter Alfe Strasse have surfaced in international art circles. Shadowy agents of ODESSA are killing to get them back. An investigation into Strasse reveals that the master vanished at the end of World War II, and was presumed to have been killed during the Allied invasion of Berlin. All trails lead to a Chilean art dealer, who in turn leads the PCs to legends of Neu-Schwabenland, where Strasse and hundreds of other cultural figures were smuggled in the era of the Nuremberg Trials. A trip to Neu-Schwabenland, naturally, leads to a confrontation with Iron Cross.

Goering's Diary: Reichmaster Herman Goering, Adolf Hitler's hand-selected would-be successor, distastefully referred to Iron Cross as "the foreigner" in his diary, which refers to an "Antarctic mountain range" as the German superhuman's final destination. ODESSA badly wants Goering's diary, and is willing to kill whomever it needs to in order to retrieve it. Why? What happens when the diary falls into the hands of the player characters?

JOHNNY REB



13

AMERICA SHALL FALL, AND WITH IT'S DESTRUCTION, I SHALL BE FREE!

DEMONIC ANTI-PATRIOT

	Balshamon
	Secret
	The American South
	The Incorruptible Society
	Extraplanar
	Elmer Durrocks, Bryce Atkins, etc.
6' 3"	Blue / Brown
180 lbs.	Unknown

BACKGROUND

As General Sherman marched toward Atlanta in 1864, an increasingly nervous Confederate President Jefferson Davis entertained all manner of far-flung schemes to turn the tide of the American Civil War. In June of that year, Davis received a delegation from Vatican City led by the enigmatic sorcerer Father Luciano, a high-ranking agent in the Ordo Seclorum, a secret cabal of Catholic wizard-philosophers who guarded the arcane knowledge wrested from heathens during the Inquisition. Father Luciano delivered to Davis a crown of thorns hand-woven by Pope Pius IX, who saw parallels between the plight of the Confederacy and his own struggle against radical Italian reformers. Luciano also offered the beleaguered president his services and skill in the mystical arts.

At President Davis's request, Luciano and his men initiated a dark magical ritual that manifested Balshamon, a demonic spirit from the underworld, and forced it to inhabit the body of a young rebel soldier. The proud duke of Hell boasted that he would not depart Earth "until the Union shall fall." Luciano and Davis named the creature Johnny Reb, a tireless soldier lit by the fires of self determination and the powers of enduring Southern cultural institutions.

The only other man to see Balshamon manifest on Earth was St. Germain, an immortal European adventurer, jewel thief, and raconteur who had tracked his long-time enemy Luciano from Italy to Richmond. After a successful confrontation with Luciano, St. Germain dogged Johnny Reb's trail all the way to Atlanta, where the demon dispatched hundreds of Union soldiers in his protection of the city. In a climactic battle, St. Germain shot Johnny Reb in the forehead, lodging a sanctified solid-gold bullet into his demon-tainted brain. Believing the matter settled, St. Germain returned to Europe to delight courtesans and society ladies with his tales of bravery on the American front.

Johnny Reb's body never decomposed, however, and during the Union's occupation of Atlanta it served as a sort of roving mascot of the Confederate defeat, moving from tavern to tavern to hang above mantles as a grim trophy. General Sherman considered the body a good luck charm, and ordered that any soldier who removed the bullet from its head be shot. The Union abandoned Atlanta that November, leaving Johnny Reb to burn with the rest of the city. But Balshamon, still trapped within the lifeless corpse, would not die so easily.

Over the next hundred years, the corpse of Johnny Reb, rescued intact from the ashes of Atlanta, served as an object of adoration for the Incorruptible Society, a group of influential white supremacists who fought integration, Reconstruction, and finally civil rights throughout the American South. They concocted a false history for the man and the gold bullet, honoring his memory in quasi-religious ceremonies. In 1964, Elmer Durrocks, supreme leader of the Incorruptible Society, removed the bullet from Johnny Reb's head in a ritual that had been ordained by prophecy. Balshamon's spirit spurted from the wound, dominating Durrocks and transforming the racist politico into a host. Johnny Reb lived again.

The demon decided to use his new form to take control of the Incorruptible Society, reasoning that upsetting America's racial tensions was the best way to destroy the country. He and his cronies sponsored and organized a series of lynchings and murders of civil rights activists that lasted more than a year. Johnny concocted a fanciful costume sure to bring the attention of the media, which he figured would only spread his message, hastening the fall of the nation. Instead, it gained him the attention of former Homefronters Victory Girl, Ouija, and the Agrarian, who came out of government-forced retirement to deal with his menace. A lengthy battle left the Incorruptible Society scattered and Elmer Durrocks in a coma, the spirit of Balshamon trapped within.

In 1970, a liberal hospital worker named Bryce Atkins decided that Durrocks didn't deserve to live, even in a coma. The young orderly took the law into his own hands and switched off Johnny Reb's life support. Instead of the gentle death he expected, Bryce looked on in horror as Balshamon's demonic lifeforce oozed from the dying Durrocks. In moments, the fiend inhabited his third human host. Within months, he'd reestablished himself as a supervillain, adopting an updated version of his costume and contacting former members of his organization. His greatest modern victory came in 1980, when he murdered the Native American Statesman Orenda.

Finally captured in the late 1980s, Johnny Reb was remanded to a federal penitentiary in Washington, D.C., where he seems to have passed out of history. Recent divinations by the Luciferian revealed that Balshamon somehow left Bryce Atkins in the early 1990s, but he has not been heard from in the meantime. While it's possible that the demon discovered some way to escape Earth, America still stands. It seems likely Johnny Reb will return.

USING JOHNNY REB

More than 100 years of servitude to long-dead Confederate masters have granted Johnny Reb humiliating perspective. Now on his fourth human host, the demon despairs that America might never fall, and that he might be trapped here forever, never to return to his beloved kingdom in the Underworld. He wants desperately to leave Earth, and he isn't willing to go through another half-dozen hosts to escape.

The details behind Johnny's possession are left as special effects for the GM to decide upon as best fits his campaign. You might rule that Balshamon's spirit must be disrupted through a magical ritual after his host has been killed, or you might decide that the only way to truly trap the demon is to completely incapacitate (but not kill) his host. Simply dying shouldn't be enough to get rid of him forever, or he would have tried killing himself a long time ago.

Who serves as his current host has been left deliberately vague in order to best fit developments in your own series. One option is to fool your players into trusting a government or military official who only later reveals his true identity. The statistics below reflect what happens when Johnny inhabits an average host. If you decide to place him in the body of a more powerful character (perhaps a superhero!), be sure to adjust his point totals and power level accordingly.

No matter how well he hides within the body of a host, Johnny Reb will have a difficult time masking his feelings for the racial minorities of America, particularly African Americans. Although all humans looked alike to him upon his arrival in 1864, a century of inhabiting the minds and bodies of vile racists has led him to believe his own message. His secret army of bigots remains strong (particularly in the American South) and awaits his orders to march on state capitals, rifles and nooses in hand.

TACTICS

Johnny Reb was summoned to Earth to fight in the front lines, and he prefers to lead his followers from the heat of battle. He fancies himself a "Southern gentleman," often challenging his enemies to one-on-one battles to "prove the measure of a man." Although he's a despicable racist, he retains a certain gentility that colors his combat options; Johnny despises cheats and will never strike a (white) man whose back is turned to him. Against formidable foes, he attacks from afar with Energy Blasts from his Flaming Sword while moving to close for melee combat.

GAME STATISTICS

Johnny Reb: PL 13; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 23 (+10 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +14 melee (+24L, Flaming Sword), +13 ranged (+13L, Energy Blast—fire); SV Dmg +2 (Protection +8), Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 18.

Skills: Bluff +23, Diplomacy +24, Disguise +17, Gather Information +17, Intimidate +17, Taunt +17.

Feats: Attack Focus (armed), Indomitable Will, Infamy, Inspire, Leadership, Minions (Loyalty 36).

Powers: Mental Protection +10 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Super-Charisma +13 [*Extra:* Intimidating Presence; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 39 pp], Super-Strength +8 [*Extra:* Protection; *Flaw:* Protection Ineffective against gold weapons; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 32 pp].

Equipment: Flaming Sword [*Effect:* Weapon +13; *Power Stunt:* Extra Attack (Energy Blast—fire); *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 15 pp].

Weakness: Quirk (racist). Balshamon will never willingly cooperate or assist non-white individuals, and holds African Americans in particularly low regard. If offered multiple targets, Johnny Reb chooses to attack non-whites over white opponents, even if doing so means putting himself at a tactical disadvantage. It takes great effort for him to tolerate the presence of his "racial inferiors" even in social situations.

CAPERS

Johnny's Return!: Johnny Reb currently inhabits the body of Lloyd Arbitage, Defense Secretary of the United States of America. Working in concert with elements within META-4, Arbitage has initiated the Orenda Project, an effort to secretly release super-criminals from imprisonment and use them as disposable agents for top-secret espionage and black-budget military operations in foreign countries. While these efforts nominally serve American interests such as assisting the Wars on Drugs and Terrorism or combating the influence of Unitrol in Africa and South America, their primary purpose is to destabilize foreign governments and get the United States involved in military conflicts around the globe.

The heroes might become aware of Orenda when a prison vehicle driving from a super-criminal prison or asylum to a local airport or safe house crashes, depositing a half-dozen villains who should be safe behind bars on an interstate highway. Clues lead to a warehouse safe house and hints of the Orenda Project, which ultimately leads all the way back to Washington.

Gathering the Posse: Before he can make a move against America, Johnny Reb knows he must contact his faithful racists in the Incorruptible Society. The only trouble is, the secret order has broken into several factions in the past 20 years, with at least three individuals positioning themselves to assume the role of Master Crow, leader of the Society.

Perhaps Johnny must dispose of these three would-be leaders before he can take control of his minions, and the heroes become involved when they stumble upon the butchered corpse of a ritually murdered Society leader. A little research at the crime scene reveals the hit's tie to the Incorruptible Society, and any supersleuth with an interest in past criminals will be expecting Johnny Reb around every corner.

As an added twist, use this caper months before you introduce Johnny Reb to the campaign, building anticipation for his return as you allow the players to focus on other things for a while. This will give the impression that things are going on during background "off time," which will make your campaign seem more vibrant and alive.



20

NOW, NOW. DON'T FLINCH. YOUR *BLOOD SACRIFICE* BRINGS YOU GREAT HONOR.

DERANGED BODYSNATCHING SORCERER

REAL NAME	Kalak
DUAL IDENTITY	None
BASE OF OPERATIONS	Global
GROUP AFFILIATION	None
NATIONALITY	Mayan

HEIGHT	6' 2"	EYES	Red
WEIGHT	145 lbs.	HAIR	Unknown

KALAK THE MYSTIC

The Sorcerer-Prince Kalak the Mystic surveyed the thriving city of Tikal from his vantage atop the massive temple of Ah Pook the Destroyer, Mayan god of death. His subjects thronged at the tower's base, bearing offerings of fresh fruits, gold, and human sacrifice. Seventy-six of the choicest vassals from a hundred miles around had been gathered, and kneeled on the ground far below him, necks outstretched. Otherworldly priests, garbed in the finest fabrics and metals of the empire, stood behind the offerings, eagerly awaiting Kalak's signal.

It would be the greatest blood festival the city had ever known, but Kalak was not satisfied. Even the best his people could offer would be an insult to Ah Pook, a trifling effort unworthy of the death god's terrible attention. The only offering that mattered was the supreme offering, the inevitable end of the world, during which Ah Pook would become intoxicated for eternity on the decadence and terror engendered by the Earth's dying days.

Kalak lived his life in honor of Ah Pook, valuing what he valued, coveting what he coveted. The people honored him as the death god's living manifestation, so who was he to say that Kalak and Ah Pook were not one and the same? Those honors meant for Ah Pook must also be meant for him, Kalak reasoned. The world's last day, December 21, 2012, lay hundreds of years in the future, but time would not prevent him from collecting his ultimate tribute.

Kalak's ancestors had developed a process of propelling their spirits forward in time, a now-forbidden art that had contributed directly to the world's decay. Turning from the spectacle of the blood festival, Kalak descended the narrow interior steps of the Temple of the Destroyer, bursting the seals of the structure's oldest chambers and rediscovering the lost secrets of temporal projection. Abandoning his city to chaos and lawlessness that would surely please his beloved god, Kalak's spirit exploded forward in time, speeding toward oblivion. Instead, the magical essence crashed out of the timestream in 1780, trapped violently in a golden mask by a decadent London parlor magician named Prescott Wynne.

Wynne had hoped to impress a gathering of society friends by muttering an ancient and long-dormant incantation. Ever the showman, he gamely placed the mask on his face when it began to shake and glow, sealing his fate by allowing Kalak to destroy his soul and dominate

RAMÓN PÉREZ

his body. Enraged by his confinement and distance from 2012, Kalak decided to pass his time making a study of terror and suffering by inflicting horror and woe as widely as possible. He took a clinician's approach to his craft, orchestrating complex social and political schemes aimed at spreading misery and terror.

Every few years, Kalak the Mystic burns out his host body, and must dominate another or remain trapped in the mask and unable to interact with the world. This process has seen him in the form of Madame Dufayel, an aristocratic noblewoman who manipulated the French Revolution and who went to the guillotine with Robespierre (1783–1791); Montmarche, an assistant to Napoleon (1791–1818); a Nazi commandant (1941–1950); and others.

After World War II, Kalak commanded a small region of Poland, a gift from his Nazi overlords. By 1950, Kalak had used centuries of accumulated magical lore and artifacts to make the place a living terror, a forever-dark landscape of agony and brutality. A protective aura encircled the city of Gorzow, the base of Kalak's diabolical power. Acting at the request of Poland's Soviet overseers, a consortium of mystics including Mr. Mystery, Lady Hex, Menhir, St. Germain, and Doc Mesmer penetrated the aura and destroyed Kalak the Mystic after a difficult battle. Unable to reach a consensus on what to do with the mask, they turned it over to the care of Scorpio-2, where it languished until just last year.

During the transition from Scorpio-2 to META-4 in the late 1950s, many dangerous acquisitions were mislabeled or overlooked, leading to several critical items escaping constant surveillance to end up in a low-security warehouse. In 2002, an unwitting robber infiltrated one such facility, and began breaking into crates to evaluate his potential loot. Thrilled to discover a beautiful solid gold mask in a crate marked "papers," the thief greedily held his find up to his face, allowing Kalak to take command of his body. Exhilarated after his release from confinement in the mask, Kalak launched himself into the air to study the stars. He exulted upon learning the year, pleased that Ah Pook's greatest tribute lay just a decade away.

Kalak knows that little time remains to honor his blood god appropriately. Any good apocalypse, he reasons, must have its precursors, its terrible, lurching steps toward the End Times. Armed with centuries of magical study and macabre experimentation, Kalak the Mystic stands poised to act as the harbinger of the world's greatest doom, spreading fear, destruction, and unrest to fuel humanity's unavoidable greatest sacrifice.

USING KALAK

Kalak the Mystic is the world's most powerful sorcerer, a calculating, death-obsessed agent of destruction whose very existence is a threat to the survival of humanity. Whether or not the world will in fact end in 2012 doesn't really matter–Kalak believes that it will, and is willing to do the dirty work himself if he must. Ah Pook must be praised, he believes, even if he must craft his tribute alone.

Like the Atomic Brain, Kalak should be one of your campaign world's "heavies," the kind of villain whose very appearance attracts the attention of dozens of superheroes. Beginning heroes are better off facing minions of Kalak, such as modern cults dedicated to worshipping him as a living manifestation of a once-forgotten god.

As the player characters become more experienced, perhaps they're invited by another superteam to take part in a joint mission to foil one of the sorcerer's ghoulish schemes. That fight should establish Kalak as a major-class villain worthy of "drop everything to defeat him as quickly as possible" respect. How will your team react when, in the middle of hunting down or even fighting a lesser foe, they learn that Kalak is about to do something obscenely terrible with no time to lose? Do they let the other villain go? Do they split up to take on both menaces at once?

When your PCs finally meet up with Kalak, try to instill a sense that the villain doesn't play around, and that he's more than willing to kill innocents if it pleases him to do so. In fact, he considers murder a form of religious sacrifice, so long as the victim is prepared according to the ancient traditions. If Kalak is allowed to thrive, many, many people will die, and almost everyone who comes into contact with him will suffer in some way.

As a plot device to make the campaign more interesting, a side-effect of the ancient spell that trapped Kalak's spirit in the mask made the mask completely immune to harm of any kind. There's simply no way to destroy it, which means Kalak will survive forever. Challenge your PCs to come up with an adequate way of getting rid of the mask effectively.

If they hurl the mask into outer space, perhaps an alien explorer later discovers the mask and becomes Kalak's latest host. If they dump it in the ocean, perhaps it's found by an undersea "Atlantean" or ordinary treasure diver. Be creative with how you bring Kalak back and your players will love you for it. Doing it too often, however, will make their frequent defeats of the villain seem meaningless.

As a plot device, there's no real game rules for how Kalak's possession works. Assume Kalak automatically dominates the mind of anyone who wears the mask, utterly destroying their soul and keeping them alive only so long as the body remains bound to Kalak's spirit. Try to give the players a good idea that donning the mask is a death sentence by NPC accounts or personal experience. If a PC attempts to put it on anyway, give him a DC 10 Will save to recognize a terrible sensation that putting on the mask means a certain death.

TACTICS

Kalak is a master magician, capable of defeating nearly any hero in one-on-one encounters. He's likely to isolate members of an enemy team with his Element Control (earth) power, or take to the air to focus on flying opponents. He relies upon his Force Field to protect him from most harm, but likes to keep his opponents guessing by spending Villain Points to cast spontaneously.

GAME STATISTICS

Kalak the Mystic: PL 20; Init +1 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 26 (+15 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 100 ft.; Atk + 16 melee (+20L, Energy Field–darkness), +16 ranged (+20L, Energy Blast–light); SV Dmg +10, Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 18.

Skills: Bluff +5, Concentration +15, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (occult) +15, Language (choose 5), Listen +10, Sense Motive +10.

Feats: Darkvision, Detect (magic), Immunity (aging, disease, starvation), Improved Initiative, Power Immunity, True Sight.

Power: Sorcery + 20 [*Spells:* Element Control (earth), Create Object, Disintegration, Energy Blast (light), Energy Field (darkness), Flight, Force Field, Illusion, Telepathy; *Power Stunts:* Extra Spells (2); *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 7 pp; *Total:* 144 pp].

CAPERS

The Coming of Uhag: In a strangely cooperative move, the Illuminati has lent their assistance to the heroes in battling Kalak the Mystic, providing them with the necessary knowledge and mystical devices to defeat the Mayan menace. After the PCs' victory, an agent of the Illuminati takes drastic action.

An Illuminati adept named Sterling Precision siezes the mask from the PCs, claiming that an even greater threat approaches, a threat that puts the entire multiverse in peril–the coming of Uhag, Bringer of Chaos. Precision has the ability to don Kalak's mask without risking the annihilation of his spirit, a process that will grant him great sorcerous powers. Perhaps the gambit works due to the aid of Ah Pook himself, who cannot thrive if the entire multiverse is destroyed, after all. As William S. Burroughs once said, "death needs time for what it kills to grow in, for Ah Pook's sweet sake."

While he is narrowly in control of the mask, Precision can act as the team's director, ushering them into missions with dire supernatural consequences for failure. Tension will run high as the heroes are aware up-front that their advisor could change into Kalak at any moment, leaving them no inside information to thwart the Bringer of Chaos.



12

HELLO, BOYS. HERE'S A LITTLE TRICK I LEARNED FROM A BURLESQUE-DANCING SHODUS IN THE HORSEHEAD NEBULA.

DEMENTED ALIEN HONEYTRAP

	Nyra Gazz
	Unknown to the general public
	United States
	None
	Extra-terrestrial (waloran)
5' 3"	Black / Black
130 lbs.	Unknown

BACKGROUND

Nyra Gazz terrorized known space for 13 years until she was finally brought to justice by interstellar police sworn to the Myriad, a confederation of aligned non-aggressive planets that includes Gazz's homeworld, Walor. Her captors charged her with abuse of her natural psychic powers, locked her in the brig of a small spacecraft, and set out for a trial held near the center of Myriad-space, several million miles from Earth. The ship ran into trouble as it sped through our solar system, crashing into a huge asteroid in the debris belt between Mars and Jupiter. Only Gazz survived the crash, which disabled most ship systems and released her from an uncomfortable prison. The psychic alien managed to coax the ship into operation, and sought refuge on the nearest planet, Mars. She discovered ancient abandoned cities carved into the walls of the Red Planet's massive canals, but detected no signs of life and regretfully turned the hobbled ship to the most likely safe harbor, a blue world third from the system's sun. With the last ounce of energy left in the ship, Nyra Gazz crash landed in downtown Hollywood, 1955.

A movie crew happened to be shooting nearby, and captured the fiery crash on film that soon made its way to newsrooms across the world. The footage struck a nerve in America, where citizens scared to death of communists expected legions of ravenous aliens to emerge from the ship and begin eating everything in sight. They most definitely didn't expect to see an antennaed blue female leap from the wreckage clothed in a scandalous mini-skirt and matching jetpack.

Since no one had been hurt in the crash and because the "alien" looked so human, nearly everyone dismissed the affair as a Hollywood special effects trick meant to draw attention to an as-yet-unrevealed motion picture. Much to her astonishment, no one attacked or apprehended her, and Gazz soon discovered that Earth was just in the opening years of its leap into space, and thus had no contact with the hated Myriad. Although the crash left her marooned on an unusual planet, it kept her away from the attention of her enemies, who would likely assume that she had been killed when the ship was lost in space.

Gazz soon befriended a coterie of opportunistic Hollywood agents and yes-men, who didn't care if her act was authentic or not so long as she found some way to make money from it. The

crash footage exposed her to the world, they counselled, but she'd make her true splash on the Silver Screen.

Her handlers managed to net her a three-picture contract with a major studio, and soon a whole platoon of fashion designers, make-up artists, and sycophants surrounded her from day to night. She relied upon her mind control powers but rarely, finding the Hollywood types more naturally pliable and subject to her personal charm than any creatures she had ever encountered.

She had access to nearly anything she wanted, fabulous beautiful people adored her, and no one knew of the interstellar crimes that made her wanted throughout the galaxy. Although the occasional lucrative power play presented itself, she managed to resist her criminal impulses. Despite how strange it felt, she was actually happier pretending to be good than she'd ever been reveling in evil.

Three months after she landed on Earth, the studio presented Gazz at a press conference to announce her first motion picture, a color musical entitled *Dinner with the Spacemen*. At the conference, Gazz presented herself as a warrior woman from the planet Mars, the last survivor of a dying world who came to Earth with a message of love and happiness and a warning to abandon the warlike ways that had destroyed her homeworld. She'd been an officer of the law on Mars, she claimed, and promised to uphold the strong Martian virtues alongside great American heroes like the recently disbanded Homefront...just as soon as she made a few more movies. At the close of the press conference, Gazz announced that she'd be taking her own superhero name, and had decided upon "Miss Martian."

Americans (especially men) ate it up, but the conference did little to allay suspicions that the whole thing had been a Hollywood set-up and all but confirmed the lovely woman's Earthly origins to most Americans. Nonetheless, the nation fell in love with Miss Martian, propelling 1956's *Dinner with the Spacemen* to the top of the box office charts. *Slave Girls of Neptune*, which wasn't half as dirty as it sounds, debuted the following year, achieving both critical and commercial success. Between movies, Gazz attempted to fight crime, but McCarthy Era suspicions created a difficult environment for superheroes. While the nation still loved the *idea* of costumed heroes, it was no longer entirely comfortable with the actual thing.

The world became decidedly uncomfortable with Miss Martian in 1959, when META-4 agents surrounded the set of Gazz's third movie and demanded that the starlet surrender herself to the authorities. An old ally of META-4 agent Gavin Pierce, a mysterious alien known as the Ancient Astronaut, had returned to Earth following a year-long sojourn into space. There he encountered agents of the Myriad police, who related the story of Nyra Gazz. The Astronaut put two and two together and made haste to Earth to warn Pierce of the dangerous alien, and Pierce mobilized a 30-strong force to contain and capture her. The operation was a complete disaster, as META-4's pistols weren't able to penetrate Miss Martian's powerful shields. The alien psychic revealed her true nature to rolling cameras as she took over the minds of half the META-4 agents and forced them to shoot the other half. Sixteen men died in the futile effort to capture her, but the government agents did manage to destroy her movie career.

An embittered Miss Martian has surfaced about once a decade since then, and though her stunning beauty hasn't changed, she's become more and more depraved with each passing year. Most of her crimes focus on stealing something beautiful—an emerald the size of a softball, a priceless brassiere embroidered with tiny diamonds—but lately she's taken to kidnapping beautiful men and women for unknown purposes. The one-time darling of Hollywood has become one of its most feared predators.

USING MISS MARTIAN

Thanks to movies like *Aliens* and *Independence Day*, most people imagine aliens as nasty, efficient killers. Miss Martian hearkens back to a more innocent view of aliens, as fun-loving explorers more likely to induce chuckles than terrified screams. Consider using her as the mastermind behind a series of thefts of high-priced jewels perpetrated by glassy-eyed thralls. But the thefts are just a smokescreen to cover a far more important crime. Outside of town, at an experimental technology research facility (perhaps owned by one of the PCs' secret identities), Miss Martian herself is at work attempting to liberate a number of high-tech devices. At long last, she's decided to go home. Will the PCs help her to attempt to bust her, knowing that she'll eventually be back on the streets to start the cycle anew?

TACTICS

Miss Martian is so confident in her ability to control the minds of her enemies that she doesn't even bother carrying any weapons. The eyes of her Mind Control victims become completely jet black while her domination persists. She prefers to use enemies against each other, and while she's not herself a killer, she has few reservations against commanding her puppets to end lives.

The Intimidating Presence extra of her Super-Charisma power manifests in the form of a horrifying face she assumes when enraged. All opponents within 30 feet must make a DC 22 Will save to avoid becoming shaken for 12 rounds. Any characters under PL 17 who fail the save by 10 or more flee from Miss Martian as quickly as possible. A successful save means that the target is immune to her Intimidating Presence for the rest of the encounter.

The four protection rings that encircle her wrists and thighs afford her Protection +10, which grants her virtual immunity from most attacks while allowing her to show off her stunning figure. She wears her jetpack at all times, and beats a hasty retreat if things go poorly in combat.

GAME STATISTICS

Miss Martian (waloran): PL 12; Init +0; Defense +20 (+10 base); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft.; Atk +10 melee (+0S, unarmed), +10 ranged; SV Dmg +1 (Protection +12), Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 20.

Skills: Bluff +26, Diplomacy +24, Pilot +2.

Feats: Attractive, Psychic Awareness, Trance.

Powers: Mind Control +12 [*Extra:* Mental Protection +12; *Flaw:* Obvious; *Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 24 pp], Super-Charisma +12 [*Extra:* Intimidating Presence; *Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 36 pp].

Equipment: Jetpack [*Effect:* Flight +10; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], language ring [*Effect:* Language (English); *Flaw:* Device; *Total:* 1 pp], protection rings [*Effect:* Protection +12; *Flaw:* Device; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 12 pp].

CAPERS

The Beautiful People, the Beautiful People: Miss Martian's recent kidnappings have a very real purpose. After nearly 50 years on Earth she's finally decided to breed, and has been attempting to discover a possible mate whose beauty approaches her own. Waloran physiology allows her to impregnate or be impregnated, so she's been collecting human men and women for much of the last decade and placing them in suspended animation until a final decision can be made. Consider targeting a PC with a high Charisma or the Attractive feat for the final candidate, which brings the heroes to her secret Hollywood lair, where they do battle against a horde of nauseatingly beautiful mindslaves.

Don't Call it a Comeback: A consortium of Miss Martian's 1950s hangers-on retain the rights to her original films, and have initiated production on *Dinner with the Spacemen II*, a tongue-in-cheek modern-day remake starring a saucy young Hollywood starlet in Miss Martian's original role.

The film's original star is less than enthusiastic about not being involved in the production, and has infiltrated the set in plain sight (thanks to her ultra-realistic Miss Martian "costume"), using her Mind Control powers to manipulate members of the cast and crew into killing or injuring each other. The film's producers think the production is cursed, and decide to bring in some superhuman muscle to protect the last few days of shooting.

MOODSWING



10

MY GOD. I CAN FEEL A CHANGE COMING!

MASTER OF 7 MINDS

REAL NAME	Len Xu-Loh
REAL IDENTITY	Unknown to the general public
BASE OF OPERATIONS	United States
GROUP AFFILIATION	ANTAG (former)
NATIONALITY	U.S. citizen

HEIGHT	5' 4"	EYES	Brown
WEIGHT	130 lbs.	HAIR	Black
		AGE	23

BACKGROUND

Len Xu-Loh developed psychic control over the minds of others as a child in Taiwan. Kidnapped from his parents by China's Shining Star paranormal organization, he was in turn kidnapped by the American Endgame Initiative, who viewed him as a potentially valuable psychic resource. They turned him over to Halfmoon House, ANTAG's refuge for psi-active children. There he met his mentor, a brilliant Chinese-American psychic who called himself Headcase. The older psychic put Len through regimens to develop his telepathy, mind control, and mental defenses, and the two became strong friends. Little by little, ANTAG allowed Len to leave the orphanage and experience life. The boy became infatuated with rave culture, developing a strong passion for music and dancing.

In late 2002, Headcase invited him to participate in a psionic exploration of Dreamspace, a group experiment in which eight psychics would project themselves into a psychic dimension thought to be the transcendental consciousness of all sleeping humans. During the experiment, the group came upon a coterie of night terrors, vicious demons native to Dreamspace. Before they were driven off, the creatures severed the astral cords of six psychics, leaving only Headcase and Len able to return to Earth. The six marooned psychics begged the survivors to allow them to nest their psyches within their healthy spirit forms, but Headcase resisted, knowing that to do so would inflict the survivors with madness. He fled Dreamspace, expecting his young student to follow without question. Len remained, however, and allowed the six psi-spirits to bond their astral forms to him in a noble effort he hoped might ultimately save them from oblivion.

Instead, Len's nobility gained him six psychic parasites who live within his mindspace and fight bitterly for control of his body, which they use according to their own motivations. When not in control, the remaining six personalities dwell in a small psychic dimension fueled by the controlling personality's subconscious. Len himself is not a criminal, though he can be prone to violence and hates both ANTAG and Headcase for betraying the lost psychics and leaving them to die, indirectly ruining his life. Other personalities are criminals, however, and take whatever steps are necessary to maintain control as long as they can, making Moodswing seven adversaries in one.

Detailed personality profiles follow:

Preston Hart: Preston Hart, a vicious pyrokinetic pulled out of ANTAG's Rejection Vaults to participate in Headcase's exploration of

Dreamspace, once burned an entire college dormitory to the ground simply because one of its residents, a woman 14 years his junior, had rebuffed his romantic attention. His disregard for human life and unabashed pyromania make him by far the most dangerous of Moodswing's seven personalities—all six of his fellows hate him.

Trigger: Exposure to unusual amounts or displays of fire.

Power: Energy Control (fire) +10 [*Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp].

Feat: Immunity (fire).

Joyce Brendleman: Joyce Brendleman developed Extra Sensory Perception during an intense 3-day labor that produced her only child, a daughter named Chelsey. Her visions led directly to the apprehension of serial killer David Allen Hanson, and soon police stations from around the country called with questions about open cases in their jurisdictions. Despite her growing notoriety in the law enforcement community, Chelsey remained her first priority, and she worried that the policework got in the way of spending time with her precious child. When her country called, however, Joyce agreed to join Headcase's Dreamspace Experiment, expecting to be away from her husband and child for only a matter of hours.

Instead, the experiment went awry and her astral form took refuge in Len Xu-Loh. ANTAG informed her husband that she had died in service to her country, and provided him with a small pension. By the time her psyche managed to assume control, her husband had married a high school sweetheart, whom her 3-year-old daughter referred to as "mommy." An enraged Joyce vowed revenge against ANTAG and Headcase, and began using her powers to track down other psychics throughout the United States. These she murders in order to spare them the grief of an ANTAG betrayal, and to deny the organization its "natural resource" of American psychics. She's indifferent to the other psyches save for Collette, whom she treats as a surrogate child.

Trigger: Exposure to dead bodies.

Power: ESP +5 [*Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 10 pp].

Skill: Profession (mom) +5.

Feat: Track.

Madame Libra: At the time of the Dreamspace Experiment, Jason Lawrence wrote an astrology and psychic advice column for the *Up in the Sky* tabloid under the name "Madame Libra." In life, Madame Libra was Lawrence's transvestite alter-ego, a gorgeous glamour queen and pillar of Arcadia's underground dance scene. The vivacious Libra loved nothing more than ecstasy-fueled parties and outrageous outfits, viewing her psychic gift simply as a means to support her luxurious lifestyle.

Libra went along with the ANTAG experiment to dodge a possession charge, and while she hates sharing a body with six other minds, she's at least thankful that Len's body looks good in a size 5 dress. Libra shares Len's passion for music, and has become one of his most trusted confidantes, the only member of the group he doesn't actively dislike or distrust. Len sticks largely to hip-hop clubs, but occasionally subjects himself to house music dancehalls to reward his friend Libra with a few days of life in the real world.

Trigger: Hearing fabulous dance music.

Power: Precognition +5 [*Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 15 pp].

Skills: Disguise +8, Perform +2 (dance).

Papa Gumbo: Thanks to ubiquitous cheap television ads touting his pay telephone psychic service, Papa Gumbo was by far the most famous of the psychics involved with the Dreamspace Experiment. He was also the least qualified, being merely sensitive to psionic forces. The power of marketing got the 59-year-old con man a spot on the experiment team, an appointment he considers the best thing ever to have happened to him. Now, when he can manage to take control, he has fantastic psychic powers, and has shaved almost four decades from his age. He spends most of his control time concocting highly illegal get-rich schemes using Len's Mind Control power, but spends the money as soon as he gets it, knowing that he will not be in control for long. Papa Gumbo, originally a black man from New Orleans, speaks with a thick Cajun accent.

Trigger: Hearing a ringing phone.

Power: No power change.

Skill: Bluff +7.

Collette: When she was 7 years old, Collette accidentally killed her abusive parents with a powerful mental blast. French authorities, baffled by her mysterious powers and scared to death of the child, transferred her to the care of ANTAG, who placed her in the Halfmoon House orphanage. Two years later, Headcase nominated her for inclusion in the Dreamspace Experiment, reasoning that her mental blast could be important to the team's survival should it be attacked during its exploration.

Years of physical and emotional abuse transformed Collette from a loving child to a hateful engine of wrath and childlike cruelty who cares nothing beyond her immediate whims and curiosities. Her demeanor ranges from sweetly innocent to ruthlessly enraged, and most of the other psyches keep their distance from her. When she controls Len's body, Moodswing's eyes glow with a fiery intensity. She understands English but speaks French exclusively.

Trigger: Exposure to children's toys.

Power: Mental Blast +10 [*Flaw:* Range (normal); *Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp].

Skill: Intimidate +5, Language (French).

The Great Gregarin: Captured in 1988 as a suspected Soviet spy by the Endgame Initiative, the Lithuanian telekinetic known as the Great Gregarin spent most of the intervening years in an American prison until he was summoned to assist Headcase in the Dreamspace Experiment.

On all three occasions in which he has been Moodswing's dominant psyche he's attempted to travel to the Burning Protectorate, home nation of the former Soviet superhero now known to the world as Czar, correctly reasoning that that villain may have inherited the considerable lore of Soviet Cold War psychic research—research that might hold the clue to splitting Moodswing's seven personalities. Gregarin does everything he can to avoid losing control, keeping a mental journal of known triggers and avoiding them whenever possible. He's willing to kill anyone who gets in his way. Gregarin speaks with a thick Eastern European accent.

Trigger: Any time Moodswing must make a Will save against a power other than his own.

Power: Telekinesis +10 [*Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp].

Skill: Bluff +5, Languages (Lithuanian, Russian).

USING MOODSWING

Moodswing is really seven distinct psychic personalities. Choose your favorite psyche or develop additional personalities to suit your campaign. Perhaps a previous psychic enemy your PCs helped send to prison was later recruited by Headcase, and is now part of the amalgamated Moodswing entity. Perhaps Joyce Brendleman is drawn to a psychic hero, hoping to save the character's family by killing him before ANTAG ruins his life. Perhaps your heroes take pity on Len Xu-Loh until another psyche takes over and betrays them. Each personality brings with it a host of possibilities.

TACTICS

Len Xu-Loh prefers to turn foes against each other by using his Mind Control power. He sometimes jokes that he never carries a gun because his enemies always provide him with all the weapons he'd ever need. Moodswing's Mental Link feat allows all the personalities to communicate with one another via psychic link, but several personalities ignore the link when they wish for privacy or when feuding with other psyches.

GAME STATISTICS

Moodswing: PL 10; Init +2 (Dex), Defense 20 (+8 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +9 melee (+1S, unarmed), +10 ranged; SV Dmg +2, Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5 (Mental Protection +10, Indomitable Will); Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills: Diplomacy +5, Hide +5, Language (Mandarin), Sense Motive +6, Taunt +6.

Feats: Attractive, Indomitable Will, Iron Will, Mental Link (×6), Psychic Awareness, Trance.

Powers: Mental Protection +10 [*Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Mind Control +10 [*Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Telepathy +10 [*Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp].

Weakness: Transformation. The six subsumed personalities get a chance to emerge and take control of Len's body when Moodswing encounters certain stimuli. To stave off the transformation, the controlling personality must make a DC 15 Will save. The DC of this save increases by 1 for each round Moodswing is exposed to the triggering stimuli. Specific personality triggers are listed with the personality descriptions above. Each personality has a variety of powers, skills, and feats that come to the fore when that personality holds dominance. These additional attributes replace Len Xu-Loh's Mind Control power, and do not change Moodswing's power level. While the various triggers ensure a steady shift of personalities, Len remains the most powerful personality, and triggers a transformation check any time Moodswing takes lethal damage.

MOONQUAKE

11 I'M GONNA *CRUSH* YOU, BIG-MAN

ONE-MAN DEMOLITION FORCE

	Cody Bloom
	Secret
	Global
	Crime Union (founding member)
	American citizen

5' 10"	Blue		Blonde
180 lbs.	31		



BACKGROUND

In the late 1970s, archeologist Benjamin Bloom stumbled upon an alien artifact of incredible power, a fragment of a shattered gem called the Infinity Moon. Centuries ago, the interstellar sentinels known as the the Gatesmen had utilized the crystal in a planet-sized stasis trap when defending the Sol system against the evil Starvirus. The trap collapsed in a cataclysm barely contained by the Gatesmen, knocking Starvirus from this reality and scattering invaluable arcano-tech across the timestream.

This fragment of the Infinity Moon, when psionically stimulated, affected changes in gravitational topography. By practicing with the stone, Bloom activated a variety of parahuman abilities. Apart from super-human strength and telekinesis, he gained the ability to increase his density, and the gravity affecting others. Swept up with the spirit of the age, Bloom assumed the identity of Moonquake and fought crime alongside the infamous hero team, EXCISE (Extreme Crisis Intervention and Security Enterprise). For a time, he was hero to his young son Cody, and to other children across the country.

Cody idolized his father, and excitedly followed his exploits. He dutifully studied his father's powers, and at 12 begged his dad to take him on as a sidekick, Lunar Lad. The elder Bloom wisely declined, but this was not to say that he was an ideal father. Unfortunately, the life of a hero left little time for family. Moonquake toured the country when not on active duty, and spent only a few weeks out of the year at home. Benjamin barely knew his son. Despite the comfort afforded the family by sizeable EXCISE checks, resentment took hold of the youngest Bloom. He blossomed into a brooding and destructive teen. At the worst possible moment, tragedy struck.

Bangkok '85 was the greatest calamity to strike the world of heroes since the Battle of London 40 years earlier. Terrorists took control of a Bangkok Duran Duran concert, seizing 20,000 hostages. EXCISE, intervened at the precise moment Unitrol-backed counter-insurgents stormed the arena. 5,400 died, and many more were seriously injured. Team leader Hype and the Strobe were killed; Moonquake, the Flea, Hustler, and a young Cyclone suffered grave wounds. The event contributed to a rise in the world's suspicion of superhumans and initiated a lowpoint in the public's trust and tolerance for their former protectors.

During this shadowy era, covert, enhanced kill-squads executed secret national policies.

Neighborhood heroes were branded vigilantes, and America flirted with a policy of "observation" camps for parahumans. Supervillains, who cared nothing of public sentiment, layed constant siege to out-gunned local police. Only grassroots support for the champions of good changed the tide. Still, heroes had a long way to go to re-establish the public trust. The era scarred many people.

Cody Bloom was one of these people. His father returned from Bangkok '85 a shattered hero. In addition to spinal damage that would take his life in less than 5 years, Ben Bloom suffered severe emotional trauma from the bloodbath. His son felt little sympathy, and was disgusted by his father's association with the debacle. The bitter young man refused to speak to his father up to the end. Nevertheless, Ben unrealistically hoped his son would carry on his legacy and redeem his image. He left Cody his battlesuit and the Infinity Moon. After the original Moonquake's quiet death, his spiteful progeny commandeered this legacy with the intention of driving it straight into the ground.

The young Bloom left his mother behind, and squandered his father's sizeable insurance payout. He was bright enough to pick up a bit of engineering know-how in college, but dropped out and turned to a shiftless life of alcohol and petty crime. His father's equipment gathered dust in a safety deposit box.

The sinister spy network Octopus Umbrella gathers intelligence on any suspected advanced or alien technology, and had been keeping a close eye on the Infinity Moon. Their operatives traced it to Cody Bloom, and made him an attractive offer. In exchange for an opportunity to study the artifact, OU would help Bloom upgrade his father's weaponry, no questions asked.

Synthetic copies of the crystal's matrix enable a currently-in-production range of consumer and military anti-grav vehicles, and Octopus Umbrella is set to make billions on the patents. Bloom contributed far less to society with his new toys. In an act of unbridled contempt, he assumed his father's mantle as the new Moonquake, but dedicated his powers to the forces of wanton destruction. In a raid on a Portland software firm, he met and befriended the mad gamer Player 2 (p. 84). After raising hell in the Pacific Northwest for years, he was finally captured by his father's former teammate, Cyclone. He served ten years at the Federal Deep Sound Facility before Player 2 and some turncoat META-4 agents broke him out. The two have recently formed a loose alliance of supervillain gangs known as the Crime Union. Moonquake is currently out on the streets, looking for big stuff to knock down.

USING MOONQUAKE II

Cody Bloom is an angry, destructive man fueled by the demons of his youth. He is driven by little more than a desire to cause mayhem, and revels in vandalism and property damage. Heroes will have a difficult time keeping civilian casualties down and collateral damage at a minimum even when facing the lone Moonquake on a sundry robbery.

Moonquake takes the fight to much larger foes like he's got something to prove. He holds particularly palpable contempt for self-righteous, four-color-style heroes. Cody blamed EXCISE as much as he did his father for his lonely childhood, so he will go out of his way to discredit a team of heroes.

Although his powers to lighten a load leave him with little need for henchmen, Moonquake makes an excellent team player. The sheer destructiveness of his powers can keep numerous heroes preoccupied, while his teammates handle other duties. His greatest disadvantage is an utter lack of subtlety. On covert missions, Moonquake is best utilized as a diversion. He is renowned for getting carried away, and lingering too long on a mission simply smashing things up. Speed metal blares through custom headphones worn under his cowl.

TACTICS

Moonquake's powers are particularly effective as a foil for heavily armed and armored opponents, and he loves wading into the thick of battle. Kinetic energy from a slugfest or projectile weapon is redirected into an exoskeleton, increasing his strength. He sometimes stands still, weathering blow after blow before unleashing a flurry of damage that belies his size.

Moonquake's Grav-Gauntlets can create small gravity wells, slowing down or crushing trapped foes. His enemies find themselves unable to lift their weapons, while they are pummeled by gravitational energy that buckles the pavement.

Indoors, Moonquake enjoys slamming his opponents between the floor and ceiling, while outdoors, he hurls targets a bonecrushing distance into the sky. The brutal supervillain fights dirty, thinking nothing of pulling down a building's entire top floors while remaining aloft in flight. His appetite for destruction knows no bounds.

While his powers leave no signature themselves, his blasts are clearly visible as an invisible spherical weight grinds into the earth. Even blasts targeted at the sky leave tell-tale fissures in the concrete below, as if cleaved by a thin curtain of gravity projecting upward.

GAME STATISTICS

Moonquake: PL 11; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 20 (+8 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft.; Atk +10 melee (+12S, Energy Field–gravity), +10 ranged (+10L/crit 19–20/50-ft. radius, Energy Blast–gravity); SV Dmg +2, Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Intimidate +4, Knowledge (hero lore) +5, Repair +5, Science (physics) +5.

Feats: Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (Energy Blast), Infamy, Power Attack, Point Blank Shot.

Equipment: Armor +10 [*Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], Grav-Gauntlets [*Effect:* Energy Control (gravity) +10; *Extras:* Area (50-ft. radius), Energy Blast, Energy Field; *Power Stunts:* Detect (vibration), Flight; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Alien; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 42 pp], Inertia Generator [*Effect:* Absorption +8; *Extras:* Physical Attacks, Boost (Strength); *Power Stunt:* Durability; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Alien; *Cost:* 4 pp; Total: 33 pp].

CAPERS

Scraping the Bottom: To strengthen their ranks, Moonquake and the Crime Union are holding tryouts at a secret location. META-4 intelligence hacked the super-criminal support website the Wire, and determined the meeting's time and location. The heroes are tasked with gathering information on as many attendees as possible, but because a crime has yet to be committed, the heroes will be forced to keep a low profile.

This is a powderkeg waiting to explode. If the spies are discovered, the newbies are likely to accuse the Union of setting some kind of trap, and could retaliate with the heroes stuck in the middle. Though the auditioning thugs range from PL5–8, there are more than a dozen of them and they wield a variety of dangerous powers. A single, inexperienced parahuman could lose control of mighty Energy Control powers, threatening the entire city. Its unlikely the Union will provide any help, as it prefers to interfere with the heroes to cover their own tracks. This event is a unique way of bringing together a team of heroes who may have considered starting their careers on the wrong side of the law.

The Weight of the World: The world is finally coming to terms with the horrible tragedy of Bangkok '85, and a large monument is planned for the site. Moonquake is beside himself with indignity, and sabotages the project at every turn. He lures the heroes into an insidious trap that will remind the world of the consequences of entrusting their fate to costumed buffoons.

In spite of Player 2's Union by-laws protecting heroes and villains in their private lives, Moonquake abducts the retired EXCISE survivors. (Piper Wilke and Marcus Hauser, Loop and the Flea, respectively, are fit for people nearing fifty, but neither would qualify as parahuman.)

Investigating his father's recently discovered journals, Moonquake has learned of additional fragments of the Infinity Moon, and has used them to construct a potent bomb. The PCs must rescue the veteran heroes from a classic deathtrap that would not only obliterate Bangkok, but open a nasty wound in timespace.

Should the heroes fail, the resonance of the blast threatens to free the world-eater, Starvirus. Luckily for the heroes, Hauser is a technical genius, and Wilke's specialty was dimensional travel. Their assistance should prove invaluable. Moonquake, astounded by the scale of the devastation caused by his gravity bomb, snaps and rages on like a primal engine of destruction.

Mountain King



15	I'LL PAVE OVER THIS WORLD'S BUZZING BITS WITH BEAUTIFUL MOLTEN GOLD.
MYTHIC SUBTERRANEAN CONQUEROR	
REAL NAME	Yuro'at Koloon Boxon XXVI
SPECIAL ABILITIES	None
SCOPE OF OPERATIONS	Multiversal
GROUP AFFILIATION	Self-proclaimed King of the Trolls
HABITABILITY	Extraplanar
HEIGHT	4' 11"
WEIGHT	375 lbs.
EYES	Gold
HAIR	Unknown
SKIN	Gray

BACKGROUND

The Ur universe known as the Primal Sphere encases a portion of the unthinkably massive Axis Strand, a coruscating cosmic filament that serves as the backbone of the multiverse. Few mortals have visited this fantastic world, where all sub-dimensions and planes intersect. Life and unlife storms cascade off the Axis Strand, buffeting a landscape on which elemental forces intermingle violently.

Where the more predictable life energy storms strike, diverse populations of improbable flora and fauna spread like wildfire along the inner surface of the Sphere, where elemental forces like earth, air, fire, and water intersect and allow a semblance of conventional life. Inhabitants refer to the inner surface of the Primal Sphere as the Esplanade. Here, even the surface of the smallest puddle is a window to the infinite planar source of all water. Start digging, and you may never find the surface again.

And dig they do! Many of the Esplanade's species are fueled by elemental energy as well as life force, and show an overpowering affinity for their source element. One group of loosely related proto-creatures, fueled by the spirit of earth, is the trolls. These broad, selfish, gnarled humanoids crave solitude, rarely leaving the Primal Sphere and spending most of their lives tending impossibly huge gem and mineral mines that directly tap the rich veins of the Plane of Earth. But some have managed to venture to our world, where they became archetypal monsters of myth.

The immortal bon vivant and insatiable gem collector St. Germain claimed in his journal to have somehow pierced the Primal Sphere to trade gems with the leader of a powerful troll kingdom. Despite the dangers of the Esplanade, St. Germain seems to have had a grand time, perhaps thanks to the assistance of a native psychopomp. His frolicking adventure came to a halt, however, when he and his guide were captured by a greedy troll warlord named Yuro'at Koloon Boxon XXVI. The psychopomp summoned a celestial host, who soon freed the pair and brought the troll warlord to justice. The celestials cleaved Boxon's mountain stronghold from the surface of the Esplanade and levitated it into the boundless Ether beyond the Primal Sphere, cutting the troll lord from his power source, the Plane of Earth. St. Germain returned to Earth in time to play a starring role in the nascent French Revolution, leaving the embittered exiled troll lord as little more than a footnote in the long tale of his illustrious career.

ART: AXEL ORTIZ
COLORS: GEOFF ONG

The eternal malaise of his exile gnawed away at Boxon, but trolls are not easily beaten down. Fierce pride and determination burned inside of him, and eventually, he learned to draw earth energy directly from his massive stone prison. Charged with energy and anger and leading a renegade population of trolls, Boxon proclaimed himself the Mountain King.

Planar travelers often sail through Ethereal Space *en route* to alien worlds. It is a strange, vast, and dark place where any safe harbor is welcome. The Mountain King and his troll thralls prey like pirates upon unwary travelers, who often mistake the mountain for elemental flotsam.

Although the Mountain King cannot navigate the turbulent purple nothingness of Ethereal Space, he and his minions enjoy plenty of shore leave thanks to the unusual structure of the Axis Strand. An endless ladder of buttresses circle the Strand as it makes its way through Ethereal Space. These buttresses act as tunnels to different dimensional realities.

When Boxon's mountain drifts through one of these structures, it materializes in a random location on a world very much like Earth. Like Viking raiders, the trolls spill out of the mountain, taking what they please. Fortunately, these worlds have champions of their own, who eventually manage to cast the mountain back into the Ether, and the cycle begins anew.

Recently, a powerful, corrupt celestial sought refuge with the Mountain King after escaping enemy heroes on Earth. The celestial had fallen in love with the slain mystical heroine Lady Hex, and had stalked her back to the land of the living when allies returned her to life as a ghost. In return for the King's hospitality, the celestial presented him with the Eclipse Hammer, a powerful relic stolen thousands of years ago from a now-dead demon city. A two-dimensional rip in spacetime positioned within the hammer's head weeps tainted unlife energies, which waft from the hammer like oily black smoke. Boxon doesn't know or care how the hammer works, but takes heart from its earth-shattering power.

USING THE MOUNTAIN KING

Like many of his kin from Earth folklore, the Mountain King is a loud, crass bully. His greed slightly hedges out his thirst for conquest as his most dominating trait. His long life and travels through the Ethereal Seas have given him more experience than most mortals will ever know.

The Mountain King is by no means stupid, and has a very sophisticated taste in art and craftsmanship. By his standards, our world is incredibly luxurious and advanced, albeit disorienting and overpopulated. Despite his lawlessness, the Mountain King has a profound love of nature and could even be convinced to champion the environment. The irritating insects known as humans, however, he cannot abide. Were this world his, he would immediately set about razing large cities as an act of cleansing.

To a certain degree, Boxon has outgrown his troll peers, and does not suffer their company gladly. Compared to the host of interdimensionals he has interacted with, his brethren are incredibly ignorant and boring. Guests of the mountain stronghold enjoy a modicum of safety, and earn some degree of respect if they can match the King in a wrestling match or drinking contest. He gladly accepts bribes, but thinks nothing of breaking his word. He covets gold and jewels, and immediately seeks these out upon arrival on a new world. Though capable of grand hospitality, he is incredibly treacherous and violent.

TACTICS

The Mountain King's stronghold can appear at any time and in any place. The mountain's arrival could be foretold in recently acquired arcane texts, or happen as the result or a super-science interdimensional accident. Nothing prevents the mountain from appearing at the most inopportune times, such as a major personal event in the PCs' lives, or when the heroes are struggling with another crisis.

A large-enough deposit of gold or gems could attract the King's attention, should his mountain materialize somewhere isolated. He would then likely set up, or take over, a mining operation. If he arrives near a large population center, the Mountain King swaggers into the most important-looking building demanding gold, food, and lodgings. Even if he behaves himself, trolls in his company do not, and soon start terrorizing the locals. If their needs are not met, or if they perceive insult, they officially declare war and initiate a murderous rampage.

The Mountain King is not a complex opponent. If he cannot dominate the strongest-looking enemy toe-to-toe with the Eclipse Hammer, he retreats under the cover of Obscure to his stronghold in the hope that his minions and traps can wear down the enemy. The unlife energy that infuses the hammer's smoke can animate non-living organic matter into small goblin-like creatures that add to the ranks of his forces.

Alas, there is always another world around the corner, and the Mountain King knows when he is beaten. He is gracious in defeat, and humbly rewards the champion who vanquishes him with some artifact from his extensive collection. Should the King sleep on his throne, or be placed there dead or unconscious, the entire mountain dematerializes back into Ethereal Space. There, Boxon plots revenge and nurses his wounds, or another troll rises to bear the mantle of the Mountain King.

GAME STATISTICS

Mountain King: PL 15; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 23 (+12 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +16 melee (+20L, Eclipse Hammer), +12 ranged (+20L, Eclipse Hammer); SV Dmg +5 (Armor +10), Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills: Craft (metalworking) +5, Knowledge (the planes) +3, Survival +7.

Feats: Attack Focus (Eclipse Hammer, grapple), Darkvision, Detect (gold), Headquarters (see below), Improved Pin, Minions, Mystic Awareness*, Rapid Healing, Scent.

Powers: Immovability +10 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], Incorporeal +1 [*Flaw:* Limited (only through earth); *Source:* Alien; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 1 pp], Super-Strength +5 [*Extras:* Protection, Shockwave; *Power Stunts:* Lethal, Lifting; *Source:* Alien; *Cost:* 6; *Total:* 34 pp].

Equipment: Armor +10 [*Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], Eclipse Hammer [*Effect:* Weapon +15; *Extras:* Animation, Ghost Touch, Horde, Mighty Range, Obscure, Range (normal); *Flaws:* Device, Limited (Animation affects nonliving organic matter only); *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 6; *Total:* 90].

Weakness: Braggart. Boxon earned much of his reputation by destroying his enemies on epic campaigns. Most creatures from the Plane of Earth know of his exploits through heroic song and poetry. The Mountain King does his best to contribute to his legend, often at the expense of discretion and his greater strategic goals. He considers subterfuge dishonorable, and usually proclaims his aspirations from the highest mountain.

Disturbing. Trolls are thick, gnarled creatures, almost as broad as they are tall. Boxon's tough, pebbled hide is dark ash gray. Though bald, his beard and massive eyebrow are the consistency of rusted steel wool. His deep-set eyes burn with ancient flame. When irritated, the Mountain King generates sparks by grinding his stone teeth. He suffers a –5 penalty on Bluff and Diplomacy checks when dealing with humans.

Naive. Despite the confidant leadership he provides his troll minions, the Mountain King is bewildered by the complexities of the modern age. The Esplanade was a much simpler place, where might made right. Boxon certainly cannot be troubled to learn the intricacies of human interaction. He suffers a –5 penalty on Sense Motive checks against humans.

Susceptible. A strange affliction shared by all trolls of the Esplanade is their need to be in constant contact with their patron element, earth. Ironically, Boxon's banishment has caused him to adapt and gain greater mobility away from his home plane. His floating mountain fortress is composed of enough stone to fuel the elemental tyrant. However, should he be denied contact with a body of earth more than approximately 640 cubic feet, he suffers the effect of Susceptibility (*Mutants and Masterminds*, page 107).

Headquarters: Trolls are incredibly farsighted, so the fortress was well stocked for its planar drift. Now, it serves as the Mountain King's palace and primary mode of travel.

The Mountain King's throne room, the Great Forge, lies directly below a volcanic crater, which vents the forge's toxic exhaust. The hall itself is an enormous clanging industrial clockwork of goblins (p. 24) and trolls, who hammer away endlessly at Boxon's latest war-machine. The rest of the complex is a maze of caverns and chambers accessible only through stone phasing. Numerous forgotten crypts, lost chambers, and deadly booby-traps protect priceless treasures, which seem to have been scattered arbitrarily through the complex. Shifting walls and enormous dropping block traps abound.

Headquarters Features: Combat simulator (gladiatorial pits), concealed, defense system, Dimensional Travel +15 [*Flaw:* Limited (to Ethereal Space only)], ESP +15 (scrying pool), gym, holding cells, isolated location, laboratory (arcane), library, living space, reinforced structure, security system, staff, workshop.

MURDERMAN & BUTCHER BOY



13

FOR ANOTHER 20%, I'LL MAKE SURE HE DOESN'T CHOP OFF BOTH YOUR LEGS... ah GOOD. I'M GLAD YOU AGREE.

BOSS OF ALL BOSSES

	Reginald Carter
	Secret
	Arcadia
	Leader of criminal empire
	U.S. citizen
6' 5"	Brown / None
245 lbs.	41

BACKGROUND

Throughout the late 1960s and early 70s, Arcadia was plagued with an influx of Mafioso from cities like Chicago and New York. Seeing the West Coast as prime new grounds for criminal enterprise, mobsters like Johnny Fiola and Benny "the Jew" Goldstein moved in on the small-time criminal underground in Arcadia. For years the police and the city's superheroes attempted to shut down the operations of these nouveau-gangsters, but with little success.

Their day did not last long, as all the leaders of the gangs died off under suspicious circumstances by the early 1980s. Criminals spoke of a ghostly "Murder Man" who stalked the criminal underworld. The police and mayor were relieved they no longer had to deal with the gangsters, but they were uncomfortable with the thought of a costumed vigilante working in their city. Little did the police know, but the name criminals had been whispering about for years wasn't just a name. Murder Man was real...very real.

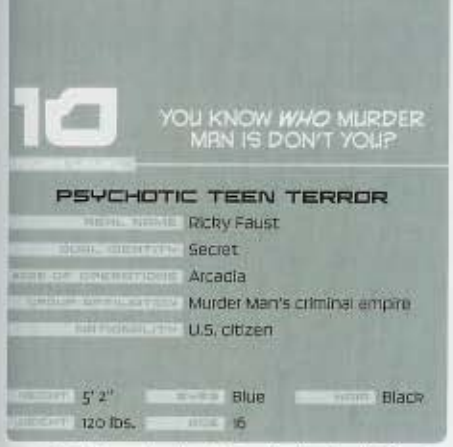
Murder Man is none other than wealthy playboy entrepreneur Reginald Carter. Well known as a rich eccentric in Arcadia's social circles, few know the true lengths to which his influence reaches. Nearly every crime committed in the city has a connection, however tenuous, to Carter's empire.

By day, Carter sits on the boards of several multinational corporations, and by night he directs his underlings to carry out all manner of crime, striking fear in the heart of the city. Incredibly charismatic (some would say preternaturally so), Carter inspires slavish devotion amongst his minions.

After an attempt on his life by the superhero Cyclone, Carter realized that for his organization to continue without him, he would need to groom a worthy successor. But who could be trusted? Even Carter's closest lieutenants were unworthy of such an honor. He found himself drawn to the thought of passing on the business to another—a son.

Knowing the brutality and lack of scruples that would be necessary for such a position, Carter searched the city's orphanages for a child who embodied these traits. After an exhaustive hunt, Carter found Ricky Faust, an 11-year-old street-rat orphan with a mile-wide mean streak. Only his ingenuity and charismatic nature had kept the boy out of Juvenile Hall.

A few well-placed donations and outright bribes brought the disinclined child into Carter's home. Over the course of 5 years, Carter



revealed the extent of his criminal activities to the child, only to find out that Faust had already discovered much of the truth about his adoptive father, and embraced the chance to become part of Murder Man's coterie.

Faust quickly excelled as a heavy, his young age and small size misleading those who assume that a young man won't chop off a finger to show that he means business. Adopting an appropriate nickname, Faust took to calling himself Butcher Boy, both in honor of Carter's underworld nickname as well as his own penchant for carrying a pair of wickedly sharp meat cleavers.

While Murder Man seeks to teach Faust to respect his new position, Butcher Boy looks at his job as a fun pastime, referring to Murder Man's turbo-charged Bentley as the "Murdermobile," the palatial estate as the "Murdercave," and so on. Butcher Boy takes his role as a costumed villain a little too seriously.

Arcadia's criminal underground soon came to dread a visit from the teen terror, knowing it meant Murder Man had taken a personal interest in their activities. Butcher Boy acts as Murder Man's agent, delivering messages, demands, and acting as executioner when necessary, tasks he takes to with unreserved glee.

With Butcher Boy at his side, Murder Man has all but solidified his stranglehold over Arcadia's criminal underground, bringing together all manner of lawbreakers. Those who challenge the control Murder Man exercises over the city find themselves quietly disappeared, or worse, subjected to a visit from the psychotic Butcher Boy.

USING MURDER MAN

Every city needs a grim-and-gritty criminal boss who controls all manner of crimes for the PCs to discover. Murder Man makes a devious adversary for any low-powered group of heroes, or those who concentrate their efforts on keeping the city streets safe. In such games, Murder Man can act as the untouchable arch-nemesis, the one villain behind it all, pulling the puppet strings but frustratingly impossible to convict for his crimes.

Murder Man can also be a worthy adversary to more powerful heroes. Due to Carter's use of Butcher Boy as a go-between, he has managed to keep his public image nearly spotless. Allow the PCs to have him arrested following an early encounter. The PCs will be too busy congratulating each other to notice that Carter's million-dollar lawyers have him out of jail within hours. The next day, Murder Man sues the PCs for defamation of character.

Murder Man's involvement in the seedy side of the city means that PCs may need to trade favors with him in order to complete some piece of a puzzling investigation. Very little happens in the city that Murder Man is not aware of, but he doesn't share that information lightly. Helping to bring down and ruin a competitor's criminal empire might grant the PCs a small favor from the Boss of All Bosses.

Alternately, they may find themselves owing Murder Man a favor for eliminating a pesky villain, or arranging for certain police files to be lost, such as those containing details of the hero's identity. Murder Man's control extends deeply into the media and corporate arenas as well. As easily as he can help out a hero, he can make their life a living hell by pillorying them in the press, arranging for the bank accounts they depend on in their civilian lives to shut off, arranging for thugs to rough up their loved ones, and even having a beloved pet put down by Animal Control. Murder Man is not an enemy to be trifled with lightly.

As a frequent employer of parahuman villains, Murder Man can be accompanied at any time by the likes of Redhawk, Player 2, Black Diamond, the Nihilist, or even employing a team of villains such as the Bestiary in some vast scheme benefiting both parties and making a lot of work for the PCs in return.

Butcher Boy can be used to introduce the PCs to the underbelly of the city's criminal elite. Coming across the psychotic punk while he's making a few house calls can be a harrowing experience for heroes more used to the concept of villains who don't routinely amputate body parts as a warning. Butcher Boy is best used when his age and perverse enjoyment of violence can be showcased. Although easily used as comic relief, it's far more twisted to play him straight, leaving the PCs with the choice of beating up on a teenaged child, or leaving him to carry out his ghastly tasks, knowing that his targets are by and large other criminals—maybe even criminals the PCs have tried to defeat in the past.

TACTICS

Murder Man rarely involves himself in combat—no need to bloody one's hands when there are so many willing to do it for you. Murder Man calls upon his thugs, or on Butcher Boy, to defend him against any attackers. If pressed, Murder Man first attempts to shoot his opponents with his pearl-handled .45 pistol, resorting to melee combat only as a last resort.

Butcher Boy, on the other hand, lives for melee combat, leaping in to fight at the earliest opportunity, blades flashing. Against powerful foes, Butcher Boy uses his Power Attack to make sure they don't get up again. An expert in fighting with two weapons, Butcher Boy nearly always makes three attacks per round, unless he is concentrating on a particularly difficult-to-hit opponent. If necessary, he throws his meat cleavers, but he prefers to keep a hold of them (for obvious reasons).

GAME STATISTICS

Murder Man: PL 13; Init +2 (Dex); Defense +20 (+8 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft; Atk +11 melee (+3S, unarmed), +10 ranged (+5L, pistol); SV Dmg +3, Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 20.

Skills: Bluff +28, Diplomacy +28, Gather Information +28, Intimidate +30, Sense Motive +13.

Feats: Above the Law*, Connected, Fame, Iron Will, Leadership (Loyalty 40), Sidekick (Butcher Boy), Tainted Network*, Villain's Luck*, Wealth (×3).

Powers: Super-Charisma +13 [*Extra:* Intimidating Presence; *Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 39 pp].

Equipment: Pearl-handled .45 Pistol [+5L; *Cost:* 5 pp].

Butcher Boy: PL 10; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Defense +23 (+10 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +14 melee (+13L/crit 19-20, cleaver) or or +12/+12/+7 melee (+13L/crit 19-20, cleavers), +13 ranged (+13L, cleaver) SV Dmg +5, Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Escape Artist +8, Hide +7, Intimidate +24, Move Silent +11.

Feats: Ambidexterity, Attack Focus (melee), Dodge, Improved Critical (melee), Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Power Attack, Takedown Attack, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Powers: Super-Skill (Intimidate) +10 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp]

Equipment: Finely-crafted meat cleavers (pair) [+10L].

CAPERS

A Visit From the Butcher: All is not well in the city. Murder Man suspects that a soon-to-be ex-employee (perhaps Player 2 or another hired hand) has said too much to the wrong people. Butcher Boy has been sent to deliver a painful message: bite the hand that feeds you and lose your own hand in return.

The heroes stumble across the fight between Butcher Boy and his hapless victim as the brawl spills out into the streets. With two villains dueling to the death, what will the heroes do? If Butcher Boy and his victim see the heroes approaching, they join forces to deal with the impending threat, Butcher Boy offering a stay of execution in return for a little assistance.

Murder, Murder Everywhere: Who knows why, but Murder Man has decided to make things difficult for one of the PCs. Thugs follow him home, ninjas ambush him while he walks his dog, his ailing grandmother is kidnapped and held for ransom. His secret identity is revealed to the local tabloids. His house is torched. Play these encounters out over the course of several sessions and make sure that only the most tenuous connections can be drawn between these events. When finally the PC meets Murder Man, it'll feel like Heaven.

NEUTRONIK



15 YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A HERO! WATCH THAT TEMPER OR I'LL BURN IT OUT OF YOU.

DARK CHAMPION OF ANTI-EARTH

REAL NAME	Aleksandr Solokov
OTHER IDENTITY	Unknown to the general public
BASE OF OPERATIONS	Anti-Earth, Earth
GROUP AFFILIATION	The Atom Agents (disbanded)
NATIONALITY	Extra-dimensional

HEIGHT	6' 2"	EYES	Red
WEIGHT	180 lbs.	HAIR	Black
		AGE	45

BACKGROUND

Earth's most powerful hero is probably Aleksandr Solokov, a gentle Russian who gained incredible abilities when his spirit bonded to a limitless source of atomic fusion in 1979. Solokov became the Proletarian, a living representation of the U.S.S.R.'s nuclear preeminence. Solokov shook off his KGB programming in 1982, abandoning his communist handlers and taking the name Protonik. Aware that the world's governments would attempt to use him as a superpowered pawn, Solokov swore off politics completely, and dedicated himself to the solitary task of protecting the citizens of the world from natural catastrophes and out-of-control supervillain masterminds.

Elsewhere in the multiverse, another Aleksandr Solokov struggled with a similar dilemma on an alternate Earth. On this world, the Confederacy had defeated the Union in America's Civil War. Communism had taken root in America instead of in Russia, which enjoyed a position of dominance as Earth's political superpower. So many major historical events had happened differently here that a member of Courage Unlimited, who visited in 1952, named the place Anti-Earth.

On our world, the former communist Protonik entered a life of solitude to ensure th[illegible] he could spend all of his time focusing on h[illegible]lping the powerless people of Earth. Anti-Ear[illegible]s Solokov, who took the name Neutronik, had been a lifelong capitalist, and tried to solve the same problem and make a little money for himself in the process. Thrilled by the adoration of his public, Neutronik reasoned that the people needed their role models, and that simply removing himself from society wouldn't solve the problems of the world. Besides, American communism was the greatest threat to Earth, and required his attention more than this week's supervillain or next week's flash flood.

He couldn't be everywhere at once, however. To solve that problem, he auctioned off his biological information in the late 1990s, selling his DNA and the secrets of his origin to the governments of six allied nations so that they could create their own national champions. Together, the nuclear-powered heroes would both protect the people of the world and defeat the menace of communism once and for all.

American supervillains like Madame Mystery, Miss Trix, and Speedfreak had already made a mockery of that corrupt nation, leaving America ripe for an attack despite the efforts of heroes

like Midnight Man and the Son of Sunset or Johnny Reb. In 1999, Neutronik and an international team of flash-grown clones and genetic knockoffs called the Atom Agents moved against the American Republic, brutally neutralizing U.S. superhumans and dismantling the nation's government. Other communist governments quickly surrendered to the authority of Neutronik and his cohorts. International tensions cooled, and most of the world looked to Neutronik and the Atom Agents as planetary saviors who had ended the Cold War in a matter of days.

Having erased political division, the Atom Agents turned their attention to eradicating crime. This invisible target proved difficult to squelch, however, and as the world entered the twenty-first century, Neutronik and his clones grew more and more brutal in their persecution of criminals, frequently carrying out on-the-spot executions for even minor infractions. The Atom Agents had grown drunk with power, and their powerless subjects viewed them with a mixture of fear and respect.

Fear and respect wasn't enough. The individual Atom Agents began to feel they deserved more. Had they not brought peace to the globe? Should they not, then, be allowed to lead it? Neutronik himself was enraged by the words and deeds of his cohorts, an anger fueled by the fact that he had entertained similar thoughts. If one of the Atom Agents was to rule the world, he reasoned, it might as well be the original. The atomic heroes fell upon each other and began to war across the globe.

Neutronik began to understand the error of his cloning enterprise when a battle between two of the Atom Agents resulted in thousands of civilian deaths in China. Realizing that his doubles would stop at nothing in their tireless pursuit of perfection, Neutronik set out to eliminate his kinsmen, brutally and efficiently killing one after the other with pulverizing blows from his peerless fists or by blasting holes through their bodies with his Nuclear Vision.

His travels across the globe revealed the terrible after-effects of superhumanity run rampant. Some nations began to worship their nuclear-powered savior as a living god. Others rose up in armed revolution, throwing the world once more into chaos. The situation reached the point of no return after Neutronik killed his last rival. The human populace, exhausted by a 2-year super-war that had torn the globe asunder, feared Neutronik most of all, seeing the last Atom Agent standing as the most powerful threat to human life on Earth. A consortium of twelve nations launched a nuclear strike against Neutronik, bathing the world in atomic fire and killing countless millions. Relatives of the surviving elite, protected by advanced fallout shelters, would emerge in the far future to begin life anew, armed with knowing the cost of superhumanity run wild.

Neutronik survived the disaster that killed his planet, at long last understanding the true stakes of his attempt to fix the problems of the world. With almost no one left to protect, Neutronik departed Anti-Earth in early 2003, seeking out unspoiled worlds to save from the kind of madness he had inflicted upon his own.

USING NEUTRONIK

Whether or not you use Protonik in your campaign, Neutronik presents an interesting opportunity to reign in out-of-control player characters. With great power comes great responsibility, but it often also brings with it a great deal of hubris and undeserved self-confidence. One of these days, your players are going to bite off more than they can chew, throwing themselves into a very political fight or attempting to step on the wrong side of morality to serve the greater good.

If your PCs are running around reading the minds of criminals to imprison people before they've committed a crime or have decided to simply wipe out an enemy government, consider planning an encounter with Neutronik, who notices their antics shortly after coming to Earth. He first attempts to reason with the heroes, telling them his personal story and informing them that he won't let arrogant superheroes destroy this world, too.

If your heroes behave themselves perfectly and don't get any big ideas about changing their world forever, Neutronik targets NPC superheroes instead. Your heroes first hear of him when they come across the bodies of other heroes who have been killed by Neutronik after they failed to impress him. Eyewitnesses and the nature of the superhumans' wounds implicate Protonik himself or perhaps even a PC with similar powers. When the PCs finally track down Neutronik and attempt to question him, they learn he has a few questions of his own.

TACTICS

Neutronik doesn't fly into encounters with eyebeams blazing, but he did spend 3 difficult years tracking down genetically identical companions and killing them as effectively as possible. He's more likely to cut a character's leg tendon with his Nuclear Vision than he is to talk over his philosophy during a leisurely fistfight.

He cares much, much more about winning a fight than about making sure that it's fair. One of his favorite tactics to use against superheroes is putting nearby innocents in grave danger, forcing the hero to make a choice between striking him or saving the lives of bystanders. No matter what the hero does, Neutronik has a choice criticism at the ready, and presses any advantage with brutal efficiency.

GAME STATISTICS

Neutronik: PL 15; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 23 (+12 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 75 ft.; Atk +16 melee (+16L, unarmed), +13 ranged (+10L, Energy Blast–radiation); SV Dmg +4 (Protection +12), Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills: Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +21, Listen +6.

Feats: Durability, Immunity (disease, cold, exhaustion, fire, poison, pressure, suffocation, radiation), Penetration Vision, Ultra Hearing.

Powers: Flight +15 [*Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 30 pp], Nuclear Vision [*Effect:* Energy Blast (radiation) +10 [*Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Super-Strength +12 [*Extra:* Protection; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 5 pp; *Total:* 60 pp].

CAPERS

All the Rage: Neutronik's "take no prisoners" approach to fighting supercrime and even some superheroes takes the media by storm, with a majority of the world's population claiming to support his brutal methods. Hometown newspaper editorials start calling upon the heroes to be "more like Neutronik," specifically citing supervillains who the team put behind bars only to see return to the streets and a life of crime months or years later. Neutronik mania forces the heroes to change their methods or confront the people of the world, explaining why brutality isn't always the answer. In order to prove their superiority, the PCs will have to take on Neutronik himself in a televised battle that shows the villainous Solokov nonchalantly mowing through civilians to mercilessly attack his enemies.

Hero, Meet Hero: After suffering an embarrassing defeat at the hands of the PCs, Neutronik returns to the ruins of his homeworld to recruit a new group of Atom Agents made up of the Anti-Earth "mirrors" of the player characters! More than one such character should bear an awful mutation, evidence of his homeworld's nuclear conflict. Take the opportunity to create fun evil doppelgangers of your players' heroes, either emphasizing an existing personality trait or making the villain a true opposite of the player character. If your players hate their doubles more than any other character in your campaign, you're doing something right.

THE NIHILIST



13

SILENT AVATAR OF OBLIVION

Martin Obermeyer
Secret
Arcadia
Frequent agent of Murder Man
U.S. citizen (deceased)

6' 2" Green Black
190 lbs. 33

BACKGROUND

Our age's most insidious and heartless assassin lived most of his life as a kind Christian man, an irony that delights the shadowy forces that interlope in the affairs of man. Martin Obermeyer married young, had two healthy children, and earned a meager but respectable living as a high school teacher. He lived a quiet, pious life, and spent his free time studying scripture with his family. All this shattered, however, as circumstance transformed him into a modern-day Job.

Martin Obermeyer's avalanche of sorrow began with a home invasion attack that left his beloved children dead. Martin himself had been walking the dog at the time. All signs, unfortunately, pointed to his wife Anne, who had been suffering from terrible headaches and anxiety. Despite a hazy recollection of the events, she maintained her innocence all the while.

A brief but sensational trial found her guilty, and she was sentenced to die. Martin stood dutifully by her side, stunned to near catatonia during the proceedings. Despite his prayers, his wife was executed, and Martin Obermeyer withdrew into bitter isolation.

In the midst of a downward spiral brought on by despair and alcohol abuse, Obermeyer lost both his job and home. His unusually rigid faith and focus on family left him little time to form relationships, and the few family friends drifted away in condescending deference. This solitude fueled a blossoming dementia.

Tormenting dreams suggested that he had butchered his children, forcing Martin to escape his guilt through serious drugs. Within a year of his wife's death, Martin lived on the street as a transient, meeting any attempted intervention with rabid contempt. After an unfortunate coincidence his life, as miserable as it seemed, took a turn for the worse.

While Obermeyer cooked up a fix with some new acquaintances under an isolated stretch of monorail track, conversation turned to the exploits of one of the junkies. Amidst a litany of crimes, the hooligan bragged of getting off clean in a particularly famous and violent home invasion. Anne Obermeyer's story, despite her inconsistent recollection, had been true. The crime *had* been perpetrated by a stranger.

All the sorrow, horror and frustration that had been simmering in Martin suddenly exploded in white-hot, righteous fury. After thanking God, he called upon all that was good, holy, and true in the universe to help him avenge his family's slaughter. The hardened junkies beat the

milquetoast school teacher ruthlessly, and strung his body up on the viaduct.

As his life slipped away, Obermeyer cursed the universe and the hand he'd been dealt. His assailants hooted and laughed as they disappeared between the spotlights of the street lamps. Martin cursed a will that failed him, an intellect that could not see the truth, and a body too weak to exact bloody revenge.

While most souls promptly depart our plane via the astral space of the Limbo Lanes, Obermeyer's soul stalled in a way similar to that which creates ghosts. His despair was so profound that it severely diminished his spiritual energy. It hung from his body like wet clothing. Obermeyer wanted nothing more from existence, in this life or any other. Terrified that he might somehow encounter his deceased family in the afterlife, his soul lingered in shame. God may not have heard his prayers, but corners of the city are full of strange beings ready to exploit the desperate.

Such exquisite suffering does not go unnoticed. While flickering between life and death, Obermeyer sensed a presence. He had been discovered by a murder of Nothings—powerful, malevolent non-beings that haunt the Ether. The Nothings were attracted to Obermeyer's wretched state, but seemed to find him almost too decadent or rich a morsel. For whatever sinister reason, the Nothings erased Obermeyer's soul, forever trapping him between life and death.

This twisted mercy killing transformed Obermeyer into an undead vessel of revenge. No ember of his original personality glows within his bloated heart, as it now burns with violent and indiscriminate rage. It's unclear if he serves the Nothings out of some form of gratitude or obligation, but the undead slasher now known as the Nihilist certainly does his part to spread their brand of horrific suffering.

Ironically, once Obermeyer took to the shadows in his resurrected form, he discovered that police had slain the junkie murderer in an unrelated altercation later that evening. The Nihilist butchered eight police officers and was killed twice more that night before rising to begin his reign of terror anew.

Street lore connects the Nihilist to the vast modern urban pantheon of "gods" that has emerged alongside modern parahumanity. Many believe him to be the rising God of Murder. Another of these so-called street gods, the enigmatic Prince of Thieves known as Mr. F, appears to fear the Nihilist, despite the Prince's clearly superior mystical powers.

USING NIHILIST

The Nihilist is an empty human shell, supernaturally driven by the primal forces of anger and revenge. He is virtually incapable of dealing in a meaningful way with a normal person. Although he has infrequently teamed up with other villains, in such cases he can usually be counted on only to spread mayhem.

The Nihilist certainly does not suffer fools gladly, as illustrated by his brutal slaying of teammate Marauder on a job for Murder Man and Butcher Boy (p. 78). He reserves an unusual respect for the Dastardly Duo, possibly out of uncharacteristically nostalgic affection for young Butcher Boy. Though Nihilist serves as their most loyal assassin and works largely for free, the crime lords dare not take him for granted. The pair can only guess at Nihilist's long-term agenda, but aren't about to question the motives of such an effective and brutal killer, so long as he works for them.

Between contracts, Nihilist spends most of his time divided between two equally hollow pursuits. He often sits for weeks on end utterly motionless in a rented room in a transient hotel, his rotted flesh illuminated by the icy blue glow of a black-and-white TV, communicating with the Nothings through the interference of poor television reception. When not inert, the Nihilist wanders the streets of dilapidated industrial quarters, snuffing out life wherever he finds it.

TACTICS

The Nihilist is a relentless, silent stalker who seeks to maximize his victims' terror. He rarely engages a target directly, and avoids confronting groups. Instead, he stalks his prey in shadow form, striking when his advantage is greatest. Though he is technically dead and virtually invisible in shadow form, characters who can Detect (life) register his presence as an obvious cold void. Characters with Scent detect him at double distance because of an air of decay that hangs about him.

When he strikes, he reveals himself to be something other than a stiff, shambling zombie. With unnatural, silent grace, he flicks and slices with a pair of antique rusty straight-razors. Wounds inflicted by the Nihilist's touch or melee attacks cause the victim's life energy to bleed into the Ether, requiring the victim to make a fresh Damage save at the start of the Nihilist's turn until a successful save is made.

Should the Nihilist fail to Reincarnate himself and rise to continue a hunt, his body melts away into an inky shadow due to his Into Thin Air feat.

GAME STATISTICS

Nihilist: PL 13; Init +7 (+4 Improved Initiative, +3 Dex); Defense 13 (+10 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +14 melee (+6L, razor), Full Atk +12/+12/+7 melee (+6L, 2 razors); SV Dmg +4, Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2 (Mental Protection +5); Str 18, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills: Concentration +7, Listen +6, Spot +6, Survival +6.

Feats: Ambidexterity, Darkvision, Detect (life), Immunity (aging, disease, exhaustion, poison, starvation, suffocation), Human Shield*, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Into Thin Air*, See Invisibility, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Powers: Alternate Form (shadow) +6 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 5 pp; *Total:* 30 pp], Mental Protection +4 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 8 pp], Reincarnate +10 [*Extra:* Never Say Die; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 5 pp; *Total:* 50 pp], Wounding [*Effect:* Disintegration +10; *Extra:* Continuous, Disruption; *Flaw:* Limited (One Material—flesh), Range (touch); *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp].

Equipment: 2 Razors (+2L).

Weakness: Disabled (mute). The Nihilist lost the ability to speak when he was ushered into un-life by the Nothings. A man of few words before the transformation, the Nihilist now communicates through the most spartan of gestures—a nod, a somber shake of the head, or a slowly raised hand. As no air passes through his leathered lungs, he is incapable of even a whisper. He suffers a -5 penalty on Bluff and Diplomacy checks.

Disturbing. For all intents and purposes, the Nihilist is a walking corpse. Although mystic forces stave off most of the ravages of decomposition, his pallid skin flakes to the touch. His eyes glow with an unholy light, and his teeth and mouth are as black as coal. The musty stench of dried blood clings to him, and seems to waft from his shadow form.

Susceptible (items of faith). As an avatar of hatred and despair, the Nihilist cannot abide the hope that eternally springs from life. Because he is fuelled by the inevitability of oblivion, he chafes at any assertion of strong beliefs. Characters possessing the Unshakable Faith feat can force Nihilist to make a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 for each minute of continued exposure). If he fails, he becomes fatigued and generally flees.

CAPERS

The Haunted Monorail: Gentrification has hit the haunted industrial zones stalked by the Nihilist. The wealthy and young are buying up warehouses and converting them to trendy lofts. Unfortunately, the center of one of these developments is the site of a secret urban massacre, where corrupt law enforcement officers in the late 1920s burned a transient tent city to the ground. Construction excavations have turned up zombies and disturbed ghosts. What's worse, the Nihilist (aka the Monorail Slasher), who lost his life hanging from the rails, prowls the trains, looking to terminate happy lives. His shadow form makes it easy for him to enter and exit the moving cars of the monorail. The authorities are loath to attribute the attacks to the supernatural, but big business expects the train to act as the commercial center's spine, and wants answers.

Necrophilia: A secret extradimensional research lab has created an artificial gate to the Carrion Queen's Larval Lands. The Nihilist is instructed by the Nothings to protect the project, as its reckless progress poses an enormous threat to reality. On this assignment, he meets the Carrion Queen (p. 48), who falls in love with him. Unaware that the gate threatens her realm as well as Earth, she endeavors to catch the Nihilist's eye through a series of atrocities. Meanwhile, the heroes have their hands full with demon insects slipping through additional dimensional ruptures. Can the Carrion Queen give Nihilist an apocalypse to believe in, or will he teach her that oblivion's embrace is the sweetest? *Aahh...that's amore!*

PLAYER 2



12 SHALL WE PLAY A GAME—SUCKER?

THE WIZARD OF VIDEO-CRIME

REAL NAME: Morris Crowell
KNOWN ASSOCIATES: Secret
BASE OF OPERATIONS: Global
CRIMINAL AFFILIATIONS: Crime Union (Local 833); Operative of Octopus Umbrella
NATIONALITY: South African citizen

HEIGHT: 5' 9" WEIGHT: 175 lbs. EYES: Blue HAIR: Brown AGE: 33

BACKGROUND

Morris Crowell would have been proud to simply go down in history as the world's greatest video game designer, but the young South African was always looking for a bigger thrill. After producing a blockbuster Playstation game, *Serum*, for the then-unknown Hammerpointe Games, he was recruited by the Bay Area software mega-corporation i-Friend and put to work on a top-secret project. Virtual reality technology was taking the world by storm, and i-Friend designers sought a completely immersive holographic game grid. As team leader, Crowell made progress in leaps and bounds, and completed the project far ahead of schedule. The wunderkind delivered fantastic (yet utterly realistic) results, and his virtual reality opus, *Daystalker/Nightslayer*, was poised for a blockbuster release in late 1994.

Unfortunately, problems with marketing, including a rash of video-game-related violent crimes, delayed the game's debut. Crowell worked out his frustration on the grid, developing prodigious skill at his masterpiece game. After receiving word that a controversial game feature that allowed players to import the likenesses of real people as victim "skins" would be cut prior to release, Crowell hit the roof. He found no support for his position among his peers, whom he increasingly dismissed as corporate lackeys, not true gamers like himself.

Crowell dealt with these critics on his own terms, slaughtering their digital images nightly in the master *Daystalker/Nightslayer* grid. When his production manager discovered this virtual violence, he reported Crowell to his superiors, who terminated the hot-shot designer. Furious with a company that cast him aside after "stealing" his ideas, Crowell crossed the line. After rehearsing the murders to perfection on the game grid, it seemed a small matter to make the crimes a reality. And so he did, murdering his team's managers and stealing the company's prototype holographic equipment, HAG I and SLATE III.

Crowell's reputation preceded him. Shortly after fleeing the United States, he was approached by a shadowy corporate espionage organization known as Octopus Umbrella. For access to his hard- and soft-light research, the consortium supported his continued work. Crowell decided to take his game to the big leagues, and updated his systems with an eye toward military and espionage capabilities. With characteristic cheek, he dubbed himself Player 2.

and plundered E3, the electronic gaming industry's massive annual international trade-show. Later that year, a run-in with the crime-fighting renegade robot Zero 00, ended with Player 2's first of many incarcerations. After a break-out engineered by his friend Moonquake (p. 74), Crowell continued his life as a successful career supervillain. He stays in the game as much for excitement as for financial gain.

USING PLAYER 2

Player 2 carries on in the tradition of the "themed" supervillains of the Silver Age. His motif is broad, and allows for a diversity of mini-adventures. Even the simplest of crimes could catapult the heroes into the cockpits of virtual space interceptors, or onto surreal scaffolds facing a barrel-hurling gorilla. On the grid, Crowell is smug and arrogant to a fault, and will designate a particularly confident, hot-shot hero as his Arch-Nemesis just to take the hero down a peg. He truly believes in playing the Game, and will not harm innocents or unmask an opponent.

Despite his loose morals, he despises cheaters. He is a thrill seeker first, and a mercenary second. Player 2 enjoys working with others on a big score, and with Moonquake founded a loose support network of supervillains known as the Crime Union (Local 833).

For his first appearance in a campaign, it is likely that Player 2 has recently relocated to the heroes' home town to escape constant punishment at the hands of a former Arch-Nemesis. An encounter with Player 2 could also be the heroes' first exposure to the corporate espionage of Octopus Umbrella (p. 75), an excellent source of recurring schemes.

TACTICS

When heroes arrive on a Player 2 crime scene, they can expect to be immersed in a retro video-game arena, with Crowell plunking in the quarters. He uses the SLATE to project a complex holographic environment in a 50-ft. radius around him. On its own, the game-grid is extremely hazardous; the shock of interacting with the incredibly realistic hazards is enough to cause very real trauma. In addition, Player 2 can generate 625 cubic ft. of solid sprites and simple geometric shapes to further vex his opponents. For example, in a simple maze arena, the HAG can spawn five human-scale Hardness 10 "goblin ghosts," (who can fire Energy Blasts of light or Snare their quarry) and six, 10-ft. × 10-ft. × 1-ft. walls (Hardness 10).

Player 2 keeps his actual location on the grid hidden, but if discovered, he powers-up and enters the fray with his Joystick—sometimes virtual violence is no substitute for a taste of the real thing. However, should the HAG and SLATE be disabled, Crowell usually gives up without much of a fight. He knows that most heroes are superior hand-to-hand combatants, and has no desire to be ground into the real-world pavement. When operating as a team member, Player 2 coordinates attacks from a distance, and protects his allies with the hazards of the game-grid.

GAME STATISTICS

Player 2: PL 12; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Defense 11 (+8 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +9 melee (+9S, Joystick), +11 ranged (+8L, Energy Blast—electricity); SV Dmg +3 (Armor +8), Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Computers +12, Craft (electronics) +11, Knowledge (games) +13.

Feats: Arch-Nemesis (PC hero)*, Motif (video games)*, Dodge, Evasion, Talented (Computers, Knowledge—games), Wealthy.

Equipment: HAG III Hard-light Avatar Generator [*Effect:* Create Object +10; *Extras:* Animate Object, Create Attacks (Energy Blast—light); *Power Stunt:* Create Attacks (Snare); *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 3 pp; Total: 37 pp], SLATE VI Soft-light Animated Tactical Environment [*Effect:* Illusion +10; *Extras:* Area (50-ft. radius), Damaging; *Flaws:* Device, Limited (creature illusions only); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp]; Joystick [Weapon +8; *Extra:* Energy Blast (electricity); *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 16 pp]; Power-Up Battle Suit [*Effect:* Armor +8; *Extra:* Boost (Str) +6; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 4/1 pp; *Total:* 26 pp].

Weakness: Braggart. Crowell is almost pathologically competitive. He is too focused to talk trash during a fight, but loves flaunting his skills before a caper. He is so sure of his dominance on the game-grid that he can't help but literally invite heroes to try to stop him. Worse yet, as a designer, Player 2 is madly in love with his own ideas, and won't hesitate to reveal his masterful plans.

THE CRIME UNION

Working as a supervillain is difficult, dangerous work. Ask Mindcrime (p. 7) and countless henchmen obliterated by cranky masterminds. Still, a job is a job, and these men and women are motivated by cold, hard cash. In such a dog-eat-dog industry, the thugs who do all the leg-work deserve some degree of protection. Only the brilliant, twisted business sense of millionaire master criminal Morris Crowell, better known as Player 2, could twist the concept of organized labor into the almost absurd Crime Union. In collaboration with legendary info-terrorist, the Wire and his eponymous secret computer network, Crowell installed a system of sound socialist policies. For a 10% cut of a heist, the Union provides safe houses, legal council, a retirement pension, medical insurance, and job placement. Members are free to come and go as they please, but woe betide any scab who tries to cut in on a Union job.

By-laws include: No aliens ("Earth jobs for earthlings"), respect for heroes' privacy and families ("We're not here to ruin anyone's life, *per se*..."), and mild restraint when dealing with bystanders ("No psychos"). Ironically, the Union, especially Local 833, operates more professionally than many superhero squads.

Members in good standing of Local 833 include: Chokechain, Moonquake (II), Googleplex, Player 2, Gunmetal Grace, Redhawk, Pyrecracker, and Grit.

CAPERS

Ghost in the Machine. After disappearing for a number of months, Player 2 resurfaces in an unexpected way. A strange and tenacious virus has ravaged the computer systems of corporate America, leaving complex artificial intelligences playing simple child's games with each other. Crowell has gone virtual and downloaded his consciousness into the Internet. Using technology based on the SLATE control software, he can manipulate his digital environment like a god. Even the most sophisticated security systems are baffled by his antics.

META-4 calls on the heroes to "go digital" and enter the Internet in pursuit of the mad gamer. It's only a matter of time before the agency's own network is violated, putting the entire world at risk. Crowell's avatar is incredibly powerful in the virtual world, and he may prove a challenge to an entire team of heroes. Any damage the good-guys take on the Net is treated as a damaging illusion (*Mutants & Masterminds*, page 73). Should the heroes track Player 2 in the real world, they find his body well-protected in an Octopus Umbrella safe house.

First Person Shooter. To exact revenge against the corporate heads of the gaming industry, Player 2 has devised a dastardly plan. Heroes with an interest in video games discover that luminaries in the field have been committing suicide at an alarming rate. Investigation reveals that a new game, a retread of the retro-hit *Serum*, has been making the rounds. A hot new developer has distributed advanced copies of the game to industry leaders, who seem to become so addicted that they have been taking their own lives in frustration. In actuality, Player 2 has allied himself with a cult of techno-arcane witches. A powerful vengeance spell has been coded into the game, and is manifested by walking the sprite along the paths of certain levels. Although they are not inherently evil, the witches and their bizarre digital familiars make powerful recurring enemies if not treated with care.

Still the Greatest. Now in his mid-30s, Crowell is worried that he's losing his touch. To prove he is still the greatest living video jockey, he has abducted two dozen of the world's top arcade players, many of whom are children. He means them no harm, but intends to run them all through a grueling 48-hour tournament. The authorities call in the heroes, mistakenly seeing the kidnappings as an extortion plot. Player 2 intends to release his prisoners once the tourney is over. In fact, if beaten, he'll pay the winner a cool $5 million. Should this happen, Crowell suffers a terrible blow to his ego, and likely fades away to re-evaluate his life.

REDHAWK



12

THE WRIST LASERS *DO* WORK. SOME SORT OF *EMP* PULSE MUST HAVE KNOCKED THEM OFFLINE...

POWER-ARMORED CAT BURGLAR

REAL NAME	Dominick Trent
SECRET IDENTITY	Secret
BASE OF OPERATIONS	Arcadia and the western U.S.
EMPLOYER AFFILIATION	Crime Union (Local 833)
CITIZENSHIP	U.S. citizen

HEIGHT	5' 9"	EYES	Blue
WEIGHT	245 lbs.	HAIR	Brown
		AGE	26

BACKGROUND

Even as a youth, Dominick Trent sought the easiest of all paths. Throughout his college years, Trent succeeded on the work of his peers and partners, consistently taking credit for their inventions and innovations. Never a particularly talented engineer, he did excel at one thing—thievery.

Before long, a professor uncovered his actions and expelled Trent from college. Bitter and vowing revenge, Trent drifted into the criminal underworld of the big city. He enjoyed the thrill and ease of crime, but ultimately his life of larceny wasn't enough. Trent wanted the notoriety that only a super-criminal could achieve.

Trent learned that Reginald Carter—known in the underworld as Murder Man—sought second-story men with an understanding of engineering and science—an opportunity Trent couldn't let pass. Seeing his chance to prove himself with the city's premier crime lord, Trent eagerly accepted the job.

Murder Man sent Trent to liberate the latest in bioengineered nano-chips, held in a secure warehouse within the city's industrial center. But the warehouse contained more than just chips. After disabling the warehouse's strangely high-tech security systems, Trent broke into a large shipping container only to discover a bright red suit of powered armor complete with turbine jets, ceramic ballistic shielding, and a host of exotic weapon systems. Trent donned the armor and became Redhawk, the Crimson Cat Burglar.

Redhawk hired himself out to the highest bidders, his armored suit making previously impregnable targets contemptuously easy to plunder. The armor seemed to amplify his already cocky demeanor as he came into conflict with several of the city's self-appointed superheroes.

Redhawk terrorized banks, labs, and factories throughout the western United States, amassing considerable wealth and making his reputation as a super-criminal. While making off with a large portion of SciLab's newest computer mainframes, Redhawk was confronted by the armored hero Cyclone. During an intense battle, Cyclone revealed the secret of Redhawk's armor—it had been a prototype of the hero's original battlesuit! Obsolete technology and amateur tactics failed miserably against Cyclone's polished grace and terrifying firepower. Redhawk escaped the battle, but not without massive damage to his purloined armor, not to mention the terrible blow to his fragile ego.

Redhawk's engineering background was of no help as he tried in vain to repair the armor. The cosmetic damage was easily repaired, but several important functions were rendered far from reliable, and some systems became dangerously untrustworthy.

Trent continues to hire himself out, hiding the fact that his armor is in such disrepair. He has found convenient excuses to explain the system failures that seem to crop up more frequently as time passes. His inability to return to full functionality has left an indelible imprint on Redhawk's confidence, rendering him impulsive and near psychotic when his armor fails him. Redhawk blames Cyclone (or an appropriate armored hero from your own campaign) for his current condition, a hatred fueled by the fact that his suit is no match for the superior Cyclone armor. Trent recently began investigating Cyclone's career, trying to pinpoint his secret identity and the source that manufactured both armors, hoping to discover parts and technology to repair his suit.

USING REDHAWK

Redhawk is best used as a minion for an existing criminal mastermind or technology-oriented villain in need of cheap-but-effective muscle. He is loyal only to his paycheck and the prestige granted to him by a successful high-profile crime.

Redhawk's malfunctioning armor adds an element of humor to encounters with the villain, but can serve as a story hook as well. The Crimson Cat Burglar might target a super-science hero, attempting to steal some gadget or technological item identified as necessary to repair a sub-system of his armor. Heroes may be forced into a race to find their stolen equipment before Redhawk strips it down to component parts.

Redhawk is particularly paranoid about his armor's malfunctions. He rightly assumes that prospective employers might consider his faulty armor a sign of weakness and unreliability, cutting into the fortune he hopes to continue to make from his criminal exploits. He does his best to make excuses or cover up any malfunctions that occur, going as far as to blame allied villains or sabotaging the devices of others to make it appear that his armor is not the only equipment affected.

His attitude toward heroes is condescending at best, and outright insulting at worst. Redhawk is a man of very little confidence, and the problems with his armored suit have only exasperated his insecurities about cutting it in the criminal underworld. Heroes can easily enrage Redhawk, forcing him into a foolish course of vengeful action, by simply mocking his armor's failings or by acting as witness to some crime gone embarrassingly wrong. In such a case, the heroes become constant adversaries for Redhawk, while he attempt to prove his worth over and over again.

Redhawk is by no means a top-shelf villain, and while resourceful, he prefers working for others than for himself. An appearance by Redhawk most often means that someone more powerful and more dangerous is involved.

TACTICS

Redhawk's battlesuit is a virtual armory, containing offensive and defensive weapon systems. The suit contains a highly sophisticated fuzzy logic computer program, which aids the wearer in combat and maneuverability. The suit's wrists are fitted with large-capacitance lasers capable of cutting through the walls of bank vaults as easily as they can cut down people. In addition to their use as weapons, the lasers can also be used to blind an opponent with a Dazzle attack.

In combat, Redhawk usually remains airborne, using his wrist lasers to blast away at opponents from a distance after he has blinded them. If forced into melee combat, Redhawk attempts to escape as quickly as possible, using his fists or picking up nearby objects to use as improvised weapons.

Quite talkative during combat, Redhawk's mouth often gets him in as much trouble as his larcenous streak. He frequently touts his own abilities or brags about how easily he can defeat his opponents. One thing Redhawk doesn't do is talk about his plans or employers. As cocksure as he is, he realizes where his money comes from, and knows that a villain who snitches on his boss doesn't get very far in the criminal world.

GAME STATISTICS

Redhawk: PL 12; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 24 (+11 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft.; Atk +14 melee (+12S, unarmed), +14 or +10/+10 ranged (+12L, Energy Blast–light); SV Dmg +13 (Armor +12), Fort +1, Ref +15, Will -1; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +4, Disable Device +4, Listen +11, Open Lock +5, Search +13, Spot +11, Repair +1.

Feats: Attack Finesse.

Equipment: Redhawk's battlesuit grants him the following powers:

Redhawk Battlesuit [*Effect:* Armor +12; *Extra:* Impervious; *Power Stunts:* Aerial Combat, Detect (weapons), Dodge, Move-By Attack, Point Blank Shot, Multishot, Radio Broadcast, Radio Hearing; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 32 pp].

↘ Amazing Save (Damage) +12 [*Extra:* Reflex; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 12 pp].

↘ Energy Blast (light) +12 [*Extra:* Multifire; *Power Stunt:* Dazzle (sight); *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 25 pp].

↘ Flight +12 [*Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 12 pp].

↘ Super-Senses +12 [*Flaw:* Device; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 12 pp].

↘ Super-Strength +12 [*Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 36 pp].

Weaknesses: Quirk: Malfunctions. Due to the devastating damage inflicted on Redhawk's armor recently, its systems don't always work the way they're meant to. Each round, Redhawk makes a malfunction check before he can act. If he rolls a 1–5 on a d20, he is affected as if dazed and cannot act that round (but can defend himself normally).

CAPERS

It's Not My Vault: The player characters are called in to help excavate a collapsed bank that fell into a sinkhole the previous night. The police suspect foul play, but the vault seems to be intact and unopened. Extricating the vault from the rubble reveals the culprit–the Crimson Cat Burglar himself, trapped beneath the collapsing vault when his explosives went awry. And boy is he mad. Redhawk would prefer that no one ever learns of the poorly planned heist, and fights with all his strength to escape. The pride-wounded villain threatens the heroes with a fate worse than death if they reveal the details of this encounter to anyone.

With the vault itself free from the confines of the bank's foundation, Redhawk may even try to make off with it!

This is Only a Test: A man representing himself as the head of Corporate Security International contacts the player characters. He seeks a group of heroes to test the new security features of a local office of the Icarus RocketLab, a government contractor specializing in guided missile systems. Fearing possible supervillain attacks, Icarus has tasked his firm with beefing up the building's security systems. The representative gives the PCs a handheld transponder, explaining that it will be used to track their progress through the building, showing the security firm where the biggest holes are in the system. He asks them to make their way to room 1500, buried deeply behind security measures on the building's first floor.

In fact, the man is Redhawk in disguise, and the heroes are his pawns to bypass the building's extensive security network. While the heroes manage their way through various high-tech anti-personnel traps (paralysis beams, megatanium containment cages, and quick-set containment foam), the Crimson Cat Burglar loots the sub-basement of its missile guidance systems and downloads the latest warhead designs from the company's mainframe. By the time the characters discover there is no tracking device in room 1500 it will be too late to stop Redhawk. Or will it?

I'll Take That!: For PCs whose powers stem from high-tech devices, a villain like Redhawk can mean big trouble. Having watched the character's exploits on television, and analyzing his equipment, Redhawk has decided that the technology used in the character's equipment is just the thing he needs to finally repair his battlesuit!

Redhawk will first face off directly against the hero, attempting to stun him into submission using the Dazzle effect of his Energy Blast power, being very careful not to damage the PCs armor or devices in any way. If he is unable to knock the hero out of commission, Redhawk will revert to what he knows best–a hasty retreat, and then an attempt to steal the desired item while the hero isn't looking. If Redhawk captures the device, it will only be a matter of time before he has disassembled it into junk. Can the heroes track him down in time?

ROSE MONK



15

A SIMPLE TECHNIQUE, REALLY. THESE PRESSURE POINTS WILL ALWAYS NEUTRALIZE YOUR ABILITY TO TURN INTANGIBLE.

MYSTIC MARTIAL ARTIST

	Daniel Ladd
	Unknown to the general public
	Global
	None
	Unrevealed

HEIGHT	5' 10"	EYES	Brown
WEIGHT	140 lbs.	AGE	38

HAIR White

BACKGROUND

It's not easy to find a fight. It's even more difficult to find recognition as a true talent in the international underground Zensen fighting tournament. Daniel Ladd found both. A talented martial artist even as a youth, Ladd sought to challenge himself with tougher and more dangerous opponents. Arcadia's fights were some of the most brutal in the United States, with rampant rumors of fight fixing, designer drugs, and even parahuman involvement. Ladd rose to the top ranks, becoming a fan favorite along the way, and a nearly sure bet.

Sure bets don't win any friends in the circuit, and Ladd was set up for a fall. Stepping into the ring with Lucien Cachot would be the last time Ladd fought for entertainment's sake. Cachot, an unknown French boxer, beat Ladd within an inch of his life, leaving his gasping, bloodied body face down on the mat. The shocked crowd stared on, and those in the know walked away with tens of thousands of dollars from cleverly placed bets.

The semi-conscious Ladd was disposed of, loaded onto a cargo ship bound for mainland China. As quickly as he had risen within the circuit, he was forgotten. Nursed back to health aboard the ship, Ladd befriended the crew, who regaled him with stories of the mystical fighting monks of their homeland. His curiosity piqued, Ladd decided to investigate the crew's claims of magical martial artists and their devastating art of fighting.

Upon his arrival, Ladd wandered the five Taoist mountains of China, searching for clues to the location of the monasteries that housed the remaining monks of the mystical Taoist disciplines. On Jun Qu Mountain, Ladd came across a hidden temple dedicated to the Shang Qing sect of monastic spirit boxers, considered by many Taoist monks to be wizards and practitioners of black magic. The xenophobic monks welcomed him with some reserve, but he quickly won them over with skill and dedication.

A keen student, Ladd absorbed everything he could from the monks, swiftly surpassing the younger ascetics and challenging the eldest. The temple master, Li Shou, cautioned Ladd that his warrior nature lay at odds with the Taoist principles of non-action and non-intention. Ladd respected Master Li's words, and began to pursue the mystical side of spirit boxing. He swiftly gained the title of Rose Monk—an honor never before bestowed upon a foreigner.

ED TADEM
STEVE COBB

The arrival of the young St. John Aristide, now known as the infamous parahuman-hunter Toreador (p. 102), initiated Ladd's most trying test. In the beginning, the two outsiders became fast friends, encouraging each other in their training. After only six months, Toreador left the monastery, returning later with a squad of Chinese soldiers intent on stamping out the last of the mythic Shang Qing. Ladd leapt to the defense of his spiritual brothers, brutally slaying the soldiers and leaving only Toreador to fight. High atop the steep mountain cliffs, Toreador and Ladd staged an epic brawl. Consumed with rage and resentment over his friend's betrayal of the sect, Ladd forced his opponent to the ground, and paused to deliver his coup de grace. Master Li stopped him. "No action, even one this wicked, is worthy of death." Li's words shamed Ladd, who realized his warrior spirit would always conflict with the inner peace that the Shang Qing sought. After helping to rebuild the monastery, Ladd left Jun Qu Mountain, never to return.

Ladd wandered aimlessly throughout China, Mongolia, and Tibet, but no place could keep his interest for long. The explorer found his way to Hong Kong's notorious Walled City, a thriving den of corruption, gambling, prostitution, and murder. While wandering its street market, Ladd came across a curiously bound tome emblazoned with the symbols of the Shang Qing. Within its pages were revealed teachings that had been lost for centuries. Careful study of the text afforded Ladd an amazing insight into his previous training, bringing his martial skills to a level unknown by normal men. He quickly realized that other lost texts must exist, and began planning a journey, hoping to uncover fabled lost shrines, abandoned cities, and buried temples.

Word soon made its way through the underground that Ladd had been sighted in Hong Kong. Rumors of his newfound abilities brought dozens of experienced fighters to the city, eager for the chance to defeat the fighter who had come back from the dead. The Zensen Tournament had changed during Ladd's absence, becoming even more lethal, with parahuman combatants becoming the rule. On the eve of his departure, five diabolical superhuman fighters ambushed and overwhelmed Ladd in his dojo. Near death, he drew upon the teachings from the book of Shang Qing, focusing his inner *qi*. In a blinding series of holds and nerve pinches, he neutralized the powers of his would-be assassins. Unable to stay his raging hands, Ladd killed all but one enemy—leaving him to tell the world of the unbeatable martial expertise of the Rose Monk.

The Rose Monk has spent the remaining years scouring the world, hoping to find lost teachings that will open even greater paths of study. His all-consuming devotion to this quest allows no one to stand in his way. Better that someone dies than to lose a potential source of power.

USING ROSE MONK

Due to the nature of the Rose Monk's quest, he can be encountered anywhere the GM desires. Anything could hold a source of information, from museum pieces to a book of ancient Chinese poetry possessed by a player character's grandmother. The Rose Monk uses whatever force is necessary to wrest such artifacts from their owners, regardless of the legalities. Many a collector of antiquities has been left nursing a broken arm or leg after an encounter with the mysterious red-garbed warrior monk

The Rose Monk is not evil per se, but has no qualms about using violence in order to ensure the success of his quest. He never hesitates to kill those who stand against him, but does respect the abilities of trained fighters. However, he grants no quarter even to those he respects.

The Rose Monk has abandoned any pretense of achieving inner peace, and now seeks only to become the world's foremost fighter, a veritable living weapon unequalled by any other. Some would argue he is not far from this goal.

TACTICS

An unparalleled combatant, Rose Monk is nearly impossible to take by surprise. Even in complete darkness, he can focus on a foe's heartbeat, footsteps, or other audio cues to pinpoint his position. The Rose Monk's methodical studies have allowed him to master the most devastating offensive moves of Shang Qing kung fu—such as the Fist of Eight Elements—allowing him to severely injure or kill opponents with just a single blow.

Against superhuman foes, he first focuses on his surroundings, attempting to turn the arena to his advantage. Whether that means cutting out the lights to fight a sighted foe in the dark or moving into a cramped area to disadvantage fliers, Rose Monk takes no chances while fighting.

Quickly moving into melee range, Rose Monk attempts to stun or paralyze opponents, saving his ability to Neutralize for a last resort, as it requires intense focus and concentration as he draws on his inner *qi*. His fighting style is one of languid movements, and he appears to block punches, kicks, and even projectiles with a practiced ease.

Rose Monk is not arrogant enough to continue fighting an opponent he cannot defeat, and retreats carefully, only to return at a later date with new tactics and styles.

GAME STATISTICS

Rose Monk: PL 15; Init +12 (+5 Dex, +3 Super-Dexterity, +4 Improved Initiative); Defense 29; Spd 30 ft.; Atk +13 melee or +11/+11 melee (+17S/L/crit 19–20, unarmed), +13 ranged; SV Dmg +14, Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills: Acrobatics +15, Balance +15, Escape Artist +13, Jump +14, Knowledge (occult) +7, Sense Motive +7.

Feats: All-Around Sight, Attack Focus (unarmed), Blind-Fight, Blindsight (acute hearing), Dodge, Evasion, Expertise, Improved Critical (unarmed), Improved Initiative, Improved Pin, Rapid Strike, Stunning Attack.

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +6 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 6 pp], Deflection +6 [*Power Stunt:* Catch; *Flaw:* Limited (physical attacks only); *Source:* Training; *Cost:* 1 pp, *Total:* 8 pp], Neutralize +10 [*Extras:* Neutralizing Block, Nullification; *Flaws:* Range (touch), Villainous Effort; *Source:* Training, *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Paralysis +4 [*Extra:* Sustained; *Flaw:* Range (touch); *Source:* Training; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 8 pp], Strike +10 [*Extra:* Dual Damage; *Source:* Training; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp], Super-Dexterity +3 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 12 pp], Super-Strength +3 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 12 pp].

CAPERS

White Lotus Clan: Weeks ago, the Rose Monk liberated the powerful Five Elements Blade from the possession of the White Lotus Clan, a secretive splinter sect of mystic Taoist assassins. Now, the clan wants it back. Attacked by White Lotus assassins, the Rose Monk opts to hide the blade—by allowing it to fall into the hands of the player characters! Now the White Lotus Clan wants to eliminate not only the Rose Monk, but the characters as well, and they will stop at nothing to return the blade to its rightful place. Even if the players manage to defeat the assassins, they still must face off against a very motivated Rose Monk when he returns to reclaim his purloined property.

White Lotus Clan Monk: PL 5; Init +8 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 19 (+5 base, +4 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +10 melee (+6L/10-ft. reach, kwan dao staff) or +10 melee (+2S, unarmed), +10 ranged (+3L, throwing stars); SV Dmg +4, Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Jump+2, Hide +4, Listen +1, Move Silently +4, Spot +1.

Feats: All-Out Attack, Attack Finesse, Attack Focus (armed), Attack Focus (unarmed), Dodge, Evasion, Heroic Surge (1), Improved Initiative, Instant Stand, Move-By Attack, Power Attack, Stunning Attack, Surprise Strike (+3).

Equipment: Kwan dao staff [+4L, *Power Stunt:* Extend Reach; *Total:* 5 pp], rope dart [+4L, *Extra:* Snare +4; *Total:* 8 pp].

The Five Elements Blade shouldn't fall into the hands of the PCs permanently. They should feel compelled to return it to its rightful owners. Perhaps an ancient curse will be visited upon those who abscond with the blade.

Five Elements Blade: [*Effect:* Weapon +10 (+10L, melee); *Extras:* Energy Blast (fire), Element Control (earth), Element Control (water), Plant Control; *Power Stunt:* Amphibious; *Flaw:* Tiring; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 41 pp]. The Five Elements Blade must be held to activate its powers.

SISTER BLISTER



12

IT'S NOTHING PERSONAL, I JUST HATE YOU.

OUTCAST TEEN FLAMETHROWER

REAL NAME	Gwen Foster
EGO ID	Publicly known
GROUP AFFILIATION	Arcadia
CREW	Bestiary (former)
NATIONALITY	U.S. citizen with criminal record
HEIGHT	5' 5"
WEIGHT	105 lbs.
RACE	White
AGE	17
HAIR	Blonde

BACKGROUND

Some children are born bad. Some children are born good, but their parents assume otherwise. The latter case applies to Gwen Foster. Gwen's power to generate and control fire manifested as she passed into her teenage years. A series of small fires aroused the suspicions of local police, but when Gwen's pyrophoric skin ignited spontaneously in air while she slept, destroying her childhood home, even her parents turned against her. Gwen knew nothing of how the fire started, and claimed innocence. Star witnesses in the arson trial that followed, Gwen's parents helped to convict their daughter, who was shipped off to a nearby jail.

Her time in Southampton County Jail further turned her against her treacherous parents and taught her to defend herself against the more brutal and violent girl inmates. In time, her skin once more burst into flame, resulting in the death of two guards and Gwen's escape from confinement.

META-4, the U.S. government agency tasked with investigating, studying, and policing America's parahumans, immediately scrambled a search and rescue team to bring Gwen in, but to no avail. Chimera (p. 41), eavesdropping on META-4's encrypted radio transmissions, arrived first. Members of his team, the Bestiary (p. 38), made short work of META-4's extraction team and brought the frightened and confused young parahuman back to their Arcadia headquarters.

The Bestiary trained Gwen in the use of her emerging powers, and she began at last to feel at home with others, like her, who had transcended humanity. A special containment suit designed by Chimera channeled Gwen's flames through vents positioned at the hands, feet, and top of her head. She remained unable to keep her skin from catching fire, but learned to control and project that fire, becoming a powerful living weapon. Chimera rechristened her Helia, the Greek word for "of the Sun."

Gwen fell for Chimera's natural charismatic nature, a development the Bestiary's leader did little to stave off. He believed that Gwen's feelings for him would only benefit the team, easing her fears of abandonment. Instead, it had the opposite effect. The closer Gwen grew toward Chimera, the further she withdrew from the rest of the Bestiary. This culminated when Gwen, spying on the object of her obsession, found the team's waterborne siren, Undine, in the throes of passion with none other than Chimera. Seething with anger and resentment,

she vowed to show Chimera the seriousness of her love. She began sabotaging the team's criminal operations in hopes of killing Undine. During the daylight kidnapping of California Senator Dalton Markham, Gwen ignited the fuel tank of the team's getaway chopper, nearly killing Undine, and causing her to be captured by META-4 agent Minotaur. In an act of whim or guilt-ridden action, Gwen later rescued Undine from her cell and returned her to the team's headquarters.

Later, when Gwen revealed her affections to Chimera, he dismissed them as a childish infatuation. Crushed, she left the Bestiary's zoo headquarters that night, never to return. She hid out in Arcadia's upper east side, committing petty crimes as necessary to secure food and other necessities. Her anger over Chimera's rejection solidified her resolve as a villain, as she now believes she can trust no one but herself.

After establishing a home base of sorts in an abandoned refinery, Gwen began her career as a serious super villain. She made national news after destroying the headquarters of a teen superhero team called the Upstarts, although reporters originally mistook her for the superheroine Inferna. In the aftermath of that case of mistaken identity, Gwen embarked on an accelerated crime spree, ensuring that she would never be confused with any other parahuman again. Her recent actions have earned her a new nickname—Sister Blister.

USING SISTER BLISTER

Sister Blister is not an easily controlled element within the supervillain subculture of Arcadia. Her nature is unpredictable, subject to the typical whims of any teenager. One week she may kidnap a visiting boy-band singer and the next threaten to burn down the Arcadia Stock Exchange.

Still young and capricious, Sister Blister may develop a crush on a PC hero, perhaps without the target of her affections being at all aware of this development. In such a situation, the hero might find his enemies attacked, his female teammates harassed, or even his secret identity uncovered. The relationship could develop into something more than a one-sided obsession, as Sister Blister reveals herself as just a misunderstood young woman with abandonment issues.

Sister Blister need not always play the part of the lovesick teen. She is a dangerous opponent, with all the training her mentors could provide, and has no trouble operating in a tactical manner. She can make for a vicious (albeit short-term) ally to any villain who needs extra firepower. She may temporarily team up with heroes who are adversaries of the Bestiary, or trade favors with them, providing information about the Bestiary in return for something she wants. Alternately, she may interfere with encounters involving the Bestiary, assaulting both sides with gouts of white-hot flame only to fly off, her laughter ringing in the characters' scorched ears.

Any time that Undine is encountered, Sister Blister may not be far behind. As a grudge-holder, Gwen is unequaled in her tenacity and dedication. Seeing Undine as the sole reason for leaving the Bestiary has left her both bitter and vengeful, willing to risk almost anything to see her rival defeated, humiliated, or dead.

Sister Blister usually acts alone, taking out targets that meet her undecipherable criteria for destruction or mischief. A publicity junkie, she goes out of her way to make sure that she is seen, even going so far as to pose for photographers and cameramen. She won't, however, sacrifice a mission just to make the 11 o'clock News.

TACTICS

Sister Blister's powers stem from her pyrophoric skin. Flames constantly envelop her body, burning in excess of 1600 degrees Fahrenheit. Vents in her containment suit channel, dampen, or amplify the flames as necessary, allowing her a measure of control over the intensity and direction of the fiery blasts from her palms. She's also learned how to use her flames to lift her body skyward, allowing her to fly by superheating the air around her body and projecting flames from her boot vents to change direction. Outside her containment suit, Gwen's body is impossible to touch without receiving horrific burns.

As a prior member of the Bestiary, Sister Blister is well trained in using her powers in an offensive and defensive manner, targeting weak opponents first, then moving on to those she sees as immediate threats. She avoids melee whenever possible, keeping herself in the air, at a distance, to stage her attacks. The very air around Sister Blister's body is so superheated that attacks against her may fail outright. When necessary, she forms a shield of super-heated air and flame around herself, or others, to protect them from more devastating attacks. In the case of an impending defeat, Sister Blister will pull out all the stops, opening every vent on her costume at once, allowing her to channel enough explosive force to incinerate everything in a 60 foot radius.

Sister Blister is possessed of the arrogance of youth, often taunting opponents with disparaging remarks about their abilities, attractiveness, the usefulness of their powers, or even their fashion sense. Few seem to appreciate the cruelty with which a 17-year-old girl can deliver insults.

GAME STATISTICS

Sister Blister: PL 12; Init +4 (Dex); Defense 20 (+6 Base, +4 Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft.; Atk +9 melee (+2S, unarmed), +12 ranged (+12L, Energy Blast–fire); SV Dmg +13 (Protection–fire +12), Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Skills: Taunt +6.

Feats: Aerial Combat, Attack Focus (Energy Blast), Power Attack, Immunity (fire), Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +10 [*Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], Energy Blast (fire) +12 [*Extras:* Deflection (*Extras:* Automatic, Deflect Others), Explosive Blast (60-ft. radius), Propulsion; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 7 pp; *Total:* 84 pp], Protection +12 [*Flaw:* One Type (fire); *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 12 pp].

CAPERS

My Flaming Valentine: Fires are popping up all over the city, and Devil's Night is still months away. Everything from city parks to orphanages have been burned down, and so far, no one has lost their lives. The fires form a pattern around a player character's headquarters or home, revealing the arsonist's next target—a towering high-rise, mere weeks from completion. When the characters arrive, Sister Blister is in the process of setting the building ablaze, and reveals her plan. Is it an ambush, or has Sister Blister fallen in love with one of the characters, making the fires her larger-than-life love note?

It Wasn't Me! A rash of fire-related crimes point at Sister Blister, although none of the witnesses have seen who committed the acts. The mayor and fire chief offer up a substantial sum to anyone who can bring Sister Blister in for trial. The villainess explains the whole story of her innocence to them, and asks the PCs to help her clear her name. It won't be easy to prove her innocent, especially with every amateur vigilante in the city trying to bring her in.

Once her name has been cleared, new evidence comes to light—it was Sister Blister behind the crimes all along! How will the heroes react? Revealing the evidence will forever taint their image, casting them as accessories—or even worse, as collaborators. Keeping the information to themselves will save their good name, but at what cost?

How Dare You!: Sister Blister has developed an irrational hatred of a female player character. Whether it's stealing her motif, getting more television coverage, or simply being "bitchy," the teen flamethrower doesn't want the hero in town any longer. She begins by showing up wherever the hero does, hanging in the background of any fight, and subtly aiding any villains the hero fights against. Soon, Sister Blister stages an all out assault on the hero's reputation, going as far as to injure innocents the hero tries to protect, or even masquerading as the hero to put her in a compromising position. The culmination of Sister Blister's assault entails the revelation of the source of her hatred, and the ultimatum—"There's only room in this town for one of us, and that's going to be me!"

SOVEREIGN

16 AN INTRIGUING PLANET. IT SHALL REFLECT MY PERFECTION IN FLAMES.

EXILED ALIEN PRINCE

REAL NAME	Dovox
CIVIL IDENTITY	Unknown to the general public
BASE OF OPERATIONS	Region of space including the planet Vodan, Earth
GROUP AFFILIATION	Broan Imperial Family (former)
NATIONALITY	Extra-terrestrial (broan)
HEIGHT	7' 0"
WEIGHT	260 lbs.
EYES	Yellow
HAIR	None
SIZE	62



BACKGROUND

The ruthless Broan Empire spans a thousand worlds throughout the galaxy. Most captured planets (known to the broan as thrallworlds) have been demolished by the broan armadas, raped utterly of natural resources, and left to die a slow, lonely death in the wake of the Empire's eternal advance through the cosmos. The broan also harvest technology in their "exploration" of space, which they use to improve their armies and warmaking industries. Much captured technology goes to keep the current Emperor, Orbanux VIII, alive and healthy, as he has remained for the last 359 years.

As a result of the Emperor's longevity, whole generations of his progeny have lived and died with no prospect of taking the imperial throne. As a result, the sons and daughters of Orbanux want for nothing, living a life of luxury so long as they express no political motivations whatsoever. The arrangement worked perfectly for centuries. Then, about 7 years ago, an ambitious young scion, one of 23 living princes of the Broan Empire, decided luxury wasn't enough. That calculating, proud, and treacherous son was Dovox, the alien menace known to Earth's heroes as Sovereign.

Ancient ancestors of the Empire's current rulers first pacified and united warring broan factions thousands of years ago, before the race had the technology to escape their pollution-choked homeworld. The ancient heroes unified the broan thanks to special super-powers gained by exposure to the rays of a certain gemstone. Known as the Tempering, the ritual serves as one of the religious pillars of broan society by ensuring that the ruling class is seen as gods by the common "powerless" broan. Prince Dovox emerged from his Tempering with the ability to regenerate wounds at an astonishing rate. His powers made him nearly invulnerable to damage. "The Empire spends its fortunes keeping my feeble father alive," he reasoned. "And yet I

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can never die." He resolved to take over the Empire one elder brother at a time, murdering three in 1996 before being captured while attempting to kill Orbanux himself.

The Broan Empire holds killing a member of the ruling family so taboo that it never even considered executing Dovox. Instead, the prince received the harshest of nonlethal punishments—exile to a distant backwater of space far from the major civilized spaceways. Orbanux grudgingly provided his son with his own translator, a kwoloo named Waymaker (p. 112), who would ensure Dovox's ability to communicate with creatures throughout the galaxy.

Calling himself Sovereign, Dovox immediately decided to create an empire to rival that of his father, with the hope that they might one day clash in a titanic space battle the universe will remember until the last sun has died. Within a year, he'd pressed more than 100 high-tech space mercenaries into an effective invasion force capable of capturing any pre-space-travel planet.

His first target was Vodan, a mineral-rich planet whose gemstone inhabitants lived according to a super-feudal government ruled by an aged Primarch. The combined swords and limited magic of Vodan's defenders did nothing to stop the onslaught of Sovereign's well-equipped army. Days after the force arrived, Sovereign wrested the Harbinger Staff from the Primarch of Vodan and used it to extinguish the planet's Worldspark, a ghostly luminescence within the giant crystals that served as the spiritual anchor of Vodan culture.

In the Primarch's vanquished castle, Sovereign came across a curious brass amulet, and turned it over to Waymaker for further study. The scholarly alien detected an invisible script and, using his ability to read and understand any language, he read the amulet's incantation. Doing so produced a human man in ancient garb, who seemed to emerge from within the amulet itself. The man called himself Sulemain, and before Sovereign could crush his neck, the strange human offered an unusual bargain.

Sulemain (p. 96) claimed to be a wizard who understood the mathematical rules that govern the universe. He promised to provide Sovereign with a means by which to move his armies from planet to planet without need for an armada. The offer held the prospect of capturing highly advanced technological worlds, using the element of surprise to slip past most planetary defense systems. Dovox assented to the plan.

Sulemain immediately set about creating a architecturally perfect building, which allowed visitors to jump to any point in the universe simply by standing at the right confluence of angles and uttering an arcane formula. In return for creating this perfect weapon, Sovereign promised to conquer Sulemain's homeworld—a planet known as Earth. After adding seven more planets to his fledgling empire and murdering four more elder brothers, Sovereign is finally ready to fulfill his side of the bargain.

USING SOVEREIGN

Sovereign prefers to visit a new world himself in order to test its mettle before deploying his armies. He wants to get a feel for Earth's superhuman protectors before full-scale invasion can begin, which puts him on a collision course with your heroes. Sovereign disdains Earth's "primitive" technology and culture, but respects its superhumans, whom he sees as his peers. While he realizes that the superhumans of Earth, like those of the conquered planets before them, must be destroyed in the invasion to come, he relishes every battle like a wizened general facing off against a worthy foe.

Consider teaming Sovereign with Sulemain and Waymaker, members of his advisory Collective Council, in an adventure that presages an invasion of Earth by Sovereign's armies. Keep the armies off stage (unless the PCs really mess up), allowing your players the opportunity to shut down an alien invasion before it happens. Even at his meanest, Sovereign is perhaps best used to presage the trouble to come if his father's Broan Empire decides to pay a visit to Earth.

Sovereign's appearance in the campaign might be particularly impactful for an alien PC, as the character may have lost family or loved ones to the crushing advance of Orbanux's Broan Empire. Perhaps the Empire utterly destroyed the PC alien's homeworld ages ago, forcing survivors to live a nomadic existence (which may have brought the hero to Earth in the first place).

TACTICS

Sovereign Regenerates three stun and lethal hits every two rounds (1 the first, 2 the second, and so on). If disabled or knocked unconscious, he gets a DC 5 Constitution check to recover. This nigh-invulnerability makes Sovereign exceptionally brave. He occasionally suffers damage willingly in an effort to prove his resilience to an opponent.

Although exceptionally dangerous even when unarmed, Sovereign prefers to fight with the Harbinger Staff, which he liberated from the dead hands of Vodan's Primarch. Sovereign added a custom blade to the staff, inset gemstone heart of the staff's previous owner.

GAME STATISTICS

Sovereign (broan): PL 16; Init +1 (Dex); Defense +26 (+15 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +20 melee (+15L, Harbinger Staff) or +16 ranged (+15L, gradient pistol) or +16 ranged (DC 15 Fort save, Stun); SV Dam +7 (Armor +10, Durability), Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills: Intimidate +18, Knowledge (space) +8, Sense Motive +6.

Feats: Attack Focus (armed), Chokehold, Durability, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Immunity (pressure), Improved Grapple, Infamy, Toughness.

Powers: Natural Weapon (tusks) +3 [*Source:* —; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 6 pp], Protection +4 [*Flaw:* One Type (cold only); *Source:* —; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 4 pp], Regeneration +15 [*Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 30 pp].

Equipment: Armor +10 [*Flaw:* Device; *Source:* —; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], fog bombs [*Effect:* Obscure +4; *Extra:* Extra Sense (scent); *Flaw:* Device, Uses (8); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 4 pp], Harbinger Staff [*Effect:* Weapon +16; *Extra:* Extra Attack (Stun); *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 32 pp].

CAPERS

Sister, Sister: The Broan Empire doesn't recognize the political aspirations of female broan, so Dovox's sisters play little part in his scheme. In fact, he pays little attention to them at all, a trait he shares in common with even the Emperor's staunchest supporters. His eldest sister, a scheming manipulator named Unava (Mental Blast +15), detests this bias and has come to the conclusion that her only route to power must come from an alliance with Sovereign, whom she has never met. To gain his trust, however, she knows she must prove her value to him.

She does this by appearing to the heroes as a representative of a benevolent broan Emperor who wishes to bring home a wayward and troublesome son. She provides the heroes with information on Sovereign's whereabouts and reveals the nature of his powers. Once they have defeated Sovereign, Unava betrays the heroes as a display of loyalty to her brother and offers an alliance right before the heroes' eyes.

Klatuu, Barada, Nikto: On his first visit, Sovereign decides to test the planet's reaction time by appearing outside a world capital (the White House, 10 Downing Street, the Kremlin, etc.) and declaring (with the help of his translator) his intent to take over the Earth. While he realizes that he can't dominate the entire planet alone, he's fairly certain he could do serious damage to the capital building, possibly killing an important world leader or three in the process. He's had luck with the tactic before, and finds that a destabilized world makes for easy conquest.

The PCs become involved by sheer proximity, having recently finished a case in the same city. Radio and television broadcasts reveal a massive red-skinned alien attacking the nation's center of power, and commentators bemoan the fact that the city's regular superheroic defenders have not yet made the scene. Can the heroes act before it's too late for their nation's leader? What happens to their popularity and notoriety after they save the president's life on live TV?

SPASM



12

TIME TO LAY ON THE HURT!

RAW NERVE OF RAGE

REAL NAME	Earl Duke
OTHER ALIASES	Merrill Bergie
GOAL IDENTITY	Secret
BASE OF OPERATIONS	Global
GROUP AFFILIATION	None
NATIONALITY	U.S. citizen

HEIGHT	7' 2"	EYES	Blue
WEIGHT	430 lbs.	HAIR	None
		AGE	35

BACKGROUND

Merrill Bergie was born a sickly child in a rural Midwestern community in the late 1960s. By then, costumed superheroes were just the tip of the parahuman iceberg, as mutants with enhanced senses and superhuman intellects flooded the private sector, bolstering the American economy. Radical therapy was cheap and readily available for nearly any affliction. Young Merrill's parents placed him in a program to strengthen his compromised constitution. But for the injections and the blue light that kind of burned, the child enjoyed his weekly trips into the city. By the age of 10, Merrill was not only healthy, but as strong as an ox. Unfortunately, later studies suggested a connection between the drug he had been administered, Penthelox-73, and an increased occurrence of psychotic rage.

Merry made the most of his newfound vigor, leading his high school football team to a state victory. If not for a number of disciplinary incidents, including a narrowly avoided charge of manslaughter, Bergie could have easily enjoyed a high-profile scholarship. His exceptional athleticism made him something of a small-town celebrity, so he easily made the transition to sports entertainment. Over the next ten years, he clawed his way from backyard wrestling to the top of the Global Gladiatorial Federation. Though claiming to favor "man's natural strength and cunning" over the use of parahuman abilities, this utterly corrupt pseudo-sport frequently dumped very dangerous, unstable "powered" individuals into the ring against each other. Of course, GGF matches soon became the most popular media events of all time. Washed-up middle-aged superheroes, battle androids, and kooks with bizarre motifs looking to make a name for themselves were common sights on weekly televised matches. Bergie, fighting under the name Earl Duke and advertised as a "common man," was an easy fan favorite.

Duke's agent, a sinister Hollywood player named Nolly Pratt, managed a number of very popular "gladiators." Though pitching them all as merely well-trained fighters, Pratt maintained a lucrative partnership with a French pharmaceutical company, Renard Prochem, which provided numerous performance-enhancing cocktails designed to slip by the Federation's loose drug testing. The French firm's dodgy ethics caused its share of casualties, and in reality, Renard used the pit fights to field test combat serums intended for the black market. But the serums were far from perfect, and few

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gladiators escaped unscathed. Despite his riches and notoriety, Earl Duke's body was being painfully eaten away by the chemicals that helped make him so popular.

Duke managed to return to the ring numerous times after injuries and neuromuscular problems that would have killed the average man. When he could fight no more, Pratt tried to transition him into Hollywood, starring him in a pair of wretched family action movies, *Nuclear Mailman* and *Submarine Mountain*. On set, the star was violent and petulant, often physically accosting crew members before collapsing in pain. Earl Duke was reduced to a caricature, and even his legion of die-hard fans, the Dukesters, drifted away. His physical condition deteriorated suddenly. Swollen, calcified muscles erupted painfully through his skin, while barbed tendons and cartilage twisted and bore through his internal tissue. Pratt took pity on his friend, and secretly flew him to Switzerland to undergo experimental treatment under the direct supervision of Renard doctors.

The physicians did the best they could to stabilize Duke's condition. Unfortunately, the Penthelox-73 he had been administered as a child reacted unexpectedly with the Renard treatments. Earl Duke emerged from treatment with a disturbing array of parahuman abilities. Knowing he could never return to his previous life of celebrity and gracious to Pratt and Renard, Duke, now known as Spasm, Master of Pain, comfortably made the transition from superhuman gladiator to international enforcer and mercenary.

USING SPASM

Spasm has accepted his lot as a follower. By trusting in Pratt, he has tasted a great deal of success. In Spasm's mind, Pratt saved him, and as a result, Spasm is a loyal soldier. He rarely questions missions handed down from Renard, and enjoys the travel and violence. Strangely, Spasm directs his rage over his physical condition toward popular superheroes. He is bitter that his star faded from public memory so quickly, and believes that the fickle American public chewed his body up, turning him into a pop-culture joke. Spasm does not respond well to taunts or jabs at his former celebrity, and is quick to fly off the handle when confronted by costumed, media-whore heroes. When not fighting, Spasm is dimwitted and crass. He is a consummate bully who enjoys frightening old women, children, and pets. The only way he knows to get his way is through intimidation and threats. While obsequious to his superiors, Spasm rarely has the foresight to determine which asses to kick, and which to kiss.

TACTICS

Although he is well equipped to fight a number of opponents simultaneously on his own, Spasm is also well suited to act as the lynch-pin in a coordinated team attack, as long as he can keep his temper in check and avoid mental attacks. In such cases, Spasm focuses on the "pretty boys," especially flyers, who try to stay out of the melee and utilize ranged attacks. He hides on a perch, lashing out with his unwound muscles and tendons at maximum range of 30 feet. Spasm uses his Elasticity only to extend the reach of his flaying attacks. The calcified barbs, enzymatic acids, and raw bio-electricity of this meat-scourge make it a threat to heroes who otherwise consider themselves invulnerable.

With a successful strike, he attempts to initiate a grapple, neutralize the opponent's powers, and either overwhelm him with the searing pain of his Fatigue power or simply throttle him with a Choke Hold. Thanks to Improved Grapple, he is capable of doing this with one hand free. In a free-for-all, Spasm targets the biggest, baddest-looking hero in an attempt to prove "they ain't so tough!" Thanks to his resilient and pliant physiology and the hit he recovers every other round due to his Regeneration, in many instances he's right.

GAME STATISTICS

Spasm: PL 12; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 23 (+10 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +15 melee (12L/crit19–20/30-ft. reach, unarmed); SV Dmg +10, Fort +7, Ref +3, Will -1; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +12, Hide +6, Intimidate +13, Move Silently +6, Taunt +4.

Feats: Ambidexterity, Attack Focus (unarmed), Choke Hold, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical, Improved Grapple, Improved Pin, Power Attack, Rapid Takedown, Startle, Takedown Attack.

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +5 [*Source:* Super Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp], Elasticity +6 [*Extra:* Protection; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 5 pp; *Total:* 30 pp], Fatigue +10 [*Flaw:* Range (touch); *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], Natural Weapon +4 [*Extra:* Climbing; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 12 pp], Neutralize +10 [*Flaw:* Range (touch); *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], Regenerate +5 [*Extra:* Regrowth; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 15 pp], Super-Strength +4 [*Source:* Super Science; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 12 pp].

Weaknesses: Disturbing. Spasm's skin varies in consistency from a mucus-like film, like the skin of a tadpole, to a tough weave of strong, silky fibers. It frequently splits, seeps bloody fluid, and regrows. Like visceral serpents, his muscle tissue undulates, often visibly beneath the surface, cracking and re-knitting his skeleton. Understandably, Spasm rarely shows his face, and cannot move about in public without eliciting screams of terror.

Unlucky. For whatever cosmic reason, Spasm is an incredible screw-up who often snatches defeat from the jaws of victory. His unique brand of reckless ignorance has led to an accidental self-electrocution on more than one occasion. How this misfortune manifests itself is left to the discretion of the Gamemaster.

Vulnerable (electricity). Renard's bio-chemicals and numerous sports injuries have ravaged Spasm's nervous system. Many of his nerves are grotesquely enlarged and exposed, and while they carry a jellyfish-like sting, they are vulnerable to electrical surges. Spasm finds these attacks mind-numbingly painful and attempts to avoid heroes with any electrical motif or cybernetic powers.

CAPERS

Show Me the Muscle: Authorities have evidence that Nolly Pratt is seeding other professional sports with parahuman ringers. Heroes are brought in by the police, team owners, or even gambling interests to infiltrate a professional sports team without revealing their powers. Once their true nature is discovered, the heroes are set upon by athletic goons, using sports-related weapons and the Motif feat. Whether challenged on ice by hockey players with bladed sticks and explosive pucks or thrown onto the pitch with their hands in manacles to face an evil team of soccer players enhanced by Renard drugs, the players should find themselves out of their element. Signs inevitably point to Pratt and Renard, but by the time the heroes confront Spasm and mercenary allies (such as Player 2), the evidence will have been destroyed.

Zombie Supervillains Must Die!: The Kevorkian Retreat*, a privately funded treatment center for parahuman sociopaths, is under a nightmarish siege. Drugs supplied by Renard Prochem to suppress super-powers have had apocalyptic side effects on the residents of the facility's morgue. Upon death, the chemicals act as a strange catalyst in the pineal gland. The cadavers rise as mindless zombies still wielding their parahuman abilities.

After an unfortunate PR debacle, the heroes have been incarcerated, sans costumes and equipment, at the retreat. An obligatory power outage causes heroes' restraints and power suppression devices to fail, freeing them just as the zombies rise. This is a creepy opportunity for the heroes to confront villains and bystanders they have deliberately or accidentally slain. Another unfortunate side-effect of the Renard drug is the zombies' apparent subservience to recent guest Spasm and whatever allies he's recruited from the sanitarium patients.

**Calvin Kevorkian, son of the famous Dr. Jack Kevorkian, is a preeminent authority on parahuman deviant psychology.*

SULEMAIN

10

THE WORLD OPERATES UPON THE PRINCIPLES OF SACRED GEOMETRY, AND I AM ITS RIGHTFUL ARCHITECT/

SORCEROUS MASTER OF DEMONS

REAL NAME	Lemuel Druitt
KNOWN ASSOCIATES	Secret
BASE OF OPERATIONS	Global (especially Middle East), Vodan
GROUP AFFILIATION	Sovereign's Collective Council
NATIONALITY	British citizen with criminal record
HEIGHT	6' 2"
WEIGHT	140 lbs.
EYES	Red
HAIR	Black
SKIN	Unknown



BACKGROUND

Obsessed with esoteric mystical traditions and the secret history of Freemasonry, archeologist and mystic Lemuel Druitt dedicated his life to the excavation of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, Masonry's most revered site. While digging alone in 1934, Druitt unearthed a series of secret chambers in the ruined structure's foundation. The ancient rooms, undisturbed for thousands of years, contained numerous magical tomes detailing the temple's construction and ancient secrets of the world's nature and origins. The deepest chamber, protected by a devious trap, housed the Goetia Cask, a small brass vessel containing the spirits of 72 demons imprisoned within by King Solomon himself.

Rapt by the psychological realization of his life's work, Druitt claimed the cask as his own, arrogantly declaring himself Solomon's living reincarnation. He magically sealed the chambers from within, spending months alone studying the texts and scrolls to decode their ancient secrets. He became convinced that the Earth and everything on it followed the dictates of "sacred geometry," a sort of esoteric mathematical formulae. Mastery of this geometry, he reasoned, would allow him to control anyone and anything.

Druitt emerged from the Temple of Solomon clothed in ancient garb, callin himself Sulemain. With the aid of the dem -spirits of the Goetia Cask, Sulemain embarke on a tour of the world's great museums and libraries, looting them of gems, relics, and manuscripts related to his numerologic quest. Throughout the late 1930s, several American heroes thwarted the wizard's plans, and while Sulemain often battled the likes of Scorpio, Mr. Mystery, and Blast Samson, he reserved especial hatred for his most frequent foe, a turbaned mystical rival known as Doc Mesmer.

Sulemain and Mesmer's ongoing conflict continued into the 1940s, and after Doc Mesmer banded with a group of superhumans called the Homefront, the reincarnated mystic gained a slew of new enemies like Everyman, Johnny-on-the-Spot, and Swing Shift. Unlike many costumed criminals of his era, Sulemain fled from wartime service, viewing World War II as a lucky distraction that allowed unmolested access to previously protected archeological sites. In this manner he pierced the legendary Sphinx of Egypt, gaining access to a hidden library and preserving the volumes discovered therein by casting them into the Goetia Cask. Similar capers continued until 1948, when Doc

Mesmer and his young ward Anna Klien defeated Sulemain and sealed him within his magical vessel, trapped in the nethervoid with his demonic thralls. Mesmer melted the brass cask and fashioned the metal into an amulet which functioned much as the cask had and redoubled the strength of Sulemain's binding.

In 1951, Mesmer and Anna Klien departed Earth as part of Courage Unlimited, a world-weary group of superhumans frustrated with politics and eager to explore the multiverse on an extended journey with no plans for return. Mesmer traveled the cosmos for twelve years before finally choosing to sacrifice himself on the crystal planet of Vodan, where his life-essence became the planet's luminescent Worldspark. Mesmer's possessions, including the Goetia Amulet, remained in a place of honor at the castle of Vodan's Primarch. For the 48 ageless years of his imprisonment, Sulemain battled and made alliances and battled again with his former prisoners, developing heightened skills of self-preservation and a more intimate understanding of the nature of demons. Sulemain's imprisonment ended in 1996, when Waymaker, the emissary to the exiled broan prince Sovereign (p. 92) accidentally released him by reading an invisible incantation on the amulet's surface.

Sovereign had come to Vodan on a conquering tour of nearby space, to which he had been exiled by a brutal distant empire ruled by his kin. To spite his hated family, the prince had set out to create a rival empire, but as yet lacked the space armada for such a monumental undertaking. The manipulative Sulemain offered a compromise, wherein he would provide the alien warlord with the means by which to transmit armies from planet to planet without an armada. In return, Sovereign would use his ruthless army to take over Earth, which he would then hand over to the wizard. Sovereign agreed, and thus began the nearly 6-year process of reconstructing a perfect replica of the ancient Temple of Solomon on Vodan. Sulemain relied upon Masonic teachings that the temple was a perfect geometric model of the universe, reasoning that by simply standing upon the correct mosaic and uttering a kabalistic phrase one could teleport himself anywhere in the universe. The plan worked, and Sovereign's armies went on the march.

USING SULEMAIN

After conquering seven planets, Sovereign has finally gotten around to honoring his side of the bargain. Unwilling to wait, Sulemain appeared on Earth as long ago as 2001, investigating the same secrets that fueled him almost 70 years ago. He has no respect for ancient art as a thing unto itself, and will willingly destroy a beautiful ancient sculpture to discover the hidden scroll within. This makes him a menace to characters with secret identities such as museum curator, professor, or archeologist.

Despite his singular interest in Earth, Sulemain serves on Sovereign's Collective Council of advisors, and must attend his Emperor regularly at the temple on Vodan (Sovereign's agents return to the temple via a special ritual). Use Sulemain to provide unexpected mystical spice to an encounter with the aliens Sovereign and Waymaker (p. 112) or ditch the science fiction elements and throw your party against Sulemain and a handful of demons from the Chapter 3 of this book. If you prefer your sorcerers straight, perhaps the Goetia Amulet never left Earth and instead fell into the hands of a player character. The hero's eventual accidental release paves the way for Sulemain's involvement in the campaign.

TACTICS

Sulemain's Lemurian Circlet, a band of gold worn around his head, grants him improved vision and relative immunity from a number of dangers. It also provides insight into his enemies' weaknesses, granting him use of the Evaluate super-feat. In combat, Sulemain prefers to Snare an opponent, slowing her down long enough for the Circlet to give him an angle he can exploit with the variable effects of the Goetia Cask. His Unshakable Faith in the Masonic deity Jabulon, an amalgamation of the Christian god Jehovah, the Caananite god Baal, and the Egyptian god Osiris, grants him limited protection against the unholy and undead.

GAME STATISTICS

Sulemain: PL 10; Init +1 (Dex); Defense +17 (+6 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +5 melee (+0S, unarmed); +6 ranged (hardness reduced by 10, Disintegration); SV Dmg +2, Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +4 (Indomitable Will); Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +4, Concentration +9, Knowledge (mathematics) +10, Knowledge (occult) +14, Languages (choose five).

Feats: Indomitable Will, Photographic Memory, Unshakable Faith (Jabulon); Villain's Luck*.

Power: Sorcery +10 (Disintegration, ESP, Healing, Illusion, Neutralize, Telekinesis) [*Power Stunt:* Snare; *Flaws:* Excluded Group (transportation), Rote; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 5 pp; *Total:* 52 pp].

Equipment: The Goetia Cask [*Effect:* Gadgets +10; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Mystical; *Total:* 10 pp], the Lemurian Circlet [*Effects:* Darkvision, Evaluate*, Immunity (disease, exhaustion, poison, starvation), See Invisibility, True Sight; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Mystical; *Total:* 7 pp].

THE GOETIA CASK

Thousands of years ago, the historical King Solomon imprisoned 72 demons within a brazen cask. These fiends aided the king throughout his life, and constructed the Temple of Solomon, an archeologically perfect building now lost to the ravages of time. At one time the cask's owner could physically manifest the demons from the vessel, but the magic grows weak, and today only ephemeral demon-spirits answer the master's call.

Summoning forth a demon-spirit from the Goetia Cask costs a Villain Point, per the rules for Gadgets. Any villain (including a player character villain), can use the cask, but GMs may wish to prevent from doing so any characters whose Unshakable Faith feat might forbid them from dealing with demons.

Sulemain usually summons 2–3 demon-spirits prior to battle (usually calling forth Asmoday's Aura, the Worms of Sabnock, and the Wings of Malphas) and 1 or 2 additional spirits as the fight goes on and tactical weaknesses or opportunities become clear. He utters the name of each blessing pulled from the cask, but this is an affectation—the cask responds to his thoughts, not his words.

Some demon-spirit effects take physical form, such as the ghostly Brazen Blade of Botis or the razor-sharp Murmur's Probe. Others, such as the Will of Ipos or Forneus's Ear, have no physical manifestation. In all cases, the attendant spirit images are merely special effects, and all powers are tied to the Goetia Cask. If deprived of the cask, the wielder is deprived of all cask effects.

Some frequently-used demon-spirit incantations follow:

Amazing Save (Dam): Asmoday's Aura
Amazing Save (Fort): Sturdy Girdle of Bifrons
Amazing Save (Ref): Raumsense
Amazing Save (Will): Will of Ipos
Armor: Dented Mail of Alloces
Combat Sense: Thousand Eyes of Eligos
Comprehend: Forneus's Ear
Dazzle: Flamemantle of Phenex
Drain (Limited–Intelligence): Gaap's Rule
Drain (Limited–Constitution): Worms of Sabnock
Element Control (Air): Winds of Focalor
Element Control (Earth): Shaking of Agares
Element Control (Water): Waves of Vepar
Energy Blast (fire): Breath of Marchosias
Energy Blast (sonic): Purson's Trumpet
Energy Control (fire): Aim's Flamerule
Flight: Wings of Malphas
Invisibility: Mask of Glasya-Labolas
Mental Protection: Helm of Foras
Mind Control: Paimon's Bind
Mind Control (Limited–women): Vuall's Guile
Obscure: Miasma of Shax
Plant Control: Buer's Thumb
Shapeshift: Cloak of Marbas
Super-Charisma: Sitri's Fire
Super-Skill (Bluff): Balam's Tongue
Super-Skill (Diplomacy): Amon's Crown
Super-Skill (Knowledge–culture): Gamigin's Map
Super-Skill (Knowledge–history): Astaroth's Tome
Super-Skill (Knowledge–space): Starsight of Stolas
Super-Skill (Search): Vassago's Sight
Telepathy (Limited–animals): Barbatos's Link
Telepathy (Limited–dead bodies): Murmur's Probe
Teleportation: Bathin's Step
Transmutation (Limited–liquids only): Haagenti's Formula
Transmutation (Limited–solids into gold): Berith's Boonful Beam
Weapon (bow): Leraje's Bow
Weapon (sword): Brazen Blade of Botis
Weather Control: Furfur's Wrath



TAG TEAM

Concept: Mischievous Graffiti Artists
Members: Burner, Tag, and Toykiller
Area of Operation: Arcadia

Every city has places that draw graffiti artists: rooftops, trains, bus stops, water towers, delivery trucks, freeway overpasses, subway cars, train stations, and tunnels. Whether covering the walls with drippy marker tags or painting elaborate murals, these artists vie for infamy, and respect from other graf writers. Those who fail to impress are labeled as "toys," and those who conquer the most-treasured spots are granted the title of "all city."

Recently, a three-man crew of graffiti artists began bombing the urban core of the city with their tags, throw-ups, and murals. Burner, Tag, and Toykiller quickly grew to all-city status, their names seen everywhere from the East Bay train yards to the water towers atop the Arcadia Bank building. Adopting the name Tag Team, the trio grew infamous nearly overnight.

Sidestepping the city authorities seemed overly easy for the Tag Team. Their messages changed from mere name recognition to a running battle against the city's mayor, and his newly formed vandal squad. When the mayor unveiled his *Clean Streets, Clean City* program at a press conference downtown, a large backdrop, featuring photographs of the city's various landmarks, dramatically unfurled behind him. The gathered crowd and news media began to giggle; the entire backdrop had been defaced with graffiti by the Tag Team.

During the city's Thanksgiving Day parade, the trio pulled their most daring stunt yet. They broke into the warehouse which stored the parade's world-famous giant inflatable balloons. When the balloons were inflated, each and every one had been redecorated with the names of the Tag Team, as well as various anti-corporate slogans and general lambasting of the city government.

The televised appearance of the graffitied balloons acted as a floating gallery of the trio's work. The stunt garnered national attention, and a well-funded effort to bring the Tag Team to justice. At the same time, graffiti artists worldwide gained a brand-new set of heroes to look up to.

Unbeknownst to the general populace, the trio commits their crimes with the aid of some very strange supernatural powers. Early in their career, the trio met with the enigmatic Mr. F, a strange urban boogieman who contacts young criminals, imbuing them with powers that make their exploits easier. No one knows why Mr. F does this. Is he recruiting for some sort of criminal empire, or is it something more sinister, brokering the souls of the young to a darker demonic power? Perhaps the capture of the Tag Team will allow the heroes to track down Mr. F and discover his secret.

USING THE TAG TEAM

Burner, Tag, and Toykiller are mostly a nuisance, annoying heroes by spraypainting the PCs' flying car or super-motorcycles. They may break into the heroes headquarters and paint over the whole place. If the heroes are well-loved by the city, they become targets for the Tag Team's ire, being ridiculed in murals throughout the city. They may be encountered while on the run from another, more powerful villain, who they have recently angered.

CHECK THIS PIECE--
IT'S ALMOST REAL!

LIVING GRAFFITI PAINTER

Real Name: Eric Haze
Dual Identity: Secret
Base of Operations: Arcadia
Group Affiliation: Tag Team
Nationality: U.S. citizen

Height: 5' 8" | Eyes: Blue | Hair: Blond
Weight: 128 lbs. | Age: 17



BACKGROUND

Not content to be just another name among those decorating the walls and streets of the city, Eric Haze embarked on his career as a graffiti artist to prove his skills with the spraycan. Looking up to others like Futura2000, Dondi White, and Espo, Eric mastered the medium, turning out brilliant pieces that elicited oohs and aahs from graf heads and passers-by alike.

His work caught the attention of two other rising stars, Tag and Toykiller, and the three became inseparable. The city was their canvas. The plan: cover the whole damn thing!

Nothing was too bold—defacing all the art in the city's most famous museum, redecorating every bus stop in a 10-mile radius, or simply writing their names in 30-foot-tall letters on the side of a downtown skyscraper.

Of course, this provoked the ire of the mayor, and the team soon had a new enemy to focus on. Burner was less concerned with the political side, instead seeing the fight with the city to be one of ugly bare city streets versus his beautiful, intricate murals.

One late evening, while painting a series of full cars in the train yards, Burner, Tag, and Toykiller heard the sound of quiet footsteps. Automatically the trio assumed the vandal squad had tracked them down—they took off running, clutching their cans of paint.

Their pursuer seemed to anticipate their every turn and juke. Splitting up, the three soon made their way back to their subway tunnel hideout, only to be confronted by the very man they had been running from.

The tall, gaunt figure transfixed them with his hypnotic eyes. His offer was simple, he could grant each one of them supernatural powers, if only they would answer his call at a later date. It seemed too good to be true, but hesitantly, each consented, becoming yet another pawn of the mysterious Mr. F.

USING BURNER

Mr. F granted each member of the Tag Team powers tied to their natural talents. Burner is now able to animate the images he paints, and can paint those images with incredible speed.

Burner acts as the voice of reason for the Tag Team. He has little interest in politics or crime, caring only about decorating the city with his artwork. Nominally the leader, Burner often turns Toykiller's hare-brained schemes into well-planned assaults on the aesthetics of the city.

TACTICS

Typically, Burner creates creatures that help him break into buildings, carry heavy objects, or fight powerful opponents. Whenever the team is on a mission, they are accompanied by one or more of these graffiti-come-to-life creatures, which often take the form of robots, cartoonish caricatures, or distorted animals.

Burner is never afraid to run from those who would harm him, being a artist, not a fighter. He happily sends one or more of his creatures to defend tie up opponents while he escapes.

Burner: PL 8; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 19 (+7 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft; Atk +5 melee, +7 ranged; SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +3, Craft (graffiti) +24, Move Silently +6, Hide +6.

Feats: Skill Focus (Craft), Leadership, Stealthy*.

Powers: Animation (images only) +8 [*Extras:* Powered Images ×5; *Flaw:* Limited (graffiti only); *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 6 pp; *Total:* 48 pp], Super-Skill (Craft) +8 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 8 pp].

Typical Animated Object (Graffiti Robot): PL —; Init +2 (Dex); Hardness 4; Defense +14 (+2 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft; Atk +4 melee (+5S unarmed), +2 ranged; SV Dmg +4; Fort —; Ref +2, Will —; Str 18, Dex 14, Con —, Int —, Wis 0, Cha 0.

Powers: Strike +1 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 2 pp]; Super-Strength +1 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 4 pp]





WHO WERE YOU LOOKING FOR? COULDN'T HAVE BEEN ME--

QUICK-CHANGE GRAF ARTIST

REAL NAME	Kurt Klink
SECRET IDENTITY	Secret
BIRTHPLACE	Arcadia
GROUP AFFILIATION	Tag Team
NATIONALITY	U.S. citizen

HEIGHT	5' 7"	EYES	Brown
HAIR	Black	WEIGHT	130 lbs.
AGE	15		

BACKGROUND

Even as a child, no surface was safe from Tag. No matter what object came to hand, whether it be a marker, a paint brush, or a spray can, he used it to deface something.

Skipping school to ride the trains became de rigueur for the budding graffiti artist. The trains took him throughout the city, and by extension, took his name as well. Tag wanted his name to cover the city the way the names of huge corporations did. After all, what was graffiti but another sort of billboard or JumboTron marquee?

A rivalry of sorts came to exist between Tag and another graffiti artist, a writer named Toykiller, who spent his time crossing out the names of those he deemed unworthy of claiming a spot on the streets of Arcadia.

A back and forth battle over the summer provoked much ire between the two, as they raced to see who could get their name up in the most outrageous place, and who could cross out the other's name the quickest.

While painting his name on the side of a downtown freeway overpass, Tag met his rival face-to-face—Toykiller was in the process of painting the other side of the same overpass. Tensions were high at first, but as the two had developed a grudging respect for each other, and their animosity soon turned to friendship.

Toykiller had already met up with fellow graf writer Burner, and brought Tag into the crew. The three became inseparable.

One starless night while Tag was on lookout and Toykiller and Burner painted a series of full cars at the train yards, he heard someone sneaking around between the tracks. Whistling to the others, Tag signaled that they had company and the trio took off running, pausing only to grab their paint.

Tag split from the other two, running at full speed back to the crew's subway tunnel hideout. Evidently he hadn't run fast enough—the mystery pursuer was waiting for him.

As Burner and Toykiller arrived, the man began to speak, his mesmerizing eyes holding all three in near-paralysis. One by one, the three consented to the stranger's gifts of supernatural powers, his only caveat being that the Tag Team would answer his call when it came. And thus, the mysterious Mr. F added yet again to his enigmatic collection of misfit criminals.

USING TAG

Tag is the member of the crew most likely to provoke a fight, as he is very cocky about his ability to disappear with but a quick flick of the spray can. He is also the most destructive of the group, unafraid to mark up, tag, or deface anything, anywhere. Cars, buildings, or even people provide irresistible targets for the Tag Team's incorrigible vandal.

TACTICS

Mr. F's strange mystical power granted Tag the ability to use his skill with the spraycan to alter the state of his own body, as well as affect other objects' states. Tag uses his powers fairly recklessly, relying on his ability to Blend and Shapeshift to keep him hidden from harm's way. When facing off against foes, he uses his spraycan to Transmute pistols to paperweights, or even turn clothing into a straightjacket. Regardless of the risks involved in his ventures, Tag will go out of his way to make sure he places his name in a few choice locations anywhere the crew visits.

Tag: PL 8; Init +4 (Dex); Defense +22 (+8 Base, +4 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +7 melee (+15, unarmed), +10 ranged; SV Dmg +2, Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills: Hide +9, Disguise +6, Move Silently +9.

Feats: Dodge.

Powers: Shapeshift +8 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 3 pp; Total: 24 pp], Blending +8 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 16 pp], Transmutation +6 [*Flaw:* Limited (one state); *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 12 pp].





HA HA -- DUSTED!

CROSS-OUT KING OF THE STREETS

REAL NAME	Leonard McGurr
CODE NAME	Toykiller
DUAL IDENTITY	Secret
BASE OF OPERATIONS	Arcadia
GROUP AFFILIATION	Tag Team
NATIONALITY	U.S. citizen

HEIGHT	5' 6"	EYES	Brown
WEIGHT	125 lbs.	AGE	15
HAIR	Brown		

BACKGROUND

Leonard McGurr grew up in an upper-middle class neighborhood, living the life any suburban kid would love. He hated it. The city was the release he looked forward to, spending his days skateboarding and his nights writing graffiti all through Arcadia.

It didn't take long before Leonard left home for good, living on the streets, making ends meet by panhandling and petty crime. Armed with a marker filled with drippy silver ink, Leonard made sure his name got up everywhere, even going as far as crossing out the names of well-respected writers, signifying that he, Toykiller, was the undisputed king of the streets.

These actions caused a bit of friction with other graffiti writers, not so happy that this young kid was audacious enough to assume a title he had no right to. As time passed, however, Toykiller earned the reputation he created for himself. His strong reputation didn't, however, stop him from trying to one-up every other graf artist that dared write his name on a lamp post or traffic sign.

At the height of his renown, Toykiller started to see Tag's work in nearly every spot he had bombed himself. It was as if this kid was challenging him. Word quickly spread through the community that the two writers had beef, and the only way to settle it was to see who could get up in the most audacious places. It quickly became a contest of one-upmanship as the two rivals sought out more and more outrageous places to put up tags and throw-ups.

While painting a freeway overpass downtown, Toykiller heard the sounds of spray cans being shaken. He wasn't alone on the bridge! Taking a quick peek over the railing, he caught a glimpse of Tag, painting the other side of the overpass. It was fate, Toykiller thought. There was no way the two could ever outdo each other, but together they could outdo everyone else.

Together with fellow graffiti artist Burner, the three joined forces to become the city's most prominent, and infamous, crew.

While working with Burner to paint several full trains which were resting in the trainyards, the two were signalled by their compatriot Tag, indicating that someone was coming.

Thinking they had outrun their pursuer, the three were shocked when they returned to their hideout to find the gaunt stranger with the mesmerizing eyes already there. He offered the trio a deal: in return for making them even more talented vandals, he would return at a later date, at which time they would need to do something for him in return. Ever the reckless youth, Toykiller was the first to step up and consent to the stranger's deal.

Since that day, Toykiller's penchant for crossing out names has changed into an ability to disintegrate any inanimate objects he chooses by merely spraying them with paint.

USING TOYKILLER

Brash and reckless, Toykiller is the member of the Tag Team most likely to cause mischief, come up with a crazy scheme, or wind up with a gaggle of cops chasing him from a spot where he's managed to disintegrate his way into a automated teller machine and make off with thousands of dollars in cash. He's a scrapper and not afraid to throw some punches. While working with Tag and Burner, Toykiller acts as the front-line combatant, setting concrete pillars to fall by "erasing" their supports, or melting his way into (or out of) a building. It's not discreet, but it works.

Toykiller: PL 8; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Defense +21 (+8 Base, +3 Dex); Spd 30; Atk +12 melee (+3S, unarmed), +11 ranged; SV Dmg +3, Fort +3, Ref +3, Will -1; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills: Escape Artist +11, Move Silently +14, Hide +13.

Feats: Attack Focus (unarmed), Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Powers: Disintegration +8 [*Extra:* Continuous; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 3 pp, *Total:* 24 pp].

ART ANDREW HOU
COLORS ARNOLD TSANG

TOREADOR



16

WHAT A QUAINT FIGHTING STYLE, BUT YOU SEEM TO HAVE LEFT OPENINGS HERE--HERE--AND HERE!

ELITIST HERO HUNTER

	St. John Aristide
	Secret
	Global
	Alleged agent of the Illuminati
	Unknown

	6' 2"	Blue	Blond
	190 lbs.	45	

BACKGROUND

St. John (pronounced *sinjin*) Aristide was born into privilege previously reserved for the royalty of centuries past. His anonymous parents, both world-class assassins, united in the loving bonds of a eugenic masterplan crafted by the ancient global shadow-government commonly known as the Illuminati. Though conspiracy theorists readily invoke the name, the general public is unaware of the secret society's existence, and even the most sophisticated public and private intelligence agencies are dumbfounded by their complex machinations.

The Illuminati generally eschews involvement with the high-profile and gauche world of costumed heroes and villains. Their motives often transcend conventional notions of good and evil. Assassination, however, is the ink with which they write history, and the Illumianti breeds and trains the world's most efficient and elusive professional killers. Regrettably, superheroes often place themselves between the Illuminati's agents and their targets.

While the Illuminati employs numerous powerful parahumans, none eradicate the annoyance of interloping do-gooders-in-tights with the panache and murderous artistry of the insufferably flamboyant Toreador. Though he has his detractors, his celebrity distracts the public from the organization's many secret operations.

In a program of misdirection typical for the Illuminati, Aristide's parents were executed along with a number of other families so that his precise genetic history could never be traced. Misinformation and paranoia are frequently fomented among the Illuminated. Allied agents, each filling essential but seemingly unrelated missions, are deliberately pitted against one another to further obscure the master plan.

The Illuminati earns much of its loyalty through indulging its agents in a vast pageant of worldly pleasure, a tradition dating back to the first assassin-king, Hassan i Sabbah. From birth, the Illuminati groomed St. John to be their master assassin and the prophesied "Lord of Assault." Young St. John travelled the world, studying literature, architecture, and history, as well as the martial arts. The *enfant terrible* grew into a treacherous--albeit cultured--killer, and took to personally "retiring" each of his instructors once he had mastered their techniques. At 15, Aristide confronted his Illuminated mentor, an accomplished assassin known as the Brute, when the older man chastised him for dawdling

at a cabaret. To the delight of he crowd, St. John clenched a dahlia in his teeth and slew his elder with only a wine soaked table-cloth.

Although they were delighted by the pupil's progress, his overseers decided to refocus his training and curb his wild side. He was sent to remote Chinese monastery to learn the secrets of Taoist Spirit Boxing, and to learn some restraint. Though his discipline improved while training alongside Daniel Ladd, the future Rose Monk (p. 88), deeper spiritual enlightenment eluded him. A true sociopath at heart, Aristide had little trouble betraying his friend when his masters ordered him to destroy the monastery to cover his tracks.

Within a year, Aristide had completed his training and the Toreador burst onto the public scene. In just over 20 years, he has ended the careers of more than three dozen costumed parahumans. Ironically, no parahuman can match this "normal" man's astounding record of wins. His list of victims include many of the Statesmen, Jack the Lad, and the Hustler, who was resurrected by the pacifist hero Dogstar after grossly underestimating Toreador's skill.

USING TOREADOR

Toreador is an enigma in parahuman pop-culture, largely because of his rumored affiliation with the Illuminati. In a world of hero and villain fan websites, where obsessed superhuman enthusiasts are likely to be as well informed as the legal authorities, St. John Aristide may be the last, true international man of mystery. His identity as the Toreador is publicly known, and though he is clearly European, his specific nationality remains a mystery.

Many of the websites dedicated to the popular assassin are sponsored by the Illuminati itself, and indiscriminately run truth alongside fiction. Webmasters of such sites frequently die from convenient accidents, regardless of their allegiance or the veracity of their information. Few details of Aristide's life are agreed upon. He is openly gay, and his wit and flare have made him a counter-cultural darling. He is frequently in the company of rock stars, fashion moguls, and the corporate elite.

None of he world's governments have levelled charges against him. An elite segment of the public, sick of so-called heroes razing their cities, has romanticized him as an iconoclastic anti-hero, blind to his life as a master torturer and assassin.

Aristide collects artifacts almost compulsively. In addition to galleries filled with priceless art and antiquities, he possesses an arsenal of supernatural and legendary weapons. His jade armor, for example, was worn by the mythic Green Knight who confronted Sir Gawain in Arthurian lore. The barbed javelins, or *banderillas*, developed for him by Illuminati arcano-techs utilize nanites infused with iron-oxide molecules from the actual Spear of Destiny. The trophy rooms of his various estates are filled with the costumes and equipment of those he has defeated. Though he is loath to leave the comfort of his luxurious lifestyle without an eight-digit fee, the right relic could pique his personal interest. At his best, Toreador is charmingly self-obsessed and arrogant. At his worst, he's an incredibly dangerous bastard.

TACTICS

Aristide earned his moniker from a dynamic and uncanny form of "scarf fighting." Combining aspects of Australian whip-boxing, the Muslim garrote techniques of Silat Mubai Agal, and mystical Illuminati combat forms, he transforms a 20-ft. scarlet length of silky kevlar, his *muleta*, into a devastating and versatile living weapon.

The crack of the muleta's tip has wrenched vault doors from their hinges. When twisted it into a flexible spear, it's capable of piercing powered armor. With his mastery of the scarf, Toreador has tossed about opponents he would otherwise be incapable of even lifting. Most spectacularly, he can run at fantastic speeds along its length, which seems to extend indefinitely. His opponents often mistake him for helpless without the scarf, though Aristide can pierce steel with a well-placed unarmed strike. When confronted with a particularly tenacious foe, Toreador wears his opponent down with evasion and insults, negating any pernicious powers with his *banderillas*.

Any fight with the Toreador draws a media circus, with some members of the crowd rooting for the bad guy. With access to the Illuminati's finest intelligence, he never enters a fight he isn't sure he can win. He is especially wary of psionic and mystic opponents.

His pride and reputation are worth more to Toreador than any particular mission, and he is quick to fabricate thin excuses when a plan goes awry. Toreador is far more effective as a truly despicable adversary if he can humiliate the heroes and make a clean getaway. He cares little for his fans or other "nobodies," and fails to appreciate how anyone could hold a little death or collateral damage against him. "Why, isn't that what they came for?"

GAME STATISTICS

Toreador: PL 16; Init +10 (Dex); Defense 20 (+15 base, +5 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +17 melee (+12S/L/reach 30 ft., la muleta) or +17 melee (+12S/L, unarmed), +17 ranged (+7L, banderillas); SV Dmg +5 (Armor +10), Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Skills: Acrobatics +13, Bluff +7, Drive +13, Language (French, German, Spanish), Pilot +8, Taunt +10.

Feats: Assessment, Attack Finesse, Connected, Diplomatic Immunity, Dodge, Evaluate*, Evasion, Indomitable Will, Stunning Attack, Surprise Strike, Tainted Network*, Takedown Attack, Untouchable*, Wealth.

Powers: Combat Sense +5 [*Source:* Training; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp], Strike +10 [*Power Stunt:* Dual Damage; *Source:* Training; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 22 pp].

Equipment: Banderillas (spears) [*Effect:* Neutralize +5; *Extras:* Nullification (no concentration), Weapon; *Flaws:* Device, Limited (one source–mutation), Uses ×2 (4 spears); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp]; Jade Mail of the Green Knight [*Effect:* Armor +10; *Extras:* Amazing Save (Fortitude, Reflex, Will); *Power Stunts:* Immunity (critical hits, fire); *Flaws:* Device, Limited (Amazing Save effective only against Mystical sources); *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 32 pp]; muleta (scarf) [*Effect:* Weapon +10; *Extras:* Flight, Telekinesis; *Power Stunts:* Dual Damage, Extra Attack (Snare), Reach ×6 (30 ft.)*; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* –; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 38 pp].

Weakness: Disabled (frail)*. More than 25 years of combat and hard living have taken a toll on Toreador's health. He is beginning to feel his age. Despite his combat prowess, he is lazy and averse to dirtying his hands. He smokes two packs of cigarettes a day, and drinks himself to sleep (only on the finest potables, of course). As a result, he suffers a -5 penalty on attempts to stave off disease and to skill checks that require endurance over time (running, swimming, holding his breath).

Quirk (braggart)*. A winning streak as long as Toreador's is bound to lead to some complacency. It's questionable whether Toreador has ever been truly challenged in any capacity. This arrogance has proven to be his Achilles heel. He often continues to brag and idly chat with wounded foes rather than deliver the coup de grace. In addition to foolishly revealing his plans to a captive audience, he practically ignores the actions of non-combatants and minions.

CAPERS

A Night at the Bum Fights: Much to Toreador's distress, Illuminated sages have recently prophesied that a "lowly wretch" will usurp Toreador as the Lord of Assault. The assassin now combs the world's most dangerous back-alleys and bloodsport venues in the hope of stemming the prophesy.

Although he finds the practice utterly contemptible, cryptic clues have lead him to regularly frequent local "bum fights," exploitative contests in which the homeless are goaded into melee with the promise of liquor. Toreador has sat through weeks of barbarism, and his patience has worn thin. Only his grand sense of self-preservation suppresses his meager-but-inflamed sense of decency.

While the PCs are away on a mission in outer space or another state, a group of street people somehow infiltrate the heroes' headquarters (or a nearby warehouse if that's too unlikely), eager to set the place up as a bum-fighting venue. The heroes arrive at home just in time to be drawn into the grand melee. Toreador worries that one of the PCs might qualify for the prophecy, especially if a character disguises himself as a bum to investigate the scene. In any event, the Toreador is tired of watching winos do battle, and is ready for a more sophisticated melee.

UNIFIER



15

TODAY, YOUR COUNTRY LEAVES BEHIND ITS PAST FAILINGS, TOMORROW, IT BECOMES A GLOBAL PLAYER AS PART OF *UNITROL!*

CRYPTO-TERRORIST LEADER

REAL NAME: Unrevealed
DUAL IDENTITY: Secret
MODE OF OPERATIONS: Global
GROUP AFFILIATION: Leader of Unitrol
NATIONALITY: Unknown

HEIGHT: 6' 1" EYES: Blue HAIR: Black
WEIGHT: 225 lbs. SEX: Unknown

BACKGROUND

Throughout the 1960s, the world saw the emergence of a new kind of superhero, one more interested in getting his kicks from wearing a garish costume than from punishing evildoers. Bold costumes, outlandish behavior, and a bevy of strange opponents were the rule of the day. Into this wonderland of larger-than-life hero versus villain society came No-Man. Capable of altering his appearance with but a thought, No-Man used his abilities to commit a streak of crimes based on impersonating the rich and famous, making off with millions in cash, jewels, and other goods and in the process destroying the lives and livelihood of many of his victims.

Nearly impossible to catch, No-Man grew bolder by the hour, eventually imitating superheroes, their allies, and their loved ones in bizarrely convoluted schemes that seemed to accomplish nothing more than ruining the reputations of these heroes, most of whom were already distrusted by the government and the media. It seemed as though No-Man would single-handedly take down even the biggest players of the era.

Until Jack the Lad stepped in, that is. Son of 1940s British hero Daylighter, the mad mod clashed frequently with his nemesis No-Man. Somehow always able to clear his name, Jack the Lad made it his priority to put a stop to the antics of his shape-shifting foe. No-Man masqueraded as British celebrity hero Night Lane for several months, making televised appearances to denounce the role of superheroes in modern society. Jack the Lad, with investigative help from Scotland Yard's best detectives, unmasked No-Man on live television, and soundly beat him into submission.

No-Man escaped from his cell that night, but the damage had been done. It was all the fault of the superheroes. Without them, No-Man reasoned, the world would be his. No more penny ante thievery, he swore. Instead, he would steal the world from under the noses of its leaders and create a unified government, devoid of meddling superheroes.

No-Man renamed himself Unifier, and with the help of the proceeds from his previous crimes he gathered together investors, politicians, corporate vice presidents, psychologists, scientists, and stockbrokers. Under Unifier's careful eye, these men and women began to manipulate world events, slowly at first. Soon, however, the quasi-corporate governmental body known as Unitrol made its mark upon the

world scene. Taking over a small West African nation in the late 1960s, Unitrol announced its aims to the rest of the world. The United Nations were a sham, they claimed. Unitrol, on the other hand, would provide military forces, new businesses, and a better standard of living to any country that would join them.

They did not, however, announce their plans to remove these countries' current ruling bodies, replacing them with Unitrol boardmembers. Nor did they mention what is perhaps the most insidious part of the plan--the wholesale slaughter *of all parahumans in the country.*

Announcements relayed to the citizens spoke of the disappearance of their local heroes, having bravely given their lives fighting for the revolution (or fighting for the government, depending upon who the Unitrol Mediators were speaking to). In other cases, the heroes simply disappeared in an Orwellian fashion. Villains who plagued these third-world countries wound up jailed or executed, presented as evidence that Unitrol was cleaning up the streets in every way.

Unitrol is able to execute their plans with such ease thanks to Unifier's ability to adopt the exact appearance of any human being, mimicking speech patterns, gestures, and even fingerprints. It's easy to take over a country from the inside, and that is exactly what Unifier does. Working through his covert operatives, insurgents, rabble-rousers and feeding munitions and supplies to both sides of a country already made unstable by civil war, Unitrol then offers its services as a peacekeeping governmental body. With Unifier making appearances as the country's leaders, the right palms are greased and Unitrol moves in. In this way Unitrol now holds land in dozens of countries, with dozens of others poised on the brink of acquiescence.

In the late 1970s, Unifier acquired a nuclear submarine, which he transformed into a mobile embassy. Some postulate that he brokered a deal with a Soviet crimelord. Others say Unifier merely walked into the pens at Gdansk and sailed away with the ship. Whatever the case, the sub, now named Unity One, operates throughout the world to this day, shuttling Unifier and his closest minions from country to country, fomenting revolt and unrest.

Unifier also manages to make appearances in the UN, the U.S. Congress, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission, the Bilderberg Group, and international business meetings, putting in a good word here, or vetoing a bill there. Those who he temporarily replaces are drugged and brainwashed, returned to their lives only after Unifier has achieved his goals.

USING UNIFIER

As a political figure, Unifier manipulates the world like a puppet from behind a thick veil of secrecy. To the outside world, Unitrol appears as an alternate United Nations, benign at best, and merely an irritation at worst. PCs who work for the government of their country may find themselves suddenly ordered on strange missions, with oddly suspicious objectives, only to find out after many months that Unifier is manipulating them for his own purposes. This works best in long-term campaigns, with the Gamemaster subtly dropping clues over many sessions that something just isn't right with the team's liaison to the White House. The campaign should end with a climactic fight, as Unifier is revealed, and Unitrol's forces come in to shut the heroes down for knowing too much.

For shorter-term adventures, the heroes may be targeted for execution as Unitrol moves in to take over a country. Perhaps they are on vaca*tion, or merely get caught up in a situation they* did nothing to create. After fighting their way through Unitrol's Parahuman Suppression Teams and covert operatives, they discover the true brain behind the hostile takeover, freeing dozens of parahumans along the way.

Investigative heroes may uncover a cell of terrorists, working to unbalance their country's government. Upon tracing the organization's roots, they discover that one central cell is providing troops, supplies, and equipment to both sides. Before they can uncover the true core of the organization, a trusted friend shows up to throw them off the path. Unbeknownst to the PCs, it is Unifier in disguise. Perhaps deeper investigation turns up this mutable foe for a final fight.

TACTICS

Working behind the scenes of Unitrol doesn't mean that Unifier cannot handle himself in a fight. To the contrary, his years of experience as No-Man and the added benefit of Unitrol's advanced proprietary technology makes Unifier a deadly foe in combat. He is nearly always accompanied by bodyguards and Unitrol troops (p. 30), all fiercely loyal and willing to give their lives for their mysterious master.

In addition to his Shapeshifting power, which he uses to disorient, confuse, and perplex opponents, Unifier carries several devices at all times. On his belt is small but powerful Maser Screen projector. Using amplified electromagnetic waves to stimulate light particles, the Maser Screen casts a visible field, surrounding Unifier and protecting him from melee and ranged attacks. Anyone who comes into contact with the Maser Screen (either with a hand-held weapon or an unarmed attack) must make a Damage save against the screen's damage bonus of +10L. During combat, Unifier leaves the screen up at all times. By simply adjusting the controls, Unifier can reconfigure the Maser Screen to bend light around his body, rendering him invisible. Because the screen's Energy Field appears as flat panes of translucent color when active, Unifier deactivates that function when appearing invisible.

Unifier also carries a prototype Nullification Beam Pistol. Based on the designs of Unitrol's top weapons engineers, the pistol is a scaled-down version of the Nullification Cannon Unitrol's PHST teams carry in the field. The pistol is capable of neutralizing an opponent's powers for a moment, allowing Unifier the chance to deliver the crucial coup de grâce. The pistol can also be set to Stun, which Unifier uses to ensure his chances of hitting with the Neutralize setting.

GAME STATISTICS

Unifier: PL 15; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 14 (+2 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft; Atk +10 melee (2S, unarmed), +10 ranged (DC 20 Will save, Neutralize); SV Dmg +3, Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 20.

Skills: Bluff +15, Diplomacy +23, Disguise +39, Language ×5 (GM's choice), Sense Motive +12.

Feats: *Diplomatic Immunity*, Leadership*

Powers: Shapeshift +10 [*Extras:* Continuous, Exact; *Flaw:* Limited (humans only); *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 30 pp], Super-Skill (Disguise) +9 [*Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 9 pp].

Devices: Maser Screen [*Effect:* Energy Field (light) +10; *Extras:* Immunity (energy—light), Invisibility; *Flaw:* Device; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 30 pp], Nullification Beam Pistol [*Effect:* Neutralize +10L; *Extra:* Stun; *Flaws:* Device, Limited (does not affect mystical powers); *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 20 pp].

CAPERS

Welcome to the New World Order: While visiting a small third world country, perhaps on a publicity jaunt or merely for a vacation, the PCs are caught up in a hostile Unitrol takeover. As rebels and insurgents are put down with ease by Unitrol soldiers, the heroes are asked to stay at the American embassy and not make things more difficult. While at the embassy, the heroes catch word about local parahumans being attacked by Unitrol's special forces, who wield weapons which deactivate superhuman powers. Rumor has it that surviving parahumans have been taken away for some dark purpose.

The country is being locked down in a state of martial law, with Unitrol Mediators patrolling the streets. Parahumans who demonstrate their powers in the open will be immediately attacked by PHST teams, captured, and taken to containment cells aboard Unity One, conveniently floating offshore. If the heroes are careful (and more than a bit sneaky) they may be able to make their way aboard the sub, fight their way through the hardened crew, and confront the Unifier, who is in the process of testing dangerously unstable nullification technology on the parahumans he has already captured.

For added fun, bring in Wasphawk (p. 110) and his sky pirates (p. 27) to head the heroes off at the pass.



The above map details the occupational governments of Unitrol throughout the world. The majority of Unitrol's current holdings center in western Africa, where they have concentrated their efforts since the late 1960s. In countries like Venezuela, Turkey, and Macedonia, the influence of Unitrol is hotly contested, with various other governments lending arms, troops, or financial aid to keep those lands out of Unitrol's sphere of influence.

UNITROL

Concept: Crypto-Terrorist Intercessionists
Area of Operation: Global

One of the great concerns facing the United Nations today is the existence of Unitrol. Formed in the late 1960s, the organization consists of a mysterious group of investors, politicians, corporate vice presidents, psychologists, scientists, and stockbrokers. Through shrewd manipulation of the world markets and subtle political maneuvering, this group "acquired" the small African nation of Zanika in 1968, renaming it Unitra. From their new homeland, Unitrol launched a campaign of widespread and effective crypto-terrorism.

Fomenting unrest in already unstable countries, Unitrol then offers its guidance and military forces to quell the turmoil. Once the insurgents have been put down and publicly pilloried, Unitrol manipulates the local government into turning over their lands and holdings, becoming another holding in the Unitrol portfolio. Along the way, Unitrol rids this new resource of its parahumans.

However, without Unifier, none of this could have been accomplished. Able to mimic the appearance of anyone he chooses, he insinuated himself into the government of the African country of Zanika, masquerading as their king (who had been assassinated by Unitrol operatives). Upon granting control of the country to Unitrol, "King Mabili" conveniently disappeared from the public's eye. Since conquering Zanika, Unifier remains behind the scenes, even within the inner conclaves that orchestra Unitrol's far-reaching global plans. Some members of Unitrol even doubt the existence of a central leader, citing the fact that Unitrol's Council of Equals is called upon when the organization needs to present a public face. Despite his lack of direct interaction with those who issue Unitrol's orders, Unifier exerts an undeniable chokehold over even the smallest operations carried out by the organization.

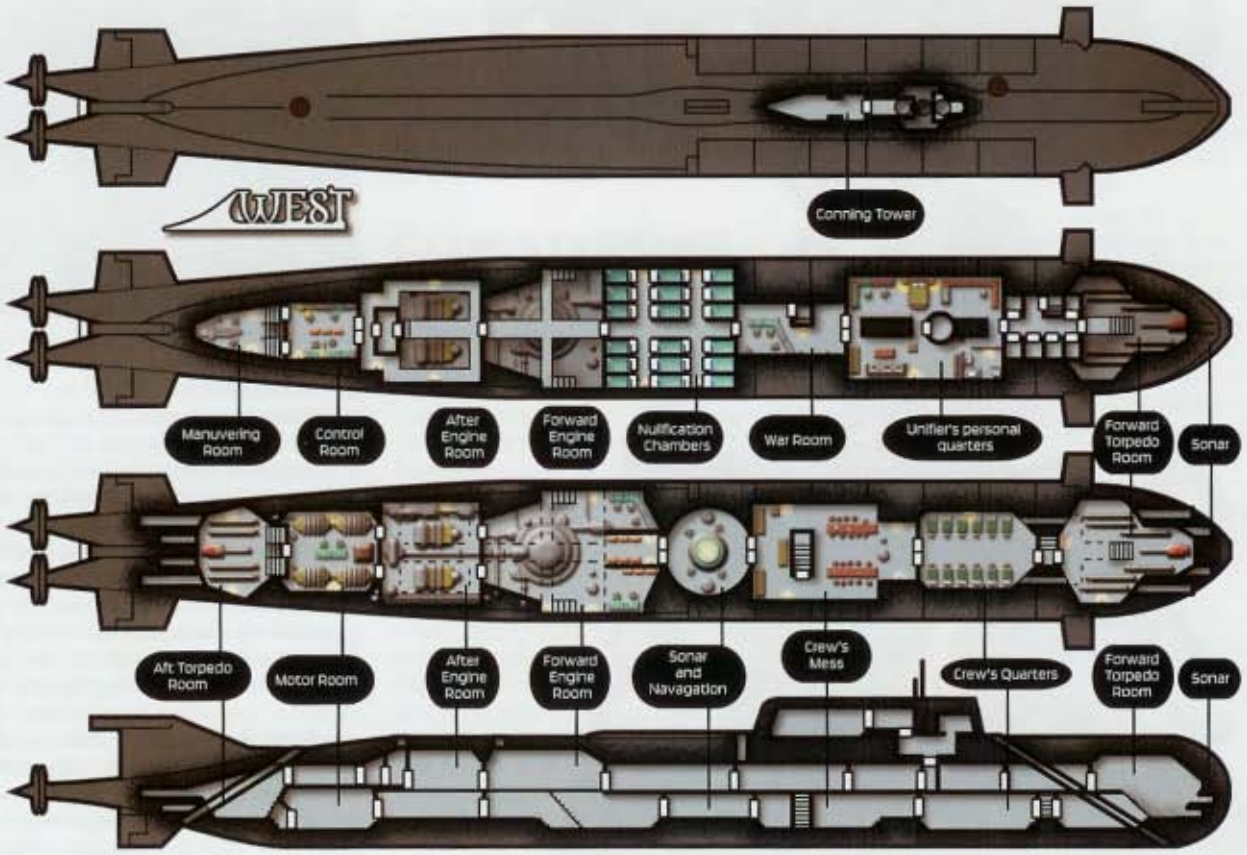
Unitrol began with monetary resources that rivaled the GNP of some small countries, and now controls vast amounts of liquid assets, corporate holdings, marketing firms, security forces, and strategic land resources. Many of Unitrol's employees do not know who they ultimately work for, as the holding companies are set up in labyrinthine structures that would drive even Enron's bookkeepers insane. Each country that Unitrol adds to its portfolio brings with it vast natural resources, which the organization is happy to scrape dry.

Through these double-blind companies and research labs, Unitrol developed the technology Unifier sees as most important to the success of Unitrol's global plans—the Nullification Beam. Labs all over the world build parts for the cannons carried by Unitrol's Parahuman Suppression Teams (PHST). When used against parahumans, the beams fired from these cannons cause pain akin to the searing of one's skin, and immediately suppress all the parahuman's powers. Once deprived of their abilities, the parahumans are easy targets for Unitrol's executioners.

To the outside world, Unitrol presents the face of concerned politicians and corporate leaders, dedicated to the advancement of humanity, the end of war, and peace for every common man. Unitrol's stance on parahumans isn't public knowledge, but the organization does make it known that those who attempt to upset the new governments Unitrol installs will be dealt with in the harshest possible terms, citing the need for long-term stability and not short-term solutions.

In the United States, Unitrol is opening new Education Centers, where members of the public can come in, talk with representatives, make donations toward bettering the lives of the residents of third-world countries, and even apply for Unitrol citizenship. The centers have attracted quite a bit of media attention, and even the endorsements of several human rights groups. Unitrol hopes to complete its takeover of Amnesty International, Greenpeace, and the Peace Corps within the next year, shutting down three of its major detractors.

Statistics for Unitrol operatives appear on page 30.



UNITROL HQ: UNITY ONE

During the fall of the Iron Curtain, Unitrol acquired a mobile base of operations, the submarine known as *Unity One*. Some suspect the deal was brokered with the Eastern Bloc dictator, Czar; others suppose that Unifier himself merely waltzed into the submarine pens of Gdansk and sailed out with the nuclear powered terror. Whatever the case, *Unity One* has been through a series of retrofittings, upgrading its weapon systems, communication and sensor arrays, travel range, and lessening its requirements for a crew. In addition to the standard complement of sonar arrays, torpedo tubes, and quarters, *Unity One* has been upgraded to function as an embassy of sorts, allowing Unifier a place to meet with local Unitrol COOs and other high-ranking bureaucrats from throughout the world.

Control Room: From the Control Room, all *Unity One's* orders are issued, to be carried out by crewmen throughout the submarine. This room contains a dense conglomeration of computers, security measures, read-outs and broadcast equipment, as well as access to the sub's periscope and other visual recorders. Cameras mounted throughout *Unity One* are accessible in the Control Room, allowing the sub's commander to view every part of his charge.

Crew Quarters: Many of *Unity One's* systems have been streamlined and modernized with the latest technology, bringing the necessity of a crew down to the barest minimums. With the need for fewer crew members, *Unity One* is afforded more luxurious accommodations for it's hard-working seamen, if any accommodations on a submarine can truly be called luxurious.

Nullification Chambers: Using a technology derived from the Nullification cannon program, *Unity One* is outfitted with fifteen chambers. Each is designed to hold a single parahuman, bombarding him with Nullification beams. This torturous confinement is reserved only for those subjects Unifier wishes to deal with personally. After hours or days of agonizing confinement, most parahumans will do or say anything to be set free. Below the chambers lies the machinery responsible for projecting the beams to each prisoner. Disabling this would immediately shut off the chamber's power supply, but would also trigger a multitude of security measures and alerts, forcing the entire sub crew into immediate lockdown until the perpetrators are caught. By shunting power from the sub's nuclear reactor, the Nullification machinery can be up and running in less than 5 minutes.

Torpedo Tubes: *Unity One* is fitted with a variety of munitions that can be fired from it's torpedo launchers. Conventional explosives, magnetic chain mines, electronic countermeasures, radar decoys, electromagnetic pulse bombs, and even tiny escape subs can all be fired from these rooms both fore and aft.

Unifier's Personal Quarters: While aboard *Unity One*, Unifier enjoys the posh appointments of his personal rooms. Fully outfitted with soundproof walls, security measures, and doors keyed to Unifier's unique DNA, these rooms are impregnable once locked down. A bank of monitors allows Unifier to view the entire submarine through its system of cameras. This room also serves as both a briefing area and meeting room in occasions when the War Room is not secure enough. In the case of a catastrophic emergency, the conning tower separates from the body of the submarine, taking Unifier's personal quarters with it.

War Room: It is from this room that Unitrol's military actions are controlled and executed. Equipped with state-of-the-art communications technology, the War Room allows Unitrol generals to observe their troops in the field and deliver orders to them with the precision of real-time broadcasting. Additionally, dozens of media outlets and news feeds can be monitored from this room, and a direct line to Unitra means that the submarine is always in contact with the outside world.

VAGABOND



11 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN, YA *MALOVIK SLAGGERS!*

DIMENSION-HOPPING TRICKSTER

REAL NAME: Qual Velora
DUAL IDENTITY: Unknown to the general public
BASE OF OPERATIONS: Interdimensional
GROUP AFFILIATION: None
NATIONALITY: Interdimensional

HEIGHT: 6' 3" EYES: Violet HAIR: White
WEIGHT: 200 lbs. AGE: 21

BACKGROUND

Most dimensional travelers consider the brutal factory world of Aphex-2 one of the least hospitable of the Known Planets. Aphex-2's entire surface area is only twice that of Manhattan Island, but the world's Industrial Revolution-era factories make it smell several times worse. The filthy, acrid foundries belch hideous fumes and sprawl over an arid tar-plane, with no open pastoral spaces to ease the spirit. The quasi-artificial planet's numerous nested spheres periodically shift and grind under a chorus of ear-splitting klaxons. A caste of imperious primarchs imposes their depraved whims on a vast, downtrodden population of slaves, thieves, mercenaries, and traders. Gang warfare, forced labor, and gladiatorial contests are realities of daily life. Folktales of forgotten, mystic arts, locked away in vaults beneath the squalid surface, provide the masses with their only hope of escape. These legends speak of a trickster hero wandering the skies of a vast multiverse, sampling its riches and plenty.

The young orphan Qual Velora often daydreamed about this hero while eking out a meager existence on the surface of Aphex-2. The boy's quick wits and exceptional athleticism allowed him to escape his labor camp and survive on the run as a sneak thief. Beneath the stained, strangely smooth and featureless landscape of the planet's Rupture Plane, Qual Velora fled for his life through the Rusted Labyrinth after a particularly disastrous attempted theft. With the Wild Boys, vicious henchmen of Grid Primarch Yellow 54, nipping at his heels, Velora stumbled upon one of the hidden monasteries mentioned in Aphexan folklore.

The fiendishly trapped arcane facility had been abandoned for centuries, but was in pristine condition, and proved quite comfortable. Velora, astounded by his luck, moved in and used the monastery as a base of operations for his increasingly brazen banditry. He was delighted by what he found after a few months in residence. The monastery's texts revealed secrets of plane-shifting wizardry. Once he discovered the Aphex Key, a powerful, sentient relic, his attention focused on the mastery of Oturan Trip Magic, a long-lost Aphexan mystical art. A life of luxury and adventure was now within reach. After his first dimensional jump, a random jaunt to the idyllic, permissive world of Jhett Jarot, a giddy Velora assumed the mantle of the Aphexan trickster-hero and began referring to himself only as the Vagabond.

Vagabond prefers the consensual reality of Earth to all other dimensions, although he always retreats back to his squatter's paradise in the Rusted Labyrinth after each visit. Although his monastery home lacks many of the conventions of a twenty-first century residence, Vagabond has filled the place with fantastic trinkets and amusements from dozens of worlds.

USING VAGABOND

Though generally affable and loath to harm innocents, Vagabond isn't averse to mixing it up with those who get in his way. His years in labor camps and on the run have desensitized him to violence and strife to a degree that even he isn't quite aware. He can easily rationalize away any mayhem that his actions spark. At his core, Vagabond is selfish, petty, and something of a coward. He surrounds himself with luxury to dull the pain of his brutal past. His greatest fear is being forced back to his old slave cell. His flippant banter belies an almost primal survival instinct. Though he fancies himself a hero of the masses, and would never stoop to menacing hostages, he won't hesitate to create a calamity—such as pulling down a building—to cover a desperate escape.

Nonetheless, he is affable enough to strike up a friendship with a hero with bravado and a sense of humor. In this capacity, Vagabond makes a compelling recurring character who can open the door to transdimensional adventures without radically changing the campaign by allowing PCs to hop dimensions under their own power. As a nemesis, the challenge for the heroes is in catching him, not pounding him to a pulp. The costumed parahumans of earth often resemble heroes from Aphexan mythology, and Vagabond, in spite of himself, regards them with child-like wonder.

TACTICS

The Aphex Key is a far more dangerous combatant than its owner. Vagabond focuses his attention first on securing his booty, and then on chatting up heroes to learn more about their world. The Key pins down the most menacing threats, while Vagabond taunts and jukes through the melee, having a grand time. He generally does not fight. The tone of the encounter can change instantly, however, if Vagabond is injured (particularly with lethal hits). Then, playtime is over. Vagabond and the Key, who stay in constant telepathic contact, make a bee-line for each other and attempt to gate back to Velora's lair on Aphex-2.

If a team is excessively boorish or violent, Vagabond holds a grudge and goes out of his way to vex the heroes. This shouldn't be directly harmful, but could seriously interfere with the heroes' primary mission.

If Vagabond decides the heroes really need to be taught a lesson, he is capable of gating them against their will to the Rusted Labyrinth, where they will certainly have their hands full. The Aphex Key is utterly loyal to Velora, and teleports him home if he is knocked out. If Vagabond loses the Key, he is capable of returning home with his Sorcery, but will not do so without his most cherished possession. He is so attached to the relic that he accepts any assistance in getting it back, whether provided by the heroes or other villains.

Vagabond is rather nervous about mucking around in the timestream, and hesitates using the Key to Time Travel.

GAME STATISTICS

Vagabond: PL 11; Init +8; Defense 24; Spd 30 ft.; Atk +12 melee (+0S, unarmed), +12 ranged; SV Dmg +6, Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Acrobatics +11, Balance +7, Escape Artist +9, Hide +9, Knowledge (dimensions) +8, Open Lock +9, Slight of Hand +7, Survival +2, Taunt +7.

Feats: Attack Finesse, Dodge, Evasion, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Slippery Eel*, Sidekick (Loyalty 13, Aphex Key), Toughness.

Powers: Sorcery +10 [*Effects:* Comprehend, Create Object, Flight, Force Field, Obscure, Snare; *Flaws:* Excluded Group (Control), Restricted (Material Ward—super-science); *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 5 pp; *Total:* 50 pp].

The Aphex Key (construct): PL 9; Size Tiny; Init +10 (Dex); Defense 30 (+8 base, +10 Dex, +2 size); Hardness 20; Fly 30 ft.; Atk +21 ranged (+7S/35-ft. radius, Energy Blast—sonic); SV Dmg +20, Fort —, Reflex +10 (Dex), Will +2; Str 1, Dex 20, Con —, Int 9, Wis 16, Cha 2.

Skills: Listen +7, Spot +7.

Feats: Attack Focus (Energy Blast), Blind Fighting, Blindsight, Immunity (aging, cold, critical hits, disease, exhaustion, heat, poison, pressure, starvation, suffocation).

Powers: Dimension Travel +7 [*Extra:* Portal; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 21 pp], Energy Blast (sonic) +7 [*Extras:* Deflect, Explosive Blast (35-ft. radius); *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 28 pp], Flight +6 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 12 pp], Telepathy +1 [*Flaw:* Limited (communication only); *Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 1 pp], Time Travel +3 [*Extra:* Portal; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 9 pp].

Weakness: Animate Object. As a 1-ft.-diameter hoop of unknown metal, the Apex Key is severely limited as an NPC. Excluding its ability to float in the air, it is completely inanimate and unable to manipulate its surroundings. Unless circumstances are incredibly dire, it will not use its Telepathy to communicate with anyone other than Vagabond. Observers have no reason to suspect its sentience. When forced to interact with humans, it suffers both the Naive and Disturbing weaknesses. The relationship between Vagabond and the powerful relic is akin to that of a master and his dog

CAPERS

Timmy in the Well. The authorities call in the heroes to deal with an unusual threat. The Aphex Key is spinning frantically in the middle of a busy downtown intersection, firing off random shots of its potent Energy Blast. Surprisingly, it seems to settle down when the heroes approach. After some strained diplomacy, the heroes discover that Vagabond has finally been tracked down and taken prisoner by the Primarch's Wildboys. The Key has been dispatched to bring help. If they allow themselves to be gated to Aphex-2, the heroes should find it inhospitable in the extreme. Even the mooks of Aphex-2 should give them a run for their money. If captured, heroes will be relegated to the fighting pits unless the Grid Primarch can think of a menial use for them. Should they ultimately succeed in the rescue, Vagabond is forever grateful, and makes a valuable transdimensional ally.

Go!...Set...Ready. To settle a drunken argument, Remlok the Rover (*Mutants & Masterminds*, page 177) and Vagabond have set out to prove which thief has the bigger *cajones*. Over the course of a week, each tries to out-do the other and bring in the most outlandish artifact. Remlok has set the boundaries as "the past" to help Vagabond acclimate to Time Travel. This could provide the unique opportunity to "re-run" a classic battle from the players' past, but this time inserting Vagabond as an annoying distraction, possibly grabbing a hero's weapon and sliding away at a critical moment.

Should the characters be unable to travel the timestream under their own power, META-4 could easily detect ripples in the timeline caused by these shenanigans and sponsor the heroes' excursion. Any number of exotic artifacts could be swiped in the contest—the more ostentatious the better. Neither villain is out to corrupt the present, and may curtail their contest if made aware of grave consequences.

WASPHAWK



11

DO WHAT YOU WANT WITH THE DAMN PLANET. I CONTROL THE SKIES.

SKY PIRATE TOP GUN

REAL NAME	Maj. Cameron Clay
DUAL IDENTITY	Secret
BASE OF OPERATIONS	Global
GROUP AFFILIATION	Air marshal of Unitrol, former member of the Raptors
NATIONALITY	American
HEIGHT	5' 10"
EYES	Brown
HAIR	Black
WEIGHT	107 lbs.
AGE	30

BACKGROUND

Cameron Clay truly made something of himself, surviving a harsh youth in the impoverished inner city and enrolling at a young age in the Air Force. His charisma, discipline, and natural skill in the cockpit served him well in the military, and he rapidly rose through the ranks. After heroic service supporting META-4 in repelling an secret incursion by rogue alien skoviak (p. 21), he was promoted to a new high-profile squadron of interceptors that utilized captured skoviak technology.

Like the Blue Angels, the Raptors toured the country, performing in air shows to hype a beleaguered U.S. military. In addition to performing in these sky circuses, the Raptors frequently provided covert air support to the Front and other American superhero teams. The schedule was grueling, and Clay, like many of his squadmates, succumbed to sanctioned amphetamines known as "go-pills." To compound his stress and fuel a growing paranoia, Clay correctly suspected one of his wingmen of having an affair with his wife. Little did he suspect that the deck had been stacked against him.

The villainous "alternative United Nations" Unitrol coveted the captured skoviak technology, and planned to compromise a vulnerable Raptor pilot to advance this agenda. Intelligence agents fomented Clay's addiction and marital problems, all in an effort to drive him toward a mistake that would place the Raptors' technology in the hands of Unitrol.

Clay's military discipline allowed him to mask his emotional problems, and he slipped through the Raptors' regular psych evaluations. With characteristic duplicity, Unitrol agents enhanced his go-pill cocktail and doctored his psych records to keep him flying the most stressful of sorties. By the time his peers suspected a problem, Clay was poised to take drastic action. In a seasonal air show over Seattle, Washington, he deliberately collided with his rival wingman. In a ball of fire, both SKA-X3 Interceptors plunged into the icy waters of Puget Sound.

Hidden beneath the surface of the inky water, the sinister forces of Unitrol lurked like a giant octopus. A stealth salvage submarine recovered Clay's battle Interceptor, which contained priceless technological secrets despite extensive damage. An alien jet is nothing without a trained pilot, however, so Unitrol took steps to save Cameron Clay from his watery grave, managing to recover the ace's badly damaged body, salvaging only his head and torso. Unitrol doctors

spared no expense rebuilding Clay with state-of-the-art lightweight composite materials.

During his painful recovery, Clay met with Unifier (p. 104), Unitrol's shadowy mastermind. Unifier offered Clay the chance to fly again in exchange for the pilot's support. Instead of serving unseen military masters, however, he would now fly as the scourge of the skies, commanding Unitrol's massive covert air force.

Unitrol labs cannibalized the recovered skoviak technology to create Clay's prototype combat flightsuit as part of Project: Wasphawk. While Clay had trouble walking with his composite body, he took to the air with instant mastery. Since his restoration, Unitrol scientists have failed to replicate such a seamless bond of pilot and suit, and further experiments with the "bio-bonding" skoviak technology have resulted in twisted half-humans.

Wasphawk and Unitrol operate largely independent of each other. Clay and his sky pirate minions are free to plunder the skies and seas, paying only nominal tribute to Unifier. Unitrol, in turn, has equipped Wasphawk with state-of-the-art weapons and equipment in the form of the *Hivewing*, a flying battle fortress. In return, the sky pirates often act as muscle in Unitrol's global protection racket. Additionally, Wasphawk and his pirates receive warm receptions in any Unitrol nation on the rare occasion in which the *Hivewing* sets down for supplies or repairs.

USING WASPHAWK

Cameron Clay runs a tight ship. A series of misfortunes has corrupted him and made him cynical, but he is good to his crew, and isn't out to hurt innocent people. His raids frequently target shipping lanes, where he spreads chaos at Unitrol's discretion. Occasionally he takes on high-paying assassinations, and strikes when his prey is vulnerable in a jetliner. In such cases, he or his crew boards with such tactical precision that the plane is capable of landing safely. Wasphawk has little interest in skyjacking for the sake of terrorism, and finds such acts despicable. Unitrol has also utilized the *Hivewing* as an advanced diversionary force, intercepting heroes or military operatives investigating sensitive Unitrol operations.

Wasphawk is generally taciturn and focused. Because of difficulty adapting to his artificial legs, he rarely sets down, even if it requires floating an inch or two above the ground. His Combat Exo-Frame allows him to stand and walk slowly, however, to mask any suspicion of his condition. Should this ablative armor be destroyed, he is utterly unable to walk. At rest in his opulent zero-gravity personal quarters, Wasphawk constantly studies aeronautical journals and monitors world military affairs.

Cameron Clay is a proud man who has yet to fully accept his cybernetic nature or his continued addiction to amphetamines. He keeps both secret from his crew. Despite his discipline, he would likely surrender if denied the ability to fly, hoping for his connections to bail him out.

TACTICS

Wasphawk is a master of the blitzkrieg. He maximizes use of his long-range missiles to soften up a strong opponent before strafing the target using the Move-By Attack feat. At close range, Wasphawk easily outmaneuvers other flyers in his "Harrier Mode." He tops out at Mach 4 in his "Cruising Mode," though this requires him to focus on a sophisticated in-helmet HUD. In hijacking operations, Wasphawk relies on his sky pirates, each heavily armed and riding a small personal sky-cycle, to do the grunt work. He circles at a distance, wary of incoming threats and coordinating the raid. If attacked, Wasphawk attempts to cover his crew's escape, leading enemies in the opposite direction. His Pilot skill grants him a +2 synergy bonus on Concentration checks while flying in Cruising Mode. When Wasphawk activates Cruising Mode from Harrier Mode, the wing assembly on his back unfolds, revealing crackling energy shaped into rough wings. This energy extends behind him in a brightly lit contrail.

To get the most out of Wasphawk, it's recommended that the Gamemaster use the optional Flight Maneuverability rules (*Mutants and Masterminds*, p. 71). The stat block below utilizes the Flight Maneuverability Rules. If you prefer to run the simpler Flight rules, give Wasphawk Flight +7 [*Extra:* Super-Flight; *Flaws:* Device, Wings; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 7 pp] and Super-Dexterity +7 [*Flaw:* Limited (no Dexterity check bonus, no Reflex save bonus); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 14 pp] instead of his SKA-pX1 Wasphawk Aerial Combat Suite.

GAME STATISTICS

Wasphawk: PL 11; Init +5 (Dex); Defense 28 (+12 base, +5 Dex, +1 Dodge); Spd 15 ft., fly 35 ft.; Atk +13 melee (+6L, unarmed), +17 ranged (+8S/L, Energy Blast–vibration) or (+10L, 50-ft. radius blast, Energy Blast–kinetic); SV Dmg +5 (Protection +5), Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills: Concentration +7, Pilot +15, Profession (aviator) +7.

Feats: Combat Pilot*, Dodge, Evasion, Headquarters (see below), Infamy, Minions (Loyalty 22), Move-By Attack, Point Blank Shot, Radio Broadcast, Radio Hearing, Rapid Shot.

Equipment: Wasphawk's battlesuit grants him the following powers:

Buzz Blaster [*Effect:* Energy Blast (vibration) +8; *Power Stunt:* Dual Damage; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 9 pp].

Combat Exo-Frame [*Effect:* Armor +5; *Extra:* Strike; *Power Stunt:* Mitigates Disability; *Flaws:* Ablative, Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 6 pp].

SKA-pX1 Wasphawk Aerial Combat Suite: Harrier Mode [*Effect:* Flight +7; *Extras:* Increased Maneuverability (perfect); *Flaws:* Device, Restricted (wings); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 21 pp] or Cruising Mode [*Effect:* Flight +7; *Extras:* Increased Maneuverability (good), Super-Flight; *Power Stunts:* Immunity (cold, critical hits, electricity, fire, pressure, sonic, suffocation); *Flaws:* Device, Duration (concentration), Restricted (wings); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 21 pp].

Spiderflash Missiles [*Effect:* Snare +10; *Extra:* Area (50-ft. radius); *Power Stunt:* Far Shot (150-ft. range); *Flaws:* Device, Uses (×8); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 11 pp].

Sting Burst Missiles [*Effect:* Energy Blast (kinetic) +10; *Extra:* Explosive Blast (50-ft. radius); *Power Stunt:* Far Shot (150-ft. range); *Flaws:* Device, Uses (×8); *Source:* Super-Science; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 11 pp].

Headquarters/Vehicle: *The Hivewing.* The *Hivewing* is an enormous air fortress designed by Unitrol weaponsmiths. This three-story flying-wing can accommodate more than 40 troops, although it requires only a skeletal crew to stay aloft and defend itself. In addition to providing air support over its astounding flight range, the *Hivewing* is equipped with a lamprey-like boarding tool that allows for in-flight hijackings. Generally, Wasphawk splits the crew between his personal operations officers and sky pirates (p. 27) kitted out with small, armed riding jets. The flight bay holds 9 of these "drones," and can scramble them in-flight. Landing them in the small bay is a harrowing maneuver at best (DC 20 Pilot check). Though he abhors mass-transit jobs, Wasphawk will, at Unifier's request, occasionally muster Unitrol commandos.

Headquarters Features: Communications, computer, concealment (cloud generator), defense system, hangar, holding cells, infirmary, living space, power system, reinforced structure, staff (see below for vehicle stats).

Weaknesses: Disabled (addiction–amphetamines). Clay eventually succumbed to the inhuman schedule his duty as a Raptor heaped on his shoulders. Military doctors provided him with go-pills to help keep him alert on his numerous missions. Unfortunately, as the demands on him increased, Clay found he could no longer function as effectively without the pills. Unitrol now keeps him well supplied, and Wasphawk believes the stronger-grade drugs provide him with a necessary edge. Unifier tolerates his air marshal's weakness, as it keeps him focused and on a short leash. Wasphawk rarely sleeps.

Disabled (paraplegic). Cameron Clay's body was all but obliterated in the fiery air-show incident. Remarkably, Unitrol was able to build a body around the skull, spine, and few salvageable organs. It was designed to be lightweight and rigid for flight, however, and is not terribly durable. Wasphawk's Combat Exo-Frame allows walking at half normal speed, but if it is destroyed (for instance, if Wasphawk's ablative armor is reduced to 0 Ranks) and he is forced to land, he can crawl only 5 ft. per round as a full action.

Vehicle Type	Size	Movement	Hardness	Armor Bonus	Cost	Features
Air Vehicle						
Hivewing	Gargantuan	9	9	9	74	3 × Gun +8L, 2 × Missiles +8L (blast), Sensors

WAYMAKER

14

I WISH TO CONVERSE WITH THE HEAD OF YOUR WORLD'S GOVERNMENTAL BODY.

FIRST CONTACT MESSENGER

REAL NAME: None

QUAL IDENTITY: None

BASE OF OPERATIONS: Intergalactic

GROUP AFFILIATION: Sovereign's Collective Council

NATIONALITY: Extra-terrestial (kwolootian)

HEIGHT: 7'1" EYES: Green HAIR: None

WEIGHT: 186 lbs. AGE: 58



BACKGROUND

Deep in space lies a small, desolate planet, strip-mined of its natural resources, not much more than a barren rock hanging in the mantle of stars that make up the systems controlled by the all-pervasive Broan Empire. Once, this planet was home to the kwoloo—gangly, deeply religious, and valued by the Empire for their singular genetic deviance.

Unique among the races of the galaxy, the kwoloo can comprehend and speak any form of communication. This ability appears to have little to do with the complex construction of the kwoloo's larynx and vocal cords (although that certainly helps), and more to do with their ability to read the psychic vibrations of spoken language and the residual psychic residue of the written word. Even the subtle nuances of dialect and body language speak psychic whispers to the kwoloo.

When the Broan Armada arrived, intent on decimating Kwoloo and its inhabitants, the planet's ruling barons hailed the admiral, speaking the guttural broan language with perfect inflection. It would be unfair to categorize the broan admiral's response as surprise, but somehow, the kwoloo impressed him enough to spare two members of the ruling class. The admiral ordered the rest executed, and the planet immediately gutted for its resources.

The broan had never excelled a diplomats, and had in fact lost several planetary holdings throughout the empire due to civil wars, self-inflicted genocide, and outright rebellion. When the kwoloo were presented to the emperor, he was struck with an idea. For too long he had been forced to interact with the various tendrils of his empire. Thus was born the Collective Council, the personification of the emperor's will. One of the two kwoloo, the male of the pair, was appointed to the position of Waymaker, an emissary of sorts who would announce the arrival of the Broan Armada to new planets, broker any terms of surrender, and declare the conditions of imperial slavery. The kwoloo was stripped of his prior name and attached to the imperial armada, although he spent much of his time attending strategic planning sessions in the emperor's war room. In time, the Collective Council grew to include seven additional advisors, becoming a central aspect of imperial tradition.

Many years passed. The kwoloo couple bore children, and their children bore further offspring. Their line belonged to the emperor, with each successive generation providing new Waymakers as the prior one died or, more frequently, met his end at the hands of angry would-be vassals. Eventually, a small community of kwoloo developed on the imperial homeworld, and not every kwoloo was destined to serve the emperor.

One such middle-aged kwoloo, Teket, hoped his existence would continue to be one of leisure and ease. Those hopes were cut short when Dovox (p. 92), the son of the current emperor Orbanux VIII, attempted to assassinate his father in a bid to take the throne. The imperial police arrived at Teket's dwelling, and brought him to the emperor's chambers. Fearing that the previous Waymaker, his cousin, had died, Teket dreaded the thought of living out the rest of his days attending to an undying emperor, and worse, enduring the deceitful backstabbing that characterized the Collective Council.

Instead, Teket became embroiled in one of the empire's most fiercely contested decisions. By imperial law, no member of the royal family could be put to death for any crime, nor could they be jailed. The emperor could not bear to leave his traitorous son unpunished, but he could not violate imperial law for fear of breaking with millennia of tradition.

Upon conferring with the Word of Law, another member of the Collective Council, the emperor decided upon exile for Dovox. Fearing that his son would continue his traitorous ways, the emperor appointed Teket as Dovox's Waymaker. In addition to serving as an advisor to his son, Teket was tasked with reporting the doings of his master back to the emperor. Teket protested, citing his age, his health, and his distrust of the emperor's son, but the will of a broan emperor cannot be defied.

Teket was stripped of his name, cut off from his family, and anointed with the trappings of the office of Waymaker. The imperial war works crafted a second Scepter of the Way, the standard weapon of the Waymakers, and Teket left the imperial homeworld, never to return.

In the years that Waymaker has accompanied Sovereign on his journeys, he has become only more bitter, and more patronizing to his master. He fulfills the tenets of his position, but secretly he despises this would-be usurper as the being who forced him out of a previously quiet, safe existence.

During Sovereign's occupation of the crystalline planet Vodan, Waymaker explored the furthest depths of the fortress of the planet's primarch. Deep within a hidden chamber, he found a strange brass amulet, a mystical alien script etched imperceptibly into its tarnished surface. No amount of wear could hide the strong psychic language emanations coming from the trinket. Waymaker studied it thoroughly while Sovereign delighted himself with drinking blood out of the necks of keejee birds to the horror of the locals, who held the birds as sacred messengers.

Waymaker discovered the true function of the brass amulet—it was a prison for an alien man from a blue planet called Earth. The warnings writ upon it cautioned the reader against setting the prisoner free, but also contained some sort of incantation to do so. Curious about the amulet's prisoner, Waymaker recited the incantation, and with a spectacular burst of magical energy, the amulet opened. Standing before the startled kwoloo was Sulemain (p. 96), clothed in simple garb of an alien nature.

To Sulemain's surprise, Waymaker welcomed him to the newly conquered planet of Vodan in a language of ancient Earth. Noting that he also possessed the incantation to place Sulemain back within the amulet, Waymaker brokered a deal with the demonologist. In return for releasing him from the amulet's imprisonment, Sulemain would aid Waymaker in arranging the death of Sovereign, allowing the weary kwoloo to return home to the niceties of the imperial homeworld. Sulemain happily agreed, and the two arranged for Sovereign to "discover" the amulet. Through simple magics, Waymaker would appear to accidentally release Sulemain.

The plan worked. Sulemain and Waymaker now eagerly await their opportunity to dispose of the universally abhorred Sovereign.

USING WAYMAKER

As a translator and emissary, Waymaker has no equal. Able to communicate in any language, from the insectoid click-buzz-click voicing of Daeket's wasp people to the musical pheromone-laden speech of the mushroom men from the caves below the surface of Kapulu, Waymaker brings but one message: Sovereign is coming.

The rash behavior of his master means that Waymaker is rarely afforded the opportunity to announce the arrival of the planet's soon-to-be conqueror. Instead, he mops up after the horrific violence and pillaging of Sovereign's invasion forces, and the brutal excesses of Sovereign himself. Organizing the remnants of a conquered people in order to create a useful slave pool is a thankless job—one that grows increasingly tiresome.

The arrival of Waymaker foreshadows a large, important invasion, one in which Sovereign has abandoned his usual tactic of smash-and-grab. On these rare occasions, Waymaker shuttles down to the planet's surface, seeks out the largest governmental body on the planet, announces the impending invasion, and offers the world a last chance to surrender.

Consider using Waymaker to foreshadow Sovereign's arrival—perhaps an alien PC knows of the Waymaker, and can warn the other characters of what an appearance by the tall, cloaked kwoloo foretells.

The PCs may even become embroiled in Waymaker's plan to knock off Sovereign if they manage to befriend the kwoloo and garner his trust, or simply appear naive and powerful enough to face off against the prince.

TACTICS

Primarily a non-combatant, Waymaker uses the Scepter of the Way's Force Field power to protect himself from harm, and activates this function whenever addressing the natives. If pressed, he uses the staff's Energy Blast to annihilate those who would be so bold as to attack Sovereign's emissary.

When engaged in parley, Waymaker speaks through the amplifier built into the scepter, broadcasting his voice far and wide. He plays whatever role necessary to secure the surrender of the target planet's governmental bodies, whether that be obsequious and timid or full of menacing threats to life and limb.

GAME STATISTICS

Waymaker: PL 14; Init +1 (Dex); Defense +19 (+8 Base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +11 melee (+1S, unarmed and +12L, Energy Field—light), +11 ranged (+12L, Energy Blast—light); SV Dmg +1 (Protection +14), Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +19, Intimidate +8, Sense Motive +20.

Feats: Assessment, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Psychic Awareness, Ultra-Hearing.

Powers: Comprehend +14 [*Source:* Alien; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 28 pp].

Equipment: Staff of the Way [*Effect:* Energy Field (light) +14; *Extras:* Energy Blast, Protection, Sensory Protection; *Power Stunts:* Radio Hearing, Radio Broadcast; *Flaw:* Device; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 58 pp].

CAPERS

Moving Day: Sovereign's plans to invade the planet Earth proceed apace. However, a small snag has been uncovered by Sulemain—the geometrically precise transporter he has fashioned is being blocked by another dramatic piece of architecture—Neu-Schwabenland!

The original skoviak plans for the arctic hideaway contained plenty of mystical wards and seals, courtesy of Hitler's research into the paranormal. One of those wards, a giant swastika, rests precisely in opposition to the final angle that will allow Sovereign's troops to teleport to the planet's surface, and ensure their quick and decisive invasion.

Waymaker has been sent take care of the problem, and as luck would have it, he's already thought of a plan. After observing the Earth's media, he decides that the PCs will make for perfect dupes, and recruits them to accompany him to the Antarctic.

Not even Waymaker knows what Neu-Schwabenland truly hides, and the skoviak and their aryan brethren won't allow their great monument to the Third Reich to be destroyed without a fight.

With everyone from Iron Cross to Sulemain potentially involved, as well as an army of Nazis, a traitorous Waymaker, and a swarm of skoviak jet fighters, it may just get a little ugly.

5: NEW RULES

The following new rules supplement those found in the *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook. While the bulk of this chapter applies primarily to villains, several new feats and additional rules can apply to heroic characters, too.

VILLAIN PLAYER CHARACTERS

The default *Mutants & Masterminds* rules assume that the player characters are superheroes battling against evil supervillains controlled by the Gamemaster. In the comics, however, a superhero might be a reformed villain, and some heroes might fall from grace into a life of crime. Players interested in "switching sides" might want to play a villain, and assuming the GM is willing to let them, there's no reason the rules should get in the way of a good time.

Players interested in dabbling in the dark side must declare their intent to play a villain to the GM between adventures or at the beginning of the campaign. Whether or not the would-be villain reveals his intentions to the other players is up to the player and the GM, but Gamemasters should carefully consider the dynamics of their play group before allowing *any* villain player characters, let alone a "secret" villain in a group of otherwise upstanding heroes.

Some experienced players might enjoy the moral ambiguity of having villain characters along for the ride, basking in the irony and story potential of a good betrayal. Pulling it off without upsetting other players is very tricky, and should be attempted only with great caution. If you think your group wouldn't appreciate a badguy in their midst, it's probably not worth allowing a player to run a villain, even if it might seem like fun for you and the villain's player. Always remember that the role of the GM is to help everyone have fun together, and maintaining a healthy and fun group dynamic is essential to a good roleplaying campaign.

The easiest way to integrate a villain PC into a campaign is to add one of the NPCs in this book as a pre-generated player character. Make sure that the character's power level does not exceed that of the other characters in the group to ensure even footing, and off you go.

CREATING AND PLAYING VILLAINS

Many players, especially after they've played a few games, will want to create their own villain characters. This brings up an interesting problem, as several of the new feats presented in this chapter are perfect for villain player characters, but require the expenditure of Villain Points, usually in the exclusive purview of the Gamemaster.

Villain player characters gain "Villain Points" in the same manner as heroes gain Hero Points, as discussed on page 105 of the *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook. They may spend these points on any of the options in the Hero Points section of that book, including inspiration and recovering faster from being knocked out or disabled, two abilities denied to the GM's villains. Identical to Hero Points in every way but name, these Villain Points allow the PC to use feats that require the expenditure of Villain Points. The villain may not, however, take advantage of feats that require the expenditure of Hero Points. Such feats are not lost when the character becomes a villain (and they still cost power points), but cannot be used until the villain once again becomes a hero.

Should the PC villain wish to "reform" and become a hero, he must declare his intent to reform between adventures. When acting as a hero, he cannot use any feat that requires the expenditure of a Villain Point. Such feats are not lost (and still cost power points), but cannot be used until the hero once again becomes a villain.

A character can "switch" between hero and villain no more than once per power level.

NEW FEATS

Most of these feats were designed with villains in mind, but there's no reason they can't be taken by heroes, so long as they meet the prerequisites.

ABOVE THE LAW

Thanks to great lawyers, great luck, or both, you seem to be immune to legal prosecution.

Benefit: Gain a +4 bonus to your trial modifier (see p. 120).

ANIMAL AFFINITY

You get along well with animals.

Benefit: For the purposes of interaction checks (*Mutants & Masterminds*, p. 148), an animal's starting attitude toward you improves by two ranks. A hostile animal, for example, would be treated as indifferent to you. Further actions can influence the animal's attitude, of course. If a character's statistics do not suggest whether it is an animal or not, the GM makes the final decision.

Special: Apply the Limited flaw to this feat to model an affinity for a specific type of animal (such as only dogs, only sea animals, etc.). In this case, the feat costs just one power point.

ARCH-NEMESIS

You have a particularly hated foe against whom you focus most of your efforts and attention.

Benefit: Designate one foe as your arch-nemesis. You receive a +2 bonus to attacks made against your arch-nemesis, and receive a +2 bonus to saving throws against attacks from your arch-nemesis.

Special: You may have only one designated arch-nemesis. You may change your arch-nemesis only if your previously designated foe is dead or otherwise "out of the picture" for one level advancement.

Example: The Atomic Brain has the Arch-Nemesis feat, and designated his rival Everyman II as his arch-nemesis. Everyman died recently, leaving the Atomic Brain's arch-nemesis slot "open." Currently at PL 20, the Atomic Brain can designate a new arch-nemesis upon achieving PL 21.

BODY LANGUAGE

Your nonverbal communication skills are particularly expressive.

Prerequisites: Cha 13+, 3 or more ranks in Innuendo.

Benefit: You may attempt to send a message with the Innuendo skill to someone untrained in Innuendo (*Mutants & Masterminds*, p. 35).

COMBAT DRIVER

You know some tricks that can keep you alive while driving a ground or water vehicle under combat conditions.

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, 1 or more ranks in Drive.

Benefit: Choose to specialize in ground or water vehicles. You are especially good at operating this type of vehicle under combat conditions. You gain a +1 bonus on either attack rolls or to the vehicle's Defense (chosen each round) when driving a vehicle of your chosen type. Defense bonuses from multiple operators with the Combat Driver feat do not stack.

Special: You can gain this feat twice. Its effects do not stack. The second time you take the feat, it applies to the other type of vehicle.

COMBAT PILOT

You know some tricks that can keep you alive while piloting an air or space vehicle under combat conditions.

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, 1 or more ranks in Pilot.

Benefit: Choose to specialize in air or space vehicles. You are especially good at operating this type of vehicle under combat conditions. You gain a +1 bonus on either attack rolls or to the vehicle's Defense (chosen each round) when piloting a vehicle of your chosen type. Defense bonuses from multiple operators with the Combat Pilot feat do not stack.

Special: You can gain this feat twice. Its effects do not stack. The second time you take the feat, it applies to the other type of vehicle.

DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY

Your ties to a foreign government grant you diplomatic immunity from prosecution for most crimes.

Benefit: When you're apprehended by the authorities for a crime, the GM makes a secret trial check (see p. 120). If the result is 5 or higher, no charges are pressed and all records regarding the case are classified (requiring a

successful DC 20 Search check by someone with access to the right type of information to find). If the result is 4 or lower, the character is ejected from the country in question and henceforth loses the benefit of this feat in that country (but still has to pay the power point cost for it).

EVALUATE [SUPER-FEAT]

You have a knack for figuring out how to beat an opponent.

Prerequisite: Wis 13+.

Benefit: For every round in which you take a full action to study an opponent, you learn one of that opponent's weaknesses (*Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook, p. 106). If your opponent lacks a weakness, you know so after one round of study.

EXTEND REACH

Your long limbs or combat skills allow you to make attacks against enemies a short distance from you.

Benefit: Add 5 feet to your reach (the distance within which you may make melee attacks).

Special: You can take this feat multiple times, increasing your reach by 5 feet each time. This feat is often added to a weapon to represent a long blade or handle. Reach from a weapon stacks with a character's natural reach.

GANG UP

You work well with others to confuse opponents in combat.

Benefit: When you and another character with the Gang Up feat flank an opponent, you gain a +3 bonus on attacks against that opponent.

Normal: Flanking attackers gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls against the flanked target.

HUMAN SHIELD

You know the defensive value of a good hostage.

Benefit: When grappling, you retain your dodge bonus and gain an additional +4 to Defense against opponents you aren't grappling.

Normal: Grapplers lose their dodge bonus to Defense against opponents they aren't grappling.

INTO THIN AIR [SUPER-FEAT]

Your body mysteriously vanishes when you die.

Benefit: When you die, you can spend a Villain Point to make your body and all worn and carried possessions vanish into thin air—zapped to another dimension, teleported to a hidden safe house, consumed in an explosion, or any other mysterious disappearance you prefer. No matter the "special effect" of the disappearance, the body somehow finds its way to relative safety, where it can be recovered and, perhaps, brought back to life by someone with the Healing (Resurrection) or Reincarnate power.

Normal: What happens to your body is up to the circumstances of your death.

LAY LOW

You know how to make the most out of cover.

Benefit: When behind cover, increase your degree of cover by one rank. Because your skill at maximizing cover can only go so far, however, this feat cannot grant better than nine-tenths cover.

MOTIF

You excel at capers related to a specific theme.

Benefit: Choose a creative theme such as waterfowl, sports, tarot cards, or holidays. When engaged in a caper related to this motif, you gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks and to Defense. GMs should be careful to avoid excessively broad themes (crime, peace, justice, injustice) as well as specialties (bank robberies, murder investigations). The point of a motif is to come up with something quirky and memorable. The GM is the final arbiter on whether or not to allow a specific motif in the campaign.

MYSTIC AWARENESS [SUPER-FEAT]

You can sense the use of mystic powers in your presence.

Benefit: When a power with the mystical source is used near you or to affect someone near you, you may be able to detect it. Make a Sense Motive check (DC 10). If successful, you sense the use of the mystical power. The DC of the check increases by +1 for every 10 feet of distance between you and the user or the target of the mystical power (whichever is closer to you). If you are targeted by a mystical power, a successful DC 10 Sense Motive check allows you to know the identity of your attacker (if you are familiar with him or her).

Special: At the GM's discretion, this feat can apply to other power sources, with each source requiring a separate feat.

SLIPPERY EEL

You are particularly skilled at escaping from bonds.

Prerequisite: 3 or more ranks in Escape Artist.

Benefit: Halve the time it takes to make an Escape Artist check.

Normal: It takes 10 rounds to make an Escape Artist check.

Special: You can take this feat up to three times. Each time you do so, halve the time it takes to escape bonds (rounding fractions down). Taking this feat three times allows a character to make an Escape Artist check as a full action.

STEALTHY

You know how to make the most out of poor visibility.

Benefit: When taking advantage of concealment, treat your concealment condition as one rank better. Because your skill at remaining unseen can only go so far, however, this feat cannot grant better than nine-tenths concealment.

STOIC

You aren't easily rattled by insults.

Benefit: You get a +4 bonus on Sense Motive or Taunt checks made to resist enemy Taunt attempts.

TAINTED NETWORK

Whether by applying political pressure or a simple show of brute force, your contacts know how to keep an opponent's contacts out of the picture.

Prerequisite: Connected.

Benefit: Spend a Villain Point to deny one designated opponent the benefit of the Connected feat (*Mutants & Masterminds*, page 44) for one adventure. Designate the opponent when you spend the Villain Point.

Special: You can take this feat multiple times. Each additional feat allows you the chance to deny an additional opponent the benefit of the Connected feat for one adventure. You must spend one Villain Point for each designated opponent.

TAKE THE FALL

You can sacrifice yourself to save others, putting yourself in harm's way at the very last moment.

Prerequisite: Dex 13+.

Benefit: Once per encounter, you may choose to interpose yourself between an attack and a target within 5 feet. Declare your intent to accept the attack before the attack roll is made. Moving to accept an attack does not actually change your location.

TRAILBLAZER

You have little difficulty navigating difficult terrain.

Benefit: Increase by 1/4 your movement penalty multiplier for obstructions, bad surfaces, and poor visibility. For example, a character with this feat moves at 3/4 speed through mud (instead of 1/2 speed). Movement penalties for hampered movement are found on page 104 of the *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook.

UNSHAKABLE FAITH

Your belief in a divine being or beings grants you spiritual resolve and threatens the undead and unholy.

Benefit: Designate a specific religious faith. Your faith and belief grants you a +2 bonus to Will saves related to fear, such as an attack with the Mind Control (Emotion Control) power. Additionally, your faith grants you the ability to use items of faith such as holy symbols and holy water (see p. 118).

Normal: Characters lacking the Unshakable Faith feat gain no benefit from items of faith.

VILLAIN'S LUCK

You are capable of great acts of villainy.

Benefit: Increase your maximum number of Villain Points by one.

Special: You can take this feat multiple times, gaining an additional Villain Point each time, but your total Villain Points cannot exceed your power level. This feat is available only to player character villains.

NEW POWER

The following is an expanded version of the Gadgets power from the *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook.

VARIABLE EFFECT

Cost: 2
Action: Half
Range: By power
Duration: By power
Saving Throw: By power

You have an all-encompassing but infrequently used power that allows you to produce a number of different effects. You can allocate your Variable Effect rank to any power with a base cost of 2 or

fewer power points simply by taking a half action and spending a Hero or Villain Point. You cannot apply any flaws to this power to reduce its cost (Variable Effect with the Device extra is the Gadgets power). You may apply extras, but this divides your power ranks by the number of extras, plus one. So one extra divides your ranks in half, two extras by three, and so forth. Any fractional ranks are dropped. If this reduces your power rank below 1, you cannot use that power. You may divide your power ranks between multiple powers as desired, but each separate power requires a half action (but only one Hero or Villain Point, regardless of how many powers the Variable Effect ranks are allocated to).

NEW ENERGY TYPE

The following energy type should be added to the existing types listed on page 69 of the *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook.

- Chemical: You can manipulate chemical compositions to weaken the structure of living and nonliving matter like the Disintegration power with the Range (touch) flaw. Attacks made against living creatures deal lethal damage equal to your power rank (targets make a Damage save as normal).

NEW DEVICES

The *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook provides extensive guidelines to help you create your own fantastic devices and weapons. The following section includes four ready-made devices, taking the design weight off your shoulders and letting you concentrate on coming up with a great adventure for your players.

Assassin Suit: Composed of tight-fitting synthetic fibers inlaid with bleeding edge circuitry, these military-engineered bodysuits use "gestalt cells" and fractal technology to mimic the wearer's surroundings, helping her blend into the background. Tiny nodules positioned on the suit's palms and toes secrete fast-degrading glue, granting the wearer the ability to climb on walls and ceilings. *Range:* Personal; *Effects:* Blending +10; *Extra:* Climbing +10; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Super-Science; *Total:* 10 pp.

Garrote: A short corded wire used to strangle opponents from behind. Favored weapon of the silent assassin. *Range:* Touch; *Effect:* Suffocate +5; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* –; *Total:* 5 pp.

Handcuffs: Standard police-issue steel handcuffs. Locking a subdued enemy in handcuffs is a half action. *Range:* Personal; *Effect:* Snare +5; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* –; *Total:* 5 pp.

Smoke Pellets: Favored by ninjas and intelligence agents, these small incendiary devices provide total concealment for everyone within a 10' radius. Often used to cover a silent retreat. *Range:* Normal; *Effect:* Obscure +2; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* –; *Total:* 2 pp.

NEW WEAKNESSES

Comic book characters tend toward extremes in their powers and in their flaws. The *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook contains several sample weaknesses, many of which are more appropriate for heroes than for the type of lawbreakers and monsters covered in this book. While any of the below weaknesses are appropriate for heroes, many of them have been designed with the supervillain in mind. As with the weaknesses presented in the rulebook, the character gains an additional 10 power points per weakness taken. GMs are encouraged to limit the number of weaknesses allowed to players, lest the campaign degenerate into a contest of who can squeeze the greatest number of points from the least bothersome weaknesses.

Addiction: You're addicted to a substance such as drugs or magical compulsion dust. For every day in which you do not subject yourself to the substance, you must make a Will save (DC 20) to stave off the debilitating effects of your addiction. If the save fails, you become fatigued, and risk a worsening of your condition (fatigued to exhausted, exhausted to unconscious, unconscious to dying) every day until a successful Will save is made. Every day, the DC increases by 1. You improve your condition one step for every full day of rest (an addicted character cannot, for instance, remove the fatigue effect by resting for 8 hours as usual).

Disabled (dull witted): Characters with this weakness gain a -5 penalty to both Intelligence and Wisdom, although neither ability score can fall below 2 as a result of this weakness. Since ability scores start at 10 during character creation, this weakness is identical to simply lowering the value of two ability scores by 5, which also results in 10 additional character creation points. The weakness exists primarily to simulate conditions that occur *after* character creation, such as a blow to the head or a transformation into a mindless zombie. If the weakness does not measurably affect the character (such as if he started with an Intelligence and Wisdom of 5), Disabled (Dull Witted) grants no power point bonus.

Disabled (frail): As a result of advanced age, years of hard living, or devastating illness or injuries, you're extremely frail. You suffer a –5 penalty on checks for physical actions that require endurance over time (running, swimming, holding your breath), to avoid becoming fatigued, and to stave off disease.

Disabled (slow): The character's movement is hampered due to lame or stubby legs, malfunctioning gears, or zombified muscle tissue. A Disabled (Slow) character suffers a -5 penalty on Acrobatics, Balance, Jump, Move Silently, and Ride checks. Reduce his base speed by 10 feet.

Quirk (braggart): The character has supreme confidence in his abilities and enjoys regaling others with tales of his superiority. Before engaging in a serious crime (such as a bank heist, museum burglary, assassination or kidnapping attempt, etc.), the character must arrogantly warn the authorities of the impending crime. The character may wish to couch his warning in riddles, such as suggesting the city "look out for a hot time" before stealing the legendary Fire Opal Eye, but careful detective work on behalf of heroes and law enforcement should lead directly to the crime scene with time to halt the crime in progress. At the Gamemaster's discretion, the character compulsively reveals aspects of his future plans to captured heroes.

Quirk (fanatical): The character belongs to an organization such as a cult or secret army of dedicated fanatics. If given an order by a superior within the organization, the character is compelled to comply with that order, even if it means certain death. Orders can be resisted only with a successful Will save (DC = 10 + Cha modifier + Super-Cha ranks). Characters who fail this save must comply with the order.

Quirk (malfunctions): Whether due to unreliable servos, bad wiring, drug addiction, or electroshock therapy, characters with this weakness don't always work the way they're meant to. Each round, the character makes a malfunction check before he can act. If he rolls a 1–5 on a d20, he is dazed and cannot act that round (but can defend himself normally). Each time a character takes this weakness, add 5 to the top end of the malfunction threshold. For example, a character with three Malfunctions weaknesses malfunctions on a roll of 1–15.

Quirk (ravenous): When in the presence of living creatures, characters with this weakness must attempt to eat those creatures, foregoing all actions until the would-be meal is killed and devoured.

Susceptible (hunger): A character with this weakness can remain awake and alert for one hour per point of Constitution bonus. Thereafter, she must refresh her life essence by feeding. The exact definition of feeding is up to the Gamemaster, but might include draining ability scores or physically consuming a volume of meat equal in weight to a full-grown human. If the character does not feed before she runs out of time, she begins to suffer the effects of susceptibility, as described on page 107 of the *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook. After feeding, the character can remain active for a number of hours equal to her Constitution bonus before needing to feed again.

Susceptible (items of faith): Some characters, especially the unholy and undead, have an aversion to objects of religious significance. Such characters begin to suffer the effects of susceptibility when in sight of an item of faith wielded by a character with the Unshakable Faith feat. Such items wielded by characters without the Unshakable Faith feat have no unusual affect against characters susceptible to items of faith.

TEMPLATES

Sometimes, a character becomes *something else.* Whether wounded by the claws of a werewolf lord, bitten by a seductive vampire princess, or raised from the dead as a zombie by a demented witch doctor, your character (or villain, or bystander) is no longer what he once was, and has become something both greater and lesser than his original form. While the *Mutants & Masterminds* core rulebook gives you the tools to create a character with newly gained powers, the following templates handle most of the guesswork and heavy lifting, giving you a set of additional powers and character modifications that can be added to an existing character with minimum effort.

The following *templates* balance the gained benefits with new weaknesses that limit the character, often making him weaker when confronted with certain attack forms or certain environmental circumstances. The templates presented in this book balance themselves out, and do not change the character's power level. Certain customized versions of the templates do change the charac-

ter's power level, giving him abilities equal to 15 power points per level adjustment.

Sometimes, templates allow a character to exceed the normal bonus limits dictated by the character's power level in the granted attributes only. Granted attributes can be raised only after the character's power level has increased to allow for additional ranks, as normal.

Granted feats stack with existing feats, so long as the feat in question can be taken multiple times. Otherwise, the additional feat is lost. Granted powers stack with existing powers, so a character with Super-Strength +5 who becomes a werewolf (gaining Super-Strength +4) ends up with Super-Strength +9, even if that exceeds his normal stacking limit as dictated by power level.

Example: Vampire hunter Klaus Kronas (PL 2) tries to stake the fanglord Monseigneur Marat but instead ends up at his mercy after failing a Move Silently check. Deciding to teach the plucky occultist a lesson, Marat turns Kronas into a vampire. Kronas gains several new attributes, including Drain +5. Ordinarily, Kronas could not have a power that exceeds rank 2, but the vampire template allows him to circumvent this limit. Should he survive, gaining power points in the process, he can raise his Drain ranks only after he has reached PL 6 or higher.

VAMPIRE

As long as there have been comic books, there have been vampires lurking in shadowy panels, waiting to prey upon powerless victims and stalwart superheroes alike. The following template covers several different types of vampires, from the traditional caped aristocrats sleeping in coffins and turning into bats to the modern angst-filled fashion plates of the 1990s to the dust-and-forget feral adversaries of modern movies and television shows.

BECOMING A VAMPIRE

The *Mutants & Masterminds* default assumes that a character becomes a vampire when he has been drained to 0 Constitution by another vampire. The following round, he rises from the dead as a vampire with his Constitution restored to its original score. This results in easy "no questions" transformations that may very well see a former companion "switching sides" in the middle of a fight. It's one thing to stake the insidious Monseigneur Marat, but another to behead the newly transformed Princess Patriot, a former companion with a newfound taste for blood.

Gamemasters who want more elaborate transformations might require that the drained victim drink some of the vampire's blood, be buried for three days, or any other colorful requirements before rising from the dead. This is a matter of preference, and doesn't change the game rules related to creating a vampire character. Once you've decided upon the particulars, however, stick to it and maintain a common "continuity" regarding the transformation process. Establishing a set of common vampire ground rules will make the few vampiric adversaries who don't follow those rules (see Customization, below) that much more memorable.

PL Adjustment: 0

Feats: Darkvision, Immunity (aging, disease, exhaustion, poison, starvation, suffocation), Into Thin Air (body becomes dust)*.

Powers: Clinging +3 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 3 pp], Drain +5 [*Flaw:* Limited (Con only); *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp], Leaping +2 [*Power Stunt:* Super-Leaping; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 4 pp], Mind Control +4 [*Flaw:* Restricted (gaze); *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 4 pp], Natural Weapon (claws) +2 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 4 pp], Natural Weapon (fangs) +2 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 4 pp].

Weaknesses: Susceptible (hunger, items of faith, sunlight), Vulnerable (stakes).

WEAKNESSES

Susceptible (hunger): A Vampire can remain awake and alert for one hour per point of Constitution bonus. Thereafter, he must refresh his life essence by draining a total of 10 ranks of Con from a living victim or victims, or suffer the effects of the Susceptible weakness (*Mutants & Masterminds*, p. 107). After feeding, the vampire can remain active for a number of hours equal to his Constitution bonus before needing to feed again.

Susceptible (items of faith): A vampire's traditional susceptibility against items of faith (crucifixes, holy water, stars of David, etc.) applies only when those items are wielded by adversaries with the Unshakable Faith feat.

Susceptible (sunlight): A vampire's susceptibility to sunlight is his greatest weakness, and is far more acute that his other susceptibilities. A vampire who fails a Fortitude save against exposure to direct sunlight automatically begins dying.

Vulnerable (stakes): An opponent armed with a wooden stake or sharp wood fragment poses significant danger to a vampire. Vampire minions struck by a critical hit with such a weapon die instantly. Vampire characters are simply vulnerable to attacks from sharpened wood, as described on page 107 of the *Mutants & Masterminds* core rulebook. Nonlethal critical hits with a stake in this case represent "near hits" that greatly harm the creature but leave him alive.

LEAVING THE TEMPLATE

In most cases, vampirism is forever. Forgiving GMs might allow characters a way out by forcing them to endure an outrageously difficult mystic ritual or quest, the equivalent of several game sessions of play. Possible rituals include draining 15 ranks of Constitution from a willing stigmatic or staking oneself with a fragment of the True Cross.

CUSTOMIZATION

Want to mix up your blood-sucking encounters? Try one of the following vampiric variations:

God is Dead: Atheists and Gamemasters who simply wish to surprise their players might decide that items of faith such as crucifixes and holy water don't slow down vampires at all. In this case, vampire characters gain a +1 bonus to their Mind Control, Natural Weapon (claws), and Natural Weapon (fangs) powers and add 1 to the character's power level.

Surprising Spins: Perhaps vampires in your campaign world don't work the way they do in most movies. Consider changing a vampire's Drain from Constitution to another ability score, such as Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (possibly to imitate a "psychic vampire"). Does this new form of vampire Drain its enemies by sucking blood, or by draining life essence from the brain through the ears or eyes? Mix this type of variant with "God is Dead," above, to really keep players on their toes.

The Transylvania Twist: While it may seem corny today, most "classic" vampires had the ability to transform into a bat or a cloud of gas. If Dracula's more your style or to emulate a powerful "ancient" vampire, change the template's PL adjustment to +1, give the vampire the Identity Change super-feat (allowing him to change into a bat), and add the following powers: Incorporeal +3 [Affected by attacks with mystical source; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 6 pp], Mind Control +7 [*Flaw:* Limited (animal control); *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 7 pp].

WEREWOLF

Strange howls echo through the wilderness on moonlit nights, confirming local legends and initiating a deadly hunt against unwary campers. A ravenous beast stalks the downtown streets, eviscerating and devouring the homeless and filling the newspapers with stories of a grisly serial murderer. A noble superhero struggles with an ancient family curse, locking himself away three nights a month lest he break his solemn vows of pacifism. These are just some ways to add werewolves to your *Mutants & Masterminds* campaigns, but modern literature, movies, and television shows are filled with hundreds of others.

BECOMING A WEREWOLF

Each time a character is wounded by a werewolf's Natural Weapon or unarmed attack, the Gamemaster should roll a secret DC 15 Fortitude check for the wounded character. Failure indicates that the victim has contracted the curse of the werewolf, and will gain the benefits of the werewolf template on the next evening of a full moon.

Werewolves possess two forms. The character's original form is called the "masked form," and resembles the original character in almost every way. The character gains limited tracking ability even when in his masked form, thanks in no small part to an enhanced sense of smell. Masked werewolves might express more subtle signs of their affliction, such as a short temper or a preference for very raw meat.

The werewolf's "lupine form" is his most dangerous. The character transforms into an animalistic wolflike biped that retains some of the character's original features but buries most of what was once human (or alien, or whatever) under a horrifyingly bestial visage.

All of the powers granted by the template stack with the character's existing powers. A character with Super-Strength +10 would have Super-Strength +14 when in lupine form (see Templates, above, regarding templates exceeding power level stacking limits).

MASKED FORM

PL Adjustment: 0

Feats: Scent, Track.

Powers: Combat Sense +2 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 2 pp], Super-Skill (Survival) +4 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 4 pp].

Weaknesses: Transformation (full moon).

WEAKNESSES

Transformation (full moon): On nights of the full moon (usually three consecutive nights a month) the afflicted character transforms into a creature that blends lupine features with the character's ordinary appearance (see Lupine Form, below). The transformation lasts from dusk until the following dawn, and begins again each night of the full moon. The character retains memories of events that occurred while in wolfen form, but due to the weaknesses of that form might not always be able to control his actions.

Generally, the Gamemaster tracks the phases of the moon in an ongoing campaign. For a quick and easy method of determining the moon phase, the werewolf player can roll 1d20 prior to the beginning of each day. On a roll of 1 or 2, the night will have a full moon.

LUPINE FORM

PL Adjustment: 0

Feats: Darkvision, Improved Initiative, Improved Pin, Instant Stand.

Powers: Natural Weapon (fangs) +3 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 6 pp], Protection +5 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 10 pp], Super-Str +4 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 4 pp; *Total:* 16 pp].

Weaknesses: Berserker, Disturbing, Susceptible (hunger), Vulnerable (silver weapons).

WEAKNESSES

Berserker: Every round of combat, the werewolf's player must make a successful DC 20 Will save to avoid going berserk. If this save fails, the werewolf enters a battle frenzy. He loses any dodge bonus to Defense and must take the full attack option as often as possible, only taking other actions to get into range of potential opponents. The werewolf does not snap out of the berserk state until all potential opponents are defeated. Then the player must make another DC 20 Will save. If it fails, the werewolf attacks an ally or bystander. The werewolf gets a new saving throw each round, with a cumulative +1 bonus, to come out of the berserk state. A successful DC 20 Diplomacy check by an ally who tries to calm down the werewolf gives the werewolf a +2 bonus on the Will save, but a failed Diplomacy check makes the character who attempted the Diplomacy check the werewolf's next target.

Susceptible (hunger): A werewolf can remain awake and alert for one hour per point of Constitution bonus. Thereafter, he must refresh his life essence by consuming a volume of fresh meat equal in weight to an average-sized human, or suffer the effects of the Susceptible weakness (*Mutants & Masterminds*, p. 107). After feeding, the werewolf can remain active for a number of hours equal to his Constitution bonus before needing to feed again.

Vulnerable (silver weapons): The mystical curse of the werewolf imbues its victim with a cruel vulnerability to attacks from silver weapons. Saves made against such attacks have a bonus of 0—the werewolf's player simply rolls 1d20 as a save, with no modifiers for ability scores, powers, or anything else. The attack has its normal effect based on the result of the hero's save. Weapons can be made silver by application of the Special Materials extra (see **An Occultist's Arsenal**, p. X).

LEAVING THE TEMPLATE

A DC 15 Knowledge (occult) check reveals the solitary means by which a character can be cured of the werewolf's curse. A ritual known as the Belladonna Working must be performed by a character with 10 or more ranks in the Sorcery power. The sorcerer must spend five consecutive rounds in concentration over the werewolf, his hand pressed to the creature's chest. Each round, the sorcerer must spend a full action on the ritual and expend a Hero or Villain Point. At the end of the ceremony, the character is healed and loses all benefits and drawbacks of the werewolf template.

CUSTOMIZATION

Four-Legged Fun: Some werewolf traditions boast a third form, that of a powerful wolf with sharp eyes and sharper teeth. If you'd like to give your werewolves this additional power, simply add the Disabled (Mute) weakness to represent the wolf-form's inability to speak. Give the werewolf the Identity Change feat to represent the ability to transform into a third form, a transition that can occur only from the lupine form, and the Attack Focus (fangs) feat. Also add the following powers: Leaping +2 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 2 pp], Running +2 [*Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 4 pp]. All feats and attributes beyond the Identity Change feat can be used only in wolf-form.

ZOMBIE

Whether they're the spiritless automatons of voodoo lore or the radio-controlled corpse-warriors of military black ops, zombies should always be welcome in a *Mutants & Masterminds* campaign. They present players with an opportunity for guiltless carnage and give Gamemasters the chance to horrify her players by revealing that the mindless, rotting meat-puppet striking out against them is actually a beloved friend. Everybody wins.

AN OCCULTIST'S ARSENAL

You can't just throw two sticks together and call it a crucifix. Anyone looking to take on supernatural threats is well served by doing a little research and picking up the right equipment for the job.

Frog Box: Used to detect undead, this ritually prepared box contains the corpse of a bullfrog. When the box comes within 10 feet of a vampire, the frog returns to life. Due to the frog box's extremely short range, most vampire hunters set them as traps along a specific character's established route. Once the suspected vampire has passed, the box can be recovered and checked. *Range:* Normal (10'); *Effect:* Frog returns to life when a vampire passes within 10 feet; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp.

Holy Water: Blessed by a holy cleric, this water causes great harm to unholy creatures such as vampires and demons (and no harm to anyone else). It further causes such creatures to make a Fortitude saving throw or suffer the consequences of susceptibility to holy items. You do not add your Strength bonus to holy water's damage bonus. Holy water has no damage bonus unless wielded by a character with the Unshakable Faith feat. The following statistics represent enough holy water to last for one adventure. *Range:* Touch; *Effect:* +4L damage; *Flaws:* Limited (damages undead and unholy only), Device; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 4 pp.

Holy Symbol: Items of religious significance hold power over the unholy and undead, serving as a channel for the wielder's faith and triggering a susceptibility response from those sensitive to the powers of belief. An affected character must make a successful DC 15 Will save each time a character brings a holy symbol into view or suffer a change in condition as outlined on page 107 of the *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook. The wielder must have the Unshakable Faith feat to use a holy symbol effectively. *Range:* Sight; *Effect:* Triggers susceptibility response; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp.

Legemeton: Also known as the *Lesser Key of Solomon the King*, this seventeenth century tome contains an extensive catalogue of unholy monsters and demons, outlining their powers and weaknesses and giving instructions on how to bind them into place. Targeted creatures must be susceptible to items of faith to be affected by the book. Affected targets must make a DC 20 Will save or be caught in a Snare. *Range:* Normal (100 feet); *Effects:* Snare +10; *Extra:* Mental; *Flaws:* Device, Limited (only affective against creatures susceptible to items of faith); *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 10 pp.

Stake: A simple length of sharpened wood. *Range:* Melee; *Effect:* +2L damage bonus; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* —; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 2 pp.

Stake, Mature: Like a guitar, stakes improve with age and use. Over time, the wood slowly absorbs some of the blood of its slain enemies, giving it greater power over future victims. *Range:* Melee; *Effect:* +5L damage bonus; *Flaw:* Device; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 5 pp.

Tobin's Spirit Guide: This nineteenth century libram, collecting the life's work of eccentric mystical researcher Neville Tobin, includes first-hand accounts of encounters with 53 spirits, ghosts, and undead creatures and second-hand accounts of more than 100 more. *Range:* Personal; *Effects:* +10 bonus on Knowledge (occult) checks, Evaluate (creatures with mystical-sourced powers); *Flaw:* Device; *Cost:* 11 pp.

NEW EXTRA

Special Material: The weapon to which this extra is applied is constructed of a specific type of material, such as silver, gold, or wood. If the weapon is ranged, the special material applies to the projectiles fired from the weapon.

ANIMALS

The following animals are referenced elsewhere in this book.

Gorilla: PL 4; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 15 (+3 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +8 melee (+9S/10-ft. reach, unarmed); SV Dmg +6 (Protection +4), Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +12, Listen +4, Spot +4.

Feats: Extend Reach*, Scent.

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +4 [*Source:* –; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 4 pp], Super-Strength +4 [*Extra:* Protection; *Source:* –; *Cost:* 5 pp; *Total:* 20 pp].

Tiger: PL 6; Large; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 14 (-1 size, +3 base, +2 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; Atk +8 melee (+9L/10-ft. reach, claw or bite); SV Dmg +3 (Protection +4), Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 20, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills: Balance +6, Climb +11, Hide +4, Jump +16, Listen +3, Move Silently +6.

Feats: Improved Grapple, Scent.

Powers: Leaping +6 [*Source:* –; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 6 pp], Growth +4 [*Extra:* Duration (permanent), Immovability +4, Protection +4, Super-Strength +4; *Source:* –; *Cost:* 8 pp; *Total:* 32 pp].

Shark: PL 6; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 19 (+6 base, +3 Dex); Spd Swim 60 ft.; Atk +9 melee (+9L, bite); SV Dmg +1 (Protection +4), Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6.

Feats: Darkvision, Dodge, Evasion, Improved Initiative, Move-By Attack, Power Attack.

Powers: Combat Sense +3 [*Source:* –; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 3 pp], Natural Weapon (bite) +6 [*Source:* –; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 12 pp], Protection +4 [*Source:* –; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 8 pp], Super-Senses +6 [*Source:* –; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 12 pp], Swimming +6 [*Source:* –; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 12 pp].

Weakness: Susceptible (being out of water).

BECOMING A ZOMBIE

Some zombies are created via a sacred religious ceremony merging the trappings of Christianity with the tribal rituals of Old Africa. Others come from scientific labs, exposure to chemical agents, or magic spells. Regardless of specific origin, a zombie can be created only from a dead body. Consequently, the zombie template can be applied only to a dead character, who instantly rises as a zombie.

PL Adjustment: 0

Feats: Darkvision, Immunity (aging, critical hits, disease, exhaustion, poison, starvation, suffocation).

Powers: Protection +12 [*Flaw:* Degrades; *Source:* GM's choice; *Cost:* 1 pp; *Total:* 12 pp], Super-Strength +4 [*Flaw:* Limited (doesn't apply to carrying capacity); *Source:* GM's choice; *Cost:* 3 pp; *Total:* 12 pp].

Weaknesses: Disabled (dull witted, mute, slow), Disturbing.

WEAKNESSES

Disabled (dull witted): A zombie is a mindless automaton, just intelligent enough to understand short instructions but not intelligent enough to communicate. Particularly wise or intelligent individuals, however, often result in relatively bright zombies. Zombies suffer a -5 penalty to both Intelligence and Wisdom. These scores "bottom out" at 2.

Disabled (mute): Because they cannot speak, zombies suffer a -5 penalty on Bluff and Diplomacy checks.

Disabled (slow): Due to their lumbering movement, zombies suffer a -5 penalty on Acrobatics, Balance, Jump, Move Silently, and Ride checks. Reduce the character's base speed by 10 feet.

Disturbing: A zombie's rotting flesh, vacant stare, hideous moaning, and horrific stench is enough to send most members of normal society fleeing in panic. All zombies suffer a -5 penalty on Bluff and Diplomacy checks. These penalties stack with those from Disabled (mute).

LEAVING THE TEMPLATE

The only "cured" zombie is a dead zombie. Thereafter, the corpse can be returned to life via the Healing (Resurrection) or Reincarnate powers.

CUSTOMIZATION

Ravenous Dead: Want to add a little horror movie spice to your zombies? Give them a brain addiction. Add the Quirk (ravenous) weakness to model the zombie's unquenchable need for brains. When brains (or a living creature with a brain) are within sight, the zombie drops all immediate plans and makes haste for the brainpan, its rotting tongue lolling about decayed teeth in gluttonous anticipation. Add the Detect (life) super-feat and give the zombie Natural Weapon (bite) +4 [*Source:* –; *Cost:* 2 pp; *Total:* 8 pp].

CAMPAIGN OPTION: CRISIS LEVEL

Unlike in most comics, on the game table, there's no guarantee of the heroes' success. Climactic moments are resolved by the players' wits and the luck of the dice. This creates a problem for the campaign narrative. What happens if the player characters are knocked cold, and no one prevents the Atomic Brain from throwing the switch on the Transdimensional Omni-Destructo Beam? Unless the Gamemaster has preplanned for every contingency, the apocalypse can be a real hassle to adjudicate. The last thing anyone wants is a villain who isn't prepared to follow through.

The campaign's "Crisis Level" tracks the repercussions of the heroes missions, providing in-game ramifications for their successes and failures. Before play begins, the GM selects the campaign's style, establishing a Crisis Level baseline for the series. It's generally a good idea to talk over campaign style with your players, so no one's disappointed when they start fighting sentient cartoon creatures or blood-sucking vampire spawn. See page 146 of the *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook for more advice if you're not sure about what type of game you'd like to run.

Campaign styles range from utopian, in which the heroes have solved most of the world's problems, to terminal, in which they've probably played a role in speeding the destruction of the planet. Most campaigns are either four-color, realistic, or gritty. At the beginning of the campaign, public attitude, personal conditions, social conditions, and global conditions are dictated by the campaign style. Once play begins, however, the fate of the world is truly in the hands of the player characters.

CHANGING CONDITIONS

Every time the heroes finish a major adventure, they gain a pool of "victory points" equal to the power level of the adventure's highest-level opponent (defeating the PL 20 Atomic Brain, for instance, would net the heroes 20 victory points). The heroes may, as a team, spend these victory points to improve personal conditions, social conditions, or global conditions by one step per 10 victory points spent. Surplus points are retained for later use.

The GM is free to assign no victory points for unchallenging or irrelevant adventures (the world's greatest superheroes shouldn't net 5 victory points for beating up a lone ninja, for example). He also has the option to disallow certain condition shifts if the change doesn't seem appropriate. Breaking up a series of local jewel heists, for instance, might change social conditions, but it probably won't have any impact upon global conditions.

Major villains who defeat the PCs grant the GM victory points equal to the highest-level villain in the adventure (the Atomic Brain, for instance, would net 20 victory points for defeating a group of heroes). These points may be spent to shift personal conditions, social conditions, or global conditions lower, causing more problems for the PCs. Try to shift the Crisis Level in a manner appropriate to the successful crime.

Public attitude represents the starting attitude of the "man on the street," which may color the heroes' interactions with those they have sworn to protect. For more about interaction checks, see page 148 of the *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook. After play begins, public attitude matches the Crisis Level of personal or social conditions (whichever is lower).

Improvements to the Crisis Level that exceed the starting levels dictated by the campaign style should not last longer than one adventure. Heroes who manage to improve the Crisis Level of a non-native world by two levels gain the benefit of the Fame feat when visiting that world. Unlike changes to the Crisis Level of the PCs' native world, changes to the Crisis Level of foreign worlds last indefinitely.

In all cases, changes to a campaign's Crisis Level occur during the downtime between adventures.

TABLE 5-1: CAMPAIGN CRISIS LEVEL

Crisis Level	Campaign Type	Public Attitude	Personal Conditions	Social Conditions	Global Conditions
Green	Utopian	Helpful	Heroes revered and generally considered the authorities.	Crime rare; Organized crime occasional.	Disasters rare.
Blue	Four-Color	Friendly	Personal trouble rare.	Crime occasional; Organized crime rare.	Disasters occasional.
Yellow	Realistic	Indifferent	Personal trouble occasional.	Crime common; Organized crime occasional.	Disasters common.
Orange	Gritty	Unfriendly	Personal trouble common.	Crime daily; Organized crime common.	Disasters daily.
Red	Against all Odds	Hostile	Heroes considered villains, though may still retain supporters.	Crime constant; Organized crime daily.	Disasters constant. End of the world scenario.
Terminal	Hopeless	N/A	Rock bottom. Heroes considered a stain on history. Utter failure.	Complete anarchy and the breakdown of the system. Back to caveman times.	The world is destroyed with everyone on it.

CRISIS LEVEL EFFECTS

The conditions on Table 5-1 are compatible with the Random Events table on page 152 of the *Mutants & Masterminds* rulebook. As global tension increases, the heroes may have to juggle multiple calamities. Should they save the volcanic island, or repair damaged PR? The approximate frequency of random events is described below:

Rare: Random events happen every few months of game time, and are considered anomalous. The condition does not register on the public's mind.

occasional: Events happens every few weeks of game time. Symptoms of the condition surface as uninteresting news stories. The public feels problems are being adequately handled by the parties involved.

Common: Events happen every few days of game time, and are followed constantly by an insatiable media. The public is concerned, but daily life continues as usual. Water cooler chatter and misinformation is on the rise.

Daily: At least one event occurs daily. The heroes should begin to feel overwhelmed. The conditions are at the front of people's minds, and the population is fearful. The media provides non-stop news coverage.

Constant: Critical events are happening everywhere, all the time. As soon as the heroes put out one fire, another one immediately pops up. The world is in a state of emergency, and people are afraid to leave their houses. The authorities make desperate pleas for help. Basic services are frequently interrupted.

CAMPAIGN OPTION: THE LEGAL SYSTEM

The old adage "crime never pays" is more wishful thinking than gospel truth. If crime never paid, there would be no criminals, and yet the world is full of men and women willing to work outside the law to get what they want. More importantly, without criminals, characters in a superhero roleplaying game like *Mutants & Masterminds* wouldn't have a whole lot to do.

Even in a world teeming with superheroes, it's not difficult to imagine why a villain might undertake a crime, especially when lots of money is involved. Fame (or rather infamy) might also be a factor. Think about the media attention drawn to unusual real-world crimes such as the Zodiac killings, the Washington D.C. sniper, or the Unabomber, who even received a fancy "supervillain" name thanks to law enforcement and the media. Now imagine the same types of crimes perpetrated by men and women in colorful costumes with even more colorful names and personas. Think a lot of people were glued to the television watching O.J. Simpson's white Ford Bronco flee Los Angeles police? Replace the Juice with a flying supervillain wearing a swastika and an iron mask and the slow-moving police with energy-projecting superheroes and you've got a ready-made "reality TV" media circus sure to shoot cable news channel ratings into the stratosphere.

Imagining a motive for your super-crime shouldn't be much of a problem. Nor should executing the crime itself, which will most likely result in an entertaining combat between your villain and the heroes of your player characters. But what happens after the villains have been defeated and turned over to the justice system?

Mutants & Masterminds is a superhero roleplaying game, not a lawyer game. Your players will have more fun when tracking a supervillain to his lair or fighting against an arch-nemesis than they will sitting in a stuffy courtroom listening to boring forensic testimony. Memorable superhero campaigns focus on the action, and leave a lot of the nitty gritty in the background. It's in your best interest to handle the legal matters surrounding the capture and prosecution of a supervillain "off camera."

That doesn't mean, however, that you need to forget about it entirely. Your players will want to know what the courts decided to do with the villains they've captured, if only to know when to expect them back on the streets. You'll want to control the destiny of major campaign villains yourself, deciding if they're convicted or acquitted based upon what you think would be best for the campaign. But what about the everyday villains your players encounter, roundly beat, and leave for the authorities?

This system below allows you to quickly determine the outcome of a criminal trial without a lot of effort and preparation. Chances are pretty good that you're not a lawyer, and neither are we. The system isn't meant to accurately model the American justice system, but it should help you determine, with a single roll, how long it'll be before this week's supervillain is ready to exact some sweet revenge on the boyscouts who sent him to the slammer.

Keeping track of the legal status of your campaign villains has the added result of providing your players with evidence that will help them track down the culprits of future crimes. The comics are full of heroes saying things like "Dr. Dungeon just got out of prison last month, and this crime seems to bear all of his usual hallmarks." Giving your crooks a life beyond super-battles makes your campaign world seem more alive.

MAKING A TRIAL CHECK

Your players have turned over this week's villain to the authorities. With a single d20 roll, you'll soon make a trial check to determine the villain's fate. First, however, you've got to determine the character's trial modifier. A trial modifier derives from two different sources, the severity of the crime (or crimes) and the circumstances surrounding the crime.

STEP 1: CRIME SEVERITY

A multiple-murderer is looking at a lot more time than the costumed kid who knocked over a liquor store. Consult the table below to determine the severity of the character's alleged crime. Use only the most severe crime, falling back on grand theft or mass murder for crimes in which a lot of stuff was stolen or a lot of people were killed. In the game world, the villain might stand accused

TABLE 5-2: CRIME SEVERITY

Examples	Severity	Trial Modifier
Corruption, minor possession, pandering, theft, vice	Meaningless	-0
Arson, assault, burglary, grand theft, larceny, trafficking	Forgettable	-2
Kidnapping, murder, rape	Newsworthy	-4
Mass murder, serial murder, terrorism, treason, war crimes	Memorable	-6
Genocide, world domination	Historic	-8



of several crimes at once, but for the purposes of the quick-and-easy trial check, you're only interested in the most heinous.

STEP 2: CIRCUMSTANTIAL MODIFIERS

If facts were the only things that mattered in a criminal trial, the prisons would look a lot different than they do today. Circumstantial factors such as good lawyers, biased juries, and even physical appearance can affect a trial one way or the other. To determine if one or more of these factors apply, consult the chart below. All named feats and weaknesses apply to the character on trial. If the character has the attribute in question, the modifier applies to the trial. All circumstantial modifiers stack.

TABLE 5-3: CIRCUMSTANCES

Circumstance	Modifier
Above the Law	+4
Attractive	+1
Disabled (Disturbing)	-5
Fame	+3
Infamy	-3
Prior convictions*	-2 each
Prior retrials (this trial only)	-2 each
Race bias**	-2
Roughed-up jury***	+5 or -5
Wealth feat (optional)	+2

** Either keep a running total throughout the campaign or make up a number.*

*** This modifier might apply to a racial minority coming to trial in a bigoted region, or it might apply to parahuman or "mutant" characters in a campaign in which such characters face racial prejudice.*

**** This dangerous option is available only to characters with the Connected feat. The character on trial must make a DC 25 Diplomacy check. If successful, the defendant's connections manage to track down and apply pressure to the jury, granting the defendant a +5 bonus to his trial modifier. If the Diplomacy check fails, the connections still attempt to threaten the jury, but the tactic backfires disastrously, granting the defendant a -5 penalty to his trial modifier. The defendant receives only one such Diplomacy check per trial.*

STEP 3: ADD IT UP

Determine the defendant's trial modifier by adding the severity modifier to all qualifying circumstantial modifiers. Remember that only the most severe crime adds to the trial modifier, while all circumstantial modifiers stack.

STEP 4: THE TRIAL

Simulate the final trial with a single d20 roll. Add the defendant's total trial modifier to the die result and consult the chart below to determine the character's fate. Always remember that just because the judge sentences the villain to time behind bars doesn't mean that the character needs to be out of play for that long. Prison breaks are a staple of comic stories, and should appear fairly regularly in a *Mutants & Masterminds* campaign.

Example: Dr. Dungeon (5 prior convictions) has been busted once again by the Upstarts, a youthful superhero team. The teenage heroes hand over the villain to the authorities, hoping to see him put away for a long time. The Gamemaster determines Dr. Dungeon's fate as follows. The good doctor was arrested for kidnapping, a newsworthy (-4) crime. Circumstantial modifiers come into play for his prior convictions (-10) and his Infamy feat (-3), giving Dr. Dungeon a -17 trial modifier. The GM then rolls 1d20 and gets a 16. 16 - 17 = -1, which means that Dr. Dungeon is headed to the slammer for good, his numerous conflicts with the law finally having caught up with him.

Example: Now consider a more savvy criminal, Murder Man (0 prior convictions), being tried for the exact same crime. The gamemaster adds the trial modifier for the crime's severity (-4) to Murder Man's circumstantial modifiers for Above the Law (+4), Fame (+3) and a successfully roughed-up jury (+5), bringing Murder Man's total trial modifier to +8. The GM rolls a 1d20 trial check and miraculously comes up with a 16, the same roll he got for poor old Dr. Dungeon. In Murder Man's case, however, the check result becomes 24. Murder Man walks away without so much as a blemish on his legal record.

TABLE 5-4: TRIAL RESULTS

Die Result + Trial Modifier	Trial Result
20+	Found innocent and released
19–15	Commuted sentence (counts as "prior conviction" for purposes of future checks). Released.
14–10	Convicted. Sentenced to 1d20 days behind bars.
9–5	Convicted. Sentenced to 1d20 months.
4–0	Convicted. Sentenced to 1d20 years.
-1 or lower	Convicted. Sentenced to life in prison or death penalty (GM choice).

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COLORS IAN HANNIN

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He is once again working with director Peter Chung, this time on a brand new animated franchise at Universal Pictures. In addition to this feature, he is also working on a pet project he expects to announce shortly. For more of Eric's talent and imagination, please visit his studio website at www.blackvelvetstudios.com.

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Ian Hannin: Ian Hannin has been coloring comics for nearly 10 years. He got his start with Jim Lee's Wildstorm Productions in 1994, coloring *WildC.A.T.s, Gen13, Wetworks*, and nearly every other title under the Wildstorm banner. In 1996, after serving as Color Coordinator on many titles, he left Wildstorm Productions to pursue his own business.

Along with two other Wildstormers, he formed BAD@$$, a coloring house with a dependable reputation for high-quality coloring. BAD@$$ continued to supply Image Comics, DC Comics, and other publishers with top-notch colors.

In 1999, Ian went freelance and relocated to Los Angeles, where he continues to color for Avalon Studios, DC Comics, and Marvel Comics. Ian lives in Beverly Hills with his fiance Kim and their two cats, Dill and Indy.

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Jason and Heather Martin: Jason and Heather first met and began to collaborate artistically in the summer of 2000. In 2001, they launched an online portfolio that became known as "Artplaymix." Normally, Jason does the pencils and inks for the images on the site, and Heather colors his work. Jason and Heather married in 2003 and currently work together as freelance artists.

Karl Waller: Born to an Air Force family in 1964, Karl Waller has since lived in California, Hawaii, and Utah. He attended PSA (now PSA&D) art school in Pennsylvania, and has hovered around comics and gaming art for the last fifteen years. He now resides in North Carolina. Karl has worked on various titles for Eclipse, Marvel, and DC, notably *Wonder Woman, Batman, a Wolverine* movie prequel book and a little bit of *X-Men*.

Leonard Kirk: Leonard Kirk lives in Niagara on the Lake in Ontario, Canada and has been drawing comics for just over 13 years. His work was first published by Malibu Graphics in a number of mini-series, including *Alien Nation: The Skin Trade* and *Galaxina*. Later, he picked up *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and drew that series for a couple of years. He also picked up some projects with other companies like Revolutionary Press, London Night, Brainstorm, etc.

He worked with DC Comics on a 5-year run penciling *Supergirl*, which led to a "tour of duty" on *JSA*. Along the way, he also managed to do a few pinups and fill-in issues for folks like Chaos and Marvel. Currently, he's lined up for a number of projects from several publishers, including *The Legion Secret Files 2003* (DC), *JSA* #55 (DC), *Witchblade* #71 (Top Cow), *Solus* #8–10 (Crossgen) and *Glory B* #1–6 (Dreamwave Productions).

Ramón Pérez: Ramón Pérez has been illustrating for the RPG industry going on about 9 years, though he's really not quite sure as it's all become somewhat of a blur. He has worked on such properties as *Star Wars*, *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Rifts*, *In Nomine*, *GURPS*, *Legend of the Five Rings* and many more as well as the four-color world of *Mutants & Masterminds*.

As much fun as the fantastical world of gaming can be, Ramón is always looking for new avenues of artistic expression. His latest push is into the world of web comics. Check out his little baby at butternutsquash.net or just peruse his artistic catalogue at ramon-perez.com.

Rob Ro: Born in South Korea, Rob Ro now lives in Southern California. He majored in painting at Humboldt State University, and learned the craft of Photoshop at Jim Lee's Homage Studios, in San Diego. Rob cofounded BAD@SS Studios with friends. He plans to raise a family in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina with his smart and beautiful wife, Julie.

Sean Chen: Sean Chen has been drawing comics professionally for nearly a decade. He began his career at Valiant Comics, where for four years he drew titles such as *Rai and The Future Force*, *Harbinger*, *Bloodshot*, and finally *X-O Manowar*. Sean became known for his hyperdetailed style, superior draftsmanship and clear storytelling.

After a brief stint at DC Comics, he landed his big break with what would probably be the title he is most identified with, *Iron Man*. As part of their *Heroes Return* relaunch, Sean and writer Kurt Busiek began a memorable 3-year run beginning with Vol. 3, #1. A few years later, he began a 2-year run on the ultra-popular *Wolverine* series, beginning with #159. Sean is currently the artist on Marvel's *Elektra*, which debuted in May, 2003.

Steve Cobb: Steve Cobb triple majored at the Art Institute of Phoenix in sleep, college girls, and beer drinking. After sleeping in most of his classes, graduation time finally came and Steve was not even sure what state he was in. He now colors comics, and remains a test subject for the tobacco industry.

Steve Scott: Steve Scott has been working in the comics industry since 1994. His earliest work could be found in the pages of Malibu Comics, where he did several fill-ins. Steve later went on to work for several independent publishers such as London Night, Brainstorm, Chaos, Image, and many others. In recent years, he has done work on a number of projects for both Marvel and DC, including *New Warriors*, *Wolverine*, *Hourman*, and *JLA*.

SUPER UNICORN IS:

Erik Mona: Erik got his start in the RPG business as editor of *Polyhedron Magazine*, which he still runs to this day. He recently became Editor-in-Chief of *Dungeon Magazine*, and somehow still manages to squeeze in some freelancing. He's co-written the *Living Greyhawk Gazetteer*, *Forgotten Realms: Faiths & Pantheons*, and the *Fiend Folio* for Wizards of the Coast, and wrote the critically acclaimed *Armies of the Abyss*, for Green Ronin Publishing. He's edited and developed every *Mutants & Masterminds* product to date, and is looking forward to getting a little shut-eye.

Erik would like to thank his partners Sean and Kyle, the patient folks at Green Ronin, and his even more patient girlfriend, Jessica. Thanks also to the great crew at Paizo Publishing and his personal Yoda, Johnny Wilson.

Kyle Hunter: Kyle is a friendly ghost who drinks and smokes to excess. He enjoys waking up in the middle of the night and obsessing over his account balance. If you ever run into him, be sure to start an argument about art or music.

Kyle's current projects include *Dungeon Magazine's Downer* and cute little monsters, art directing *Undefeated* magazine, and the sci-fi adventure *Swerve*. He struggles to find the time to cook more for himself, and get more exercise. Good luck with that, buddy.

Thanks to Sean and Erik for your fabulous work and continued support. Thank you Wendy for taking care of me and putting up with my crazy life. Thanks Mom and Dad for being Mom and Dad.

Sean Glenn: Even as young as 9 years old, Sean was designing the covers for *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Top Secret* modules he wrote for himself. Since then, he's managed to work on advertising for *D&D*, design the award-winning *Dungeons & Dragons Third Edition* interiors, and art direct the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* and the *Star Wars Trading Card Game*. He was proud to be awarded the ENnie for Best Graphic Design and Layout for his work on *Mutants & Masterminds' Freedom City* sourcebook. *Crooks!* is Sean's first professional writing work in the RPG industry, which taught him just how bad using passive language can be.

Sean would like to thank each and every one of the illustrators who lent their talented pens, pencils, computer mice, brains, and hands to this enormous project. He would also like to thank Erik for being a patient and dedicated editor, Kyle for being a fount of creative ideas, and the fine folks who sponsored our little sojourn in the world of superheroics, Chris and Nicole at Green Ronin.



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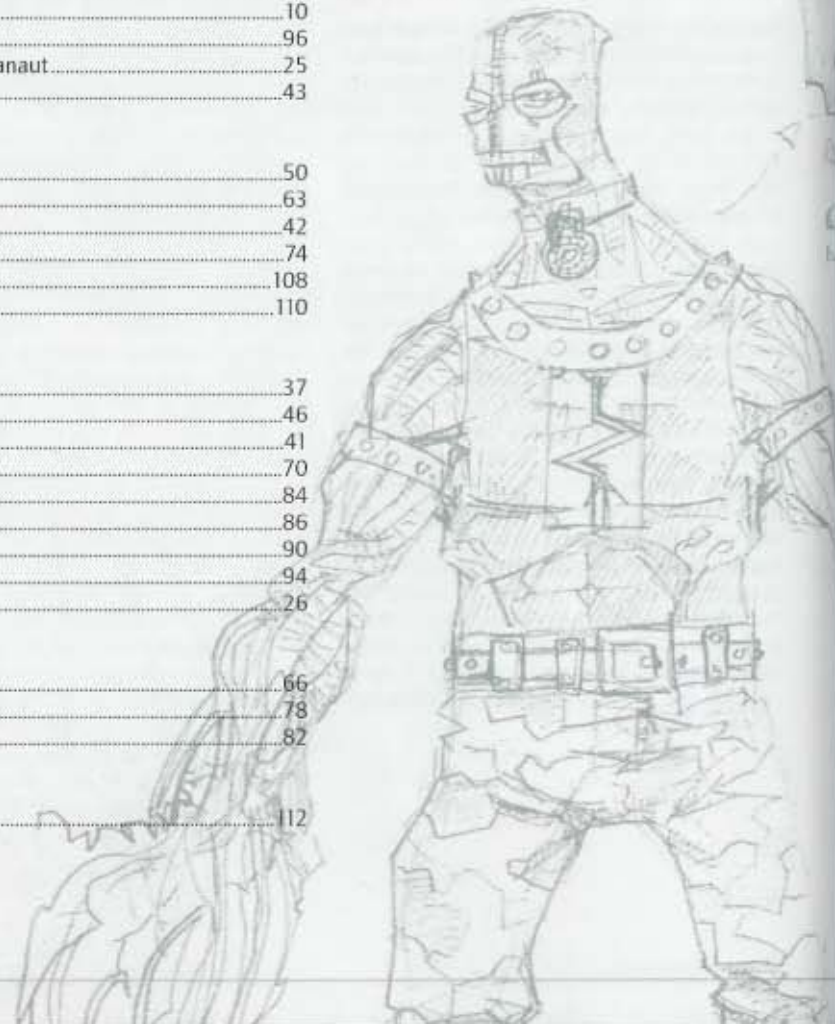
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