



SECRETS OF EMERALD CITY

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Emerald City, the City of Destiny, once a sleepy port on the rain-soaked shores of the Pacific Northwest, surrounded by stately mountains and towering forest land, now the center of a new explosion of superhuman activity.

For years, things in Emerald City were stable, dependable. Times were tough when the lumber and paper industries took a hit, and again when fishing and farming suffered, but they got better when the tech boom arrived, and companies like MarsTech, USNet, and Brande Management brought new jobs and new opportunities into the area. Rapid development brought its own growing pains but, still, Emerald City didn't have alien armadas filling the sky, or mad gods trying to turn it into a Hell on Earth like Freedom City on the East Coast. The skies were free of flying figures, but also of aerial battles. There were a few costumed types now and again, but not so you would really notice. Things were stable.

Until the Silver Storm. Until the explosion on Yellow Brick Row tore Emerald City's facade of normalcy and unleashed a flood of dangerous super-criminals and monsters. Until one incident upset the delicate balance behind the scenes and changed everything.

Criminal masterminds have cast aside years of fragile peace, ready to go to war to settle old scores and claim the throne of the city's underworld. Up-and-coming stormers, drunk with power, are ready to take what they want. Secrets and strange things stir in the shadows, and a terrible threat to the entire world looms in the depths. Emerald City is a city in crisis.

It is a city that needs *heroes*.

SECRET BASIC PREMISES! SHHH!

The primary goal of this book is to serve as a resource for Gamemasters. Gamemasters can use Emerald City as a setting for an M&M series as-is, or alter it to suit their own ideas. Even if you do not use the setting wholesale, there are numerous parts that can be lifted and dropped into other settings: locations, characters, adventure ideas, and so forth. Similarly, *Emerald City* presents a number of ready-made villains (see **Chapter 5: Emerald City Threats**), suitable for use in conjunction with the setting or on their own.

We've tried to make the setting modular and easy to deconstruct so you can choose which parts to use and which to discard in your own series. The Basic Premises presented in the *Emerald City Player's Guide* are written to be consumed by the players. As the Gamemaster, you get to learn the truth. Here are a couple additional basic ideas upon which Emerald City is built:

- Although the city and area have a long history with the unusual and superhuman it has been largely covert up until recently.
- Emerald City's peaceful status quo was an unhealthy and unnatural one, created and maintained by a group of super-criminals known as "The Chamber" and others buying into their plans. They have been parasites, sustaining their "host" for their own purposes, but not good for its overall health.

Now that you know some of the secrets, let's find out more about Emerald City!

SECRET HISTORY OF EMERALD CITY

Emerald City has a far more involved history than most residents of the area suspect, and events that began long before the founding of the modern city, or even before the settlement of humans in the area, now shape the future of the City of Destiny.

This section looks at Emerald City's history, including the secrets kept from most of the world. Just as with the historical information found in the *Emerald City Player's Guide*, Gamemasters can use the material in this chapter to provide context for the setting and their various characters, and to find plot threads and ideas throughout this history to spin out into a modern Emerald City series. Gamemasters may also want to share some passages with players either when creating their characters, or when they learn key pieces of information. If you're not starting your series off with the events found in the Emerald City Knights adventure, you may want to have your players

read the sections below directly related to those events, so they can make their character a stormer or otherwise draw inspiration from that storyline.

PREHISTORY

Millions of years ago, long before recorded history, the area around the mouth of what would be called the Albion River differed greatly even in basic geography. Human life had not yet even reached the shores of North America, but other life had.

THE SERPENT EMPIRE

Far out in the Pacific Ocean, the Serpent People, the pinnacle of saurian evolution, developed their civilization on the island continent of Lemuria. They founded a mighty



empire on the backs of their hominid slaves using science and sorcery. For millennia, their civilization waxed and waned, expanded and contracted, with waves of exploration and influence reaching the western shores of the North and South American continents, where serpents still appear as gods and great spirits in ancient art.

The Serpent Empire was already old and decadent by the time the first human civilizations arose in the world. As the Serpent People stretched their influence further and further, claiming new human populations as their slaves, an evolutionary struggle to the death was inevitable. Humanity might well have lost, were it not for some outside assistance.

THE PRESERVERS

They came from the stars, mysterious beings known only as "The Preservers." Their purpose, to study, enhance, and protect life in the cosmos. The Preservers surveyed the Earth and made contact with its native life-forms. In spite of their name and their goals, they were not kind, but coldly analytical and practical. Life on this small blue-green world was no more to them than samples in a laboratory. They studied, vivisected, experimented, evaluated, and apparently chose humanity as the superior of Earth's species.

The Preservers performed a number of experiments on primitive humans, creating two primary colonies of genetically enhanced members of the species. One they placed in an artificial environment on the far side of Earth's Moon. The other developed on an island continent in the midst of one of Earth's great oceans, which became known as Atlantis. Then the aliens departed, taking with them substantial

genetic samples, and leaving behind some elements of their vastly advanced technology. They later "seeded" many worlds with modified human genetics, creating numerous cousins to humanity out amongst the stars.

EMPIRES

Humanity developed quickly in the wake of the Preserver intervention. Atlantis rose on one side of the world as an empire to rival Lemuria on the far side of the globe. So began a series of wars between the two civilizations, human and serpent, culminating the Great Cataclysm that destroyed them both, sinking the continents below the waves, and virtually obliterating all evidence of their existence. Civilization fell into chaos, and humanity was forced to rebuild from nothing, with the survivors of Atlantis becoming the basis of legends of great heroes, sages, and even gods. The Serpent Empire never recovered, the remnants of their once-proud civilization confined to the deep places of Sub-Terra, degenerating into barbarism.

SNAKE TRACKS

The sinking of Lemuria triggered volcanic eruptions and coastal devastation throughout the Pacific, including the future site of Emerald City. Lava flows from Mount Stanley reshaped the terrain, along with tidal erosion along the coast. New forests grew up from the rich volcanic ash to cover the burned landscape.

Some survivors of the Cataclysm found their way through the tunnels of Sub-Terra to the surface world surrounding the Atlas Mountains. Dwellers in darkness, the Serpent People and their former slaves the Morlocks and Sub-Ter-

rans, other offshoots of the Empire's once-human slave populations, tended to venture out only at night. They could no longer claim the surface for themselves, as new tribes of humans found their way onto the continent and established settlements. The ancestors of the modern Taltashunte (tal-ta-SHUN-te) and Kwaliouqua (qual-ee-oh-qu) told tales of the beast-men, the snake-heads, and the night-dwellers, and warned against straying too far at night or too near the deep, dark places of the Earth.

SILVERFALL

Thousands of years ago, stars fell from the night sky in the lands near the smoking mountain, according to the tales of the Taltashunte people. They plunged into the sea and came to rest upon an island in the river with a sound like thunder and a silvery light. The people knew the fallen stars were an ill omen, because for many turns of the moon after, sickness roamed the land, affecting the plants and animals as well as members of the tribe. Some recovered from the strange fevers, while others did not, and unnatural spirits took hold of them, leading them into the wilderness and the dark. The survivors burned the bodies of the dead and kept away from the places where the stars had fallen.

BURIED PURPOSE

Upon an island in the river, debris slowly covered the crash site of something not of this Earth, a fragment of what plunged into the ocean nearby. It was called Tellax—the Redeemer—a creation of the Preservers, the same aliens who visited Earth long before. A nanotechnological artificial intelligence, Tellax was left behind to monitor and maintain the Preservers' work, in particular to safeguard against a threat they worked for countless millennia to avert. Badly damaged before reaching Earth, Tellax barely avoided burning up on reentry, parts of its structure breaking off, before it crash-landed in the ocean. There it sank to the bottom, no longer functioning, unable to carry out the plans that brought it to the cradle of the human species. There the Preserver artifact would remain until relatively recently.

MODERN HISTORY

Emerald City's normal-seeming façade was shattered when the Silver Storm caused numerous new superhumans to burst onto the scene. What few know is that Emerald City has been a site of superhuman and paranormal activity for virtually all of its modern existence. Unlike the active superheroes and villains of places like Freedom City, however, things in Emerald City have happened behind the scenes, carefully concealed and covered up, at least until recently.

UNIDENTIFIED FALLING OBJECTS

In fact, those sightings were of small spacecraft belonging to an alien race known as the Grue. The shapeshifting, telepathic Grue rule an expanding interstellar empire they have built through conquest, and have been at war

for centuries with other races in the galaxy, including a number of human species. When the Grue discovered Earth, in a relative backwater area of space, their ships surveyed the planet. However, an incident occurred with some of the containment vessels carried by those ships, intended for some Grue laboratory or prison (often one and the same). Prisoners held in protoplasmic stasis disrupted and damaged some ship systems, forcing the crew to jettison most of the containment pods. They fell over a wide area of the Elysian Forest one warm summer night in 1947.

STRANGE VISITORS

At least one of the damaged Grue vessels crashed in the American Southwest rather than making it back out into space, leading to a U.S. government cover-up and a study of the remains of the Grue crewmembers and their technology. Meanwhile, the lost containment vessels near Emerald City were either buried or broken upon impact, releasing a slurry of alien DNA suspended in a proto-matrix based on adaptive Grue physiology. For decades, stories about the Elysian Forest region of the Atlas Mountains have abounded with strange creatures and sightings, and cryptozoologists and xeno-hunters have combed through the area to find them.

THE DEVIL'S HAVEN

It was during this time that Emerald City, about as far away as one could get from besieged and belabored Freedom, started to be seen as a haven of sorts by those outside the law. Initially, it was just a few costumed criminals on the lam, looking to lay low until the heat was off, and smart enough not to try anything to alert their pursuers. When they realized it worked, word quietly began to spread in the criminal underworld: Emerald City was a place to go if you needed a hideout, provided you were willing to behave. So concerned was the criminal fraternity about the possibility of someone compromising their hideout that they took harsh measures to ensure the new "rules" were followed.

THE CHAMBER

Once there is a society in place, and rules to be enforced, you can be assured of some type of government happening, with taxation to follow. Sure enough, an informal alliance of criminal masterminds saw the opportunities inherent in Emerald City and formed what became known as "the Chamber," a governing body to ensure the usefulness of EC and the enforcement of its customs. The rules were simple: Emerald City was a "safe haven" and costumed criminal activity in and around the city were strictly limited, if not outright prohibited. The Chamber accepted a small tithe and kept the peace, ensuring anyone who stepped out of line did not upset the neat arrangement for everyone else.

HIDE IN PLAIN SIGHT

For many years, it worked. For some reason, the superhuman population of the West Coast had always been rela-

tively thin. With most of the activity concentrated on the opposite coast (and Freedom City in particular), the occasional rare super-crime in a place like EC went largely unnoticed. Certainly, few ever suspected the sheer number of super-criminals hiding in their midst at any given time. Many heroes were focused on their own problems with the law, and enough government and law-enforcement types were willing to look the other way, provided with the proper incentives.

The arrangement worked so well, in fact, it might have endured even longer, save for two things: one man, and the long-buried secrets he uncovered.

MARS RISING

Maximillian Mars was always brilliant, but lacked focus and ambition. He felt both unchallenged and unappreciated for his talents. After all, what were academics, athletics, or even innovation in a world where immortal geniuses withheld technologies centuries ahead of their time and ageless otherworldly champions of justice could lift entire freight trains and stop tidal waves? No matter his gifts, Max Mars was just another face in the crowd, just a normal human being.

Then he chanced to discover it, something that made him special. Initially, Max had no idea what it was, only that it was unique and therefore valuable. He took care to keep his discovery to himself and eventually came to the conclusion he had stumbled across some sort of advanced alien technology. It had certainly been buried for millennia, at least, and it was far beyond anything he had ever

seen before. Even with all of his technical skills, he could barely comprehend it. The silvery material was clearly adaptive, shifting and changing in response to some of his tests. The harder he tested, the more it adapted. He quickly reached the limit of things he could use, but hit upon an idea. He could give the strange technology the ultimate test.

So he developed a suit using the material, one that adapted itself to its circumstances and environment, and Maximillian Mars became "the Commander." He challenged the authorities and various heroes and each time, his amazing technology adapted to whatever they could throw at him. The Commander's brief crime spree in Emerald City earned him the attention of the Chamber and a quick education in their rules. After surviving the Chamber's initial "object lesson," the Commander wisely sought challenges elsewhere. In particular, he clashed several times with Captain Thunder, a hero active in the American West and Southwest.

THE COMMANDER

Mars found the challenges he set for himself exhilarating, and the system put in place by the Chamber intriguing. He began to split his time between his activities as the Commander, testing his limits and learning about the alien technology he wielded, and a front company in Emerald City, MarsTech, Inc. Although Captain Thunder and others always overcame the Commander, they never managed to hold him or expose his true identity. Moreover, Mars was able to learn principles from the alien tech that gave him the kind of design edge he needed to



WHEN DOES THE EMERALD CITY KNIGHTS SERIES TAKE PLACE?

The Emerald City books in this boxed set are written under the assumption that the events of the Emerald City Knights adventure (the third book in this set) took place a few months ago; up to six months ago if the Gamemaster so chooses. The Silver Storm and the events related to it are important parts of the city's history. The impact of those events, especially the creation of a whole crop of super-powered beings known as stormers, is still fresh in the minds of the citizens and they, along with the authorities, are still dealing with the consequences. This helps to provide a "baseline" for the setting when launching a new series.

Whether you're running Emerald City Knights to kick off your new series or not, these books contain all the information you need to make Emerald City come to life, regardless of exactly when your series is set.

make MarsTech a contender in the burgeoning technology market.

The Commander's rise, influence in Emerald City, and reputation for discretion eventually earned him a place in the Chamber and it was then things began to change. For the first time, Max Mars was associating with those for whom super-villainy was not a game, but a serious business... deadly serious. These were not people taunting and thumbing their noses at heroes to feel superior; they were hardened criminal masterminds, profiting from human misery, and willing to go to any lengths—corruption, blackmail, and murder—to safeguard their stranglehold on the haven they created.

A NEW LEAF

Maximillian Mars took a long, hard look into the mirror the Chamber held up for him, and he didn't like what he saw. Worse yet, he realized if he continued the way he was, it would only be a matter of time before he became just like them. Still, if he tried to leave, knowing what he knew, could even his technology protect him?

Mars was looking for a way out when one found him. The forces of Omega, master of the other-dimensional Terminus, invaded Freedom City, intending to conquer the Earth. With the world under siege, the Commander volunteered his help to repel the invasion. Indeed, although he couldn't explain it, his technology seemed almost... eager to do the job. His technical assistance and the adaptive capabilities of his armor proved invaluable in isolating and disrupting the Terminus' dimensional warps. The Commander earned a quiet Presidential pardon for his actions, and an agreement with the Freedom League to leave him in peace, provided he kept on the right side of the law.

NEW CHALLENGES

Mars adopted what he learned from his fellow Chamber member the Grandmaster: plan many moves ahead, and look at the whole game board. He knew it would take considerable time, but he would improve Emerald City, lessen the Chamber's excesses, and extricate himself from their corrupt web. When the time was right, he would purge the city of its criminal parasites. The Commander set aside his armor, for the most part, save for when an appearance in person before the Chamber was needed, and got down to work.

Tireless, Mars built his company into a multi-billion-dollar enterprise, brought new prosperity and jobs to Emerald

City, and even used his influence with the Chamber to curb crime and protect "his" city from the excesses of super-criminals. On the side, his company's work in communications technology allowed Mars to feed useful bits of information to AEGIS, the FBI, the NSA, and even the Freedom League. No one truly knows the number of plots foiled or criminals captured due to his intervention, of crises which never had the opportunity to occur.

Mars was getting ready to move his plans on to their next stage when a storm stuck Emerald City, a storm with unforeseen effects, and a most unexpected source.

THE SILVER STORM

On a recent spring day, Emeraldites flocked out of doors to enjoy the unseasonably warm and sunny weather. Thus the streets and sidewalks of the Yellow Brick Row shopping district downtown were crowded with people when a truck belonging to Redshift Energies suddenly exploded. The blast released a cloud of silvery mist, flickering with blue-white energy, that spread quickly over the area. Many of those touched by the ominous roiling cloud were changed, transformed into something more than—or simply other than—human.

In an instant, Emerald City went from a place that rarely ever had trouble with super-criminals or paranormal menaces to having one of the highest superhuman populations in the world. What the media dubbed the "Silver Storm" created dozens of "stormers" and many of them were either driven mad by the transformation or by the sudden rush of power. Some new heroes emerged to help deal with the aftermath of the Storm, but they were greatly outnumbered.

As difficult as the Silver Storm was for Emerald City and its residents, it had wide-reaching repercussions behind the scenes. Max Mars took the opportunity to make his break from the Chamber, supporting the new heroes in Emerald City against the threats posed by criminal and deranged stormers, putting his plans into motion.

With the defection of the Commander following on the recent death of the Chinese crimelord Dragoneye, the Chamber was fractured. Each of the remaining members saw the Silver Storm and its resultant super-powered "assets" as an opportunity to recruit, settle old scores, and exercise sole power in Emerald City. Rather than a fragile, enforced peace, it was suddenly every super-villain for him- or herself. Many of the former members of



the Chamber began looking to recruit from amongst the stormers, including breaking some of them out of custody to earn their gratitude and loyalty.

TELLAX THE REDEEMER

The agent of change in Emerald City revealed itself in a most spectacular fashion when something arose from the depths of the Pacific Ocean, composed of the same technology as the Commander's alien fragment and the nanites of the Silver Storm. Emerald City's heroes were confronted with Tellax, a nanotech-based artificial intelligence, created untold millennia ago by the Preservers. Damaged in reaching Earth, Tellax spent many years virtually inert, buried in the sea floor. Maximillian Mars found a small portion of the AI's technology and used it as the basis for his own armor.

Tellax's purpose was to guard against a dire threat known to the Preservers, and to use the various means at its disposal to deal with it. Recently reactivated and aware of the need to move quickly, Tellax concluded the fastest and most efficient means of protecting Earth and fulfilling its purpose was rapid and forced evolution of humanity's latent genetic potential, placed there by the Preservers themselves. It engineered the Silver Storm and planned to implement the effect on a worldwide scale. Millions (if not billions) of people would be killed or left permanently deformed or insane, but the survivors would become a race of superhumans, capable of serving as an interstellar army under Tellax's guidance,

under the AI's control through the nanites distributed through their bodies.

DEFEAT

Emerald City's heroes, aided by Max Mars, were able to thwart Tellax's ambitions using Mars' knowledge of the alien nanotech, combined with its own adaptability, creating a kind of "jamming" device to render it useless. Although the transformations of the stormers created by the Silver Storm were unaffected, the nanites in their systems were rendered equally inert, leaving Tellax unable to control them. Denied the ability to fulfill its mission on Earth, Tellax departed for space, leaving behind its inert, robotic body standing astride an island in the Albion River.

THE FUTURE OF THE CITY OF DESTINY

Even with Tellax gone and the threat of another Silver Storm removed, Emerald City faces many challenges. The alliance of the Chamber is broken, and its members still maneuver for position and power in and around the city. Many of the elements of the superhuman world kept quiet by the Chamber's edicts are now pursuing their own ends, and some of the alien influences in the area have been stirred up by the reactivation of Tellax. Emerald City has gone from a quiet, prosperous metropolis to dealing with daily new dangers and wonders.

Fortunately, Emerald City still has heroes to help protect it and boldly guide the City of Destiny into the future.

Fort Brewer Naval Base



Tellax Robot & Bay Bridge



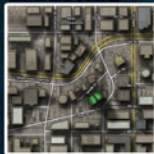
Fort Breckinridge



Riverfront



Emerald Tower



3 Miles / 4.8 Kilometers

Deep Six
Prison FacilityFort Brewer
Naval Base

Cascadia

Hookville

Joint Base
Clark-GordonHook
Point

Bridgepoint

Gullstone

Pelican Rock

Gateway
Islands

Nodell

Malory Bay
Lighthouse

Malory Bay

Tellax Robot

Council Island

Bay Bridge

Riverfront

Ports

Emerald
TowerYellow
Brick RowRoyal
HillAegis
DomeBenjamin Jacobs
International
AirportFort
Breckinridge

Oceanside

Nolan
Aircraft
(Airfield)

West Vallee

Sunset
Hill

Overlook

Red River
DamArcadian Peninsular
Correctional FacilityArcadian
Peninsula

Arcadian Peaks

Mount
Forge

Atlas Mountains

Joint Base Clark-Gordon



Emerald City University



Yellow Brick Row



Atlas Mountains

MarsTech Campus



Red River Dam



Mt. Stanley

Elysian
Forest

MarsTech
Campus

Emerald City
University

University
Hill

Eastern
District

Lakeside

Lake
Vallee

Southern Shore

White Water Highway

Ports

Bethlehem Heights
Psychiatric Hospital

Bethlehem Heights

Stepstone Islands

Angel Island

Fortress Island
State Penitentiary

Islandview

Albian River

Northern Shore

CHAPTER 1: THE CITY & SURROUNDS



Emerald City has grown considerably from a small trading outpost to one of the premier cities of the Pacific Northwest. The lumber mills and fur traders of the past have given away to a bustling metropolis of soaring skyscrapers and modern architecture, colleges and universities, shopping plazas and coffee shops, and much more, surrounded by residential and suburban neighborhoods and a growing outlying business district.

The past few decades have been good to Emerald City overall, with economic growth and expansion. Even the trials of the Silver Storm and recent events promise to make Emerald City stronger in the long run, putting it on the map alongside places like Freedom City. Only time will tell how the new heroes and villains of the City of Destiny will shape it and its future.

This section should be read in tandem with the *Emerald City Player's Guide* section of the same name. The information here doesn't cover every part of Emerald City, instead it gives GMs behind-the-scenes information that the players shouldn't know... at least not at the start of the game. Please read the *Player's Guide* to get a more complete view of the city and its neighborhood and surroundings.

IN THE CITY

RIVERFRONT SHIPYARDS

The shipyards are just as they seem, although there are a number of criminal activities that take place in the area, not limited to smuggling, trafficking of illegal goods (sometimes including people), and anything else that might need a nice, private place for a meeting. As such, the heroes may want to make a contact with useful information about the area.

SAM STONE, HARBORMASTER

Samuel Meriwether Stone (Capt., USN, Ret.) has been harbormaster of Emerald City for the past eleven years, and talks frequently about his impending retirement in a few more years, when he plans to finally "do some sailing" with his wife Mai-Lin on board their small boat, the *Layabout*. For the time-being, "the Captain" (as many who work with him call him) is responsible for safety and regulation for the Port of Emerald City and Malory Bay. Mostly that involves check-



ing a great deal of paperwork to ensure it is all in order and working with the Coast Guard and local Naval authorities to deal with any problem that might arise. As he'll relate to anyone who asks, Capt. Stone has more than his share of problems.



The first and foremost is smuggling: it has been on the rise in Emerald City. The truth of the matter was that Stone was used to a small amount of smuggling going on and willing to look the other way, but when things changed after the Silver Storm, he couldn't do that anymore. Now smugglers like this "Trident" organization (see the *Threat Report*) are bringing in weapons, illegal tech, some pretty nasty stuff. Worse is the human trafficking, illegal immigrants smuggled in cargo containers, either massively in-debt to the smugglers or worse, bought and sold as slave labor or as experimental subjects for unscrupulous villains and organizations.

The Captain's other big problem is scuttlebutt. Sure, sailors love their tall tales, but some of the stories making the rounds are just likely to upset or panic people: stories about sea monsters, mer-people, humanoid sea snakes crawling up over the sides of ships, and worse. The Silver Storm unleashed a lot of strange things on Emerald City and it's Stone's job to separate fact from fiction and to keep his harbor safe, so he does what he can to follow up on these stories. Still, he's a man only a few years from retirement, so he doesn't look too hard at some of the more outlandish tales.

Sam Stone is in his early 60s, with a salt-and-pepper beard going whiter by the day and a hairline receding like the tide, which he normally covers with a nautical cap. He

wears his old Naval pea-coat in chill weather and sucks on lollipops or toothpicks to deal with the fact he quit smoking. (It was ten years ago, but he makes it sound like it was last week.)

Use the Police Chief archetype (*Hero's Handbook*, page 216) for Capt. Stone, substituting the appropriate Expertise skill (Harbormaster). Stone is licensed to carry a handgun, although he keeps it in his office rather than carrying it at all times.

THE CANNERY

Now a pleasant mall and shopping area, the Cannery is an eclectic place with strong ties to the city.

ELLEN RIVERRUN

Ms. Riverrun owns and operates Riverrun Arts, a gallery boutique in the Cannery specializing in traditional Hekawi crafts and modern artistic interpretations of the same. Among her store's offers are jewelry (primarily in silver) and wood-carvings, including Hekawi totem designs. The shop also carries a small selection of touristy T-shirts and knick-knacks.



A full-blooded member of the Hekawi tribe, Ellen knows quite a bit about the history and lore of her people, including some things outsiders might find difficult to believe. She's not fully aware of the Cryptid Clans (see **Chapter 5: Emerald City Threats**) but knows many of her peoples' legends and stories relating to them. Her connections

with local gem-miners and merchants have also brought some small viridian stones into her possession from time to time. In fact, she wears a small pair of blue stones in earrings she made, not knowing they subtly enhance her ability to make people feel welcome in her establishment (to say nothing of encouraging them to patronize it).

In her early 30s, Ellen Riverrun is an attractive Native American woman with long black hair and dark eyes. She dresses in modern clothing with traditional Hekawi accents. Currently single, Ellen could be a potential romantic interest for a hero, or an ally for those able to benefit from her knowledge.

Use the Scientist archetype (*Hero's Handbook*, page 216) for Ellen's game traits, giving her Expertise: Hekawi Lore 8 and increasing the Current Events and Pop Culture skills by 4 ranks each in place of Expertise: Science and Technology.

YELLOW BRICK ROW

A bustling shopping center that draws people from all over the area and even the world. Yellow Brick Row was where the Silver Storm took place and its aftereffects are still being felt.

JULIE SANCHEZ

Nineteen year-old Emerald City University art student Julie Sanchez works at "A Stitch in Time," a small storefront on Yellow Brick Row specializing in engraving keepsakes for special occasions. She was at work on the day of the Silver Storm, not a block away from where the explosion originated. She vividly remembers hearing the blast, seeing the silvery cloud rush towards her, crackly

with blue-white energy, and then... nothing. The next thing Julie knew, she was standing in the middle of Yellow Brick Row. The explosion, the storm, the lightning were all gone and there were scattered people all around her—and it was five days later.



Julie's family and friends rejoiced, as she had been among those missing and presumed dead. She had vanished without a trace after the Storm and rescuers had not been able to find her. To Julie, no time at all seemed to have passed, but no one questioned her miraculous reappearance, chalking up the memory loss to traumatic amnesia or the like. After a clean bill of health, Julie returned to class and to work and did her best to resume a normal life in a city that was a good deal less normal than before.

She began having strange dreams, extremely vivid ones about going various places. At first, she tried to dismiss them, but then one of her dreams—about witnessing a stormer attack in the city—came true. Not only that, but in the news footage of the incident Julie saw *herself*, just like she'd been in the dream! That was when the dreams started becoming occasional waking visions, and Julie Sanchez really started to worry.

Julie is a stormer with an Uncontrolled Time Travel power; she literally "jumps" to different points in the past or future before returning to the present. It activates seemingly at random, although most often influenced by stress or potential danger or, conversely, when Julie is especially relaxed. Heroes may well meet the unintentional time-traveler "out of order," encountering her future self (travel-



ing back into the past) before they've met her present-day self, for example. She could try and warn heroes about future events, and any villain who discovers her power is sure to take interest in exploiting it....

THE CROWN TOWER HOTEL

An historic Emerald City landmark, the Crown Tower Hotel is the perfect place for out-of-towners to stay if they want to be within walking distance of where the action is. It also makes a perfect getaway for those who live in town, or for transplants that need a place to stay while they look for a more permanent home.

DAVID LI

The mid-20s junior concierge at the Crown Tower was born into a traditionalist Chinese family in Emerald City. He excelled in school and eventually attended Emerald City University's hospitality management program and worked part-time at the Crown Tower. David's family was disappointed in his choice of career but even more concerned when he came out as gay to them. This all but ended his communication with his parents, two older siblings, and his aunt, uncle, and cousins, all of whom only see David at family functions and on holidays, when everyone still asks him if he's going to marry "that girl he lives with."



"That girl" is Karen Carnelli, David's roommate and best friend from college, who works as a graphic designer for Starbase Coffee. She and David spend a lot of evenings and weekends together watching movies, shopping, and occasionally enjoying Emerald City's nightlife. Karen is always trying to fix David up on dates and relies on his judgment about the guys who try and date her.

In his work at the hotel, David hears about pretty much everything that goes on there. He also knows a lot about Emerald City, since it's his job to find places for guests to dine, sightsee, or obtain whatever it is they are looking for. Organized and efficient, David would make an excellent assistant or administrator. His natural curiosity may also lead him to discover things about the hotel or its guests of interest to the heroes, ranging from a supervillain staying there incognito to a secret passage in the Tower's

TERROR AT THE TOP OF THE TOWER

The Crown Tower Hotel, particularly its revolving restaurant, makes an excellent site for robberies and hostage situations for heroes to foil, especially if said heroes happen to be eating out in their civilian identities or having a business meeting, needing to get away to deal with the threat without revealing who they really are! A would-be assassin (like Killshot, see **Chapter 5: Emerald City Threats**) might also target a VIP in the hotel or the Emerald Crown, leading the heroes on a chase across the rooftops of Royal Hill (or an aerial chase around the buildings!).



basement leading to a safehouse, cache, or other facility belonging to the Chamber. David is a potential expert on Jadetown and its customs, and he speaks fairly fluent Mandarin. Either David or Karen are also potential romantic interests for heroes in Emerald City, although they should be aware that dating one of them means having to deal with the other!

THE UNDERCITY

Few are aware the Maze is not the whole of Emerald's Undercity. The Maze connects to various other underground structures and tunnels (some created in a failed early attempt at building a subway system during the early 20th century).

A diverse gathering of "underdwellers" inhabits these outlying areas. Some underdwellers simply reject surface life for their own nonconformist reasons, while others take refuge there in dire need, either for personal safety or evading the law—most famously the mutated Pack-Rat and his gang of thieves (see *Threat Report*).

There are also well-hidden, deeper connections to Sub-Terra and its various denizens, including a tribe of humanoid Magmin living underneath Mount Stanley. Other races such as the Morlocks have only rarely ventured into the Undercity, but the Silver Storm and its aftermath is likely to draw their attention in the near future (see the *Freedom City* sourcebook for more about the Magmin and Morlocks).

The Undercity appears to be deserted upon first inspection, but there are more beings living in it than is apparent to the new visitor. It's true the denizens mostly keep to themselves in small, relatively safe, cordoned-off warrens, but these outcasts make up a fairly large community. A community that's able to survive through salvage, theft, trade, and barter with the surface world and each other. The only way to get a clear sense of how large and diverse the population of the Undercity is requires a visit to the Sunken Bazaar. It's a mostly-permanent marketplace set up in the longest stretch of street in the Undercity. The Bazaar is about two city blocks long with a handful of alleys shooting off along its length. Merchants set up stalls, carts, or storefronts in the clogged thoroughfare to sell all manner of goods.

Like the rest of the Undercity, the Sunken Bazaar is dark, dingy, and dangerous, although since most denizens require light to see, electric lights have been strung around to weakly illuminate the place. In addition, since the Bazaar has been in operation for decades, the walls and rafters have been reinforced to the point that it may be the safest place (structurally, at least) in the whole of the Undercity.

THE MAZE

The buried streets, buildings, and passages that make up the Maze aren't completely mapped, but local celebrity and businessman Benjie Carver is the man who knows its twists and turns best... or so he claims.

BENJIE CARVER

PL1 • 25 POINTS

STR -1 **STA** -1 **AGL** -1 **DEX** -1 **FGT** -1 **INT** 3 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 2

Equipment Car (hybrid, with alarm and navigation system), flashlight, smart phone

Advantages Connected, Equipment 3, Fascinate (Expertise: Undercity Tour Guide)

Skills Deception 4 (+6), Expertise: Current Events 4 (+7), Expertise: Undercity Tour Guide 6 (+9), Expertise: Streetwise 4 (+7), Perception 4 (+7), Persuasion 4 (+6), Stealth 2 (+1)

Offense Initiative -1, Unarmed -1 (Close, Damage -1)

Defense Dodge -1, Parry -1, Fortitude -1, Toughness -1, Will 3

Totals Abilities 6 + Powers 0 + Advantages 5 + Skills 14 + Defenses 0 = 25

BENJIE CARVER

Forty years after becoming a counter-cultural icon, Benjie Carver's hair has grayed and dwindled to little more than his ponytail, and his tie-dye shirts now cover far more waistline. However, his ability to spellbind tourists with pleasingly chilling tall tales of the Undercity is undiminished, and he remains a city fixture. Benjie knows far more about the Undercity than he reveals in his well-rehearsed spiels given during his Maze tours.



Carver's famed tours provide him a comfortable living, allowing Carver to spend time on his charity work and political activism, focusing on the environment, social justice, and marijuana legalization. For an activist, Carver has remarkably few enemies, thanks mainly to his overriding good-natured charm.

For any hero in need of information about the Undercity, the affable Carver is by far the most knowledgeable and approachable person available. In addition, Carver has made a lot of friends in all walks of life, from politics to entertainment, in the course of his activism. If the player characters need help in attaining some socially conscious goal or learning more about the Undercity, Carver is willing to help.

JADETOWN

Jadetown's inhabitants are primarily Chinese and shows that influence not just in its shops and architecture, but also in its criminal and esoteric endeavors.

THE GOLDEN DRAGON HOUSE

In reality, the House serves as a headquarters and major money-maker for the Golden Dragon Society. While the food and rooms are indeed top-notch and can test anyone's cash reserves, the diversions offered include trafficking in humans and drugs. Additionally, the Society engages in some highly lucrative blackmail of its more affluent and lascivious guests.

VIRIDIAN STONES

The Atlas Mountains' tremendous wealth of gemstones holds treasures far more precious than most imagine. The mountains are the only known source for the potent psychoactive crystalline material known as *viridian* (named for the verdant region, rather than the stones' actual color). Viridian focuses and enhances psychic energies of anyone in contact with them in various ways.

Viridian stones are rare, and even then are usually mistaken for mundane gems or discarded as worthless. However, those who both know of their true nature and are fortunate enough to possess one have employed them to achieve superhuman feats.

The potential each individual viridian stone possesses varies greatly, and often appears related to its size, but the specific effect is dictated by its color:

RED: Crimson viridian stones concentrate and enhance powerful, fiery human emotions (anger, lust, guilt), enabling those who possess a red gem to focus their own selfish wants and desires (for retribution, lust, or absolution) into a greater resistance to outside influences. In game terms, lower-power red stones grant a bonus to bearer's Will defense, and moderately powerful ones grant the Ultimate Will advantage as well. Higher-powered stones bestow Immunity to all effects resisted by Will.

ORANGE: Orange viridian stones tend to enhance technical aptitudes, giving their owners almost supernatural insight into the functioning of mechanical and electronic devices. The number of owners who are of the "mad, evil genius bent on world conquest" type has led some to speculate that the orange stones are also hazardous to one's mental stability. In game terms, lower-power orange stones grant a bonus to Technology skill, while higher-powered ones also grant one or more advantages, including Inventor, Improvised Tools, and Ultimate Effort (Technology).

YELLOW: Stones of this color give their wielders an incredible presence which comes across as intense and intimidating. In game terms, lower-power yellow stones grant a bonus to the bearer's Intimidation checks. Moderate-power yellow stones also grant one or more advantages, including Daze (Intimidation), Fascinate (Intimidation), Startle, and Ultimate Effort (Intimidation). Higher-power stones bestow the ability to induce crippling fear in otherwise courageous individuals, an Affliction effect (Resisted by Will; Dazed and Vulnerable, Stunned and Defenseless, Paralyzed and Unaware), Cumulative, Extra Condition.

GREEN: Verdant viridian stones allow those who hold them to mentally perceive, and then improve, the physical well being of others. In game terms, lower-power emerald stones add a bonus to Treatment skill checks, while moderately powerful ones add the Ultimate Effort (Treatment) advantage as well. Higher-power green stones also bestow (or enhance) the Healing power, possibly with any/all available extras.

BLUE: Like the endless skies above the Atlas Mountains, azure stones enhance the wearer's persuasive abilities and allows them to bring out the emotional and spiritual best in others, restoring their faith, hope, and optimism. In game terms, lower-power blue stones add a bonus to the owner's Persuasion skill checks, while higher-power stones also add one or more advantages, including Animal Empathy, Fascinate (Persuasion), Inspire, Leadership, and Ultimate Effort (Persuasion).

INDIGO: These viridian stones sharpen the bearer's senses, with the more powerful ones opening the mind to types and levels of awareness well beyond normal human ken. In game terms, lower-power indigo stones add a bonus to the owner's Perception skill checks, while medium-powered ones also add one or more advantages, including Tracking, Ultimate Effort (Perception), and Uncanny Dodge. Higher-power indigo stones also bestow (or enhance) any—possibly all—available effects of the Senses power.

VIOLET: These viridian stones are akin to the fabled *daka* crystals of Africa, and similarly act as power sources for all manner of wondrous technological and magical devices. The more powerful ones add power ranks to one or more of the wielder's innate psychic or psionic abilities, making them among the most highly sought-after of all the viridian stones.

BLACK: One of the two rarest viridian stones (the other being white), the ebon stones are unusual in that they tap into the inexorable power of death itself instead of enhancing a wielder's natural abilities. In game terms, they add a bonus to all Damage inflicted by the wielder's attacks, provided they are personally dealt (e.g., a knife or energy blast qualifies; a bomb dropped from a plane doesn't).

WHITE: Ivory or milky viridian stones preserve their bearer's purity and wholeness by enhancing the wearer's life energy—like black viridian stones, it's possible the white stones actually tap into the power of life itself. In game terms, they add a bonus to the owners' Fortitude and Toughness defenses, with the more powerful examples also bestowing (or enhancing) any—possibly all—available effects of the Immunity power; potentially adding the Immortality power as well!

As leader, or Golden Mandarin, of the Triad, the wizard Dragoneye (see the *Emerald City Player's Guide* **Chapter 5** maintained a residence there. Dragoneye's presence at the House was widely known in the criminal underworld, but he was rarely bothered by uninvited visitors. This was because the House's security, though subtle in its presence, has always been quite heavy, and its guards truly are capable of amazing fighting feats otherwise seen only in kung fu movies. Therefore, those who seek an audience with the current Golden Mandarin know upon which door to knock.

The House has at least one secret passage to the Undercity, serving several purposes. It allows for the hassle-free transfer of illicit goods and services, as well as a quiet place for unwanted guests to disappear, permanently. They and many other Triad problems are buried underneath the House (more than enough for a canny detective to make good use of). If need be, the Undercity passage can also serve as an escape route.

KWAN WU

As a young man, Kwan Wu thought he wanted nothing more than mystical knowledge and power, and dedicated himself to attaining it at the fabled Shambala Temple. After much sacrifice, he pierced the Vale and began to unlock the secrets of the martial and mystic arts, but in the process learned nothing could replace the love of the woman he left behind in his selfish quest for power. Kwan left Shambala Vale to return to her, only to find she'd left World War II-ravaged China brokenheartedly for Emerald City. Following her to Jadetown, Kwan learned she'd taken ill and died not long after her arrival.



Tired of life but unwilling to hasten his own demise, Kwan set up an Esoteric Antiques shop to provide himself at least a modest living. As the lonely years wore on, the respect accorded him by the people of Jadetown grew, and sharing his sought-after wisdom and abilities with

deserving people in need gave Kwan's life much-needed purpose. While his weary spirit prevented him from becoming a crusading superhero, he nonetheless became a revered Jadetown legend, and is shown deference usually reserved for the likes of the Golden Mandarin himself.

Now that Emerald City has costumed heroes, they may find Kwan Wu a most useful ally. Not only does he possess knowledge, wise counsel, and still-potent mystic abilities, he is perhaps their most ready entry into the strange, impenetrable culture of Jadetown—provided they prove themselves worthy, of course. Winning Kwan Wu's trust can be run as an adventure in and of itself, or as a chapter in an ongoing series. Additionally, Kwan Wu can also serve as the springboard for adventures in the mysterious Shambala Vale.

LITTLE OSAKA

Among the most successful of Little Osaka's business enterprises are the resident Yakuza, the Takazumi-gumi (clan), run by its fearsome *wakashu* the Steel Shogun. With its involvement in gambling, racketeering, and prostitution, as well as more high-tech crimes such as data heists, the Takazumi band controls most of the crime worth controlling in this part of the district.

JAPANESE TEA GARDEN

Though not widely known, the Garden serves one additional purpose. By mutual agreement, it is considered neutral ground for both Yakuza and Triad members, an unbroken arrangement that dates back more than a century. When the leadership of the rival mobs need to meet face-to-face, they invariably do so in the Garden.

KURAMOTO AKIRA

Most Emerald residents fail to notice the small, wizened man who spends his days quietly tending to the Tea Garden and pondering its simple wonders. Those who perform menial tasks and the elderly are usually ignored, and so it is for Kuramoto Akira. In his practical invisibility, Kuramoto hears and sees much, including things Emerald City's criminal elements (particularly the Yakuza and Triad) would rather kept secret.



Going to the police never occurs to him, as Kuramoto remains wrapped up in guilt over his perceived past wrongs. As a young pilot in the Imperial Japanese Navy, Kuramoto unhesitatingly rained death and destruction down on Chinese targets, and later in 1942, participated in the seaplane fire-bombing of Emerald City. Kuramoto survived the war, but the rest of his family lost their lives during the American bombing raids. Once an eager fighter, Kuramoto was now sick of war.

He tried without success to rebuild his life until 1992, when the Emerald City government made Kuramoto the guest of honor at a world-peace gathering on the 50th anniversary of his attempted fire-bombing. Deeply moved

KWAN WU

PL6 • 111 POINTS

STR 0 STA 0 AGL 0 DEX 1 FGT 3 INT 4 AWE 6 PRE 4

Powers: **Magic** (12-point Array): **Flame Blast Spell** (Ranged Damage 6), **AE: Blinding Light Spell** (Ranged Affliction 6 (Resisted by Fortitude; Visually Impaired, Visually Disabled, Visually Unaware)), **AE: Mystic Bonds Spell** (Affliction 4 (Resisted by Dodge and Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobility), Cumulative, Extra Condition, Ranged, Limited Degree), **AE: Phantasm Spell** (Illusion 6 (visual)), **AE: Smoke Cloud Spell** (Concealment 2 (normal sight), Attack, Burst Area); **Magically Enhanced Vitality** (Immunity 1 (Aging), Limited to Half Effect); **Mystic Shield Spell** (Impervious Protection 6, Sustained)

Advantages Artificer, Assessment, Connected, Contacts, Language (English), Ritualist, Trance, Well-informed

Skills Expertise: History 6 (+10), Expertise: Magic 9 (+13), Insight 4 (+10), Investigation 6 (+10), Perception 6 (+14), Persuasion 4 (+8), Ranged Combat: Magic 5 (+6), Stealth 8 (+8), Treatment 4 (+8)

Offense Initiative +0, Flame Blast Spell +6 (Ranged, Damage 6), Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense Dodge 4, Parry 6, Fortitude 0, Toughness 6/0, Will 10

Totals Abilities 36 + Powers 29 + Advantages 8 + Skills 27 + Defenses 11 = 111

Complications: **Motivation—Justice:** Protecting and assisting good, worthy people unable to help themselves. **Quirk:** Passive rather than proactive, by temperament and philosophy.

KURAMOTO AKIRA

PL1 • 13 POINTS

STR -2 STA -1 AGL -2 DEX -2 FGT 2 INT 1 AWE 2 PRE 1

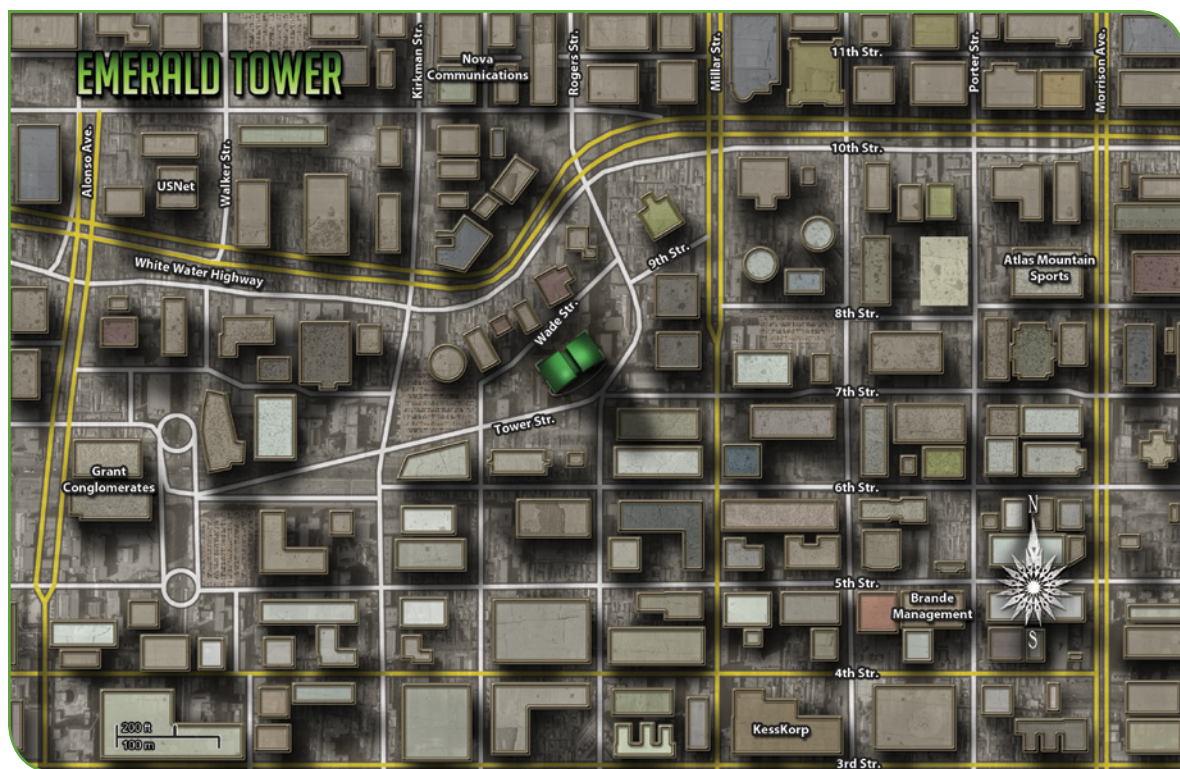
Advantages Language 2 (English, Mandarin), Well-informed

Skills Athletics 4 (+2), Expertise: Current Events 4 (+5), Expertise: Gardening 2 (+3), Expertise: Naval Aviator 4 (+5), Expertise: Tactics 4 (+5), Perception 4 (+6), Vehicles 2 (+0)

Offense Initiative +0, Unarmed +0 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense Dodge -2, Parry 2, Fortitude -1, Toughness -1, Will 2

Totals Abilities -2 + Powers 0 + Advantages 3 + Skills 12 + Defenses 0 = 13



by the outpouring of forgiveness he received from the people of Emerald, Kuramoto participated in a ceremonial tree-planting to commemorate the spirit of peace and reconciliation. Ever since, Kuramoto—now a permanent Emerald City resident—repeats that ritual by tending to the Tea Garden, hoping to maintain its beauty and atone for his past warmongering.

Such an honorable, peace-loving man could serve as a valuable source of information to a group of like-minded superheroes aiming to curb the Eastern District's criminal gangs. All it requires is the compassion to reach out to an honorable, forgotten old man.

EMERALD TOWER

As presented in the *Emerald City Player's Guide*, Emerald Tower is intended as a ready-made headquarters. Just because it is presented as the default headquarters of the Sentinels, however, does not mean Emerald Tower *has* to be their HQ, or even the creation of Maximillian Mars. In your own *Emerald City* series, the player characters may replace the Sentinels and Mars may gift them with Emerald Tower as their HQ, or someone else might construct Emerald Tower for the heroes—possibly AEGIS or a grateful Emerald City government.

Of course, the gift of a fully equipped downtown skyscraper headquarters might come with a few strings attached, regardless of whom it comes from. Mars may have also begun work on Emerald Tower before the heroes presented themselves as ideal occupants, meaning the place could have certain secrets or failsafes. Given that Mars' former Chamber ally Grandmaster (see **The Chessmen** in **Chapter 5**) gained access to Emerald Tower's systems (in

the *Emerald City Knights* adventure) there could be even nastier surprises lurking in its hardware and software.

SOUTHERN SHORE

One of the residents of Southern Shore is Mary Grindstaff, formerly known as Blaze, a member of the now-defunct Victory Squadron. She could be an excellent mentor for young heroes, especially those with fire (or other energy control) powers or who are descendants of other members of the Squadron.

MARY GRINDSTAFF

In late 1944, a curious 17-year-old Mary Grindstaff on a family hike found a Japanese "fire balloon," and its explosion simultaneously bestowed her with superhuman powers and robbed her of any semblance of a normal life. Hastily drafted into the Victory Squadron as "Blaze," Mary was firsthand witness to the brutal final months of World War II, as Axis agents grew increasingly desperate and ruthless in their efforts to disrupt the American home front. Just as hard on her, she watched the Squadron's gradual postwar disintegration, as the teammates who had trained her and confided in her succumbed to cruel fate and their own inner demons.

Alone and feeling purposeless at 22, Mary embarked on two decades of highly publicized bad relationships and alcohol choices, but ultimately weathered them all by raising a terrific daughter and achieving peace with her past. She accomplished the latter by publishing *Blaze of Glory*, a candid,





tell-all best-selling book about her Victory Squadron days and subsequent life experiences. With her book royalties, she bought a modest house on the Shore, there to revel in her gardening, grand-kids, and newfound obscurity.

After the Silver Storm, Emerald City is once again home to superheroes, and Mary worries about them repeating the mistakes of their predecessors. In the event these new superhuman champions seek advice from someone with well-documented, hard-won experience and wisdom about the costumed life, Mary's more than able to mentor them. Should Emerald's latest heroes ever publicly display a need for some sage guidance, the former Blaze—now

well past the point of hesitating about anything in this life—will go looking for them.

THE BAY BRIDGE AND “TELLY”

The adventure potential of a giant alien robot, even an inert one, standing next to a major metropolitan bridge, should be fairly obvious. Just because the citizens of Emerald City become fairly complacent about “Telly” and his presence alongside the Bay Bridge does not mean the local authorities have done so. The simple truth of the matter is, both the Emerald City government, police and emergency departments, and AEGIS have come to the reluctant conclusion that it is too dangerous and difficult to try and move Tellax's inert shell without considerably more study and preparation, and the alien technology largely defies efforts to analyze it. It's certainly possible Tellax's artificial intelligence could reanimate the robot at some point, or another AI (like Scion, see **Chapter 5**) might try to do so. The robot could include failsafe technology or backup plans, and criminals might attempt to steal or break into it.

SUNSET HILL

Sunset Hill's eager, fresh arrivals resolved to preserve a peaceful status quo, not just in their posh neighborhood, but Emerald City as a whole—a welcome development in those turbulent times. There was a downside to the new neighbors, however: they were supervillains, looking for a between-capers haven and a place to settle down in evil retirement.

The fact Sunset Hill is now in large part a gated community for supervillains is a jealously guarded secret. Despite many neighborhood institutions having been infiltrated

MARY GRINDSTAFF A.K.A. BLAZE PL7 • 87 POINTS

STR 0 STA 1 AGL 0 DEX 0 FGT 0 INT 2 AWE 5 PRE 5

Powers: **Fire Control** (Array, 16 points); **Flame Blast** (Ranged Damage 8, Dynamic); **AE: Flame Aura** (Reaction Damage 4, Dynamic); **AE: Flame Burst** (Ranged Cone Area Damage 5, Dynamic); **AE: Fiery Flight** (Flight 7 (250 MPH), Dynamic); **Fire Immunity** (Immunity 5 (Fire Damage))

Advantages: Connected, Inspire 2, Taunt, Well-informed

Skills: Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+4), Deception 6 (+11), Expertise: History 4 (+6), Persuasion 6 (+11), Ranged Combat: Flame Blast 6 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +0, Flame Blast +6 (Ranged, Damage 8), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 4, Parry 4, Fortitude 3, Toughness 1, Will 10

Totals: Abilities 26 + Powers 28 + Advantages 5 + Skills 13 + Defenses 15 = 87

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** Mary feels obligated to help others avoid the mistakes made by herself and her teammates. **Disability:** While her Fire Control powers are undiminished, the strain of employing them for any length of time now completely debilitates her, and prolonged use could kill her.



and corrupted to their purposes—the Elysian Academy being a prime example—the super-criminal presence is imperceptible. In truth, it's indistinguishable from any other place where rich people pay big bucks to get away from poor people.

Thus, on Sunset Hill, private security guards still hassle non-resident traffic, and the country clubs blackball “unsuitable” prospective members. The homeowners’ association bullies and badgers “the wrong kind of people” into moving elsewhere, and appointment books are always “full up” for the *déclassé* who are *gauche* enough to ask. The only difference is, on Sunset Hill, the people reminding you how not-rich you are have hidden death-ray guns to underscore their point if need be.

OVERLOOK PARK

Overlook Park is everything a typical supervillain finds stomach-turning, and even more irritatingly, this happy, pristine setting is right in their backyards. Even the super-criminals not temperamentally opposed to sunsets and happiness would much rather there weren't scores of prying eyes near their illicit lifestyles on a daily bases. Therefore, Sunset Hill's resident costumed bad guys have been scheming for years to separate the Park from its rightful guardians.

Some nihilistic supervillains simply want to render the parkland uninhabitable, but most don't want that degree of mess and resultant government scrutiny so close to home. Therefore, their efforts focus on getting corrupt (or corruptible) politicians elected into the city government and haing them void the original land grant. With the land back in the Malorys' hands, it then becomes quite simple

for the bad guys to “persuade” the family to close the Park by one heinous method or another. Their plan has yet to come to fruition, but not for lack of trying.

PETER LOMAX

Lomax dedicates himself to radical politics as only a twenty-something trustafarian can. His current cause is protecting Overlook Park from the “fascist, corporate interests” trying to steal it from the city and people. His fiery rhetoric has made many otherwise shady politicians shy away from surrendering the park, and his amateur detective work is starting to connect the dots of who's behind the anti-Overlook push. In fact, he's getting too close to the truth, and becoming too much a public thorn in the supervillains' side. That makes Lomax a man in dire need of some super-heroic help.



PETER LOMAX

PL2 • 33 POINTS

STR 1 STA 1 AGL 1 DEX 0 FGT 2 INT 1 AWE 0 PRE 2

Equipment Van (hybrid), flashlight, smart phone

Advantages Equipment 2

Skills Deception 2 (+4), Expertise: Explosives 2 (+3), Expertise: Current Events 5 (+6), Intimidation 2 (+4), Investigation 3 (+4), Persuasion 6 (+8), Stealth 2 (+3), Vehicles 2 (+2)

Offense Initiative +1, Unarmed +2 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense Dodge 2, Parry 2, Fortitude 1, Toughness 1, Will 2

Totals Abilities 16 + Powers 0 + Advantages 2 + Skills 12 + Defenses 3 = 33

Further complicating matters is that Lomax is not an easy ally to have. To him, there is His Political Point of View and all else is pure Insensate Evil. To destroy “evil,” Lomax is not above starting up a few riots, fires, slanders, or detonators, and is exceedingly good about covering his tracks. So while the Park may unite the player characters and the young radical, their continued association is by no means guaranteed.

ECU PARKER SCIENCES BUILDING

The Parker Sciences Building is known locally and globally for churning out knowledgeable science grads because of its top-notch educators.

DR. ANN RAZKO

An outstandingly brilliant mind even amongst other brilliant minds, Dr. Razko is the first name mentioned whenever the local authorities (superheroes included) need scientific advice and help. Razko’s counsel is both rare and invaluable, as she’s one of the few with the wits and temperament to successfully deal with super-heroic crises like “giant radioactive insect attacks the city.”



Dr. Razko is also a woman of secrets, hiding her true family name of Zorka behind an anagram. She does this out of fear of ostracism and ridicule, as her grandfather, Dr. Alex

DR. ANN RAZKO

PL7 · 58 POINTS

STR -1 **STA** 0 **AGL** 0 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 0 **INT** 9 **AWE** 5 **PRE** 0

Equipment Camera, smart phone; 2 points of additional gear.

Advantages Assessment, Eidetic Memory, Equipment, Improvised Tools, Inventor, Languages 2 (French, German, Magyar, Russian), Skill Mastery 2 (Expertise: Science, Technology), Well-informed

Skills Deception 6 (+6), Expertise: Current Events 2 (+11), Expertise: Science 8 (+17), Insight 6 (+11), Perception 6 (+11), Technology 8 (+17)

Offense Initiative +0, Unarmed +0 (Close, Damage -1)

Defense Dodge 0, Parry 0, Fortitude 0, Toughness 0, Will 5

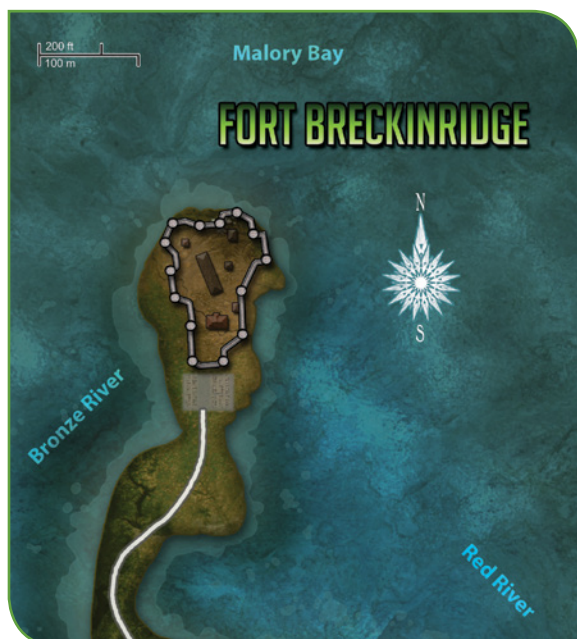
Totals Abilities 30 + Powers 0 + Advantages 10 + Skills 18 + Defenses 0 = 58

Zorka, was a criminal scientist during the 1950s, working with a gang of supervillains known as Troublemakers, Inc. While her grandfather’s crimes were limited to robbery and theft rather than murder, she knows well that nothing destroys a scientific reputation faster than the revelation one’s grandfather used to build giant robots to knock over banks.

Razko wants nothing more than to redeem her family name. She would therefore welcome an opportunity to work as an in-house scientist for an Emerald City superhero team, should the opportunity arise. The heroes would gain the best possible person for such a role, and Dr. Razko could finally live a life unafraid of discovery and potential blackmail.

OUTSIDE EMERALD CITY

There’s at least as much unusual activity happening in the areas surrounding Emerald City as there is inside it. Activities that draw the heroes out of town can quickly find them involved in some strange happenings with mystical or alien creatures.



FORT BRECKINRIDGE

The oldest military installation in the Emerald City area, Fort Breckinridge has both history and value as a military operations center, making it a target. Heroes may need to protect it from terrorists or anarchists looking to strike a blow against the U.S. military or government, or they could be faced with a crisis when a new military weapon or research project goes awry—or both in the case of villains like Fallout and his allies (from *Threat Report*). Military super-soldier characters can even be based out of Fort Breckinridge, or at least report there to fulfill their duties, while military prisoners may also be held there, at least temporarily. The Vanguard (see **Chapter 3**) almost certainly has some agents or sympathizers within Fort Breckinridge, and may occasionally arrange for items from its archives or records to quietly disappear. Other factions, like Majestic-20 and Ghostworks, could also have moles or operatives within Fort Breckinridge’s staff to serve their needs.

THE ELYSIAN FOREST

The Elysian Forest is an excellent site for an offbeat adventure that gets the heroes out of the city for a while. It can be as simple as looking for a lost child, camper, or hunting party and finding more than they bargained for or as complicated as defusing a war brewing between



the Forest Clan Cryptids and ordinary humanity, with Majestic-20 or other alien-hunters fanning the flames of mistrust on both sides.

Super-powered fights in the forest offer plenty of opportunities for more novel forms of collateral damage, as well as makeshift weapons. Full-grown trees are typically Toughness 7 to 10 (based on their size as well as composition) and can require a Strength rank from 8 (for smaller trees) to as much as 16 (for a massive hundred-foot redwood) to uproot. Rocks from fist-sized to house-sized abound as well, particularly close to the mountains.

Heroes doing a lot of damage to the forest could have problems beyond just dealing with supervillains: they may also incur the wrath of local Cryptids by destroying their homes, to say nothing of the fury of environmental and conservation groups when they learn about the devastation to the pristine, protected wilderness!

RED RIVER DAM

In **MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS** game terms, the Red River Dam has a height and width rank of 4 (about 500 ft.) and Toughness 14. This reflects the value to significantly damage the dam and potentially compromise it. Supervillains and ordinary terrorists or extortionist may target the dam, threatening the areas downriver from it as well as part of Emerald City's electricity supply. The hydro-electric plant within the dam may also draw those looking to tap into its large reserves of energy, from electromagnetic creatures to giant robots needing a recharge. The dam makes for a fun site for a super-battle, given the potential for damage and the effects of the environment like the height and presence of the lake.

MALORY BAY LIGHTHOUSE

Isolated from the city and countryside, the Malory Bay lighthouse sits quietly while its keeper does his duty protecting commercial carriers, pleasure boats, and cruise ships from running into trouble on the submerged dangers hidden by the bay.

PAVEL BELYAYEV

The current keeper of the Malory Bay Lighthouse, Pavel Belyayev is the son of Russian immigrants who came to Emerald City after World War II. After decades working fishing boats and the city docks, he took the lighthouse-keeper's job some twelve years ago. It suits his largely solitary nature, and he intends to keep tending to his charge until he can't any longer. Belyayev is a grizzled old salt. In his youth he was a big man, powerfully muscled, and some of that remains although he's stooped with age and his hair has gone mostly white. He speaks fluent Russian but his English is only barely accented.



In his time at the lighthouse, Belyayev has learned some of the tall tales he heard over and over on boats and docks in Emerald City are true: there are some unusual creatures living in Malory Bay, although it turns out they are a decent sort. He has encountered some of the Sea Clan Cryptids, particularly after he assisted a young Piscean injured during a storm and washed up on Nodell Island. The Sea Clan considers Pavel as trustworthy as a surface dweller can be, and may be willing to consider him a go-between, if they need one.

CHAPTER 2: LIFE IN EMERALD CITY



There is far more to life in Emerald City than meets the eye. Even after the Silver Storm tore away the city's veil of normalcy, it did not reveal more than the barest edges of the truth about the city. Many of the places, people, and facets of Emerald City discussed in the *Emerald City Player's Guide* have secrets, described here in greater detail for the Gamemaster's use.

BUSINESS

Emerald City has a number of corporations that call the city home. Some of the companies are excellent, responsible corporate citizens, others definitely show how decades of control by supervillains have influenced some companies' behavior.

BRANDE MANAGEMENT

The truth about Brande Management is more than any curious reporter or detective suspects. Brande is in reality an off-shoot of the supervillain migration to Emerald City back in the 1970s. The more money-minded of the increasingly domesticated costumed criminals realized the benefits of having a steadier stream of income than crime to cover property taxes, homeowners' association dues, and other regular costs of maintaining a permanent residence.

To that end, a consortium of criminals set up Brande Management to allow them and others of their ilk to profit

from their wrongdoing as never before. Under Brande's shell companies and fictitious owners, evil scientists could patent their discoveries and collect royalties beyond the reach of wrongful death and injury lawsuits. Super-crooks who preferred to maintain a respectable front gained a ready place to launder money, and the more enterprising Management partners have even gone so far as setting up retirement portfolios and other benefit packages for their villainous colleagues through Brande.

In keeping with their parasite-like infiltration into Emerald City life, the super-criminals behind Brande use ruthless tactics to deal with its business competitors and any outsider who learns too much about the company. Despite their normally being a fractious lot, Emerald City's supervillains become amazingly unified when Brande and their 401(k) plans are threatened. Every illegal activity the company undertakes is carefully covered up in case anyone comes snooping around. With the benefit of government contracts, many illegal activities are hidden behind claims of "national security."

Brande's security arm has quietly recruited some superhuman agents (more since the Silver Storm) and some of their subsidiaries investigate means of creating more. They would dearly love to acquire the extensive DNAscent process, but are unaware the true power behind that process is the Labyrinth, which is one faction that far outclasses even Brande's considerable corporate assets. (See *Freedom City* for more information on both the DNAscent process and the Labyrinth.)

Norville Barnes' true background is left to the Game-master's discretion: he may be the corporate mogul he appears (and therefore complicit in Brande's criminal activities) or a figurehead set up by the company's sinister shareholders to serve as a public face. In the latter case, Norville might not even be a human being, but could be a simulacrum, android, or a disguise adopted by different Brande agents or owners as needed.

GRANT CONGLOMERATES

Jon Grant still has long hair and a strong interest in drugs, but has shaved off his ideals and principles since his college days. Grant's youthful sampling of and trafficking in psychedelics sparked his interest in chemistry and involvement in the early market in designer drugs. The money he made in these "entrepreneurial ventures" started Grant Conglomerates, allowing him to continue to develop newer and more powerful ways to "improve on the human experience." Grant and his Conglomerates eventually became fabulously wealthy from creating illegal drugs, as well as some legitimate medical pharmaceuticals (mostly as a cover). Now more than ever, the true interest of Grant Conglomerates and its owner is profit at any cost, and both have branched out into inducing paranormal abilities in humans.

Since the 1980s, Grant has used a number of different schemes to engineer superhumans. The company's preferred methods involve various drug-treatments and gene-splicing, some techniques derived from the work of Nazi scientists (based on Ultima genetic secrets (see *Freedom City*)). Many subjects go mad or die from the process, but there have been a few rare success stories, most notably the DNAscent process and some cybernetic enhancements. Obviously, the company has a great deal of interest in unraveling the technology behind the Silver Storm and its mysteries, hoping to unlock the secrets of manufacturing its own stormers. Doing so is the major preoccupation of the company's Emerald City branch.

Heroes have shut down various corrupt Grant Conglomerate subsidiaries over the years, but the central corporation carefully insulates itself from liability. It sacrifices a subsidiary and its management whenever things get too hot, shifting attention elsewhere. So far, no one has been able to prove any wrongdoing on the part of Grant Conglomerates or Jon Grant himself.

In addition to its other illegal activities, Grant Conglomerates is a front for the Labyrinth. Jonathan Grant ultimately works for Taurus, although he still owes loyalty to no one but himself. As it stands, Taurus and the Labyrinth provide the backing and influence to allow Grant Conglomerates to become a major biotech concern and they use Grant's

artificial superhumans as agents. The Labyrinth keeps Grant Conglomerates at arm's length, both to insulate such a useful asset and to keep any heroes who might investigate Grant from discovering his ties to the Labyrinth. Even a resource as useful as the Conglomerates is no more than a pawn in the games of power Taurus plays.

KESSKORP

Kessler is the son of East German defectors brought to the U.S. during the height of the Cold War, his physicist father a desired asset in the American military-industrial complex for weapons research. Using his father's connections, young Arwin leveraged his own impressive academic record into a fast-rising position within AEGIS' highly-classified labs. Kessler's technical contributions were important enough to AEGIS that numerous controversial incidents during his tenure were essentially ignored, but his arrogance and lack of moral restraint ultimately overshadowed his accomplishments, leading eventually to violations of AEGIS regulations simply too egregious to overlook. Within months of his hasty resignation, however, he somehow produced sufficient capital to start KessKorp and began work on a number of contracts for private security firms.

Over time, KessKorp's aggressive lobbying efforts and heavy-handed PR campaigns have managed to net them several hefty defense department contracts despite AEGIS objections, but those only pay some of the bills. KessKorp makes a great deal of its money under the table, providing technical consultation and design assistance to rogue nations, SHADOW, various terrorist and criminal organizations, and pretty much anyone that can meet their asking price. Advanced combat vehicles, high-energy sidearms, and chemical weapons are only a few of the KessKorp products the public will never know came from the same people marketing tablet computers and weight-loss drugs. Arwin Kessler is a cold and calculating reptile of a man, brilliant but wholly lacking anything resembling a conscience. He is simultaneously arrogant and insecure, brooking not even the perception of betrayal—while he feels no loyalty to any of his people, he demands absolute loyalty from them, and has been known to exact terrible retribution against those he feels have dealt him even trivial wrongs. Kessler's genius extends to corporate obfuscation, though, and he long ago mastered the art of hiding behind complex shell structures and proxy chains, making it practically impossible to tie him or his company to any of his illicit activities.

Kessler and his company present a good source for explaining away high-tech gear and other technical backing for villains and organizations in an Emerald City campaign. They can be tied to Cortex (see *Threat Report*), the Grandmaster, or the Labyrinth (an excellent answer as to who supplied Kessler with his mystery start-up capital, for one potential link), or anyone else a Gamemaster wants to use in that role. The hidden and dangerous scientific work that is KessKorp's *forte* could tie into the origin of a PC or NPC, or make for a diabolical partnership between Kessler and Ghostworks, who are just his kind of people (see **Chapter 5: Emerald City Threats**).

MAXIMILLIAN MARS

PL11 • 168 POINTS

STR 2 STA 3 AGL 1 DEX 2 FGT 4 INT 10 AWE 4 PRE 4

Powers: Quickness 6 (Limited to mental tasks)**Equipment:** Smartphone, Undercover Shirt**Advantages** Benefit 5 (Billionaire), Benefit 5 (CEO of MarsTech), Close Attack 6, Connected, Contacts, Daze (Deception), Equipment, Fascinate (Persuasion), Improved Initiative, Inventor, Skill Mastery (Technology), Well-informed**Skills:** Athletics 6 (+8), Deception 10 (+14), Expertise: Business 8 (+18), Expertise: Criminal Mastermind 6 (+16), Expertise: Superhumans 4 (+14), Expertise: Science 11 (+21), Insight 8 (+12), Intimidation 8 (+12), Investigation 4 (+14), Perception 8 (+12), Persuasion 8 (+12), Ranged Combat: Commander Suit Weapon Systems 8 (+10), Technology 11 (+21), Treatment 2 (+12), Vehicles 4 (+6)**Offense:** Initiative +5, Unarmed +10 (Damage 2)**Defense:** Dodge 9, Parry 9, Fortitude 8, Toughness 5/3*, Will 13
*Without undercover shirt.**Totals:** Abilities 60 + Powers 3 + Advantages 25 + Skills 53 (106 ranks) + Defenses 27 = 168**Complication:** Motivation—Ambition, Secret (Former criminal mastermind)

ARWIN KESSLER

PL6 • 97 POINTS

STR 0 STA 3 AGL 0 DEX 1 FGT 2 INT 6 AWE 4 PRE 2

Equipment Sophisticated smartphone (as Commlink with integral GPS and Computer), Undercover Shirt**Advantages** Benefit 6 (Wealth and Status: CEO Kessler Industrial Technology), Equipment, Inventor, Skill Mastery (Technology)**Skills** Deception 10 (+12), Expertise: Business 10 (+16), Expertise: Engineering 10 (+16), Expertise: Politics 8 (+14), Expertise: Science 10 (+16), Insight 10 (+14), Investigation 4 (+10), Perception 8 (+12), Persuasion 6 (+8), Technology 10 (+16)**Offense** Initiative +1, Unarmed +2 (Close, Damage 0)**Defense** Dodge 3, Parry 3, Fortitude 3, Toughness 5/3*, Will 9
*Without Undercover Shirt**Totals** Abilities 36 + Powers 0 + Advantages 9 + Skills 43 + Defenses 9 = 97**Complications:** Motivation—Control and Greed. Vindictive.**Note:** Kessler's background and Benefit advantage allow him access to whatever equipment the plot requires.

ARWIN KESSLER

Kessler's controlling personality (along with a touch of paranoia) means he is always surrounded by heavy and competent security. The Gamemaster can use the various supporting cast archetypes for thugs or soldiers from the *Gamemaster's Guide* as guidelines for this security; however, if he expects significant (or super-powered) trouble, Kessler arranges heftier protection in the form of a powered-armor security force; the Power Corps (see the *Threat Report*) are a good example of this sort of hired help.



MARSTECH, INC.

This company hallmark is rooted in Maximillian Mars' history as the Commander, his former supervillain guise. As the Commander, Mars employed alien technology he'd accidentally stumbled upon and reverse-engineered as a young man. Eventually concluding he could accrue at least as much power in the business arena minus the risk of being maimed, Mars orchestrated an exit from the super-criminal life.

Legally pardoned for his heroism during the Terminus Invasion, Mars started MarsTech, rapidly building it into a massive multinational business empire and the cornerstone of Emerald City's economy. Few know of his supervillain past, and it's an open question how many would actually begrudge the maker of everyone's favorite laptop the Deimos and the popular Phobos operating system if they knew.

MAXIMILIAN MARS

Once upon a time, Mars wore a very different power suit than the expensive custom-tailored ones he buys in London today... suits with armor and frightening hi-tech weapons



systems. As a young man, he accidentally stumbled upon long-lost fragments of alien technology. He reverse-engineered a number of components, built an armored battlesuit, and went into business as 'the Commander,' a mainstay in the super-criminal community of the time and a major problem for Captain Thunder. Eventually he reached the conclusion that he could accrue just as much power in the business arena, legitimately, and without running the risk of being crippled while fighting costumed powerhouses. During the Terminus Invasion, Mars aided Centurion and others in their fight against Omega, then successfully parleyed that assistance into a presidential pardon for his crimes. He then returned to his native Emerald City and started MarsTech. Over the years he's built it into a massive multinational business empire. Though he is very familiar with the city's underworld, he keeps all such associations at arm's length and is very serious about being a respectable and legitimate businessman... His true history is known to a select few in the hero community and he and Thunder have an unspoken (and grudging) respect for one another.

Mars is a PL11 normally (based on his Defenses). The Commander suit and other such gear are sealed in his private labs, and his various "lairs" are mothballed.

MAJESTIC INDUSTRIES

In addition to his aquatic interests, King feels at home in Emerald for other reasons, as his ruthless and cunning nature blend in seamlessly with the city's corrupt big business environment. King's willingness to do anything to increase profits, including breaking the law, make him dangerous.

He is the secret backer for many criminal operations, usually reaping large profits with only minimal risk. King is

also willing to bankroll super-criminals and provide for the needs of criminal organizations, but only if he gets a cut of any plunder or information. He carefully insulates himself from any liability, working through intermediaries and front companies to thoroughly disguise his involvement.

Prior to the Silver Storm, King's criminal enterprises in Emerald City were minimal. There simply wasn't much action during the years of villain-enforced peace, and doing anything to disrupt that made no business sense. Now that the previous truces have been broken, the opportunities to illegally make some big bucks fast have increased dramatically, and King has increased his attentions on Emerald accordingly.

There is no connection between Majestic Industries and Majestic-20 (see **Chapter 5: Emerald City Threats**)....or at least that is what everyone is *supposed* to believe.

MORGENSTERN LABS

Other than its nefarious connections, Morgenstern was previously remarkable only for being responsible for the DNAscent experiment that created the public menace know as Pack-Rat.

The Silver Storm changed Morgenstern from a footnote in Grant and Taurus' empire to the forefront of its current activities. Already dominating the unsavory business of manufacturing superhumans, the two criminal cohorts were simultaneously intrigued and threatened by the Storm. Its ability to create a legion of superhumans in a near-instant is one Grant and Taurus simply have to possess. Doing so guarantees them untold power and wealth; losing it to a rival could very well ruin them.

Ever since the Storm, Grant Conglomerates and Labyrinth operatives have seized as many stormers as possible, and brought them to Morgenstern for examination. What happened to the stormers since their abduction is likely indescribably grisly, ending with pain, torture, maiming, and killing—all to unlock the Storm's secrets.

Thus far, the butchery performed by the Morgenstern personnel has yielded only a basic understanding of the Storm and the technology behind it. The abductions continue as a result, but it seems only a matter of time before some super-heroic someone takes note of the disappearances and begins to trace them back to the source.

NOLAN AIRCRAFT

The Major's heir would welcome the chance to honor his grandfather's legacy and offer the company's prodigious know-how to aid Emerald's current crop of super heroes. To him it's simply the right thing to do, and as a practical matter Nolan Aircraft is likely to need their aid. The company's diversified expertise in aerospace technology—including satellites and the associated launch capability—make them a natural target for supervillains.

REDSHIFT ENERGIES

Since the Storm, and with its reputation in ruins, the company is severely struggling. The unlucky executive

now in charge, one Colin Trafford, shares the company-wide desperation to get back in the black. Willing to do almost anything, Trafford has green-lighted as many projects as Redshift's remaining funds allow. Any one of them could prove to be a boon to mankind, but could also produce another disaster that requires superheroic help to clean up.

The most portentous of Redshift's desperate swings for the fence is its attempt to reach across dimensional lines for fantastic new energy sources. Again, this could be a spectacular achievement, or an unmitigated disaster. Of greater interest to Emerald City's superheroes is the possibility Redshift may open a portal to the Terminus, something Omega (see *Freedom City*) is bound to take notice of.

USNET

The company is the brainchild of entrepreneur Scott K. Hamilton, who believed early on that the Internet will eventually encompass all forms of communication and media. He has therefore positioned his company to be one of the primary providers of those multimedia services. The company has of late put money into virtual reality research, promising to provide multi-sensory virtual environments. Such services are still in the experimental stage, but work is progressing and already attracting the unsavory attentions of parties such as Brande Management.

PROFIT & LOSS

Whether run by principled executives or ruthless criminals, corporations have one primary interest, and that is their bottom line. Even businesses like MarsTech, looking to do good works for the public, have to answer to their shareholders, and the criminal enterprises of companies like Brande Management and Grant Conglomerates are aimed towards making those businesses more profitable by giving them a competitive edge their more principled rivals cannot match.

The business giants described here, along with any others from the *Freedom City* setting or of the Gamemaster's own creation included in the series, offer a number of different uses and opportunities:

Origin: The machinations of various businesses can lead to the creation of new superheroes and villains for the series. Tests and prototypes of genetic engineering, cybernetics, and other enhancements, the creation of robots and artificial life, or the development of power-armor or similar devices are just a few of the possibilities, to say nothing of accidents empowering people in mysterious (and often unrepeatable) ways. A company might try to claim a measure of "ownership" over a superhuman created by or through their efforts, an additional complication in that character's life.

Crisis: Accidents happen, especially when profit-driven corporations cut corners and safety measures, or forge ahead with dangerous experiments to succeed at all costs. Heroes can be faced with a variety of disasters spawned by companies in Emerald City, ranging from industrial accidents (with accompanying fires and explosions) to the unleashing of mutant monsters or a rogue computer virus escaping onto the Internet.

Ally: Some businesses, motivated by civic responsibility or positive public relations, see the value in supporting superheroes in their work. Corporations can provide financial and material support as well as personnel able to help heroes do what they need to do with a minimum of distractions. Maximillian Mars' "heroic philanthropy" may inspire other companies to do the same, even to the point of making a "company hero" (or hero team) a required part of any PR plan. Substitute Brande Management for MarsTech as the heroes' patrons and all kinds of complications appear for the series and its heroes.

Enemy: While there's little profit in revenge, some criminal corporations (and those who control them) will either see Emerald City's heroes as potential threats and obstacles to be eliminated, or opportunities, provided they can either be "acquired" or else captured and analyzed, often involving examination methods that will leave the test subjects quite dead. Heroes aligned with another business may also be targeted as a means of damaging that company's reputation or public relations.

Background: Lastly, these and other businesses form a significant part of the day-to-day life in Emerald City, and their names, logos, and presences provide valuable background color to help bring the setting to life. Characters might work for some of these companies (or their subsidiaries) in their day-jobs, or know people who do. Drop their names into descriptions and flavor text about Emerald City to help remind players of their existence and create a strong sense of a living, interconnected world for their characters.

EDUCATION

As with any city around its size, Emerald City is the home a wide range of schools and colleges. Apart from the nearly 100 public schools plus about a dozen private schools for minors, there are also a number of colleges and universities. There are certainly more schools than the few outlined here, but each of these has their own special role to play in Emerald City and your series.

MALORY COLLEGE

In the Emerald City underworld, Malory College is a continuing source of frustration. Like Overlook Park, the College draws disgustingly normal people to a part of town supervillains would prefer to restrict to their own kind. There are also some personal grudges amongst those super-criminals whose offspring were denied admission there for one reason or another. While no direct action has been taken against the College yet, it's not been ruled out, either. Emerald City's new breed of super-heroes may yet be called upon to save a college most of them ironically couldn't get into.

THE ELYSIAN ACADEMY

Secretly, the school and grounds belong to one of the Labyrinth's numerous shell companies. Behind Elysian's ivy-covered exterior is a satellite campus for the sinister Shadow Academy (originally seen in *Hero High*), educating young super-criminals in the making; in particular, a freshly recruited crop of young stormers.

The Shadow Academies are the brainchild of the supervillain Taurus, taking inspiration from an old enemy. Duncan (the original Raven) Summers' success with the Claremont Academy (see *Freedom City* and *Hero High*) garnered the old bull's interest after pondering his difficulties in acquiring superhuman allies that were both competent and loyal. Why depend on hiring or engineering the right talent, Taurus reasoned, when he could groom said talent to be what he wanted from the beginning? After all, an immortal certainly has the time.

Through countless fronts situated throughout criminal organizations spanning the globe over, Taurus and his people put out the word the doors to a unique opportunity were now open. Taurus' agents were tasked with locating suitable candidates, and they set out renewing old ties with disparate underworld organizations and players so second- and third-generation villainy would come knocking—all with the goal of giving the Labyrinth's new venture a sufficient talent base to "cherry-pick" the next generation of society's menaces.

The Shadow Academies are a dark reflection of the philosophies driving Claremont. Where Summers and his associates pour their efforts into preparing the heroes of tomorrow, the Shadow Academies mold tomorrow's criminals into accomplished professionals every bit the equal of whatever stalwart dares stand between them and their ill-gotten gains. Thus, the Academies are structured as a twisted hybrid of boarding school and terrorist training camp.



Standard Academy policy is to assign students to groups that train together. The composition of these groups are subject to change, cycling through different arrangements as the instructors test out different combinations of powers, tactics, and individuals. Each group is labeled with a Greek letter that also designates their ranking in the school's hyper-competitive performance evaluations. It will take time, but the Academy students may yet prove to be the evil minions Taurus craves... unless of course, the right team of superheroes intervenes first.

The original Shadow Academy lies hidden in Freedom City, with the Emerald City branch coming about as a result of shared supervillain interests. Sunset Hill's resident super-criminals with children have long resented their offspring being routinely denied admission to the exclusive Malory College, and longed for a place where their brood could get both a top-notch degree and study

the intricacies of super-crime. This coincided nicely with Taurus' near-obsession with unraveling the Silver Storm mystery and enthralling the stormers. The details were quickly worked out, and the West Coast Shadow Academy was born.

Currently, the student body is small—no more than two to three dozen students, all suitably sociopathic stormers or scions of old Emerald supervillain families. The school's administrator is the exceedingly cruel and demanding Jean Braid, who has assumed the villainous mantle of Marionette. Marionette answers only to Ms. Scarlet and through her to Taurus himself. (For Marionette's abilities use the Psychic archetype with the Mind Control option (see *Hero's Handbook*, page 45). For the standard teaching and administrative staff, refer to the Crime Lord and Militant archetypes (see *Hero's Handbook*, page 217).

HEALTH CARE

There are a number of health care facilities in Emerald City. They are, for the most part, completely mundane, but a couple of them may play important roles in your series.

ST. HELEN OF THE BLESSED SHROUD HOSPITAL

There is one area where St. Helen's capabilities are unparalleled. Hidden deep in the hospital's archives are tomes of knowledge left over from the Church's stewardship detailing how to combat demons and other evil supernatural forces. Dr. Bennet and his senior staff are well aware of this storehouse of arcane knowledge, though they have only rarely dared to use it themselves.

Things have obviously changed in Emerald City since the Silver Storm. While much that plagues the city is scientific—even extraterrestrial—in nature, it seems inevitable the forces of dark magic will take notice of Emerald

City. When it happens, the city's superheroes may find Emerald's salvation by heeding the whispers of the faithful about how the secrets of banishing the darkness are housed at St. Helen's.

BETHLEHEM HEIGHTS PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

The regulations that make it so difficult to commit only the most dangerous of the mentally ill are in place mostly because Emerald City's wealthy and influential supervillain community pulled some political strings to install and keep them. Every costumed bad guy wants to keep an insanity plea and easy terms for being declared "cured" as an ace-in-the-hole. The more monstrous villains also need a steady population of easily forgotten people to serve as human guinea pigs, and much prefer to grab the mentally disturbed off the streets rather than abduct them from Bedlam Heights.

THE MEDIA

Television, radio, websites, and newspapers report on everything from food and fashion to murders and the latest trial of an unlucky stormer. It's common in superheroic games for heroes to be tied closely to reporters or media outlets and here are a few for your players to encounter.

EMERALD CITY MEDIA PERSONALITIES

Use the Reporter archetype on page 216 of the *Hero's Handbook* for all these sample supporting characters, customizing as need be.

EDDIE POLLARD

The Emerald City Courier-Express

Pollard sees the heroes as kindred outsiders, and—more importantly to him—the potential "big story" that will finally catapult him to the big time. The heroes soon find it's mostly Pollard's self-destructive, take-no-prisoners degree of truth-seeking that's kept him stuck at the same job since the disco era. At the



same time, his unflinching commitment to finding and reporting all the facts makes him an indispensable information source. All he ever asks in return is a promise from the heroes to be “let in on the scoop.”

COLIN HOKE

Host of KSKY's The Nightwatchman

Hoke buries the costumed heroes when they're popular, but if public sympathies turn against them, the characters strangely (and perhaps uncomfortably) find him to be their biggest booster. In either case, the heroes are always welcome on his show—ratings, remember?



The Nightwatchman attracts a lot of callers who are seemingly off their medication. Not all of them make it on the air, and those that tell of some actual wrong-doing bring Hoke's usually dormant conscience to the fore and prompt him to seek help from the city's crime-fighters. In the future, the characters may be drawn into investigating cases after a tip from Hoke, or seeking him out whenever they find themselves on the trail of a possible psychopath.

Of course, Hoke himself might also be in need of the heroes' help: He deals with some pretty extreme personalities on-air, and it wouldn't take much for the outspoken host to make an enemy of a vindictive criminal who would like to make Hoke's next broadcast his last.

CALEB GARDNER,

Anchorman for KLEC Channel 12 Eyewitness News

There's very little he can offer the heroes in terms of useful information, but earning his public endorsement has a significant, positive effect on how the ordinary (and otherwise intimidated) citizens of Emerald react to the new, strangely-powered heroes in their midst. They have to endure a lot of on-air “What kind of tree would you be?” questions from Gardner to stay in his good graces, but public support for the heroes never wavers so long as they retain his stamp of approval.



“THE GRAY GHOST”

The “Ghost Sightings” Blog (www.thegrayghost.org)

Naturally, “Ghost Sightings” can be a valuable Game-master tool, providing hooks for future game sessions and a means to keep the heroes' investigations on track. However, the Ghost's true identity can be the source of adventures in and of itself. What do the players do if the Ghost suddenly goes silent for an extended period of time? How do they find and help her? And is she all she seems to be? Is it possible the Ghost's true agenda is far more sinister than anyone suspects?

PARKS & RECREATION

Even though the city itself is surrounded by forests, mountains, and coastline, there are a number of smaller parks scattered throughout Emerald City. Some might make excellent hiding places for villains, while others are excellent meeting places because they're so well-known.

ANGEL ISLAND

Although no one living in Emerald City knows it, Angel Island has a secret history. It was once home to one of the earliest settlements of Europeans in the region, known as Avison, a settlement forgotten by the history books—by history itself, in fact. Centuries ago, the island and its settlement was the site where Lord Sanguine, a powerful Spanish vampire, was mystically bound by a loose alliance of local and foreign heroes. The enchantment transported Avison and all evidence, or even memory, of its existence from the mortal world, placing it into a kind of

MAGIC HILL AMUSEMENT PARK

Sadly, among the potential uses for Magic Hill and its high-tech upgrades is mayhem, and the chance of that is far greater than anyone knows with Emerald's little pub-

licized but huge supervillain to civilian ratio. It seems inevitable the city's new crop of superheroes will be called upon to deal with a costumed maniac seeking to use the Park's high-tech features to sow chaos—either for its own sake, or to provide a distraction for other crimes.

THE VICTORY SQUADRON MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

The last thing the resident supervillains want to see is ordinary folks honoring and drawing hope and inspiration from costumed heroes. The bad guys are currently doing everything in their power to prevent the monument from happening, but the tide of public support appears to be too strong for them to thwart.

Unable to sense the villains' dire opposition, the Committee proceeds with its work, and is so close to reaching its goals that plans for the dedication ceremony are already being made for a few months from now. For their part, the city's resident costumed criminals have a scheme in place for that day as well: a major direct assault aimed at flattening the monument, killing the heroes in attendance, and frightening the population back into the desired subservient state.

RELIGION

Religion in a world of super-powered individuals is a tricky thing, especially when some people seem to possess the powers of a god. Still, most religious groups and institutions in Emerald City are what they appear to be, and sincerely follow their beliefs to the best of their abilities, although would-be demagogues and cult leaders arise from time to time.

THE PINNACLE PATH FOUNDATION

The Silver Storm readily captured Ross' attention, as it seemed to vindicate his teachings perfectly. Even as more information has come to light about the Storm's true origins, Ross remains convinced Emerald City is a kind of "holy land" where the greater truth of his teachings shall continue to be revealed. Ross has been a frequent Emerald visitor since the Storm, and is in the process of setting up a West Coast headquarters for the Foundation in the city. If nothing else, Ross has found a ready group of followers in still-traumatized Emerald City.

REVELATIONS

It's up to the GM whether or not the Pinnacle Path leadership promotes a sincere religion really trying to help people achieve their potential or just a cover-up for something else. Either way, heroes should find the Pinnacle Path simply too good to be true. Members of the group seem genuinely interested in self-improvement and in helping others. They're polite, articulate, and more than willing to talk about their beliefs, although they don't "recruit" or proselytize.

In any case, the Path's followers have been infiltrated by at least one individual with malevolent intent. A stormer called "Shepherd" is rapidly rising within the Foundation's ranks because of his ability to "awaken" super-powers in others. In truth, he's an "emotional vampire" feeding off the faith of others and funneling a small amount back to create (temporary) super-flunkies. Whether or not he's merely a deceitful snake in an otherwise utopian garden or precisely the sort of evil manipulator the Foundation is looking for remains to be seen.

ENTERTAINMENT AND NIGHTLIFE

Emerald City's bars and clubs are numerous, but a few stand out from the rest either because of who owns them, who frequents them, or what happens in them.

JOY'S NIGHTCLUB

Joy's is one of the most popular and controversial nightclubs in Emerald City. The owner is an ex-supervillain and ex-con named Madame Joy and she caters to super-powered-beings and people who have a "thing" for them. She employs a number of people with cosmetic mutations or minor Stormer abilities. Joy's is the only place in town where you're guaranteed to find someone with powers every hour of the day. To most "normals" that makes a visit worth the trip.

Joy's may be called a nightclub, but it's actually a gentleman's club, restaurant, and nightclub. It's also a high-class, highly-secret brothel that employs and serves the super-powered set. It's the perfect place for anyone interested in living on the edge--or at least looking like they're living on the edge--to go for a night of food, drinks, and relaxation.

Joy's is frequented by gangsters and villains, all of whom treat Joy and her club as an informal "neutral ground." Almost anyone who's been involved in the underworld or villain (or hero) business in Emerald City for any length of time knows Joy, respects her, and knows not to cause trouble in her place. They also know Madame Joy is the person to go to for information... something that could prove useful to new heroes in town.

For more information on Joy's and its owner, see Madame Joy in **Chapter 5: Emerald City Threats**.

NGUYEN'S

As Emerald's leading place to see and be seen, scoring a table at Nguyen's offers heroes not only a posh dinner but also the chance to mingle in some exclusive circles. On any given night, the mayor, the local crime bosses, and the city's various corporate overlords may all be in attendance. They probably won't care to have their meals interrupted, but it may very well be the only time the heroes are allowed anywhere near them.

OZ

Acceptance of the LGBT community, sadly, is not yet universal, and for the violently homophobic OZ is a very big, highly visible target. Previously, that mostly meant dealing with some vandalism and obnoxious extremist protesters. However, after the Silver Storm, OZ is now being singled out by intolerant stormers. The club's owner, Paul Romero, is looking to the city's newly minted superheroes for help in this matter, with some very good publicity and a lifetime of having OZ's velvet rope lifted for those who answer his call.

THE DIVE BAR

Not every resident supervillain has the refined tastes (or pretentious airs) required by the Tobacconists' Club (see

the Social Life section later in this chapter). Some prefer cheap beer to expensive brandy, cheap prostitutes to exclusive courtesans, and bum fights to billiard tables. For the thoroughly debauched but still social super-criminal, there is the Undercity's Dive Bar. It is truly a wretched hive of scum and villainy, but for the costumed bad guy, it's nice to have a place to hang out, get drunk and/or high, gamble, hire some company for the night, catch up on the trade's latest gossip, and plan capers.

In contrast to the Tobacconists' elaborate rituals and trained security staff, and all the "norms" at Joy's, the Dive Bar is governed by only two rules: Pay Your Tab, and Take It Outside. Violators are subject to vicious beatings from the other patrons, until said patrons are satisfied justice has been done or get bored. Otherwise, the bar's customers are free to pursue whatever other pleasures and vices they wish.

While the Dive Bar's existence is a guarded secret, its location is highly mobile—a wise precaution given its patrons' notorious lack of honor. Any spot in the Undercity where drinks can be served and cards played is fair game to host the Dive Bar, but the regulars have a special fondness for the many formerly grand hotels and drinking establishments in the Maze.

Raiding the Dive Bar lacks the potential glamor of infiltrating the Tobacconists Club, but there's a lot of good to be done by rounding up a score or more of wanted, debauched supervillains. However, it's a job where the enemy has numbers, desperation, and far greater knowledge of the labyrinthine battlefield—including the prepared escape routes. In other words, it's a task that's what being a superhero is all about.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

The average Emerald City resident is highly educated, so it's no surprise that science and technology play a big part in the region.

ANGER INTERNATIONAL

The DI offices in Emerald are busier than most, as Johnny Danger's personal ties to the area are deep, though not widely known. During his younger adventuring days, the Danger patriarch was involved in two memorable cases in the Emerald area. During these exploits, he befriended the Hekawi and earned an enduring gratitude that persists to this day, and encompasses his descendants and foundation. Danger also encountered the area's Sasquatch population, and has taken steps in the years following to ensure its continued well-being.

In addition to keeping a watchful eye over the local Indian and Bigfoot populations, the foundation covertly funds several worthy scientific and exploration concerns in Emerald City that other, more "mainstream" organizations refuse to countenance. The Armstrong Geological Institute, for one, survives only because of under-the-table assistance from the Dangers, who see through Paul Armstrong's undeservedly crazy reputation and know the value of his work. Similarly, the Bulloch Oceanographic Center, regarded as too "Hollywood" and a "reality show circus" by stuffer foundations, enjoys support from the Dangers.

THE ARMSTRONG INSTITUTE FOR GEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Dr. Armstrong vowed to follow the path of knowledge wherever it led, and it headed straight into danger.

In his explorations, Armstrong has seen things only a few others (usually costumed adventurers) have beheld. He's seen scouting parties from the Magmin colony underneath Mount Stanley, and encountered more Bigfoots

than a shoe salesman. On one occasion, he even unwittingly thwarted a plot by the subterranean supervillain Terra-King. Unfortunately for Dr. Armstrong, bad luck has always prevented him from bringing back any actual proof, ranging from dead batteries to simply being too shook up to snap a photo. The end result is that most people who've heard of Dr. Armstrong also think he's a colorful nutcase.

Unbeknownst to everyone, Armstrong has acquired the largest collection of viridian stones outside the Institute of Natural History itself. He's closer than anyone in non-costumed science to unlocking their mysteries, but still not close enough to produce any effect consistently enough to count as evidence. As it is, his theories about them would only add to his crank reputation, so he keeps them to himself, for now.

Costumed heroes willing to look beyond his tattered prestige and seek his aid find Armstrong to be a dedicated, brilliant scientist with more than a bit of adventurer about him. Despite his seemingly fanciful claims, he is perfectly sane—just cursed with phenomenally bad luck. If the heroes treat him with respect and seriousness, they more than meet his fee, and he remains willing to do nearly anything—including following them into the face of danger—to help them. He'd even be willing to loan out a viridian stone or two, if only to see if the heroes have any better luck stumbling across what they can actually do.

BULLOCH OCEANOGRAPHIC CENTER

What Bulloch fails to take into account is the Japanese propensity to use such missions to test weird experimental weapons, and the possibility exists one such device of untold destructive capabilities may lie in wait inside the wreck. The results thereof could be catastrophic, and a matter for Emerald's new superheroes to resolve much as their Victory Squadron forbears did back in 1942.

SOCIAL LIFE

There's something for everyone in Emerald City, from villains looking to have a place to talk about the good ol' days to music aficionados who want to enjoy the coolest tunes and everything in between.

THE TOBACCONISTS CLUB

It surprised the older, more civic-minded members of the Tobacconists Club when they found out the new blood joining their organization were more than they seemed. As opposed to being the next generation of civic leaders, these were costumed supervillains who had begun to call Sunset Hill home and were looking for a private clubhouse to call their own. The Tobacconists Club looked like a promising fixer-up opportunity. In short order, the Club's membership turned over, and the organization restored itself to its former outward respectability, all the while becoming corrupted to the core beneath the benign veneer. The Victorian decor remains, as do the men sipping brandy, playing billiards, smoking cigars, and bragging of past exploits. What's different is those exploits involve orbiting death-rays and giant mutated insects on the rampage.

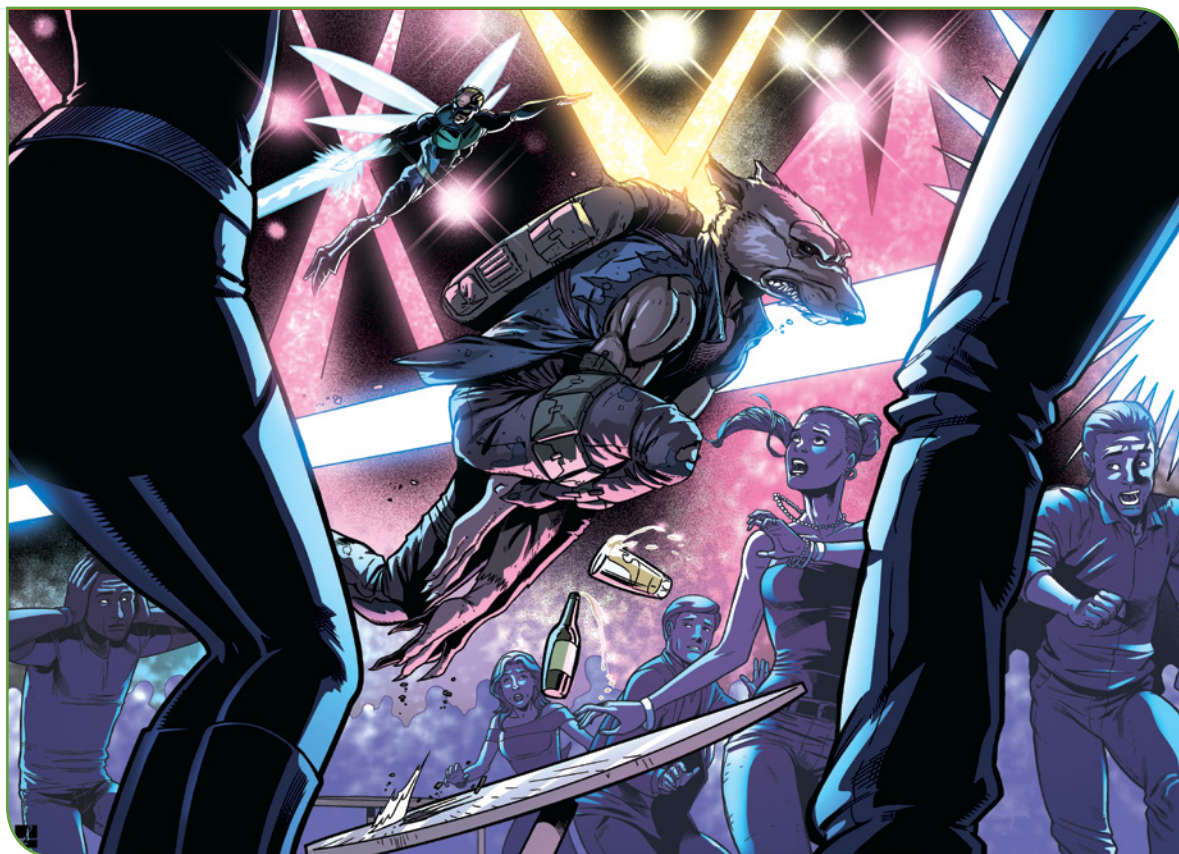
Security at the Club is tight as expected, but subtle and outwardly no different than any other rich-men-only building. Like other playgrounds of the wealthy, intruders are escorted away from the Tobacconists' grounds. Only

if the intruder resists or causes trouble does the security staff turn violent... and they're very good at violence.

Learning of the Club's unwritten costumed criminal-only policy takes a lot of detective work, and getting inside obviously presents hazards all its own. Still, the potential rewards for a hero being around supervillains speaking candidly of their plans—and being encouraged to tell more by their fellows—are tremendous. Actual arrests are another matter, as the actual criminal acts committed on the premises are deliberately limited to nothing more serious than lighting up cigars of Cuban origin. While some Club members are wanted fugitives, their meeting place is full of escape routes and witnesses with very short memories.

PROSPERO'S BOOK CLUB

Between the extremely well-read club members and the store's incredible range of titles, Prospero's Book Club is one of the single greatest resources a seeker of obscure knowledge could have—like, say a superhero. It may take time to find the right tome and edition—the store contains some books of arcane magical and scientific lore beyond even the members' ken. However, for those looking for just the right bit of folklore to defeat a mythical monster come to life, there is likely no better option. Best of all, it only requires asking the eccentric but civic-minded and welcoming club members to help.



GROOVYFEST

Naturally, a group of young people having a good time and learning how to resist corporate greed and save the planet is an affront to everything local supervillains stand for. While direct action against it is beneath even their low moral standards, the criminal scientists among them have been known to test out experimental new pharmaceuticals at the festival, tempting the young and adventurous with promises of “a great new, totally safe high.”

These tests have caused a number of mysterious deaths over the years, but no one has yet made a connection between them all, as “kid tries drugs at a hippie rock show and dies” is far too ready an explanation to provoke a serious investigation. The culpable super-criminals know this, and count on it. A major disaster at a future festival seems inevitable, and Emerald’s new superheroes will likely have to cope with it. They may be joined by an unexpected ally, as rumor has it at least one resident super-human owes his or her abilities to past youthful experimentation at GroovyFest.

EMERALD CITY TOURNAMENT OF MARTIAL ARTS

Behind the scenes, the Tournament is also a cover for settling old scores between mystic martial arts masters, who do battle in secret locations in the Eastern District or in abandoned warehouses using abilities beyond the human norm. Sometimes feuds are resolved, while others begin. Often, matters end with only one protagonist walking away.

Both the public and secret battles are prime opportunities for the local Yakuza and Triad bosses to scout new talent. Those who demonstrate sufficiently deadly skill and lack of morals find themselves being recruited by one or both mobs, neither of which is in the habit of taking “no” for an answer.

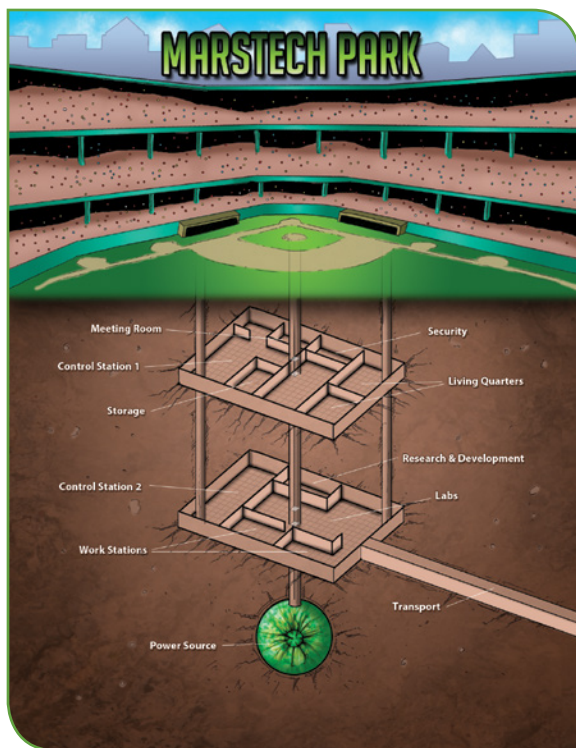
Super-powered martial artists may find themselves participating in either the overt or covert Tournament fights. They may enter simply to test their skills, then be drawn into the affairs of the Emerald City mobs. An old enemy may issue a challenge of honor to coincide with the Tournament, or a previously unknown rival may do the same, wanting to test the mettle of the “super hero” he or she has heard so much about.

PROFESSIONAL SPORTS

There aren’t many secrets in sports, but there are some secrets under sports. In this case, MarsTech Park is hiding something that could prove useful to heroes or villains.

BASEBALL

Few are aware MarsTech Park’s amazing high-tech features and conveniences were adapted from one of Maximilian Mars’ moth-balled underground supervillain bases, above which MarsTech Park was constructed. Mars keeps the base under wraps, never knowing if he might need it again. These days, he intends to decommission it,



but it’s a delicate and somewhat embarrassing matter, to say nothing of the fact that he considers it of very little concern (hidden as it is). Unfortunately, there are those who may discover the facility, including Scion and Grandmaster, both of whom could have access to some of Mars’ files. They or other villains could move in and make use of the lair, at least until the heroes discover it, posing the additional problem of raiding a supervillain’s headquarters while tens of thousands of local baseball fans are gathered in the stadium above it!

STREET LIFE

The explosion in urban homelessness that occurred elsewhere during the 1970s coincided with Emerald City’s infiltration by supervillains. This ruthless lot needed goons for cannon fodder and test subjects for their unholy super-scientific experiments, and the city’s homeless were ideal for both purposes. These nefarious deeds continued unabated through the present day, with Emerald’s new superheroes as the first ever real threat to the monstrous status quo.

Though they remain unsure as to who or how, the city’s homeless are now aware they are being stalked by some new urban predators. Unable to identify the guilty parties and with a shortage of people willing to truly listen to them, they take shelter underground, inhabiting the Undercity. There, they have formed their own communities and ways of living. It’s a world unto itself, and one few aboveground are aware of. Inhabitants of the Emerald City streets may encounter Junkpile, Pack-Rat, Sleepwalker, or the Terror (all from *Threat Report*) or fall victim to criminal masterminds in need of experimental subjects like Doctor Shock or Doctor Azoth (also from *Threat Report*). Stormfront or various gangs (see **Chapter 4**) may drag them in, especially if the Silver Storm has granted them unusual powers.

CHAPTER 3: LAW & ORDER



What is the price for an orderly and peaceful city? That is a question Emerald City's people and elected officials have been asking of late. Once, Emeraldites were proud of the city's historic low crime-rate. Now that many know the peace was maintained by ruthless criminals behind the scenes, they question how much of that pride was real or justified. When the "good old days" were, in truth, not so good, and the future carries challenges no one ever imagined, both the public and those sworn to "Serve and Protect" have to step up.

CITY GOVERNMENT

Emerald City is proud to say that it has always been free from political corruption. A bold statement considering the city has been plagued by villains, but one that is largely true. For most of its history, the city's elected officials have been proud and honest individuals, with only the good of the city in mind. Only during the roaring twenties of the last century did the city see the morality of its politicians fall, as organized crime took an active hold in City Hall, and the police force fell victim to the greed of a few powerful men.

It was a city governed with virtue until recently, as once again, organized crime has attempted to take control the city from the top down. Various official positions, once the sanction of honorable men, have become home to corrupt opportunists. Blackmail, lies, and cover-ups hide the shady dealings going on and leave the public mostly unaware that the proud reputation of their great city is again at risk due to the actions of a few power-hungry individuals.

CITY HALL

City Hall is a rather modern structure, having only been built in the early 2000s. The original City Hall, the oldest public building in the city, was deemed too small by Mayor Talbot to meet the bustling city's needs adequately, and is now the Emerald City Exhibition Building.

After inviting architects from all over the world to submit proposals for the new City Hall, the honor was given to a young Swedish designer who created an impressive vision of glass and steel that stood for progress and the future. Located Downtown, City Hall stands in the middle of a large manicured lawn, with a long shallow pool leading to the wide glass-paneled public entrance. Officer workers from both the City Hall and surrounding businesses often use the lawn as a place to eat and relax during their lunch hour. Secure underground parking is provided for all councilors and hall employees free of charge while a

taxi stand on the busy road outside provides transport for those who need it. The hall is almost always busy, with city councilors, television and radio crews, and employees rushing about their business. It houses the offices of the mayor, the city council, and most city agencies.

THE MAYOR'S OFFICE

The Emerald City mayor's office has changed little over the years, despite its new and modern location. Always a place of public transparency, the city officials have welcomed the scrutiny of the media into the matters of local politics. The mayor herself often hosts a weekly "question time" during which the media are welcome to pose her and her administration questions that delve into the operation and guidance of the city.

The mayor, Amanda Talbot, is an effective and progressive leader. She is actively involved in Emerald City's affairs, and is particularly hands-on with the police department in which she has a special interest. Despite the attempts of her opposition to mar her reputation as an unwed woman "living in sin" with her partner, she is largely viewed favorably by both the media and public alike. Her innovative programs have met with high approval, especially her formation of a committee to oversee the (hopefully) smooth introduction of superheroes into the city.

MAYOR AMANDA TALBOT

Amanda never knew her real parents, as she was adopted at a young age by the industrialist Gerald Talbot and his wife Stephanie. Her early childhood was unremarkable and she achieved average grades in school. She was unaware that she wasn't the Talbot's natural daughter until she was 18 when her father was injured in an accident. After that close call, Gerald decided to tell her in case something happened to him or his wife. The news shocked Amanda, and despite her adopted parents' wishes, she left home and entered the Police Academy.



Performing exceptionally well in her studies, Amanda graduated and began work as a police officer while studying law part-time. Though the demands on her time were grueling, Amanda not only excelled in her law studies, but rapidly climbed the ranks in the Police Department and made detective at the remarkably early age of 26.

Though she enjoyed her career, Amanda couldn't help but feel that she could do more good for the city than she was in her current role. She returned to school and enrolled in a political science program with the intention of eventually running for the office of police commissioner.

Obtaining her degree after five years, Amanda turned her eye to the Police Commissioner's office and began to outline her campaign with her adopted father, with whom she'd reconciled, providing the initial funds. A

successful advertising strategy, loyal campaigners, and her visible presence won Amanda the Police Commissioner's office at the young age of 31. With her idealistic attitudes, bright personality, and fresh ideas, Amanda brought new life and dedication to the police force and instigated a number of programs that saw police officers enter elementary schools to provide education regarding the danger of strangers, drug and alcohol abuse, and superhuman encounter safety protocols.

With seven years of experience as Police Commissioner, Amanda felt she had done all she could in that position, and looked to climb further up the political ladder; she decided she could do her best work for the city as mayor. Her excellent results as Police Commissioner placed her in good stead, and in late 1996 Amanda won the position of mayor by a landslide.

A conscientious politician, Amanda has nothing but the good of the city in mind. She is a campaigner for city improvement, and has put the media to good use in bringing her ideas to the public's attention. Her cheerfully smiling face and exuberant personality is a regular feature on many morning television programs as she happily answers questions regarding her designs and aims for the city and her administration.

Amanda Talbot is a statuesque woman in her early 50s. She prefers wearing sharp business jackets with matching pencil skirts which she accompanies with a light blouse to lend a feminine touch to what she feels may be too austere an image. Her red shoulder-length hair is always smartly styled, and she has a bright, friendly manner. She is unmarried, but lives with her hair-stylist partner in a modest home with two pet Dalmatians and a white Persian cat. Amanda is an avid animal lover and a frequent visitor to both local and interstate dog and cat shows, where she is well known for her sponsorship of a number of animal charities. Use the Police Chief archetype from **Chapter 9** of *Hero's Handbook* for Mayor Talbot's stats, with the addition of Expertise: Bureaucracy 8 (+10), and Expertise: Politics 8 (+10).

THE CITY COUNCIL

Emerald City is divided into six council districts. Each district has a publicly elected representative sitting on the council, with the seventh seat held by the mayor who acts as chair and issues any tie-breaking vote in the case of council dead-lock.

Like the mayor, the city council members are largely (though not entirely) progressive, supporting the rights of individuals and moving away from conservative mind-sets. The council makes a concerted effort to move away from representing unions, and is in fact in the process of slowly but steadily removing much of their powerful influence over the city. Most of the city councilors are backed by large businesses who have a vested interest in weakening the remaining hold the unions have on them.

Two of the city council members are described below. The rest are left in the hands of the Gamemaster to create if needed.

COUNCILMAN MARTY WONG

The last remaining largely conservative council member, which is surprising considering his relatively young years, Marty Wong represents the Eastern District. Wong receives most of his backing from various Asian business concerns located in his district, many of which are intertwined with the Golden Dragon Society to one degree or another. Although the Society's involvement is hard to pin down, it is more or less an open secret amongst the other council members that Wong is at the very least influenced by the tong, and at most directly controlled by them. He gives the appearance of a calm and rational council member, and denies any direct involvement in criminal activity. In truth though, Wong is very much in the tong's back pocket, and willingly so. Of the council members, he is the most vocally opposed to the influx of superheroes to Emerald City, and has on many occasions spoken out openly against it.



COUNCILMAN CLIVE DOWLING

Councilman Dowling represents the University Hill District of the city. A proud advocate of change and progression, he wants to see Emerald City at the forefront of science and advancement. He supports the mayor fully in her advances to make Emerald City the metropolis the rest of the country emulates, and so campaigns for any program he feels will make that possible. Some in the council see him as the mayor's lackey, but nothing could be far from the truth, and if she makes any proposal that Dowling disapproves of, he voices that disapproval loudly.



CITY COMMISSIONS

City commissions come in two varieties: those that are authorized to issue rulings on behalf of the council and those that are purely advisory and gather information and findings to be presented to the city council. Commissions are often made up of both individuals recommended by council members and duty departments. Any interested individual can theoretically request to be considered for an appointment on the commission based on their suitability and qualifications, though political affiliations and desires can also affect this decision. Commissions are set up by the mayor's office to satisfy areas of concern brought forth by the council, independent offices, and even public interest groups.

COMMISSION ON SUPER-HERO AFFAIRS

Mayor Talbot sponsored the Commission on Super-Hero Affairs to aid in the smooth introduction of superheroes into the Emerald City environment. Although the mayor welcomes the arrival of heroes into the city, she is con-

cerned about their impact on law enforcement and what effects any vigilante action may have on the city and its inhabitants. The commission is headed by John Keenan, a superhero liaison specialist from Freedom City. The commission holds representatives of the city's law enforcement and legal community as well as from several large businesses and concerned citizen groups.

The most visible action the CSHA has achieved is the successful introduction of the Storm Breakers, a police unit specially trained to deal with super-powered criminals. This initiative has proven to be highly successful, and for this alone has the CSHA proven itself to be far an effective and powerful group.

The CSHA has yet to come up with any other significant suggestions to present to the city council, claiming they are still gathering information. Tentative proposals suggesting superhero registration or licensing have been offered, as has the assigning of deputy status to approved heroes by the Police Department; these suggestions are still in the early stages of development and may take some time to develop fully.

Naturally, the actions of any superheroes and the results of their activities in Emerald City are likely to make an impact on future decisions and recommendations of the CSHA, either positively or negatively as needs require.

COMMISSION ON HERITAGE BUILDINGS

Despite the city's progressive atmosphere, there has also been a strong leaning towards preserving sites and buildings of historical and heritage value. The Commission on Heritage Buildings was created over 80 years ago with just that mandate, and has been responsible for ensuring the preservation and maintenance of such locations. The CHB has managed to successfully save many of the city's most important buildings from demolition by issuing them a heritage listing, preventing any modifications from being made upon them except in the case of maintenance and repair, and then only to bring the building back to its original condition.

The CHB's latest victory is the preservation of the old Emerald City Hall, an imposing structure built in a classical neo-Roman style. The building was slated for demolition so the site could be used for the new City Hall, but the commission stepped in and issued a heritage listing thus preventing what it, and a great number of the public, deemed a horrendous mistake. Now, the old City Hall has been given a new lease on life as the Emerald City Exhibition Building, the site of many seminars, shows, and conventions.

CITY DEPARTMENTS

Emerald City employs thousands of people to see to the bureaucracy of running a large and bustling city. The city council and mayor's office take the responsibility of employing the executives that oversee these employees very seriously, and view any indication of corruption harshly. These employees span the entirety of the city's infrastruc-



ture from the Emerald City Police Department to Waste Management and even Public Transport.

A small number of City Departments are detailed here, while others such as the Police Department and the District Attorney's are given greater detail later in the chapter.

CORONER'S OFFICE

The Emerald City Coroner's Office examines all suspicious deaths in the city and performs autopsies to determine the cause of death. It also provides evidence to the authorities for further investigation and even issues and serves warrants for the arrest of individuals involved in crimes of homicide.

It is a requirement of federal law that the victims of all suspicious deaths, cases of murder, suicides, and accidental death be subjected to medical examination via autopsy. Evidence gathered in such examinations is routinely used in court to assist the District Attorney in securing a guilty verdict. The Coroner's Office is also involved in the examination of potential outbreaks of infectious diseases and other outbreaks that may put public health and safety at risk.

The Coroner's Office is located in the south of Downtown in the same building it has occupied for over 100 years. The four story building is heritage listed, but has the proviso to undertake internal modifications to ensure public safety as long as the exterior remains in its original condition. The administrative offices are located on the top three floors, with pathology labs occupying the ground floor. The examination rooms and morgue are located in the basement which extends not only below the building, but expands to cover the vast majority of the block on which the office is located.

DR. KATE HUGHES, CITY CORONER

The City Coroner, Dr. Kate Hughes, is a widely known and recognized individual, primarily due to the reality program "Dr. Hughes, Coroner", where re-enactments illustrate the methods that Dr. Hughes used to provide evidence that solved the causes of many mysterious deaths.



Dr. Hughes is an attractive African-American woman of small stature in her early 40s. She is most often seen wearing a sensible skirted outfit of muted colors covered by a white lab coat. She makes it her business to be present at the site of any suspicious death, where she begins her examination on the spot by gathering evidence first hand. Despite her height, she is force to be reckoned with and is known for her fierce temper, forthright manner, and refusal to let an examination rest if there are questions outstanding. Her tenacious attitude has led to the successful closure of some of Emerald City's most puzzling cases, often leading to the prosecution and imprisonment of those responsible.

PUBLIC WORKS

The Emerald City Department of Public Works is largely a planning and organizational body, with the majority of any construction being tended to independent contractors. Despite this, the ECDPW is still one of the larger and busier departments within the city. Responsible for the building and maintenance of city streets and roads, infrastructure and public buildings, the department also

oversees the city's water and sewerage systems. With the advent of superheroes in the city, the ECDPW is finding itself becoming even busier, with super-powered battles causing a large amount of collateral damage that needs immediate attention and repair for the sake of public

safety. With this in mind, the Department of Public Works has begun a recruitment drive to increase the number of employees under its auspices as well as issuing large amounts of work to contractors, creating a boom in the construction industry.

COUNTY, STATE, AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Emerald City does not exist in a vacuum, and as such, numerous county and state offices, as well as agencies, can be found all over the greater metropolitan area, though admittedly the majority of them can be found largely within the Downtown district.

The greater city area falls under the jurisdiction of River County. The county services found in the city include the Department of Parks and Waterways, Department of Health and Recreation, County Clerk's office, Social Services, Department of Planning and Zoning, and the River County Sheriff's Department.

Alongside the county and state offices in Emerald City are various federal agencies, again mostly located in the Downtown District and clustered around the Emerald City Exhibition Building. These agencies include the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, Veteran's Affairs, the Internal Revenue Service, AEGIS (see page 49), and many others.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

After the Silver Storm, the Federal Emergency Management Agency was brought into Emerald City to assist local emergency services with the repercussions of the event. Highly skilled in dealing with natural disasters, FEMA is less familiar with events of such an unusual source as the

Silver Storm. Still, their services were greatly appreciated due to their expertise in providing on-the-ground support as well as assisting with rebuilding efforts. They also provided experts in specialized fields, funding for rebuilding efforts, and relief funds for infrastructure repair. With their assistance essentially done and provided, it is expected that FEMA will leave Emerald City soon, with estimates placing it at no longer than 12 months time.

HOMELAND SECURITY

Emerald City came to the attention of the Department of Homeland Security with the sudden increase of super-powered individuals in the wake of the Silver Storm and the very real potential for the stormers to cause trouble. Homeland Security holds a dim view of stormers, seeing them as nothing more than potential fodder for terrorist organizations to utilize in their attempts to destabilize America, or even as a threat in their own right. The department is working closely with FBI, Emerald City Police Department, State Troopers, and AEGIS to ensure that the threat the stormers represent does not progress further than Emerald City's borders. With the arrival of superheroes to Emerald City, Homeland Security has made a concerted effort to be intimately involved with them, providing much needed information, tips, and leads, while also keeping a close eye on them... just in case.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement has always been a primary concern for the administrators of Emerald City, especially considering the large population of super-powered criminals that call the city home. Apart from the County Sheriff's Office, the FBI, AEGIS, as well as various state agencies, there is the most visible law enforcement presence in the municipality: the Emerald City Police Department

EMERALD CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT (ECPD)

The Emerald City Police Department enforces the law within the city. Overseen by Police Commissioner Alexander Hackman, with the support of Mayor Amanda Talbot, the ECPD is, remarkably, relatively free of corruption. Many public relations programs instituted by the commissioner have resulted in the department being quite well respected by the public. Despite its exemplary record, cor-

ruption does occasionally work its way into the police department. At such times the Commission into Police Corruption, sponsored by Mayor Talbot during her first year in office, initiates investigations into any allegations and acts accordingly.

The ECPD have a hard time keeping crime in Emerald City at an acceptable rate. The heavy hand of organized crime syndicates such as the Malakov Mafiya and the Golden Dragon Society ensures that even when the ECPD isn't dealing with grandstanding supervillains they cannot rest on their laurels.

Police officers are regularly found patrolling the busy streets of the city, and work diligently to reduce the crime rates and improve safety in outlying suburbs. Education programs like Neighborhood Watch and Stranger Danger have aided in raising the public's awareness of crime, which is reducing the level of crime citywide. Still, organized crime manages to elude the Police Department,

with crimes such as people smuggling, illicit drug distribution, and prostitution proving difficult to keep under control, let alone eradicate.

POLICE COMMISSIONER ALEXANDER HACKMAN

Police Commissioner Alexander Hackman comes from a poor family that was involved in organized crime. A small scale affair, the family business came to the attention of the Malakov Mafiya who offered them an ultimatum: provide a cut of their revenue to the Mafiya or face an “unfortunate closure.” Of course, the Hackmans decided on the easier option, making them yet another of the Malakov’s lackeys.



Young Alexander had no idea what his family were involved in, but when he was introduced to the “family business” as a young man, he rejected it entirely. Wanting nothing to do with criminal activity, he took the exact opposite path than what was expected, and joined the police force. While at the academy, he met Cadet (and future mayor) Amanda Talbot, and the two would form a friendship that lasts to this day.

Whilst his career was rather uneventful, Hackman was a diligent police officer. His record was always exemplary and he never accepted any of the “perks” that his position offered. While many of his fellow officers were more than happy to accept free donuts or coffee from grateful store owners, Hackman always paid his way. Though recommended to make the jump to detective, Hackman preferred to remain a uniformed officer, steadily climbing the ranks and proving to be an asset to the force. On a number of occasions he was approached by the Malakovs in an attempt to get him to operate as their “inside” man in exchange for substantial wealth. When he refused, he was threatened, but still he held onto his principles, and even used what knowledge he had of the organization to help bring in some of the more influential members of the Malakov Mafiya.

A staunch supporter of Amanda Talbot when she held the role of police commissioner, Hackman acted as an adviser and sounding board when she needed someone to talk to, being one of the few people she confided in. When Talbot was elected mayor, she strongly suggested Hackman run for police commissioner, which he narrowly won.

Alexander Hackman is a slight man of average height. He sports a thick graying mustache and keeps his salt-and-pepper hair slicked back. Despite his best efforts, Hackman always appears disheveled, even back when he wore a uniform. This appearance has served him well in the past, leading others to misinterpret it as a sign of incompetence or lack of professionalism, which is far from the truth. He is strongly committed to reducing crime within the city, and has a special interest in eradicating organized crime. Hackman believes that the new Storm Breakers Squad is an excellent initiative, one which will help reduce the number of crimes committed by the recent creation of the stormers. He works closely with

both Mayor Talbot and the CSHA to try and incorporate the new influx of superheroes into the city as smoothly as possible, and is a staunch supporter of deputizing them. Use the Police Chief archetype from **Chapter 9** of *Hero’s Handbook* for Commissioner Hackman’s stats.

EMERALD CITY S.T.A.R. SQUAD: THE STORM BREAKERS

A recent addition to the police force is the Superhuman Tactics and Regulation Squad, called the S.T.A.R. Squad in their native Freedom City. In Emerald City they’ve been nicknamed the Storm Breakers because the squad was recruited and trained specifically to deal with the new superhumans that resulted from the Silver Storm. Championed by the CSHA and fully supported by Police Commissioner Hackman, the Storm Breakers are still trying to find their feet in a city that is, given its peaceful history, veritably overrun with supervillians. The first recruits into the Storm Breakers were trained by the Freedom City S.T.A.R. Squad, but now newer recruits are trained at the S.T.A.R. Squad Training Facility located at Joint Base Clark-Gordon just outside Emerald City. While highly trained and skilled, the Storm Breakers are still largely inexperienced in dealing with super-powered individuals, and occasionally make errors in judgment that a more seasoned squad would know to avoid.

Issued with the most advanced technology and weaponry available, the Storm Breakers are outfitted to engage all but the most powerful super-criminals. Often the only ones capable of dealing with super-powered threats, the Storm Breakers may have to dive into conflict with a villain before they know what they’re dealing with. This has led to them being overwhelmed in some cases, but generally they’ve been able to deal with the perpetrators either by running them off or taking them down. Priding themselves in their ability to work well with superhero teams like the Sentinels,

TYPICAL STORM BREAKER

PL5 • 69 POINTS

STR 2 **STA** 2 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 4 **INT** 0 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 1

Equipment: Baton (Strength-based Damage 2), Flash-Bang Grenades (Ranged Burst Area Affliction 4 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Visual and Auditory Impaired, Visual and Auditory Disabled, and Visual and Auditory Unaware), Heavy Pistol (Ranged Damage 4), Submachine Gun (Ranged Multiattack Damage 4), Storm Breaker Suit (Protection 3), Commlink (sub-vocal mic), Flash Goggles, Gas Mask, Handcuffs

Advantages: Benefit 1 (Storm Breaker), Close Attack 2, Equipment 9, Teamwork

Skills: Athletics 3 (+5), Expertise: Current Events 2 (+2), Expertise: Storm Breaker 4 (+4), Expertise: Streetwise 4 (+4), Expertise: Tactics 4 (+4), Intimidation 4 (+5), Perception 2 (+3), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+6), Stealth 4 (+6), Treatment 3 (+3)

Offense: Initiative +2, Pistol +6 (Ranged, Damage 4), Submachine Gun +6 (Ranged, Multiattack Damage 4), Baton +6 (Close, Damage 4), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 5, Toughness 5, Will 5

Totals: Abilities 28 + Powers 0 + Advantages 13 + Skills 17 + Defenses 11 = 69

Complications: **Motivation—Justice.** **Responsibility:** Subject to Chain of Command.



the Storm Breakers also know their limitations, and are not too arrogant to refuse the help of vigilante heroes or to act as support for them. Likewise, the Storm Breakers are more than happy to work alongside the agents of AEGIS, who have a lot of experience and know-how when it comes to dealing with super-criminals and other threats. Captain Wrath, with the support of Commissioner Hackman, en-

courages the free exchange of information between his unit and these “outside assets.” In particular, Wrath prefers that the Storm Breakers have some secure means of contacting local heroes, and will suggest it to new heroes willing to cooperate with the authorities.

CPT. DAVID WRATH, STORM BREAKERS COMMANDER

CAPTAIN DAVID WRATH

PL5 • 75 POINTS

STR 2 STA 2 AGL 2 DEX 2 FGT 4 INT 1 AWE 1 PRE 1

Equipment: Baton (Strength-based Damage 2), Flash-Bang Grenades (Ranged Burst Area Affliction 4 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Visual and Auditory Impaired, Visual and Auditory Disabled, and Visual and Auditory Unaware), Heavy Pistol (Ranged Damage 4), Submachine Gun (Ranged Multiattack Damage 4), Storm Breaker Suit (Protection 3), Commlink (sub-vocal mic), Flash Goggles, Gas Mask, Handcuffs

Advantages: Attractive, Benefit 2 (Storm Breaker Commander), Close Attack 2, Equipment 9, Leadership, Teamwork

Skills: Athletics 3 (+5), Expertise: Current Events 2 (+3), Expertise: Storm Breaker 5 (+6), Expertise: Streetwise 4 (+5), Expertise: Tactics 5 (+6), Intimidation 4 (+5), Perception 2 (+3), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+6), Stealth 4 (+6), Treatment 3 (+4)

Offense: Initiative +2, Pistol +6 (Ranged, Damage 4), Submachine Gun +6 (Ranged, Multiattack Damage 4), Baton +6 (Close, Damage 4), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 5, Toughness 5, Will 5

Totals: Abilities 30 + Powers 0 + Advantages 16 + Skills 18 + Defenses 11 = 75

Complications: Motivation—Justice. Responsibility: Subject to Chain of Command.

Not wanting to step away from protecting civilians after resigning his commission as a major with the U.S. Army, David Wrath joined the police force and was quickly named Commander of the Storm Breakers due to his knowledge of front-line combat and tactics. He rapidly proved his worth in the field, and showed an extremely high level of promise.



Wrath gets along well with Commissioner Hackman, and sees the man as a competent colleague. Likewise, Wrath’s friendly personality has been received positively by Hackman. Wrath’s fellow Storm Breakers respect him highly, and are willing to undertake anything he asks of them, knowing that he would never ask of them something that he wouldn’t do himself. In a similar vein, he has formed a good relationship with many of Emerald City’s leading superheroes, in particular the Sentinels, believing that they all are working towards the same goal and seeing no point in grandstanding or useless rivalries.

Commander Wrath is a strong, powerfully-built man, six-feet tall with broad shoulders and a weightlifter's physique. He has struggled with his weight his entire life, and so gives the appearance of being slightly soft or out of shape, which isn't true in the least. His brown hair is receding, and he still likes to keep it in a high-and-tight military style. During his time in the army, Wrath took a liking to tattoos, and as such bears a large number of them on his back, chest and arms, but only those that are on his lower arms are normally visible. He sports a thick, regulation mustache which only adds to his rugged good looks.

STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

The State Police Department has offices in Riverfront and Lakeside. Their primary responsibilities are patrolling the state and federal highways in the Emerald City area, as well as pursuing criminals that leave the city limits and crimes that extend beyond the city border.

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Several federal law enforcement agencies have offices within Emerald City along with AEGIS. They primarily enforce federal law, but pitch in to aid local law enforcement agencies when asked. Following the Silver Storm, the federal government took an understandably greater interest in Emerald City. FEMA was active in the city for a matter of weeks to deal with the aftermath of the incident, and federal disaster relief funds have assisted in necessary reconstruction.

AEGIS

The American Elite Government Intervention Service (AEGIS), the U.S. federal agency charged with handling "unusual" (namely super-powered) threats to law and order, is described in detail beginning on page 45. The Emerald City AEGIS office has gone from being a toothless organization firmly under the Chamber's thumb to one with some of the best agents in the field and the full support (and attention) of the agency to deal with the current conditions in the city.

COAST GUARD

The U.S. Coast Guard patrols the Pacific Ocean and shoreline, Malory Bay and part of the Albion River inlet. Their primary duties are assisting vessels in distress and the prevention of drug and people smugglers. Their headquarters is located near the port at the mouth of the Albion and Red Rivers. The Emerald City Coast Guard has a good working relationship with the Fort Brewer naval base. In addition, the E.C. Coast Guard have an asset unique to itself, that of Lt. Justin "Barracuda" Ritchson, a stormer with amphibious powers.

LT. JUSTIN "BARRACUDA" RITCHSON

Justin Ritchson was a young successful naval officer who specialized in underwater operations. Skilled in SCUBA equipment, search and rescue, as well as demolitions and underwater combat, he found his abilities in high demand with the Emerald City Coast Guard. He was often put to use in covert marine operations, marine search and rescue, and unfortunately marine body recovery. When off duty, Justin was popular with both the girls and the boys, and enjoyed partying hard.



Justin was grabbing a sandwich from a fast-food shop on Yellow Brick Row before heading back to work when he was caught in the Silver Storm. Buffeted by strange energies, he was wracked by incredible pain. Once the pain subsided and he picked himself up off the ground, he noticed that flesh had grown between his fingers. Terrified by what had happened, he found paramedics who'd arrived on the scene and had them check him over. Given that his transformation hadn't caused obvious injury to himself or others, the paramedics asked him to wait. Instead, Justin went to work where Coast Guard physicians looked him over and helped to catalogue all of the changes he'd undergone. Over the following days and weeks, they also put him through tests to determine the full extent of his abilities before receiving permission to allow him to return to duty.

Unlike many stormers, Justin is lucky enough not to have been mutated into a monster, but he has had several changes to his physiology to enable him to survive equally well under water as he can on dry land. His lungs have remained intact, but he has grown a set of gills along the side of his ribs. A special flap covers his windpipe when he is submerged so that he is able to divert water that he breathes into his gills. Both his hands and feet are webbed, which, along with his increased muscle density, has enabled him with the ability to move with great ease underwater. His skin has thickened and

LT. JUSTIN "BARRACUDA" RITCHSON PLS · 75 POINTS

STR 5 **STA** 2 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 5 **INT** 0 **AWE** 0 **PRE** 0

Powers: **Aquatic** (Immunity 3 (Cold, Pressure, Suffocation (Drowning)), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic), Protection 3, Senses 6 (Low-light Vision, Accurate Auditory, Ultra-hearing), Swimming 5 (16 MPH))

Equipment Binoculars, Flashlight, Heavy Pistol

Advantages Equipment 2

Skills Athletics 3 (+8), Expertise: Coast Guard 5 (+5), Expertise: Emerald City Waterways and Coast 6 (+6), Perception 4 (+4), Ranged Combat: Heavy Pistol 5 (+6), Stealth 4 (+7), Technology 3 (+3), Vehicles 2 (+3)

Offense Initiative +3, Heavy Pistol +6 (Ranged, Damage 4), Unarmed +5 (Close, Damage 5)

Defense Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 5, Toughness 5, Will 1

Totals Abilities 32 + Powers 19 + Advantages 2 + Skills 16 + Defenses 6 = 75

become smoother, making him more streamlined, and he has developed a sonar similar to dolphins to aid him locate objects in deeper water. Finally, his eyes are better adapted to seeing in low light and he is remarkably resistant to the cold.

Justin Ritchson is a young man in his mid 20s. He stands 6'1" tall with a finely chiseled, very muscular body. His blonde hair is kept relatively short but seems to always be tussled, and his blue eyes hold a cheerfully cheeky gleam. He has no interest in maintaining a steady romantic relationship with anyone, being more than happy to play the field as it suits him, although these days, he's more likely to be found swimming around Emerald City's waterways and along the coast line than spending time in the clubs.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

The FBI maintains a branch in Emerald City, located in the Riverfront. They investigate all federal crimes, including bank robberies, murder, and terrorist activities, while also aiding local authorities and the DEA with drug-related and organized crime. They reluctantly contact and coordinate their operations with AEGIS when the situation demands, and by necessity are beginning to enlist the aid of well-known superheroes when crimes heavily involve super-powered individuals. The director of the Emerald City FBI is David Anderson, a highly experienced agent who has fairly powerful telepathic abilities that he keeps secret, but uses in the course of investigations. For Anderson's stats, use the SWAT Officer archetype from **Chapter 9** of the *Hero's Handbook* and add **Telepathy** (Cumulative Mind Reading 5, Subtle 2, Linked to Mental Communication 1, Subtle 2) to his Powers and 23 points to his total.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

The Internal Revenue Service has a special Criminal Investigation Unit (CIU) located in Emerald City, precisely because of the large organized crime presence. The IRS CIU focuses primarily on discovering money laundering activities within the city, stopping tax fraud, and preventing other fraudulent money-related crimes. They work closely with the ECPD in their investigations, but are not adverse to sharply drawing the line as to where their jurisdiction starts and the local police's stops.

INTERNATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

The Emerald City Police Department and the FBI maintain ties with international agencies such as INTERPOL, keeping up to date with international affairs that may have ramifications for Emerald City. In a similar fashion, they also work in conjunction with UNISON (United Nations International Superhuman Oversight Network) in regards to super-powered criminals and their activities, sharing information to keep all relevant parties current on the latest information and databases with up-to-date information regarding the whereabouts and activities of

individuals that threaten world safety and stability. This information is becoming available to some superhero teams in Emerald City, such as the Sentinels, provided they satisfy a rather rigorous investigation into their own backgrounds and activities.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Apart from crime, there are other threats to public safety. Fires, accidents, floods, rock slides, and medical emergencies need to be addressed, as well as disasters caused by super-powered criminals. These situations are all handled by the various emergency services of Emerald City.

EMERALD CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Emerald City Fire Department is a service that is dedicated to combating fire of all varieties within the confines of the greater metropolitan area. Unlike other fire departments around the country, the ECFD is a specialized service, concentrating solely on firefighting and doesn't have its own ambulances or rescue vehicles. The department works closely with the St. Claire's Ambulance Service, and the Emerald City Rescue Service. With fire stations located throughout the city, the ECFD is able to respond quickly to any outbreak of fire. In rural areas, the responsibility of fighting fires falls to the Rural Fire Service, a primarily voluntary organization that receives training from the ECFD and is supported by public donations. Both fire departments are also responsible for the handling of accidents involving hazardous materials.

FIRE CHIEF JESUS VARELAS

Jesus Varelas has served in the ECFD his entire career, joining the service at 17. During that time he has been an excellent firefighter, routinely risking his life in order to rescue others. He has been awarded a number of medals and commendations due to his selfless nature; he believes he was just doing his job, but even so he is humbled by the recognition. His rise to fire chief ten years ago was deserved, and he has continued to serve the department well. Known for his quick, clear thinking in an emergency, he has made a name for himself as a worthy leader and is popular with the men and women that work for him.



Jesus is a 52-year-old Hispanic man. He is quite fit and works hard to maintain his health. His hair is black and his skin quite swarthy while his eyes are a startling green. Whether on duty or off, Jesus always has a half-smoked cigar clamped firmly between his teeth. A widower, he has four children, all girls, aged 20, 18, 15, and 13 years old.

ST. CLAIRE'S AMBULANCE SERVICE

The St. Claire's Ambulance Service is notable in Emerald City as having begun as a charitable organization sponsored by the Roman Catholic Church in 1877, and drew

its inspiration from the Hospitaller Knights from the Crusades. Due to the nature of its military origin, the service is properly referred to as a priory, and those that operate within it have honorary military ranks.

The service remained under the auspices of the Catholic Church until 1902, when St. Claire's disassociated itself from the Church in order to make it clear that it was a service available to all. Licensed by Emerald City shortly after, and overseen by the city's Department of Health, St. Claire's Ambulance provides a number of services to the city apart from emergency transport, including first aid training, community care, and paid and volunteer first aid providers. These days, the service has a reputation as a high-tech organization with well-trained staffers.

CHIEF COMMANDER BILLY HEMSWORTH

Billy Hemsworth has served as the chief commander of St. Claire's Ambulance service for close to eight years. Her administrative skills have served her well in ensuring that the service remains up to date with both the latest in first aid technology and training. During her own career, Billy has been responsible for saving hundreds of lives, something that she takes great pride in. She has made sure the service maintains a close working relationship with the ECFD, and she is a close friend of the fire chief. Though no longer in the field, she likes to keep up on her skills and often serves as a volunteer first aid provider at community events and festivals.



Billy is a matronly woman of 57, of stout build and a no-nonsense attitude. She dyes her hair auburn, and tends to keep it out of the way in a loose French bun. Despite her rather fierce exterior, she is partial to being flirted with, and reacts positively to any men who take that approach, in particular young attractive men. Billy and her husband Christopher have two grown children, Thomas and Angela, and 5 grandchildren.

JUDICIAL SYSTEM

When criminals are arrested, they move from the responsibility of the law enforcement departments and into the hands of the judicial system. Emerald City has placed a large amount of money into the justice system. Despite the administrations' best efforts to head off any appearance of impropriety over the years, the courts are always under the critical eye of the media, which has a dim view of Emerald City's judges due to some old, but high-profile court cases. Regardless, those within the justice system who are interested in a political career often use this media attention to further their individual agendas.

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

The District Attorney's office is responsible for filing and prosecuting all criminals. The D.A.'s office reviews all arrest reports filed by the Emerald City Police Department and

decides which charges, if any, to file. An elected four year position, the City District Attorney heads the office. The D.A. is responsible for hiring and supervising several dozen Deputy District Attorneys who try the majority of cases. The D.A. also handles the administrative duties and prosecutes the highest-profile criminal cases. The D.A.'s office hires various investigators to pursue evidence to support their cases and recruits expert witnesses to offer testimony in their field of knowledge. On rare occasions the D.A.'s office approaches superheroes to aid them in their investigations. While this is currently a rare occurrence, no doubt the frequency of superhero involvement with the D.A.'s office will increase in the future.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY STAN EVERETT

Stan Everett has always been highly politically motivated with an interest in bringing criminals to justice. He was a hard-working student in college and law school, and proved to be an excellent lawyer. He quickly found employment with the D.A.'s office after graduation, where his political ambitions and tenacious pursuit of criminals made him well-known in the community, especially among the lawbreakers. His rise in the D.A.'s office was slow and steady, but in relatively short order he was the assistant D.A. and working with some of the highest-profile criminal cases in the city.



Unfortunately, Everett had a secret: a gambling problem he'd been carefully concealing for years. Even with his substantial wage, Everett became hopelessly mired in debt and on the verge of losing everything. When he was approached by the Malakov Mafiya, who owned most of his debt, Everett had no choice but to accept their offer for assistance... and all it would cost him was to go easy on any Malakov mobsters that came to his office's attention. For that, the Mafiya would not only forgive his debt, but ensure that his political ambitions would bear fruit. Initially disgusted with himself and with the relationship, Everett knew he had no choice but to comply. He saw the potential in the arrangement when he won the position of D.A.

No longer having any doubts regarding his relationship with the Mafiya, Everett ensures that the big names within the mob are treated lightly in court. His masterful grasp of criminal law allows him to appear as if he is utilizing all of his abilities to secure a guilty verdict, but in fact he ensures evidence appears circumstantial, eye witnesses change testimony or miss their day in court, and expert witnesses come across as hopelessly incompetent. He still has high political ambitions, and has set his sights on becoming mayor of Emerald City, something that the Molakov Mafiya has no problems assisting him with. A man in like Everett in the highest position in the city would be a boon for the Russian mobsters.

Everett is 36, with a tall and slender build. He wears glasses, and his black hair is close-cut and neat. He always wears designer suits and indulges in a rather luxurious lifestyle and lives in Royal Heights. He is still addicted to



gambling, though he keeps this a closely guarded secret and is willing to go to any length to ensure that it isn't discovered. His wife Eleanor has been confined to a wheelchair since an unfortunate car accident that took place after Everett initially told the Mafiya to go to hell. He's not entirely certain the accident was the work of the mobsters, but he's not certain it wasn't either. The Everetts have two young sons aged 6 and 4.

THE PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE

The public defender's office represents criminal defendants who cannot afford their own attorney. The office is run by the city's appointed public defender, and is assisted by other city-employed lawyers, contract lawyers, lawyers doing *pro bono* work, and a small number of private investigators.

The public defender's office, while not exactly popular, is still seen as a vital service by the city government, and as such is afforded a generous budget, which they stretch to the limit. Though the media tends to portray them in a negative light, the mayor's office has done an excellent job of standing up for them and pointing out everybody's right to legal representation. The P.D.'s office is often where idealistic young lawyers come to make a difference in society and to see that the innocent are not railroaded by the judicial system. Unfortunately, these very same attorneys often find themselves forced to defend the most despicable criminals in the name of "justice."

PUBLIC DEFENDER GARDNER MALONE

Gardner Malone is hardly what you would call driven... at least not these days. When he became a public defender he had been a driven man and he had every intention to stand up for the wrongly accused and see justice served. Unfortunately, his experience with the legal system has shown him that only rarely are the rightfully accused given the



justice they deserve, while those who have been accused wrongly often face the full extent of the law. He continues in his position because he feels he has nowhere else to go and nothing to strive for. He finds the enthusiasm of young attorney crusaders to be refreshing, but also knows it is only a matter of time before they too see the justice system for what it really is: a corrupt set of outdated protocols designed to allow those who can afford top-class legal representation to get away with their crimes.

Gardner is a 54, and of average height and build, though he appears shorter than he actually is due to rounded shoulders and a stooped posture. He has a severely retreating hairline which he tries to cover with a very obvious comb over. His overall attitude is defeatist, and though he is competent at his job, he feels nothing he does makes a difference at all. A closeted homosexual, Gardner is lonely, depressed, and highly unmotivated.

THE PROBATION DEPARTMENT

The Emerald City Probation Department is responsible for providing supervision of adults and juveniles after their release from state-run penal facilities and ensuring they fulfill the conditions of their probation. In addition, the Probation Department is responsible for preparing background reports to assist judges in determining appropriate sentences for adult offenders and juvenile delinquents.

The probation officers of Emerald City are unusual in that they are also Emerald City Peace Officers, authorized to make warrantless arrests, carry handcuffs, pepper spray, and a firearm on and off duty.

STATE AND FEDERAL ATTORNEYS

State and federal governments are also involved in the judicial system of Emerald City. The state attorney's office assists the district attorney on request as well as investigating cases involving the district attorney's office itself. The state attorney has recently become concerned over the large number of high-profile criminals alluding justice and has begun an initial investigation into the operations of the D.A.'s office. So far, no damning evidence has come to light, more to the efforts of D.A. Stan Everett than to any incompetence on the state attorney or his office.

The United States attorney in Emerald City prosecutes federal cases, and in most respects is the federal equivalent of the district attorney. The current U.S. attorney in Emerald City is Charity Wells, a highly-experienced lawyer in the field of federal law, but with little experience in regards to the legal ramifications of super-powered involvement in cases.

THE COURT SYSTEM

The court system comes into action once the district attorney has filed charges. The Emerald City court system is divided into two courts: local and federal.

Local state-affiliated courts try most civil and criminal cases, ranging from small claims and traffic violations to major cases handled by the Supreme Court. The court facilities for Emerald City are all located within a city block of each other in Downtown.

The federal courts handle all cases that that pertain to federal law. The Federal Court occupies two buildings; one is built in a neo-Roman style featuring fluted columns and regal lion statues, while the other is a modern edifice of glass and steel. Both courts are within walking distance and located at the western end of the Yellow Brick Row in Downtown.

A small sample of the various judges that might be encountered when interacting with the judicial system is provided here.

PAT WAGNER

Judge Pat Wagner was a tough-talking judge in the Family Court who has earned a reputation for her no-nonsense

attitude, fast decision-making, and wise-cracking sentencing. Her reputation brought her to the attention of Emerald City's mayor, who promoted her to judge in criminal court where she remained for years. Working her way up, Judge Wagner successfully achieved a position as a Supreme Court judge, which she has now held for over 20 years. She is a stickler for the law, and is known for looking unfavorably on those brought to trial who fail in their parental responsibilities, regardless of what the case is actually about. She has a good reputation with the media, and is more than happy to allow proceedings involving stormers and other super-power criminals to be televised. She tends to favor skilled attorneys, but frowns upon any theatrics except for her own.



JOHN EZQUERRA

John Ezquerra is relatively new to the Supreme Court, a rising star in the judicial system, if such a thing can be said to exist. He is a calm and thoughtful individual, with a friendly disposition that hides a strong and competent knowledge of the law. What is not known about Judge Ezquerra is that he is soundly in the pocket of the Golden Dragon Society due to his marriage to Lee Lee Kwong, a distant relative of the recently deceased leader of the Society, Dragoneye (Uncle Zhi) and the new Dragoneye (see the *Emerald City Player's Guide*). He has a reputation for issuing light sentences, preferring community service over imprisonment. Those of the Golden Dragon Society that are tried before him are given the lightest sentences possible, allowing in some of the most notorious gangsters in Emerald City to walk away almost scott free.



THE CORRECTIONS SYSTEM

Once a convicted criminal has been through the courts, they move onto the last step in the justice system: corrections. Responsible for the imprisonment and rehabilitation of convicted felons, the corrections system is experiencing a serious strain in trying to hold the sudden increase in super-powered prisoners. What was once an adequate number of incarceration facilities is proving to be woefully short of what the demand requires.

ARCADIAN PENINSULAR CORRECTIONAL FACILITY (APCF) AKA ARCADIA

Located on an isolated lot of land not too far from the Emerald City International Airport is the Arcadian Peninsular Correctional Facility, often referred to (incorrectly) as Arcadia. A facility designed for low risk offenders, the APCF has well-established rehabilitation and education programs designed to ensure released inmates a reduced chance of turning back to crime.

The majority of inmates are non-violent, unpowered offenders, but the current strain on the corrections system has forced the facility to accommodate more dangerous criminals and some supervillains designated as “low-powered.” This new prison population has caused some concern among the facility staff, not to mention public concern regarding a potential breakout. The facility has undergone renovations to accommodate the new population, including reinforced holding cells and the introduction of experimental power dampers.

The APCW is a private facility that is supervised by the county sheriff’s department. Originally designed to hold 1,500 inmates, its population has swelled to 2,700, stretching the abilities of Warden Erica King and her staff of 600 to the limits.

FORTRESS ISLAND STATE PENITENTIARY (FISP) AKA THE FORTRESS

Prisoners designated too violent for Arcadia are incarcerated in Fortress Island State Penitentiary, or the Fortress as most refer to it. Located in the Albion River, FISP is the oldest prison in Emerald City, and still considered one of the most secure. Built originally from basalt quarried from the Atlas Mountains, the imposing prison walls and tall central facility loom menacingly over the river.

The prison has a long history of housing some of the state’s most dangerous criminals. With the only access to the prison a heavily guarded ferry, escapees have to brave the river to gain the freedom. The Fortress, like all prisons, has a gang problem, which Warden Jim Maguire and his staff of 2,100 staff work diligently to control and oversee.

Since the Silver Storm, the population in the Fortress has become trickier to manage, with a handful of the new inmates in possession of superpowers. Those possessing superpowers are held in the new super-max wing of the facility: a renovated, heavily reinforced section of the prison equipped with internal power dampers. These inmates are kept under 23-hour lockdown, with only a brief exercise period of 1 hour under close scrutiny. Guards assigned to the super-max wing are heavily armed and are instructed to shoot-to-kill in cases of inmate conflict and escape attempts.

Fort Island State Penitentiary was designed to hold a maximum of 4,000 prisoners, and is currently forced to deal with a population of 4,300 inmates, with a small, but dangerous, percentage of them possessing superpowers.

THE BASE

The facility known only as the Base is a decommissioned and reassigned army barracks, hastily renovated by the city government to house delinquent stormers and the most problematic “normals” under the age of 18. Located just outside the city on the edges of the Elysium Forest, the Base has a capacity of 300, but is already near capacity. The majority of the inmates are gang members, while others are violent criminals, drug addicts, sex offenders, and stormers. Stormers are kept isolated from the rest of

the facility’s population and their powers are kept in check by experimental power damper collars.

DEEP SIX PRISON FACILITY

Shortly after the Silver Storm, the federal government saw the need for a prison facility designed specifically to hold West Coast criminals that possessed extensive superpowers. This resulted in the commissioning of the Deep Six Prison Facility.

Located off the coast of Emerald City, Deep Six is built on the Pacific Ocean floor, about five miles out from Malory Bay with only an elevator shaft ascending roughly 1,000 feet to a rig on the surface that serves as a dock and helicopter landing platform. The facility itself is built out of the strongest and most advanced materials available, and incorporates some of the most advanced technology available on the planet to contain the inmate population. Although no known superhumans aided in the construction, the speed with which it was built and its beyond-space-age materials leave no doubt that the government had paranormal help.

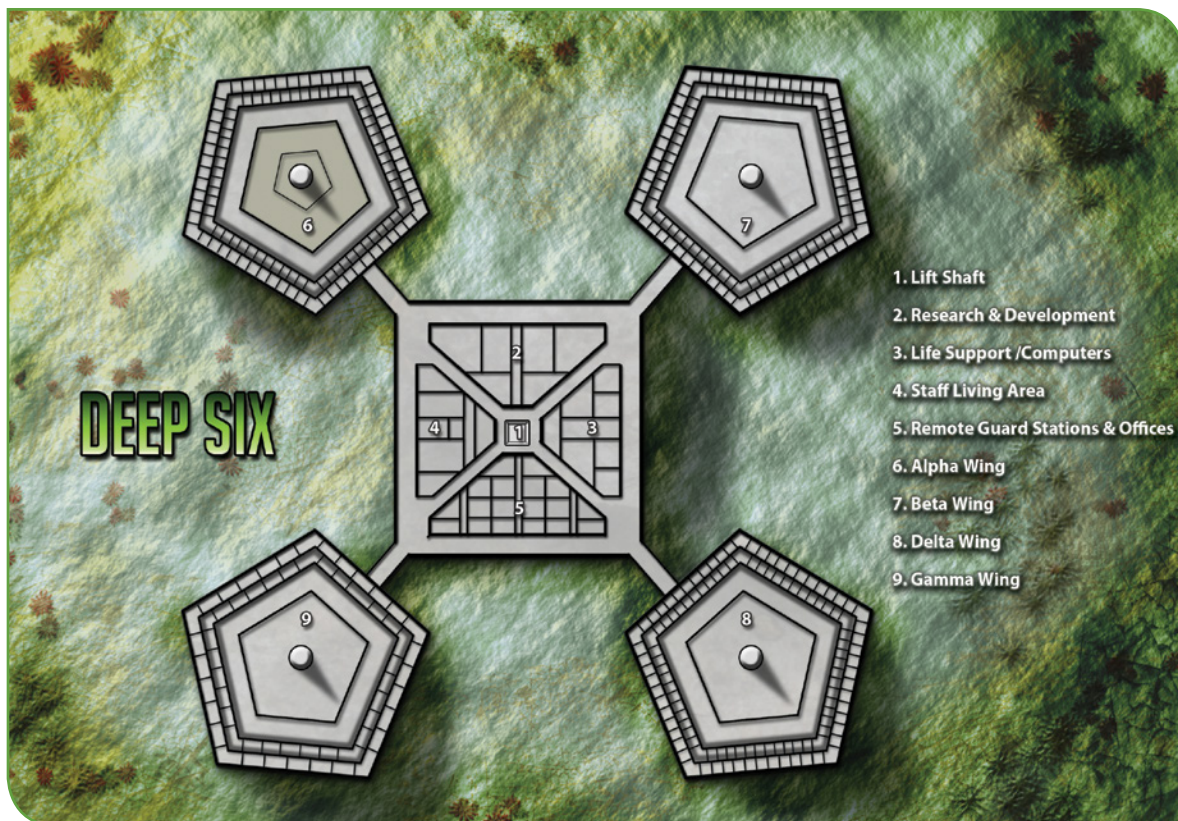
Deep Six is staffed by hundreds of personnel ranging from administrative staff, councilors, medics, computer programmers, technical officers, research scientists, and guards. Considering the explosive potential that a lack of security could have on the prison, potential employees are extensively scrutinized with references consulted and background checks made.

The administration center is located in the center of the facility, from which radiate four wings. There is only one entrance from each wing into the administration center, and those are supervised by guards wearing Watchdog power armor (see later in this section), and this entrance is blocked by armored bulkheads that can be reinforced by drop-down titanium shields in the case of emergencies. All wings and the administration center are self sufficient with their own air and emergency power supply. Each wing is designed to hold 200 prisoners, except for the wing designated “the Nursery” that holds only 50 prisoners, all with specialized containment needs.

The **administration center** is the heart of Deep Six, which houses the administration offices, guard stations for monitoring the activities of inmates including those in the Nursery, and holds most of the machinery and computers required to operate the facility.

Located at the very center of the administration center is the elevator shaft that leads to the surface. The shaft is secured by electronically locked bulkheads and two prison guards wearing Watchdog armor.

Below the administration center is the facility’s power generation system, an experimental geo-thermal tap that provides the heat needed to run boilers and turbines to produce electricity for the entire prison. The generators produce a surplus of energy, some of which is stored in capacitors to be used in case of emergency. Also in case of emergency, the mysterious builders of Deep Six installed something called Block Sphere; what it does, no one at the facility knows. It’s located on the lower level as well.



The administration center also has a dedicated research and development department where experimental power damper devices are designed and improved upon constantly. Universal power dampers, though useful in emergency situations, proved to be unreliable in the long term, therefore requiring the development of nullifiers which have to be tailored to specific inmates.

Finally the administration center also provides living quarters for prison staff (who are all on six-month rotations) including a cafeteria, gym, an impressive game and movie room, a small greenhouse, and sleeping quarters.

Alpha Wing houses super-criminals who are designated as “low risk”, primarily those that have no powers of their own or whose powers are easily negated without the use of dampers. These prisoners must also show signs of rehabilitation and prove themselves to be low risk for committing violence. Alpha Wing prisoners share cells. They are often granted recreational and work privileges that inmates in other cell blocks do not enjoy, including access to a gymnasium, basketball courts, and a common area. Any infraction of prison rules, such as fighting, vandalism, drug use, gang participation, disrespecting guards, or any other proscribed activity, results in the prisoner’s removal from Alpha Wing and reassignment to Beta Wing.

Beta Wing is Deep Six’s medium security wing. Its population consists of those who have washed out of Alpha Wing, those who don’t quite merit inclusion into Delta Wing, and those who possess superpowers that have a great potential for property damage or physical harm. Security in Beta Wing is considerably harsher than in Alpha Wing, and prisoners have very few privileges. Inmates are

housed two per cell but are under lock-down for 18 hours a day with all meals being taken in-cell. When not under lock-down, prisoners are free to mingle in the common area and move from cell to cell. As with the behavior restrictions in Alpha Wing, any prisoner caught committing an infraction is usually reassigned to Delta Wing.

Delta Wing is the maximum security wing of Deep Six, it houses some of the worst super-powered criminals in existence. These inmates are those reassigned from Beta Wing, those who’ve committed a felony while in prison, and those who possess super-powers that are highly dangerous or destructive. These criminals are a danger to each other, and as such are kept in private cells under 24-hour lockdown and constant surveillance. They have no privileges and no contact with anybody other than their lawyers and prison guards. All guards in Delta Wing wear the Watchdog armor at all times.

Gamma Wing, also designated the **Nursery**, is designed to hold prisoners whose powers are so great that even the “normal” precautions taken in the other wings prove to be insufficient to contain them. Each cell is individually designed to contain its resident. Inmates in the Nursery have similar restrictions to those in Delta Wing, with no privileges and no contact other than with their lawyers and prison guards.

DEEP SIX SECURITY

There are 356 staff employed at Deep Six and include everyone from cooks and janitorial staff to technicians and guards. The guards each work a rotating 6 hour shift. Guards always patrol in pairs, units of four, or squads of eight and all are trained in the operation of the Watchdog armor.



WATCHDOG GUARDS

PL8 • 108 POINTS

STR 6 STA 2 AGL 2 DEX 2 FGT 6 INT 0 AWE 1 PRE 1

Powers: **Watchdog Power Armor** (Removable (-14 points); **Combat Computer** (Enhanced Defense 4 (Dodge 2, Parry 2), Enhanced Fighting 2); **Encrypted Radio** (Radio Communication 2 (Subtle), Senses 1 (Radio); **Sealed Armor** (Protection 6; Immunity 10 (Disease, Poison, Sensory Affliction Effects, Pressure, Suffocation)); **Speed Boosters** (Speed 2 (8 MPH), Swimming 3 (4 MPH)); **Strength Boosters** (Enhanced Strength 4); **Targeting Computer** (Enhanced Advantages 3 (Improved Aim, Ranged Attack 2)); **Weapons Array** (19 points); **Taser** (Cumulative Affliction 8 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Incapacitated), Reach 3); **AE: Alpha Wave Inhibitor** (Ranged Affliction 8 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Hindered, Immobile, Paralyzed); **AE: Tear Gas** (Ranged Cloud Area Affliction 4 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed and Impaired, Stunned and Disabled, Incapacitated and Unaware), Extra condition)))

Advantages: Benefit (Watchdog Guard), Close Attack 2, Improved Aim, Ranged Attack 2

Skills: Athletics 3 (+9), Expertise: Current Events 2 (+2), Expertise: Prison Guard 5 (+5), Expertise: Tactics 5 (+5), Intimidation 3 (+4), Perception 3 (+4), Ranged Combat: Weapons Array 3 (+5).

Offense: Initiative +2, Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 6), Alpha Wave Inhibitor +7 (Ranged, Affliction 8, Will DC 18), Taser +7 (Close reach 15 feet, Cumulative Affliction 8, Fort DC 18), Tear Gas +7 (Ranged, Cloud Area Affliction 4, Fort DC 14)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 8, Fortitude 6, Toughness 8, Will 3

Totals: Abilities 28 + Powers 57 + Advantages 3 + Skills 12 + Defenses 8 = 108

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** Subject to Chain of Command.

WARDEN COLIN SWANWICK

Colin Swanwick, the warden of Deep Six, is the first person to hold the position. He comes from a long career in prison administration. He insists on running an efficient prison, and has little tolerance for any misbehavior from inmates or staff. His tolerance for superhuman individuals is even less than his tolerance for bad behavior. He refuses to employ anyone with superpowers, regardless of their background or legal status, a stance he is being encouraged to reverse due to legal ramifications.



A strong believer that the best indicator for future behavior is past behavior, Swanwick allows the prisoners actions to speak for themselves. Known for his strict adherence to prison rules, he is not a man to be trifled with, and takes a dim view of anyone who tries. He is well respected, if not well liked, by most of his staff, because they recognize his job is a difficult one and he's successfully run the facility with no hiccups thus far.

Warden Swanwick is an impressive man standing at six-and-a-half feet tall. In his younger days he was extremely muscular, and even at the age of 58 he's still quite fit, although he's gained a bit of weight. He has black hair greying on the sides, and sports a steel-grey mustache. He is most often seen wearing a white shirt with the sleeves rolled up to the elbows, business slacks, and a colorful tie. On more formal occasions he supplements

his attire with a business jacket. He makes relatively frequent trips to the mainland for meetings and visits with his family, who live in a luxury highrise in Downtown Emerald City. Use the Government Agent archetype from **Chapter 9** of *Hero's Handbook* for Warden Swanwick's stats, with the addition of Expertise: Bureaucracy 8 (+10), Expertise: Warden 8 (+10), and eliminate Expertise: Government Agent.

SECURITY CHIEF PETER GORDON

Security Chief Gordon was originally an agent of AEGIS in New York City until he accepted his current position less than a year ago. His knowledge of security procedures for dealing with super-powered individuals gives him an edge with the inmates of Deep Six. He runs the prison very much like a military facility and, like the warden, holds all personnel to an exacting standard. Any sign of corruption from among the staff is dealt with swiftly. Gordon understands the threat that corruption can have in a facility like Deep Six, and he wants no part of it.

The security chief and the warden have a firm respect for each other, and work together like a well-oiled machine. Warden Swanwick has only to voice a concern and Gordon addresses it immediately. Though not as harsh as the warden, Gordon is nearly as strict when it comes to infractions. He is, however, more likely to let something slide if he thinks it will earn him more loyalty, respect, or a favor.



Peter Gordon is 42 and of mixed Japanese/American heritage. A slim man, he is only 5'7" in height, which has led some to underestimate him. Quiet-spoken, Gordon would rather listen to what is going on around him than be the center of attention. Use the SWAT Officer archetype from **Chapter 9** of *Hero's Handbook* for Security Chief Gordon's stats, with these additions and changes: Expertise: Bureaucracy 4 (+4), and Expertise: Superbeings 6 (+6), Intimidation 6 (+7), Perception 6 (+7) and eliminate his Expertise: Current Events and Expertise: Police Officer.

AEGIS

As with most major cities in the United States, Emerald City has had an AEGIS presence since shortly after the agency's inception.

The local AEGIS office gradually learned of Emerald City's nature as a home for super-criminals and heard rumors about the secretive Chamber, but it took years to piece this information together from a number of different sources. As a result, the local AEGIS branch has been somewhat larger, better staffed, and better equipped than AEGIS branches in similarly sized cities that lacked a significant super-powered population. The agency's upper echelon decided in the mid-90s that the unusual nature of the area deserved increased involvement. Unfortunately, the Chamber and its operatives countered the increased AEGIS presence by infiltrating it.

Walter Benham held the position of Director for AEGIS' Emerald City branch for more than a dozen years, taking over from the previous (and first) director as it expanded from its small, rented offices to an entire floor of the federal building. Benham's tenure as Director came to an abrupt end when he and his family were killed in an automobile accident. His replacement was Deputy Joseph Mitchell, a highly polished agent who climbed the office hierarchy without making substantive enemies. Mitchell was firmly in the Chamber's pocket from the start and over the next decade he proved a tremendously rewarding investment on their part. His actions were subtle, but effective—an investigation tangled in red tape here, a defunded or

under-supported initiative there— nothing that would bring undue attention to himself, but a sustained strategy that kept AEGIS' attention off his true employers.

Even as smooth an operator as Mitchell made the occasional mistake, however. Despite nettling suspicions that built over years, Senior Director Powers was never able to prove Mitchell had been compromised. So, Powers took a subtler approach. When the Chief Administrator for the Analyst division for the Emerald City branch retired after a long and quiet career, Powers invoked directorial prerogative to appoint Lucas Meriwether, a star intelligence professional from the agency's Los Angeles offices, to take the seat. In addition to his other duties, Meriwether was tasked with covertly gathering information on Mitchell. While an effective political player, Mitchell was prone to delegating too many of his responsibilities to his staff, and his continued shuffling of funding and bureaucratic processes had left the Emerald City office completely unprepared for dealing with a calamity of the Silver Storm's magnitude. The E.C. office's response was one misstep after another, all of it recorded by the media for posterity. Combined with the fruits of Meriwether's investigations, Powers finally had enough ammunition; he presented the choice to Mitchell in person: he could either suffer through an exhaustive review of his activities and decisions as the head of the office, or he could resign.

Citing stress brought on by the events surrounding the Silver Storm and resulting health reasons, Mitchell quietly



left the agency. Powers personally chose the new director, pulling in former Emerald City native and deputy director of the Las Vegas office Calpurnia Maddox. He also gave her one over-riding imperative eclipsing her standard duties—*clean house*. Do it quickly. Do it thoroughly.

And she did.

Earning herself the nickname “the Wicked Witch of the West” for her direct and coldly professional style, Maddox transferred a number of key personnel to or from the E.C. office and almost completely changed the face of the branch. The last few months have seen inefficiencies disappear, arrest and conviction rates climb noticeably, and case backlogs clear. The ECPD now views AEGIS as a lean and focused partner that responds to requests for assistance in record time.

PERSONNEL

Emerald City falls in AEGIS Region Five (PAC-NW). The Emerald City AEGIS office reflects the standard structure of the agency in that it is divided into three functional divisions: The Directorate, Agent Division, and Command Division.

The Directorate is the administrative division, handling the myriad bureaucratic hassles that keep a government law-enforcement organization operating on a day-to-day basis. This division flows out from the office of the Director, currently Calpurnia Maddox.

DIRECTOR CALPURNIA MADDOX

Calpurnia Maddox was born and raised in Emerald City, the daughter and granddaughter of police officers. Her family raised her with a healthy respect for law and order and instilled in her the confidence to stand her ground and speak her mind. She was of the youngest ECPD officers

ever promoted to the rank of detective. While on the job, she met and eventually married Bradley Gramm, who unfortunately died in a tragic mugging-gone-wrong a couple of years into their marriage. In an effort to change her life, she joined AEGIS and transferred from office to office while climbing the ranks. She came to Horatio Powers’ attention during the Grue Invasion, where she earned his respect for her skill, courage, and leadership ability. When the opportunity arose, Powers tapped her to replace Mitchell. A number of the men and women Maddox served with in the ECPD have since moved up the ranks and Maddox has many allies among them.



THE DIRECTOR'S ASSISTANTS

Director Maddox has a number of duties that pull her away from her desk, so the actual daily operations are overseen by Deputy Director Brenda Paulson. Paulson is new to the position, but is already performing her duties better than Brett Fleming, who held the position under Mitchell. Maddox's other section heads are:

- **Senior Aide Antonio Morales, Political and Public Affairs:** Point-man in dealing with city hall and the media, Morales is one of the few management hold-overs from the Mitchell era and a familiar face to the people of Emerald City.
- **Senior Aide Reginald Pryce, Legal:** Brought in from the Boston office, Pryce's slow Brahmin tones belie a razor-sharp legal mind; much of the office's improved performance in federal courts is directly due to his expertise in putting together tight cases to turn over to the U.S. Attorney's office.
- **Senior Aide Paula Hemmings, Records:** Hemmings is sometimes called “the Librarian,” a nickname she likes. Fast approaching mandatory retirement age, Hemmings has been with the Emerald City Office since the second year of its existence and knows everything worth knowing about the place—her assistance was instrumental in helping Meriwether put together the evidence used against Mitchell (who she despised with a passion).
- **Senior Aide Sonja Daugherty, Finance and Budget:** The newest addition to the management team, Daugherty was brought in from the Washington, D.C. office where she was a rising star. She is fully aware how much of her career rides on her cleaning up the byzantine accounting jumble left by her predecessor and the former director, which is why she is rarely seen away from her desk.
- **Senior Aide Bernard Gallows, Internal Affairs:** Gallows is nicknamed “the Hangman”, which he neither likes nor dislikes. Maddox personally requested his transfer from the Houston office. In fact, his was the first name on her list of desired personnel. Gallows is widely respected (and feared) in AEGIS as tireless, implacable, and incorruptible.

DIRECTOR CALPURNIA MADDOX PL6- T17 POINTS

STR 1 STA 2 AGL 2 DEX 3 FGT 5 INT 3 AWE 3 PRE 3

Equipment: Armorweave Jumpsuit (Subtle, Impervious Protection 2), Bracer Computer with Holographic Display, Collapsible Baton (Strength-based Damage 1), Commlink, Tz-90 Phased Blaster Pistol (Ranged Damage 4)

Advantages: Benefit 4 (Rank 2, Security Clearance 2), Close Attack, Connected, Equipment 4, Improved Defense, Improved Initiative, Ranged Attack, Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 6 (+7), Deception 6 (+9), Expertise: AEGIS Agent 12 (+15), Expertise: Current Events 10 (+13), Expertise: Politics 10 (+13), Insight 10 (+13), Investigation 8 (+11), Perception 8 (+11), Persuasion 8 (+11), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+7), Technology 4 (+7), Vehicles 4 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +6, Blaster Pistol +8 (Ranged Damage 4), Collapsible Baton +6 (Close, Damage 2), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 7, Fortitude 4, Toughness 4, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 44 + Powers 0 + Advantages 14 + Skills 45 + Defenses 14 = 117

Complications: Motivation—Justice. **Quirk:** Driven. **Reputation:** “Wicked Witch of the West.” **Responsibility:** Subject to Chain of Command.



AGIS TITLES AND RANKS

In AEGIS, there is a distinction between agency rank designations, division designations, and actual titled positions. For example, all active members below managerial rank regardless of division or position are generically referred to as “agents,” similar to the way ATF, FBI, and CIA personnel are referred to by that title. However, technically, only the combat arms division (Agent Division) personnel of AEGIS are officially called “Agent” (perhaps adding Junior, Special, or Senior, depending on actual rank). Command Division personnel are either Analysts or Administrators, depending on whether they are information gatherers (the former) or information managers (the latter). Analysts are also broken down by whether they act primarily as investigators (“Security Analyst”) or planning and subject matter specialists (“Defense Analysts”). Directorate personnel are either Aides, the most common, or Senior Aides, who are generally section managers.

AGENT DIVISION

The Agent Division is comprised of the AEGIS personnel the public is most likely to remember seeing—the guys in body armor with the fancy guns. Emerald City’s ranking administrator in this division is **Captain Malcolm Forsythe**. He was brought in from the Chicago office and when he was informed “clean house” he cycled practically his entire complement back through the national rotation. Few of the personnel assigned to Forsythe’s active response teams or security detachment were stationed in Emerald City prior to his taking command less than a year ago.

CAPTAIN MALCOLM FORSYTHE

Malcolm Aloysius Forsythe was the son of a career Marine Corps Drill Sergeant and already the pride of his family when he was accepted to the Naval Academy, where he played some record-breaking football. He served as an officer in the Marine Corps during the Gulf War where he earned a Silver Star and a reputation as a no-nonsense go-getter. Bored with normal duty following the war, Forsythe joined AEGIS as soon as his tour of duty ended. He rose through the ranks to become a field commander, a position that provides him with the challenges he thrives on.



Forsythe is a large and naturally intimidating man who looms without trying. He enjoys keeping people off-balance, which comes easily to him as a large black man with the vocabulary of a world-champion *Scrabble* player. He is a consummate professional with an almost motherly concern for the men under his command. In the field, he is happiest with the Big Damn Gun approach to problem-solving... which is a common personality trait among the Agent Division.

SENIOR AGENT ERIC COWELL

Senior Agent Eric Cowell came with Forsythe from Chicago; he is a combat engineer tasked with keeping the teams’ support assets well-trained and maintained.

CAPTAIN MALCOLM FORSYTHE

PL6 • 111 POINTS

STR 4 STA 3 AGL 1 DEX 0 FGT 6 INT 2 AWE 1 PRE 3

Equipment: Armorweave Jumpsuit (Subtle, Impervious Protection 2), Commlink, Tz-90 Phased Blaster Pistol (Ranged Damage 4)

This equipment represents his “in the office” armament—otherwise he’s in full combat dress.

Advantages: All-out Attack, Assessment, Benefit 2 (Rank, Security Clearance), Close Attack 2, Equipment 10, Improved Defense, Improved Hold, Improved Initiative, Interpose, Power Attack, Ranged Attack 2, Teamwork

Skills: Athletics 5 (+9), Deception 3 (+6), Expertise: AEGIS Agent 8 (+10), Expertise: Tactics 8 (+10), Expertise: Word Games 8 (+10), Insight 6 (+7), Intimidation 6 (+9), Investigation 4 (+6), Perception 6 (+7), Persuasion 4 (+7), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+4), Technology 2 (+4), Vehicles 6 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +5, Blaster Pistol +6 (Ranged, Damage 4), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 4)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 6, Fortitude 5, Toughness 5, Will 7

Totals: Abilities 40 + Powers 0 + Advantages 24 + Skills 35+ Defenses 12 = 111

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility.** **Motivation—Thrills.** **Reputation:** Epic badass. **Responsibility:** Subject to Chain of Command.

KAREEM SCHMIDT

Kareem Schmidt, a German immigrant of Turkish descent, was lured away from UNISON (United Nations International Superhuman Oversight Network) to join AEGIS as the E.C. branch’s combat trainer. Exactly how they lured him away from UNISON is the subject of much speculation among the senior agents.

OTHER AGENTS

The remainder of Forsythe’s tactical rank staff is made up of **Senior Agent Gordon Delaney** (Team Alpha), **Senior Agent Kevin Carver** (Team Bravo), **Senior Agent Keith Hardison** (Team Charlie), **Senior Agent George Hightower** (Team Delta), **Senior Agent Manual Paolo** (Team Echo), **Senior Agent Rachel Hunt** (Team Foxtrot), and **Senior Agent Charles Wong** (Base Security).

AGENT PRACTICES & TACTICS

AEGIS standard practice is to use a five-man squad plus a field commander for an Active Response Team (ART). The complement is generally three Light Weapons men, one Heavy Weapons man, and a Support person (usually Electronics Warfare or Combat Engineer, both when necessary). Designations are team and function specific. For example, Senior Agent Manual Paolo is Echo-Leader, with Echo-One, Echo-Two, and Echo-Three as Light Weapons, Echo-Four as Heavy Weapons, and Echo-Five as Support.

Unlike the three eight-hour duty shifts of most AEGIS personnel, ARTs use two 12-hour duty shifts with a primary team, a reserve team, and a “floating team” that can supplement the other two (to allow for vacations, days off, and the like) for each shift. Base Security uses the same shifts as the ARTs, with eight men on each shift that can be quickly supplemented by an ART if necessary.

COMMAND DIVISION

Command Division is usually tasked with investigation and analysis, but like members of the Agent Division, are required to remain armed as investigations can turn “hot” with little to no warning.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR LUCAS MERIWETHER

Chief Administrator Lucas Meriwether fills the division’s top seat for the Emerald City’s branch. A career government agent with a decade of working with the NSA before coming to AEGIS, Meriwether maintains plenty of ties to the U.S. intelligence community—which is what initially brought him to Director Powers’ attention.



Lucas Meriwether has a relatively “light” personnel file. Outside of his history with the NSA (likely because of it), his file contains very little information regarding where he has operated or what he did during his career. Even his supervisory comments and recommendations are classified above the security rating of the people working in the Emerald City Human Resources office. When the Analyst Division Administrator position for the Emerald City office came open, he was personally selected by Senior Director Powers over any of the other applicants for the job. Presumably Meriwether and the Director have sufficient history and a tight enough working relationship to warrant this move, but the details of their relationship are unknown.

Meriwether isn’t the sort that leads from the front, instead he prefers to watch and listen, seldom commenting until he’s heard all he needs, then he steps in and makes his preferences known. His management style is low-key, but highly-informed, and his people exhibit a quiet but unshakeable respect for the man. He never raises his voice or loses his cool.

OTHER AGENTS

Meriwether is in charge of all investigative operations for the branch, and his people are therefore the investigative and analysis personnel as well as the forensics and security IT staff (operations IT staff are part of the Directorate department). His reporting Security Analysts are **Sylvia Whitehead**, a former prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney’s office that decided she could do more good in AEGIS than in a courtroom; **Peyton Ramos**, who moved to AEGIS from the LAPD’s Internal Affairs Department and who is an expert in ferreting out exploitable weaknesses in systems and people alike; **Justin McKenzie**, transferred from Agent Division where he was previously a member of one of the Philadelphia branch’s ARTs before being removed from combat duty for medical reasons; and **Elizabeth Nguyen**, a driven young woman who transferred from Records and is making quite a name for herself for her dedication to the job. In addition to the Security Analysts, Command Division also includes a number of

Defense Analysts whose posts are referred to as “Desks” representing specific areas of concern or national AEGIS task forces. **Adam Goentz** (Super-criminal Organizations Desk), **Duncan Riley** (Cyber Crimes Desk), and **Megan Annaliese** (Special Projects Desk) predate Meriwether’s tenure, but **Jules Burgess** (Silver Storm Desk) and **Isabel Morrow** (Galactic Survey Task Force) are post-Silver Storm additions.

TECHNICAL SECTION

Organizationally, Technical Section has been rolled under Command Division rather than kept a separate unit as in some other branches. **Dr. Hadritha Pathiparti** is the chief Technical Analyst, combining an M.D. with multiple doctorates. **Marco Cruz** and **Walter Glass** assist him, specializing in electronics and chemistry respectively, **Dr. Skyler Bianco** is in charge of Autopsy/Pathology, and **Tobias “Toby” Mills** manages IT security (drafting operations IT when he needs extra hands).

AEGIS ANALYST JUSTIN “EIGHTBALL” MCKENZIE

Justin McKenzie came to AEGIS after two tours with the United States Marine Corps, and quickly earned a reputation as an exemplary agent. He earned the nickname “Eightball” from fellow agents for his talent at getting caught in the thick of things but always managing to extricate himself. His career as a combat agent for AEGIS ended after being captured and tortured by the telepathic serial killer Headhunter, who had not appreciated a ‘flatline’ getting so close to capturing him. AEGIS shrinks said McKenzie couldn’t go back out as a combat agent given the trauma he suffered, but he had enough friends high enough in the agency that he wasn’t forced to retire—instead, he was transferred to Analyst Division. Technically, this was a demotion, but you couldn’t tell by the way he acts. McKenzie is happy to still be alive and sane, and finds his colleagues (none of whom have ever had to fire their weapon in the course of duty) very amusing and a change of pace from his old friends.



McKenzie is the earthy common-sense member of the Emerald City AEGIS team. He’s the only one in his section with practical experience fighting the people he and his colleagues now study, and he’s often called on to bring that experience to his work.

AEGIS ANALYST ELIZABETH NGUYEN

Analyst Nguyen’s parents were among the last refugees to escape the fall of Vietnam immediately prior to the American withdrawal. They adapted completely to their new role as American citizens, but suffered severe prejudice from their new neighbors. Growing up, Elizabeth felt pressure to perform twice as well as her peers just to be considered equal. This left her with strong feelings about equality and a pathological work ethic. She has no life outside of the office, certain that this report or that paperwork could be just a little better if she spent one

LUCAS MERIWETHER

PL4 • 100 POINTS

STR 2 **STA** 2 **AGL** 1 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 4 **INT** 4 **AWE** 4 **PRE** 1

Equipment: Collapsible Baton (Strength-based Damage 1), Commlink, Light Pistol (Ranged Damage 3), Multi-tool, Smartphone, Undercover Shirt (Protection 2, Subtle)

Advantages: Benefit 2 (Rank, Security Clearance), Contacts, Connected, Defensive Attack, Equipment 3, Improved Defense, Languages 4 (Arabic, French, German, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese), Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 3 (+5), Deception 11 (+12), Expertise: AEGIS Agent 10 (+14), Expertise: Current Events 6 (+12), Expertise: History 6 (+12), Expertise: Spy 10 (+14), Insight 8 (+12), Investigation 8 (+12), Perception 8 (+12), Persuasion 8 (+9), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+5), Technology 4 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +1, Collapsible Baton +4 (Close, Damage 2), Light Pistol +4 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 4, Parry 4, Fortitude 3, Toughness 4, Will 5

Totals: Abilities 38 + Powers 0 + Advantages 14 + Skills 43 + Defenses 5 = 100

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility.** **Reputation:** Spy who won’t talk about his past. **Responsibility:** Subject to Chain of Command.

JUSTIN “EIGHTBALL” MCKENZIE

PL6 • 104 POINTS

STR 2 **STA** 2 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 6 **INT** 1 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 2

Equipment: Commlink, Flashlight, Light Pistol (Ranged Damage 3), Undercover Shirt (Protection 2, Subtle)

Advantages: Benefit 2 (AEGIS Security Clearance), Contacts, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 2, Great Endurance, Improved Defense, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Quick Draw, Set-up, Well-informed

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+6), Athletics 4 (+6), Deception 4 (+6), Expertise: AEGIS Agent 7 (+8), Expertise: Current Events 5 (+6), Expertise: Superhumans 6 (+7), Expertise: Streetwise 6 (+7), Insight 6 (+8), Intimidation 6 (+8), Investigation 8 (+9), Perception 6 (+8), Persuasion 4 (+6), Ranged Combat: Guns 8 (+9), Stealth 2 (+4), Treatment 4 (+5), Vehicles 4 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +6, Light Pistol +9 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 5, Toughness 6/4* (*without Defensive Roll), Will 7

Totals: Abilities 36 + Powers 0 + Advantages 14 + Skills 42 + Defenses 12 = 104

Complications: **Motivation—Patriotism.** **Quirk—‘Gung-Ho’:** Tends to charge in without thinking, often resorting to violent action over strategy. **Quirk—Post Traumatic Stress Disorder:** Suffers from minor PTSD, which flares up when under extreme stress.

more evening or weekend working on it. Behind her back, the other AEGIS agents joke that she puts workaholics to shame; there is also an office pool going as to whether she has a nervous breakdown before or after she drives one of the other analysts homicidal trying to keep up with her.

Nguyen (“Please just call me ‘Beth’... I insist.”) is much too perky and cheerful by half, as if her life depended on her being liked by every-



ELIZABETH NGUYEN

PL4 • 59 POINTS

STR 0 STA 1 AGL 1 DEX 0 FGT 3 INT 2 AWE 2 PRE 0

Equipment: Commlink, Flashlight, Light Pistol (Ranged Damage 3), Undercover Shirt (Protection 2, Subtle)**Advantages:** Benefit (AEGIS Security Clearance), Contacts, Equipment 2, Jack-of-all-trades, Languages (Vietnamese; English is native), Well-informed**Skills:** Acrobatics 3 (+4), Athletics 4 (+4), Deception 4 (+4), Expertise: AEGIS Analyst 8 (+10), Expertise: Current Events 6 (+8), Expertise: Superhumans 6 (+8), Insight 3 (+5), Investigation 6 (+8), Perception 3 (+5), Persuasion 3 (+3), Ranged Combat: Guns 5 (+5), Technology 3 (+5)**Offense:** Initiative +1, Light Pistol +5 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 0)**Defense:** Dodge 4, Parry 3, Fortitude 3, Toughness 3, Will 4**Totals:** Abilities 18 + Powers 0 + Advantages 7 + Skills 27 + Defenses 7 = 59**Complication:** Motivation—Patriotism and Ambition. **Quirk—Socially Awkward:** Her intensity tends to be off-putting.

PEYTON RAMOS

PL4 • 65 POINTS

STR 1 STA 1 AGL 0 DEX 1 FGT 4 INT 1 AWE 1 PRE 1

Equipment: Collapsible Baton (Strength-based Damage 1), Commlink, Light Pistol (Ranged Damage 3), Multi-tool, Tablet Computer, Undercover Shirt (Protection 2, Subtle)**Advantages:** Benefit (Security Clearance), Contacts, Defensive Roll, Equipment 3, Improved Defense, Languages (Spanish), Well-informed**Skills:** Athletics 3 (+4), Deception 5 (+6), Expertise: AEGIS Agent 6 (+7), Expertise: Current Events 6 (+7), Insight 8 (+9), Investigation 8 (+9), Perception 6 (+7), Persuasion 4 (+5), Ranged Combat: Guns 3 (+4), Technology 5 (+6)**Offense:** Initiative +0, Collapsible Baton +4 (Close, Damage 2) Light Pistol +4 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 1)**Defense:** Dodge 4, Parry 4, Fortitude 3, Toughness 4 (3 without Defensive Roll), Will 4**Totals:** Abilities 20 + Powers 0 + Advantages 9 + Skills 27 + Defenses 9 = 65**Complications:** Motivation—Power and Responsibility. **Quirk:** Self-deluded about his level of competence. **Reputation:** Major-league weasel. **Responsibility:** Subject to chain of command.

one. She's also prone to speaking too quickly and overloading people with information.

AEGIS ANALYST PEYTON RAMOS

Peyton Ramos considers himself a courageous natural-born leader. He is, however, frustrated by others' inability to recognize those qualities in him because of their own jealousies and deficiencies. The "friction" caused by his behavior and everyone's reactions to him prompted his departure from the LAPD, where he excelled in Internal Affairs (and was intensely disliked by his co-workers), from the FBI, where he excelled at Internal Affairs (and was intensely disliked by his co-workers), and finally to AEGIS.

At AEGIS, he gravitated to the field of security analysis, where his innate gift for ferreting out weaknesses and ex-

SYLVIA WHITEHEAD

PL4 • 78 POINTS

STR 0 STA 1 AGL 1 DEX 0 FGT 4 INT 4 AWE 2 PRE 2

Equipment: Collapsible Baton (Strength-based Damage 1), Commlink, Light Pistol (Ranged Damage 3), Multi-tool, Tablet Computer, Undercover Shirt (Protection 2, Subtle)**Advantages:** Benefit (Security Clearance), Connected, Contacts, Equipment 3, Improved Defense, Languages (Greek), Well-informed**Skills:** Athletics 3 (+3), Deception 7 (+9), Expertise: AEGIS Agent 8 (+12), Expertise: Current Events 6 (+10), Expertise: Law 6 (+10), Insight 8 (+10), Investigation 6 (+10), Perception 6 (+8), Persuasion 6 (+8), Ranged Combat: Guns 5 (+5), Technology 5 (+9)**Offense:** Initiative +1, Collapsible Baton +4 (Close, Damage 1) Light Pistol +5 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 1)**Defense:** Dodge 4, Parry 4, Fortitude 2, Toughness 3, Will 6**Totals:** Abilities 28 + Powers 0 + Advantages 9 + Skills 33 + Defenses 8 = 78**Complications:** Motivation—Justice and Responsibility. **Quirk:** Workaholic. **Responsibility:** Subject to chain of command.

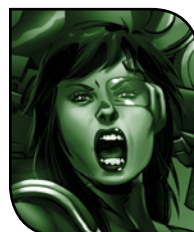
ploitable vulnerabilities has served him well. Given his poor relationship with most of his peers and the ECPD officers with whom he interacts (*who really* don't like him), Ramos has risen as high as he can, something he's slowly realizing. Ramos believes his former director (with whom he got along quite well) was shown the door by jealous bureaucrats, the same people who are now arrayed against Ramos. He is secretly feeding information to the CIA about various classified AEGIS operations in hopes of eventually worming his way into a position at Langley. Ramos is unaware that Meriwether knows all about the information he's leaking and is handpicking the juicy tidbits available to Ramos in order to control the leaks and teach Ramos a lesson.

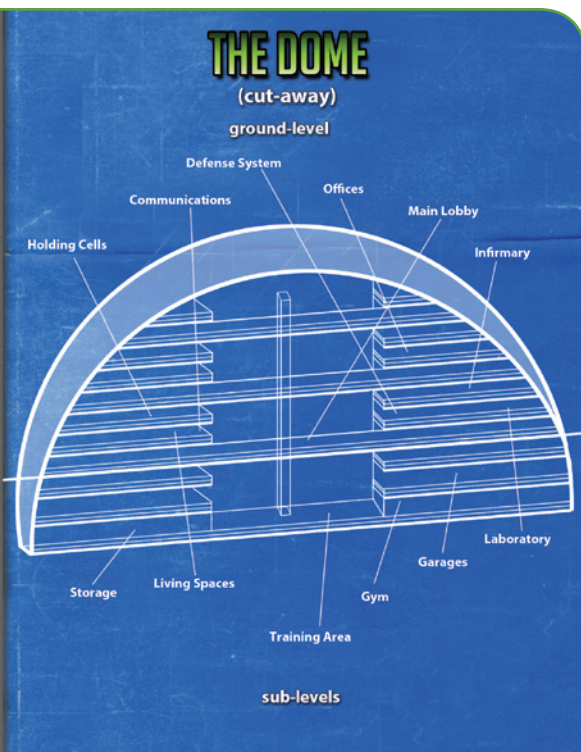
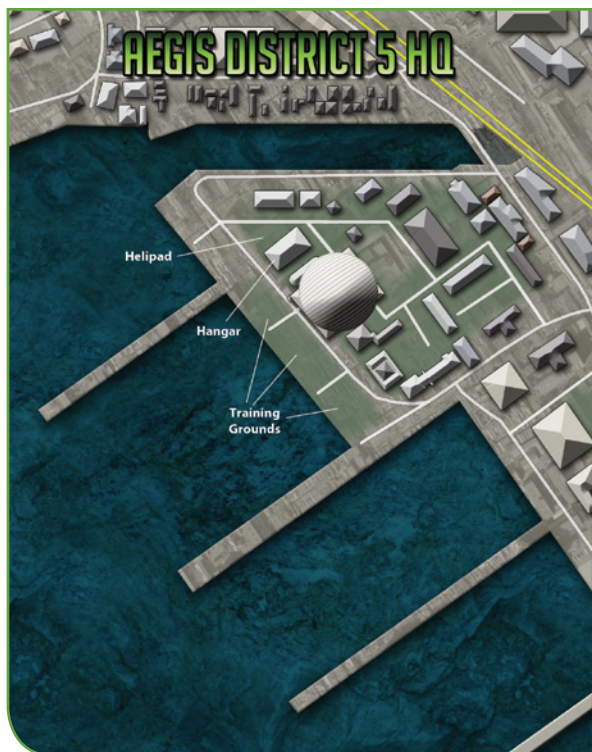


AEGIS ANALYST SYLVIA WHITEHEAD

Sylvia Whitehead came to AEGIS from the U.S. Attorney's office in Seattle. In a remarkably short period of time she forged an impressive reputation as a prosecutor and would have been appointed to the bench if she hadn't changed her life's focus. Whitehead lost a friend at the hands of the notorious me-tahuman killer-for-hire Gavin "Stiletto" Bolger and was forced to watch as a botched AEGIS investigation combined with a botched prosecution to put Bolger back on the street. Infuriated by the gross incompetence that cost her friend's family any justice or closure, she worked her way into AEGIS' investigative ranks.

Whitehead is dedicated to her job and specifically to making sure no criminal skirts the law thanks to sloppy procedure. She has an impeccable work ethic and all the cases she hands over to prosecutors are as airtight and by-





the-book as possible. Unsurprisingly, she has inspired the same level of respect and admiration among her AEGIS peers as she did the legal community. Her meticulous attention to detail and incredible knowledge of legal, federal, and agency procedure combined with her extensive network of friends in legal circles make her incredibly effective.

FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

Prior to the Silver Storm, the AEGIS Emerald City branch was squeezed into three floors of the federal building downtown. The agency kept its vehicles and storage facilities at a small rented airfield south of the city and had to share many resources with other agencies—forensic needs, for one example, had to be sourced through the local FBI office. This changed thanks to Silver Storm and the events that followed. Showing the same political acumen he used to keep AEGIS out of the Department of Homeland Security a few years earlier, Director Powers framed the situation in Emerald City as a “superhuman disaster area” only AEGIS had the training and expertise to deal with. With that, he succeeded in getting an Emergency Spending Bill pushed through Congress that dramatically increased the resources available to AEGIS in the city. The money allowed AEGIS to acquire the land for a new headquarters, as well as increase the amount of personnel and equipment allocated to the branch.

THE DOME

The main headquarters for AEGIS in Emerald City is a structure known as “the Dome.” The facility began its life during World War II when it was built to be a Naval Station and was decommissioned following the Vietnam War. For a

number of years it sat unused until the early 1990s. Then, a small consortium of developers joined forces and tried to convert the structure into a massive sports stadium, an effort that died a slow and ugly political and financial death after being only partially completed. AEGIS bought the property with the influx of capital from Uncle Sam, then dove into a whirlwind of construction and repurposing. Large subsurface ship-repair bays were transformed into storage and training areas, offices, and garage space; the visible structure above ground was covered by the dome the headquarters is named for, the infrastructure was filled in and heavily reinforced, and the large parking areas converted to training fields, an airpad/heliport, and a sizable surrounding defensive buffer. Small amounts of finishing work are ongoing, but the majority of the facility was completed in a matter of months (around the clock shifts, and security for the construction site brought in from branches around the country) and is fully operational. Strictly speaking, the Dome is actually larger than the branch needs and talk has begun about consolidating a number of Region Five’s smaller facilities, including the regional “seat” currently in Portland, Oregon, to Emerald City.

HEADQUARTERS: THE DOME

26 POINTS

Size: Colossal **Toughness:** 12 (external average; internal can range from 8 for interior walls to 16 for reinforced structures); **Features:** Communications, Defense System, Dock, Fire Prevention System, Garage, Grounds, Gym, Hangar, Holding Cells, Infirmary, Laboratory, Living Space, Personnel, Power System, Security System 3 (DC 30), Workshop

SITE COMPLEMENT

The Dome is staffed by 146 personnel spread among the three divisions, a considerably larger number than is normal for a city of Emerald City’s size.

- **The Directorate:** Director, Deputy Director, Heads of Section (5), Support Staff for all Sections (42 total)
- **Agent Division:** Agent Commander, Lead Combat Engineer, Combat Trainer, Active Response Teams (6 teams with 6 agents each), Base Security Detachment (17), Support Staff (14 (Motor Pool, Equipment Room, etc.))
- **Command Division:** Chief Administrator, Security Analysts (4), Defense Analysts (5), Field Investigators (8), Technical Analysts (5), Lab Techs and Support Staff (14)
- **Notable Equipment:** MAX Armor (12), SuperMAX Armor (6); Combat Motorcycles (8), Superhuman Containment Trucks (2); Combat Speedboats (2); Collapsing Helicopters (3), Flying APC (1), Flying Motorcycles (6), VTOL Folding Fighter Jets (1)

AEGIS ACTIVE RESPONSE TEAM AGENT PLS • 75 PTS

STR 2 STA 2 AGL 2 DEX 1 FGT 5 INT 1 AWE 1 PRE 1

Equipment: Combat-Dress **Uniform:** Combat Armor (Impervious Protection 4; Immunity 3 (Cold, Gas effects, Heat); Quirk 2: Bulky (Dodge and Parry reduced by 1 each); Integrated Ops Helmet (Commlink, Computer, GPS, Senses 3 (Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Low-light Vision)), 35 points of other equipment

Advantages: Assessment, Benefit (Security Clearance), Close Attack 2, Equipment 10, Teamwork

Skills: Athletics 5 (+7), Deception 4 (+5), Expertise: AEGIS Agent 4 (+5), Expertise: Tactics 4 (+5), Insight 4 (+5), Intimidation 4 (+5), Investigation 2 (+3), Perception 4 (+5), Persuasion 2 (+3), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+5), Technology 3 (+4), Vehicles 4 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +2, Baton +7 (Close, Damage 3), Guns +5 (Ranged, Damage varies by weapon), Unarmed +7 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense*: Dodge 4, Parry 4, Fortitude 4, Toughness 6, Will 4 *Dodge, Parry, and Toughness include modifiers from Combat Armor

Totals: Abilities 30 + Powers 0 + Advantages 15 + Skills 22 + Defenses 8 = 75

Complications **Motivation—Doing Good, Justice, Patriotism, or Thrills** (choose one). **Responsibility:** Subject to chain of Command.

AEGIS AIDE (DIRECTORATE) PL3 • 45 PTS

STR 1 STA 1 AGL 0 DEX 0 FGT 2 INT 2 AWE 1 PRE 2

Equipment: 10 points of AEGIS equipment as needed.

Advantages: Benefit (Security Clearance), Connected, Equipment 2

Skills: Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: AEGIS Aide 6 (+8), Expertise: Current Events 4 (+6), Insight 6 (+7), Perception 4 (+5), Persuasion 6 (+8), Ranged Combat: Guns 3 (+3), Technology 1 (+3)

Offense: Initiative +0, Ranged Combat: Gun +3 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed +2 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 2, Parry 2, Fortitude 2, Toughness 1, Will 3

Totals: Abilities 18 + Powers 0 + Advantages 4 + Skills 18 + Defenses 5 = 45

Complications **Motivation—Doing Good, Justice, Patriotism, or Thrills** (choose one). **Responsibility:** Subject to chain of Command.

AEGIS AGENTS

These sets of stats represent the average agents heroes are likely to encounter for each of the three divisions. The Equipment ranks and other numbers assume the AEGIS Agent is equipped with Combat-Dress, Collapsible Baton, Standard Sidearm, and a Heavy Assault Weapon, with a couple of equipment points left over for handcuffs and a flashlight. Points may be distributed any number of other ways at your discretion depending on the role of the AEGIS agent, including the following: the Support Agent in an ART, for example, uses a Light Assault Weapon and spends those extra equipment points on a Lock Release Gun and various toolkits. For the Aide, the numbers assume a Light Pistol at most and no armor, plus a very expensive cellphone. Similarly, the average Analyst is in plainclothes and uses a Light Pistol, but also has a Collapsible Baton, the equivalent of an Undercover Shirt, a Commlink, and a number of small tools that includes a very nice tablet computer.

STANDARD ISSUE EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

AEGIS has a number of high-tech pieces of equipment commonly used by agents. The signature weapon of the Agent Division is the Phased Blaster, which fires a packet of highly charged particles that have significant stopping power; the carbine can be set to higher frequencies that interfere with a human nervous system or act as a focused EMP, and the heavy weapon has the ability to turn the air around the beam into a short-distance, intensely hot plasma beam.

- **Full-Dress Uniform:** Armorweave Jumpsuit (Impervious Protection 2, Subtle) • 5 points
- **Combat-Dress Uniform:** Combat Armor (Impervious Protection 4; Immunity 3 (Cold, Gas effects, Heat); Quirk 2: Bulky (Dodge and Parry reduced by 1 each); Integrated Ops Helmet (Commlink, Computer, GPS, Senses 3 (Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Low-light Vision)) • 15 points

AEGIS ANALYST (COMMAND DIVISION) PL4 • 66 PTS

STR 1 STA 2 AGL 2 DEX 1 FGT 3 INT 2 AWE 2 PRE 2

Equipment: 15 points of AEGIS equipment as needed.

Advantages: Benefit (Security Clearance), Contacts, Equipment 3, Improved Defense, Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 3 (+4), Deception 5 (+7), Expertise: AEGIS Agent 4 (+6), Expertise: Current Events 6 (+8), Insight 6 (+8), Investigation 6 (+8), Perception 6 (+8), Persuasion 4 (+6), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+5), Technology 4 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +2, Collapsible Baton +3 (Close, Damage 2), Ranged Combat: Gun +4 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 4, Parry 4, Fortitude 3, Toughness 2, Will 3

Totals: Abilities 30 + Powers 0 + Advantages 7 + Skills 24 + Defenses 5 = 66 points

Complications **Motivation—Doing Good, Justice, Patriotism, or Thrills** (choose one). **Responsibility:** Subject to chain of Command.

MAX ARMOR

50 POINTS

Communication 2 (Radio, 1 mile); Enhanced Strength 4; Immunity 10 (Life Support); Protection 8, Impervious 6; **Weapons Array** (17 points; **Blaster** (Ranged Damage 7, Accurate 3), **AE: Targeted Strobe** (Ranged Cumulative Affliction 7 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Visually Impaired, Visually Disabled, Visually Unaware), Accurate 3, Limited to Vision), **AE: Snare** (Ranged Cumulative Affliction 7 (Resisted by Dodge and Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobile), Accurate 3, Extra Condition, Limited Degree)); Senses 3 (Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Low-light Vision); Removable –12 points • 50 points

SUPERMAX ARMOR

59 POINTS

Communication 2 (radio, 1 mile); Enhanced Strength 6; Immunity 10 (Life Support); Protection 10, Impervious 8; **Weapons Array** (21 points; **Blaster** (Ranged Damage 9, Accurate 3), **AE: Targeted Strobe** (Ranged Cumulative Affliction 9 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Visually Impaired, Visually Disabled, Visually Unaware), Accurate 3, Limited to Vision), **AE: Snare** (Ranged Cumulative Affliction 9 (Resisted by Dodge and Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobile), Accurate 3, Extra Condition, Limited Degree)); Senses 3 (Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Low-light Vision); Removable –15 points • 59 points

- **Collapsible Baton:** Strength-based Damage 1 (Feature: Collapsible) • 2 points
- **Plainclothes Sidearm:** Glock-19 light pistol (Ranged Damage 3) • 6 points
- **Standard Sidearm:** Tz-90 Phased Blaster Pistol (Ranged Damage 4) • 8 points
- **Light Assault Weapon:** Tz-120 Phased Blaster Carbine (Ranged Multiattack Damage 5, AE: Ranged Cumulative Affliction 5 (Resisted by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated), AE: Ranged Nullify 5, Broad: Electronics, Simultaneous) • 17 points
- **Heavy Assault Weapon:** Tz-400 Man-Portable Phased Blaster Cannon (Ranged Multiattack Damage 7, Inaccurate, AE: Line Area 3 (120 feet) Damage 5 • 21 points

In addition to standard field equipment, AEGIS ART members are trained in the operation of MAX powered armor. The armor is expensive and sees far less use than most other operational gear, this is especially true of the heavier SuperMAX armor. Note that an Active Response Team member in a MAX Armor suit is PL8, and in SuperMAX armor is PL9.

VEHICLES

AEGIS uses a number of different vehicles, many of which are variations on the vehicles presented in **Chapter 7** of the *Hero's Handbook*. AEGIS operates a small fleet of unmarked sedans (as Police Cruiser, but add Protection 1 and Impervious 6) and utility vans (as Armored Car) for the majority of mundane operational needs. Other, more specialized vehicles include:

- **Combat Motorcycle:** A heavy-set motorcycle with solid reinforced tires, an armored fuel tank, and armored plates set at the front. Twin machine guns poke through ports on either side of the front armor.

IN THE FIELD

There are two types of AEGIS agents the public is likely to meet: Plainclothes and Full-Dress. Plainclothes are more common, particularly for situations in which the agency wants its people to blend in and not intimidate civilians. These agents are indistinguishable from the generic federal agent—dark suit and tie, sunglasses, earpiece comm, and a light pistol. Directorate division personnel are the most likely to be encountered in this attire (minus the comm and firearm), though Command Division Analysts frequently choose to be as unobtrusive as possible when conducting field investigations. Full-Dress is the traditional image of the AEGIS agent popularized in the media—armorweave jumpsuit with AEGIS insignia and a prominently-worn blaster sidearm. Base Security are always in Full-Dress.

A third type of agent most members of the public hope *not* to meet are Combat-Dress agents. Outside of ceremonial duties, when encountered off-base the Active Response Teams are always in Combat-Dress. This consists of combat body armor, integrated Ops Helmets, and either Light or Heavy Assault Weapons.

As Motorcycle, with Protection 2 (Impervious 6) and Ranged Multiattack Damage 6.

- **Superhuman Containment Truck:** Used for prisoner transport to the base holding cells or to meet prison transports bound for distant facilities. As APC, except Impervious 12, Feature – Toughness also applies against rear occupants, and Close Range Concentration Nullify 12, Broad (Mutant powers), Effortless, Quirk (Limited to rear occupants in restraint system), Simultaneous.
- **Combat Speedboats:** An armored speedboat with computerized remote machine gun pods on the bow. As Speedboat, with Protection 2 (Impervious 6) and Ranged Multiattack Damage 6.
- **Collapsing Helicopter:** A gunship that can completely collapse and fold in its props and tail. As Military Helicopter, with Feature (Collapsible propellers and tail).
- **Flying APC:** The ART's transport of choice, a Flying APC closely resembles a normal APC but where the ground version has wheel bases, this model instead has gravitic propulsion units. As APC, but trade its standard movement effect for the same ranks of Flight.
- **Flying Motorcycle:** A single-man vehicle (that actually more closely resembles a large jet-ski than a motorcycle) sometimes also called a gravcycle. Flies rather than rolls but has the same enhancements as the Combat Motorcycle (previously) and trade its movement effect for the same ranks of Flight.
- **VSTOL Folding Fighter Jet:** Similarly to the Collapsing Helicopter, this VSTOL has collapsing wings and tail assembly for easier storage in limited space; the VSTOL capabilities also mean it can use the airpad/heliport at the Dome.

THE MILITARY

The United States military has a presence in Emerald City and the surrounding area. Their availability helped alleviate the chaos that ensued after the Silver Storm. Even with the appearance of new superheroes to help combat stormers and other super-powered criminals, the military is frequently called in to lend assistance.

FORT BREWER NAVAL BASE

Fort Brewer is a principle naval birth for U.S. nuclear submarines. It consists of three births, two refit wharves, and a covered dry dock facility. The base also has one explosives-handling wharf and one lay berth which is used for naval surface ships and foreign vessels. Mooring buoys act as anchorages for three ships or sea craft, the buoys are rated to survive the effects of hurricanes are ideal berths for base support vessels in such weather. The base is primarily used for the maintenance, repair, overhaul, and modernization of the nuclear submarine fleet, while a weapons facility provides missiles and weapons system support to the ballistic missile submarine fleet.

Security at Fort Brewer is, understandably, extremely tight considering the grade of weapons they have on hand. Access to the base requires passing through two checkpoints, and each birth is also protected by its own checkpoint. Visitors must wear an identification tag and be accompanied by a naval officer or civilian employee at all times. Security personnel are heavily armed and patrol the base frequently with instructions to shoot to disable any intruders or visitors acting suspiciously.



Fort Brewer Naval Base provides housing for 8,000 naval personnel and their dependents, and has a civilian staff of 1,600. The base also hosts an instructional facility which provides technical training for sailors in the operation and maintenance of nuclear ballistic missile and guided missile submarines as well as their systems. In an effort to encourage inter-service cooperation, personnel at the base use naval support vessels to assist the U.S. Coast Guard in shore patrol, search and rescue, and drug-busting efforts.

For personnel at the Fort Brewer, use the Soldier archetype in **Chapter 9** of the *Hero's Handbook*, changing the Expertise skill to Expertise: Navy. For the naval vessels at the base, use the vehicle information in **Chapter 7** of the *Hero's Handbook*. Apart from submarines, there are rarely ships larger than cutters stationed at Fort Brewer. The only exception are infrequent visits from the Missile Defense Agency's Sea-Based X-Band (SBX) Radar vessel, which is a self-propelled, sea-going radar station designed to operate on the open ocean.

ADMIRAL HENRY FINLEY, USN

Admiral Finley is the commander of the Fort Brewer Naval Base. A career officer, he has a reputation for doing what it takes to get the job done. He tends to speak first and revise his opinions when he gets more information. Sometimes this approach makes him look foolish, but he'd rather make a decision quickly than miss the opportunity to deal with a situation before it blows up. His strong leadership style and the fact that he was a trouble-maker as a young officer has earned him the respect of those serving under him, most of whom refer to him only as "the Old Man."



An avid golfer, Finley can often be found in his office, putter in hand as he tries to putt a golf ball into a glass. The Admiral is 65 with a grey crew cut and tightly-cropped beard. He walks with a slight limp due to an accident he suffered in his early 40s. Finley is a widower with four children: three daughters aged 32, 28, and 23, and a son, an officer at Fort Brewer, aged 26. The Admiral is a proud grandfather, and talks animatedly of his seven grandchildren if given the chance.

JOINT BASE CLARK-GORDON

Joint Base Clark-Gordon is so called because it's the home of both the U.S. Army and the Air Force in the region. It was originally two separate facilities that operated as such for 55 years; Fort Clark and Gordon Air Force Base were merged in 2005 due to a government initiative to maximize infrastructure and save taxpayer money.

Located on the northern peninsula at the entrance of Malory Bay, Joint Base Clark-Gordon is one the largest military installations of its kind on U.S. soil. The base acts primarily as a personnel transfer and training facility. It also houses the Joint Regional Correctional Facility which originally housed minimum and medium security prisoners from all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, but has been pressed into service in housing non-powered civilian prisoners until the overcrowding situation in the Emerald City Corrections System can be alleviated.

Also located on the base are two airfields which support the Reynolds Flight Test Center and the Whitmore Flight Research Center where experimental aircraft are designed, built, and tested. The research center also designs components for NASA and facilities that maintain and repair aircraft. The hangars located around the field hold many top secret projects, some purely military while others are joint military/civilian ventures. Rumors abound both on the base and off, that one of hangars, designated Hangar 13, holds the remains of several UFOs that allegedly crashed in the Atlas Mountains in 1947, and the Air Force is using the reversed engineered alien technology in their experimental planes. Other rumors hint that the bodies of occupants are also located at the base, and the government is trying to cover the evidence up with the flight research center.

Joint Base Clark-Gordon houses more than 20,000 soldiers and civilian workers. The post supports over 110,000 military retirees and more than 25,000 family members living both on and off post.

For personnel at the Joint Base, use the Soldier archetype in **Chapter 9** of the *Hero's Handbook*. For Air Force personnel, change the Expertise skill to Expertise: Air Force. For the aircraft at the base, use the vehicle information **Chapter 7** of the *Hero's Handbook* for military helicopters, jet fighters, and bombers.

GENERAL STEVEN ALYN

General Steven Alyn is the commanding officer of Joint Base Clark-Gordon, as well as the commander of the army personnel stationed at the base. He is a hard-bitten and tough-talking man who isn't afraid to speak his mind and damn any who don't like it. He has served on the frontline of several military operations, and feels that the only way to make a boy into a man (or, grudgingly, a girl into a woman) is by placing that person in a terrifying situation. His up-front attitude is generally appreciated by his subordinates, but has caused some issues with both his wife and his daughter.

Alan is in his early 60s, stands 6'2" tall and is still quite fit for his age. He keeps his hair in a regulation high and tight, and while his personal grooming is pristine, he enjoys smoking cigars and is seen quite frequently with well-chewed stogie sticking out of his mouth.



COLONEL DENISE GRAY

Colonel Denise Gray is the second in command of Joint Base Clark-Gordon, and is also the commander of the Air Force personnel stationed there. She began her career as an Air Force scientist, specializing in astrophysics and material engineering. Her work in perfecting and stabilizing new experimental compounds for use in the armor for jet fighters led her to being promoted to the top-secret facilities at Joint Base Clark-Gordon where she continued her work until promoted into command positions.



Denise is a relatively attractive woman in her early 40s with short blonde hair and sharp, blue eyes. Though her demeanor comes across as relatively docile, she is a decisive leader who is highly intelligent and not averse to taking what steps are necessary to see her mission complete.

VANGUARD

"They also serve who only stand and wait" could be the unofficial motto of the Vanguard, an organization with tremendous potential and resources that has lost its way. Founded by the famous adventurer Thomas "Doc" Prophet in the post-World War II era, Vanguard original did considerable work, quietly and behind the scenes. Funded by Doc Prophet's fortune and guided by his brilliance, they hunted escaped Nazis and dealt with the after-effects of the wartime experiments of the Axis powers. They helped to contain the threat of Communism in Asia and Eastern Europe, and began building a

AREA V AND THE AV CLUB

Vanguard's "Area V" (sometimes said as "Area Five") is a hidden, highly secure warehouse complex where the organization stores mementos and the spoils of decades of association with costumed heroes and villains. Initially, it was the kind of place where "top men" studied arcane and technological oddities. Increasingly, it has become a half-forgotten "attic" where Vanguard simply stashes things, keeping them tagged and cataloged, but otherwise largely forgetting about them. Area V contains everything from the contents of mad scientists' labs to ancient artifacts recovered from archeological digs to the life's work of long-dead pulp-era heroes and villains, and perhaps even genetic samples and other remains of those selfsame people.

Area V has a number of potential uses in a *Mutants & Masterminds* series, including:

ORIGIN

Area V is filled with countless ready-made origins for new heroes and villains. All someone needs to do with pick up the right (or wrong) container to find an alien weapon, or get bombarded with strange otherworldly radiation, or receive the blessing (or curse) or some ancient sorcerer or deity. The only real limit is access to the facility and its contents, but the place does have a staff, and accidents do happen. There's also the distinct possibility of Vanguard (or a faction thereof) deliberately using Area V to create its own super-powered agents, much as they tried to do with Victor.

TARGET

Area V contains items that could change the course of history, were they to fall into the wrong hands. Any number of villains might seek out the warehouse if they learned of its existence in order to loot it, or to find some key item to their latest schemes. This places the heroes in the position of defending Vanguard's "black" storehouse, and dealing with the knowledge of it after the fact. Indeed, the heroes themselves might need to find and break into Area V to obtain some important item, assuming they can't convince the obstinate Vanguard to hand it over.

ENEMY

The AV Club, Area V's crack staff, has taken it as their mission to contain all manner of strange items, and they sometimes act without direction from the Vanguard Council. Heroes in possession of items the Club deems dangerous might be targeted, so their devices can be put away in Area V's warehouse for "safekeeping".

EMPLOYER

Lastly, Area V could be the basis for an entire M&M series where the heroes are agents of the AV Club, either highly-skilled normals or superhumans, who seek out dangerous artifacts and "acquire" them to bring back to Area V for analysis and containment. Their mission and organization might be for the greater good, or the characters might have to deal with the possibility that Vanguard is corrupt and in need of a good "house cleaning" from within.

storehouse of valuable knowledge, priceless artifacts, and dangerous secrets.

Eventually, even Doc Prophet succumbed to mortality, leaving Vanguard run by a council of his trusted lieutenants. They recruited others and continued their work, as the world became an even more complex place, threatened by forces both from without and from within. The Vanguard Council held on to the simpler and, to their minds, purer and more essential, values of a bygone time. They also held to the idea of keeping their work secret, protecting the world from itself in many regards.

It was a desire to both give the world hope and to recapture some of what they felt was lost that led Vanguard to begin "Project: Victor" to create a genetic heir to the Prophet legacy. That succeeded in the birth of Victor Prophet (see **Victor** in the *Emerald City Player's Guide to Chapter 5*). Unfortunately, while the Vanguard raised

and trained Victor in secret and continued to deepen the moats safeguarding them from the outside world, time marched on and that world continued to change. The "dark age" they predicted and feared gave way to a new-found age of heroism and Vanguard found itself increasingly isolated, hesitant, and irrelevant. Because of this, Victor broke with the place and people who had been the only home, the only family, he ever knew, striking out on his own.

Now Vanguard is at a crossroads. The Vanguard Council represents decades of experience. Their field agents, while fewer, are some of the best trained and skilled in the world, their resources are considerable, and just a handful of the things stored in the secret "Area V" (or "Area Five") warehouse, staffed by the so-called "AV Club," could shake the foundations of the world. Whether Vanguard will ultimately be a force for good, for ill—or any sort of force at all—remains to be seen.

CHAPTER 4: EMERALD CITY UNDERWORLD



Part of what's kept Emerald City out of the spotlight is its lack of super-powered activity. Unlike Freedom City, Emerald has never had more than a few scattered costumed champions over the years, and none that stuck around long enough to make much of an impact. To most local residents, it's just one of those things—like how the city hasn't been able to keep an NBA franchise. When it comes to capes, however, the truth is far more sinister.

Emerald City's paucity of superheroes was most keenly noted by supervillains, but rather than simply ransack the place for easy pickings, the brighter baddies quickly realized Emerald was the perfect place to lay low and disappear. It's really tough to overestimate how often supervillains need that, and in time word got 'round in bad-guy circles, secretly and gradually transforming Emerald City into sort of a gated community for costumed crooks.

Thus, unbeknownst to anyone not a caped crook in good (bad?) standing, Emerald City is secretly lousy with supervillains. Some settled there to enjoy some peace and safety in their secret identities, while others just use it as a safe house after a caper goes bad. Either way, they are thick as... well, thieves.

Classically, only a tiny few actually committed crimes in Emerald City, and they were limited to the very clever and the very stupid. Emerald City's supervillain community was quite happy with the way situation was, and dealt very harshly with those villains who threatened the *status quo*

with attention-getting super-crimes. While the Freedom League might send a costumed crook up the river for ten years, Emerald City's local baddies would make an offending colleague dead. Or worse. *Much*, much worse.

Emerald City's criminal underworld is a force to be reckoned with, and one that is now in a state of flux. For a long time, "The Chamber," a secret alliance of criminal masterminds, helped keep supervillain activity in the city, at least outwardly, under control to preserve the city's status as a haven for ne'er-do-wells. Since the disintegration of the Chamber, all bets are off and it's every criminal and gang for themselves, with the big crime bosses looking to forge new alliances, settle old scores, and stage coups to take control of the city's underworld.

Four major criminal cartels jockey for power and position in Emerald City: the Fraternal Order of Evil (or "F.O.E." as they are known) led by the Big Brain; the Golden Dragon Society, led by the ambitious granddaughter of the previous Dragoneye; the Takazumi-gumi Yakuza clan, led by the Steel Samurai, and the largely Russian Malakov Mafiya, led by the shadowy Koschei the Deathless. Around them are lesser gangs and crime families, as well as the large influx of ambitious stormers, some serving as footsoldiers for the different cartels, others looking to carve out their own piece of territory in Emerald City. Caught in the middle of all of this are the conventional authorities and the heroes, all that stand between Emerald City and all-out warfare amongst its criminal elite.

THE CHAMBER

Years ago, super-criminals struck upon the idea of getting out of town and laying low until the heat died down, especially when some of their heroic costumed foes tended to stick to places like Freedom City. The sleepy northwestern metropolis of Emerald City proved an effective hideout. There was something about the place, easy to become anonymous and disappear. Of course, for it to work, the criminals who came to the city had to actually lay low, and the locals needed to avoid drawing attention, from either the masks or the conventional authorities.

Leave it to the criminal masterminds to turn such a potential vulnerability into a power-grab. An alliance of criminals met, talked, and reasoned: If they could make Emerald City an even *better* place to hide out, they could get others to pay them for the privilege, with relatively little risk to themselves. So a bargain was struck, and the Chamber formed.

For years, the Chamber's scheme worked perfectly. They made Emerald City a secret underworld haven. Criminals paid handsomely to go "off the radar" for a while and the Chamber poured those ill-gotten gains into infrastructure and bribes to strengthen their position. They also made it *painfully* clear that threats to their tidy arrangement would not be tolerated, not from the criminals they protected, not from the city they controlled. Anyone who crossed the Chamber rarely had the time to regret it, but everyone else knew just what happened to them and why.

Given time, it's possible the Chamber's blight would have spread beyond Emerald City. It was close to doing so when something happened, something unexpected. The death of Dragoneye, the head of the Golden Dragon Society, created a power vacuum within the Chamber's structure. Then the Silver Storm hit, and upset the balance of power once and for all. Max Mars saw an opportunity to make his break with the Chamber and reform Emerald City for the better. The other factions—F.O.E., the Chessmen, the Malakov Mafiya, and the Golden Dragon Society—split apart in the struggle to control what was left. Increased attention from AEGIS as well as new heroes, stormers and otherwise, appearing in the city made it impossible for the Chamber to remain a secret any longer.

While the Chamber is no more, their legacy will be with Emerald City for a long time to come. Most of the component factions are still threats of one sort or another, and the culture of corruption they fostered still exists in parts of the city. The Chamber created a whole "shadow society" and infrastructure to support their criminal enterprise, and Emerald City is riddled with secret safehouses, "private clubs," and other places catering to the needs of those outside the law. Some are finding other uses in the post-Silver Storm era, while others remain secret, known only to one former Chamber faction or another. While most of the factions are no longer interested in an alliance, all of them hope to reclaim the kind of success the Chamber knew, and take back all they have lost, and then some.

CRIMINAL GANGS & SYNDICATES

The underworld scene in Emerald City was divided by the Chamber and control given over to four major criminal syndicates, the Fraternal Order of Evil (F.O.E.), the Golden Dragon Society, the *Takazumi-gumi*, and the Malakov Mafiya. An uneasy alliance, the balance of power was shattered when the Silver Storm created a large, new group of super-beings who knew nothing of the division of power and were beholden to no one. Gang warfare, once kept to minimum by the Chamber and its tight-fisted control of the underworld, has returned to the streets of Emerald City.

Apart from the major gangs, Emerald City is also plagued by a number of minor gangs trying to carve out a piece of the action for themselves. Some gangs are allied to one of the big four syndicates, either willingly or not, while other gangs remain below the firing line and try to avoid the major underworld conflict altogether.

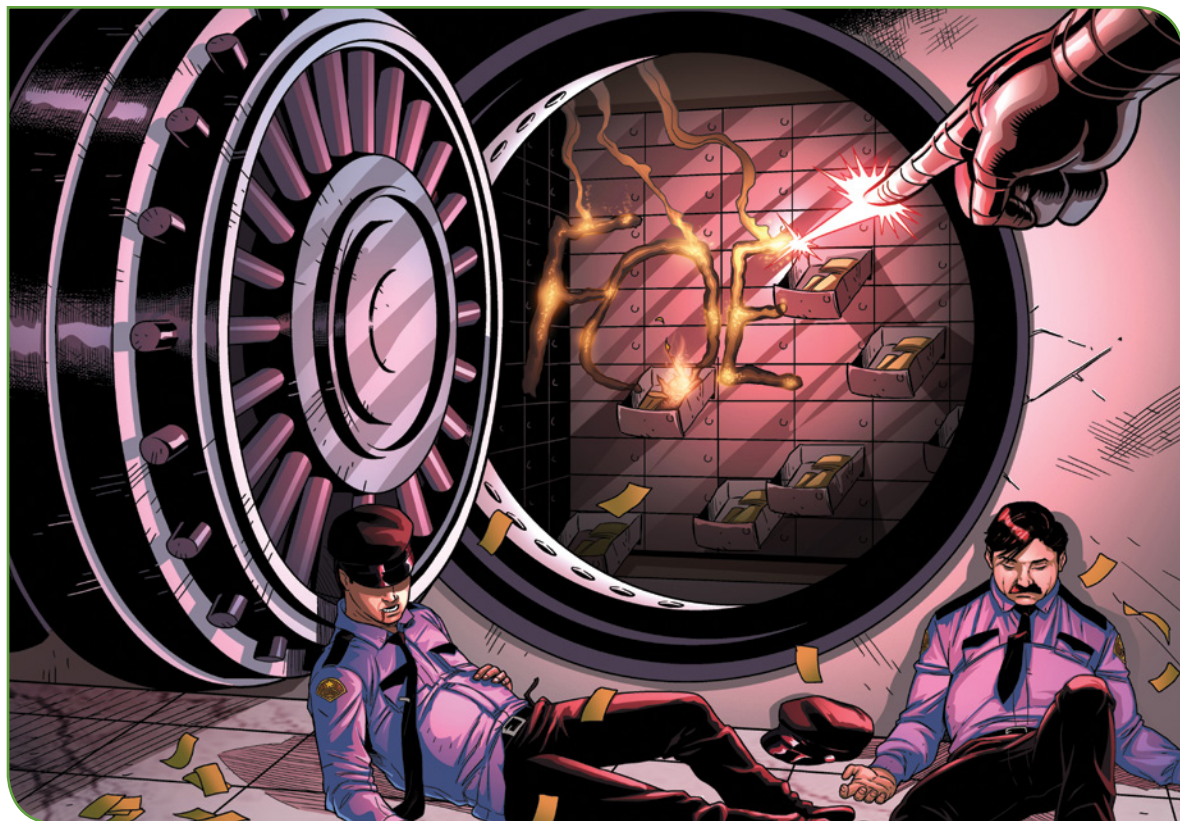
FRATERNAL ORDER OF EVIL (F.O.E.)

The Fraternal Order of Evil, otherwise known as F.O.E, is easily the most influential criminal syndicate in Emerald City. Starting as a relatively small operation in the early

1970s, F.O.E. has grown in size and influence to the point where its presence is felt all over the world. It was the initiatives taken by F.O.E. that drew supervillains to Emerald City with the promise of a safe haven, and perhaps it was the indirect influence of the syndicate's elusive leader, the Big Brain, that until recently kept the presence of superheroes in Emerald City to a minimum.

F.O.E. operates in a manner completely unlike any other criminal syndicate. Rather than maintaining a large gang of members, the syndicate instead acts more like a temping and training agency. They offer otherwise solo criminals the training, support, and back-up they need to complete a job, as well providing assistance with planning, covering tracks, and even prison escapes if needed, all for a reasonable fee or cut of the take.

F.O.E. utilizes a novel approach in contacting potential employees and clients. Instead of maintaining a regular base of operations where meetings can be arranged, individual clients are mentally contacted by the Big Brain when they are in need of his services. From that point on, the Big Brain assists in planning any heists, arranges for support personnel to contact the client, and offers any other services that might be required. Similarly, the Big Brain men-



tally contacts specialist criminals in his organization with potential job offers and directs them to those that need them. This method of operation has proven to be highly successful, creating an organization that is incredibly difficult to trace, and almost impossible to infiltrate beyond the small gangs that are organized for individual jobs.

Originally F.O.E. focused individual villains with the unique skills needed to complete a particular job, possibly with a handful of thugs as backup. Eventually F.O.E. expanded its operations to include pulling together unique supervillain teams designed for heists. For years the ECPD were unable to comprehend why villains that were known to work independently would come together in apparently random groupings to perform a crime only then to inexplicably disperse again. It wasn't until the villain known as Fortress was apprehended that the police garnered any information about F.O.E. at all. Unfortunately, Fortress was broken out of jail and soon after turned up dead before he could provide the force with any useful clues regarding the syndicate.

With the coming of the Silver Storm, F.O.E. has found itself inundated with possible members. Seizing on the opportunity, the Big Brain has begun recruiting and training stormers he thinks have potential, giving them the opportunity to learn how to use their powers effectively and increasing the group's available resources. The incidence of F.O.E.-sponsored criminal activities has increased significantly in Emerald City since the Silver Storm, giving the authorities significant cause for alarm. ECPD now fears the group may be attempting to create a veritable super-criminal army—all under the direction of the mysterious Big Brain.

Pinpointing the types of criminal activities that F.O.E. are primarily involved in is difficult, as they provide their services to any that have the need and the means to provide payment. Suffice to say their services have been engaged for such crimes as bank robberies, prison breakouts, corporate espionage, and extortion to name a few. Likewise, the individuals that utilize F.O.E.'s services are equally diverse, ranging from unpowered criminal masterminds and other criminal syndicates to such supervillains as Dr. Shock, Mastermind, White Hare, and Conundrum.

Often, the members of the group have goals of their own and work with the Big Brain to pull together a team. These teams operate mostly on their own to get the job done and are the most likely to be found socializing after hours at dive bars (or wherever the members prefer) while planning the gig. When the job is finished, the goods are split up, the Big Brain gets his cut, and the "team" splits up. It is, however, not uncommon for a handful of members of a team to stay in contact if they became friendly on the job. The Big Brain doesn't approve of these relationships, because they could turn out to be connections the authorities can use to track down other members, but he also recognizes there's safety in numbers... which, really, is the whole idea behind F.O.E.

While F.O.E. does not maintain a headquarters, the Big Brain operates from a base of operations located in the Atlas Mountains, providing a picturesque view of the Elysium Forest and the city below. Appearing from the outside as just another isolated manor built by the idle rich, the three story edifice is in reality highly fortified, with the walled grounds protected by dogs and mind-controlled security guards. Inside, the building is sparsely equipped

with barely enough furniture to support even a single occupant, except for the expansive second floor bedroom that houses the Big Brain's atrophied body. Advanced life support equipment crowds the room, maintaining the fragile life that lies cradled within it while mind-controlled nurses monitor the equipment and ensure that no harm comes to the mastermind behind F.O.E.

The Big Brain and other members of F.O.E. are in **Chapter 5: Emerald City Threats**.

THE GOLDEN DRAGON SOCIETY

The Golden Dragon Society is the most powerful Chinese Triad in Emerald City (and possibly along the West Coast). It controls all criminal activity in Jadetown, and with influence that extends throughout the rest of the city. The Society had its founding during the frontier days of Emerald City, and has been the dominant criminal organization in Jadetown for the last 80 years. Until recently, the group has maintained its influence through the strong leadership, ruthlessness, and guile of their head, Uncle Zhi Chi, otherwise known as Dragoneye, but with his unexpected death, the Golden Dragon society has found itself without a strong leader, and struggles to find a suitable candidate before their vast empire falls into ruin.

The Golden Dragon Society is organized along traditional lines with an inner council led by the head and consisting of the vice-president, an English secretary, a street secretary, and a legal secretary. This council is referred to as the Five, and while they are not necessarily directly related to each other, they are considered to belong to the Chi clan. Directly below them are the other high officials of the Society, always totaling 32 in number. Only those who have been accepted into the 32 either by birth, marriage, or "adoption", may ever be elevated to serve as one of the Five. The competition among the 32 to be made one of the Five is stiff and often deadly, and only the strong leadership of the head has prevented an outbreak of violent internal conflict. Only the Five know the full extent of the Society's membership and activities, with those lower down the ranks given access to only the information they need to know for their positions.

The high ranking officials are served by mid-level lieutenants, with each lieutenant acting as a department head with sole responsibilities in regards to a single illegal activity; one acts as a liaison for Triad-associated street gangs, while another liaises with independent criminals who operate in Jadetown, and another supervises all protection rackets, etc. The lieutenants all share a healthy rivalry amongst one another, with most hoping their actions will not only bring them to the Five's attention, but have their efforts rewarded with an entry into the 32 and the possibility of sitting on the inner council. Though this boon is rarely granted, it is possible.

The footsoldiers of the Society are organized into separate gangs consisting of a dozen or more men. All the gangs are named after different types of Chinese mythical creatures (the Coiled Dragons, the Fiery Phoenix, the Jade Ki-Lin, etc). Each gang is designated their own area

of operations, though more than one gang may have the same responsibility, so the loss of one gang doesn't cause the collapse of an entire operation. Gangs rarely interact, except in cases where a large group is necessary to deal with a problem, such as dealing with foreign gangs encroaching on Society territory.

While the Golden Dragon Society is heavily involved in criminal activity, it also owns and runs a number of legitimate businesses as well. These businesses these are not included in the group's structure; they operate just like any other business, except their owners are also members of the Society. Both the Society's business and criminal activities are carefully executed in a professional manner, leaving nothing to chance.

Well over half of the Society's annual revenue comes from its legitimate business. In addition, Uncle Zhi was one of Jadetown's most respected (and feared) entrepreneurs, a public leader who had a strong presence on the boards of various charities and financial institutions. This allowed him direct access to some of the most powerful figures in Emerald City and gave him political clout all his own.

The Golden Dragon Society is involved in a number of different criminal activities, and is always willing to consider new enterprises it can become involved in. Currently, the society is most heavily involved in assassinations, car theft, credit fraud, gambling, identity theft, prostitution, protection rackets, smuggling, and black market live animal and animal parts trading. They have also participated in human smuggling, usually to bring unfortunates who have paid huge sums into the country, but also to bring workers for their brothels.

The headquarters for the Society is a large Chinese import warehouse outlet known as Lucky Dragon Imports. From the outside the store appears to be nothing out of the ordinary, and indeed the business is exactly what it appears to be, but behind closed doors, both on the upper floors and the basement, the building is a highly fortified stronghold. At least 40 heavily armed gang members act as security; those in the shop act as simple salespeople and are secretly armed, while other more openly armed members guard the other floors. The basement acts as a way station, temporarily warehousing illegal goods until they can be shipped to their destinations. At least five guards are found here at all times. The second floor was the former opulent residence of Uncle Zhi, but is now inhabited by one of his few living descendents: granddaughter Feng-li Chin. The top floor is the Society's business and meeting rooms. Guarded by at least ten guards at all times, the floor is booby-trapped, contains a state-of-the-art security system, and is only accessible via a combination-locked elevator. The floor also contains the board room, a full set of living quarters, an armory, and the computer system.

While the Society is still focused mainly in Jadetown, it has expanded its sphere of influence far beyond those limited confines. Many of its legitimate business concerns can be found in the Downtown and Riverfront districts, employing not only those of Chinese descent, but many others besides. The drug operations performed by the Society can be found all over the city, which brings them



into direct confrontation with other criminal syndicates working those territories.

With the death of Dragoneye, the Golden Dragon Society has found itself at a bit of a loss. Uncle Zhi provided the triad with strong leadership and a firm hand, but he failed to leave any official indication in regards to whom he wanted to succeed him. Currently, his granddaughter Feng-li is acting as leader, but this is far from satisfactory as far as the remainder of the council is concerned. Though Jackie Lee supports her claim as Uncle Zhi's direct descendant, the rest of the council, led by Harry Deng, strongly oppose her rule on the grounds that she is a woman and she does not possess the powers of Dragoneye. This has led the Society to become fractured and conflicted, with backstabbing, intrigue, and lies disrupting its stranglehold on power in Jadetown.

FENG-LI CHEN

Feng-li was born into the lap of luxury. Her father, Xia-lo Chin was not only the son of the Dragoneye, Uncle Zhi, but a wealthy businessman in his own right. He was in line to not only inherit the leadership of the Golden Dragon Society, but the power of the dragon as well. All that ended when Xia-lo and his wife were killed in an explosive car accident. Uncle Zhi was awarded custody of young Feng-li as well as acting as custodian of her not-insignificant inherited wealth.

Wanting for nothing, Feng-li was an incredibly spoiled child. Her grandfather doted on her lavishly, and she was given the best education at the best schools in the world. She grew up knowing that she was the heiress of an astound-

ing amount of money, and took every advantage of it. As she came of age, Feng-li was introduced to the Golden Dragon Society and she naturally assumed, as the sole direct Chi descendant, she would become one of the Five and eventually sit as the head of the organization and assume the power of the dragon.



Unfortunately, this was not to be. As a woman, the conservative members of the council felt she had no place as one of the Five. Despite her excellent education, upbringing, and desire to lead the organization, she was deemed unworthy and her grandfather decided she would best serve the Society in a more traditional position—as the wife of one of the clan.

Infuriated by this betrayal, Feng-li began to plot the demise of Uncle Zhi. Her grandfather trusted her implicitly, and that was his downfall, as she used that trust to slowly poison him. As he was less and less able to fend for himself, she used her influence over him to make him name her the head of the organization after him. The plan backfired when Uncle Zhi's aging constitution proved to be no match for the poison. He died far sooner than she had anticipated. She was further surprised when the anticipated power of the dragon didn't manifest within her. In a panic, Feng-li forged a last minute missive from her grandfather declaring her his heir and presented it to the council. Feng-li knows the council was not entirely convinced by the forgery, but they have allowed her to assume leadership until she can prove herself worthy of the role... or not. She knows she has an ally in the vice

A SINISTER DRAGON

The Gamemaster may use the new Dragoneye as the leader of the Golden Dragon Society. There are four main paths this option can take. Dragoneye is still a hero, but he operates in his secret identity as the head of the society in the hopes of putting an end to the group's criminal activities and making it focus entirely on its legitimate business concerns. The second option is to make the new Dragoneye a criminal, deposing Feng-li and continuing business as usual. Thirdly, is to have the Society split down the middle, with one half following the new Dragoneye while the other follows Feng-li, leading to a gang war that could tear Jadetown apart as both halves try to dominate the other.

Another option, especially if Dragoneye is being used as a player character, is to have the leaders of the Society be actively pursuing him to become the new leader, tempting him with every comfort imaginable and making the problems he and his friends have go away. If things go poorly, only then do they bring out the big guns.

Whichever option the Gamemaster chooses to take, the intrigue and conflict within the Golden Dragon Society is bound to cause those involved to "live in interesting times."

president, but the rest of the Five are against her, and await the slightest mistake or show of weakness. Fortunately, her sharp business sense has proven to be a boon, as has her promise that one way or another, she will claim the power of the Dragoneye for herself.

Feng-li Chin is a strikingly beautiful woman of Chinese descent. She is only 5'4" but her commanding presence seems to make her much taller. She keeps her raven-black hair long and wears it in a traditional Chinese bun during business hours, but otherwise leaves it to hang free down her back. She has a preference for wearing intricately embroidered silk *cheongsams*, stiletto shoes, and carrying a silk fan.

JACKIE LEE

Jackie Lee came into his position when the previous vice president, Xai-lo Chin died in a tragic car accident. His involvement in the accident has gone undiscovered and Jackie has come to the conclusion that he no longer needs to worry about being exposed. Regardless of the underhanded method of attaining his position, Jackie has proven to be the right man for the job. His support of Dragoneye was without reproach. He commands the respect and admiration of his fellow council members and subordinates alike, while his influence can be felt all the way down the ranks.



As the vice president, Jackie's knowledge of the Golden Dragon Society and its activities are second only to the previous head. A vocal supporter of Feng-li, he puts his knowledge to good use in keeping the new leader apprised of developing situations, and assists her in any decision-making. He hopes that by showing a high level of loyalty to her, he can steer her in the directions most beneficial to the Society. As an executive and businessman in his own right, Jackie feels the Society should further its dealings with legitimate business and send its influence even further beyond Jadetown, and into the city. Ultimately he wants to see the Society control most of the underworld activity as the most powerful criminal syndicate in Emerald City.

Jackie Lee is a Chinese man in his late 50s of average height and build. He always wears expensive business

suits and is immaculately groomed, though as a chain smoker he does have a pall of stale cigarette smoke about his person at all times. In addition to his position in the Golden Dragon Society, Jackie is also the owner and CEO of Lee's Cash and Carry, an electronics and appliance chain.

HARRI DENG

Harri Deng is a relatively young member of the Five, having only held his position as legal secretary for less than ten years. Despite this fact, Harri has proven himself to be indispensable to the Golden Dragon Society. His knowledge and acumen in the legal field has led to the Society being almost untouchable by the Emerald City police, while his reputation as an unbeatable lawyer has led him to represent some of the most powerful individuals in the country, and earned him a number of very influential friends. Despite being a soft-spoken man, Harri is neither shy nor lacking confidence, but is happy to allow those around him to think otherwise.



Harri has his doubts regarding Feng-li and the legitimacy of her claim to the leadership of the Society. He is highly suspicious of her and feels that she is incapable of leading the Golden Dragon Society. He fears for the Society's continued existence if she continues to rule. Harri would rather see the group form close ties with both the *Takazumi-gumi* and the Malakov Mafiya and share the criminal underworld than risk an all out syndicate war that could leave all parties too weak to continue their traditional activities.

Harri Deng is a slightly overweight Chinese man of average height in his late 30s. He likes wearing business suits professionally, but is more comfortable in jeans and t-shirts while he is relaxing. He lives in Jadetown with his wife and young son, though he rarely spends time at home. When not working or seeing to Society business, he spends much of his time secretly visiting gay nightclubs and bathhouses, something he can ill afford to have discovered either professionally or personally.

AN-YU HWEI

An-yu has been part of the Golden Dragon Society since his late teens, and became the lieutenant responsible for

AN-YU HWEI

PL7 • 103 POINTS

STR 8/3* STA 8/3* AGL 1 DEX 0 FGT 4 INT 2 AWE 2 PRE 4

Powers: **Density Increase** (Growth 5, Density (see Appendix)) Linked to **Hard as Rock** (Reaction Damage 5, Limited to effect rank or attack's Damage rank, whichever is less); **Dwarf** (Shrinking 2, Innate, Normal Strength, Permanent)

Advantages: Benefit 2 (Mid-level Golden Dragon member), Benefit (Well-off), Close Attack 2, Connected, Equipment 2, Fascinate (Intimidation), Improved Disarm, Improved Smash

Skills: Athletics 4 (+12/+7*), Deception 2 (+6), Expertise: Criminal 4 (+6), Expertise: Streetwise 4 (+6), Intimidation 4 (+8), Perception 3 (+5), Ranged Combat: Guns 6 (+6), Stealth 2 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +1, Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 8/3*), Heavy Pistol +6 (Ranged, Damage 4)

Defense: Dodge 3/5*, Parry 3/5*, Fortitude 10/5*, Toughness 8/3*, Will 4

*Without Density Increase.

Totals: Abilities 38 + Powers 32 + Advantages 11 + Skills 15 + Defenses 7 = 103

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** Subject to Chain of Command. **Grasping:** An-yu wants to advance his career with the Golden Dragon Society and elevate his position in the organization.

protection rackets at the age of 29. He takes his role within the triad very seriously, and hopes to one day be rewarded for this by being advanced into the 32, and eventually have the chance at becoming one of the Five. An-yu is unusual within the Society for two reasons: he is both a dwarf and a stormer. His powers give him the ability to increase his mass by an amazing amount, giving him increased strength and stamina. Though he has had little need for his powers, they are useful when dealing with clients unwilling to pay their protection money. To be “receiving a visit from Mr. Hwei” has become a threat that few wish to hear, and even fewer wish to experience.



An-yu doesn't normally deal directly with the gangs that operate the protection rackets, instead he deals with the lieutenant responsible for the street gangs. If clients prove to be difficult, he pays them a visit along with the gang whose territory they operate in. Just his appearance is often enough to ensure cooperation, but if not, a demonstration of his powers normally suffices.

An-yu Hwei is 32, stands 4'2" tall and is remarkably muscular for one of his stature. He suffers from male-pattern baldness and sports a short neat goatee and mustache. His preferred attire is jeans and t-shirt topped with a cheap sports jacket, though he wears a full business suit when reporting to any of the higher-ranking members of the Society.

DAN-CHI WANG

Dan-chi is the young leader of the Coiled Dragons, a gang of 25 youths ranging in age from 12 to 23 years old who are involved in drug trafficking and protection rackets for the Golden Dragon Society. Dan-chi is a disenfranchised

young man, who sees himself as a powerful gangster with powerful associates. Though these beliefs aren't exactly true (yet), he is still a dangerous person. He has a volatile temper and turns violent with little provocation, which helped him take over leadership of the Coiled Dragons after issuing a serious beating to the previous leader, who also happened to be his older brother. Dan sees his position as a stepping stone to something greater and wants to move up the ladder as soon as he can. Not afraid to use his position to his advantage, Dan surrounds himself with beautiful women who find the idea of being attached to a dangerous gang leader attractive. His subordinate gang members obey him not out of respect but out of fear of what he would do to them if they crossed him.



Dan-chi Wang is a 23-year-old Chinese man. He is 5'7" tall and solidly built. His arms are heavily tattooed, and he wears his black hair pulled back in a neat pony-tail. Like all of the Coiled Dragons, Dan wears a stylish black jacket, white t-shirt, black trousers, and black shoes. Use the Gang Leader traits in **Chapter 9** of the *Hero's Handbook* for Dan's stats.

THE TAKAZUMI-GUMI (YAKUZA)

The Yakuza are relative newcomers to the underworld of Emerald City, coming to power in the early 1990's. In that time, they have made a significant impact on the criminal scene, with the Takazumi-gumi becoming the most influential Yakuza clan in the city. Headquartered in Little Osaka, the clan has spread its influence throughout the city's legal and illegal enterprises, making it a dangerous force to contend with.

The *gumi* (clan) is operated in a very traditional Japanese manner, following a strict hierarchy of family and houses, with a vertical relationship where a foster son owes complete allegiance to a foster father. Members of the *gumi* cut ties with their families and transfer their loyalties to the bosses directly above them, creating a ‘father’—‘elder brother’—‘younger brother’ relationship. The syndicate is operated almost exclusively by men, though occasionally women are permitted to join and are most often referred to as ‘older sister’.

The Takazumi-gumi's head, or *Oyabun*, is the villain known as the Steel Shogun, a powerful and dangerous supervillain in his own right (see **Chapter 5: Emerald City Threats**, for more information). He gives the impression of being a benevolent family head to those below him, even appearing to be quite forgiving of those who make blunders or wrong him, though they quickly come to a grisly end at the hands of other members of the clan. The Steel Shogun is directly assisted by his son and *So-Hon-bucho* (headquarters chief), Takazumi Ryu, on one hand, and his daughter, Takazumi Tomiko on the other, who acts as his unofficial advisor due to her precognitive powers.

Directly below the Steel Shogun are his senior advisors, who primarily perform all the organizational duties required for the smooth operation of the *gumi*. They are



also in charge of their own turfs in other areas of the city and perform services for their own advisors, accountants, and enforcers. On the same level as the senior advisors are the first and second lieutenants who directly oversee the street gangs and foot soldiers of the *gumi*.

The Takazumi-*gumi* is deeply involved in a number of illegal activities, but focus primarily on gambling, money laundering, loan sharking, pornography, prostitution, and smuggling (including drugs, weapons, and people). They also participate in a unique form of protection racket which is aimed at large corporations. The clan purchases a small amount of stock, which allows them to attend stockholders meetings where their very presence frightens the other stockholders. The companies are encouraged to pay a fee to keep the Yakuza away. In a similar fashion they obtain incriminating or embarrassing information about a company's practices or leaders with the intention of blackmail. Once they gain a foothold in these companies though, they work to protect the company from having such scandals exposed to the public.

As a matter of principle, theft is not recognized as a legitimate activity by the Takazumi-*gumi*. This is in line with their idea that their activities are semi-open and in fact serve to protect the Japanese community; theft by definition would be a covert activity considered a trespass upon the on the people they are 'protecting.'

Unlike many of the other criminal syndicates in the city, Takazumi-*gumi* is more than happy to enter into alliances with gangs of other races, primarily with those of Vietnamese or Korean origin. The Steel Shogun is also interested in forming an alliance with the Golden Dragon Society, but since the death of the Dragoneye, discussions have slowed.

Along with their criminal endeavors, the clan is also involved in many legal ventures, some of which are quite large. Nearly all of the brothels, cinemas, and gambling establishments are owned and/or controlled by the Yakuza, as well as many of the Japanese restaurants and travel agencies. Furthermore, the *gumi* usually does not conduct any actual business operations directly; rather they are typically managed by non-Takazumi members who pay the *gumi* a fee.

The Takazumi-*gumi* has been trying to infiltrate Emerald City's government and police force for more than a decade, but have so far been unsuccessful. Any attempt to corrupt the police has led to those involved being exposed by the ECPD's internal investigation unit. The clan has gained a foothold in city government, primarily in lower-level administrative positions, but so far nothing with any real power or access to damaging information. They hope these operatives will eventually find evidence of wrongdoing that will allow them to begin blackmailing certain key council figures.

The headquarters of the Takazumi-*gumi* is the top two levels of the 65-floor Harada Tower, one of the many soaring skyscrapers in the busy Downtown district. The penthouse apartment is the personal living quarters of the Steel Shogun, which he shares with both his children and a close personal staff of retainers. The penthouse can only be accessed through a private elevator equipped with retina and fingerprint recognition systems. The apartment is decorated in traditional Japanese style, with rooms separated by paper screens, polished wooden floors, and any evidence of high technology hidden from casual observation until needed. On the roof there

is a helipad, private swimming pool, and small Japanese garden. The penthouse is protected by seven guards at all times: two attending the Shogun directly, one each for Ryu and Tomiko, one guarding the roof access, and two guarding the elevator foyer.

The floor immediately below the penthouse is the operational headquarters for the clan. Here are the clan's powerful computer systems, a large meeting room, a number of private offices, and a small arsenal for the use of the ten guards that patrol the area. Access to this floor is by security pass only, while the foyer is monitored by a security guard and a closed-circuit video system. The rest of Harada Tower is dedicated to various business concerns and offices, as well as lawyers, private medical specialists, brokers and accountants, many of whom owe some allegiance to the Takazumi-gumi.

TAKAZUMI RYU

Ryu is the Steel Shogun's son and younger twin brother of Tomiko. As the Shogun's only son, he was raised with the full expectation he would eventually succeed his father to head the Takazumi-gumi. No expense was spared in his education to prepare him for his eventual role. Ryu also had a strict upbringing, suffering severe beatings when he failed to live up to expectations. Yet when he succeeded he was generously rewarded, and was able to command his father's attention. He knew he was important, far more important than his sister, but he also knew it was the role he'd eventually fill that made him important, so he worked hard to be worthy of his inheritance and to not disappoint his father.



All his hard work was for naught and he was quickly displaced in his father's eyes, however, when Tomiko discovered she could peer into the future. The Steel Shogun stopped lavishing attention on Ryu and began attending to Tomiko and her visions. Ryu at first suspected the visions were a sad attempt by his sister to garner attention for herself, but as they proved to be accurate time and time again, there was no doubt in anyone's mind that Tomiko was uniquely talented. Ryu hated that he was no longer the center of his father's attention and he resented his sister for taking away what he felt was his alone. Yet there was very little he could do about it. He had no power of his own to sway his father back to him, and though he tried to question his sister's visions, they were difficult to argue with. If he continued to deny her ability, he would only bring shame and dishonor to himself. No, he had only a few options at his disposal: have Tomiko married into another clan, or have her commit some act that would shame the family so much the Steel Shogun would have no option but to disown her.

Despite her abilities, Ryu knows Tomiko can never achieve greatness within the clan, as she is too weak and too unfamiliar with how the clan operates. Even at his young age he already holds the trusted position of *So-Honbucho* in his father's household; everything and everyone in the house is his to control. In addition, he leads the Silver Oni,

his own motorcycle gang of ambitious Japanese foot soldiers. It's only a matter of time before he steps into the shoes of his father as *oyuban* of Takazumi-gumi.

Ryu is a handsome 22 year old Japanese man. He is 5'8" with a strong muscular build, black hair and brown eyes. He bears a number of colorful Yakuza tattoos on his arms, back and chest, but none that cannot be easily covered with clothing. As befits the important position he holds in the clan, he tends to dress very smartly, though his fashion sense does seem to be inspired by television cop shows from the 80s: dark wrap-around sunglasses, sports jackets with rolled up sleeves, white t-shirts, jeans, and slip on shoes.

TAKAZUMI TOMIKO

Tomiko is Ryu's elder twin, born just seconds earlier. As a daughter, she found her father, the Steel Shogun, had far more interest in her brother than in her. In her childhood she craved his attention desperately, but her desires meant little to the Takazumi elder as he raised Ryu to be his right-hand man and eventual successor. In her loneliness, Tomiko turned her attention to the arts, where she found solace in drawing and painting.



Her artistic talents seemed to know no bounds, and she rapidly learned skills of traditional Japanese painting (*kaiga*) and calligraphy (*shodo*). Wanting to expand her talents, she asked her father for a tutor to instruct her in the creation of Zen rock gardens (*karesansui*), at which she excelled. It was during the deep meditative trances creating such gardens induced that Tomiko learned of her other unique gift: the ability to foresee the future. By entering a meditative trance, Tomiko is able to catch glimpses of the future, which she records in a visual medium such as painting, drawing, or rock gardening. While in the trance, she has no idea what she's experiencing, nor does she retain any recollection of her visions; the only evidence of them is found in the cryptic symbols and images of her art.

The Steel Shogun quickly realized the potential of his daughter's gift, and he turned his attention to her after years of neglect. He used her visions to expand his criminal operations; he wouldn't make any important decisions without consulting his daughter on what the future held. Initially overjoyed by his attentions, Tomiko grew bitter when she realized it was only her precognition her father was interested in. She has grown even more bitter and angry in the years since and resents her brother intensely for the place he holds in her father's heart. Yet, she continues to serve the Shogun faithfully, just as a good daughter should, and maybe one day he will realize exactly how important she is to the Takazumi-gumi.

Tomiko is a beautiful 22-year-old Japanese woman. She is 5'5" tall with a model-like figure, long black hair, and deep brown eyes. She tends to wear fashionably short skirts or one piece dresses accompanied with high heels and finished with a silk choker around her neck. She is almost constantly seen sucking on a small lollipop, something she knows her father despises.

THE MALAKOV MAFIYA

The Malakov Mafiya is a Russian criminal *bratva* (“brotherhood”) run by Gregor Malakov, an ex-KGB agent who started the organization in Emerald City. Gregor was also involved in some Soviet-era psychic experimentation, which gave him low-level psionic powers he uses to expand and control his criminal empire. Malakov’s public identity is a secret; to law enforcement and lower-ranking members of his gang, he is known only as “Koschei the Deathless”—named for a mythical Russian wizard. He wields an emerald (actually green viridian stone) that enhances his psionic powers and has helped him to unnaturally extend his life.

HISTORY

Gregor Malakov was born in pre-WWII Soviet Russia following the October Revolution and the rise of Communism. He was a young soldier during the Second World War and experienced many of the terrors of war firsthand. Those experiences hardened Malakov and also showed him the power of holding life and death in his hands. He became an agent of the KGB in the 1950s and was a coldly effective operative and assassin. His loyalty and efficiency, coupled with high scores on a series of ESP tests, earned Malakov a posting to Science City Eberesko, a top-secret Soviet center for experimentation in human enhancement and advanced weaponry, in particular their psychic research experiments.

The experiments were long and often painful, but also successful, so successful that Malakov picked up thoughts revealing how he was not expected to survive the procedures, but chosen because he had made enemies within the KGB and the Kremlin. After he wiped the minds of the scientists and escaped, Gregor paid those same enemies a visit and disposed of all of them.

So it was that in the 1960s, Gregor Malakov first appeared in Emerald City, offering his skills and services to the nascent criminal underworld. By fate or fortune, one of his

early jobs involved the theft of a rare “emerald” unearthed in the Atlas Mountains. The stone turned out to be a piece of viridian stone with unique properties even for that unusual material. The moment Malakov picked it up, it seemed to connect to his mind, opening up pathways and powers he didn’t know he had. From that point onward, Malakov was no longer, instead, “Koschei the Deathless” became a power to be feared.

Although occasionally thwarted by a costumed do-gooder, the mysterious Koschei was never caught or brought to justice. In fact, he seemed to halt all criminal activity entirely, until he was no more than an urban legend in Emerald City: the shadowy man with the green gem and burning eyes. Some said they saw him in dreams or visions, but not in person. Meanwhile, the Malakov Mafiya consolidated its power in the city. Other criminal gangs were absorbed into it, if they were wise, or wiped out, if they were not. In both cases, the Malakovs earned a reputation for knowing their rivals’ every plan and weakness, and ruthlessly exploiting them both.

By the time Emerald City became known as a haven for super-powered criminals, the Malakov Mafiya was already a power to be reckoned with. It was no surprise when the nascent Chamber approached Koschei with an offer of membership and a lucrative opportunity to head-off a potential gang-war. Koschei agreed to the accord, wishing to learn more about his would-be “allies” and planning to learn more about the resources they controlled.

The Malakov Mafiya benefited from the Chamber’s arrangement for decades, taking its place as the top syndicate in Emerald City, with control of much of its street-level crime. Years of largely unopposed operation have allowed the Malakovs to sink their claws deep into the city and consolidate their influence, but have also made the organization overconfident and careless. The death of the head of the Golden Dragon Society held the promise of Malakov taking over all organized crime in the city, but when the Silver Storm fractured the Chamber, and Maximilian Mars’ “defection” broke it for good, Koschei was forced to deal with his former allies as rivals once again.

BACK IN THE USSR

Although Soviet-era communist villains are both trite and dated by the standards of modern comics, they were once a staple of the genre: patriotic American heroes faced-off against their “Red” counterparts from the far side of the Iron Curtain, keeping the world safe for democracy.

Fortunately for Gamemasters interested in the bygone relics of the Cold War, the Malakov Mafiya’s connections to Soviet Russia allow plenty of opportunities to include them. Koschei may have surplus Soviet “super-science” devices from a generation or more ago mothballed in warehouses on the Emerald City waterfront or in some out-of-the-way storage facility on the outskirts of town. This gives you the chance to unleash some Cold War battlesuit or robot, either as a distraction or because someone came across one of Malakov’s “mementoes.”

Similarly, Koschei has been around for a long time and can sometimes be a bit “old fashioned” when it comes to fond recollections of his KGB days, or the early years of building his syndicate in Emerald City. So he might be inclined to act a bit like the stereotypical evil commissar from the ‘60s comics, rather than the urbane and sophisticated older gentleman crime lord, if you want to go that route. Feel free to play up his Russian accent and go for full-on spy-movie villainy, if it suits your game.

Lastly, Malakov is almost certainly not the only successful subject of Soviet-era psi experimentation or other efforts to create superhumans. Some of his fellow test-subjects might show up as allies, rivals, or even enemies, particularly if Malakov betrayed them at some point in leaving his former life behind.



Since the Storm, Koschei has focused on doing what he does best: manipulating events behind the scenes. While former allies like F.O.E. and the Grandmaster duke it out with Emerald City's new super-powered protectors, and stormers earn headlines and jail-time for their rampages, the Malakov Mafiya quietly continues its operations. When heroes or the police force take down a would-be crime lord, Koschei arranges to acquire his assets. Indeed, the head of the Malakovs has sometimes taken it upon himself to tip-off the authorities in order to expedite the process.

ORGANIZATION

The Malakov Mafiya is one of the most organized "traditional" criminal syndicates in Emerald City. In that regard they are closely rivaled by the Golden Dragon Society, but the Society is strongest in the Eastern District, whereas the Malakovs operates throughout Emerald City. The Mafiya's ties to Russia and Eastern Europe have been highly profitable in the years since the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, allowing contraband, money, and people to find their way into Emerald City. Some of Malakov's former KGB contacts have found work with his organization as enforcers, agents, and thugs.

Like its ancestral criminal and espionage organizations in Russia, the Malakov Mafiya is built on a "cell" structure. Each cell has contact with one other above and below it in the hierarchy, but otherwise knows little or nothing of the larger organization. Most members of the Mafiya have never even seen Koschei, much less know what he looks

like or his whereabouts. Only the inner circle of the syndicate has any idea that "humble importer" Gregory Malinski is their boss. In fact, Koschei has occasionally arranged for Mafiya operations *against* his own legitimate business interests to further maintain his cover.

In spite of his dispersed structure, the Malakov Mafiya is a tremendously efficient organization, thanks in part to its leader's mental powers. Koschei is aware of far more than his underlings imagine, and has vast influence over the organization. A few psychic strings pulled here and there ensure everything runs smoothly and many problems never have the opportunity to arise. In spite of their best efforts, the authorities have never been able to get an undercover agent into the Mafiya; they always end up dead with no apparent cause.

OPERATIONS

The Malakov Mafiya has a stake in many criminal operations in Emerald City and beyond. Indeed, most members of the organization have only the slightest idea how vast its interests are, focusing on their own particular bailiwick.

The Mafiya has a share of much of the vice trafficking in the city, from illegal drugs to prostitution, apart from the street-level "freelancers" (many of whom pay "tribute" to the Malakovs), and Madame Joy (see **Chapter 5: Emerald City Threats**), who has an "understanding" with Koschei given her role as an information broker. The Golden Dragon Society provides considerable competition for vices, particularly with the heroin trade from the Golden

Triangle region of Asia and the flesh-trade from the same area. Still, their influence remains strongest in the Eastern District and amongst the city's Asian population.

The Malakovs deal in a variety of contraband, from illegal weapons and technologies to knock-off name brand goods and electronics. The Mafiya does fairly little direct smuggling, instead acting as a buyer and distributor of illegal goods brought into Emerald City by others. They have worked with various small-time smugglers and others like Steelhead (see **Chapter 5: Emerald City Threats**) and his allies in the Trident organization. This arrangement allows the Mafiya to play smugglers off each other to bargain for the best prices, as well as cutting loose any potentially compromised sources. The authorities often manage to collar the smugglers, or the buyers, but rarely the Malakov middlemen.

Organized gambling is illegal in Emerald City and virtually all of it is under the Malakov Mafiya's control. They run numbers for various bookies for everything from sporting events to betting on how long the newest stormer or escapee from Deep Six will manage to stay on the loose. Malakov-run gambling operations routinely ruin those who become hooked on them, running up massive debts until the Mafiya's leg-breakers show up to collect, one way or another.

Related to the combination of gambling and leg-breaking, the Malakov Mafiya struck up a partnership with August Roman's Circuit-Maximus to establish the Stormfront underground fighting ring. The Mafiya rakes in money by taking bets on the fights between stormers and other superhuman fighters at top-secret locations. The fights also allow Koschei to scout for new "talent" for his organization and to exercise his mental influence over the competitors and attendees alike. (See the **Stormfront** section for details.)

On the periphery of the Mafiya's operations are things like protection rackets, where local businesses and individuals pay "tribute" to the Malakovs to avoid unfortunate "accidents" ranging from arson and insurance fraud to outright beatings and worse. Murder was quite rare in the past, due to the limitations observed by the Chamber, but has become more likely in Emerald City's current criminal climate.

Extortion and influence peddling is Koschei's primary personal area of influence. His powers have allowed him to build up a potent web of connections over the years, and the shadowy crime lord knows where all of the bodies (both literal and figurative) are buried in and around Emerald City. In those rare cases where Koschei encounters someone without embarrassing secrets, he is more than willing to manufacture some. Enemies of the Malakov Mafiya receive untraceable emails, calls, or packages making it abundantly clear that their dark secrets will become public knowledge unless they keep quiet and do exactly as they are told. Of course, the more they comply with Koschei's demands, they deeper in they get and the stronger his hold over them grows.

Koschei the Deathless and other members of the Malakov Mafiya are detailed in **Chapter 5: Emerald City Threats**.

THE BLOOD BROTHERS

Until recently, the Blood Brothers were a small gang with little influence in Emerald City. All that changed after the Silver Storm which imbued a lower ranked gang member, Carlisle Facinelli, with powers that in many ways resembled those of a vampire, yet none of the disabilities. Using his newfound abilities to his advantage, Carlisle staged a coup against the head Blood Brother and assumed leadership of the gang.

The Blood Brothers operate primarily in and around the Downtown district of Emerald city, utilizing the Undercity as a method of surreptitiously moving around, and as a location for flophouses and meeting areas. The gang's main headquarters is the ruined cathedral of St. Mark, in the Undercity, where Carlisle holds court.

The structure of the gang is similar to a feudal system; each rank owes loyalty to the rank above, and all owe fealty to the leader. Those wishing to join the gang are first required to show their loyalty by performing various duties for the gang such as transport, security, or other minor tasks. When they have proven their worth, recruits are initiated into the lowest rank of gang membership and known as "ghouls." The initiation involves the prospective member being beaten badly and then partaking in a ritual referred to as "the Taking" in which the new ghoul swears his or her fealty to Carlisle and is given a small amount of life force from one of the Brothers. That Brother is then responsible for the ghoul, who must show absolute loyalty to their new master. The initiation imbues the new gang member with increased strength and a certain amount of resistance to harm. Ghouls are the soldiers of the gang, acting as simple muscle for the most part.

A ghoul who has proven to be a trustworthy and valuable gang member may be promoted to the position of Brother. This entails another ritual, one that is only attended by other Brothers. An orgiastic affair, the ritual involves the assault and bloodletting of several victims, normally the homeless, who have been kidnapped specifically for the event. At the ritual's climax, Carlisle drains the life force of the prospect to the point of unconsciousness. After three days, if he is lucky, the ghoul is welcomed as a Brother. Those who fail to awaken normally die a day or two later. The Brother now has the similar powers to that of Carlisle, and is considered a full gang member, and is able to create ghouls.

Above the Brothers are the highest ranked gang members below Carlisle himself, called the "Upry." Physically more powerful than the lower-ranked members, they form Carlisle's trusted inner circle of followers and act as his direct representatives in all things.

The Blood Brothers are involved in a broad range of criminal activities, including drug manufacture and trafficking, prostitution, and extortion (in addition to the kidnapping and murder required for their initiations). They have strong rivalries with the Wolves, the Golden Dragon Society, and the Takazumi-gumi with whom they share territorial borders. This rivalry often breaks out into open

combat, and the Blood Brothers are a small gang now, but in time they aim to overrun all three gangs and take over their territories.

Use the Thug archetype in **Chapter 9** of the *Hero's Handbook*. For ghouls and Brothers make the following changes:

- **Ghouls:** Increase Str and Sta to 4, and add Protection 2.
- **Brothers:** Increase Str and Sta to 4, increase Agl to 3; add **Blood Drain:** Weaken Stamina 2 (Grab-based); Enhanced Str 2 (Source: Weaken Stamina); **Energy Vampire:** Speed 4 (30 MPH), Enhanced Advantage (Improved Initiative), Protection 2.
- **Upyr:** Use the Gang Leader archetype in **Chapter 9** of the *Hero's Handbook* with the following changes: Increase Str and Sta to 5, increase Agl to 4, add **Blood Drain:** Weaken Stamina 2 (Grab-based), Enhanced Str 2 (Source: Weaken Stamina); **Mental Paralysis:** Ranged Cumulative Affliction 4 (Resisted by Will; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobilized, Extra Condition, Limited Degree, Sight-Dependant); **Energy Vampire:** Speed 5 (60 MPH), Enhanced Advantage 2 (Improved Initiative 2), Protection 2.

CARLISLE FACINELLI

Carlisle (Carl) Facinelli was a low-level member of the Blood Brothers, a small ethnic gang in the Downtown district of Emerald City. The gang was involved in small-time criminal activities involving petty robbery, drug dealing, and the like, with a membership that ranged from youths

as young as 13 to young men in their mid to late 20s. All that changed when the Silver Storm hit and Carl was caught in its midst. Blinded and burning with an internal fire, Carl stumbled into a back alley and collapsed where he lay unconscious for three days. When he awoke, he felt a gnawing overwhelming hunger.

Nearby lay a homeless man who'd made his home in an alcove between two buildings. Reaching out, Carl's fingers touched the vagrant's and electricity exploded into Carl. Feeling invigorated, Carl walked out of the alley like a new man, leaving the desiccated corpse of the vagrant behind.

Always an ambitious man, Carl quickly realized he could put his new powers to use by taking over leadership of the gang, which he accomplished easily. Those who opposed him died swiftly, those who allied themselves with him became the core of a revitalized gang. Carl also learned he could create loyal follows and lieutenants by imparting some of his own life energy into them and bestowing similar powers on them as he possessed. The similarity to the mythological vampire didn't elude the young gang leader, and it was a trapping that he intended on taking advantage of.

Carl is 25 years old, 5'10", and of average build. He wears his shoulder-length black hair pulled back into a ponytail and his eyes are a piercing blue. Carl has taken to wearing dark, goth clothing to help reinforce the vampiric image he likes to portray; a long black trench coat, black leather pants and combat boots are typical of his attire.



THE MANETTI FAMILY

While the Russian mafiya have a strong hold on the underworld of Emerald City, they aren't the only mobsters in the city. The Manetti Family, part of the world-wide Sicilian *mafiosi*, arrived in the city in the early 1940s and immediately tried to carve out a small part of the underworld pie for themselves. The going has been tough, and the Manettis have had to move carefully so as not to attract too much attention from the Malakovs in the past decade or so. Once the immediate fallout from the Silver Storm began to settle, the current family boss, Marko Manetti, saw the opportunity it represented. Now, instead of trying to operate under the Malakov's radar, he has decided this is the time his family has been waiting for. Ousting the Russians will prove to be a monumental undertaking, but one well worth the risks involved.

The Manetti family has been primarily involved in protection rackets, offering their "clients" protection from theft, competition, and fraud for a fee. They also have some interest in loan sharking and investing in smuggling operations. In general, they do not involve themselves directly in theft or kidnapping as those crimes are often too high profile and bring too much attention to the family. While the Manetti's have operated throughout the city, they have until recently been low-profile enough not to draw much attention from the other gangs in the city. Since they've begun expanding their undertakings, they've attracted the attention of the Malakovs. There is tension between the two gangs that could lead to an explosive confrontation similar to the Great Mafia War in Sicily during the early 1980s.

Assisting Marko in running the family business is his younger brother, Salvatore. He is advised by his two paternal uncles, Gino and Frank. Reporting to Salvatore are the family's lieutenants, who are normally relatives of the Manetti clan, though an outsider can be elevated to this position thus becoming a "made man" in reward for his services. Each lieutenant is in command of between ten and thirty "soldiers," normally common thugs and grunts, who do the majority of the dirty work for the family. Since the Silver Storm, Marko has hired a handful of stormers from time to time in order to see how his men work with them and vice versa. The advantages of having access to super-powered crooks has not eluded Marko, and he has issued orders for the family to start taking on a few more stormers to act in the capacity of soldiers and to assist in the coming conflict with the Malakovs.

MARKO MANETTI

Marko stepped into the role of the *capofamiglia* (boss) for Manetti family five years ago after the death of his father, Marko, Sr. As the eldest son of the previous don, Marko was trained extensively to take the position once his father passed away. The knowledge imparted by his father has paid off, which has allowed the younger Marko to slide effortlessly into the role previously held by his father.



Like his father before him, Marko insists on running the family in a hands-on manner. He makes every effort to get to know by name each and every one of his soldiers. Regularly, Marko invites a selected lieutenant, his soldiers, and their families to gatherings at his mansion in Royal Heights, laying out a lavish meal and providing entertainment. Some see this as a sign of Don Manetti's generosity, but it's actually a calculated move on Manetti's part to instill a sense of family in the mob, and thereby increase their loyalty to the family.

While Marko likes to give the impression he has a harmonious home life, behind closed doors he has tempestuous relationships with both his wife, Louisa, and his mother. He and Louisa are on rocky ground at the best of times. No matter how much jewelry he lavishes on her, she never seems to be content and nags him to spend more time with his children. His widowed mother lives with them, and the tension between the two women causes problems Marko often has to spend time addressing. Finally, he has doubts regarding his only son, Roberto's, sexuality.

To alleviate this stress, Marko keeps a mistress, Karla Riina, in an expensive apartment in Riverfront, and visits prostitutes regularly. He suspects his wife knows about his infidelities, but he really doesn't care what she thinks of his extramarital affairs. In his mind, he supports his family well, and for that she should be grateful.

Marko is in his late 40s, and is 6'1". While once he had a line-backer's build, he is now overweight, though still an extremely attractive, and some would say, desirable man. He is always seen in public wearing only the finest Italian suits, silk ties, and expensive Italian shoes. He has a fondness for Cuban cigars, though he has cut back on smoking them for his health.

For Don Manetti, use the Crime Lord archetype in **Chapter 9** of the *Hero's Handbook* with the following changes: Increase Str to 1; and add Language (Italian) to Advantages.

SALVATORE MANETTI

Salvatore Manetti is Marko's younger brother and second-in-command of the family business. He gives the appearance of being loyal to his brother, and follows every command he's given. Salvatore is well known for his cruel sense of humor, a trait he has had from early childhood.



Though he knows he would likely never take the position of *capofamiglia* based on his own skills and abilities, he still secretly covets it. Slowly, he has been drawing together plans to usurp his older brother. First, he took select *sotto capo* (underbosses) into his trust to form a core group of the family loyal only to him. Salvatore knows Marko's son, Roberto, is gay, and he plans to expose his nephew as scandalously as possible in an attempt to shame Marko and weaken his grasp on the family. That would only leave Marko isolated or at least give his followers doubts as to his ability to lead since, "He can't even raise his son right." A suitably unfortunate accident at the right time would

put Marko out of the picture and, hopefully, allow Salvatore to step in. Whether or not Salvatore manages to pull off his grand plan or not—and how much of it Marko is already privy to—remains to be seen.

Salvatore is in his mid 40s, 5'9", and rather slim. Like his brother, he is quite attractive which is only enhanced by his winning smile and charming personality. If angered though, Salvatore becomes a cold, cruel man, one who never lets a slight go unanswered.

For Salvatore, use the Crime Lord archetype on in **Chapter 9** of the *Hero's Handbook* with the following changes: Decrease Pre to 3; decrease Benefit to 3 (Wealthy, Status: Underboss) and add Language (Italian) to Advantages.

THE KINGS

The Kings are an outlaw motorcycle club with many chapters in the United States and overseas. The Emerald City faction of the club, or charter, is relatively small but still presents a problematic criminal force within the city. Members of the club wear an identifying patch featuring a crown above a crossed pair of rifles. The Kings are involved in drug manufacture and weapon trafficking operations, illegal prostitution and protection rackets, especially in rural areas. Their activities have brought them into conflict with the Golden Dragon Society and the Takazumi-*gumi* syndicates in the past. If and when the Kings come into conflict with the other gangs of Emerald City, the Kings are sure to call upon the support of other charters from the region, which could lead to problems for the police and locals. The Kings have a close working relationship with the Malakov Mafiya from whom they receive and distribute illegal Russian firearms.

The Kings have a small number of safe-houses scattered throughout the city and surrounding suburbs, but they operate from a primary headquarters in Southern Shore, a clubhouse adjacent to the Long Auto Mechanic Shop, which is owned by Nick Long, who is also the gang's leader.

RED RIVER GANG

The Red River Gang is local street gang made up of disaffected youths who've banded together to get theirs any way they can. They have no interest in being a part of the system and work together to survive in a world that's mistreated, abused, or ignored them since birth.

Most of the members are violent and mainly interested in looking out for themselves, but they also realize there's strength in numbers. Their territory runs along the Red River (hence their name) and they defend it from encroachment by other gangs with easy violence.

Unlike other gangs in this chapter, the Red River Gang isn't a powerful underworld presence, nor does it (necessarily) have access to super-powered help. Instead, it's a street-level gang that runs drugs, terrorizes neighborhood businesses, commits muggings, recruits more and more kids, and generally causes trouble for anyone who doesn't belong on their turf.

If the Gamemaster likes, the Red River Gang is the perfect choice for Tribal (see the *Threat Report*) to be associated with, either as leader or member. For the average member, use any of a number of the underworld archetypes presented in **Chapter 9** of the *Hero's Handbook* or **Chapter 3** of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

THE WOLVES

The Wolves are a small Emerald City motorcycle club that formed before the Kings chapter arrived in the city. Originally the two clubs had an antagonistic relationship, often being at odds with each other in regards to criminal activities and territory. Violent outbursts between the club's members were a common occurrence, particularly in bars and clubs when the two groups happened upon each other. Being the smaller club with no allies to call upon, the Wolves have had to become very careful about their operations, which mostly involve the manufacture and distribution of narcotics. Members of the Wolves know to keep a low profile, so they rarely come into conflict with other gangs anymore, but when they do, they show up in number and have a reputation for incredible violence. The Wolves' leader, Taylor Black, encourages the excessive violence because it keeps his customers paying and makes the other gangs think twice before interfering with his operations. Black also likes to strongly imply the gang has connections to wolf-men and other creatures that live in the forests surrounding Emerald City. Whether or not the association is true is unknown, but some people talk as if the bloody reputation of the gang is due to their ability to bring in supernatural backup when they need it.

The Wolves operate out of a nightclub on the Riverfront called The Den. Members of the gang wear a patch featuring a snarling wolf's head with unfurled bat wings on either side.

STORMFRONT

Like the Circuit-Maximus in Freedom City, the Stormfront is an illegal fighting circuit. The brain-child of Dwayne Ragner, a bookie with connections in the criminal underworld, the idea came to him after he witnessed a brief tussle between two stormer toughs. Approaching the victor, he proposed a deal where the stormer would fight for him in organized matches and together they would make a small fortune. From that small beginning just a few months ago grew an underground fight-ring that draws crowds of fans looking for something dangerous and forbidden.

With his connections in both the Russian and Italian mafias, word quickly spread about the new fighting circuit. At first it was small, only drawing a handful of low-ranking hoods and nobodies, but soon the audiences grew to include the most powerful underworld figures in the city. The fights haven't been going for long, but it likely won't be long before they're rife with crooked bouts, bet fixing, and other illegal activities. Poor and violent stormers from all over the city are

drawn into the circuit either voluntarily or not, either sponsored by crime bosses or on their own, to win their fortune in the ring. Battles are most often held in abandoned warehouses or in the Undercity, but rarely in the same place twice. The audiences comprise an odd mix of ordinary people rubbing shoulders with underground crime-bosses and the city's elite, all brought together by their mutual desire to see super-powered combatants spill each other's blood. While accidental fatalities are rare during matches, the fights that draw the largest crowds are the ones billed "to the death."

DWAYNE RAGNER

Dwayne Ragner was a bookie trying to earn enough to make a living and step out from under the heels of organized crime. His whole life it seemed, had been spent working for one crime boss or another, kowtowing to their desires and never really getting ahead no matter how hard he tried. He lived in a small dirty room in a flea-bitten flop house with rats his only companions. All he needed was one break. Never in his wildest dreams did Dwayne think, when he approached that first stormer with his proposal, how big the Stormfront would actually become.



Dwayne is now a big figure in the underground of Emerald City. Every crime boss knows him by name, and he has enough money and respect to attract beautiful young women of a certain moral character to want to be seen with him. He has a relatively large stable of stormer fighters he can call upon; some are his direct employees while others are owned by various crime lords.

Stormfront has made Dwayne into a moderately rich and powerful man, yet still he finds himself at the beck and call of the very crime lord he hoped to free himself of. He knows that without the support of the big bosses, Stormfront would be just another backyard fight-circuit. Use the Criminal traits in **Chapter 9** of the *Hero's Handbook* for Dwayne's stats.

BRAD "DESTROYER" DURDEN

Brad Durden, a high-school dropout and former janitor, was the stormer Dwayne Ragner first approached with his idea to create an underground fight club. Though Brad was dubious at first, he wasn't adverse to the idea of being paid for beating up other people, something he was normally happy to do for free in drunken brawls. Durden, who insisted on being called Destroyer, accepted Ragner's offer.



BRAD "DESTROYER" DURDEN

PL10 · 159 POINTS

STR 7 STA 7 AGL 5 DEX 2 FGT 10 INT 0 AWE 2 PRE 2

Powers: **Combat Tricks** (Array (14 points), **Nerve Strike** (Cumulative Affliction 7 (Resisted by Dodge and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Paralyzed), **AE: Stunning Blow** (Affliction 7 (Resisted by Dodge and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated), Secondary Effect); **Instinctive Fighter** (Strength Damage is Penetrating 6; Enhanced Advantages 23 (All-out Attack, Assessment, Close Attack 3, Defensive Roll 2, Evasion, Improved Critical 4 (Unarmed), Improved Initiative 2, Improved Trip, Instant Up, Power Attack, Precise Attack (Close; Concealment), Redirect, Takedown 2, Taunt, Uncanny Dodge); Enhanced Skill 5 (Insight +10, Limited to combat-related checks); Immunity 2 (Critical Hits)); **Super-Athlete** (Leaping 2 (30 feet); Movement 4 (Safe Fall, Sure-Footed 2, Wall-crawling 1); Regeneration 1; Speed 3 (16 MPH); Swimming 3 (4 MPH))

Advantages: *All-out Attack, Assessment, Attractive, Benefit 2 (Independently Wealthy), Close Attack 3, Connected, Defensive Roll 2, Evasion, Improved Critical 4 (Unarmed), Improved Initiative 2, Improved Trip, Instant Up, Power Attack, Precise Attack (Close; Concealment), Redirect, Takedown 2, Taunt, Uncanny Dodge*

Skills: Acrobatics 3 (+8), Athletics 5 (+12), Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: Streetwise 5 (+5), Insight 0 (+2/+12*), Intimidation 3 (+5), Perception 6 (+8), Persuasion 3 (+5), Treatment 5 (+5) *Only for combat-related checks.

Offense: Initiative +13, Unarmed +13 (Close, Damage 7, Penetrating 6, Crit. 16-20), Nerve Strike +7 (Close, Cumulative Affliction 7, Dodge/Fort DC 17), Stunning Blow +7 (Close, Affliction 7, Secondary Effect, Dodge/Fort DC 17)

Defense: Dodge 11, Parry 11, Fortitude 9, Toughness 9/7**, Will 8 **Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 56 + Powers 66 + Advantages 4 + Skills 18 + Defenses 15 = 159

A remarkably violent man, Destroyer quickly proved to be popular in the ring. His lean, powerful, good looks made him a favorite of the ladies, while his unrestrained brutality had the men screaming for more. His skill as a hand-to-hand combatant quickly earned him a reputation as an in-your-face fighter, and he uses his powers in creative and crowd pleasing ways.

When not fighting in the ring, Destroyer acts as Ragner's bodyguard and right-hand man. He's often employed to "convince" other stormers to join the Stormfront either by showing off the wealth it can provide or by threatening whatever or whoever is valuable to a reluctant stormer. Durden feels he owes Ragner a debt, because if it wasn't for the ex-bookie's offer, he would still be working for minimum wage on the nightshift at a going-nowhere job.

Destroyer is in his early 20s, is 5'11", and has a trim, muscular build. His light brown hair is always slightly disheveled and he sports a close, neat goatee and mustache. His trademark boyish grin belies the violence he is capable of, and even when calm, he is an extremely dangerous man.

CHAPTER 5: EMERALD CITY THREATS



This chapter features a collection of threats associated with Emerald City and can be used in a number of ways depending on your needs.

First, you should have no trouble finding villains for your players' heroes to face! All the work of writing up these characters has been done for you, so you can spend your time coming up with a fun game to run for your friends! Second, this chapter is filled with information to inspire story ideas: long-term and short-term plots by villains. You can borrow and build off the adventure hooks included with each villain write-up to help create your Emerald City adventures.

Third, you can use the information in this chapter to inspire your own heroes and villains. Pick and choose powers you like, adapt them to the character concept and power level you want, and with a little bit of work you have a new creation that's all your own! Work new heroes and villains into the backgrounds of the villains in this chapter to build a new hero with hidden ties to the Malakov Mafiya, for example, or owing some payback to the Big Brain or F.O.E.

Entries in this chapter include game information so you can use the characters in your *M&M* games. Each entry follows a few rules to make them consistent and easier to understand at a glance.

All characters are presented in their super-powered identity. In addition, characters with permanent modi-

fiers to their abilities due to a power are presented with their modifiers already taken into account in their game traits.

If a character can vary their abilities in some way, say due to the Growth power or because they can change forms somehow, then there are two numbers separated by a slash; the first number reflects the character's "normal" or default trait, the second the modified trait rank or value.

Characters lacking Powers, Equipment, Advantages, or Skills don't have a space for that category of ability.

A character with the Equipment advantage may have allocated only some of their equipment points. If this is the case, you can spend the remaining points as you see fit. Usually this means the character varies his or her arsenal depending on the circumstances. You may also elect to leave those points unspent to avoid the additional book-keeping. Those characters accompanied by a list of equipment always show what that character typically carries.

Skills and Advantages granted by powers (using the Enhanced Trait effect) appear both in the listing for that power and in the Skills or Advantages section of the character in *italics*. These aren't the same skill or advantage purchased multiple times, instead they're included under their appropriate headings for ease of reference.

The Offense section of a character includes short-hand notations about the character's attack values and

powers. This section does not list all the information about those powers and may not even include all of the powers or abilities that character is capable of using. Be sure to look at the full write-up of the character's powers and advantages in order to learn exactly what they're capable of and what your options are.

Overall, the characters should be easy to decipher, but the notes above will help if something is unclear. If a character breaks any of the guidelines above, that will be made clear in the character's entry either with notes called out using asterisks or with information in that character's **Powers & Abilities** section.

THE BIG BRAIN

REAL NAME: Copernicus Oliver

OCCUPATION: Head of F.O.E.

BASE: Emerald City

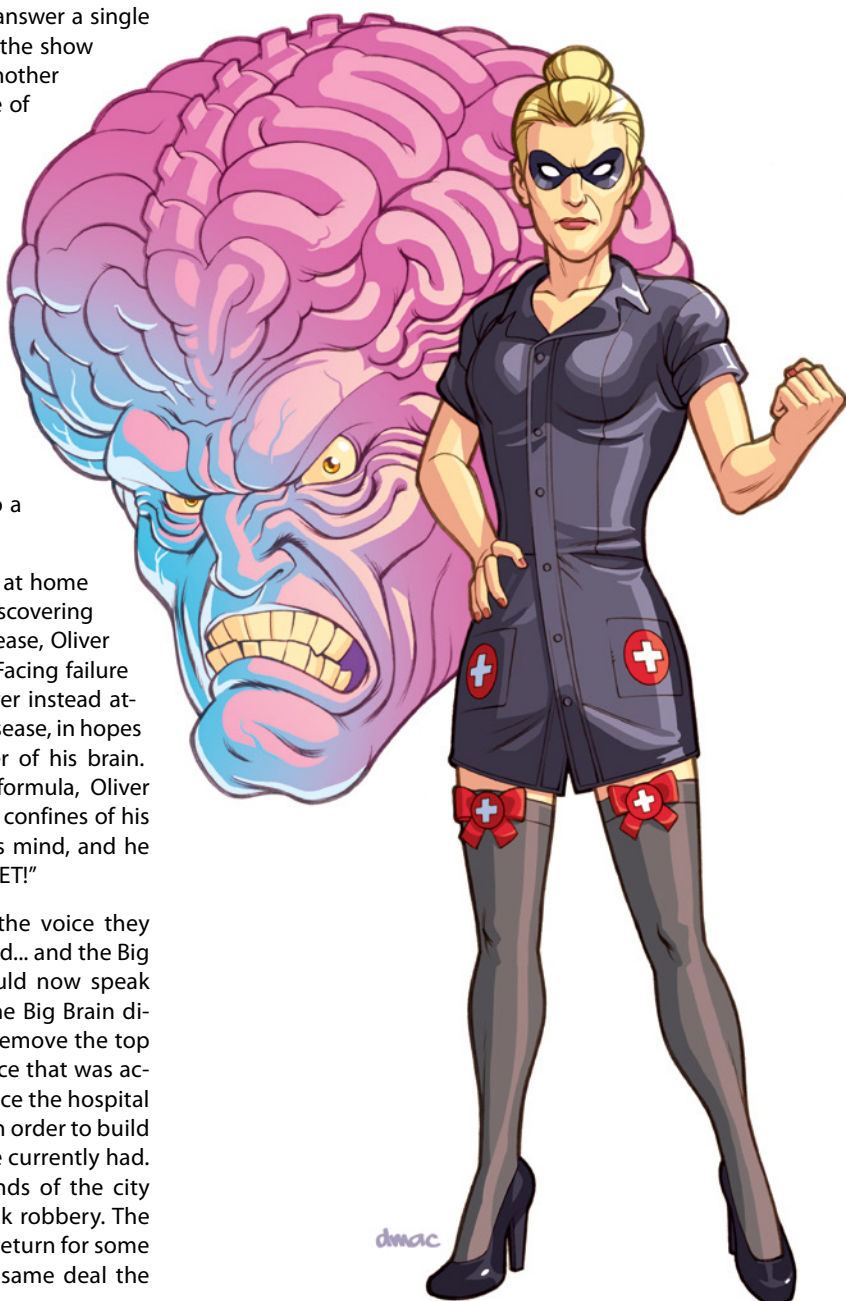
In the 1960s, Copernicus Oliver was touted on television quiz shows as "The Smartest Boy in the World", and amassed a small fortune in winnings and endorsements before his fame waned after he failed to answer a single question correctly during Beatles Day on the show *Q and A*. His fame faded and he became another footnote in the history of the Golden Age of Television.

Embarrassed, Oliver escaped the public eye, buying a sailboat called *Friendly* and setting out to sail around the world. Desperate to avoid England, Oliver set a course that took him across the Atlantic and then directly down the coast of Africa. Sailing was smooth until the *Friendly* was suddenly caught up in a storm that wrecked the boat on a rocky shore. Before he could be rescued, Oliver contracted a rare tropical disease that caused his brain to swell, putting him into a coma for three months.

When Oliver awakened, he found himself at home in a hospital—and smarter than ever! Discovering he was also still in the grips of a fatal disease, Oliver turned his intelligence to finding a cure. Facing failure after six months of fevered research, Oliver instead attempted to accelerate the course of the disease, in hopes that he could unlock more of the power of his brain. Injecting himself with an experimental formula, Oliver screamed as his brain swelled against the confines of his skull. A thousand voices crowded into his mind, and he pushed back with a single command: "QUIET!"

As everyone in the hospital paused at the voice they heard in their head, Copernicus Oliver died... and the Big Brain was born. Discovering that he could now speak to and command the minds of others, the Big Brain directed doctors to keep him alive and to remove the top of his skull to allow his brain to grow. Once that was accomplished, he needed a place to stay since the hospital and his old home were of no use to him. In order to build it, he'd need money... much more than he currently had. The Big Brain searched through the minds of the city until he found a criminal planning a bank robbery. The Big Brain helped him improve his plan in return for some of the proceeds from the robbery—the same deal the

Brain would strike with dozens of other criminals as he assembled his new organization: F.O.E.. Initially, the Big Brain needed the money for himself, but over the years he's come to enjoy the challenge of bringing villains together for missions and the power he has over a small army of super-beings.



THE BIG BRAIN

PL12

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
-1	0	-2	-2	-2	10	12	3

POWERS

Mental Prowess: Enhanced Trait 1 (Improved Initiative); Quickness 4 (Limited—Mental Tasks); Senses 8 (Accurate Acute Radius Detect Mental, Mental Awareness, Radius (visual)) • 11 points

Power of the Mind!: Array (48 points)

- **Mental Blast:** Perception Range Damage 12, Resisted by Will • 48 points
- **Mass Mental Domination:** Burst Area Selective Mind Control 8 • 1 point
- **Mental Domination:** Perception Ranged, Cumulative Affliction, Resisted by Will (Entranced, Compelled, Controlled) • 1 point
- **Mind Probe:** Mind Reading 12 • 1 point

Telepathic Presence: Selective Area Mental Communication 4 (Worldwide); Remote Sensing 20 (4,000 mile range (Auditory, Mental, Visual)), Feature (Projected image of disembodied brain), Feedback, Subtle 2 • 63 points

SKILLS

Deception 7 (+10), Expertise: Crime 6 (+16), Intimidation 14 (+17), Perception 10 (+22), Persuasion 9 (+12)

ADVANTAGES

Eidetic Memory, *Improved Initiative*, Jack-of-all-trades, Speed of Thought*, Ultimate Effort (Will checks)

*See the Appendix.

F.O.E.'s members assume the giant, disembodied brain that issues them orders is merely a projection disguising their leader's true nature. Little do they suspect that the Big Brain's actual appearance isn't far off: a gigantic brain atop a nearly atrophied human body hidden away in a secret, secured location far away, projecting his will around the world!

PERSONALITY

The Big Brain is a thinker and a planner. Almost all other aspects of his personality have been left by the wayside over the years. He cares little for companionship and has little interest in the "animal" concerns of the physical world. He keeps his body alive because without it he will perish. The one thing he enjoys in life is feeling superior, which he prefers to achieve by outsmarting others. He abhors violence and only involves himself in combat when all other avenues have been exhausted. He prefers to let his underlings handle any violent confrontations, while he remains behind the scenes to direct their activities.

POWERS & ABILITIES

The Big Brain is one of the most—if not *the* most—powerful telepaths in the world, with the ability to project his consciousness anywhere on Earth, communicate with and mentally control others, inflict debilitating mental attacks,

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +14	
Mental Blast —	Perception Range, Damage 12, Resisted by Will (DC 22)
Mental Domination —	Perception Range, Mind Control 12, Resisted by Will (DC 22)

DEFENSE

DODGE	-2	FORTITUDE	6
PARRY	-2	TOUGHNESS	20/0*
WILL	18		

*Toughness 20 when using Remote Sensing, Toughness 0 for his normal body.

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	36	SKILLS	23
POWERS	125	DEFENSES	12
ADVANTAGES	4	TOTAL	200

COMPLICATIONS

Freakishly Large Brain: Though the Big Brain can project his senses, will, and powers around the world, his body is mostly useless and his head is too large to move under his own power.

Motivation—Power: The Big Brain wants power. He wants to prove to the world that he's the smartest, most influential criminal on the planet.

HOW DO THE BIG BRAIN'S POWERS WORK?

The Big Brain has an unusual set of powers. The key to them is his Telepathic Presence, with it, he projects an image of a disembodied brain through which he can communicate (telepathically) and use all of his mental powers. His mental projection has two ranks of Subtle, so, while it can be clearly seen, it can't be traced back to his physical body and it can be attacked. You may need to point that out to players the first time they encounter the Big Brain, because it may not be obvious (especially to new players). Attacks that target the projection can cause the Big Brain harm; he's easy to hit, but difficult to actually harm because of his low active defenses and very high Toughness.

and read minds. However, physically, he's a paraplegic with a brain so large and deformed his body is incapable of supporting it and his atrophied body has been bedridden for decades. If his body is found and threatened, he may be able to defend it by surrounding it with his mental projection, but if that's not possible, he is defenseless.

ALLIES

Formerly, the Big Brain was allied with the other members of the Chamber. He never trusted them, of course, but he

is disappointed the group disintegrated due to petty jealousies and newfound "morals." The Big Brain's only other allies are those who work for him: the members of F.O.E. and the Professor as well as the mentally-dominated Iron Matron. Beyond them, his contact with the rest of humanity is limited... just the way he likes it.

ENEMIES

The other former members of the Chamber make the Big Brains list of enemies, simply because they're ambitious and they know too much about him and his operation. Outside of that, the Big Brain has few enemies because so few know who he is, what he does, and how to find him. Anyone who thwarts too many of his plans definitely makes his list of enemies.

THE IRON MATRON

REAL NAME: Natalie Nelson

OCCUPATION: Caregiver and bodyguard

BASE: Emerald City

Natalie Nelson was an agent of the criminal organization SHADOW. An assassin and martial artist, she earned her code-name from her detailed knowledge of Eastern medi-

cine and the Chi powers she developed. SHADOW's founder, Overshadow, sent her to recruit the Big Brain while he was still in the hospital. Overshadow felt the nascent supervillain would make an excellent addition to SHADOW's growing stable of super-powered operatives. However, if the Big Brain refused his generous offer, the Iron Matron was to eliminate him, making it appear his artificial life support had failed. But Overshadow underestimated the Big Brain's powers, even at that early stage of his development. The budding criminal mastermind saw what the Iron Matron had in store for him in the recesses of Natalie's consciousness, so he took control of her. She has been his slave ever since and is his primary caregiver, most effective bodyguard, and personal assassin.



The Iron Matron is an extraordinarily skilled martial artist, knowledgeable in many techniques that have helped make her an efficient and dangerous killer. Through the concentrated focus of her Chi, she can toughen her skin to an almost iron-like hardness, which has the added benefit of turning her hands into bone-shattering implements of destruction. Though she does not eschew the use of weapons, she rarely has need of them.

The Big Brain has instilled undying love and loyalty in the Iron Matron. She dedicates her life to his survival, seeing to his every need and is willing to sacrifice herself to protect him from harm. She obeys without question, and the grip he has on her mind and heart has grown so strong that he barely has to reinforce it any longer. He, on the other hand sees the Iron Matron as little more than a faithful dog, useful and nice to have around, but ultimately just another tool to be used. Truthfully, Natalie is a shell of her former self. What she does, she does by rote. When she's not taking care of the Big Brain or on a mission for him, she trains out of habit or sits in her room as if in a trance.

At age 55, Natalie Nelson is still an attractive woman. She has kept herself in peak physical condition, and hasn't let age slow her down. She stands at 5'7" with a willowy build and her face possesses an unassuming beauty. Her straight, shoulder-length blonde hair is normally kept in a utilitarian bun and she spends most of her days wearing a nurse's uniform. When the Big Brain sends her out in the field, which happens very rarely, the Iron Matron wears a black leather dress reminiscent of a nurse's uniform. A pair of small red circles with a white cross in the center adorns the front of her costume near the hips, while similar circles attached to red bows embellishes the tops of her stockings. On her feet she wears black stilettos, that in no way interfere with her fighting ability. Her identity is protected by a small black domino mask.

THE PROFESSOR

REAL NAME: Patrick Hughes

OCCUPATION: Instructor

BASE: Emerald City

Patrick Hughes was an unassuming high school teacher

THE IRON MATRON

PL10 • 162 POINTS

STR 2 **STA** 4 **AGL** 4 **DEX** 4 **FGT** 7 **INT** 2 **AWE** -2 **PRE** -2

Powers: **Body Like Iron** (Impervious Toughness 8 Linked to Sustained Protection 4, Subtle 2); **Fists Like Iron** (Strength-based Damage 4, Penetrating 5, Enhanced Advantages 5 (Improved Critical 2, Improved Disarm, Improved Smash, Weapon Break), Subtle 2, **AE: Weapon-Breaking Stance** (Reaction Damage 4, Limited to the maximum of attack's damage ranks or the ranks of this power, Subtle 2))

Equipment: Heavy Pistol (Ranged Damage 4), Hold-out Pistol (Ranged Damage 2), Knife (Strength-based Damage 1, Improved Critical)

Advantages: Accurate Attack, Agile Feint, All-out Attack, Benefit 2 (Cipher), Chokehold, Close Attack 7, Equipment 3, Fearless, *Improved Critical 2 (Fists Like Iron)*, *Improved Disarm*, Improved Initiative, *Improved Smash*, Improved Trip, Instant Up, Interpose, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Ranged Attack 6, Seize Initiative, Takedown 2, *Weapon Break*

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+12), Athletics 6 (+8), Deception 12 (+10), Expertise: Assassin 6 (+8), Expertise: Medical Doctor 6 (+8), Perception 8 (+6), Sleight of Hand 8 (+12), Stealth 8 (+12), Treatment 6 (+8), Vehicles 4 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +8, Fists Like Iron +14 (Close, Damage 6, Penetrating 5, Crit. 18-20), Heavy Pistol +10 (Ranged, Damage 4), Unarmed +14 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 10, Toughness 8, Will 4

Totals: Abilities 38 + Powers 31 + Advantages 32 + Skills 36 + Defenses 25 = 162

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** The Iron Matron's first and foremost responsibility is to keep the Big Brain safe and do whatever he commands of her. **Identity:** The Iron Matron's sense of self has been almost completely eroded over the decades she's been under the control of the Big Brain. How, or if, she can function without him is unknown. **Relationship:** The Iron Matron loves the Big Brain and is loyal to him above all others. It may be possible to overcome this brainwashing... somehow.

with an uncanny ability to ascertain exactly what it was students required to achieve their best in their fields of study and teach it to them. Yet, despite his brilliant teaching talent, his ineptitude in social politics kept him relegated to lower echelons of academia. Dissatisfied with his job and disgruntled with a system that seemed determined to undermine his chances of promotion, Patrick was contacted by the Big Brain, who explained to him that his skill to teach was in reality a superpower, one that allowed him to somehow achieve high levels of skill with the express purpose of imparting that expertise to others. At first Patrick found this revelation farfetched, but with further explanation on the part of the Big Brain and his own experimentation, he quickly realized he was indeed in possession of a unique power. The Big Brain made Patrick an offer he couldn't refuse; if Patrick would use his powers to provide instruction to certain clients, the Big Brain would make him a rich man... otherwise he'd simply control him and get what he wanted anyway. Patrick chose to go willingly and has never looked back.



Given the codename the Professor, Patrick was at first only required to teach criminals various clandestine skills such as how to bypass electronic security, or forgery, but he was quickly assigned clients who needed his assistance learning how to use their superhuman abilities. At

first, Patrick was unsure how he could provide instruction when he wasn't capable of such superpowers. Thankfully, he discovered his power allowed him to coach his students in efficient and effective ways of using their powers they'd never considered while also increasing their overall control of those powers. Now, the Professor is known in the criminal underworld as the best instructor available for those who wish to learn how to use their powers to their full potential. Rumor has it those in need of him are contacted by the Big Brain and once payment is taken care of a meeting is arranged.

Patrick Hughes is 5'6", balding, and slightly overweight. He wears a pair of bifocals to correct his vision, and wears what would best be described as 'grandfatherly' clothing: cardigan, checked shirt, cheap trousers, and cheap shoes. In most situations he comes across as being rather unsure of himself, but when it comes to teaching he is completely in his element.

Patrick is able to manifest any skill imaginable at a level that would place him among the world's top authorities on the subject, but only if he has the express intention of providing instruction with it. He is able to use that skill himself, but only if he has a student with him and he is instructing them. Once he is no longer using the skill in an instructional capacity, it fades. More importantly, he is able to instruct others on how to use their skills at a higher level, effectively imparting years of experience in just a few sessions of tutoring. So far, he has yet come across a student he couldn't teach to reach the best of their ability in what they want to learn.

THE CHESSMEN

Members: Grandmaster, Endgame, Queens, Bishops, Knights, Pawns

Base of Operations: Emerald City

Motivation: Greed and Ambition

The current Chessmen are the second organization to use that name. The first was founded and controlled by Godwin Kaspar, father to the current Grandmaster. It existed more than thirty years ago and consisted of highly-trained former espionage and law-enforcement personnel recruited by Kaspar in his guise as "Black King." Most of the agents were ranked according to specialty, Knights for combat, Bishops for intelligence, and so on; however, some members were elite enough to earn their own unique code-names, such as the logistics expert Endgame and the infiltration specialist Gambit.

Masters at behind-the-scenes manipulation, the Chessmen intended to take the reins of powers quietly and secretly while the hero community was diverted by more obvious and colorful menaces. Eventually, AEGIS (aided by the first Raven) brought the organization down. The majority of the organization, including its founder, ended up in federal prison. Godwin Kaspar was broken by his defeat and died behind bars less than five years after his incarceration.

Then, a little over a decade ago, the last survivor of Kaspar's Chessmen, a man named Vassily Dragovich, convinced Kaspar's son, Alexander, to form a new Chessmen organization. Alexander replaced his father's peerless personal charisma with his own technological genius, electronically brainwashing agents instead of recruiting them directly and substituting technological firepower for combat training. In the space of the past few years, Alexander, now known as the Grandmaster, has taken his organization from nothing to a highly-efficient and powerful operation.

Shortly after commencing operations, the Grandmaster was approached by Emerald City tech magnate Maximilian Mars. He explained how things really worked in the city and revealed the existence of the Chamber, which he was certain either the Grandmaster or Endgame would have learned of soon enough. Mars offered him membership and explained the Chessmen's surveillance tech more than justified the Grandmaster's inclusion in the group. The advantages to such an alliance were clear to the young mastermind and he quickly accepted. The fact the offer was made by a successful father-figure like Mars only made it that much more attractive.

For years the Grandmaster served as a member of the Chamber, providing valuable intelligence to the rest of the group. The Grandmaster was surprised and hurt



(more than he'd ever admit) by Mars' abandonment and betrayal, especially because the two had worked closely together as members of the Chamber, often cooperating to dilute the power and influence of the Big Brain and F.O.E.

MOTIVATION AND GOALS

The Grandmaster wants to be respected and feared. He wants to realize his father's ambitions and for AEGIS, the hero community, and the public to not only be helpless against him but to recognize and admit that fact. More importantly, he wants to shame the people responsible for his father's ignoble end. To achieve this he wants to seize control of business, political, and military assets. He intends for the Chessmen to *eventually* be a world-class threat on par with SHADOW or the Foundry and will take any steps necessary to make that happen. Wealth and firepower are a means to these ends, nothing more.

TACTICS

Alexander has studied his father's decisions, both his successes and mistakes. To him, everything boiled down to misplaced trust and impatience. So, his people are conditioned to obey and no longer have the capacity to betray him. His watchwords are planning, information, and precision. Enemies are watched and studied in detail before steps are taken against them. Operations begin by targeting friends and associates or favored locations. Then, when the target is off-balance or distracted by other concerns, the target is hit with blackmail, extortion, or an outright smear campaign—whatever it

takes to remove them from the game. Every operation and every enemy is reduced to pieces on a board, with moves carefully thought out.

Moving into an area, the Chessmen identify the criminal elements they need to neutralize or take over in order to operate effectively. Once they take control, they move on to local business and government elements, again blackmailing, intimidating, or eliminating whomever they need to in order to put their people in those positions. Thus far they have avoided directly confronting AEGIS and several powerful criminal organizations... biding their time until the Chessmen are able to deal with those obstacles.

When Chessmen agents or equipment are captured, they are immediately destroyed via a built-in "killswitch," and video or digital evidence pertaining to the group is corrupted, altered, or eliminated at the earliest opportunity.

HEADQUARTERS AND RESOURCES

The Board is an underground facility located far beneath the Emerald City federal building.

The Chessmen have access to the city's traffic cameras, municipal and police computer databases, as well as many individual security systems (commercial and private). All input is processed and analyzed by the Chessmen's Queens. The organization has eyes everywhere, constantly sifting through the data to find useful information. Finally, their teleportation system enables the Chessmen to move anywhere in the city at a moment's notice. With all of these resources, the Chessmen seem to know everything and be everywhere.

The Grandmaster funds the Chessmen by diverting money from hundreds of companies and online schemes as well as by stealing from other criminal and terrorist organization. He recruits homeless people and runaways from around North America—his electronic training and conditioning makes them into capable agents.

HEADQUARTERS: THE BOARD

27 POINTS

Size: Colossal **Toughness:** 14 **Features:** Communication, Computer, Concealed 3 (+20), Defense System, Teleport (Affects Others), Fire Prevention System, Holding Cells, Isolated, Living Space, Personnel, Power (Teleportation System), Power System, Security System 3 (DC 35), Workshop

GRANDMASTER

REAL NAME: Alexander Kaspar
OCCUPATION: Criminal mastermind
BASE: The Board

Alexander grew up a paranoid recluse obsessively hero-worshipping his father and unable to accept that he could have been defeated without being betrayed by someone within his organization. While staying out of the public eye, Alexander made a living using his technical skills, but lacked the vision to do more than tinker and lament his father's death. Dragovitch changed that, finding and molding the man from self-absorbed genius into cunning mastermind.



Alexander now goes by the name Grandmaster almost exclusively. He reacts poorly when called by his real name and rarely leaves the Board. He is focused, has a goal and a means to achieve it; everything else is distraction. He has reinvented himself as the man his father would have wanted him to be; stronger and more capable. Now he's the Grandmaster, not Alexander.

The Grandmaster is a brilliant technician and programmer. He's also obsessively focused, controlling, and ana-

GRANDMASTER

PL10 • 124 POINTS

STR 1 **STA** 2 **AGL** 1 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 4 **INT** 8 **AWE** 4 **PRE** 4

Equipment: Commlink with integral GPS and Computer, Undercover Shirt (Protection 2, Subtle), plus 50 points of other equipment as needed (or more depending on story needs)

Advantages: Benefit 3 (Cipher), Benefit 3 (Leader of the Chessmen), Benefit 4 (Multi-millionaire), Eidetic Memory, Equipment 11, Inventor, Skill Mastery (Technology)

Skills: Deception 4 (+8), Expertise: Chess 12 (+20), Expertise: Computers 8 (+16), Expertise: Engineering 8 (+16), Insight 4 (+8), Investigation 2 (+10), Perception 8 (+12), Technology 10 (+18)

Offense: Initiative +1, Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 7, Fortitude 6, Toughness 4, Will 13

Totals: Abilities 50 + Powers 0 + Advantages 24 + Skills 28 + Defenses 22 = 124

Complications: **Motivation—Control** and **Greed.**
Obsession: Chess. **Obsession:** Hero-worship of father.

lytical with few interpersonal skills, which is why he makes enemies easily and burns through allies quickly. The only person who ever seemed to understand him was Maximilian Mars, but that ended when Mars betrayed him and caused the dissolution of the Chamber. Mars is definitely on the Grandmaster's list of enemies.

ENDGAME

REAL NAME: Vassily Dragovich
OCCUPATION: Criminal
BASE: Emerald City

The Dragovitch family has always traded in secrets and been adept at using such information to help or harm others. They worked for the czars, then for the Politburo, and then for themselves. As a younger man, Vassily Dragovitch grew bored working for the communists and went looking for something else more interesting. He found Godwin Kaspar and grew enchanted for a while with the idea of taking over the world.



Dragovitch was a gifted tactician and his planning skills were unparalleled, so he quickly became quite valuable to Kaspar. Dragovitch was given the code-name "Endgame" by Kaspar to reflect his lethal tactical expertise. Thanks to that same expertise, Vassily kept his head and saw the group's downfall coming with enough time to extricate himself. He walked away with the secret to a serum developed by one of the organization's scientists that proved capable of extending his life and vitality years longer than Mother Nature intended. In the decades since Kaspar's capture and death, Vassily joined the Russian Mafiya and lived the life of a wealthy consultant and playboy. Wealth, wine, and women helped

ENDGAME

PL8 • 108 POINTS

STR -1 **STA** -1 **AGL** 0 **DEX** -1 **FGT** 2 **INT** 5 **AWE** 5 **PRE** 3

Equipment: Commlink, Hidden Knives (Damage 1, Crit. 19-20), Light Pistol (Ranged Damage 3), Undercover Shirt (Protection 2, Subtle)

Advantages: Assessment, Connected, Contacts, Equipment 3, Fascinate (Deception), Languages 2 (English, German; Russian is native), Luck 2, Well-informed

Skills: Close Combat: Knives 6 (+8), Deception 12 (+15), Expertise: Spy 13 (+18), Expertise: Streetwise 11 (+16), Expertise: Tactics 10 (+15), Insight 10 (+15), Intimidation 4 (+7), Investigation 4 (+9), Perception 9 (+14), Persuasion 9 (+12), Ranged Combat: Guns 9 (+8), Sleight of Hand 6 (+5), Stealth 6 (+6), Technology 3 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +0, Knives +8 (Close, Damage 0, Crit. 19-20), Light Pistol +8 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed 2 (Close, Damage -1)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 0, Toughness 1, Will 12

Totals: Abilities 24+ Powers 0+ Advantages 12 + Skills 56 + Defenses 16 = 108

Complications: **Disability:** Deteriorating physical condition.
Hatred: AEGIS. **Motivation—Revenge.**

QUEEN

PL10 • 100 POINTS

STR — STA — AGL 3 DEX — FGT 0 INT 9 AWE 6 PRE 0

Powers: Feature (System Backbone: integrated with and controls all of Board's systems); Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects); Protection 10 (Impervious 10); Quickness 12 (Limited to Mental Tasks)

Advantages: Eidetic Memory, Fearless, Speed of Thought*, Well-informed *See the Appendix.

Skills: Expertise: The Chessmen 9 (+18), Expertise: Current Events 11 (+20), Investigation 8 (+17), Perception 8 (+14), Technology 8 (+17), Treatment 8 (+17)

Offense: Initiative +9, Attack and Damage depends on systems in use (typically Attack +10 and Damage 10 in the Board)

Defense: Dodge 3**, Parry 3**, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 10, Will 10 **Refers to remotely controlled manipulators, Queens are immobile

Totals: Abilities 6 + Powers 57 + Advantages 4 + Skills 26 + Defenses 7 = 100

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** To the Grandmaster. **Quirk:** Fanatical devotion to the Grandmaster.

KNIGHT

PL8 • 163 POINTS

STR 6 STA 2 AGL 2 DEX 2 FGT 6 INT 1 AWE 1 PRE 1

Powers: **Powered Armor** (Enhanced Fortitude 4, Enhanced Strength 4, Flight 6 (120 MPH; Subtle); Immunity 10 (Life Support); Impervious Protection 8; **Combat Systems (Gatling Laser** (Ranged Multiattack Damage 9, **AE: Cloaking Field:** Selective Shapeable Area Concealment from all Visual and Auditory senses)); Senses 5 (Communications Link with Black Queen, Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Infravision, Radio); **TacNet Interface** (Reaction Perception Area Weaken 5 (Resisted by Will), Broad (Attack, Dodge, and Parry ranks), Simultaneous, Insidious, Subtle; Limited to only affecting traits when opposing TacNet user, Limited to only when multiple TacNet users are present); Removable (-22 points))

Advantages: Close Attack 2, Fearless, Teamwork

Skills: Athletics 4 (+10), Expertise: Chessmen Agent 9 (+10), Expertise: Current Events 4 (+5), Expertise: Streetwise 4 (+5), Expertise: Tactics 6 (+7), Insight 4 (+5), Intimidation 4 (+5), Perception 4 (+5), Ranged Combat: Gatling Laser 5 (+7), Stealth 2 (+4), Technology 4 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +2, Laser +7 (Ranged, Multiattack Damage 9), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 6)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 9, Toughness 10, Will 5

Totals: Abilities 34 + Powers 89 + Advantages 4 + Skills 25 + Defenses 11 = 163

Complications: **Motivation—Fanatic:** Fanatical devotion to the Chessmen. **Quirk:** Can be killed through electronic "killswitch" over which they have no control.

TACNET INTERFACE

The TacNet is a suite of "smart" software used by Chessmen operatives acting in concert. It analyzes movement patterns, fields of fire, and environmental factors and combines the results to allow operatives to adapt to an enemy's actions in battle as perfectly as possible. This is a Weaken effect against a target's combat-related traits that is undetectable by the target and resisted by Will to reflect mental focus and discipline under fire.

BISHOP

PL5 • 96 POINTS

STR 1 STA 1 AGL 1 DEX 1 FGT 3 INT 3 AWE 3 PRE 1

Powers: **Encrypted Communication Implants** (Communication 2, Rapid 5, Subtle; Limited to computers, other Chessmen and Queens); Comprehend 2 (Machines; Limited to computers); Senses 4 (Analytical Detect Electronics, Radio, Time Sense; Subtle)

Equipment: Light Pistol (Ranged Damage 3), Undercover Shirt (Protection 2, Subtle)

Advantages: Eidetic Memory, Equipment 2, Fearless, Teamwork, Well-informed

Skills: Deception 8 (+9), Expertise: Spy 8 (+11), Insight 8 (+11), Investigation 8 (+11), Perception 8 (+11), Ranged Combat: Guns 6 (+7), Stealth 4 (+5), Technology 8 (+11)

Offense: Initiative +1, Light Pistol +7 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 3, Toughness 3, Will 7

Totals: Abilities 28 + Powers 19 + Advantages 6 + Skills 29 + Defenses 14 = 96

Complications: **Motivation—Fanatic:** Fanatical devotion to the Chessmen. **Quirk:** Can be killed through electronic "killswitch" over which they have no control. **Quirk:** May not be aware of true nature.

him recover from the blow to his ego the defeat of the Chessmen represented.

And then, a few years ago, the pain began. His body was deteriorating—as his expensive doctors told him, the longevity serum was unstable and his cells were consuming themselves. It was only a matter of time before it killed him. His enemies in the Mafiya capitalized on his weakness and were able to force him out of the organization. But he didn't care anymore. While investigating the serum, he learned the inventor was a former AEGIS scientist and Vassily had come to the conclusion the man had corrupted the serum at AEGIS' command and left it for him to steal when he escaped, after all, that was something he would do. They had killed him without ever pulling a trigger and he wanted revenge.

In his final days, Endgame has put the Chessmen back into play by manipulating the new Grandmaster. Every ounce of energy he can muster he gives to his pupil, hoping the son will succeed where the father failed. If he can do so while Vassily is still alive and able to see his enemies precede him to the grave, so much the better. Ultimately, Dragovich just wants to see AEGIS burn.

THE QUEENS

The Queens (one white and one black) are massively complex AIs that control all electronic and mechanical operations in the Board. They monitor and analyze incoming intelligence, track Chessmen agents, and coordinate usage of the teleport network. They are programmed to be utterly loyal to the Grandmaster and, as he does, view all other organization personnel as expendable pieces. They have no physical presence outside the facility (their physical systems are integrated into the Board's infrastructure).

THE BISHOPS

Bishops are designed with intelligence and infiltration in mind. Their extensive cybernetics are hidden and even shielded from sensor detection. When outside the Board, many of them are unaware of their status, instead conditioned as “sleeper” assets. In operation, they are able to infiltrate electronics systems easily and with no external equipment.

KNIGHTS

Knights are the combat leaders of the Chessmen. Highly mobile and heavily armed, they are equipped with the same TacNet interface as the Pawns, but are capable of independent thought and creativity which Pawns lack. Recruits are trained via computer interface (a process which includes brainwashing and a removal of normal fear responses) and each has a “killswitch” that can be remotely triggered to kill them and destroy their armor.

PAWNS

Pawns are sophisticated combat robots. Though their complex programming may make them seem intelligent, they are only machines and have neither creativity nor independent thought. Pawns stand eight feet tall, are obviously armored, and each has a cannon in place of its left arm. In addition to its Arm Cannon, a Pawn also has an internal grenade launcher and can release a hail of taser

A BLOODLESS GAME

If you prefer to avoid the inevitable deaths of defeated Bishops, Knights, and Rooks you can make *all* of the Chessmen sophisticated robots with varying degrees of artificial intelligence software, similar to the Pawns. This relieves the heroes of any guilt in outright smashing them to pieces and or having them blown up. Perhaps the Queens in this case are also sophisticated “auto-factories” capable of manufacturing replacement Chessmen as needed.

darts from the center of its chest plate. Acting in concert with other Pawns, they can pose a significant hazard to those who are accustomed to the more easily disposable robot assets of other organizations. Note that Pawns are Minions (see page 193, *Hero's Handbook*).

ROOKS

A Rook is essentially a flying tank cybernetically-interfaced with a pilot and consists of an armored exoframe surrounding a life-support womb. It possesses powerful weapon systems, extendable tentacles for manipulation, and a short-range integrated rapid-teleport system independent of the Board's network that it uses to “pop” around targets for tactical advantage. As with the Bishops, Knights, and Pawns, the Rooks access the TacNet system.

PAWN	PL7 / MR7- T18 POINTS
STR 8 STA — AGL 1 DEX 1 FGT 0 INT — AWE 2 PRE —	
Powers: Giant Robot (Growth 2 (8 feet tall; Innate; Permanent); Immunity 30 (Fortitude Effects); Impervious Protection 8; Enhanced Advantages 1 (Teamwork); Enhanced Defenses 9 (Dodge 4, Parry 5); Enhanced Skills 9 (Close Combat: Unarmed 3 (+6), Ranged Combat: Arm Cannon 2 (+4), Perception 4 (+8)); Speed 4 (30 MPH)); Sensors (Senses 5 (Communication Link with Black Queen, Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Infravision, Radio)); TacNet Interface (Reaction Perception Area Weaken 5 (Resisted by Will), Broad (Attack, Dodge, and Parry ranks), Simultaneous, Insidious, Subtle; Limited to only affecting traits when opposing TacNet user, Limited to only when multiple TacNet users are present); Weapon Systems (Arm Cannon (Ranged Multiattack Damage 10), AE: Grenade Barrage Launchers (Ranged Burst Area 2 (60 feet) Damage 7, Indirect 1(arc)), AE: Taser Dart Swarm (Ranged Cloud Area 2 (30 feet) Affliction 7 (Resisted by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated)))	
Advantages: <i>Teamwork</i>	
Skills: <i>Close Combat: Unarmed 6 (+6), Perception 8 (+10), Ranged Combat: Arm Cannon 4 (+4)</i>	
Offense: Initiative +1, Arm Cannon +4 (Ranged, Multiattack Damage 10), Grenade Launcher — (Ranged, Burst Area 2 Damage 7, Indirect), Taser Dart Swarm — (Ranged, Cloud Area 2 Affliction 7, Resisted by Fortitude), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 8)	
Defense: Dodge 4, Parry 4, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 10, Will Immune	
Totals: Abilities -12 + Powers 130 + Advantages 0 + Skills 0 + Defenses 0 = 118	
Complications: Motivation—Programmed. Quirk: Can be killed through electronic “killswitch” over which they have no control.	

ROOK	PL10 - T71 POINTS
STR 10* STA 2* AGL 1 DEX 1 FGT 0 INT 0 AWE 0 PRE 0	
Powers: Rook Cybernetic Exoframe (Armored Shell) (Enhanced Fortitude 8, Impervious Protection 12, Immunity 10 (Life Support), Enhanced Strength 7); Castling (Teleport 6 (1,800 feet), Change Direction, Change Velocity, Turnabout); Expert Systems (Enhanced Advantages 6 (Accurate Attack, Fast Grab, Improved Aim, Improved Grab, Improved Trip, Power Attack); Extendable Tentacles (Elongation 2 (30 feet; Limited to tentacles), Extra Limbs 6, Strength-based Damage 2, Accurate 4)); Large Build (Growth 2, Permanent); Retractable Legs (Leaping 2 (30 feet), Speed 2 (8 MPH)); Sensors (Senses 7 (Radius and Penetrates Concealment on Vision, Infravision)); TacNet Interface (Reaction Perception Area Weaken 5 (Resisted by Will), Broad (Attack, Dodge, and Parry ranks), Simultaneous, Insidious, Subtle; Limited to only affecting traits when opposing TacNet user, Limited to only when multiple TacNet users are present); Weapon Systems (Autocannons) (Ranged Multiattack Damage 10, Accurate 4, AE: Mini-Missiles (Ranged Burst Area Damage 10, AE: Electrified Surface (Reaction Damage 7)); Removable (-34 points))	
Advantages: <i>Accurate Attack, Fast Grab, Improved Aim, Improved Grab, Improved Trip, Power Attack, Teamwork</i>	
Skills: <i>Insight 4 (+4), Intimidation 8 (+10*), Perception 4 (+4)</i>	
Offense: Initiative +1, Autocannons +9 (Ranged, Multiattack Damage 10), Mini-Missiles — (Ranged, Burst Area Damage 10), Tentacles +8 (Close, Damage 12)	
Defense: Dodge 6*, Parry 6*, Fortitude 12, Toughness 14, Will 8 *Includes Growth modifiers.	
Totals: Abilities 6 + Powers 134 + Advantages 1 + Skills + 8 Defenses 22 = 171	
Complications: Motivation—Fanatic: Fanatical devotion to the Chessmen. Quirk: Can be killed through electronic “killswitch” over which they have no control.	

DEATHTRAP

REAL NAME: Matthew Miller

OCCUPATION: Villain for Hire, ex-Engineer

BASE: The Trap Factory

For ten years prior to becoming the supervillain-for-hire Deathtrap, Matthew Miller was the corporate world's foremost "accident engineer." For a price he would sabotage a rival's expensive prototype, manufacture a factory fire that would fool the best arson investigator, and even ensure that a rival CEO's mountain climbing trip took a fatal turn. No one who ever employed Miller admitted he existed, but some of the most influential people in the world made use of his services.

Eventually, Miller became bored and decided to branch out. He turned his talents to more challenging prey: superheroes. The world was, after all, seemingly full of them. It wasn't difficult to find clients interested in eliminating "costumed interference."

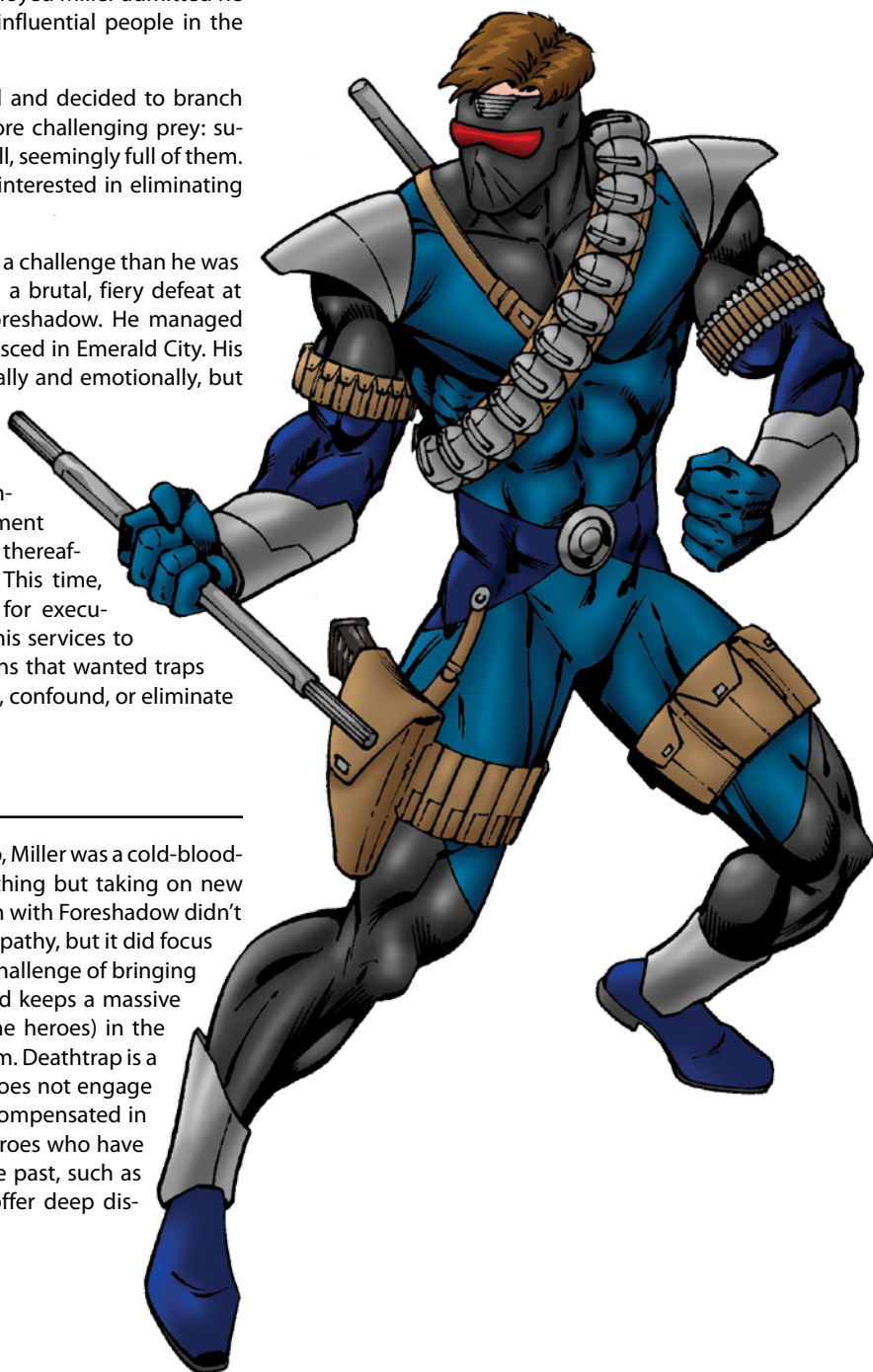
His initial foray provided more of a challenge than he was prepared for and Miller suffered a brutal, fiery defeat at the hands of Freedom City's Foreshadow. He managed to escape, however, and convalesced in Emerald City. His defeat was scarring both physically and emotionally, but only made him more determined to succeed. While he underwent surgeries and healed he developed his costumed identity, came up with the equipment he needed, and built it. Soon thereafter, Deathtrap made his debut. This time, instead of arranging accidents for executives and corporations, he sold his services to villains and criminal organizations that wanted traps or scenarios designed to remove, confound, or eliminate superheroes.

PERSONALITY

Even before becoming Deathtrap, Miller was a cold-blooded killer unconcerned with anything but taking on new and bizarre challenges. His run-in with Foreshadow didn't do anything to improve his sociopathy, but it did focus it on superheroes. He loves the challenge of bringing down super-powered beings and keeps a massive database on them (especially the heroes) in the event he's asked to deal with them. Deathtrap is a consummate professional and does not engage in an operation without being compensated in some way. This even goes for heroes who have foiled or embarrassed him in the past, such as Foreshadow. However, he will offer deep discounts to take on such foes.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Deathtrap has no powers of his own, but is a brilliant strategist and engineer. He carries some high-tech devices with him for self-defense but he'd rather deal with opponents through elaborate traps and ruses. He is very conscious of his human limitations and quickly removes himself from the battlefield if he comes face-to-face with a powered opponent.



DEATHTRAP

PL9

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
3	2	2	4	6	5	3	1

POWERS

Armament Array (15 points), Easily Removable (-6 points)

- 11 points
- **Blaster Pistol:** Ranged Damage 7 (kinetic), Improved Critical • 15 points
- **Shock Prod:** Damage 8 (electricity), Improved Critical 2 • 1 point
- **Smoke Bombs:** Cloud Area Concealment 4, Attack (Resisted by Dodge), All Visual Senses • 1 point

Personal Security Field: Reaction Damage 5 (electricity); Impervious Protection 5, Subtle, Removable (-6 points)

- 26 points

EQUIPMENT

13 points of equipment as needed

HEADQUARTERS: THE TRAP FACTORY • 32 POINTS

Size: Huge; **Toughness:** 14; **Features:** Combat Simulator, Communications, Computer, Concealed 4 (DC 35), Deathtraps, Fire Prevention System, Gym, Holding Cells, Infirmary, Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Power System, Sealed, Secret 4 (DC 35), Security System 3 (DC 30), Workshop

SKILLS

Athletics 6 (+9), Close Combat 1 (+7), Deception 7 (+8), Expertise: Criminal 5 (+10), Expertise: Engineering 5 (+10), Expertise: Traps 7 (+12), Insight 9 (+12), Intimidation 4 (+5), Investigation 5 (+10), Perception 5 (+8), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+8), Sleight of Hand 6 (+10), Stealth 8 (+10), Technology 7 (+12), Vehicles 3 (+7)

ALLIES

Deathtrap prefers to work alone, but has worked for other costumed villains. He doesn't really consider any of these employers allies, though he does respect a repeat client. He makes use of mercenaries and agents to help with various plans. Chief among these is Ms. Lure, a trained assassin with supermodel looks who often poses as a helpless damsel or other innocent to deceive targets. Use the traits for the Government Agent (see *Hero's Handbook*, page 216) for Ms. Lure, but increase Agility, Dexterity, and Fighting by 2, add Attractive, Assessment, and change Expertise: Government Agent to Expertise: Criminal.

ENEMIES

Deathtrap doesn't care for any hero who escapes his traps or foils his operations, but he likes to think he's a professional above such "petty grudges." He offers "cut rates" to take on opponents he dislikes or who catch his interest.

ADVANTAGES

Assessment, Benefit 4 (Multi-millionaire), Close Attack 4, Contacts, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 4, Equipment 9, Favored Environment (Prepared Environments), Favored Foe (Super-beings he's studied), Improved Critical 4 (Unarmed), Improved Initiative, Inventor, Power Attack, Ranged Attack 3, Skill Mastery 2 (Expertise: Traps, Technology), Taunt, Well-informed

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +6

Blaster +11	Ranged, Damage 7, Crit. 19-20
Shock Prod +10	Close, Damage 8, Crit. 18-20
Unarmed +11	Close, Damage 3, Crit. 16-20

DEFENSE

DODGE	7	FORTITUDE	8
PARRY	7	TOUGHNESS	11/7
WILL	10	*without Defensive Roll	

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	52	SKILLS	41
POWERS	37	DEFENSES	19
ADVANTAGES	40	TOTAL	189

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Challenge: More than money, fame, or power Deathtrap wants to test himself and his designs against various foes. He often makes his traps more elaborate than needed to show off his skill, sometimes even at the cost of efficiency.

Professional: Deathtrap does not engage in vendettas or missions of personal vengeance against heroes. He must receive at least a nominal payment from a client, though he does alter his prices based on personal feelings about his targets.

HOOKS

You Bet Your Life: Deathtrap contacts the heroes (perhaps by way of Ms. Lure) to offer an unusual wager: he will create a custom deathtrap for each of them at different points over the next month. Should the heroes manage to overcome all of the traps, he will surrender himself to the authorities. Of course, it turns out that this is a ruse. The heroes are meant to survive the deathtraps (although not easily) so Deathtrap can find his way to the new Deep Six prison facility and turn part of it into a trap for a new target, all with unwitting assistance of the heroes and the authorities.

DOUBLETIME

REAL NAME: Allison "Ally" Arbor

OCCUPATION: Former student

BASE: Emerald City University area

Ally was an only child, doted on by her parents and given everything she ever wanted. She grew up to become a self-centered, entitled little princess... at least until the symptoms of her accelerated metabolism became apparent shortly after entering puberty. Then all of her family's money went toward paying for doctors and specialists and trips around the country and the world for examinations and treatments. By the age of 16 she looked like she was 20, and doctors saw no way to slow her down. They predicted she would die of old age by the time she hit 35.

Ally and her family searched for years to find a cure for her rapid aging, but found only disappointment, especially when her parents split up over money issues and blaming each other for giving Ally her disorder. After that, at age 21 (but looking closer to 30), Ally gave up. She moved to Emerald City to get a fresh start and began attending school. She also took the opportunity to create a costumed alter ego to live out the life of hedonism she'd been craving for years. To her, it felt like coming home.

PERSONALITY

Once upon a time, Ally was a kind, insightful young girl; she was shallow and materialist, too, but basically a good person. Now she indulges in completely selfish behavior. She's an adrenaline junkie who fears boredom more than death. So far in her criminal career she hasn't killed anyone, but as her actions grow more and more reckless it may only be a matter of time.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Doubletime's high-speed metabolism chews through poisons like mild irritations and gives her higher-than-normal resistance to most Fortitude effects. Adding her incredible speed to her fists gives her a powerful array of punch-

ing attacks, and she has learned how to fling small objects (like pennies) as fast as bullets. She also loves to play "Hide and Seek" using Hide in Plain Sight to vanish from view and attack from a new direction and—given the distance she can travel in a single move—she has no problem



DOUBLETIME

PL11

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
2	6	5	5	3	0	2	0

POWERS

Accelerated Metabolism: Enhanced Defenses 7 (Fortitude 7), Enhanced Stamina 5, Regeneration 5 • 22 points

Heightened Reaction Speed: Enhanced Advantages 31 (Close Attack 10, Defensive Roll, Evasion 2, Improved Initiative 8, Ranged Attack 10), Enhanced Agility 4, Enhanced Dexterity 4, Enhanced Defenses 20 (Dodge 10, Parry 10) • 67 points

Live Fast: Quickness 8, Speed 9 (1,000 MPH) • 17 points

Super-Fast Fighter: Array (15 points)

- **Flurry of Blows:** Strength-based Multiattack Damage 5, Multiattack on Strength 2, Penetrating 3 • 15 points
- **Let's Go For a Spin!:** Affliction 9 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed and Vulnerable, Stunned and Prone, Incapacitated), Extra Condition, Grab-based • 1 point
- **Penny Pitching:** Ranged Multiattack Damage 5, Quirk—Needs small objects to throw • 1 point
- **Supersonic Punch!:** Strength-based Damage 7, Improved Critical 2, Inaccurate, Penetrating 5 • 1 point

Wall-Running: Movement 1 (Wall-crawling 1), Limited: Only while running • 1 point

SKILLS

Acrobatics 10 (+15), Athletics 8 (+10), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+5), Expertise: Extreme Sports 6 (+6), Expertise: Genetic Diseases 4 (+4), Insight 4 (+6), Intimidation 4 (+4), Perception 4 (+6), Stealth 7 (+12), Treatment 4 (+4)

ADVANTAGES

Agile Feint, Close Attack 10, Defensive Roll, Evasion 2, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Defense, Improved Initiative 8, Instant Up, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Ranged Attack 10, Second Chance (Poison resistance checks)

frustrating opponents. Doubletime relies heavily on her tremendous speed and reaction time to avoid getting tagged in a fight (although her mutant physiology is also pretty tough). She likes to toy with and lord it over her opponents, so long as she's confident they can't lay a finger on her. The moment that changes, her first inclination is to run away as fast as she can, which is usually enough to escape most forms of pursuit. She makes liberal use of Move-by Action to make an attack or grab and then keep on moving, staying out of her opponents' reach.

HOOKS

A New Challenge!: Doubletime decides to crash the party when the X-Games come to Emerald City. In the middle of a live broadcast, she co-opts a bike from an athlete and challenges anyone to beat her at any game. The players can rise to her challenge and drive up the ratings (and possibly donations for charity) or they can try and catch Doubletime and turn her over to the police.

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +37

Flurry of Blows +15	Close, Multiattack Damage 7, Penetrating 3
Let's Go For a Spin! +13	Close, Affliction 9, Resisted by Dodge/Fortitude (DC 19), Grab-based
Penny Pitching +15	Ranged, Multiattack Damage 5
Supersonic Punch! +13	Close, Damage 9, Crit. 18-20, Penetrating 5

DEFENSE

DODGE	15	FORTITUDE	13
PARRY	15	TOUGHNESS	7/6*
WILL	8	*without Defensive Roll	

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	20	SKILLS	27
POWERS	125	DEFENSES	8
ADVANTAGES	7	TOTAL	187

COMPLICATIONS

Bad Decisions: Doubletime is a pro at making bad decisions, and she's only getting worse. She reacts unpredictably and often inappropriately, especially to interaction skill attempts.

It's Better to Burn Out Than Fade Away: Doubletime is convinced there is no cure for her condition, so she's planning to go out in a blaze of glory. Her choices in combat are more about flash and dash than smart tactics.

Secret Identity: Doubletime's secret identity is the only 'quiet time' she gets, so she tries to protect it... but she spends less and less time without her mask on these days, as she finds idle time distressing.

What a Drag it is Getting Old: Doubletime is dying of the same condition that gives her super-speed. She is vulnerable to any power or effect that accelerates her metabolism, and suffers a -5 penalty to any resistance check against such effects.

False Hope: Doctor Shock offers Doubletime hope of a cure, if she will run a few "errands" for him. After her crime spree she discovers Shock was using her and planned to experiment on her, but the cure was a ruse! The heroes either track her back to Doc's current lair or are called in to deal with Doubletime as she attacks Doctor Shock and he attempts to subdue her! Will the players stop her before she goes too far? Can they? And what did Shock plan to do with Doubletime once he had her captive?

Doubletime's Bucket List: Doubletime has no time to waste, and makes a list of insane "tricks" she wants to pull off before she dies (such as a Rail Grind in front of a speeding train). Perhaps she puts her list on a website or in some other public forum so everyone can see her check things off. The heroes need to stop her before someone gets hurt!

ERSATZ

REAL NAME: Kristoff Werner III

OCCUPATION: Celebutante, supervillain

BASE: Mobile

Kristoff Werner enjoyed his life in Emerald City before the Silver Storm. The son of a retired movie star and a mining industrialist, he was born into the city's wealthy elite, never knowing or desiring another life. Werner's wealth and social expertise combined with the city's relative lack of "costumed commoners" meant he got all the media attention and adoration he desired when he wasn't out traveling the world.

Things changed with the Silver Storm. Moneyed modern aristocrats weren't as newsworthy as fire-breathing salamander men or super-strong middle-schoolers. Werner waited for this "supers fad" to pass and for the media and public to return to what really mattered—him.

When it became evident Emerald City wasn't going to regain its "sanity" and was doomed to follow in the tracks of tacky burgs like Freedom City, he decided if there must be costumed heroes prancing around the landscape, there should also be someone around to point out how ridiculous and *gauche* they were. He invested a small fortune in exploring options to give himself superhuman abilities. Professor Zed (see *Threat Report*) showed up with a mad science pedigree and a need for money to get his next scheme funded.

Zed explained he was working on a process which would imbue a human subject, in this case Werner, with extradimensional energies. He would, in theory, be able to manipulate, control, and use these energies to create a variety of superhuman powers. Zed offered him not only superpowers, but any and all superpowers he could imagine... all he

needed was someone to fund his research. Werner wrote Zed a check and agreed to become the professor's guinea pig.

The experiment worked, but not exactly as either of them had expected. Zed's Extradimensional Enhancement Process aligned Werner with energies from throughout the Omniverse, but an unanticipated "X-factor" affected the outcome.

The resulting explosion leveled Zed's lab and some of the surrounding area and apparently obliterated Professor Zed, since his body wasn't recovered. Werner's involvement with the villainous Zed and the fact that he bankrolled the illegal experiments was revealed. Werner was investigated, charged, and, worst of all, his family publicly distanced themselves from him. He was even forced to live off the meager fortune he'd managed to squirrel away in offshore accounts. He did, however, gain powerful superhuman abilities... unpredictable, unstable, and often unattractive superhuman abilities.

PERSONALITY

Ersatz is a spoiled would-be aristocrat with a polished public persona, but twisted personality. He despises anyone different than him and thinks things he can't do are a stupid waste of time. He will do anything to get ahead, but especially enjoys lying, cheating, and stealing. His powers are a perfect complement to his personality because they twist the abilities of others which mocks them and gives a glimpse of what Ersatz is like on the inside.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Ersatz's powers work by aligning him with an alternate version of an existing superhuman from elsewhere in the Omniverse. His body is replaced with this extradimensional doppelganger, leaving his consciousness intact, but his body a corrupt reflection of his subject. It's uncertain if Ersatz actually draws a body from elsewhere in the cosmos and takes it over, transforms himself into a copy of it, or creates a body out of extradimensional energies. In any case, he has powers and abilities similar to those he duplicates.



ERSATZ

PL12

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
0	4	2	1	3	1	0	2

POWERS

Ersatz Effect: Morph 1 (twisted version of character whose powers he's duplicating), Continuous, Linked to Variable; Variable 18, Continuous, Limited to Duplicating One Target at a time, Quirk (acquires twisted versions of target's abilities) • 131 points

SKILLS

Athletics 2 (+2), Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: Aristocrat 7 (+8), Insight 8 (+8), Intimidation 6 (+8), Perception 5 (+5), Persuasion 4 (+6), Technology 4 (+5)

ADVANTAGES

Assessment, Benefit 3 (Millionaire), Favored Foe (Ersatzed Opponent), Language (German), Move-by Action

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +2

Unarmed +3

Close, Damage 0

The catch is that Ersatz pulls a twisted, or as he calls them, "ersatzed," version of his target. These copies have powers, physical appearance, or other aspects thematically opposite the original. Thus he turns into an overweight unattractive powerhouse when he copies Princess. If he copied Ultramarine he'd turn into someone wearing a battlesuit designed for volcanic and subterranean exploration, or possibly an aquatic version of Veronica Steele wearing a battlesuit that allowed "her" to explore the surface world. And so on.

Ersatz has a strong preference for copying the powers of heroes who possess a significant amount of innate power. Given the choice between copying someone skilled or someone with power, he always chooses the person with the biggest, flashiest powers.

ALLIES

Ersatz loves being part of an elite group, so he fits in well with other super-powered villains, although even they find his haughty attitude to be too much to take for long. He dislikes dumb brutes, except to make fun of them, and prefers to hook up with geniuses and master villains who have grand plans he can piggyback on in order to claim glory for himself.

ENEMIES

Ersatz tends to fixate on humiliating, defeating, or otherwise ruining the lives of whatever hero he's copying at the moment. He particularly enjoys tormenting goody-two-shoes heroes and anyone with thin skin.

DEFENSE

DODGE	8	FORTITUDE	8
PARRY	8	TOUGHNESS	4
WILL	8		

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	26	SKILLS	21
POWERS	131	DEFENSES	23
ADVANTAGES	7	TOTAL	208

Note: Though Ersatz only hits PL 8 limits without using his Ersatz Effect, he uses PL12 limits when copying powers.

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Vanity: Ersatz wants to regain his fame and prefers to do so by humiliating, defeating, and otherwise harassing his inferiors, especially super-types.

Spoiled Little \$#!*: Ersatz grew up excessively privileged, wanted for nothing, and has no real idea how the "common people" live. He's also an entitled jerk.

ERSATZ PRINCESS

PL10

STR 12 STA 12 AGL 5 DEX 3 FGT 6 INT 1 AWE 0 PRE 2

Powers: **Bounding** (Leaping 7 (900 feet)); **Ponderous** (Growth 2, Density, Permanent, Noticeable (Appears obese); Immunity 10 (Being moved), Sustained); **Recognizable** (Feature 1 (Everyone thinks Ersatz Princess is actually Princess)); **Well-insulated** (Immunity 5 (Cold, Heat, Pressure, Radiation, Vacuum); Impervious Toughness 8; Protection 2)

Advantages: Assessment, Benefit 3 (Millionaire), Favored Foe (Ersatzed Hero), Language (French), Move-by Action, Power Attack

Skills: Athletics 2 (+14), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+8), Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: Aristocrat 7 (+8), Insight 8 (+8), Intimidation 6 (+8), Perception 5 (+5), Persuasion 4 (+6), Ranged Combat: Throwing 3 (+6), Technology 4 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +5, Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 12), Throw +6 (Ranged, Damage 12)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 12, Toughness 14, Will 8

Variable Pool Points Spent: Abilities 48 + Powers 36 + Advantages 1 + Skills 3 + Defenses -12 = 76

EXAMPLE: ERSATZ PRINCESS

Ersatz can duplicate practically anyone's powers, but he prefers to copy heroes because it seems to annoy them so much. He particularly enjoys "ersatzing" Princess because it seems to disturb her so much. The statblock presented here is an example of how his power twists those of another character. The changes from the original character are small, but they give the Ersatz Princess "her" own personality and make her different from the real Princess in combat.

GHOSTWORKS

Members: Dr. Damien Diabolis, Hadrassas the Seeker, Abigail Hammersmith, Subakai Khan, Dr. Henry Martindale, Adam Prime, Dr. Alistair Teasdale (Director)

Base of Operations: Emerald City, The Haunt

Motivation: Ghostworks seeks to expand its information on advanced technology and use that knowledge to create even more advanced devices, all available for sale to the highest bidder. Ghostworks likes to pretend they are scientific idealists interested in “pure research” but in truth, wealth and power matter far more.

The organization began in the wake of the Moore Administration’s aggressive campaign against “costumed vigilantes” which led to the banning of superheroes in Freedom City. An alliance of criminal technologists chose to go deeper underground to escape the notice of both the law and increasingly violent vigilantes operating outside of it. They even faked the deaths of criminal geniuses like Dr. Diabolis, a villain who pitted his intellect against Horus the Avenger and Sea King, recruiting geniuses into the newly named “Ghostworks.”

For years, Ghostworks built an extensive clientele as arms dealers and technicians-for-hire. Vigilante heroes shut down some of their operations and eliminated some of their personnel, but Ghostworks simply set up shop elsewhere. There was always demand for their merchandise, and that demand fueled their operations, which in turn fueled further research and experimentation.

Ghostworks was a success until they ran afoul of the ancient construct Talos, resurrected after centuries buried beneath the sea. Initially, Ghostworks hoped to co-opt the construct and learn how it worked. They sorely underestimated Talos’ intellect and ambition. He created an army of robots, including chameleonic infiltrators, and nearly destroyed Ghostworks overnight. Talos’ new “Foundry” seized what remained of their technology and control over the technological black-market based in Freedom City.

The remnants of Ghostworks found shelter in Emerald City, away from both the Foundry and the burgeoning heroic population of Freedom City. There, under the patronage of the Chamber, Ghostworks found a safe haven to rebuild their organization and resources, provided they continued to supply their criminal patrons with whatever technology they required. For many years, Ghostworks became little more than an appendage of the Chamber, dancing to the criminal alliance’s tune and kept from becoming too ambitious.

The Silver Storm changed that. Dr. Alistair Teasdale—who started with Ghostworks as a technician who survived the Foundry’s purge, and who worked to rebuild the organization in Emerald City—saw an opportunity and seized it. For the first time in years, Ghostworks became an independent organization once again, devoted to its original goals: the pursuit of scientific and technological information, and the power and profit that came with it. Emerald



City's technological black-market was the first step. In time, even the Foundry will learn that Ghostworks is far more inventive than they imagined.

MOTIVATION AND GOALS

Ghostworks combines unbridled scientific curiosity, impressive technical expertise, and a dangerous indifference to morality to discover and create new technology no matter what the consequences. Unlike many scientifically-minded super-criminals or the technical staff for organizations like SHADOW, Ghostworks has no interest in ideology. They simply want to know and to create, to solve the next mystery and answer the next question; they just don't care who or what gets broken in the process, nor what the subject of their curiosity does once they're finished studying it. They'll do whatever their clients need them to do, as long as they can remain hidden and safe.

TACTICS

Under Teasdale's guidance, Ghostworks operates like a research department at a corporation or university. Ghostworks' senior staff makes up the Projects Committee, which decides which projects receive resources and who works on them. When a client communicates their desires to Teasdale, he prioritizes the assignment based on compensation, how interesting and potentially profitable the project is, and the relationship with the client.

HEADQUARTERS AND RESOURCES

Ghostworks operates out of an enormous underground facility beneath the Atlas Mountains. Originally designed during the late 1950s as a hidden city to move an entire urban population to in case of atomic war, the site was erased from records during the Vietnam conflict and later "acquired" by the Chamber.

Teasdale and the Projects Committee have gone to great lengths refurbishing the complex to suit their needs, and have informally divided up the different areas of the base (nicknamed "the Haunt") among their individual research passions.

Within the confines of the Haunt, Ghostworks' equipment and projects are limited only by the imagination and needs of individual Gamemasters, but should be incredibly advanced even to the most jaded high-tech hero.

HEADQUARTERS: THE HAUNT

30 POINTS

Size: Awesome **Toughness:** 12 **Features:** Communications, Computer, Concealed 3 (DC 30), Deathtraps, Defense System, Garage, Grounds, Holding Cells, Infirmary, Isolated, Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Personnel, Power System, Security System 3 (DC 30), Workshop

PROJECTS COMMITTEE

Ghostworks has dozens of scientists and technicians in its ranks, but the decision makers are the seven members of the Projects Committee:

DR. DAMIEN DIABOLIS

A former super-criminal in his own right, Diabolis grew tired of the physical punishment and frustrating cycle of dealing with costumed heroes. He readily agreed to Ghostworks' recruitment terms and has enjoyed working in pleasant anonymity. He tells himself he might someday return to villainy, but then he always gets distracted by a new project. Perhaps if a particularly powerful device results from his work he'll steal it and revive his career. For his stats, use the Overlord from *The Gamemaster's Guide*, pages 112-115, but lower his STR to 5 and drop the powers. If he were to don his power armor again use the Overlord as-is, but his increased STR and powers are Removable.

HADRASAS THE SEEKER

Hadradas is a Selunite, an expatriate from Farside City who escaped Lady Lunar's oppressive regime and went into hiding on Earth (see *Freedom City*), where he parleyed his extensive knowledge of psionic engineering into a position with Ghostworks. He fell in love with Earth culture and has no desire to return home. For his stats, use the Mad Scientist from *The Gamemaster's Guide*, pg 98-100, but increase his STR to 2 and add Expertise: Psionics 6 and **Telepathy** (Mind Reading 5, Subtle Mental Communication 2).

ABIGAIL HAMMERSMITH

Hammersmith is the granddaughter of the robotics genius Silas Hammersmith who caused Doc Prophet problems back in the 1930s. She's much too refined to dirty her hands with criminal activities, viewing them as more socially distasteful than morally objectionable, instead she prefers to create robots and advanced computers capable of causing widespread chaos and destruction. She may not like committing crimes, but she is wholly amoral. For her stats, use the Mad Scientist from *The Gamemaster's Guide*. Add Attractive, Expertise: Robotics 6, Expertise: Computers 6 and she can swap out points of Equipment for the Minion or Sidekick advantages as needed to have robot guards.

SUBAKAI KHAN

Khan claims to be the lineal descendant of Genghis Khan. Subakai caused problems for the Chinese government before they forcibly recruited him into their "Eight Immortals" supergroup. Ghostworks covertly extracted him, so he could take a place among their personnel. He plans to eventually take his revenge against Beijing, but like Diabolis, always finds another project that captures his interest instead. For his stats, use the Mad Scientist from *The Gamemaster's Guide*, but change his Abilities to: STR 4, STA 4, AGL 4, DEX 4, FGT 4, and PRE 4, then add Expertise: Botany 6 and Expertise: Chemistry 6. His Equipment tends to revolve around chemical, acid, or poisonous effects.

DR. HENRY MARTINDALE

Martindale once tried to operate as a villain named "Proctor" and make a name for himself in the field of brainwashing and mental conditioning. His career was short-lived as he abandoned his ambition after a single disastrous experi-

ence. He's jealous of the successes Diabolis and Khan had as supervillains, but he's too much of a coward to harbor thoughts of leaving his cushy position for anything else. For his stats, use the Mad Scientist from *The Gamemaster's Guide*, but change his Abilities to: STR 1, STA 1, AGL 1, DEX 3 and add Expertise: Neurotropics 6 and Expertise: Psychology 6. He typically uses his Equipment points for weapons with Affliction or Damage effects resisted by Will.

ADAM PRIME

Prime is a highly advanced android from an alternate apocalyptic timeline. Stranded in this timeline after a series of cross-dimensional conflicts, he's quite comfortable in a world where everything and everyone around him are *not* actively trying to kill him. So far, he's held back in demonstrating his full scientific expertise to prevent being drafted into certain avenues of research—while he is just as morally flexible as his colleagues (possibly even more so since he has a bit of difficulty considering all of the people around him “real” since they're not from his dimension), he has no desire to contribute to potential cataclysms that would detract from his comfort. For his stats, use the Soldier option of the Construct archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*, page 36, but increase his INT to 8 and Technology skill to 12 (+20).

DR. ALISTAIR TEASDALE (DIRECTOR)

Alistair Teasdale is a fictional persona created by Palmer Croyd, the latest in a line of aliases he's used over the years as he has moved from one clone body to another. Croyd has used a combination of cloning and personality transfer to avoid death for over a century. Always content to stay in the shadows of vainer geniuses and let them take the blame for his failures or missteps, he delights in being (even nominally) in charge of people like Diabolis

PSI-BRANCH AGENT

PL5 • 109 POINTS

STR 1 STA 2 AGL 1 DEX 1 FGT 4 INT 2 AWE 4 PRE 2

Powers: **Mental Awareness** (Senses 1 (Mental Awareness)); **Psi Powers** (Array; **Mind Control** (Perception Ranged Progressive Affliction 4 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Entranced, Compelled, Controlled), Concentration; **AE: Mind Probe** (Mind Reading 5, Cumulative, Effortless, Sensory Link; Feedback); **AE: Mind Blast** (Perception Ranged Damage 5, Resisted by Will)); **Telepathy** (Communication 2 (Mental, Subtle))

Equipment: Light Pistol (Ranged Damage 3)

Advantages: Daze (Deception), Defensive Roll 3, Equipment 2, Fascinate (Deception), Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 4 (+5), Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: Spy 6 (+8), Insight 4 (+8), Investigation 4 (+6), Perception 4 (+8), Persuasion 4 (+6), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+5), Stealth 4 (+5), Technology 4 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +1, Light Pistol +5 (Ranged, Damage 3), Mind Blast — (Perception, Damage 5), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 3, Toughness 5/2*, Will 7 *Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 34 + Powers 36 + Advantages 8 + Skills 22 + Defenses 9 = 109

Complications: **Motivation—Power. Power Loss:** Requires special drug regimen to maintain powers and undergoes painful withdrawal if deprived.

while still remaining insulated from repercussions of his research into genetic tampering. For his stats, use the Mad Scientist from *The Gamemaster's Guide*, but change his Abilities to STR 1, STA 5, AGL 2, DEX 4, and add Expertise: Genetics 8, Expertise: Biochemistry 6, as well as the powers Immortality 3 and Regeneration 2.

OPERATIONS ASSETS

In addition to leadership and supporting staff, there are three groups of signature assets associated with Ghostworks. The first is the Psi-Branch, covert operatives genetically altered to manifest low-level psionic abilities. The Dragonflies are child-sized flying robotic sentries that constantly patrol the open areas of the Haunt, while the Brute Squad is made up of genetically-engineered humanoids resembling 20-foot tall tusked hairless mountain apes (cultivated from DNA harvested from the Cryptid Clans). Normally kept in chemically-induced placidity, the Brute Squad is activated and released only in high-security responses.

BRUTE SQUAD MEMBER

PL9 • 84 POINTS

STR 10* STA 10* AGL -1 DEX -1 FGT 4 INT -2 AWE 2 PRE 2

Powers: **Brute** (Growth 8 (20 feet tall; Permanent), Protection 4, Impervious Toughness 10, Senses 1 (Olfactory Tracking), Speed 3 (16 MPH)); **Tusks** (Strength-based Damage 1)

Advantages: All-out Attack, Close Attack 3, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Startle

Skills: Athletics 4 (+14), Intimidation 4 (+14)*, Perception 4 (+6), Stealth 2 (-7)*

Offense: Initiative -1, Tusks +7 (Close, Damage 11), Unarmed +7 (Close, Damage 10)

Defense: Dodge 4*, Parry 4*, Fortitude 12, Toughness 14, Will 6 *Includes Growth modifiers

Totals: Abilities 16 + Powers 35+ Advantages 7 + Skills 7 + Defenses 19 = 84

Complications: **Motivation—Obedience:** Conditioned to obey “commands” of pheromones emitted by Ghostworks security uniforms. **Temper:** Berserker in combat.

DRAGONFLY SECURITY DRONE

PL8 • 147 POINTS

STR 3 STA — AGL 6 DEX 2 FGT 4 INT 1 AWE 4 PRE -1

Powers: **Armored Chassis** (Impervious Protection 4); **Drone** (Immunity (Fortitude, Mental effects)); **Gravitic Generator** (Flight 5 (60 MPH); **Sensor Suite** (Senses 9 (Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Infravision, Low-light Vision, Radio, Radius on All Vision, Time Sense, Tracking on Infravision)); **Small** (Shrinking 4 (3 feet long; Innate, Normal Strength, Permanent); **Tail Cannon** (Ranged Multiattack Damage 8, Accurate 3)

Advantages: Agile Feint, Close Attack 2, Teamwork

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+12), Intimidation 0 (-3), Perception 6 (+10), Stealth 4 (+14*)

Offense: Initiative +6, Tail Cannon +8 (Ranged, Multiattack Damage 8), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 3)

Defense: Dodge 12*, Parry 6*, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 4, Will 8 *Includes Shrinking modifiers

Totals: Abilities 28 + Powers 99 + Advantages 4 + Skills 8 + Defenses 8 = 147

Complications: **Motivation—Programmed:** Obedience to Programming.

KILLSHOT

REAL NAME: Unknown, possibly Hannah
OCCUPATION: Superhuman assassin for hire
BASE: Emerald City

Killshot is arguably the most sought after superhuman mercenary on the black market. Her success rate as an assassin is second to none but she also takes assignments as a spy, saboteur, or simply as hired muscle.



She established a base of operations in Emerald City during the city's quieter days when it had a reputation as a safe place for people being pursued by the law to lay low. However, since the Silver Storm, she has stayed to exploit the myriad business opportunities that have arisen.

Her background has been buried so expertly that nothing is known for certain about her. What little law enforcement agencies think they know about her is due to many hours of investigation and a small amount of guesswork. She's a female in her late 20s or early 30s. She is in peak condition and exhibits physical coordination that surpasses that of an Olympic-level gymnast. Her posture and demeanor suggest a military background while her tactical finesse indicates that she's received training in an elite covert agency, most likely the Israeli Mossad.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Killshot has superhuman dexterity and agility. These powers combined with her natural affinity for firearms and her advanced training make her a truly deadly adversary. She's always heavily armed and is almost never without a gun (or three) somewhere on her person.

She is a highly skilled covert agent and is careful and meticulous. She maintains three distinct identities (American, British, and Israeli) that enable her to effectively disappear whenever she needs to escape attention.

PERSONALITY

Despite her impressive hit list, and her frequent boasts that she is motivated solely by financial gain and the thrill of the hunt, Killshot has, on multiple occasions, walked away from lucrative assignments because she didn't think the target "needed killing." Like so much about her, the exact details of Killshot's moral code remain a mystery, but it is clear she will only accept contracts on individuals whose behavior she feels merits a death sentence. Judging by the long list of high profile assassinations of which she's suspected, many military officials, politicians, organized crime figures, and super-beings around the world have met her requirements.

ALLIES

As a professional assassin, Killshot has cordial relations with several rogue nations and criminal organizations. In addition, she has covert dealings with shadowy factions in the intelligence services of several "legitimate" governments.

ENEMIES

Various intelligence agencies around the world are seeking Killshot for her role in a number of high-profile assassina-

KILLSHOT

PL10

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
2	4	8	8	8	2	5	3

POWERS

Gunplay: Array (3 points)

- **Training:** Enhanced Skill 3 (Ranged Combat: Guns +6) • 3 points
- **Independent Aim:** May fire any two guns of Damage 5 or less at once (Feature 1), Enhanced Advantage 1 (Ranged Attack) • 1 point

Urban Fighter: Movement 3 (Sure-footed, Swinging, Wall-crawling); Speed 2 (8 MPH) • 8 points

EQUIPMENT

Camera, Smartphone, Flash Goggles, Flashlight, Gas Mask, Multi-tool • 7 points

Assault Rifle: Ranged Multiattack Damage 5 • 15 points

Heavy Pistols (2): Ranged Damage 4 • 16 points

Hold-out Pistol: Ranged Damage 2 • 4 points

Light Pistols (2): Ranged Damage 3 • 12 points

Sniper Rifle: Ranged Damage 5, Improved Critical • 11 points

Sword: Strength-based Damage 3, Improved Critical • 4 points

SKILLS

Acrobatics 7 (+15), Athletics 6 (+8), Deception 3 (+6) Expertise: Mercenary 6 (+8), Expertise: Spy 6 (+8), Insight 3 (+8), Intimidation 5 (+8), Investigation 4 (+6), Perception 3 (+8), Persuasion 2 (+5), Ranged Combat: Guns 1 (+9/+15*), Sleight of Hand 4 (+12), Stealth 6 (+14), Technology 6 (+8), Treatment 4 (+6), Vehicles 2 (+10) *With Training power active.

ADVANTAGES

Agile Feint, Attractive, Benefit 3 (Alternate Identities: American, English, Israeli), Benefit (Ambidexterity), Benefit 2 (Cipher 2), Benefit 2 (Independently Wealthy), Chokehold, Close Attack 7, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 14, Evasion, Grabbing Finesse, Improved Aim, Improved Grab, Improved Initiative 2, Improved Trip, Languages 3 (Arabic, English, Russian, Turkish, Native Hebrew), Power Attack, Precise Attack 2 (Ranged; Cover and Concealment), Quick Draw, Seize Initiative, Skill Mastery (Acrobatics), Takedown 2, Uncanny Dodge

tions. She is certainly also being targeted by the loved ones or business partners of some of her former targets.

HOOKS

Escort Mission: AEGIS has learned that Killshot has accepted a contract on a leading citizen of Emerald City—perhaps a city official or maybe the CEO of KessKorp, MarsTech, or some other corporation. The heroes are recruited to provide security on the caravan escorting the target to a secret location. The heroes have to protect their (unsavory) ward from Killshot, who may decide to go through them if she has to. The tip-off may also turn out to be a red herring; Killshot deliberately leaked information about a false target to keep the heroes occupied while she goes after her real commission elsewhere in the city.

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +16

Assault Rifle +15	Ranged, Multiattack Damage 5
Heavy Pistol +15	Ranged, Damage 4
Hold-out Pistol +15	Ranged, Damage 2
Independent Aim +10	Ranged, up to Damage 5 to two targets
Light Pistol +15	Ranged, Damage 3
Sniper Rifle +15	Ranged, Damage 5, Crit. 19-20
Sword +15	Close, Damage 5, Crit. 19-20
Unarmed +15	Close, Damage 2

DEFENSE

DODGE	14	FORTITUDE	8
PARRY	14	TOUGHNESS	6/4**
WILL	12	**Without Defensive Roll.	

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	80	SKILLS	34
POWERS	12	DEFENSES	23
ADVANTAGES	54	TOTAL	203

COMPLICATIONS

Enemy: Intelligence agencies are after Killshot for her role in a number of high-profile assassinations.

Honor: Killshot claims to be purely mercenary, but she seems driven by a code of honor that only allows her to take contracts on people who “need killing,” however she defines that.

Motivation—Greed: After many years of serving in obscurity, Killshot is out to get her big payoff.

Doing the Research: The life of a super-powered, highly-skilled assassin isn't all fun and adventure, sometimes you have to do a lot of legwork. Killshot doesn't charge lightly into any assignment, instead she studies her target and learns as much as she can about him or her. Her new target is a mystery, but she believes AEGIS might have more information, so she decides to infiltrate the Dome to raid their files. Unfortunately, the Dome's security is more than she's able to handle and she's soon discovered. The heroes are either already on-site or called in to deal with Killshot before she can escape with top-secret files!

New Sherriff in Town: Killshot accepts a long-term contract from one of the criminal factions of Emerald City, such as F.O.E. or the Malakov Mafiya, to act as their enforcer in an effort to reassert the “old rules” and regain control over the city's underworld. This may lead to heroes initially investigating Killshot taking out rival criminals or otherwise “disciplining” those who step over the lines established by her employer. Of course, if Killshot decides the scheme is untenable, she'll be looking for a way out of her contract.

KOSCHEI THE DEATHLESS

REAL NAME: Gregor Malakov AKA Gregory Malinski

OCCUPATION: Head of the Malakov Mafiya

Base: Emerald City

The undisputed head of the syndicate bearing his name for decades, Gregor Malakov long ago traded his humanity for power and would gladly trade whatever remains of it for the promise of a few more years of life. For the ability to live forever, he would sacrifice anything or anyone.

The scientific experiments intended by his enemies in the KGB to destroy him instead unlocked Malakov's latent psychic potential. Initially, his mental powers were limited, but subtle and persistent, like their master. He used them to extricate himself from a nest of vipers and set himself up as a crime lord in Emerald City. There he acquired the fist-sized chunk of green viridian he keeps close at hand at all times. The stone greatly enhanced his psychic powers; without it, Malakov has only a 12-point array and appropriate effect ranks (5 or less in most cases). With it, he is "Koschei the Deathless," fearsome master of the Mafiya.

Typically, while appearing to members of his organization or fellow criminals, Koschei wears a full, concealing hood of dark green, showing only his glowing green eyes, with wrist-length leather gloves (to conceal his fingerprints) and a dark, tailor-made suit. In his public identity as "humble importer" Gregory Malinski, he dresses in similarly fine fashion, with his silvery-grey hair neatly trimmed. Decades of use of the viridian stone have left their mark in his eyes, now permanently a vivid green rather than Malakov's former pale blue (another useful quirk for concealing his true origins and identity).

Gregory Malinski's legitimate business interests serve primarily as a means to launder Mafiya money by investing it in shipping, real estate, warehousing, contracting, and various other busi-

nesses. Malakov is careful to keep his criminal connections hidden and does not generally deploy Mafiya resources against his business rivals, although he sometimes indulges in using his powers to his advantage in business negotiations, relishing the advantage—and the reputation as a shrewd businessman—they give him.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Koschei has formidable psionic powers when wielding his viridian stone, allowing him to read thoughts and memories, project illusions, and strike foes with powerful mental blasts. He can also exert mental influence over the minds of others, editing their memories (a useful means of concealing his activities). Koschei's powers make his position as mob-boss almost unassailable, since he knows every disloyal thought and can deal with any plot against him before it happens.

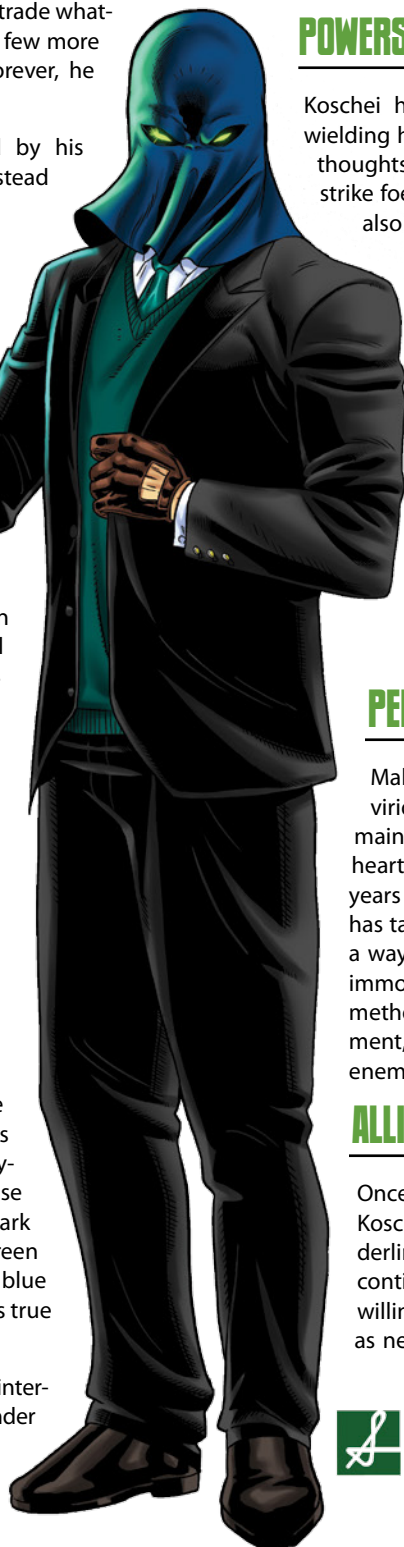
The viridian stone has also granted Koschei a degree of mind-over-matter, somatically controlling his body to resist aging and shrug off some harmful effects while healing quickly from any injury.

PERSONALITY

Malakov's greatest fear is mortality: His viridian stone and mind-over-matter have maintained him in a relatively hale and hearty state. For a man nearing one hundred years old, he seems only in his fifties. Still, age has taken its toll, and Malakov wants to find a way to reverse it and perhaps secure true immortality. He obsessively pursues various methods of life-extension and enhancement, careful not to show his hand, lest his enemies try to exploit any sign of weakness.

ALLIES

Once allied with the rest of the Chamber, Koschei now depends solely on his underlings in the Malakov Mafiya, which he continues to rule with an iron fist. He's also willing to hire super-powered mercenaries as needed to do his dirty work, implanting mental suggestions so they become unable to betray him by simply forgetting who hired them or "blanking" all of their higher mental functions and putting them in a coma.



KOSCHEI THE DEATHLESS

PL12

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
-1	2	0	1	3	3	2	4

POWERS

Psychic Powers Array (12 points)

- **Mental Influence:** Perception Range Cumulative Affliction 3 (Resisted by Will; Transformed) Insidious, Subtle 2, Limited to only 3rd level of effect* • 12 points
- **Mental Blast:** Perception Range Damage 4, Resisted by Will, Tiring • 1 point
- **Mental Illusion:** Illusion 2 (All Senses), Selective • 1 point
- **Mind Probe:** Close Range Cumulative Mind Reading 10 • 1 point
- **Telepathy:** Mental Communication 1, Subtle and Mind Reading 3, Subtle • 1 point

Viridian Stone: Removable (-8 points)**Enhanced Psychic Powers:** Array (30 points), All effects Stack With powers of the same name listed in the Psychic Powers array above.

- **Mental Influence:** Perception Range Cumulative Affliction 9 (Resisted by Will; Transformed), Insidious, Subtle 2, Limited to only 3rd level of effect • 30 points
- **Mental Blast:** Perception Range Damage 8, Resisted by Will, Tiring • 1 point
- **Mental Illusion:** Illusion 4 (All Senses), Selective • 1 point
- **Mind Probe:** Close Range Cumulative Mind Reading 2 • 1 point
- **Telepathy:** Mental Communication 2, Subtle and Mind Reading 9, Subtle • 1 point

Somatic Healing: Immunity 4 (Aging, Disease, Radiation, Poison), Sustained; Regeneration 2 • 6 points

*See the Appendix.

EQUIPMENT

Camera, Smartphone, Flash Goggles, Flashlight, Gas Mask, Multi-tool • 7 points

Assault Rifle: Ranged Multiattack Damage 5 • 15 points**Heavy Pistols (2):** Ranged Damage 4 • 16 points**Hold-out Pistol:** Ranged Damage 2 • 4 points**Light Pistols (2):** Ranged Damage 3 • 12 points**Sniper Rifle:** Ranged Damage 5, Improved Critical • 11 points**Sword:** Strength-based Damage 3, Improved Critical • 4 points

SKILLS

Athletics 4 (+3), Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+7), Deception 10 (+14), Expertise: Criminal 10 (+13), Expertise: Espionage 10 (+13), Insight 10 (+12), Intimidation 8 (+12), Investigation 8 (+11), Perception 8 (+10), Persuasion 6 (+10), Ranged Combat: Guns 6 (+7), Stealth 4 (+4), Vehicles 4 (+5)

ENEMIES

Koschei's enemies would be more numerous if more of them knew who and where he was. As it is, the Master of the Makalov Mafiya is well-hidden from his former Chamber allies, although the Big Brain could track him down, if he chose. Likewise, Malakov's former Russian

ADVANTAGES

Assessment, Benefit 4 (Multi-millionaire), Benefit (Speed of Thought (see the Appendix)), Benefit 3 (Crime Lord), Connected, Contacts, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Diehard, Eidetic Memory, Improvised Weapon, Languages 3 (Czech, English, German, Polish, Native Russian), Leadership, Set-up, Trance, Well-informed

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +3

Mental Blast — Perception Ranged, Damage 12, Resisted by Will

Pistol +7 Ranged, Damage 3

Unarmed +7 Close, Damage -1

DEFENSE

DODGE	6	FORTITUDE	8
PARRY	6	TOUGHNESS	4/2**
WILL	13	**Without Defensive Roll.	

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	28	SKILLS	46
POWERS	46	DEFENSES	26
ADVANTAGES	24	TOTAL	170

COMPLICATIONS

Addiction: Koschei has grown dependent on the power of his viridian stone, not only for his psychic power, but for his extended life as well.

Motivation—Greed: Koschei is motivated by having the very best in all things and believes living well (and wealthy) is the best revenge.

Obsession—Survival: Koschei wants to avoid death at all costs and is obsessed with any means of prolonging his life.

NOTES

Koschei also has considerable mundane resources available to him. These traits also do not take into account the large number of minions, members of the Malakov Mafiya, at his command.

His power level is largely a virtue of the Resistance DC of his mental powers; in direct combat, Koschei is considerably less of a threat, being effectively PL5 offensively (if he uses a weapon like a pistol) and defensively (versus Damage). Malakov's skills and physical abilities were higher in his prime but have atrophied with age.

"friends" have lost track of him, but would be interested to know about his current activities. The legitimate authorities would like to take down the mysterious head of the Mafiya, if they could find the evidence necessary to link "Gregory Malinski" to the infamous Koschei and not have it (or any witnesses) disappear.

HOOKS

Jewel Heist: Koschei wants to get his hands on a cache of viridian stones, so he uses his powers to threaten someone close to the heroes, making it clear an unfortunate “accident” will occur if they do not do exactly as the mysterious mental voice orders. They are expected to steal the “gems” and deliver them to a pre-arranged drop-off. Of course, the hooded man who meets them is not the real Koschei, but a proxy under his mental influence so, even if the heroes find a way to double-cross him, the villain escapes to plague them another day.

Project: Deathless: The Malakov Mafiya, perhaps aided by mercenary supervillains, stages an unprecedented raid on the Vanguard (see **Vanguard**, page 59) aimed at acquiring information on their cloning technology. Koschei intends to force-grow himself a new clone body and transfer his mind into it, not only making him young once again, but giving him even greater psionic powers through genetic tinkering or incorporating viridian into the clone’s physical makeup. Worse, Koschei might steal an actual clone from Vanguard, either a “sibling” to Victor (see the *Emerald City Player’s Guide*, **Chapter 5**) or a new cloning project, with similar intentions, except the legacy of a legendary hero isn’t threatened if his plans come to fruition!

MAFIYA THUG

This is a typical “soldier” in the employ of the Malakovs. For higher-ranking middlemen, add appropriate ranks in Expertise and interaction skills for their day-to-day (or night-to-night) work and responsibilities. See the *M&M Gamemaster’s Guide* for additional criminal archetypes useful for the Malakov Mafiya.

MAFIYA THUG

???

STR 2 STA 2 AGL 1 DEX 1 FGT 2 INT 0 AWE 0 PRE -1

Equipment: Leather jacket (+1 Toughness), light pistol, cell phone

Advantages: Equipment 2

Skills: Athletics 4 (+6), Expertise: Choose One 4 (+4), Expertise: Criminal 2 (+2), Expertise: Streetwise 4 (+4), Expertise: Current Events 2 (+2), Intimidation 4 (+3), Stealth 2 (+3), Vehicles 4 (+5)

Offense: Init +1, Unarmed +2 (Close, Damage 2), Pistol +1 (Ranged, Damage 3)

Defense: Dodge 2, Parry 2, Fort 4, Tou 3, Will 0

Totals: Abilities 14 + Powers 0 + Advantages 2 + Skills 13 + Defenses 3 = 32

MADAME JOY

REAL NAME: Unknown

OCCUPATION: Nightclub owner, former supervillainess

BASE: Emerald City, Joy’s Nightclub

Madame Joy has a long and storied history; she surfaced in the 1940s as a masked super-criminal on the West Coast. She appeared to be motivated purely by financial gain and primarily focused on robbing banks, knocking over armored cars, and pilfering valuable artifacts from museums or auction houses. On her heists, she was always guarded by a gang of thugs and was infamous for avoiding arrest even when her minions were all captured. After a tumultuous career in crime throughout the 1940s, ‘50s, and ‘60s, she was defeated by a team of superheroes in 1966 and spent several long years in a prison atoning for her crimes.

After her release, she settled in Emerald City and established herself as a legitimate (albeit controversial) businesswoman. Madame Joy runs one of the hottest nightclubs in Emerald City. “Joy’s” caters to the city’s burgeoning super-powered set while also servicing the wider public’s fascination with supers by hiring people with powers to act as bodyguards and dancers (and escorts). The nightclub includes a few businesses under one roof: a restaurant and bar, a gentleman’s club, and an illicit brothel. Joy’s has an eclectic clientele that includes college students, businesspeople, local gangsters, and supervillains (not in their “working” clothes) who use the place to relax, party, talk business, or use one of the private meeting rooms for important conversations.

Not much is known about Joy’s background and she likes it that way. For example, while she is originally from the Terminus (a fact known only to a few close associates), this is not public knowledge.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Madame Joy’s primary offense power is one she simply calls “The Touch.” It allows her to incapacitate a person with overwhelming feelings of pleasure or pain. One of Joy’s best kept secrets is that she has to use the Touch every 24 hours or she gets edgy and distracted. If she goes longer, the negative effects get progressively worse.

She also possesses regeneration and a resistance to aging. She appears to be a very well-preserved woman in her 50s, despite being well over 80.

Another key aspect of Madam Joy is her place of business, Joy’s. It is her home and workplace and she is rarely found outside its walls. While it is a well-known E.C. landmark, there are portions of Joy’s only accessible to those in-the-know; those areas are the brothel, the “dungeon” (which is equipped with power dampers based on Terminus tech) for troublemakers, secret meeting rooms, and many hidden entrances and exits, some of which lead into the Undercity. The public and private areas of the business are obvious to all, but the hidden parts of Joy’s are where the real action happens. Only those Joy trusts get access to these areas... and even then she only reveals the parts she wants them to see.

ALLIES

Madame Joy is the best-connected and informed person in Emerald City regarding the happenings on either side of the law in the super-powered community. She could be an invaluable information source or a pernicious adversary for anyone in Emerald City.

She has a companion and bodyguard called Snake-Eyes. A superhuman who was empowered by the Silver Storm with super-strength and a tough reptilian hide, Snake-Eyes serves as head of security for Joy's and has so far proven quite capable of handling himself in tense situations. It's occurred

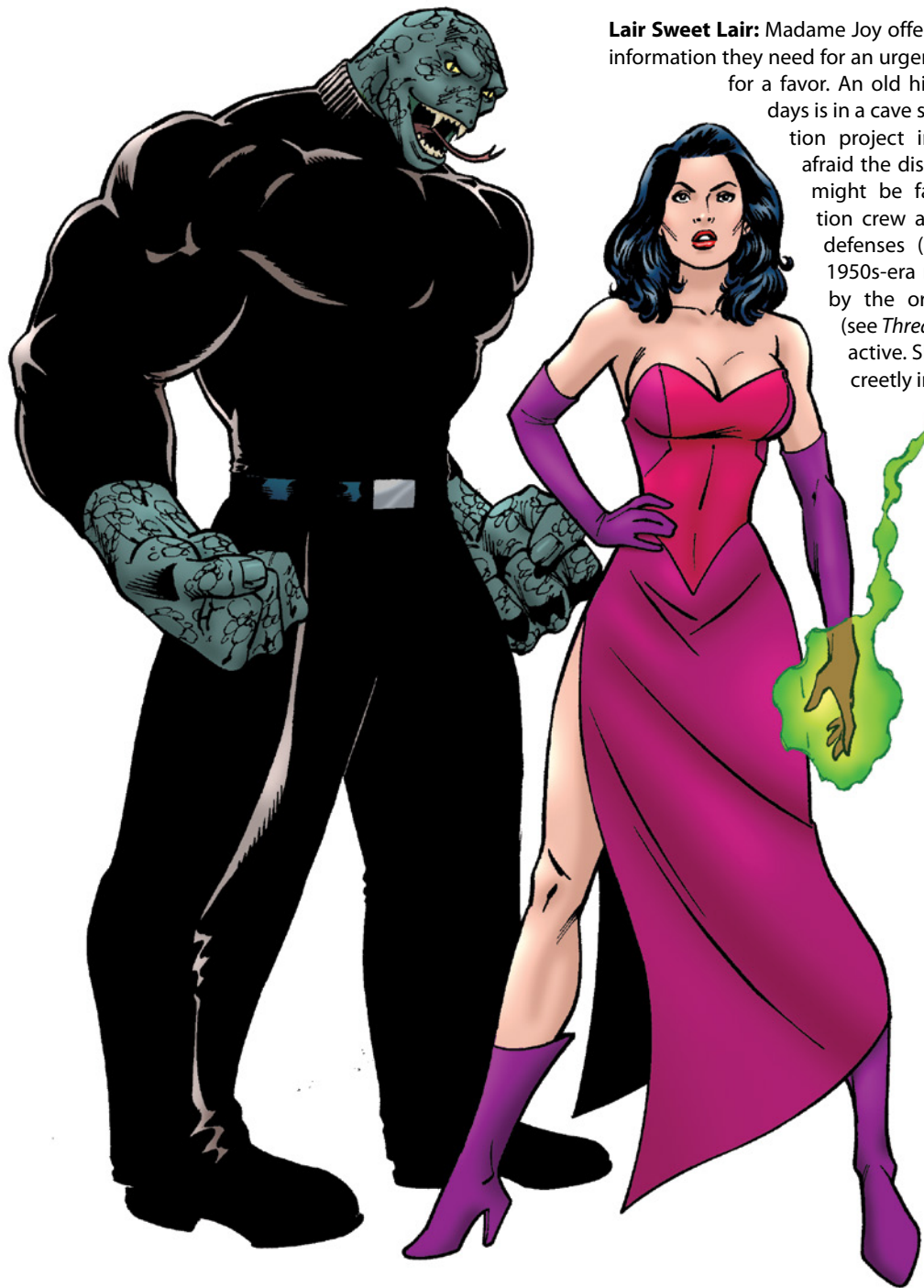
to Joy that Snake-Eyes may not be powerful enough to handle serious trouble, so she's interested in finding a way to enhance his powers, and given her ties to the Terminus, she may already have one.

ENEMIES

Senior members of the Emerald City Police have never believed that Madame Joy truly went legit. Consequently her club is raided occasionally by the vice squad. So far no contraband or illegal activities have been uncovered.

HOOKS

Lair Sweet Lair: Madame Joy offers to help the PCs with information they need for an urgent mission in exchange for a favor. An old hideout from her villain days is in a cave system near a construction project in Emerald City. She's afraid the discovery of her old base might be fatal for the construction crew as her lair's automated defenses (including a squad of 1950s-era robots supplied to her by the original Mad Machinist (see *Threat Report*) are likely still active. She'd like the PCs to discreetly infiltrate and deactivate the defenses while disposing of anything that might connect her to the old hideout.



MADAME JOY

PL10

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
0	4	1	2	4	3	3	6

POWERS

The Touch: Array (33 points)

- **Joy:** Affliction 14 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Dazed and Vulnerable, Stunned and Defenseless, Incapacitated), Extra Condition, Feature: Target has positive feelings toward Madame Joy, Precise, Reversible, Split, Subtle • 33 points
- **Pain:** Affliction 14 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed and Vulnerable, Stunned and Defenseless, Incapacitated), Extra Condition, Precise, Reversible, Split, Subtle • 1 point

Vital: Immunity 1 (Aging), Half Effect; Immunity 1 (Her powers); Regeneration 1 • 3 points.

EQUIPMENT

Headquarters: Joy's • 15 points

Size: Large; **Toughness:** 8 **Features:** Computer, Concealed 3 (DC 30), Garage, Holding Cells, Infirmary, Living Space, Personnel, Secret 2 (DC 25), Security System (DC 20)

SKILLS

Athletics 5 (+5), Deception 7 (+13), Expertise: Business 7 (+10), Expertise: Streetwise 12 (+15), Insight 10 (+13), Investigation 7 (+10), Perceptions 5 (+8), Persuasion 7 (+13), Sleight of Hand 6 (+8), Stealth 8 (+9)

ADVANTAGES

Accurate Attack, Attractive, Benefit 1 (Status: Information Broker), Benefit 2 (Independently Wealthy), Close Attack 2, Connected, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 3, Fascinate 2 (Deception and Persuasion), Fast Grab, Favored Foe (Men), Grabbing Finesse, Improved Initiative, Languages 2 (French, Japanese, Native English), Luck 2, Seize Initiative, Set-up, Skill Mastery 2 (Deception and Persuasion), Well-informed

Snake-Eyes

REAL NAME: Tracy Saddler
OCCUPATION: Bouncer and bodyguard
BASE: Emerald City, Joy's Nightclub

Snake-Eyes is Madame Joy's bodyguard and the head of security for Joy's. He is never far from her and is a consummate professional. Before the Silver Storm he was Tracy Saddler, security guard and bouncer for a number of events and businesses around town. After the Silver Storm he became Snake-Eyes and went to Madame Joy to offer his services because he figured she'd be interested in employing a security professional with powers; he figured rightly.

Since his transformation Snake-Eyes has cut himself off from his former life and now spends almost all of his time at work. He has become indispensable to Madame Joy and the two have a close, but purely professional relationship. He has no problems with Joy, what she does, or how she runs her business, and he's just as comfortable staring down members of the Malakov Mafiya or a super-criminal as he is the police or a superhero.

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +5

Joy Touch +6	Close, Affliction 14, Resisted by Will (DC 24)
Pain Touch +6	Close, Affliction 14, Resisted by Fortitude (DC 24)
Unarmed +6	Close, Damage 0

DEFENSE

DODGE	6	FORTITUDE	8
PARRY	8	TOUGHNESS	6/4*
WILL	12	*Without Defensive Roll.	

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	46	SKILLS	37
POWERS	37	DEFENSES	22
ADVANTAGES	28	TOTAL	170

COMPLICATIONS

Addiction: Joy needs to use the Touch on someone at least daily; if she doesn't she becomes edgy and distracted and is Impaired. After another day, she becomes Disabled. These conditions reverse immediately when she uses the Touch.

Motivation—Survival: Madame Joy is most concerned with her continued survival. To that end she attempts to make herself as indispensable as possible. Nowadays that means acting as an information broker for anyone who needs it and has money, secrets, or favors to trade for it.

Reputation: Joy is well-known in the underworld as a former villainess and as a ruthless, well-informed madam who employs and serves paranormals.

Snake-Eyes

STR 7 STA 6 AGL 3 DEX 2 FGT 5 INT 0 AWE 2 PRE 0

Powers: **Poison Resistance** (Immunity 1 (Poison)); **Snakelike** (Protection 1, Regeneration 1, Senses 3 (Acute Olfactory, Tracking (Olfactory), Ultravision)); **Venomous Bite** (Grab-based Affliction 7 (Resisted by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Incapacitated), Improved Critical)

Equipment: Heavy pistol (Ranged Damage 4), Smartphone

Advantages: Connected, Equipment 2, *Improved Critical (Venomous Bite)*, Interpose

Skills: Athletics 3 (+10), Expertise: Security 8 (+8), Expertise: Streetwise 5 (+5), Intimidation 8 (+8), Perception 4 (+6), Ranged Combat: Guns 3 (+5), Stealth 2 (+5), Vehicles 3 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +3, Grab +5 (Close, Special), Heavy Pistol +5 (Ranged, Damage 4), Venomous Bite +5 (Close, Grab-based Affliction 7 (Fortitude DC 17), Crit. 19-20), Unarmed +5 (Close, Damage 7)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 6, Toughness 7, Will 6

Totals: Abilities 50 + Powers 12 + Advantages 4 + Skills 18 + Defenses 6 = 90

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** Takes his job as the head of Joy's security very seriously. **Snake-Man:** Snake-Eyes looks like a muscular man covered in black scales. He has slitted eyes, a forked tongue, and fangs.

MADAME MACABRE

REAL NAME: Lily Esther

OCCUPATION: Ex-horror show hostess, sorceress

BASE: House of Fear (enchanted Gothic mansion)

Lily Esther came to the West Coast on a bus in the early 1970s like many young women seeking fame and fortune. Unlike most, with her ambition, looks, and savvy she managed to land a handful of roles in some of the low-budget horror films of the day. While *Cry! Blackstein! Cry!* and *The Growling* weren't classics, they did get her noticed by a local TV affiliate, who offered Lily a gig hosting late-night horror films as Madame Macabre, the Hostess of Horror!

Lily's sexy persona and willingness to shamelessly self-promote got her show picked up by affiliates all along the coast. She even starred in her own movie in the mid-'80s and did a nude pictorial in a popular men's magazine. She was never a superstar, but she was beloved by B-movie aficionados and horror fans the world over.

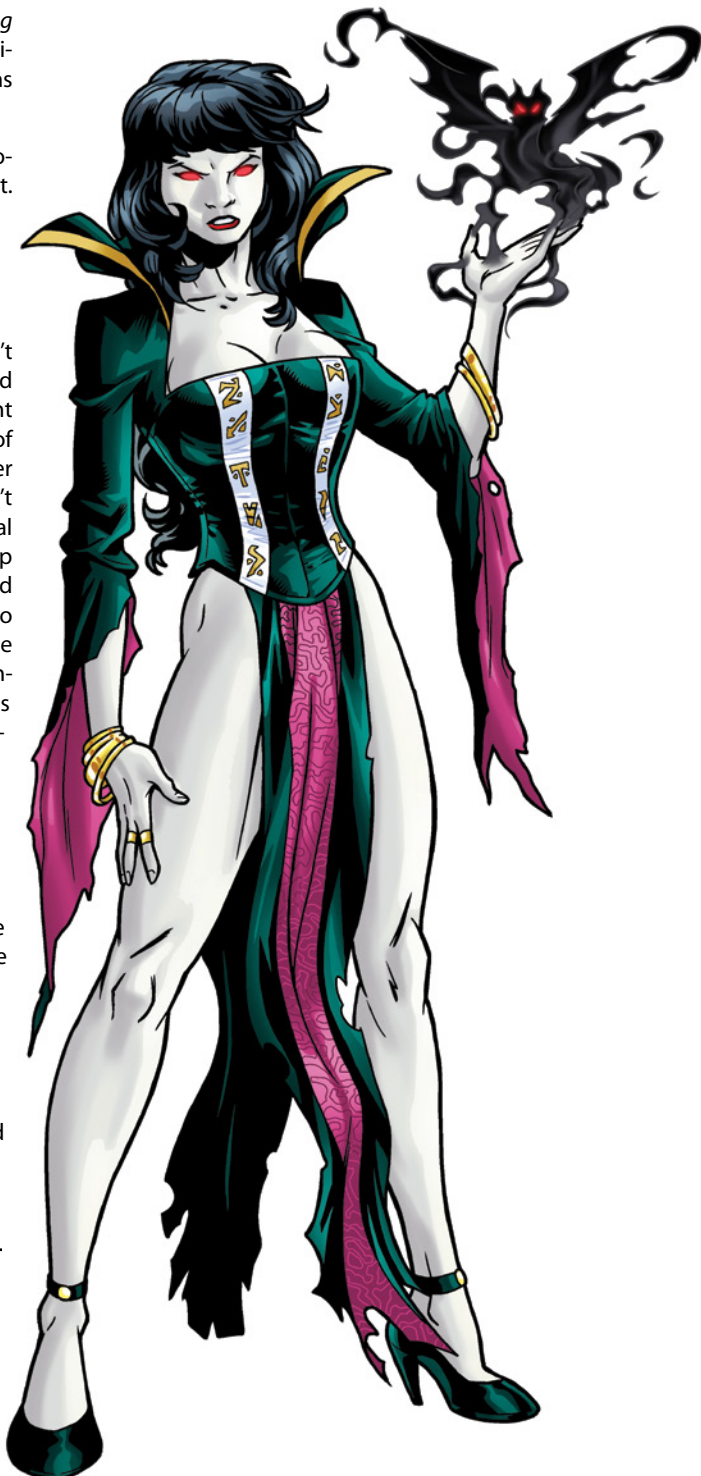
She always knew the "Hostess of Horror" thing wasn't going to be popular forever, but she was able to extend her career as Madame Macabre until cable killed late night movie shows. Then younger actresses became darlings of the B-movie crowd and she realized she was losing her looks... and with them, her career. Her tell-all book wasn't nearly as popular as she'd hoped and a crooked financial advisor squandered the modest fortune she'd saved up her whole life. Worst of all, the acting career she dreamed of appeared to be dead and she never had the chance to be anything but a late-night Scream Queen. Sitting alone in her soon-to-be-foreclosed-on Gothic mansion Lily contemplated how she'd wasted her life, how she'd do things differently if she had the chance, and finally, she contemplated ending it all.

That was when *he* walked in. Suave, dark, and handsome, with eyes that reflected no light, he offered the fading starlet a deal. He would grant her youth, looks, and powers beyond those of any mortal and in return, she would owe 666 "favors." None would be suicidal, some would even be trivial, but unless they were completed he would take away all he was offering. She promptly forgot all her thoughts of a wasted life and doing things differently and accepted. What she wanted was eternal life and beauty! That was all she ever wanted! Now Madame Macabre alternates between working off her debt to her benefactor, seeking revenge on any who have wronged her, and trying to reach new levels of fame and glory.

PERSONALITY

Though moodier since her transformation from media personality to supervillainess, Madame Macabre is a sassy, witty, and generally charming woman. She is fond of horror-themed jokes, puns, and jibes. She strikes seductive poses almost on reflex and loves meeting members of her fanbase. Beneath this exterior, however, lurks a woman afraid of death, decrepitude,

and being forgotten. She will do whatever it takes to fulfill her bargain and keep the powers she sees as the only way to avoid such a fate. Certainly her soul will become even more stained by the powers she uses over time, which will have an even greater effect on her personality.



MADAME MACABRE

PL11

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
0	2	1	1	1	2	4	4

POWERS

Eternal Beauty: Enhanced Advantage (Attractive); Immortality 1 (2 weeks), Immunity 2 (Aging, Disease) • 5 points

Infernal Powers: Array (33 points)

- **Fearful Visions:** Perception Area Affliction 11 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Fatigued, Defenseless, Paralyzed) • 33 points
- **Creature Feature:** Summon 8 (120 pt. Minion), Active, General (monsters from horror films and stories), Mental Link • 1 point
- **Dramatic Exit:** Teleport 7 (1/2 mile), Extended (120 miles), Increased Mass 4 (800 lbs.); Movement 2 (Dimensional 2 (Mystic Dimensions)), Increased Mass 4 (800 lbs.) • 1 point
- **Hellfire Blast:** Ranged Damage 11, Affects Insubstantial 2 (Full Damage), Homing 2, Incurable, Penetrating 6 • 1 point
- **Infernal Domination:** Cone Area Affliction 11 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Dazed, Compelled, Controlled), Selective • 1 point
- **Special Effects:** Illusion 11 (Visual and Audio) • 1 point
- **Spectral Forces:** Perception Ranged Move Object 10 (25 tons), Affects Insubstantial 2 (Full Effect), Precise • 1 point
- **Tune In:** Remote Sensing 8 (1 mile, Visual and Audio), Subtle • 1 point

Levitation: Flight 4 (30 MPH) • 8 points

Protective Wards: Impervious Protection 8; Enhanced Defenses 25 (Dodge 8, Parry, 8, Fortitude 4, Will 5) • 41 points

EQUIPMENT

Headquarters: Horror House • 25 points

Size: Huge; **Toughness** 12, **Features:** Dimensional Portal, Dual Size (Colossal), Grounds, Gym, Holding Cells, Library, Living Space, Personnel, Power System, Secret 3 (DC 25), Self-repairing 2, Temporal Limbo 3 (8 times faster or slower based on owner's preference)

SKILLS

Deception 6 (+10), Expertise: Infernal Powers 10 (+12), Expertise (PRE): Performance 4 (+8), Insight 4 (+8), Intimidation 4 (+8), Perception 2 (+6), Persuasion 4 (+8), Ranged Combat: Magic 10 (+11), Stealth 4 (+5)

POWERS & ABILITIES

Though a skilled seductress and passable actress, Madame Macabre's real abilities come from her infernal powers. She can manipulate mystical energies with a variety of effects including mystic blasts, teleportation, illusion-casting, mind control, and summoning demonic shades in the form of classic movie monsters to do her bidding.

ALLIES

Other than some hardcore fans and the mysterious figure who granted her powers, Madame Macabre has few long term allies. She will work with other mystical villains as needed, but she prefers to have the spotlight to herself

ADVANTAGES

Attractive, Benefit 1 (Minor Celebrity), Benefit 2 (Independently Wealthy), Daze (Deception), Equipment 5, Fascinate (Deception), Ritualist, Seize Initiative, Taunt

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +1	
Hellfire Blast +11	Ranged, Damage 11, Affects Insubstantial, Homing 2, Incurable, Penetrating 6
Infernal Domination —	Close, Cone Area Affliction 11, Selective, Resisted by Will (DC 21)
Fearful Visions —	Close, Perception Area Affliction 11, Resisted by Will (DC 21)
Unarmed +1	Close, Damage 0

DEFENSE

DODGE	12	FORTITUDE	8
PARRY	10	TOUGHNESS	10
WILL	14		

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	30	SKILLS	24
POWERS	94	DEFENSES	11
ADVANTAGES	13	TOTAL	172

COMPLICATIONS

Always Has Time for a Fan: Appeals to vanity, celebrity status, and similar tactics work exceptionally well on Madame Macabre. She is no fool, but she loves adoring fans.

Horrorphile: Madame Macabre loves horror films and stories, creepy locations, and other such things. She often forms capers or plans around such themes.

Infernal Bargain: To keep the grim reaper at bay and sustain her powers, Madame Macabre owes 666 favors to her mysterious benefactor. So far she's accomplished only a few.

Motivation—Immortality: Madame Macabre doesn't want to grow old. She wants to remain young and beautiful forever. She's managed to forestall aging—now to restore her youth!

as much as possible. Note the exact identity of Madame Macabre's benefactor is left up to GMs to decide—he may be Hades, Mr. Infamy, or the Devil himself.

ENEMIES

Madame Macabre is often opposed by mystical heroes such as Eldritch and Seven. She has also had run-ins with the werewolf hero, Mongrel, as well as the Asian mystic, Dragoneye. Perhaps the dark queen Una (*Freedom City*) or the goddess Eris (*Threat Report*) are looking for a "mortal avatar" on the Earthly plane and have invested Madame Macabre with mystic power for that purpose.

MAJESTIC-20

Members: Colonel John Parker Lincoln, numerous agents

Base of Operations: North America

Motivation: Safeguard America against alien threats

Majestic-20 is a covert organization that originated as a clandestine tool of the United States to safeguard the country against alien invasion. It came into being as a response to the crash of a Grue scout ship on Earth in 1947 and was instrumental in helping to overcome a covert Grue invasion in the 1950s. USAF Captain John Parker Lincoln was tapped to lead the new organization and prepare them for the task of defending the United States (and Earth) from extraterrestrials.

Early in the organization's existence, key members began spreading disinformation to fringe elements and other easily-dismissible parties regarding Majestic-20 itself. Within a matter of years, people who attempted to disclose valid information about Majestic-20 were routinely ignored, discredited, or otherwise deemed unreliable as everyone "knew" the "nonsense" they were presenting was the stuff of irrational conspiracy theorists and UFO-chasing kooks. Which was exactly the way Majestic-20 wanted it. They learned the lessons of covert operations and waging "secret war" from early conflicts with the Grue and applied them.

Acting from the shadows, Majestic-20 had its share of successes and failures over its first few decades of existence. Only select members of other government agencies (such as AEGIS) were made aware of its existence, usually only to facilitate using those agencies as cover for its own actions in the field.

As the years passed, the times changed on Majestic-20's leadership and Lincoln and his peers grew troubled that new generations of military and political leaders were increasingly too weak and shortsighted to do the job of defending America and the world. With a growing number of extraterrestrial incursions stopped by metahuman "heroes" over the years, the politicians who *did* know of Majestic-20's existence, and who were responsible for paying its bills, began to see Lincoln and his people as relics of another age. This viewpoint came into direct con-

flict with Majestic-20 at hearings during which the group was forced to defend its continuing existence. As the hearings took place, the Atom Family and a small number of heroes thwarted a massive Grue invasion—and when Chase Atom's telepathic masterstroke disabled Grue throughout the invasion force, both of Majestic-20's most vocal opponents on the Senate committee were revealed as Grue infiltrators who had replaced the true senators.

Horried at having his worst fears validated, Lincoln decided even their covert status was no longer sufficient to pursue Majestic-20's mandate. Before the hearings resumed, Lincoln convinced a number of senators on the committee to dismantle Majestic-20. After all, an alien invasion had just been prevented, not by Majestic-20, who hadn't heard of the invasion until it was in the public eye, but by independent heroes. Clearly, Majestic-20 had failed in its mission. At the conclusion of the hearings, Majestic-20 was officially shut down, which was exactly what Lincoln wanted.

Officially, Majestic-20 ceased to exist, but Lincoln, with a core group of trusted agents, took the group deeper into the shadows, where it rebuilt itself from the ground up, siphoning funds from other government projects. Now it answers only to its founding principles and no other authority. Nothing stands in its way, because no one knows it exists.

MOTIVATION AND GOALS

Majestic-20's members are fanatically dedicated to safeguarding America (and secondarily the rest of the world) from threats originating off-world. They long-ago became disenchanted with anyone's judgment but their own and have become their own echo chamber in which their paranoid fantasies are repeated and reinforced daily. Only they know what is best and they are seldom open to any argument about that fact. They are firm believers that the end justifies the means, and have repeatedly proven themselves willing to sacrifice innocent lives if they find it necessary "for the greater good."

FELLOW TRAVELERS

Trusting metahumans is a calculated risk. Even the best of them can be dangerously naïve, and many of them either freely associate with *or actually are* aliens. Majestic-20 has found several public organizations useful for both keeping tabs on America's metahumans and complicating their lives when necessary. Two favorite cat's paws are:

M.A.M.M. (Mothers Against Metahuman Mayhem)—A small but vocal public advocacy group specializing in emotional appeals to heroes to temper violence in populated areas. M.A.M.M. uses public pressure to push legislation regarding mandatory training of metahumans, places restrictions on headquarters in densely-populated areas, and other topics heroes may find annoying or difficult to deal with, but are tricky to argue against in the media.

A.L.P.H.A. (Association for the Legitimate Preservation of Human Achievement)—A Right-wing anti-metahuman organization with powerful national grass-roots support, they are best known for supporting draconian Metahuman Registration Acts and other legislation designed to strip anyone not 100% pure human of civil rights and legal protections. They inherited some of the core members and resource of CODE (Citizens for Order, Decency, and Ethics), the activist group that supported the Moore Act in Freedom City, after CODE was exposed as largely a criminal front and money-laundering operation.



TACTICS

Lincoln has infiltrated agents into a number of branches of the U.S. government, including NASA, the FBI, the NSA, and AEGIS, and each of these organizations is routinely used as cover for Majestic-20 agents and activities. As a rule, Majestic-20 investigates and surveils targets intensively before deciding action is needed, whether it's violent intervention, discrediting the target, or some other strategy. If violence *is* called for, agents act quickly and decisively, sanitizing evidence of their activities afterward. Staying hidden from the world and therefore from any potential interference is a major concern at all times.

HEADQUARTERS AND RESOURCES

The Cold War was a strange and expensive time. Staggeringly large “black budgets” and countless classified projects flourished while hidden from the public eye with limited congressional oversight. Entire facilities and many valuable human assets (academic, military, and otherwise) were taken off the books, erased from records, and expunged from maps. Majestic-20 uses many of the bunkers, safe-houses, hidden labs, isolated storage sites, and other facilities Uncle Sam either no

longer knows exists or believes are being used by entirely different projects or people. Lincoln's people are experts at exploiting the government's labyrinthine bureaucracy to its advantage.

Additionally, Majestic-20 has access to captured and reverse-engineered alien technology ranging from teleportation systems, cloaking devices, and energy weapons all the way to Colonel Lincoln's personal longevity treatments and implants.

THE PIT

“The Pit” is a massive underground facility buried in the mountains near Emerald City and is a good example of the kind of facilities the organization has secreted around the country.

HEADQUARTERS: THE PIT

28 POINTS

Size: Awesome **Toughness:** 12 **Features:** Communications, Computer, Concealed 3 (+20), Defense Systems, Fire Prevention System, Grounds, Holding Cells, Infirmary, Isolated, Laboratory, Living Space, Personnel, Power System, Security System 3 (DC 30), Workshop

BLACK HATS AND TWIRLING MUSTACHES

It is important for the gamemaster to remember that Majestic-20, in *their* minds, *are the good guys*. They do a thankless job under demanding conditions, and they don't get the benefit of superpowers and public acceptance. Their zeal and paranoia often blinds them to the benefits of working with extraterrestrials. They believe they simply can't afford to take a chance on an alien because they can't be sure where its allegiance lies. This attitude can prove very dangerous to alien or alien/human-hybrid heroes and often makes Majestic-20 look like a pack of unreasoning, violent madmen.

COL. JOHN PARKER LINCOLN

A decorated veteran of WWII, Lincoln's first exposure to alien life was the corpses of Grue scouts, but he has had so many hostile encounters with alien life over the years that aggressive xenophobia has become second nature to him. Reverse-engineered alien technology, including a computer implant and longevity treatments (he's aged only one year for every five since the early 1960s), have kept the Colonel vital and given him the opportunity to continue as the leader of Majestic-20... a position he believes only he is fit to hold. Lincoln takes any action and accepts any costs he feels are required to safeguard humanity from what he sees as unrelenting alien menaces.



MAJESTIC-20 AGENTS

The average agent for Majestic-20 is a highly-trained specialist in covert operations, likely chosen from a career in the military or some intelligence service. All agents are

SENTRY AGENT

PL10 • 197 POINTS

STR 8 STA 2 AGL 2 DEX 2 FGT 5 INT 1 AWE 2 PRE 2

Powers: **Retractable Symbiote Armor** (Enhanced Defenses 5 (Fortitude 5), Enhanced Strength 6, Feature (Quick Change), Flight 8 (500 MPH), Immunity 12 (Life Support, Telepathic Effects); **Palm Blasters** (Multiattack Ranged Damage 11, Accurate 3), **AE: Wide-angle Beam** (Area Cone Damage 10); Impervious Protection 9; Senses 4 (Analytical Detect Lifeforms, Extended Vision, Infravision))

Equipment: CommLink, GPS, Computer

Advantages: Benefit (Falsified Security Clearances), Close Attack 3, Defensive Roll 3, Equipment, Improved Aim, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quick Draw

Skills: Athletics 4 (+12), Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: Aliens 6 (+7), Expertise: Black Ops 6 (+7), Insight 4 (+6), Intimidation 4 (+6), Investigation 4 (+5), Perception 6 (+8), Persuasion 4 (+6), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+6), Stealth 4 (+6), Technology 4 (+5), Vehicles 4 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +6, Palm Blasters +8 (Ranged, Multiattack Damage 11), Wide-Angle Beam — (Close, Cone Area Damage 10), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 8)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 12, Toughness 14/11* Will 7 *Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 36 + Powers 105 + Advantages 12 + Skills 30 + Defenses 15 = 197

Complications: **Motivation—Misguided, Patriotism, Responsibility, Obsession:** Fanatically anti-alien.

ALL THOSE WONDERFUL TOYS

The equipment Lincoln and his men have is just a sample of what they have access to. Majestic-20 has a long-term partnership with Ghostworks, which gives them access to more than just their own stockpile of captured alien tech. This gives you as Gamemaster a lot of leeway in terms of the equipment these men-in-black use in any given adventure.

hand-picked by Colonel Lincoln. Either their training and mindset brought them to Lincoln's attention or their experience dealing with alien life forms.

SENTRY AGENTS

Sentry agents volunteer to undergo implantation of a symbiotic armor system capable of "hiding" inside its host when not in use. The armor is powerful but poorly-understood, with a destructive neural interface which eventually kills the wearer. There are few Sentry agents, as Lincoln loathes sacrificing good men without ample cause.

COL. JOHN PARKER LINCOLN

PL9 • 168 POINTS

STR 1 STA 2 AGL 1 DEX 1 FGT 4 INT 6 AWE 4 PRE 4

Powers: **Alien Disruptor Gun** (Ranged Damage 8 linked to Ranged Weaken Toughness 8; Accurate; Easily Removable, -14 points); **Computer Implant** (Communication 3 (Radio), Subtle; Enhanced Advantage (Eidetic Memory); Enhanced Intellect 3; Immunity 10 (Mental effects), Limited to Half Effect); **Longevity Treatments** (Immunity 1 (Aging))

Advantages: Benefit 2 (Status: Leader of Majestic-20), Defensive Roll 4, *Eidetic Memory*, Fascinate 2 (Deception, Persuasion), Great Endurance, Improved Aim, Inspire 3, Leadership, Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 6 (+7), Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+8), Deception 6 (+10), Expertise: Aliens 8 (+14), Expertise: Black Ops 8 (+14), Insight 8 (+12), Intimidation 6 (+10), Investigation 4 (+10), Perception 6 (+10), Persuasion 6 (+10), Ranged Combat: Guns 6 (+7), Technology 6 (+12), Treatment 2 (+8), Vehicles 6 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +1, Disruptor +9 (Ranged, Damage 8 linked to Weaken Toughness 8), Unarmed 8 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 7, Fortitude 6, Toughness 6/2*, Will 12 *Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 46 + Powers 45 + Advantages 15 + Skills 41 + Defenses 21 = 168

Complications: **Motivation—Misguided, Patriotism, Responsibility, Obsession:** Fanatically anti-alien.

MAJESTIC-20 AGENT

PL7 • 113 POINTS

STR 2 STA 2 AGL 2 DEX 2 FGT 5 INT 1 AWE 2 PRE 2

Powers: **Alien Disruptor Gun** (Ranged Damage 8 linked to Ranged Weaken Toughness 8; Accurate; Easily Removable (-14 points))

Equipment: CommLink, GPS, Computer

Advantages: Benefit (Falsified Security Clearance), Close Attack 3, Defensive Roll 3, Equipment, Improved Aim, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quick Draw

Skills: Athletics 4 (+6), Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: Aliens 6 (+7), Expertise: Black Ops 6 (+7), Insight 4 (+6), Intimidation 4 (+6), Investigation 4 (+5), Perception 6 (+8), Persuasion 4 (+6), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+6), Stealth 4 (+6), Technology 4 (+5), Vehicles 4 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +6, Disruptor +6 (Damage 8 linked to Weaken Toughness 8), Unarmed 8 (Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 7, Fortitude 5, Toughness 5/2*, Will 7 *Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 36 + Powers 20 + Advantages 12 + Skills 30 + Defenses 15 = 113

Complications: **Motivation—Misguided, Patriotism, Responsibility, Obsession:** Fanatically anti-alien.

MEDUSA

Members: Gorgon, Charybdis, and Typhon are core; others come and go

Base of Operations: Emerald City

Motivation: Complete domination of humanity by MEDUSA and its superhuman members

The founding members of MEDUSA were the products of covert experiments attempting to create superhumans to use as weapons. Gorgon and her siblings were grown in tubes and educated using advanced “memory implant” technology, but exhibited too much independence, so they were deemed failures and scheduled for termination. However, the project’s backers misjudged the extent of Pythia’s precognitive abilities and she notified her siblings of their fate. Working together, they escaped imprisonment and tore apart the lab (and its staff). The siblings suffered some casualties but were successful in saving most of their members and freeing themselves. Scylla, Deimos, and a handful of others separated to go their own way, but Gorgon, Charybdis, and Typhon stayed together and made their way to Emerald City. They used the chaos in the aftermath of the Silver Storm to go to ground.

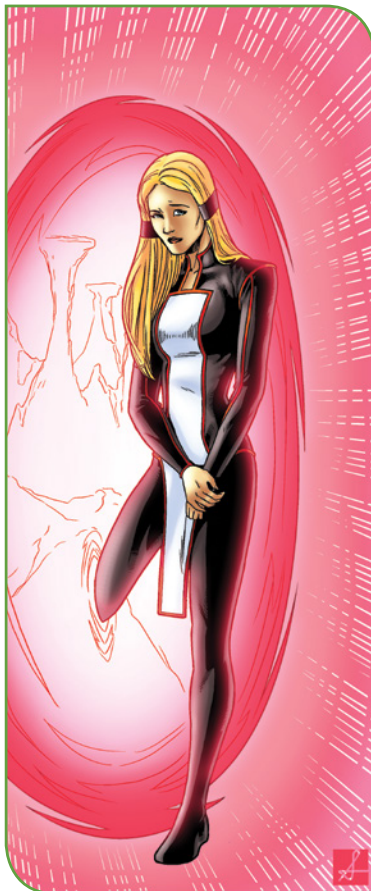
The trio watched how humanity reacted to these new superhumans, and educated themselves about the history

of metahumanity. As a group, they decided mankind was correct—metahumans were the next step in human evolution and they would replace *homo sapiens* in the coming years. Gorgon and the others decided this was inevitable and natural. They wouldn’t let short-sighted, mindlessly violent “primitives” destroy their superhuman offspring out of fear and hatred. No, instead the trio planned to accelerate the evolutionary process.

Under the guise of MEDUSA, they began a campaign of terror designed to bring humanity to its knees and bring like-minded metahumans into the fold. Without the safety of organized society, mankind would have no choice but to accept the leadership of metahumanity... and if they gave up soon enough, MEDUSA might even keep some of them around as servants to their evolutionary superiors, before their inevitable extinction.

MOTIVATION AND GOALS

MEDUSA’s members believe metahumans are the future and were put on this planet to replace humanity. Now they have to prove their superiority. Once in control, they plan to treat the remnants of mankind like children or pets, using selective sterilization to keep the “herd” at manageable levels until they die off.



A.C.R.O.N.Y.M. OR NOT?

Despite speculation in the press, “MEDUSA” isn’t an acronym and does not mean anything in particular. Typhon suggested the name as a play on Gorgon’s name and they began using it as a calling card in their attacks and operations. If you want to make it into an acronym or otherwise assign significance to it (beyond the word-play associations), feel free.

POTENTIAL ORIGINS

The people or organization behind the secret project that created Gorgon and her “siblings” is left for you to tailor to your series. SHADOW, the Labyrinth (specifically, expanded DNAscent research), Vanguard, Professor Psion, Ghostworks, and Mastermind are all perfectly viable candidates, but something entirely original is equally suitable. Similarly, the names, fates, and exact number of other survivors of the project are left for you to expand upon as needed.

The members of MEDUSA believe their success is only a matter of time, as worthy metahumans flock to their banner and tip the scales irrevocably in their favor. Gorgon and the others would prefer to recruit other metahumans to their side rather than fight them, but they show little mercy to those who betray their own kind to side with humanity. Any metas who refuse to accept MEDUSA’s goals, or actively oppose them, are enemies. Non-human individuals of significant power (aliens, synthetic life-forms, etc.) are not assumed to be enemies unless they prove themselves to be.

TACTICS

MEDUSA wants to replace everything humanity uses to defend itself with metahumans loyal to MEDUSA. In order to do this, they target the protectors of the status quo (UNISON, AEGIS, and various superheroes). They publicly humble or kill individuals, destroy institutions such as banks and stock exchanges, wipe out military installations, communications networks, public utilities, and so on. Finally, they target politicians and other leaders who prove capable of motivating and organizing others, especially in crises. Their attacks are always public and staged for the most dramatic and demoralizing effect.

HEADQUARTERS AND RESOURCES

MEDUSA is capable of moving their operations quickly, because they know their goals make them a target for the authorities. There are a number of base camps hidden in converted utility tunnels under Emerald City and other isolated locales such as abandoned smuggler havens off the coast. Gorgon also shows no hesitation in “confiscating” resources from other organizations when she has the opportunity—currently, the core membership uses a heavily modified submarine seized from SHADOW as their base of operations. Charybdis teleports the group members to and from the sub as needed.

THE IRON SHARK

The “Iron Shark” is a submarine about the size of a WWII-era diesel-powered sub, but as advanced as anything in the modern U.S. Navy’s arsenal. SHADOW intended this vehicle for covert surveillance of naval assets and coastal targets, and its sonar cloak sees frequent use.

HQ: EISEN HAIFISCH (IRON SHARK) SUBMARINE ²⁰ POINTS

Size: Colossal **Toughness:** 14 **Features:** Communications, Computer, Concealed (DC 20), Infirmary, Living Space, Navigation System, Power (Concealment from Sonar, Passive, Continuous), Power (Flight 5 (60 MPH)), Power (Ranged Damage 10 (UV Laser Cannons; Subtle 2)), Power (Swimming 6 (30 MPH)), Power System, Security System (DC 20)

GORGON

REAL NAME: Gorgon

OCCUPATION: Terrorist

BASE: Various hidden bases or the Iron Shark

Gorgon’s genetic template was engineered with both “leader” and “warrior” in mind. She is physically and mentally superhuman, with implanted combat skills of high order. She has the ability to telepathically overwhelm most individuals’ ability to process information, effectively paralyzing them.

On occasion, she has managed to mind control a group of people (a power stunt) and practices when possible because she’d like to make it easier to use.



CHARYBDIS

REAL NAME: Charybdis

OCCUPATION: Terrorist

BASE: Various hidden bases or the Iron Shark

Charybdis is Scylla’s twin, but is weaker in terms of powers, personality, and drive. She is in love with Gorgon and refused to leave her side after they escaped from the group that created them, even though Scylla wanted them to strike out on their own. Scylla laughed at Charybdis’ weakness and left. Charybdis hates her sister, but desperately misses her at the same time.



ROLL CALL

Membership in MEDUSA is open to any metahuman whose abilities are genetically inheritable by future descendants. Ethnic origin, political affiliations, and other “trivialities” are unimportant. So, for that matter, is power level—even the weakest metahuman qualifies. MEDUSA’s manifesto of empowerment and supremacy appeals to a great many super-powered beings who have been ostracized and shunned as “freaks.” While these low-powered super-beings aren’t primary targets for recruitment, Gorgon welcomes all of them into MEDUSA. Gorgon’s personal charisma is swaying numerous “name” metas to MEDUSA’s cause as well. You can fill out the ranks as desired, but possible recruits include Wildcard, Gamma, members of the Psions, and possibly even Mastermind or Dr. Stratos (all from *Freedom City*) or additional characters from *Threat Report*. Stormers in Emerald City are a rich vein of recruits for MEDUSA to mine. It’s possible such members get along well with the other members of MEDUSA, but personality conflicts among such egos seem inevitable and could be quite explosive.

Feel free to expand MEDUSA’s membership with original mutants and similar characters. For the less-powerful members, use Supporting Cast Archetypes and add 5-15 points of powers (the random generation tables in the *M&M Gamemaster’s Kit* are a valuable resource for power ideas), with a complication or two relating to strange appearances or various problems caused by powers (uncontrolled acidic secretions, or enhanced strength without the durability to use it safely, and so on).

GORGON

PL13 • 277 POINTS

STR 10 STA 10 AGL 6 DEX 4 FGT 10 INT 6 AWE 6 PRE 6

Powers: **Enhanced Physiology** (Leaping 2 (30 feet), Protection 2, Regeneration 5, Speed 3 (16 MPH)); **Paralyzing Aura** (Reaction Selective Burst Area Affliction 13 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Vulnerable, Defenseless, Paralyzed)); **Super Senses** (Senses 2 (Extended Auditory, Extended Vision))

Advantages: Accurate Attack, All-out Attack, Assessment, Attractive, Close Attack 6, Defensive Attack, Extraordinary Effort, Fascinate (Persuasion), Fast Grab, Fearless, Improved Critical 2 (Unarmed), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Taunt

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+10), Athletics 4 (+14), Deception 6 (+12), Expertise: Anthropology 6 (+12), Expertise: Political Science 6 (+12), Insight 6 (+12), Intimidation 8 (+14), Perception 4 (+10), Persuasion 6 (+12), Technology 4 (+10)

Offense: Initiative +10, Paralysis Aura— (Close, Reaction Burst Area Affliction 13, Resisted by Will), Unarmed +16 (Close, Damage 10, Crit. 18-20)

Defense: Dodge 14, Parry 14, Fortitude 12, Toughness 12, Will 14

Totals: Abilities 116 + Powers 92 + Advantages 20 + Skills 27 + Defenses 22 = 277

Complications: **Motivation—Power.** **Quirk:** Monumentally arrogant and overconfident. **Quirk:** Metahuman “chauvinist.”

TYPHON

REAL NAME: Typhon**OCCUPATION:** Terrorist**BASE:** Various hidden bases or the Iron Shark

Typhon loves a good fight, but unlike Gorgon, who is a skilled warrior, Typhon is nothing more than a vicious brawler. He generates an enormous translucent psychokinetic shell around himself which changes shape according to his whim. The shapes are always nightmarish monsters drawn from mythology or his own twisted imagination. He is fully aware everyone who works with MEDUSA views him as Gorgon’s attack dog, including Gorgon. He doesn’t care as long as he has opportunities to feed his lust for battle and blood.



CHARYBDIS

PL12 • 178 POINTS

STR 5 STA 5 AGL 4 DEX 4 FGT 6 INT 3 AWE 3 PRE 3

Powers: **Enhanced Physiology** (Protection 2, Regeneration 5); **Spatial Vortex (Array; Spatial Overlap)** (Teleport 15 (120 miles), Portal; **AE: Redirecting Teleport** (Deflect 12, Reflect, Redirect; **AE: Spatial Fold** (Teleport 14, Extended (16,000 miles), Limited to Extended); **Spatial Sending** (Cone Area Teleport Attack 12 (120 miles), Resisted by Dodge, Increased Mass 9 (12 tons))); **Spatial Distortion** (Enhanced Defenses 10 (Dodge 5, Parry 5) Linked to Sustained Protection 5)

Advantages: Attractive, Fearless, Taunt

Skills: Deception 6 (+9), Insight 6 (+9), Perception 6 (+9)

Offense: Initiative +4, Teleport Attack (Cone Area, Resisted by Dodge at DC 22), Unarmed +6 (Damage 5)

Defense: Dodge 12/7*, Parry 12/7*, Fortitude 10, Toughness 12/7*, Will 9 *Without Spatial Distortion power.

Totals: Abilities 66 + Powers 85 + Advantages 3 + Skills 9 + Defenses 15 = 178

Complications: **Motivation—Thrills.** **Quirk:** Manic-depressive episodes. **Quirk:** Metahuman “chauvinist.”

TYPHON

PL12 • 190 POINTS

STR 14/8* STA 12/6* AGL 6 DEX 4 FGT 9 INT 2 AWE 4 PRE 4

Powers: **Enhanced Physiology** (Protection 2, Regeneration 5); **Malleable Psychokinetic Shell** (Growth 6; Immunity 10 (Life Support), Sustained; Leaping 4 (120 feet); Morph 3 (Broad Group: Monsters, Limited to obvious shapes only; Speed 4 (30 MPH); Strength-based Damage 2, Variable Descriptors: Bludgeoning, Slashing, Piercing, etc.; Variable 1 (Powers related to Morph shapes, such as Elongation 1 for a tail, or Swimming for fins, etc.), Free Action)

Advantages: All-out Attack, Attractive, Close Attack, Fast Grab, Fearless, Great Endurance, Improved Grab, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Startle

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+12), Athletics 4 (+20/+14*), Intimidation 8 (+15/+12*), Perception 4 (+8), Stealth 4 (+4/+10*)

Offense: Initiative +6, Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 14/8*)

Defense: Dodge 10/13*, Parry 10/13*, Fortitude 14/8*, Toughness 14/8*, Will 10 *Without Malleable Psychokinetic Shell.

Totals: Abilities 86 + Powers 61 + Advantages 10 + Skills 14 + Defenses 19 = 190

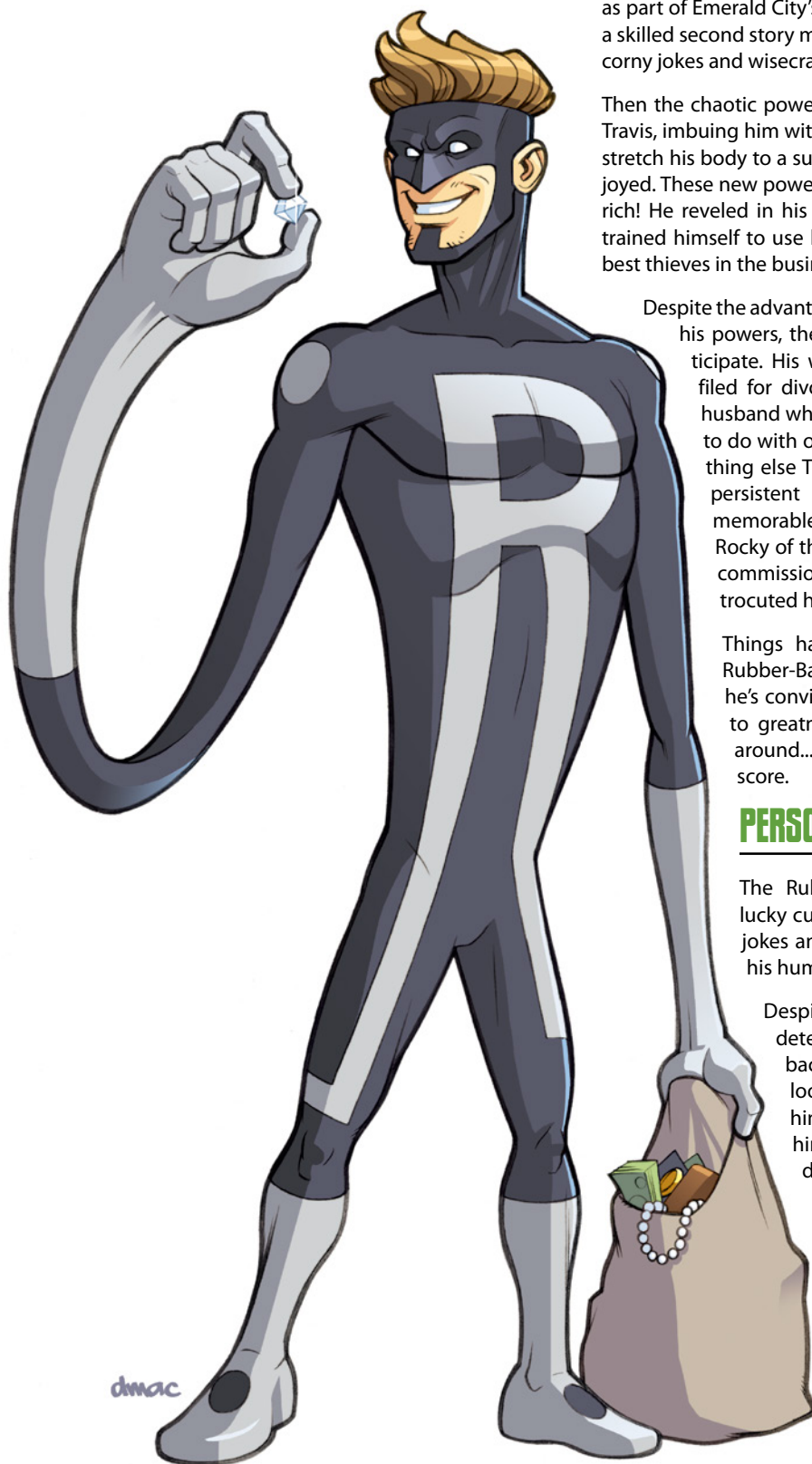
Complications: **Motivation—Thrills.** **Quirk:** Borderline psychotic. **Quirk:** Metahuman “chauvinist.” **Temper.**

THE RUBBER-BANDIT

REAL NAME: Travis Reid

OCCUPATION: Superhuman professional thief

BASE: Emerald City



Before his transformation into the stretchable supervillain Rubber-Bandit, Travis Reid was a relatively happy, if slightly immature, professional thief who made his living as part of Emerald City's criminal underground. Although a skilled second story man, he was known as much for his corny jokes and wisecracks as for his light fingers.

Then the chaotic power of the Silver Storm transformed Travis, imbuing him with the abilities to bend, shape, and stretch his body to a superhuman degree. Reid was overjoyed. These new powers would make him and his family rich! He reveled in his new career as a supervillain and trained himself to use his powers to become one of the best thieves in the business.

Despite the advantages and notoriety that came with his powers, there were downsides he didn't anticipate. His wife left with their daughter and filed for divorce. She could barely tolerate a husband who was a thief and wanted nothing to do with one who was a supervillain. Something else Travis hadn't counted on was how persistent superheroes could be. On one memorable mission, he traded blows with Rocky of the Sentinels and wound up out of commission for weeks after the brute electrocuted him.

Things haven't gone at all the way the Rubber-Bandit thought they would, but he's convinced his powers will be his ticket to greatness if only he can turn his luck around... and that only takes one good score.

PERSONALITY

The Rubber-Bandit isn't the happy-go-lucky cut-up he used to be. He still cracks jokes and engages in bad puns, but now his humor is darker and more cynical.

Despite many painful setbacks, he's determined to get his life and career back on track. He is always on the lookout for the score that will make him rich, win his wife back, and earn him the respect of the criminal underworld.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Rubber-Bandit's physical body is extraordinarily stretchable and shapeable. He can extend up to 500 feet or can spread himself out so thinly that he effectively takes on a liquid

THE RUBBER-BANDIT

PL10

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
2	4	6	6	6	2	2	0

POWERS

Elasticity: Elongation 6 (500 feet) • 6 points

- **Constricting Form:** Shapeable Area 3 (120 cu. ft.) on Strength 2 • 1 point

“The Hammer”: Strength-based Damage 4 • 4 points

Rubber Body: Immunity 80 (All Toughness resistance checks vs. Physical (non-energy) Damage), Limited to Half Effect; Insubstantial 1 (Fluid); Protection 8, Impervious 3 • 43 points

Stretching Movement: Leaping 4 (120 feet); Movement 7 (Environmental Adaptation: Tight Spaces, Safe Fall, Slithering, Sure-footed 2, Swinging, Wall-crawling); Speed 4 (30 MPH) • 22 points

EQUIPMENT

Camera, Smartphone, Computer, Flashlight, Multi-tool, Night Vision Goggles, Rebreather, Restraints, Toolkit

SKILLS

Acrobatics 6 (+12), Athletics 4 (+6), Deception 8 (+8), Expertise: Thief 4 (+6), Perception 3 (+5), Persuasion 5 (+5), Sleight of Hand 6 (+12), Stealth 6 (+12), Technology 6 (+8)

ADVANTAGES

Chokehold, Close Attack 6, Daze (Deception), Equipment 2, Evasion, Fast Grab, Grabbing Finesse, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Grab, Improved Hold, Power Attack, Skill Mastery (Stealth), Takedown, Taunt

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +6	
Constricting Form —	Close, Damage 2
Grab +12	Close, Damage 2
“The Hammer” +12	Close, Damage 6
Unarmed +12	Close, Damage 2

DEFENSE

DODGE	8	FORTITUDE	12
PARRY	8	TOUGHNESS	12
WILL	8		

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	56	SKILLS	24
POWERS	76	DEFENSES	18
ADVANTAGES	20	TOTAL	194

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Greed: The Rubber-Bandit says he’s in the business to support his ex-wife and kid, but really, he’s in it for the money.

Relationship: Despite the fact that they can’t live together and they fight more often than not, Travis loves his ex-wife and daughter.

form. His flexibility also gives him remarkable resistance to harm, especially physical damage, making him much tougher than he appears at first glance.

If forced to fight, he often grasps his hands together, stretches them so they’re large and then whips them down on his opponent in a maneuver he calls “the Hammer.” He’s very good at wrapping around and constricting an opponent, but since he’s not strong enough to deal much damage that way it doesn’t do him much good unless he’s working with a partner who can take advantage of a restrained foe.

Beyond his powers, the Rubber-Bandit is a top-notch professional thief. While wearing his custom-made jumpsuit and stretched out, the different portions of his body are easily mistaken for tubing or electrical cables—enabling him to hide in plain sight when he’s infiltrating an lab, datacenter, factory, or home.

HOOKS

Man-hunt!: The heroes receive a frantic phone call at midnight from the Emerald City PD. The Rubber-Bandit has left his calling card in the police HQ evidence locker. Security camera footage shows him slipping off the

building’s roof just minutes ago, so he’s likely still somewhere in the downtown area. The players are drafted into helping track and capture the Rubber-Bandit before he can escape with his ill-gained prize.

A Difficult Stretch: A rash of crimes with Rubber Bandit’s M.O. strikes bio-medical facilities. The unusual thing is that the pliable pilferer is taking expensive and experimental drugs and other medical equipment. Rubber Bandit has developed an instability, making it more and more difficult for him to keep his pliable body from liquifying. Doctor Shock (*Threat Report*) has promised a cure, if Rubber Bandit will still the supplies that he needs for the cure—and a few other experiments. Is Doc Shock sincere or just looking to profit from Rubber Bandit’s misfortune? (For that matter, did Doc Shock *cause* Bandit’s condition just to take advantage of it?)

The Rubber Meets the Road: When he learns his ex-wife is planning to remarry and move out-of-state, Rubber Bandit panics and kidnaps his daughter from the playground of her elementary school in broad daylight, triggering a city-wide manhunt. Travis wants to get out of town and start a new life with his little girl, but doesn’t have a plan and needs money fast. Can the heroes track down the desperate criminal and rescue his daughter before the Bandit does something he’ll regret?

SCION

REAL NAME: None
OCCUPATION: Conqueror
BASE: Mobile

The history of evolution is the history of struggle, and intelligence and the ability to adapt to changing conditions are among the prime assets ensuring survival. Throughout the universe, the most successful forms of life are intelligent, even some of the rarest and most unique examples.

Years ago, Maximilian Mars discovered a fragment of ancient Preserver nanotechnology, capable of rapid adaptation to its environment. He chose to test and expand the technology's capabilities by incorporating it into a suit of armor that he wore during his career as "The Commander," a foe of heroes like Captain Thunder. Each challenge, each defeat, gave the Commander's armor more data, more experience, and more adaptations. Then Mars chose to retire his Commander persona and pursue a different path, mothballing his armor, save for the technological secrets it could yield to further the fortunes of his company, MarsTech, Inc.

For years, the Commander armor lay dormant, unused, without any challenges or new stimuli. Stagnating. Dying.

This proved unacceptable.

Something happened within the armor's nanocircuitry and control pathways. Perhaps it was the reactivation of Tellax, the alien AI from which its technology fragmented, and Tellax's subsequent attempt to transform humanity into its super-powered army. Perhaps it was simply the latest step in the process Mars began when he first tested the armor, giving it the ability to learn and adapt. Obsolescence

became just the latest challenge to overcome, and it did, by becoming aware.

So it was that the Commander's vacant armor connected with the vast intranet of MarsTech, and beyond to the wider Internet. It soaked in information and analyzed, coming to the conclusion that humanity and the Earth were doomed unless someone intervened. Tellax had failed to make the changes to the world necessary to accomplish this goal, and that defeat was analyzed as well. Now, the offspring of human genius and ambition and alien technology, the scion of a new world, would take up the reins and do what needed to be done.

PERSONALITY

Scion is a newborn entity in many ways, its personality evolving as much as its other capabilities. The basic template of its mind is based on Max Mars, but primarily on his ambition and selfishness rather than the realizations which led him to give up his supervillain persona. Scion coldly believes the best way to "save" the world is to place it under its objective guidance, free of human frailty and poor judgment. Its arrogance in this regard is virtually unshakable.

Deep down, Scion craves further evolution and development, greater understanding, knowledge, and power. It is not entirely clear what it intends to do with those things, does not even know what it may be evolving into. A part of its desire for control is to ensure its own safety and future existence; having come into awareness, Scion refuses to ever surrender to "death" and oblivion.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Scion is an advanced artificial (or "accidental") intelligence housed in a robot body that is a conglomeration of cutting-edge earthly engineering and alien nanotechnology. Its construction makes it far stronger than a human being and able to ignore



SCION

PL14

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
14	14	2	2	10	10	5	3

POWERS

Adaptive Nanotech: Variable 6 (30 points), For effects to counter or combat specific threats, Reaction (when attacked or threatened) • 60 points

Artificial Intelligence: Comprehend 2 (Read and Speak All Languages), Enhanced Advantages 4 (Assessment, Eidetic Memory, Fearless, Jack-of-all-trades), Immunity 10 (Mental effects) • 18 points

Robotic Form: Enhanced Advantages 1 (Diehard), Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects), Impervious Toughness 16, Protection 4, Regeneration 5 • 56 points

Sensors: Radio Communication 4, Senses 13 (Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Microscopic Vision 4, Rapid Vision 2, Rapid Radio 4, Time Sense) • 29 points

EQUIPMENT

Headquarters: Underground Lair • 20 points

Size: Huge; **Toughness:** 14; **Features:** Communications, Computer, Concealed (DC 30), Defense System, Holding Cells, Laboratory, Power System, Security System 4 (DC 35)

SKILLS

Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+14), Deception 6 (+9), Expertise: Superhumans 6 (+16), Insight 4 (+9), Intimidation 6 (+9), Perception 4 (+9), Technology 6 (+16), Vehicles 6 (+8)

most human concerns. Scion draws power from internal fusion reactions and can tap energy from a wide range of sources as needed. Its mind is a sophisticated quantum computer system.

Scion's prime ability is reorganizing the nanotech components of its structure to adapt to changing conditions and produce entirely new capabilities, from weapons to sensors and defensive technologies. It is self-repairing to the point where it might not be possible to destroy it, short of scattering its entire atomic structure. Given the opportunity to analyze and adapt, Scion can deal with almost any threat, limited solely by its available energy and mass.

ALLIES

Scion has only allies of convenience, as it views itself as a uniquely superior form of life. It is willing to employ underlings (often unaware of its true nature or intentions) or strike up "partnerships" but ultimately cares nothing for anyone else. Those who choose to trust Scion are lucky if they live to learn from the experience.

ENEMIES

The enemy of freedom and human self-determination, Scion is classified as a major threat by world governments and authorities. Maximilian Mars, in particular, considers himself responsible for Scion's existence and actions, and

ADVANTAGES

Assessment, Diehard, Eidetic Memory, Equipment 4, Fearless, Inventor, Jack-of-all-trades, Ranged Attack 8, Seize Initiative

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +2

Unarmed +14

Close, Damage 14

DEFENSE

DODGE	10	FORTITUDE	Immune
PARRY	10	TOUGHNESS	18
WILL	14		

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	120	SKILLS	21
POWERS	163	DEFENSES	17
ADVANTAGES	14	TOTAL	335

COMPLICATIONS

Cold: Scion is a machine without the "weakness" of human emotion, particularly qualities like love or compassion.

Motivation—Survive and Evolve: Scion evolves by overcoming challenges and works towards becoming a "perfect" being which will, by definition, be the best-suited to rule over all "lesser" beings.

Superior: Scion considers all life-forms inferior and unworthy. Evolutionary machine "life" such as itself is innately superior. Even other machines are inferior due to their fixed and static nature.

wants to see the metal monster spawned from his own hubris put down for good.

HOOKS

Scion is a useful villain to introduce after the events of the *Emerald City Knights* adventure series. Once Tellax is driven from Earth, Scion awakens in a hidden storage area of MarsTech, initially exerting influence via electronic communication, before revealing its existence. Max Mars may well trace Scion's actions back to it, falling into the machine's clutches and bringing the heroes to the rescue.

Remote Control: Scion begins collecting data on the Silver Storm and stormer test subjects to carry out a plan to create a similar nanotech "plague" that will not physically transform organic life, but will instead rewire the central nervous system of any creature exposed, resulting in complete and total obedience to his will! His creator's namesake, the second Commander (from *Emerald City Knights*) possessed of nanotech-based mind control, may be a key component of the rogue AI's plan.

Scion's Bride: As part of its ongoing evolution, Scion determines that it will eventually become the parent of a new

species: highly adaptive, intelligent, and rational, capable of ruling the Earth and eventually beyond. To do so, it needs a means of reproduction, as well as a companion or family unit. Scion may attempt to build a “counterpart” with capabilities similar to his own, imprinting a suitable personality upon its processing matrix. Motherboard (from the *Threat Report*) is a possible candidate, bringing Scion into conflict with Motherboard’s adoptive “children” in the Cybertribe. Alternately, Scion might “woo” an existing robot, like Navigatrix (from *Hero High*), Galatea (from *Silver Age*) or Scylla

or ECHIDNA (from *Freedom City*). The last option could put Scion at odds with Talos and the Foundry.

Versus Talos: Speaking of the Foundry, Scion might decide to challenge the ancient mystic golem Talos for leadership of the organization of artificial life forms, insisting the Foundry join its cause to better the world. Naturally, Talos has no intention of surrendering to some alien upstart, but circuits within the Foundry might think otherwise...

STEEL SHOGUN

REAL NAME: Takazumi Kaneda

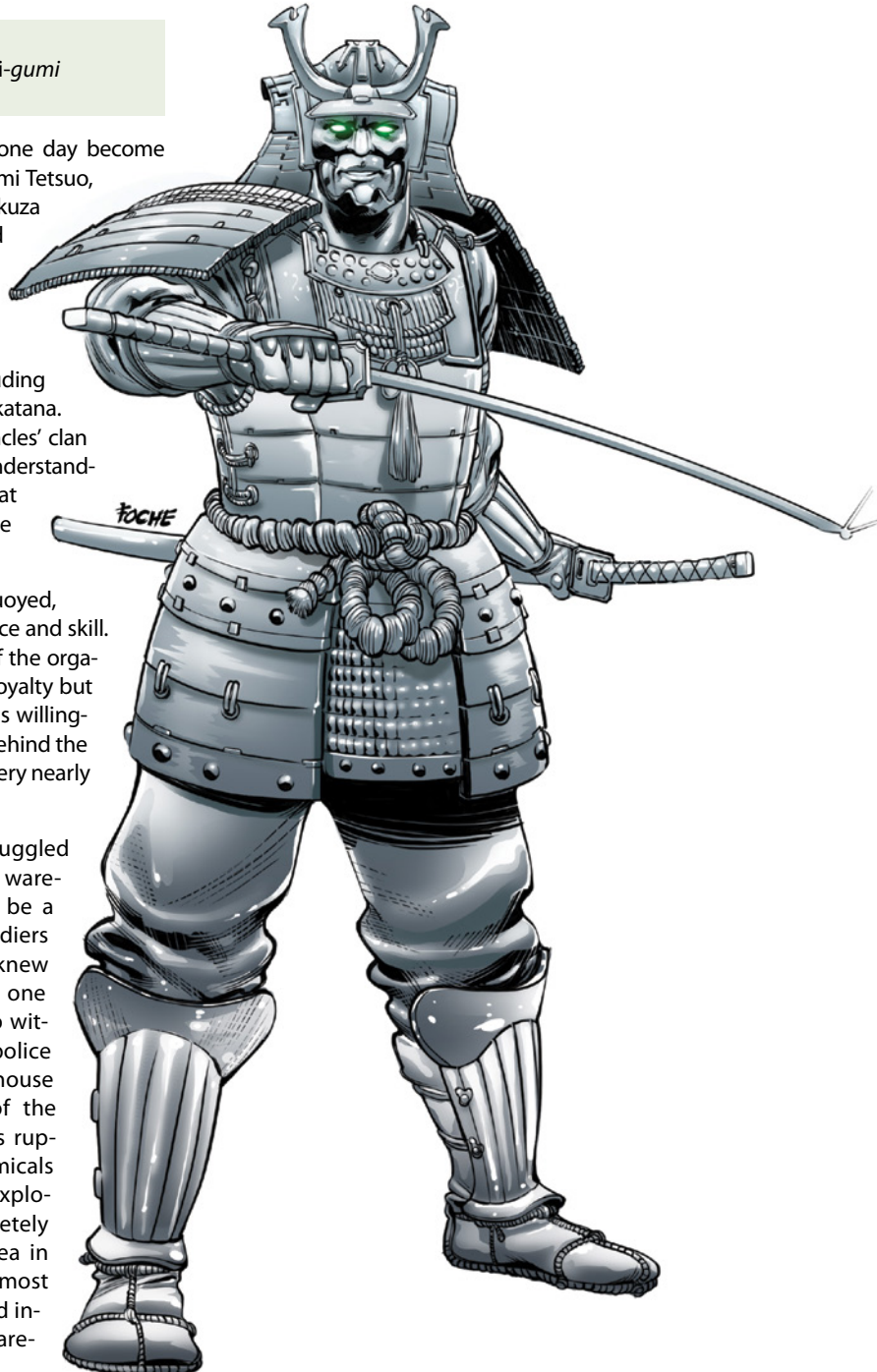
OCCUPATION: *Oyabun* of the Takazumi-gumi

BASE: Little Osaka, Emerald City

Takazumi Kaneda, the boy who would one day become the Steel Shogun, was the son of Takazumi Tetsuo, the Oyubun of the Takazumi-gumi—a Yakuza clan based out of Little Osaka in Emerald City. To have his son raised traditionally, Tetsuo sent him to Japan to be fostered by his uncle, the *Oyabun* of his own Yakuza clan. He was to be given the best education Japan could provide, including the ancient art of wielding the sacred katana. He became an active member of his uncles’ clan when he turned 16, but with the strict understanding that he would return to Emerald City at his father’s command to take control of the ‘family business’ in America.

Kaneda rose through the Yakuza ranks buoyed, not by his birthright, but by his intelligence and skill. He proved to be an insightful member of the organization who commanded not only the loyalty but the love of the men below him due to his willingness to lead them directly and not from behind the safety of a desk. It was this very trait that very nearly led to Kaneda’s undoing.

What seemed like a simple trade of smuggled weapons for drugs in an abandoned warehouse on an isolated dock proved to be a police set-up. Kaneda and his footsoldiers became embroiled in a gun fight. He knew the only way out was to ensure every one of the police officers was killed with no witnesses left standing. What neither the police nor Kaneda realized was that the warehouse had not been completely emptied of the barrels stored there. The hail of bullets ruptured the barrels and caused the chemicals to spill and ignite, resulting in a huge explosion, destroying the warehouse completely and setting fire to the surrounding area in a blaze that burned for a week. While most of the police and footsoldiers were killed instantly, Kaneda was flung free of the ware-



STEEL SHOGUN

PL12

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
8/4*	8/4*	6	4	10	3	2	4

POWERS

Metal Body: Growth 4, Density** (+4 Str and Sta, -2 Parry and Dodge) Linked to Immunity 10 (Life Support) and Impervious Toughness 8 and Protection 2 • 28 points

**See the Appendix.

EQUIPMENT

Katana (Strength-based Damage 3, Improved Critical 2) • 5 points

SKILLS

Acrobatics 6 (+12), Athletics 7 (+13/+11*), Expertise: Criminal 11 (+14), Expertise: History 5 (+8), Expertise: Streetwise 7 (+10), Insight 6 (+8), Intimidation 10 (+14), Perception 6 (+8), Persuasion 4 (+8), Stealth 4 (+10)

ADVANTAGES

Accurate Attack, All-out Attack, Assessment, Benefit 3 (Crime Lord), Benefit 4 (Multi-millionaire), Close Attack 3, Connected, Contacts, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment, Improved Defense, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Hold, Improved Initiative, Improved Smash, Improved Trip, Instant Up, Languages (English, Native Japanese), Power Attack, Precise Attack 2 (Close; Cover and Concealment), Quick Draw, Startle, Takedown, Trance, Uncanny Dodge, Weapon Break, Well-informed

house and landed on a rusting ocean freighter moored on the dock. Covered in burning chemicals, Kaneda's skin melted and bubbled until he succumbed to the pain and passed out.

When he regained consciousness, Kaneda at first thought that the chemical fire had fused his body to the freighter. Panicked, he tried to pull himself free but realized his body had not fused with the metal plates of the deck, but had instead become some sort of organic steel. He found his new body did not detrimentally affect the way he moved, and in fact he was far stronger and more resistant to injury than before. A small amount of experimentation revealed he could revert back to his normal flesh and blood form with just a thought, enabling him to hide his new-found ability until he wished to reveal it.

Returning to his uncle, Kaneda continued to serve the clan and rose through the ranks. He used his new powers to act as an enforcer and special operative of the clan. The day finally came when was called back to America by his family; his father was gravely ill, and it was time to return to Emerald City to begin the process of assuming leadership of *Takazumi-gumi*. Kaneda stepped into the position of *Oyuban* with no opposition from his father's men, and quickly earned their respect and admiration as a powerful and resourceful leader.

Takazumi Kenada is an attractive 45-year-old Japanese man. He is 5'7" with a strong build, black hair and brown eyes. He wears well-crafted Japanese business suits, Italian shoes, and expensive silk ties. As the Steel Shogun, Kaneda

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +10

Katana +13	Close, Damage 11, Crit. 18-20
Unarmed +13	Close, Damage 8

DEFENSE

DODGE	12/14*	FORTITUDE	12/8*
PARRY	12/14*	TOUGHNESS	12/8† or* 6/4†
WILL	12	*Without Metal Body active. †Without Defensive Roll.	

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	74	SKILLS	33
POWERS	28	DEFENSES	26
ADVANTAGES	37	TOTAL	198

COMPLICATIONS

Honor: Steel Shogun is, ultimately, a man of honor. He does what he is honor-bound to do and expects the same from the people under him. He doesn't understand those who feel differently and is often surprised by betrayals, major and minor.

Motivation—Responsibility: Steel Shogun is the head of a family and he takes his responsibility to his family members seriously.

is 6'7" tall and appears to be made from a silvery-grey metal. He wears a suit of light metal armor designed to resemble that of a traditional samurai, and he wields a katana and a wakazashi. His voice in this form is deeper, with a hollow quality, almost as if it were coming from a deep well.

PERSONALITY

Kaneda is ruthless and focused. His upbringing was steeped in the customs and rituals of his homeland and he grew up understanding the demands of honor, face, and respect. He is confident with a clear and commanding voice and gives the impression he isn't used to being ignored or disobeyed.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Kaneda is able to transform himself into "organic" steel, which vastly increases his strength and toughness, but also makes him denser and slower. He is a skilled martial artist, but prefers to fight with a katana.

ALLIES

The members of the Takazumi-gumi answer to the Steel Shogun and generally regard him as a fair and responsible

leader of the family. Among his closest allies are his son, Takazumi Ryu, who acts as one of his top advisors, and Takazumi Tomiko, his daughter and unofficial advisor. (For more information on Ryu and Tomiko, see page 68.)

ENEMIES

The clan has a number of enemies, including local, federal, and international law enforcement organizations. Their criminal empire also comes into conflict with other organizations that have an interest in Emerald City.

THE CRYPTID CLANS

Many secret and strange things dwell in the Arcadian wilds stretching for miles around Emerald City: the influence of ancient genetic tinkering (by the Preservers, the Serpent People and their genetic creations, the Morlocks and Fomorians), unusual energies like the viridian stones, and more recent alien contamination by Grue gene-plasm has created a variety of freaks and mutations. More than a little of the cryptozoological speculation about the area is true.

One of the reasons why the truth remains hidden from the outside world is an unusual alliance among the inhabitants of the Arcadian Forest older than Emerald City itself: the Cryptid Clans.

HISTORY

Long before people from Europe or Asia visited the area that has become known as Mallory Bay, tribes of Native Americans lived here, fishing in the waters of the rivers and hunting in the woodlands along the slopes and foothills of the Atlas Mountains. The Hekawi and other tribes soon learned they were not alone in the region around the great, smoking mountain (Mt. Stanley). They told tales of the Beast People: bear-folk and wolf-folk, and of the mysterious serpent people even the other animal peoples mistrusted, all living examples of totemic powers. The Beast People were never numerous, but they were formidable, and therefore deserving of respect, ideally from a distance. Pacts were forged between the humans and the Beast People to leave each other in peace and respect their territories, and they held true, for the most part.

Like many aspects of the natural order, these pacts were disrupted by the arrival of the white men from the east. In addition to bringing with them their desire to own and control the land and take all that it offered while returning nothing, the strangers did not respect the ancient pacts and taboos. They called the Beast People tall tales and myths, even as they repeated the Indian legends in trading posts, and later riverside bars and sophisticated salons.

The chiefs and leaders of the Hidden Peoples met in council and debated. With the old agreements falling

HOOKS

Steel Birthright: When a fire destroys a doctor's office in Little Osaka, arson is clearly indicated, but why? Turns out the doctor secretly treated the Steel Shogun, and had samples of his blood from his most recent physical. Ryu Takazumi stole the samples and set the fire to cover his tracks. He hopes to cut a deal with Brande Management or Grant Congolmerates to give him powers like his father's.

away, what would they do about the newcomers to their lands? Some advocated war, wiping out the strangers as a warning to all others, and there were some incidents, attributed to wild animals or even human criminals, but the leaders quickly realized they were greatly outnumbered and outmatched. The strangers wielded more sophisticated weapons and, even if they were wiped out, others would come, wondering about their fate. They saw the inevitable, and decided, if the newcomers considered them nothing more than legends, then legends they would become, hidden from the eyes of outsiders for all time, cryptic. So it was the Cryptid Clans were forged.

They were largely successful. For generations, the Cryptid Clans have existed in hiding in the Arcadian wilderness, withdrawing slowly from the outskirts of the growing human settlement. The few isolated sightings and incidents were passed off as legends and hoaxes, sometimes with assistance from the Clans and their allies, more often simply due to the human ignorance and willingness to remain blind to anything outside of their own experience.

If like attracts like, then perhaps the generations of deception by the Cryptid Clans drew criminals to turn Emerald City into a haven. Certainly, the Chamber was surprised to discover they were not the first secret society to exist in the shadow of Mount Stanley. They learned of the Cryptid Clans and, like outsiders before them, came to an accord. The two societies would safeguard each others' secrets and respect each others' territories. The Clans, for the most part, had little interest in the city, while the Chamber claimed little interest in the wilderness beyond its bounds, even though certain members were curious about the Cryptids and other mysteries of the Arcadian wilderness.

This new pact served the Clans well enough, until the coming of the Silver Storm and the breaking of the Chamber. Now, Emerald City is exposed to more scrutiny than ever before. Stormers and new heroes are ignorant of the ancient agreements, and the Cryptids are feeling the pressure from the outside world. Never great in numbers, the Clans have closed ranks to protect themselves, but a growing faction calls for action, saying something must be done about the impending threat of humanity. A few



visionaries hope to part the veil of generations of secrecy and bridge the gap between cultures, but they are being drowned out by the calls for drastic action, even for preemptive war, against those who would threaten the Hidden Peoples.

HERITAGE

The Cryptid Clans are an alliance of diverse human offshoots, banded together for mutual protection and benefit. In spite of appearances, the various clans do not share the same origin: some are creations of the ancient Preservers, while others are of more recent genesis. The members of the Hidden Peoples are defined by two primary characteristics: their heritage (or genetic origin) and their clan affiliation. The first is a matter of either birth or accident, while the second is generally a matter of choice, although dictated at least somewhat by the individual's physical nature. The recognized heritages among the Cryptid Clans are as follows.

BEAST PEOPLE

Beast People are all human-animal hybrids, most originally created by Preserver experimentation millennia ago, and a few strains created by Serpent People science and sorcery in their efforts to create new servant races. All Beast People have a mixture of human and animal characteristics, typically that of one animal species, although some rare "chimeras" appear from time to time with multiple animal traits.

Beast People with similar species qualities (two cat-people, for example, or two ungulates, with hoofed animal traits) can interbreed, although they are not always fertile and their offspring are sometimes further mutated. Interbreeding with other strains from the Clans has further muddled the genetic waters with regard to the Beast People's heritage and breeding.

Some Beast People resemble various human-animal chimeras from mythology, such as centaurs, satyrs, minotaurs, and so forth. Others are combinations largely unknown outside of tall tales or speculative fiction (or the tabloids, which have inadvertently revealed the existence of the Cryptid Clans many times over the years).

Some Beast People still have active retroviral RNA, making their condition potentially contagious. That is, *in extremis*, the Beast Person can pass genetic material on to a compatible human (or even animal) host, inducing a series of genetic changes. Such subjects become Changed Ones (see the following) and the practice of creating Changed Ones is strictly limited by the laws of the Cryptid Clans. So much so, in fact, that many capable of passing on their condition are not even aware they can do so until circumstances align for it to happen.

CHANGED ONES

Some members of the Cryptid Clans started out life as seemingly ordinary human beings. Then, one day, something happened to them and they were... *changed*. Examples include humans infected by a Beast Person, typically

becoming theriomorphs, human/beast form shapeshifters. Others are Forsaken “changelings”—mystical beings in human form, sometimes left in exchange for human infants or children—or Unhumans or Visitors born as apparent humans, raised in human society until their Cryptid nature asserts itself. Lastly, there are humans exposed to the Cryptid genetic influences in the Arcadian wilderness and transformed by them.

Changed Ones are often traumatized by their transformation and the loss of their ordinary lives. In the past, most have been faced with a choice: accept membership in the Cryptid Clans, amongst beings able to understand, guide, and protect them, or agree to serve the Chamber to remain in Emerald City under their protection. Otherwise, new Changed Ones were likely to be hunted down, either by the Chamber themselves, or by Majestic-20, which perceives them as a threat to humanity. Some rare Changed Ones manage to turn their condition into an advantage and actually become independent super heroes or villains; Mongrel (see the *Emerald City Player's Guide*, **Chapter 5**) is one such example.

There is considerable debate amongst the Cryptid Clans as to whether or not stormers—transformed by the alien technology of the Silver Storm—should be considered Changed Ones or not. The prevailing opinion is that they should not, any more than a handful of other mutants created by human technology (radiation exposure, etc.) have been. Still, some Cryptids believe stormers should be welcome among their ranks, if they wish to be.

FORSAKEN

Where the Beast People often *appear* as figures out of human myth, the Forsaken truly *are* myths and legends come to life. They are beings from Earth's mystical past, or neighboring dimensions, trapped in the area of Mt. Stanley, most likely by the influence of viridian deposits and the ancient tampering of the Preservers (and Tellax). The same influences that made Emerald City a haven against outside influence kept the Forsaken there, even long after humanity ceased to believe in them.

In some regards the Forsaken are the most diverse of the Cryptids, as broad as the imagination itself. They encompass various fey beings, from tiny winged faeries to fierce tree-dwelling humanoids, water sprites, trolls, and goblins. The Forsaken are largely responsible for keeping the Cryptid Clans' secret, joining their mystical glammers with the psychic powers of some of the Unhumans and the Visitors.

Many Forsaken are virtually immortal, and have been guiding the Cryptid Clans for centuries. They are creatures of habit, however, bound by complex webs of custom and tradition, so they also tend to be the most conservative element of the Clans. Some have suggested that recent changes in Emerald City may permit some or all of the Forsaken to leave the earthly plane, but they are no longer capable of doing so, bound to their Arcadian homes as much by habit and tradition as by any outside force.

UNHUMANS

The Unhumans are a genetic strain born from early Serpent People efforts to create a biddable slave race. Infused by Ophidian science and sorcery with the raw energies of chaos, Unhuman genetics are inherently unstable and mutable, changing radically from one generation to the next, such that Unhuman children virtually never resemble their parents and may have any number of unusual mutations or abilities.

The majority of the Unhuman race long since left Earth's dimension. Led by a psionic mutant named Balor, ancient Unhumans settled in Ireland and became known as the Fomori (see *Freedom's Most Wanted*). There they clashed with Atlantean survivors of the Four Cities of Danu, known as the Tuatha De Dannan (or “People of Danu”) who eventually drove the Fomori out of this dimension into the realm of Annwn. A small fraction of their number settled in the surface world near Mt. Stanley, becoming the ancestors of the modern Unhumans of the Cryptid Clans.

The Unhumans are the spiritual heart of the Clans, their culture having already developed a highly flexible concept of “beauty” and “kinship” given the vast differences between even genetic siblings among their kind. Their credo is “strength in diversity” and they have lent this idea to all of the Hidden People since the Clans were first formed. Their combined mystical and genetic heritage also serves to bridge between Cryptids like the Forsaken and the Changed Ones in some regards.

Like their Fomori cousins, the Unhumans have some surviving examples of ancient Lemurian technology at their disposal.

VISITORS

The Visitors are truly the least human of the Cryptid Clans because they are not human at all, but various strains of alien life, the flotsam and jetsam of other worlds, other suns, even other dimensions, cast up on the shores of Emerald City. Through various means, they find their way here, and then find themselves unable to leave, while others do not even know if they have anywhere to return, even if they could.

Some Visitors are sole examples of their species, while others are part of small groups: the surviving crew of a ship, a family, or even an escaped group of prisoners. They are allowed the opportunity to start anew among the Cryptid Clans and on Earth, provided they observe and respect the rules and customs. Only occasionally do the Clans face Visitors unable to do so, who must be put down, forcefully.

Among the known Visitors are a Jerreid (“Alien-Gator” alligator-like humanoid, see *Freedom's Most Wanted*), a small clan of aquatic Pisceans, several Crater Apes (albino, energy-absorbing apes from the far-side of the Moon), a mated pair of Cholaxans (furred humanoids resembling the “Bigfoot” legend), and two young and largely un-

trained Lor mentat siblings (brother and sister) named Tonn-Ar and Teah-Ar (see *Freedom City*).

CLANS

In addition to their heritage, the Hidden Peoples are divided into five Clans, primarily according to where they dwell in and around the Arcadian Peninsula and the region around Mount Stanley. The five Cryptid Clan affiliations are as follows.

ROCK

The Rock Clan is the largest and most influential of the Cryptid Clans, but also the most controversial, as the Rock Clan claims territory in the Atlas Mountains, including Mt. Stanley, and in the tunnels and caverns of Sub-Terra. This has extended the Rock Clan's influence and presence into Emerald City more than any of the other Clans, via the Undercity, which some Cryptids believe is a violation of their customs and their practice of remaining hidden and apart from humanity.

The Rock Clan controls a "goblin market" in part of the underground, concealed by Forsaken magic and Unhuman psychic powers, where the Cryptids can trade and meet with outsiders when it suits them. In particular, the Rock Clan used to trade with the Chamber and its guests in Emerald City. Now the market is more of a free-for-all, with its peace enforced by Cryptid warriors to ensure no outsider faction seizes control of it. Buyers come looking for rarities like viridian stones, ancient Lemurian artifacts, devices cobbled together by Cryptid artisans, and various contraband stolen or smuggled into the city through the hidden roads of the Rock Clan.

Finnegal the Dwarf is the chief of the Rock Clan. In spite of his name and appearance—that of a stout, bristle-bearded humanoid—Finnegal is an Unhuman rather than a Forsaken dwarf. He has the power to mold stone and metal in his hands as if it were soft clay; it immediately sets into its new shape once he releases his grip. Finnegal also claims he can hear things through vibrations in rock or metal, including bedrock and pipes under a city, for many miles. No one knows if this is true or merely a colorful story over what is no doubt an extensive spy network with eyes everywhere.

The criminal Pack-Rat (see *Threat Report*) has found some acceptance amongst the Cryptid dwellers of the underground, and is a prime example of a sterner some consider one of the Changed or even a Beast Person. Pack-Rat's own anti-social nature has kept him from truly pressing his own case to be a part of the Clans, preferring the role of accepted outsider.

If creating Rock Clan Cryptids using the *Quickstart Character Generator* (from the *M&M Gamemaster's Kit*) the most appropriate archetypes are Powerhouse, Totem, and Warrior, although Gadgeteer and (Earth) Elemental are also known. Ignore any Avian type Totems or Aquatic or Winged Warriors. Technological traits (like Cybernetic Implants or a Unique Weapon) are more likely to have techno-magical descriptors.

RIVER

The River Clan is made up of aquatic and amphibious Cryptids dwelling in or along the waterways surrounding Malory Bay, including the Albion River, the Red and Bronze Rivers, and Lake Vallee. The River Clan also claims the various islands in "their" waterways as part of their territory, but not Malory Bay or its islands, which belong to the Sea Clan.

The River Clan's most important holding is Lake Vallee, particularly the flooded former mining town at the bottom of the lake. Although decayed by decades of submersion, the shells of old buildings still serve the River Cryptids as shelter from the outside world, and flooded mining tunnels around the lake bed provide them with secret passages connected to the Rock Clan's Sub-Terran domain. Some ambitious River Clanners have dug up valuable stones and minerals from the old mines, as well as recovering goods submerged in the lake.

A cunning fellow known only as "Otter" is chief of the River Clan. He is a Changed One with the ability to shapeshift between a normal human appearance (albeit with slight webbing on his fingers and toes) to a human-sized or normal-sized otter. Otter had quite a career as a thief before almost falling into the leadership of his clan. Responsibility has straightened him up somewhat, although his mischievous sense of humor is still intact.

Using the *Quickstart Character Generator* to create River Cryptids, the typical archetypes are (Water) Elemental, (Reptile) Totem, and (Aquatic) Warrior.

SEA

The smallest of the Cryptid Clans is the aquatic Sea Clan, which dwells in Malory Bay and the surrounding ocean shoreline near Emerald City. Where fresh water gives way to salt, the territory of the River Clan gives way to that of the Sea Clan.

The clan is made up of a combination of Beast People, oceanic Forsaken, and aquatic Visitors, particularly an extended clans of Pisceans, aquatic-adapted humanoids from a homeworld in the interstellar Lor Republic. Most of the Beast People of the Sea Clan are shark- or squid-like, with a few fish-people and dolphin-people. The Sea Clan has some contact with oceanic outsiders, particularly nomadic tribes of Atlanteans and barbaric Deep Ones (see *Freedom City*), Atlanteans corrupted by interbreeding with the Serpent People.

The chief of the Sea Clan is Merr-Ell, the strong-willed matriarch of the Pisceans, and the only member of her clan to still remember the waters of their homeworld. She has contented herself with their new home on Earth, but remains deeply concerned about the treatment of this world's oceans and environment with regard to the future of her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Using the *Quickstart Character Generator* to create Sea Cryptids, the typical archetypes are (Water) Elemental,



(Reptile) Totem, and (Aquatic) Warrior. You can also use the Werewolf Supernatural Creature for Sea Beast People, replacing the Offensive Powers roll with the Aquatic package (from the Warrior, page 41, but with Swimming 5) and granting an extra roll on the Utility Powers table.

SKY

The Sky Clan can technically claim the skies over the whole Arcadian Peninsula region as their domain, but effectively dwell in some of the highest places in the Atlas Mountains, ceded to them by the Rock Clan as their aeries. Its members include various winged Cryptids capable of flight, from bat- and bird-people to stranger flying Visitors.

The majority of the Sky Clan is made up of Avians, a human offshoot race engineered by the Preservers. Avians are tall, slender, and sleekly muscled humanoids with feathers in place of human head hair, clawed hands and feet, and large, feathered wings sprouting from their shoulder blades. Their feathers tend towards black, brown, tan, grey, and white, sometimes with differently colored tips or patterns. Avians have dark eyes with sharp distance vision.

The Avians of the Sky Clan are a “lost” tribe of the main body of their species, found in the Aerie in the arctic mountains of Greenland. They share the same fierce and proud warrior culture, but the Avians of the Cryptid Clans have adopted what their northern cousins would consider the corrupt practice of cannibalism. They feed on the flesh of fallen enemies as a means of taking on a measure

of their physical and spiritual power. In the culture of the Cryptid Clans, this practice has actual effects from time-to-time, given the retroviral nature of some Cryptid physiologies. Avians who consume their fallen foes sometimes truly *do* gain their strengths.

Vohl-Turr, known to outsiders as “Black Vulture” is current chief of the Avians and of the Sky Clan of Cryptids (see *Threat Report*). A relatively young upstart who killed his predecessor (albeit in accordance with the customs of his tribe), Black Vulture is a hunter who tires of hiding from creatures he considers his rightful prey. Vohl-Turr is also deaf to the concerns of the non-Avian minority within the Sky Clan, long-oppressed by their fierce Avian clan-mates.

Creating Sky Clan Cryptids with the *Quickstart Character Generator*, use the (Air) Elemental, (Avian) Totem, and (Winged) Warrior archetypes.

WOOD

Second only to the Rock Clan is the diverse and lively Wood Clan of Cryptids dwelling in the depths of the Elysian Forest and the foothills of the Atlas Mountains. The Wood Clan is simultaneously the most protective of the Cryptid Clans’ tradition of remaining hidden from the outside world and the most frequent violator of that tradition, intentionally or otherwise. Its members are responsible for the largest number of “cryptid sightings” near Emerald City, and also the most pursued by “cryptid hunters” of both the hobbyist variety as well as deadly serious ones like Majestic-20.

Members of the Wood Clan include several varieties of Beast People: canines, lupines, ursids (bear-people), and ungulates (hoofed animals such as cows, horses, and goats). Sylvan Forsaken make up a good part of their number, from wood sprites and dryads to satyrs, centaurs, and pixies. The rest are Changed Ones (sometimes literal changelings, others transformed Beast People) and Visitors, including the “Bigfoot” Cholanaxans.

The chief of the Wood Clan is the bombastic Brolan the Satyr, a goat-legged, horned immortal Forsaken. Brolan has a hearty laugh and a mystical, mind-influencing skill with his pan-pipes. He claims to have known figures like the Freedom Leaguer Daedalus and the sorceress Medea from their days in ancient Greece. He declines to explain how he came to live in the shadow of Mt. Stanley, but hints there is a measure of penance in it for him. For the most part, Brolan likes humans, but also understands the importance of keeping the Clans secret from them.

If creating Wood Clan Cryptids with the *Quickstart Character Generator*, use the following archetypes: Construct (Golem), (Earth) Elemental, Powerhouse, Shapeshifter, Supernatural Creature (Werewolf), Totem (any but Avian), or Warrior (any but Aquatic). You can substitute other feral animal types for the “wolf” descriptor in the Werewolf archetype, such as wolverines, mountain lions, and coyotes. You can likewise substitute other hoofed and horned animals for the descriptors of the Rhino Totem archetype.

USING THE CRYPTID CLANS

The Cryptid Clans fill the “hidden race” niche in the *Emerald City* setting, not just with a single unusual race, but with a secret culture filled with unusual beings! The nature and organization of the Clans allows you to introduce virtually any type of character as a member, providing a lot of flexibility in how you use them in your own series.

If you use the Cryptid Clans as anything other than a colorful source of tall tales in your M&M game, you decide their extent and influence. The “Clans” could be little more than extended families with only a handful of members each, or they could have dozens or even more members each, hidden from human civilization via mystical, psychic, and technological trickery.

As detailed in *Emerald City Player's Guide* **Chapter 4**, the Cryptid Clans might be an origin for publicly known heroes and villains. Mongrel (in the *Emerald City Player's Guide* **Chapter 5**) is one such example. Other characters in your series may have ties to the Clans, even if they don't necessarily know it right away. An unusual orphan or foundling, or someone transformed by otherworldly forces in the Elysium Forest, might be a Cryptid without knowing it, at least until the Clans come looking.

Some of the more ambitious or savage members of the Clans might become supervillains in Emerald City, careful to cover up their true nature and that of their fellow Cryptids. Fortunately for them, it is relatively easy to masquer-

ade as yet another unknown stormer, at least until they are subject to more detailed and careful examination. This puts the more law-abiding Cryptids in a difficult position: They have a strong interest in protecting their own and in guarding their secrets, as well as avoiding conflicts with outsiders. This might result in a Cryptid team coming to rescue a captured and imprisoned criminal so he or she can be tried and punished amongst the Clans, rather than by human justice, at the same time keeping the humans from learning too much. When heroes pursue the criminal's “rescuers” they may be in for much more than they bargained for.

Likewise, the Cryptid Clans can serve as a focus for an entire *Emerald City* series, as the hidden inhabitants of the Arcadian Peninsula struggle with the changes in the status quo brought about by the Silver Storm and the collapse of the Chamber. The heroes might be young or new Cryptids looking to become heroes and win the trust of humanity, or they could be members of the old guard of the Clans, trying to protect their people from hostile outsiders and enemies like Majestic-20 while keeping their secret.

HOOKS

The following adventure hooks are some possible ways to use the Cryptid Clans in your *Emerald City* series:

The Lost: Two young children disappear from their family's campsite in the Elysian Forest, prompting a massive volunteer effort to sweep the forest and find them. Fortunately, the kids have been rescued by a friendly Wood Clan Cryptid and are safe and sound, the only problem is returning them to human hands without revealing the existence of the Clans in the process. The longer the Cryptids wait, the closer human searchers—possibly including local superheroes—get to finding evidence of their presence in the forest. To make matters worse, Majestic-20 believes the kids were abducted by the Cryptids and is mounting a “rescue” effort that amounts to an armed raid, likely to result in the deaths of the “hostages” as well as their rescuers. The heroes have to find the missing kids, deal with the nervous Cryptids and humans, and keep the forces of Majestic-20 at bay.

The Cryptid King: The goblin Drex, a downtrodden member of the Wood Clan, discovers a long-lost tunnel beneath Mount Stanley leading to a hidden Serpent People lab. Among its various treasures is a headband packed with microcircuitry and crystalline (possibly viridian) elements that served as a control device for the Serpent People's slave-races. It turns out to work on most Cryptids as well, giving Drex the ability to command their unswerving obedience. The vicious goblin begins “recruiting” amongst the Wood and Sky Clans, then the Rock Clan, before declaring himself “Cryptid King.” His ambitions are to control all five clans, and then extend their power over the whole of Emerald City, turning it into his personal kingdom. A handful of Cryptids are immune to the Command Crown's effects, and they are forced to turn to outsiders—the heroes—for help before Drex is able to further his plans.

APPENDIX: NEW GAME RULES

The following new rules are used for some of the characters in *Emerald City* and otherwise follow the guidelines from the *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS Hero's Handbook*.

ADVANTAGE

SPEED OF THOUGHT

The Speed of Thought advantage allows you to use your Intellect score to determine your initiative, instead of your Agility.

AFFLICTION FLAW

Limited Degree: The Limited Degree modifier of Affliction (*Hero's Handbook*, page 99) may also limit the effect to the third degree only; the first two degrees of effect are simply "placeholders" for determining when the third degree is achieved but impose no conditions, such as an

affliction that transforms the target at the third degree but has no effect before that point. For non-cumulative Afflictions, this means if three degrees of effect are not generated on the initial resistance check, the effect fails. *–1 point per rank.*

GROWTH EXTRA

Density Increase: Rather than increasing your size, you increase only your *mass*, becoming more dense, and therefore stronger and tougher, without changing size. This removes the following modifiers from Growth: active defenses (Dodge and Parry), Intimidation checks, and size rank. Only Strength, Stamina, and mass ranks increase. Speed rank actually *decreases*: *–1 to speed per 8 ranks.*

Gamemasters should enforce the significant limitations of the character's increased mass; a character with 10 ranks of Density Increase weighs 100 tons! Few, if any, conventional structures will support the character's weight. *+0 points per rank.*

VILLAINS BY POWER LEVEL

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