

The Bad Guys

by James Thomson
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Table of Contents

Introduction -----	3	Blitzenhammer -----	64
Using This Book -----	3	Zyclon B -----	67
The Campaign World -----	3	Der Shreik -----	69
New Feats and Powers -----	4	Mother Moebius -----	70
Chapter 1: Minor Threats -----	5	The Corpus Christi Good-Time Boys ----	72
Sicko the Clown -----	5	Johnny Black -----	75
Big John -----	8	Cimarron Starr -----	77
Doctor Shock -----	10	Grease Monkey -----	79
Mano del Muerte -----	12	Doctor Destructor -----	81
Chapter 2: Moderate Threats ----	14	The Texas Twister -----	82
Broken Arrow -----	14	Mr. Fist -----	84
U-Go-Grrrl -----	17	The Lone Star Lady -----	86
The Unicorn -----	18	Jim Dandy -----	88
Vampire Girl -----	20	Boy Howdy -----	89
Wolf-Dog -----	22	The Four Deuces -----	90
God -----	24	Double Deuce -----	94
Helen Damnation -----	27	Ace of Wounds -----	97
Chapter 3: Major Threats -----	29	Lady Deuce -----	100
The Snow Queen -----	32	Diamond Deuce -----	103
Black Thunder -----	32	The Steel Deuce -----	105
The Death Angel -----	36	Bones -----	108
Doctor Moloch, Phd -----	39	Executive Solutions -----	111
Azeraphel, the Screaming Angel -----	41	Executive Solution D -----	115
The Hammer of Doom -----	43	Executive Solution M -----	119
Captain Valiant -----	46	Executive Solution Z -----	121
Chapter 4: Teams -----	49	Executive Solution X -----	123
The Nowhere Men -----	49	Executive Solution R -----	125
Woodchuck Man -----	51	Executive Solution Q -----	128
The Ratcatcher -----	53	Executive Solution F -----	130
Grim Diddle -----	55	Executive Solution Y -----	132
Vernichtung 5 -----	57	Jim Flint, Agent 12 -----	135
Der Totenkopf -----	60	Zelma Zimmer -----	137
The Moebius Man -----	62	Mr Smith -----	138
		Jim Flint's Bodyguards -----	139
		Appendix A: Villains by PL -----	140
		Index -----	141

Introduction

A compendium of every sort of crime and wickedness, this book contains more than fifty of the most gloriously evil (or tragically misunderstood) supervillains in history. From cackling arch-fiends to sneering street thugs, if you want scum in capes—we've got 'em! This volume holds enough goons, creeps, crooks, monsters, madmen and maniacs to trouble your players for months on end. A veritable smorgasbord of crime, where the sneeze-guards of evil are always clean and the bacon bits of wickedness never run out! Includes more than one hundred separate adventure seeds that will let you start using these villains straight out of the box. Serving all your needs for crime at pennies on the dollar, no batteries are required (unless you're reading this on a laptop), and neither is any specific campaign world—these super-scoundrels fit right in anywhere! It's time to don the bicycle helmet of villainy and head-butt the smirking face of justice!

Using This Book

The villains in this book are arranged by Power Level, rather than in alphabetic order. We start out with the least powerful villains and build our way up to the toughest ones. There's an index in the back, in case you need to look someone up alphabetically.

After the individual villains, we have five supervillain teams for you, which are also organized in order of the level of challenge they provide, from the lowly Nowhere Men (intended for low-level teams and groups that like investigating mysteries) up to the nation-toppling, hero-crushing mercenary group called "Executive Solutions." Each team comes with notes on how to get the most effective use out of them, the kinds of tactics they use in combat, and a brief sample adventure or two.

A word on using heavy villains. When it comes to Power Levels, M&M is more like the D20 system than it is like most of the point-based superhero games you may be used to. In a lot of superhero games, a group of medium level PCs can take down a single high-level villain without all that much difficulty. In these games, an NPC opponent usually needs to be between twice and four times as powerful as the heroes in order to really give them a run for their money. M&M doesn't work that way. Here the differences between Power Levels really matter. A PL 12 villain is significantly stronger than a PL 10 hero, a PL 15 villain is a real challenge, and a PL 20 villain really is a world-smashing menace. Throw a team of PL 10 Player Characters up against the boys from Executive Solutions en masse, and the opposition will decimate them.

To avoid getting chased down and pummeled by your frustrated players, try and be aware of how tough

the opposition is, and give the PCs tactical advantages if you think they'll need them. Your players are sure to appreciate it. There are few gaming experiences more thrilling than spotting an enemy that you know can beat the stuffing out of you, and then realizing that this time you have the drop on them.

A word about lethality might also be in order here. A few of these villains (the Ratcatcher, the Unicorn and Sicko the Clown, for example) try scrupulously not to kill people. They won't even use lethal force on the heroes who are trying to beat them up. A few (like the poor insane Mano del Muerte) kill all the time—being homicidal is part of their character concept. But the remaining majority of character descriptions don't specify exactly how much lethal force the NPC should use in combat. It talks a lot about whether or not a given villain might take hostages, endanger innocents, use torture and so forth, but tends not to say much about whether they would kill an opponent in combat, because that should be up to the GM. And it should depend on the kind of game they want to run.

If you are running a game that is relatively light in tone, then even characters with bloody pasts like Lady Deuce or the Hammer of Doom don't have to try to kill the Player Characters. Being stone killers may be part of their back-story, but it doesn't mean they have to kill somebody in this particular adventure. Lady Deuce is capable of throwing a baby off the end of a pier, but that doesn't mean she has to spot a stroller down by the docks in every scenario. I want this material to be as useful to you as possible, so I don't want to restrict some NPCs to "gritty" settings and others to "four-color" campaigns. My own style is probably more influenced by Warren Ellis, Frank Miller and Grant Morrison than it is by Kurt Busiek or Chris Claremont. I'm more of a pretentious oaf who thinks he's Alan Moore than I am a pretentious oaf who thinks he's Jack Kirby. But if you're a four-color fanatic then I want you to be able to use this material too. If you think the Four Deuces are cool but you're running a campaign modeled on the Powerpuff Girls, then keep their bloodiest deeds offstage.

The Campaign World

There isn't one. I wrote these characters with the intention of making them as easy as possible to drop into whatever campaign you want. The only common assumptions here are that superheroes exist and that the campaign is set in the present day. Even then, most of the villains in this book can be adapted to

previous epochs with only a little work. I have included no secret history of the world, no single explanation of what superheroes are, when they appeared, or where they come from. We won't learn who the gods are, what alien races rule our corner of the cosmos or what Secret Masters (if any) have been manipulating mankind's history from the beginning. Because the more I tell you about these things and the more tightly I tie these characters into them, the more it will distort the shape of your campaign, shifting its focus away from your vision and toward my own. It's better just to give you stuff that I know you can use.

Because I chose this approach, you will see relatively few world-conquering arch villains in this book. Make no mistake, there are plenty of powerful, dangerous high-level antagonists toward the end—opponents who could give almost any superhero team a run for its money. But guys with names like “Doctor Apocalypse” or “Baron Von Annihilation”, (who always seem to be brooding in their powered armor with wine glasses held thoughtfully aloft in one hand and a Brahms concerto playing on the phonograph) tend to seriously change the shape of the campaign, shifting much of its focus toward the threat posed by their own huge vainglorious plans. They also tend to be tightly wired into the back-story, since you would expect them to have a big effect on the course of your world's history (or at least the part that concerns superheroes). Make no mistake, I love that archetype—I've seen all the same James Bond movies you have and I loved them just as much. But you really only need one or two of them for a campaign and you probably already have yours picked out. I thought it would be better to give you something more useful.

There are a few places where for the sake of atmosphere I have used the name of a secret British military project that tried to build combat cyborgs (Project Abbadon) or a US government contractor that made some disastrous attempts to create super-soldiers in the 1990s (the IF Foundation) but these names are just placeholders. Use them only if you don't already have a secret project that builds cyborgs and supermen.

There are also a few spots where one character's back-story makes reference to another character, particularly in the adventure seeds. Here too it's just for flavor and to make the characters seem more vividly alive. Ignore these links or plug different characters into them just as you like. You are under no obligation to incorporate all of these villains into your campaign and I tried to set things up so that if you'd like to just adopt a few, it wouldn't disrupt things. So, if for example the text says that Double Deuce has hired the Snow Queen as muscle on a job,

but you don't like the Snow Queen, or some part of her origin story conflicts with something in your campaign world, just substitute another high-level super-criminal with a reputation for professionalism. It doesn't even have to be someone with ice powers.

I'll be producing another book of supervillains really soon, so if you can find the time, let me know how well this approach works for you and I'll bear it in mind while I'm putting “More Bad Guys” together. Would you like characters who are even more separate from one another? Would you feel more comfortable with a broader sense of background? Don't be shy—I'm here to serve your appetite for crime, whatever unsavory form it might take.

New Feats and Powers

We barely have any of these, either. In fact we only have one.

The lunatic celebrity supervillainess called U-Go-Grrl has a new feat called “Limited Immunity to Prosecution” which gives her a +3 bonus on any rolls made to evade getting arrested, arraigned, served with a summons, convicted of a crime or in any other way inconvenienced by the legal system. It also applies to any rolls a lawyer or other legal representative might make on her behalf. This is a purely defensive feat—it doesn't make it easier for her to sue people or have them arrested, just to keep her from having to face the legal consequences of her actions.

The reason I didn't pack the book with new feats, skills and powers is roughly the same as my rationale for not building a campaign world. I'm lazy as hell. By which I mean to say (ahem!) that I want to make the GM's life easier.

I personally find it unpleasant when players come up to me with new feats and powers that they've picked up from some supplement I haven't read (always just before game time, when I can't properly study them) and I'd like to spare you the extra effort and annoyance. In addition, point-based superhero games are notoriously prone to rules-creep and I want to contribute as little as possible to the growing clutter.

It's so important to U-Go-Grrrl's character conception to have this extra feat that I didn't see a way around including it. Fortunately, it's simple, it's low-powered and it's OGL. Go ahead and use it however you like in your own work. You paid for it.

Chapter 1: Minor Threats

Sicko the Clown

Real Name: Wendell "Butch" Blutarski
PL: 8

Str: 14 (+2) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 18 (+4)
Int: 16 (+3) **Wis:** 12 (+1) **Cha:** 14 (+1)
Initiative: +2 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +10
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +12
Defense: +23/+18 **Speed:** 35
Damage Save: +12 **Fortitude Save:** +4
Reflexes Save: +2 **Willpower Save:** +1

Skills: Craft (Weird Clown Gizmos) +5, Hide +5, Intimidate +5, Performance +5

Feats: All-Out Attack, Dodge, Improved Trip, Power Attack, Rapid Healing, Startle, Stunning Attack, Surprise Attack, Takedown Attack, Toughness

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +8, Gadgets +8, Running +1 (Cost 2pts)

Equipment: (Weapon, +8 Stunning Damage Cost: 1pt), Dubious Clown Van (Vehicle; Size: Large; Movement: 6; Hardness: 6; Armor Bonus: 3; Features: Radio Reception), Revolting Pies (Energy Blast +8 Stunning Damage; Flaw: Device; Cost: 1pt), Stanky Bombs, (Obscure +8; Flaw: Device; Cost: 1pt)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Loathsome drunken degenerate.

Quirk: Crazy Clown Code (Can't knowingly do anyone Lethal damage or allow an innocent to come to harm)

Unlucky (Something horrible will happen to him at least once per adventure).

"Hey kids, it's yer old pal Sicko th' Clown! With all kinds of kooky, zany, nutty, messed-up, painful, ghastly, horrid, wacky fun for all of you! Ha ha heh heh hee hee ho hoo hoo ha!"

A wretched, drunken, self-loathing, glue-sniffing misfit clown. He's an alienated, unhappy deviate who steals women's underwear, wallowing in his perversity with frantic glee. He commits weird, kinky and outrageous crimes for the sheer twisted hell of it, and to get attention. He loves attention, especially the negative kind.

Sicko adores being a villain, a weirdo pervert freak, and plays it up at every opportunity. Yet he's much too self-conscious and theatrical to ever let his act get totally out of control. He won't hit superheroes with lethal force, and if he beats one he will always come up with an excuse to put them in some ridiculous, humiliating but easily escaped death-trap rather than execute them on the spot. Even when drunk he would never willingly let an innocent come to harm. He is deeply ashamed of this fact and tries hard to conceal

it.

For while he's great at playing the role of a sinister perverted clown, under his makeup he's kind of a fraud. He gets no kick from hurting people—he just likes shocking them. The thrill he gets from stealing panties is chiefly that it's filthy and wrong. He gets hardly any joy out of wearing them, unless of course someone catches him in the act. He's not even a real pedophile, despite sometimes making leering remarks to that effect (Note to the GM: try to keep this last affectation low-key enough so that it won't get too disgusting for your players to handle. Sicko shouldn't hang around school playgrounds in a raincoat—that would probably freak the PCs out too badly. But if he's surrendering to a superhero he might say something like *"I can never say no to anyone in a Boy Scout uniform!"*)

If confronted with the fact that he isn't nearly as evil as he pretends to be, Sicko will rave and protest and make outrageous claims about what a revolting degenerate he is (*"No! No! I eat three kittens before breakfast! I invented th' Teletubbies! I had intimate carnal relations with Walt Disney's pickled brain!"*).

Using Sicko the Clown in your

campaign: As an opponent he is flashy and distracting, constantly hurling sick jokes and exploding pies full of panty hose and bondage magazines, pausing to scribble rude graffiti on a wall or to sniff some glue. But he's a better tactician than he pretends to be. He won't interrupt a fight to do something silly and vile unless he actually has a free moment. Otherwise he would get caught too fast and the show would end too soon. He's always got an escape plan or two, even though he doesn't much care whether he wins or loses the fight. He might take a hostage, but if he does he'll utter some ridiculous threat like: *"Stay back, or I'll paint moustaches on the pictures of all this guy's kids!"* or *"Back off or I'll tell Mrs. Happy Homemaker here that Betty Crocker doesn't really exist!"*

He may even attempt to take himself or his sock puppet hostage, just for laughs (*"Back off or th' clown gets it! No one will miss him, what's one less crummy clown in the world?"*)

He'll never take small children hostage under any circumstances, as he feels that would be too scary for them.

Unfortunately, Sicko's drunkenness and drug abuse make him dangerous to be around—not because he might lash out and do something savage, but because being wasted makes him sloppy and incompetent. He's almost sure to kill an innocent sooner or later through some drunken mistake. This will no doubt drive him deeper into self-loathing wretchedness, and make him even more prone to misbehave.

Adventures With Sicko the Clown:

1) Another Triumph for Moral Decency

Sicko the Clown attends a meeting of the Crusade for Moral Decency—after all, who could be more in need

of moral decency than Sicko the Clown? He will sneak backstage and put rude slides in the speaker's carousel, rewire the PA system to make even ruder sounds and then finally, as the meeting comes close to dissolving in panicked chaos he'll attack whoever is speaking at the podium, pelting them with sticky pies and foul insults until they run for cover. He will then hold the audience hostage while he delivers a crazy, rambling, drunken lecture on the topic of family values, mocking and mutilating everything they hold dear, pausing only to show more grody and ridiculous slides or to do more drugs. Can no one stop this crazed clown of crime?

Actually, the audience is going to do its best to try. After only a little of Sicko's raving they are mad enough to rip him limb from limb, and by the time the PCs arrive they may find that they have to save Sicko from the Crusade for Moral Decency, rather than the other way around.

2) Hey Kids, It's th' Sicko the Clown Show!

Sicko the Clown gets his own Saturday morning TV show, by breaking into the carrier wave with an illegal transmitter from the back of his skanky clown van. He shows vile cartoons and revolting puppet shows and mocks everything good and decent.

Just how obscene the leering clown gets on his show is up to the GM. If your PCs would be uncomfortable with a lot of swearing, then avoid it. Otherwise, feel free to make his show an utterly outrageous torrent of filth.

It's going to be tough to catch Sicko, since he stays on the move while he's broadcasting. Unfortunately, one of the stations he's interfering with has an owner with Mob connections, and he doesn't exactly dig the idea of some clown cutting in on his action. The cops are also prone to overreact, since a whole lot of them are also parents and have caught their kids watching the show on the sly. Sicko may be in real danger soon. To make matters worse, a supervillain from Texas named Cimarron Starr is in town, and she doesn't like the way Sicko is interfering with her soap operas. His unpatriotic tone also offends her, as does the way he mocks televangelists. She is going to teach this clown to show more respect for decent folks, and has no objection to killing him in the process.

"Now sing along kids: 'Who's a twisted pervert and who wears all your panties? S-I-C, K-Y-T, H-E-C-L-O...' Ah th' heck with it, I gotta huff some more glue..."

3) A Very Special Sicko the Clown Christmas

Sicko the Clown is beginning to feel the Christmas spirit upon him. He has taken to hanging out at Santa Claus themed leather bars, with names like "The North Pole" and "Kris Kringle's Hidey Hole"—places where big dudes dressed like Santa whip guys dressed up as reindeer and bellow *"now dash away, dash away, dash away all!"* Joints where you can get a tattoo of a burning tannenbaum on your face at the bar, and the jukebox always seems to be playing *"It's a Holly Jolly Christmas."*

But then one sodden Christmas Eve, a guy that

everyone calls "Jolly Old Saint Nick" gets busted by the fuzz for selling crank and doing indecent things to a clothing store mannequin, just as he was about to deliver a whole load of toys to a program across town that the Hell's Angels run for the orphaned kids of outlaw bikers.

Sicko is seized with a sudden surge of drunken X-mas spirit, and decides to save Christmas. Alas, his sleazy clown van doesn't run at the moment and his tires are all in hock. But there's a marvy-looking sleigh hanging from the bar's ceiling which might actually be functional, and after Sicko delivers a rousing drug-crazed rant about what a bastard Santa Claus must be (*"Poor kids izz often naughty, in Santa's book, but rich kids izz always nice. Izz juss like my old clown Mama always used to say 'Sicko' she'd say, 'get me my @\$%&*! Marlboros ya little creep!', which always reminds me of th' spirit a th' seezun..."*) there are plenty of "reindeer" ready to pull the sleigh across town.

He asks the red-nosed little alcoholic who dresses up like Hitler: *"Adolph, wit yer nose so bright, won't you guide my sleigh tonight?"* And off they go, with Adolph the red-nosed Hitler in the lead!

Of course, Sicko is a wanted criminal, and any superhero who sees him riding in a sleigh covered with obscene X-mas related graffiti drawn by eight half-naked weirdoes in leather harnesses with fake antlers on their heads will surely assume that clown is up to something dreadful. I mean, wouldn't you? His motives are actually noble, for once, but his pathology will never let him admit it to the PCs.

To complicate matters, a bigger, meaner supervillain who Sicko has annoyed may show up and try to spoil Christmas for everyone. Said villain will somehow know all about Sicko's secret good intentions and will mock him loudly for them. This should let the PCs know what's really going on, and not a moment too soon! Is there still time to save Christmas? On Adolph, on Pukeface, on Pervert and Witless! On Vomit, on Rat-Fink! On Stanky and Twisted! Hey wait a minute—it's July! What the %\$#@*!??

Big John

Real Name: John Wayne Stimple

PL: 9

Str: 20 (+5) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 20 (+5)

Int: 10 **Wis:** 8 (-1) **Cha:** 14 (+2)

Initiative: +2 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +11

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +8 **Defense:**

+16/+14 **Speed:** 30

Damage Save: +4 **Fortitude Save:** +6

Reflexes Save: +2 **Willpower Save:** +2

Skills: Intimidate +9, Spot +6, Taunt +5

Feats: Chokehold, Great Fortitude, Heroic Surge, Improved Grapple, Iron Will

Powers: Growth +9 (Extras: Shockwave, Thunderclap; Power Stunt: Lethal Damage; Flaw: Permanent; Cost: 7pts)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Murderous Bigot (Big John is incapable of working with members of other ethnic backgrounds and will attack them in preference to all other targets, even if doing so puts him at a tactical disadvantage)

“What do I want? I want a white America. You give me that, right now, and I’ll surrender. What’s that? You say you can’t? Well then I guess I’ve just got to crush another hostage. You better watch carefully this time, or I’m gonna make it hurt a lot worse... Now look at that--you see what you made me do to that poor girl? You’re responsible for it, you know. You did this to her. Now let’s take it from the top. Ask me what I want again.”

A crazed white supremacist giant on a rampage, leaving a trail of blood and destruction behind him. Bumbling around without purpose or point, he hopes to do as much damage as possible to the people he hates before being gunned down by the cops or the Army. Above all, he wants to draw attention to himself and to his cause.

He’s a bully and a killer, aggressive and sadistic. He loves to hit helpless people. He loves to browbeat and intimidate his victims before crushing them. He constantly wears a cruel, knowing smirk. Big John truly believes that the world is run by a secret cabal of Jews and Freemasons, and he thinks you know it too. He’s willing to engage in long, scary conversations with people about his ideas, toying with them, letting

them think he might not kill them if they can say the right thing.

In combat, he’s a ruthless and surprisingly cunning opponent. He takes hostages as often as he can, and tries to put himself in positions where shooting at him will cause a lot of collateral damage. He likes to use school busses for cover, he likes to place himself in front of oil storage tanks or strip malls crowded with shoppers. Kids aren’t safe from him, old people aren’t safe from him, even his fellow white people aren’t safe from him. While he tries to focus his anger on minorities, gay people and everyone else he hates, Big John can always seem to find an excuse to kill just about anybody.

As you might expect, he doesn’t really fear death or expect to live much longer--guys who go on cross-country killing sprees seldom live to a ripe old age (particularly if they’re thirty feet tall and can’t hide anywhere). Yet he does fear both pain and humiliation, and can be threatened with either.

John was always big. He weighed 14 pounds at birth, and was five feet tall by the time he was four years old. He towered over his teachers in school and his mother at home, which made them afraid of him. So they beat him and terrorized him as much as they could.

By the time he was twelve John was seven feet tall and a lot stronger than an ox. His mother pulled him out of school, banished him to the cellar and told him to stay out of the sight of decent people. Instead of staying out of sight, he started hanging around by the Mini Mart. He could easily pass for an adult, so nobody questioned why he was there in the middle of the day.

He found out about nazism from the public library and TV, although his mom had already told him that black people were evil. Throughout his adolescence he hung out with other kids who were into the same stuff. His incredible size, strength and cruelty made him a natural leader. The group of them set dogs on fire and put the eyes out of squirrels and wished they could get their hands on a black kid. They were known troublemakers, despised by decent folks and constantly hassled by the sheriff. It always tickled John to think that while every adult he had ever met felt the same way he did about blacks and Jews, the fact that he wore a swastika on his shirt made them hate and fear him.

By the time he was fifteen, John was twelve feet tall and could no longer pass for a normal human. Most of his friends were in juvie by then anyway. He retreated to his Mom’s basement and spent a lot of time watching TV and surfing the web.

When he was twenty, he began exchanging e-mail with an online hate group called the Purifiers. They were a kind of suicide club, constantly egging one another on to run amok in public, kill a bunch of minorities and get gunned down by the cops. John is the third one to actually do it.

At the GM’s discretion, the other Purifiers may be a shabby collection of lunatics and halfwits, or they may actually be a group of paranoid white supremacist

superhumans, ready to tip over like a chain of firecrackers and wreak havoc all across the country. John killed his mother and collapsed their house before he set out on his rampage, but his computer's hard drive is still salvageable, and who knows what evidence it might contain?

Using Big John in your campaign:

Big John has no intention of being taken alive, and is probably a one-shot villain, who appears, goes on a rampage, and then dies. However, if the PCs manage to capture him, he can become a recurrent menace. He'll escape custody if he gets a chance and start his bloody rampage all over again. While he is vengeful and vindictive, his resources aren't really great enough for him to effectively hunt most superheroes down (anyway he's much too busy trying to smash stuff and go out in a blaze of glory) but if he encounters them again he will be pleased and will single them out for special punishment.

Adventures With Big John:

1) Zero Day
One Saturday morning a maniac named Wilbur Munce runs amok and starts shooting people in the parking lot of a synagogue. He has a lot of hostages and the cops are desperate enough to call the PCs in to stop him. Overcoming Munce is easy for a team of superheroes, but when the cops look at his apartment they find his connection to the Purifiers' web site. It is painfully clear that this group of white supremacist psychopaths has at least one actual parahuman in its ranks, and that he is about to go on a rampage. Can our heroes stop Big John in time? And come to think of it, why does he call himself "Big John"?

The PCs will arrive in John's home town just slightly too late—he has already caved in his house and walked off into the night. Now the PCs will have to fight a running cross-country battle, tracking John by the incidents he creates, to stop him before he does something horrendous. There is a small and predominantly African-American grade school directly in his path, about forty miles away.

2) Fast Train to Nowhere

This scenario assumes that Big John's rampage covers a much wider swath of territory. Big John has been smashing his way across the upper Midwest (or some other part of the country, far distant from where the PCs live) for about a month now. He seems to be able to suddenly vanish when superheroes get too close. A Player Character gets called out of town to visit a frail and elderly relative (or better yet, the frail and elderly relative of their love interest). They have stopped at a diner or a rest area near some train tracks, and the Player Character finds themselves momentarily alone, outside. A freight train rumbles past, and Big John bursts out of one of the cars, landing on the far side of the tracks from the PC. As the train rumbles between them, the giant marauder sees the PC, smiles sadistically and gestures to indicate that they should keep silent. Perhaps he

makes a threatening gesture in the direction of the diner, or the PC's love interest. Then John lumbers off to cause havoc somewhere close by. How does the PC go after Big John without blowing their secret identity? What will they do about their obligations? How can they get in touch with the rest of the team and what cover story will they use? Can the team even get here in time to keep Big John from doing something awful? And will the huge thug really take some kind of twisted revenge against the PC's loved ones?

Doctor Shock

Real Name: To be determined (see description)

PL: 9

Str: 12 (+1) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 10 (+0) **Cha:** 6 (-2)
Initiative: +1 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +10
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +10
Defense: +11/+9 **Speed:** 30
Damage Save: +5 **Fortitude Save:** +4
Reflexes Save: +4 **Willpower Save:** +3

Skills: Balance +8, Craft (Electronics) +8, Hide +9, Jump +6, Move Silently +10, Open lock, +8, Profession (to be determined) +5, Read Lips +8

Feats: All-Out Attack, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Surprise Attack, Toughness

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +3 (Extras: Willpower, Reflexes: Cost: 3pts)

Equipment: Armor +9 (Extra: Damage Field [electric], Paralysis [No Range]; Cost: 2pts), Darkvision (Flaw: Device; Cost: 1pt), Detect Movement (Flaw: Device; Cost: 1pt), Immunity to Suffocation (Flaw: Device; Cost: 1pt)

Weaknesses: **Disabled:** Deaf (-4 Penalty to Initiative, Cannot make Listen skill checks)

Quirk: Depraved Compulsive Deviate (can't stop harassing his victims even if it's obviously going to get him into trouble).

"All women crave the burning shock of my tender electric caresses. And soon they'll all know my touch."

A creepy little peeping Tom who compulsively harasses women. He likes electricity in deeply unhealthy ways and has built himself a "shock-suit" to help satisfy his peculiar appetites. His Shock Suit is designed to give out both massive jolts of electricity to others and exciting jolts to himself. He watches his victims from a distance, then invades their homes while they sleep, leaving threatening mash notes for them.

He mostly bothers deaf girls and can't understand why they reject him. All deaf women must want him—who else would have them? They're freaks, defectives, cruel accidents of nature, unlovable by anyone. Surely they crave him and his hot electric love!

After spying on and harassing a victim for a while, he'll sneak into her room while she sleeps and shock her awake with his electric caresses. Then he'll go away, and come back to do it again the next night. Sometimes it's hard for his victims to get anyone to believe what is happening, which adds greatly to his

relish. It also makes them more likely to turn to unconventional sources for help (the Player Characters, for example).

Doctor Shock has yet to kill or sexually assault anyone (at least in the conventional sense) but who knows what he might become capable of as he explores his vice more deeply. He prefers not to get into direct confrontations with the authorities, but unlike the usual stereotype of a peeping Tom he is no coward and although he has never fought a superhero hand to hand he would find the prospect thrilling. If the battle is going well, he may linger too long at the scene, unable to control his glee. He doesn't feel a lot of moral compunctions and certainly wouldn't mind taking a hostage if it either helps his chances of getting away or makes the situation more exciting.

Doctor Shock never speaks, but does leave copies of his "Electric Love Manifesto" lying around to explain his motives. He is of course deaf himself.

Using Doctor Shock in your

campaign: Dr. Shock probably won't stand up to an assault by a team of superheroes for long, so the key to using him right is to keep him offstage for as long as possible, letting the tension build and build as the PCs match wits with him at a distance. He's really meant for creepy, atmospheric mysteries rather than for street brawls. We've left his identity undetermined so that you can make this part of the mystery—perhaps he turns out to be someone his victim (or the Player Characters) already knows, or even someone who is helping them with the investigation.

He could well be a one-shot villain who dies or gets sent to prison forever after his rampage, but if he ever gets out again he's going to build himself another shock suit and go right back to doing what he loves. Or perhaps he'll start stalking a PC's loved ones.

Adventures With Doctor Shock: 1) The Unfortunate Van Valkenburg Matter

Doctor Shock torments a young deaf woman named Miranda Van Valkenburg until she commits suicide. A friend of hers is the deaf cousin, sister, girlfriend or other close female acquaintance of a Player Character. She hadn't seen Miranda in some time, and regrets it bitterly. While going through some of Miranda's things, she finds her diary. There are only a few entries from after Doctor Shock started terrorizing her—she was too upset to write very much. It seems clear from what little she did write that no one believed her, everyone thought she was crazy or desperate for attention, so she decided to kill herself.

In addition the diary, the PC's friend finds a copy of the Electric Love Manifesto. She does not know that Doctor Shock is watching her through the window as she reads it, or that she is about to become his next victim.

The Doctor starts harassing her slowly and cruelly—letting her glimpse him outside her window, leaving threatening notes. She doesn't know what to do, no one will believe her, just like they didn't

believe Miranda. She isn't even sure that she believes it herself. Initially she won't want to talk to the Player Character about this, but if they press her she tells them the whole story and shows them the evidence. And just in the nick of time! For Doctor Shock is about to move things up to the next stage.

2) School of Shock

Dr. Shock terrorizes the women's dormitory in a large school for the deaf. He is already on his third victim by the time the Player Characters get called in.

The first victim transferred out of the school when she found that no one would believe her stories about an electric marauder who abused her in the dead of night, in her room, with her roommate asleep on the next bed. When he started to harass a second victim the school started treating it seriously, but before they had a chance to involve the police the second girl fell down the stairs (perhaps by accident, perhaps not) and wound up in the hospital, unconscious. He has now transferred his affections to another student, although by the time the Player Characters learn about these events he hasn't done more than leave her threatening messages and a copy of his unsavory "Electric Love Manifesto."

It is possible that the Player Characters have been brought in as consultants, to resolve this matter discreetly, but it's almost more interesting if one of them has instead been drawn in through their secret identity—perhaps as a staff member, counselor, teacher or even a student at the school.

We have left Doctor Shock's identity unspecified because that can be one of the most intriguing parts of the mystery. He is deaf, and he is somehow able to open any locked door in the building. Is he the creepy janitor? A male student? A teacher? The school psychologist? The headmaster? Some weird guy who lives across the street and has nothing to do with the school? Do whatever would be most dramatic and scary.

Mano del Muerte

Real Name: Ramon Ochoa

PL: 9

Str: 14 (+2) **Dex:** 16 (+3) **Con:** 18 (+4)

Int: 9 (-1) **Wis:** 6 (-2) **Cha:** 2 (-4)

Initiative: +3 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +11

(+9L Damage Field) **Attack Bonus (Ranged):**

+12 **Defense:** +23/+19 **Speed:** 35

Damage Save: +4/+6 (Evasion) **Fortitude**

Save: +3 **Reflexes Save:** +3 **Willpower**

Save: +2

Skills: Hide +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +9

Feats: Darkvision, Dodge, Durability, Evasion

Powers: Super-Wisdom +9 (Flaw: only counts toward resisting mental attacks; Cost: 1pt), Energy Blast +9 (Extras: Damage Field, Subtle; Power Stunts: Pentetrating Attack x4; Cost: 4pts), Obscure +5 (Flaw: Partial; Cost 1pt), Protection +9 (Cost: 2pts), Running +1 (Cost: 2pts)

Weaknesses: **Disturbing** (looks like a mutilated ruin of a man, makes all Diplomacy and Bluff checks at a -5)

Quirk: Paranoid schizophrenic (the Mano del Muerte is dangerously out of touch with reality, which leads him to make grave errors and do terrible things)

"America! Cruel goddess! I raise monuments of blood to slake your appetites, though it wounds my mind and damns my soul."

A crazy, murderous, rampaging lunatic with superhuman powers. He has somehow been cursed with the ability to kill with a touch or a glance, rupturing blood vessels, melting flesh, causing spasms and convulsions.

We don't know much about how he gained his powers or went mad. He served in the US Army, in hopes of distinguishing himself enough to gain citizenship, and may have been considered for some sort of superhuman combat unit. Some of his records are classified, but it at least seems clear that he was discharged for psychological instability and that he had some kind of trouble with his resident alien status after that. Did he volunteer for some kind of dangerous experimental treatment, in hopes of becoming a citizen? Did it give him psychic powers? Did it exacerbate his mental instability? Did they sense that he might be dangerous and try to have him kicked out of the country? We will probably never know. His own ideas on the topic are uselessly deranged.

Completely insane, hopelessly delusional, he thinks that people are asking him to sacrifice them to the God

of Blood, so that America can stay strong, immune to foreign influences. He will go to some random location and ask the people he finds there if they want to be sacrificed for the Blood God's greater glory, that America might shine pure. They always answer yes, to his continual surprise (or at least that's what he thinks they're saying) and although he hates to kill people, what choice does he have? Just think what would happen if he didn't kill them! America overrun by foreigners, corrupted and made to serve as a festering breeding pool for their foreign influences, contaminating the rest of the world with their foreignness! Before he kills them, he asks the sacrifices where he should go next and they always give him another address (or at least he thinks they do).

Mano del Muerte is sentimental about children and cute things and cries a lot over his victims, both before and after he kills them. He would never, ever hurt a child or an animal and could be dissuaded from taking a sacrifice if he thought a child might see him do it. He has five kids of his own, back home in Bolivia, and he misses them terribly. Sometimes he gets one of them confused with some child here in the states and will leave gifts for them outside their window, or follow them down the street at night to make sure they're safe. Sometimes he misunderstands a stranger's intentions toward "his" child and kills them.

Using Mano del Muerte in your

campaign: Adventures with the Mano del Muerte should always take place at night and the atmosphere should always be as creepy as possible. While he does have some unexpected tricks up his sleeve, he won't provide much challenge in a knock-down, drag-out fight. Therefore the PCs should only get solid chance to come to grips with him right at the end of the scenario. Most of the adventure will usually involve trying to figure out his motives and then intercepting him wherever he is about to strike next, before any more innocent people die.

He's as pitiable as he is scary, but he's also exactly the kind of villain who tempts the PCs to use lethal force. If he survives his first encounter with the Player Characters, they could dedicate themselves to trying to cure his condition or they could just have him locked away forever. He's not a competent escape artist, but if you feel that the PCs would enjoy fighting him again then he could get loose in some kind of accident or mass prison break. However you decide to use him, he should not become the kind of villain who shows up every week, since that would make him less frightening.

Adventures With Mano del Muerte: 1) Hand of Death, Clutch of Fear

The city is gripped with fear as the mad killer called the Mano del Muerte stalks its streets by night. No one has yet been able to catch the fiend in the act of his grisly crimes and no one knows where he might strike next.

The state and municipal authorities have formed a joint task force to apprehend Mano del Muerte and one member of the task force asks the Player Characters to informally participate. The contact should ideally be someone the PCs think of as honest but whom they don't know very well on a personal level. Of course you should use your own best judgment here. If some other character would work best for your PC group, use them instead.

It is unclear whether or not City Hall has tacitly approved the PCs involvement. The city authorities seem unusually willing to cooperate with or at least turn a blind eye to the PCs' activities, but at the same time their contact really does seem to be making an effort to keep at least some members of the task force from knowing that the PCs are involved.

As the PCs read reports on Mano del Muerte's crimes and hear testimony from eyewitnesses, the nature of his motivations slowly starts to emerge. It becomes clear that he's actually choosing addresses at random, but because he thinks that each victim is telling him where to go to find the next one, it might be possible to figure out his next destination from something a witness overhears him saying to a victim. After they have explained this to their contact, they get a lucky break. The very next time they are out on patrol, tracking down another potential sighting, their contact gets in touch. A new eyewitness has just come forward, and she heard Mano del Muerte say something that clearly indicates the major city landmark right next to where he will take his next victim. Actually it's a little ambiguous (just enough to put a little doubt into your players' minds) but it certainly seems to indicate where he's going.

A squad of police officers moves in to confront the killer, but the PCs are closer and they get there first. A terrible downpour opens up over the city just as the PCs arrive at the scene. Somewhere out there in the dark and rain lurks the Mano del Muerte, poised to strike.

2) Carnival of Sorrows

Mano del Muerte stalks the city by night, spreading carnage and woe. The Player Characters are hunting him on their own, without any support from the authorities. By talking to witnesses and studying the pattern of his crimes they are just starting to get a sense of why he's killing people and how to figure out where he intends to strike next, when a stage incident is brought to their attention. A criminal named Ignacio Ruiz is found murdered on his ex-wife's doorstep. A policeman lies dead beside him. Both men were killed by the Mano del Muerte. Ruiz' ex-wife tearfully notes that her little boy, Hector, is missing.

Ignacio was stalking his ex-wife and stepson and he had sworn to do them both grievous harm. There was already a restraining order out against him, but she knew it wouldn't do any good and fully expected that he would kill them sooner or later.

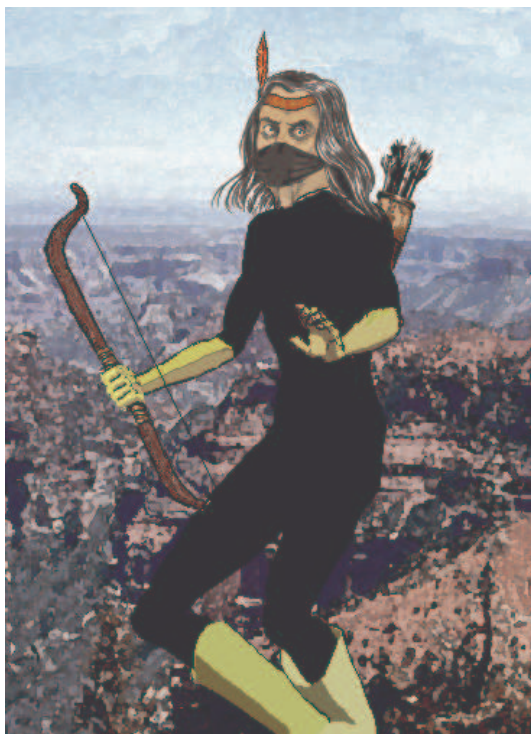
In fact Ignacio Ruiz accosted his stepson on the

steps and while the two of them struggled, Mano del Muerte happened by the scene. He mistook little Hector for one of his own sons, and swiftly moved to protect him, killing Ruiz dead on the spot. He slunk back into the shadows to watch over "his" boy from a distance, but some of the neighbors had heard the altercation and called the police. A squad car happened to be right in the vicinity, and when the police officer inside got out to talk to Hector, Mano del Muerte misunderstood his intentions and killed him too.

Hector wandered off in shock, but there are witnesses who have seen him, and seen the weird and horrible figure that follows him. Various people attempt to talk to or help Hector, and Mano del Muerte kills them. And just as the PCs start to catch up, the boy and his shadowy protector wander into a carnival.

Chapter 2: Moderate Threats

Broken Arrow



Real Name: John Wolf

PL: 10

Str: 14 (+2) **Dex:** 18 (+4) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 14 (+2) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: +8 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +11
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +13
Defense: +20/+12 **Speed:** 30
Damage Save: +2/+9 (Evasion) **Fortitude Save:** +2 **Reflexes Save:** +10 **Willpower Save:** +4

Skills: Acrobatics +6, Balance +6, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +5, Hide +5, Knowledge (Indian Reservations) +5, Listen +9, Move Silently +10, Search +5, Sense Motive +5, Spot +9, Survival +5

Feats: Attack Focus (Bow), Connected, Dodge, Evasion, Expertise, Far Shot (Bow), Infamy, Instant Stand, Lightning Reflexes, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Tracking

Powers: Super-Dexterity +4 (Extra: Super-Senses; Cost 4pts)

Equipment: Bow (+5 Lethal; Extra: Explosive Effect [Exploding Arrow], Power Stunts: Obscure [Smoke-Screen Arrow]; Cost: 2pts), Armor +4 (Cost: 1pt)

Weaknesses: **Disabled:** Missing one arm below the elbow, can't use his prosthetic hand to do anything but hold objects

"All any man can ask the world to give him is justice--but most guys are too smart to ask. So I guess you can see I was never all that bright."

A bitter, misunderstood Native American vigilante from the Ogalala Sioux reservation. He's generally thought of as a crazy Indian separatist who uses terror and violence to intimidate anyone who disagrees with his lunatic ideology. The truth is far different. Broken Arrow fights corruption, organized crime and the shadowy power of the mining interests on reservation land (all of which are deeply intertwined).

His stepfather was a tribal policeman, who tried his best to help people, but wasn't able to accomplish very much. The grind of police work wore him down, made him drink, made him beat his wife and kids. He was so busy trying to be a good man at work that he became a monster at home. To avoid his stepfather's erratic wrath, John took to spending as much of his time as possible outdoors. He hunted, fished, taught himself to navigate by the stars and sometimes didn't come home for days.

His grandmother understood him, and he spent a lot of time at her place, too. Although she didn't have much education, she was an activist and an outspoken woman, and she taught him a lot about his people's tragic history.

John left the reservation at age 18, and joined the Army. They noticed his skills as a marksman pretty quickly, and signed him up for sniper training. Before long he was reassigned to the Rangers, then to the Delta Force, and then to a super-secret elite unit called "Team Seven." An extremely competent sniper, and an all around superb soldier, he was nearly the equal of the team's legendary squad leader Silvio Strozzi (who later became the supervillain known as the Ace of Wounds).

John lost his right arm below the elbow on a mission during the first Gulf War, so he took his pension and went home. That missing arm has saved his life many times since—everyone assumes that he couldn't possibly be Broken Arrow when he has no right hand (in fact he just uses his prosthetic hand to hold the bow, and aims with his left).

It was the first time he had been home in years, and it was a troubled period on the reservation. There was unrest and repression. A lot of people were fed up with the tribal government and the amount of influence the big mining companies had over it. There were underground groups who resisted the status quo with bombs and there were vicious reprisals against them.

John was a quiet, cautious guy by nature, but he couldn't stay clear of the struggle for long. His grandma was still alive and still an activist, his little brother Fred was involved in the underground—if nothing else, John he had to get involved to protect them.

During this same period he got back together with his old high-school girlfriend, a gorgeous young woman named Eudora Leaps-Tall, who was trying her best to get enough money together to go to Wyoming State University and become a nurse. She wasn't political, but after hanging out with John for a while she began to take an interest herself. They got married almost on impulse.

Alas, these were bad days to start taking an interest in politics. People who spoke out against the mining consortiums and the shady deals that certain parties on the tribal council had cut with them had a way of dying sudden violent deaths. First Fred turned up decapitated in a ditch, then Eudora vanished on her way home from her night job (she was never found, although John has his suspicions about where her body may be buried) and then someone marched Grandma out into the woods and shot her in the head. John couldn't protect a single one of them, and he was losing other friends, too.

It was around the time his Grandma died that he went a little insane, took his bow, put on a mask and started to fight back. For the past ten years he's battled corruption and organized crime, first on the Ogalala reservation and then as his reputation grew, on other reservations across the West. These days he often feels it took him much too long to take up his knife.

An unhappy man, he tells lots of bitter jokes and drinks too much. He has lost a great deal and seen many terrible things, both on Team Seven and afterwards. When asked about the subject of revenge, he always replies with some version of the following rant: *"Now here's a funny thing about revenge. There's no such thing. The scale never balances. Why? Because there's no scale. I take three guys, I knock one eye out of each of 'em, and what are you gonna do to me? I only got two eyes, and anyway losing both your eyes is more than twice as bad as losing one of them. If my life is worthless (which it is) and I kill a guy whose life was valuable, how you*

gonna make the scales balance? Forget it. There's no scale. So don't trick yourself about why we do what we do."

It is hard to say whether or not he would resort to killing an enemy. The matter hasn't yet come up, but it's bound to eventually. He most certainly would not take hostages, but he might terrorize or threaten an enemy to get information out of them, and in an emergency might resort to actually torturing them (although he would feel terrible about doing it).

He is a canny, cagey opponent who knows how to use the ground to his advantage. In combat with other superbeings, he will always try to hit them from a distance and to take them by surprise. He wears a lot of body armor but he knows that his defenses won't hold up against guys who can put holes in the sides of tanks. A straightforward sniper without a lot of money to spend on an arsenal, he uses a minimal range of special "trick" arrows and mostly just concentrates on hitting the target really well.

Broken Arrow is a controversial figure even on the reservation. He does have connections with the most extreme wing of the native separatist underground, but he doesn't believe in their credo. He regards overthrowing the US government as an unrealistic goal. However, they hate the existing power structure as much as he does, so they make good part-time allies. He's out to make things better for the ordinary reservation Indian, and the separatists are useful tools to help him achieve that goal.

While his grandmother taught him a few of the old tribal religious rituals, he practices them more to honor her memory than anything else. Personally, he believes in no gods at all—but he does believe in his grandma. English is his first language and he actually can't speak Sioux as well as he would like. He really doesn't have a secret identity anymore, and spends nearly all his time underground, in costume. Sometimes he sleeps in his body armor. It amuses him in a twisted way that he is called a terrorist and a supervillain, but it doesn't surprise him.

Using Broken Arrow in your

campaign: Instead of dragging the PCs out to the wilderness, it's almost better to have Broken Arrow come menace them on their home ground. See the adventure seeds below for some examples of how to do this. He isn't tough enough to take on a whole gang of PL 10 heroes by himself, but then again he usually isn't the real villain of the scenario, either. Typically he'll appear, hunting some other villain or criminal, the PCs will misinterpret his motives, attack him, defeat him, and only then find out that they have misunderstood things and that something bad is about to happen if they don't team up with Broken Arrow to stop it. Of course this approach only works once with any given PC group, so after their first encounter he can become a helpful but seldom-seen ally, or a source of adventure leads.

Broken Arrow operates in a completely different part of the country from the Mafia supervillain known

as the Ace of Wounds, so the odds of them running into each other is low. If they did, they would both immediately recognize each other from Team Seven. It would no doubt occur to each of them the other one knows their secret identity, but they're both reasonable men and they would probably be able to work something out that doesn't involve killing each other.

Norville Standing Dog has hired a supervillain to carry out the hit—someone too big for Broken Arrow to handle by himself, like the Snow Queen or the Diamond Deuce. Either way, it's going to be one hell of a party!

Adventures With Broken Arrow:

1) Tiny Lester's Great Big Problem

A terrified biker named "Tiny" Lester Scruggs comes to the Player Characters and tells them that he knows Broken Arrow's secret identity. They've got to hide him, to get him into federal witness protection or something—the guy is crazy and he's coming to kill Tiny Lester.

All of this is a lie, except for the part about Broken Arrow coming for him. In fact Broken Arrow is after Lester Scruggs because he supplied crank to a gang on the Navajo reservation, shot people with casual abandon whenever it suited him, and may have sparked a major gang war between the Insane Young Vipers and the Navajo chapter of the Crips.

Broken Arrow intends to turn him over to one of the rival gang factions as a peace offering, in hopes of ending the war. But the Insane Young Vipers have already sent a hit squad after Lester, which may arrive at any moment. The PCs may be surprised to see that despite being reservation kids they dress in hip-hop clothes and speak the same gangsta dialect as an inner city gang, with a few Navajo words mixed in.

Meanwhile Lester has been trying to get some of his outlaw biker friends to join the party, just to make things really interesting.

2) A Standing Dog and a Lying Hound

A prominent Native American leader named Ron Washi has come to town to drum up investors for a new Indian casino. He's going to throw a big party at a hotel and schmooze the business community for some cash. However, the word is out that radical Native American separatists may attempt to disrupt the party, or even kill Ron Washi. They say that Broken Arrow himself may be coming.

And indeed Broken Arrow is on his way—but not to kill Ron. In fact a ruthless business rival named Norville Standing Dog wants to build his own casino, with the backing of organized crime, and Ron Washi's proposal is getting in the way. Standing Dog has arranged to have Mr. Washi killed at his party.

Ron is something of a crusader—he wants to build a casino that will bring money to the reservation. Norville Standing Dog wants a casino that will funnel most of its revenue into the coffers of the mob.

Broken Arrow favors Mr. Washi's proposal. Furthermore, a public execution like this will make it that much harder for Indian casinos to find investors who aren't tied in to organized crime. Even though he regards Ron as a sellout and a greedy fat cat, Broken Arrow is here to protect the man.

If the GM wants to complicate things, perhaps

U-Go-Grrrl

Real Name: Courtney Amber Lopez

PL: 10

Str: 14 (+2) **Dex:** 19 (+4) **Con:** 12 (+1)
Int: 10 (+0) **Wis:** 9 (-1) **Cha:** 18 (+4)
Initiative: +14 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +7
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +9
Defense: +30/+16 **Speed:** 80 (Super-Speed)
Damage Save: +1/+14 (Evasion) **Fortitude**
Save: +1 **Reflexes Save:** +14 **Willpower**
Save: +1

Skills: Balance +10, Bluff +5, Diplomacy+5,
Intimidate +8, Taunt +10

Feats: Connected, Dodge, Fame, Evasion, Legal
Immunity (New Feat, grants a +3 to any rolls made to
escape legal prosecution), Minions (business managers
and enterouge, 15 PL 1 characters and 1 PL 2), Move-
By Attack, Rapid Strike

Powers: Super-Speed +10 (Power Stunts: Wall
Run, Water Run; Cost: 6pts)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Develops obsessive,
irrational, self-destructive crushes and does all kinds
of stupid and dangerous things to get the attention of
her prospective paramour.

*“Now there’s a rack of abs that even
makes my heart beat faster! Wooh-hooo!
Heyyougottagirlfriendmisterhuhuhu
huh?”*

Perhaps the fastest woman alive, able to run at
twice the speed of sound. She’s a bit of a media
darling, mostly because of her loud, brassy personality
and her controversial behavior.

Until recently part of a large and celebrated
superhero group, U-Go-Grrrl caused so much havoc
on the team that they expelled her. She’s still a
celebrity despite her expulsion and makes a lot of
public appearances. People love U-Go-Grrrl, or love
to hate her.

In person she is twitchy, manic and constantly
fidgets at superhuman speed. She has no attention
span and gets bored in a flash. When she gets bored,
she breaks things, and is forever trashing hotel rooms
and causing trouble in public. Violent, nuts, leering
and inappropriate, she flirts broadly, badly and often.
She also has a way of developing unhealthy obsessive
crushes on male player characters. She’s much too
crazy and socially maladroit to express her feelings in
any kind of reasonable way, and will try to get their
attention by playing dangerous high-speed pranks on
them. The more the player ignores or rejects her, the
more she will escalate her tactics, getting wilder and
more outrageous. This is going to get somebody

killed if it isn’t stopped.

Unfortunately, stopping it is going to be tough.
Her powers make her hard to catch and her status as a
celebrity shields her to a large degree from arrest.
Some very powerful people have made a lot of money
from the public’s interest in U-Go-Grrrl and they aren’t
about to let her go to prison if they can help it. She
also has a kind of limited immunity from prosecution,
a holdover from her days as a superhero. Whether this
would hold up in court now that she isn’t fighting
crime or saving the world is debatable, but her lawyers
and business managers will try to use it anyway.

Using U-Go-Grrrl in your campaign:

U-Go-Grrrl can be played as a comic annoyance or
a serious, scary menace, depending on how the GM
wants to present her. She should meet one of the male
PCs in some kind of public social setting, act
obnoxious (perhaps get abusive with a waiter or some
hapless service person) appall them and leave. Make
sure that she doesn’t actually do anything illegal, but
that she’s so awful that the PC would never even
consider getting involved with her.

Only later, perhaps between some other adventures,
will she start playing pranks on them and trying to get
their attention. It all goes downhill from there.

The Unicorn

Real Name: April Pfeffner

PL: 10

Str: 8 (-1) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 14 (+2) **Int:** 14 (+2) **Wis:** 8 (-1) **Cha:** 20 (+5)

Initiative: +1 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +4

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +6/+9 (Mental

Attacks) **Defense:** +18/+17 **Speed:** 30

Damage Save: +2 **Fortitude Save:** +2

Reflexes Save: +8 **Willpower Save:** +6

Skills: Bluff +8, Diplomacy +11, Handle Animal +10, Intimidate +12, Innuendo +10

Feats: Detect Negative Thoughts, Psychic Awareness, See Invisibility, Startle, Trance, True Seeing

Powers: Amazing Reflexes Save +7 (Extra: Also Applies to Willpower Saves; Cost: 2pts), Obscure +10 (Flaw: Partial, Cost: 1pt), Telepathy +10 (Extras: Illusions [Creatures Only], Mind Control, Cost 4pts)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Irrational fear and hatred of "Bad Thoughts." Compulsively tries to stamp them out with Mind Control, regardless of the consequences to herself or others.

"Please, you have to stop hating one another before I do something awful!"

A tormented psychic who has great difficulty shutting out the thoughts of others. Negative thoughts cause her terrible pain and unhappiness and this has made her irrationally obsessed with stamping them out. The Unicorn wants everyone to be nice, to treat one another decently, to be happy and above all to think no bad thoughts. She's a powerful enough telepath to force them if they refuse. Not blessed with any sense of restraint or practicality, she causes havoc in public, projecting images of butterflies, winged horses and dolphins flying through space into the minds of everyone around her, screaming that the new age of joy and splendor is at hand. She doesn't want to hurt anybody, just to make them hold hands, sing songs about love and rainbows and forsake the cruel world that oppresses them. If she wanted to do this in private, or on a commune off somewhere in the woods, it would be merely unwholesome, but the Unicorn will do it on crowded city streets at rush hour, tying up traffic and bringing out the SWAT teams.

She has a very vivid inner fantasy life and is a spectacular telepathic combatant, projecting huge halos, coronas and streams of butterflies everywhere around her, making her voice seem to thunder from the clouds. She will avoid causing anyone physical pain, and will rely on the strength of her telepathy to force them into submission. Her powers are strong enough to affect lots of people at once and so battles

that involve the Unicorn usually have large numbers of innocent bystanders clogging up the field and getting in the way.

It may also give some heroes pause to beat the living daylights out of a fragile, wide-eyed young woman who genuinely doesn't want to hurt anyone. Then again, if they don't drag her off to jail a police tactical unit is likely to put a bullet in her poor addled brain.

Her background is unremarkable. Both her parents are moderately successful real estate brokers. They are both charming and weak, easily influenced by other people and painfully afraid of disapproval. Her father has an unconscious, low-level psychic ability to make people buy houses, but it's nothing on the same scale as the Unicorn. She grew up skinny and lonely, an only child, and has been reading people's thoughts for as long as she can remember. Always desperate to please but achingly shy, she was an unpopular kid until high school, when her fragile, waif-like beauty became apparent. She could read minds better and better as her brain matured, and she didn't like what she saw there. Nonetheless, it was a good way to help get along.

Now she's in her first year of college, and a bad LSD experience has magnified her powers enormously. She can control minds as well as read them, and she can't shut out the torrent of negative feelings that people radiate. The world is in agony, and it must stop hurting before it drives her insane.

Using The Unicorn in your campaign:

The PCs will first encounter the Unicorn shortly after her psychic breakthrough. She is disoriented and afraid, trying desperately to make the voices in her head stop screaming and she has no idea how to do this, apart from grabbing every mind within her reach and forcing it to think nice thoughts. Depending on how the encounter goes, she could be a one-shot tragic villain who appears, wreaks havoc and dies before the PCs can save her, or a recurring threat who comes back a little different each time she faces our heroes.

If they can convince her to just leave and find somewhere less populated to live, she will try to do it, but after a few months in the wilderness she will find to her horror that she can still faintly hear the cities crying out to her in pain, and that their voices are getting louder all the time. She will return to heal their pain the only way she knows how—by forcing them.

If the PCs convince her to get therapy and take some kind of medication that will suppress her superhuman abilities, she will try to comply with the program, but then find to her shock that she feels dead inside without her powers. To someone who has been able to read thoughts and feelings all her life, this is like being struck deaf or blind. She will lapse into a deep depression, stop taking her drugs and go publicly berserk once again.

If she is confined to an institution, she gets abused there and eventually escapes. Now she's angry and will no longer trust the PCs or any other authority

figures. They told her she would be safe and people would take care of her in the hospital. Instead they hurt her!

Once the Unicorn has resurfaced a couple of times, she develops a disorganized cult-like following who will try to protect her and get in the PCs' way. Unscrupulous psychic villains (like the man who calls himself "God"—see his description on page 24) may find out about her and try to exploit her for their own nefarious ends. Perhaps the best solution to the Unicorn's problems is to find her a powerful psychic teacher who can help her use and control her gifts, in which case she may turn into a different kind of character altogether—perhaps even a superheroine. A Buddhist monastery might also provide her with a safe haven, particularly if it's geographically isolated. Getting them to accept a woman as a monk may prove difficult, however (depending on the tradition they follow) and it may even start to cause the kind of psychic disruptions in their community that could trigger another one of her mental collapses.

Adventures With The Unicorn: Be Happy or Else

An utterly mysterious disaster has gripped the downtown area. Just as the evening rush hour began, some kind of traffic disturbance appeared in front of a major local landmark (use whatever landmarks would be appropriate to your campaign city), traffic is now gridlocked for miles in all directions, and yet no one seems to know exactly what is causing it. In fact they're not exactly sure where the source of the problem is—it can be tough to tell with traffic patterns and the landmark is really just where things are clogged up worst. The police who went to the scene twenty minutes ago haven't come back or checked in, and the authorities are starting to get seriously worried.

A traffic helicopter arrived about five minutes later and then suddenly dropped out of contact. They're still going through the tape of the broadcast when the PCs are summoned to look into the matter. If the Player Characters stick around to see what the last part of the tape shows, it doesn't reveal much. A lot of cars aren't moving, a lot of people have left their vehicles and are standing on the street, it's hard to be sure, but most of them seem to be looking at something off-camera. Oddly, no one in the news chopper is providing any kind of voice-over narration. The only sound on the tape is the noise of the helicopter's whirling blades.

When the PCs arrive at the landmark, the Unicorn is holding a giant crowd rapt as she begs them to stop hating one another and to believe in the power of rainbows and butterflies. Huge illusory images seem to blaze above her in the sky. Swarms of butterflies and winged unicorns flying under rainbows and dolphins swimming through the void of outer space and even sillier things. Some people are still yelling at her to let them get home to their families and their dinner, and she is trying her best to answer them. She

looks frightened and overwhelmed. Then she senses the PCs' presence and looks right at them.

How to deal with this situation? The SWAT teams are on their way and the national guard is next. As the PCs try to reason with the Unicorn, one of them gets a text message (or some other such thing) from the Mayor's office. It says "*Keep her distracted while we get the sharpshooters into position.*"

Vampire Girl

Real Name: Unknown (isn't sure herself)

PL: 10

Str: 12 (+1) **Dex:** 16 (+3) **Con:** 20 (+5)

Int: 12 (+1) **Wis:** 10 (+0) **Cha:** 18 (+4)

Initiative: +3 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +6

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +8 **Defense:**

+13/+10 **Speed:** 30/35 (Teleport)/45 (Float)

Damage Save: +5 **Fortitude Save:** +5

Reflexes Save: +3 **Willpower Save:** +0

Skills: Bluff +10, Hide +8, Knowledge (weird things) +5, Move Silently +8

Feats: Darkvision, Durability, Immunity (Aging, Disease, Poison, Suffocation)

Powers: Drain +10 (Flaw: Only Drains Constitution; Cost 1pt), Incorporeal +9 (Extra: Float; Flaw: Only Works at Night; Cost: 2pts), Regeneration +8 (Flaw: Only Works at Night, Cost: 1pt), Telepathy +10 (Extra: Mental Protection; Cost 3pts), Teleport +7 (Flaw: Only Works at Night; Cost: 1pt)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Compulsive Liar, must make a Willpower Save vs. DC 20 to tell anyone the truth about anything.

Quirk: Delusion (Thinks she is Susceptible to sunlight)

“Life is a ghastly nightmare carnival of shadows. That’s what I like about it.”

She only appears at night, she can float in midair, vanish into nothing and she drains the life force of the living. Is she the thing the vampire legends speak of? That is difficult to say. In fact nobody knows who or what she is at all, which suits her fine.

She loves to tell outrageous, contradictory stories about herself. She loves to suddenly appear, make strange pronouncements and then vanish into the shadows. One night she'll make up imaginary cabals of vampire lords who rule the world in secret, the next night she will claim that Judas Iscariot was a woman, and was punished for loving Christ by wandering the world as a vampire queen. Perhaps the next night she'll tell you that the Department of Defense used psychedelic drugs to create a test group of psi-vampires in the fifties at Area 51. None of her stories are consistent, none of them are true (or are they?)

While she enjoys acting mysterious, ancient and wise she is in fact silly, fun-loving and irresponsible, without a care in the world or a plan beyond the present moment. Vampire Girl's motives are simple. She likes to dance in clubs, lurk in darkness, get attention and suck the life force out of good-looking young men and women. A constant and compulsive liar, she feels no shame about it—or about anything else for that matter. Mercy and honor are equally

foreign to her, but then again so are malice and revenge.

She cares nothing for danger and is totally indiscreet about feeding. Only her penchant for playing it mysterious has kept from making some kind of grievous error and drawing the authorities down on her. She has yet to actually kill anyone by draining off too much of their life force, but it's not because she's being careful—she just feeds often enough that she isn't all that hungry. If she were in desperate need of sustenance, who knows what she might do?

Using Vampire Girl in your

campaign: The GM can play Vampire Girl any of a number of different ways. She can be a source of (unreliable) information about the occult underworld, a shadowy foe for the players to pursue, or even a potential love-interest. She may work best if the Player Characters are amused or enthralled by her at first, and slowly come to realize how irresponsible and dangerous she is as they see more of her.

Not particularly bloodthirsty, she has no taste for physical combat and if the PCs attempt to hunt her down she will try to avoid coming to grips with them, using hit and run tactics to pick them off one at a time as the opportunity presents itself. She is no strategist, however, and may very well attack a superior force or try to hold her ground against impossible odds, just on a whim.

Who and what she really is we leave up to GM, although perhaps it is best if the PCs never learn the answer at all.

Adventures With Vampire Girl:

1) Vampire Girl and the Case of the Discount Waterbed

Rumors reach the PCs of a creature who calls herself Vampire Girl. She haunts some new underground club, so hip the PCs didn't even yet know it existed. The place is too cool to have a name, and instead is usually called “Discount Waterbed”—the sign in the window across the street from its unmarked entrance. Club kids from Discount Waterbed pretend not to be impressed by her vampire shtick, but from the way they talk about her anyone can tell that she haunts their dreams. And a lot of them are turning up with bite marks.

PCs who choose to investigate will have two problems. First, how to infiltrate a place this exclusive, without accidentally saying or wearing something that gives them away (hint: the key is to look cool, but at the same time not like you're not consciously creating some kind of a “look”). Second, how to tell which of the pale young goddesses writhing away on the dance floor is Vampire Girl.

The PCs first trip to Discount Waterbed is frustrating and reveals nothing (if they even get in).

The second time, they meet a mysterious young woman dressed in a tight black leather dress with a 1920s bobbed haircut who acts really enigmatic when

asked about Vampire Girl. She's too cool to ever actually dance, whoever she is. The moment the PCs try to press her on the subject of Vampire Girl, she disappears, melting into the crowd.

If they try to find her they glimpse her just once, near the back door. The alley outside is deserted, although they can hear the club's dance beat throbbing through the walls. And all of a sudden they spot the young woman with the 1920s hair, lying slumped in a doorway, smiling blissfully. Standing over her is Vampire Girl. Come to think of it, they've seen Vampire Girl a bunch of times before—she was dancing next to them for a good chunk of the night. Or was she?

Vampire Girl seems amused, the girl with her sighs happily and a very odd conversation begins. She will tell them that she knew they were coming, that the forces that rule this city sent them, whether they know it or not. This is the night Count Zoltan rises from his grave to taste the blood of the world and see if the vintage has yet matured. If the PCs want to stop him, they must go to the city's oldest graveyard and find the mausoleum whose name has been eroded away. They must go quickly, for the Nine Blood Lords are already on their way to pay Count Zoltan their dark homage.

No matter what the PCs say to Vampire Girl, she replies with more of her strange monologue. If attacked, she vanishes into thin air. She disappears at the end of her speech in any case.

Wanda Nyzinski, her victim, doesn't really know much about Vampire Girl, who she only sees at the club or out back in the alley. There is no Count Zoltan, there is no mausoleum, there are no Blood Lords ready to pay anyone attendance.

The PCs don't see Vampire Girl at Discount Waterbed again. But one night while they're on an unrelated case (preferably while looking for the lair of some other villain) she suddenly appears in an alley behind them and tries to tell them that there are weak places in the world where the Vulgroids push through, sucking all the light down with them into the Seven Shadow Dimensions. That's the only reason the real world exists—they built it to provide them with sustenance and entertainment. The whole world is only about five hundred years old. And she should know, for a thousand years ago she was a princess in Samorkand, and was drawn into the seventh shadow-realm to be a handmaiden to its terrible Vulgroid queen. There is a big confluence of the forces tonight at one weak point, and who knows what might happen there. They should go and see for themselves.

Then she tells them where, and it turns out to be the exact location of the villain they are looking for. The rest of her story is complete and utter rubbish, and the villain they are chasing knows nothing about shadow dimensions or Vampire Girl.

The next time some major occult peril menaces the city, Vampire Girl appears to the Player Characters on a lonely church rooftop after midnight and tells them exactly what is going on. She uses the same loopy, pretentious style as before, but this time she is telling

the absolute, honest truth.

Then, some weeks later, a club kid turns up in the hospital, drained of life so badly that he's near death. Vampire Girl, if confronted, swears that it wasn't her, that some other peril walks the night, stealing all the prettiest kids for itself and leaving her with the dregs from the rave scene. Is she telling the truth this time? That we leave in the hands of the GM.

2) Vampire Girl and the Case of the Runaway Robot

The PCs have either bored or annoyed Vampire Girl, who decides to make their lives more interesting. The next time they see her, she tells them that she's leaving—that this city isn't safe for the dead any more. The shades desert their haunts, as something darker moves in the darkness. It's coming closer, she can feel it—it's already at (she names the intersection of two streets) and now it's moving fast! She vanishes.

If the PCs go to the location she mentioned, they will indeed find something there, but it's not some eldritch monstrosity that preys on the dead. In fact it's a giant killer robot from Texas, who calls himself "Doctor Destructor." See his individual description on page 81.

He seems delighted to see the heroes and says that "she" said they could tell him about his origins, that they know who built him and what the dreams he's been having mean. When they protest that this isn't true his mood darkens and he points out that *"She said you'd say that, if you were the False Dionyn. Then I suppose that we had better fight, if that is in fact the only way to make a False Dionyn speak the truth."*

Doctor Destructor is an implacable combatant, and will chase them all across town. He's convinced that the physical form the PCs wear isn't real, and that it conceals the three-headed Dionyn Dogs from the Other-Realm called the Hounding, who are impervious to mere physical harm. Or some such gibberish. He will be unfailingly polite while he pounds the crap out of the PCs, but he doesn't think their injuries are real and can't be persuaded to stop hitting them. *"What is my real name?"* he keeps asking.

When the PCs next see Vampire Girl, they may want to ask her why she did that to them. For the very first time she gives them a straight answer: *"I wanted to see what would happen. I'm terrible that way."*

They will probably try to attack her, but just at that moment, the troubled young supervillain called Wolf-Dog suddenly appears, and demands that they tell him the way home. She said they knew the way home, but that they wouldn't tell him out of meanness. Well he will have an answer from them—show him the way home! Vampire Girl slips away, leaving them to deal with this situation.

Wolf-Dog

Real Name: Lionel Fenric

PL: 10

Str: 14 (+2) **Dex:** 16 (+3) **Con:** 18 (+4)
Int: 10 (+0) **Wis:** 10 (+0) **Cha:** 8 (-1)
Initiative: +7 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +11
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +12 **Defense:** +23/+19 **Speed:** 35
Damage Save: +13 **Fortitude Save:** +12
Reflexes Save: +5 **Willpower Save:** +0

Skills: Balance +9, Hide +9, Jump +5, Move Silently +9, Survival +9

Feats: Dodge, Durability, Great Fortitude, Identity Change, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Rapid Healing, Scent, Takedown Attack, Tracking, Ultra-Hearing

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +3, Super-Strength +6 (Extras: Leaping, Super-Constitution, Super-Senses; Cost: 7pts), Regeneration +9 (Cost: 2pts), Running +1 (Cost: 2pts)

Weaknesses: **Disturbing** (looks like a werewolf, -5 penalty to all Bluff and Diplomacy checks)

Quirk: Foolishly loyal, even when it's severely contrary to his advantage.

Vulnerable (to Dazzle attacks).

“Wolf-Dog he the dog-dog! He steams you like iron! He hang you like laundry! He conquer the world and ask for more jam! ‘Cause dey call him Wolf-Dog!”

A crazy little werewolf with a bad haircut, Wolf-Dog is a bit of a redneck, a bit of a stoner and a bit of a punk. He's from somewhere in far northern Quebec or maybe Labrador (he says it's Quebec but his native language is English, which makes that seem unlikely). Wherever he's from, it's somewhere cold, distant and isolated, where people still think his hairdo looks tough instead of stupid.

Somehow he's been stranded in Texas, a place he doesn't like or understand at all, and he's desperate to go home to his hairy werewolf family in the frozen North. Alas, he's too ignorant to find Texas or Labrador on a map, and he doesn't have the skills to earn the money for a trip home, even if he knew where home was.

To support himself and his quest he steals, and this will soon get him into worse trouble. He loves beer and pot and is constantly tempted to waste his money on them instead of saving it up for a bus ticket, so he has to go steal more. He hasn't killed anyone yet, but he could at any time.

Wolf-Dog is wild and enthusiastic, outrageous and manic. An incorrigible delinquent, he commits acts of

vandalism and property destruction for no reason, sometimes in the middle of committing other crimes. He loves fighting, and brags and howls and shows off in combat. His soliloquies often make no sense, but they're usually fun to listen to even though his constant boasting and habit of referring to himself in the third person (“*dey call him Wolf-Dog!*”) gets on some people's nerves. Although he wants people to think he's hip, Wolf-Dog knows little about city life and it shows.

He acts like a dog even when he's in human form, and has all kinds of odd/gross doglike mannerisms. Like any dog he's distractible and loves attention. He's quick to challenge a potential foe, but when he loses he doesn't hold a grudge. If a superhero beats him up but doesn't injure him too badly, he'll become fawningly eager to impress them, like a wolf who has been humbled by another member of the pack.

If however they use excessive force on him, break his bones, put him in the hospital, or savagely humiliate him with fear attacks or mind-control, he may turn vicious and start killing people casually. If this happens he won't bother hunting the hero who wounded him, but he will react with brutal lethality if he happens to encounter that hero again.

How he came to find himself in Texas remains a mystery. He isn't very articulate, but if questioned patiently he can explain that he was running in the woods, that someone shot him with a tranquilizer dart, that he woke up once on what he thinks was a plane and again in the back of a truck. He smashed his way out of the truck and found himself stumbling down a freeway in the middle of Houston.

Using Wolf-Dog in your campaign:

What kind of villain Wolf-Dog evolves into depends largely on how the PCs treat him. He could stay a happy-go-lucky loudmouth or become a homicidal menace.

It's easy to recruit Wolf-Dog for a team. Just beat him in combat and give him some positive attention, and he'll react with slavish doglike loyalty (until he sees you get beaten in a fight or he finds a way home). He trusts easily and naively and if he is betrayed he will react with bewilderment rather than rage—at least the first time it happens.

The PCs don't have to encounter Wolf-Dog in Texas, his quest to go home could lead him in any direction and he could get tangled up in just about anything along the way.

Adventures With Wolf-Dog:

1) Wolf on th' Lam

Wolf-Dog gets off a bus in the PC's home town. It doesn't take long for him to hear about the Player Characters, and that they help people, for free. He finds them as fast as he can, and if they don't attack him on sight, he explains the nature of his problem—he wants to get home, but he doesn't know quite where it is. Also, he doesn't have enough money.

If the PCs take pity on him and try to help him out, he will follow them around, singing their praises, full of snuffing wolflike devotion. He may try to provoke a playful fight with one of the PCs, but that's just so that they can beat him and establish his place in their pack. He is loud, goofy and a little annoying, but he'll fight as hard as he can on their behalf. Perhaps a little too hard, in fact. He's eager to prove himself to his new friends and is apt to hurl himself into the teeth of danger at a moment's notice.

If on the other hand the PCs drive Wolf-Dog away, he'll follow them at a distance and try to prove his good intentions. The next time they get in a fight with a supervillain and things start to go badly for them, Wolf-Dog pops up out of nowhere, springs to their rescue, beats their opponent at the last second but gets gravely wounded himself.

Whenever they break down and decide to help him, the PCs find that Wolf-Dog's description of his home isn't really all that helpful. He has no sense of geography and he's way too hung up on little details like where the general store is located and where his grandma's cabin can be found. Yet there are tantalizing hints. He's from the northernmost part of North America, probably somewhere in northern Canada, rather than Alaska. He speaks English, rather than French, but he knows some obscene French-Canadian slang.

After he has helped them out with more than one fight and the PCs are really starting to accept him, the state police show up and demand that the PCs turn Wolf-Dog over. He's wanted for sticking up a pancake house in another city, not long before he appeared in the PC's town. They also suspect that he may have broken into a fast food restaurant and eaten some of their beef patties.

Wolf-Dog really did these things, and he looks ashamed if the PCs confront him, but he's too embarrassed to confess.

If the PCs convince him to turn himself in, things go really badly for him. He tests positive for marijuana use in lockup, which in the PCs state means he can't be released into their custody or let out on bail. Awaiting his arraignment in jail, he is savagely assaulted by a gang and hurts one of them really badly. Now he's going down for a felony, and may not breathe free air for a long time. And then he escapes.

He runs to the Player Characters for protection, certain that they'll help him. He'll do this even if they turned him over to the law, because while he feels hurt and confused by their behavior, he's not yet capable of understanding that they could actually betray him. They're his pack, after all.

If the PCs take him in, they'll find that he's a good deal meaner but still just as playful as when they first encountered him. He's become prone to using excessive force and is much easier to provoke into a fight.

If they turn him in again, he breaks out while being transported for trial. This time he's even meaner (he's PL 11 now), and he fully understands that the PCs

betrayed him (10 points went to buying off his "Foolishly Loyal" weakness).

He's pretty upset with them, for betrayal is the worst crime he can conceive of. This might be a good time to stock up on silver bullets.

2) **Bad Dog!**

Wolf-Dog falls in with the wrong crowd. He is robbing a waffle hut in Corpus Christi when he encounters a local supervillain called the Lone Star Lady. He hits it off pretty well with this morose and murderous parahuman, who introduces him to her team—the Corpus Christi Good-Time Boys. See the entry on them later on in this book to get a sense of what a dysfunctional mess poor naïve Wolf-Dog is getting himself into.

Before long, the Lone Star Lady has an affair with Wolf-Dog, mostly to get the attention of her former boyfriend, Johnny Black (who is presently involved with the team's leader, the atomic superwoman who calls herself Cimarron Starr).

This works entirely too well—Johnny becomes insanely jealous. This annoys Cimarron Starr, who determines to teach the Lone Star Lady a lesson and has a fling with Wolf-Dog herself.

Johnny is beside himself with rage, the Lone Star Lady is furious, her own manic-depressive boyfriend, the Texas Twister, is close to throwing one of his homicidal tantrums, and Wolf-Dog himself does nothing to make the situation easier. He mistakenly assumes that because both ladies were willing to be his mate, he must therefore be the pack's leader, and he begins strutting around, boastfully giving orders.

Then all four of them try to kill him, and he flees in bewilderment and terror. Now he's holed up in the PCs' town, waiting for the Corpus Christi Good Time Boys to find him. On a sudden impulse, he goes to the PCs for help. People say they help folks--why not Wolf-Dog?

God

Real Name: Jesus Pilgrim Josephson

PL: 12

Str: 10 (+0) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 14 (+2)

Int: 12 (+1) **Wis:** 20 (+5) **Cha:** 14 (+2)

Initiative: +1 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +5

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +6/+9 **Defense:**

+18/+17 **Speed:** 30

Damage Save: +2/+8 (Evasion) **Fortitude**

Save: +2 **Reflexes Save:** +6 **Willpower**

Save: +11

Skills: Bluff +8, Concentration +10, Listen +10, Sense Motive +11, Spot +10

Feats: Evasion, Headquarters (a fortified compound in the woods upstate, equipped with a Garage, a landing strip with small Hanger adjacent, improvised Holding Cells, an Independent Power System [A gasoline-powered generator], Living Space for God and all his Minions, a Reinforced Structure, Staff [15 of whom are PL 1, with one PL 2 Staff Member], six Vehicles [three vans, a battered-up old 4-wheel drive SUV, a tractor and a bulldozer] and a Workshop), Inspire, Leadership, Minions (Loyalty Level 20 [PL 12+Charisma Bonus+Displays Special Powers+Headquarters+Inspire+Leadership])

Powers: Amazing Reflexes Save +6 (Extra: Also Applies to Willpower Saves; Cost: 2pts), ESP +10 (Cost: 2 pts), Telepathy (Extras: Illusions, Memory Alteration, Mental Blast, Mind Control; Cost: 6pts)

Equipment: Really cool sunglasses.

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Has no self-control, is tempted to indulge himself and do foolhardy things to gain momentary gratification, will not hold his ground in combat once he has taken any Lethal damage unless he spends a Villain Point

“Hush my child, still your tears, for you are finally home. No more loneliness, no more regrets. I am the all-merciful, the all-forgiving and the font of pure sweet light. Now go over there, my lamb, and shoot that gentleman in the head—and then yourself.”

They call him God. He’s the lord of hosts, the living incarnation of the universe’s ultimate power—or so say his followers.

In fact he is a potent psychic, with the ability to dominate and control the minds of those around him. He is worshipped by a small but fanatical cult who call themselves the Circle of the Seventh Throne. There is a group of ten or so of his worshippers crammed into an apartment in the PCs home city, and some enclaves

of similar size in other major urban areas. He also has a large, isolated farm upstate where about sixty of his acolytes, wives and children reside. God has ten wives and is always looking for more.

Rumor has it that he’s stalked the Earth for a century, but the truth is that his powers are inherited, and his father and grandfather exploited them in exactly the same way that he has.

He grew up in the Circle, was groomed to be its new Deity, but by the age of 15 he couldn’t stand to wait to be God any longer and slew his father in a psychic duel that killed more than half of their flock. It has taken him ten years to build the Circle back up to its present strength.

The actual tenets of the Circle are a kind of militant fundamentalist Christianity, with a lot of colorful occult craziness ladled on top. His vision of the universe is vivid, if shallow, full of burning crowns and three-eyed angels with wings of bronze and secret words of power. A lot of it resembles heavy metal album cover art.

If the PCs somehow manage to speak to him in a neutral setting, they’ll find that God is eager for their approval, and desperate to show them that he’s a cynical man of the world like them—that he doesn’t really take being God so seriously as all that. He is not, however, willing to ever come out and directly admit that he isn’t really God. Characters who try to press him on this point make him Wrathful.

Using God in your campaign: Not all that much of a megalomaniac, at least for somebody who calls himself “God”, Reverend Josephson only half believes his rhetoric. He has no plans to take over the world, destroy the world, expand the Circle into a huge national organization, or indeed do much of anything else except to dominate his flock and acquire more wives.

Yet he could easily be tempted into getting into more serious trouble. For someone who dominates other minds so easily, he doesn’t have much command of his own. Under his dignified, saintly facade he’s foolhardy and weak, completely unable to resist his impulses. It would be very easy for an unscrupulous fellow supervillain to lead him into participating in a serious crime. This is in fact the way the PCs are likeliest to encounter him.

Unfortunately, he’s an undependable ally and an inexperienced criminal, and is likely to make some kind of serious mistake. If he finds himself in a desperate position, he’ll retreat to his farm, announce that the end of the world is at hand and get ready for a Waco-style siege. This situation can rapidly turn into a hideous mess, with local police, the FBI, the press, demented cultists and perhaps even an enraged supervillain or two whom God has let down all mixing it up together. Preventing a tragedy is going to be tough.

There is plenty of evidence of the bloodbath from ten years ago buried on the farm, and this fact will make God even more desperate not to give his refuge up.

Something of a coward when it comes to physical combat, God won't hesitate throw his followers (even his wives and kids) at anyone who attacks him. God desperately wants to think of himself as a good man, but as he gets more desperate and hemmed in, his basically chickenhearted nature will get the better of him, and he'll discover that he's actually capable of doing just about anything, no matter how low, vicious and despicable, if it saves his sacred hide.

If the PCs manage to break up his cult, but he gets away in the confusion, he will become incredibly vengeful, as much for what the PCs taught him about himself as for destroying the sect he spent so much of his life to build. He'll even become capable of striking at their loved ones and family members to get back at them, although he'll be sickened by his own cruelty.

Adventures With God: 1) God Steps Out to Radio Shack

A young woman runs up to one of the PCs in their secret identity, screaming and sobbing. She pleads for help, saying that God is chasing her, that God put something in her brain that makes her crazy, that He watches, He's everywhere and He sees all—they have to help her!

A quick scan of her mind will reveal that she is psychotic, but that she believes herself to be telling the truth. She has memories of meeting God, memories that seem oddly vivid and specific for hallucinations.

Before the PC has time to react, three large, concerned-looking gentlemen in identical black polyester suits and ties emerge from a van and try to take the woman away. They explain if asked that she's a member of their "community" and that she's been having psychological problems. She'll be better off with her friends back at the farm—they know how to take care of her.

They gently try to coax the woman into the van, but she gets very agitated and starts screaming that God is in the van, that he's everywhere but right now he's in the van and she won't go in there so God can make her crazy again. (if the PC has a look, there is no one in the van).

They smiling men won't take no for an answer. They remain calm, and try to persuade the PC while they are struggling to get the woman into the van that she's better off back at the community surrounded by friends who can look after her than she is on a psychoward. Has the PC ever seen what the conditions are like in a mental hospital, they ask?

If the PC wants, they can come visit the community and see how they live for themselves. In fact the three men are eager to give the PC their address. The community is always looking to make new friends.

If the PC manages to keep the woman with them, she is grateful, but insane and difficult to look after. Her memories are a tangle, but do seem to include being one of God's many wives, living on a farm and then in a cramped apartment here in the city. One night she runs away while the PC looking after her is asleep or out.

If the PC refused to take the community's address, it's easy enough to find. Any Player Character who is looking for the community suddenly spots one of the three men who took the woman away. He's handing out religious pamphlets in a public park and he's happy to tell anyone who asks him how to find the community.

The community is a large but cramped garden apartment well outside the city, in a suburban subdivision without any sidewalks, out where it would be really difficult to get to anything without a car.

About ten of God's followers live here, seven of them women. All of the women are pretty—He seems to have a thing for skinny blondes.

God is absent when the PCs arrive. The woman who ran up to them on the street (her name is Margaret Ford) is present, calm and exhausted. Margaret seems sane, and tells the PCs that she's feeling much better now. She thanks them for their help and explains that her mind is once more whole now that she is a bride of God again.

If the PCs ask where God is, one of the women says "*Radio Shack*" but the others assure the PC that God is present—in fact He's everywhere.

If the PC insists on waiting for God, He doesn't show up. After a little while, the members of the community tell the PC to come back some other time.

Meanwhile, God has sensed that a powerful parahuman (or whatever the PC is) has invaded his sanctum and is talking to his wives. This agitates Him (He's a jealous god) and brings Him into conflict with the PCs. If they won't leave his apartment, he hits them with a long-range psychic attack, warning them off. Otherwise, he just instructs his followers not to talk to the PCs. If the PC doesn't want to leave, and the GM doesn't want the conflict to heat up just yet, an unrelated super-crisis suddenly comes up and they have to go solve it. Then, some time later, the sister, girlfriend or other close female contact of a Player Character suddenly joins God's community and becomes one of his brides.

Once He figures out how close his new bride is to a local superhero, God panics, pulls out of the city and retreats to his farm. He may or may not send a brainwashed assassin or two after the PCs. You can also have him play cat and mouse with the PCs for a while before fleeing, if that would be more fun. He will always try to hit them at a distance and always avoid letting them see him directly, in the flesh.

Once he has fled, it will be very easy to interest in the authorities in God's activities and not at all hard to track him down. This will however precipitate the standoff described above in the notes on Campaign Use.

2) Vote God

A crooked politician gets in touch with God. We'll leave his name, party and position blank, so that you can work him into your campaign more easily. This could be anyone from a County Commissioner or a City Alderman up to a Senator or possibly even the President, depending on the needs of your game.

Ideally, it should be someone the Players already know is dirty.

Whoever he is in your game, he's up for re-election and things don't look good for him. His opponent is a real fire-breathing reformer with a groundswell of populist support behind him. Things look so bad that the incumbent is desperate enough to turn to the likes of God.

He will pay God an enormous amount of money to cripple his opponent's campaign. The plan is simple. God will appear at a public event where the incumbent's foe is speaking, take over his mind, and force him to say ridiculous, outrageous things that will cost him the election.

But things do not go as planned. The stress of having his mind taken over sends the victim into a psychotic break and he goes into a crazed, foaming religious rapture right there at the podium. This attracts way too much of the wrong kind of media attention. Worse, at least a dozen witnesses saw God at the scene, and two of them took pictures. God tries to track them all down and selectively erase their memories, but this causes too many of them to go insane and have religious meltdowns of their own. At least one of them develops psychic powers and goes on a brief rampage.

Soon the crooked politico who hired God starts playing on his paranoia, and talks him into making the rest of the witnesses kill themselves and/or one another.

The PCs are confronted with a baffling web of madness, death and bad religion. A little investigation shows that all the victims' paths crossed at the political rally where the first victim went crazy on TV. What did they witness there? Are there other potential victims whom the PCs could still save? Does one of them have photos of God?

3) God Falls in With the Wrong Crowd

The Six Dollar Man somehow finds God's phone number and gives Him a call. He tempts God with news of a major marijuana buy that he knows will take place out at a junkyard on the edge of the city. The two of them could rip the buyer off really easily, using God's power over the minds of men.

It's just about the perfect crime—neither nor the buyer nor the seller can go to the police and they're just a bunch of hippies selling to a bunch of college students—they're not wired into organized crime or anything like that. Maybe God could even get into the buyers' brains and make them get off drugs. That would be like doing them a favor, almost. They could keep the grass themselves or sell it through the Six Dollar Man's contacts, whatever God wills.

The Six Dollar Man is lying on at least two crucial points. That's why he communicates with God only by phone—he doesn't want Him reading his mind.

But even before the Six Dollar Man's treachery comes out, things start to go awry. For the Six Dollar Man's long-suffering girlfriend Dottie has finally decided to rat him out. She doesn't dare run to the cops. Her boyfriend is actually planning to sell the

stolen drugs to some crooked police detectives, so talking to the cops might very well get her killed.

Instead she goes to the PCs and tells them everything she knows. She has never seen God in person and she doesn't know his name, but she does know that the Six Dollar Man has invited another supervillain in on the deal, and that he's planning to screw him over.

Which brings us to the things he has lied about to God. It's not pot that's up for sale, it's crack. And the parties involved are not harmless hippies and clueless college students, they're bikers and Mafiosi.

And then the Player Characters burst onto the scene. When God sees everything go nuts, he panics badly and starts making people kill one another. Then He tries to get back to His lair upstate, where he may or may not decide that the end of the world has come and start preparing for a siege by the feds, depending on whether or not the PCs follow him. Even if they don't there are a lot of angry gangsters who now have a bone to pick with God.

Helen Damnation

Real Name: Seiko "Psycho" Suzuki

PL: 12

Str: 16 (+4) **Dex:** 20 (+5) **Con:** 18 (+4)

Int: 13 (+1) **Wis:** 10 (+0) **Cha:** 12 (+1)

Initiative: +10 **Attack Bonus (Melee):**

+11 **Attack Bonus (Ranged):** +11

Defense: +22/+12 **Speed:** 30

Damage Save: +6 **Fortitude Save:** +6

Reflexes Save: +10 **Willpower Save:** +5

Skills: Balance +10, Climb +10, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +11, Drive +13, Handle Animal +6, Hide +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Yakuza) +5, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Repair +5, Search +10, Spot +8, Taunt +10

Feats: Accurate Attack, Assessment, Attack Finesse, Chokehold, Dodge, Evasion, Far Shot, Great Fortitude, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Quick-Draw, Talented (Listen and Spot), Toughness

Powers: Powers: Reincarnate +10, Super-Dexterity +5 (Extras: Super-Senses, Super-Strength, Super-Wisdom; Flaw: Super-Strength only applies toward skill checks; Cost: 6pts)

Equipment: Wrist-Mounted Pistol (+5 Lethal), Sword (+5 Lethal), Vehicle (Psycho--Cycle; Move: 8, Hardness: 8, Armor Bonus: 0; Cost: 9pts)

Weaknesses: **Berzerker**

Quirk: Crazy, irrational and unpredictably violent. Does foolhardy things, has no impulse control.

Quirk: Enraged by any display of physical affection. Will immediately attack anyone kissing, holding hands, cuddling, etc., even if doing so puts her at a tactical disadvantage.

"The Devil plumb throwed me outta Hell on account of I raised so much ruckus down there. So now I reckon I'm yore problem, scout."

Queen of the pistol, the knife and the lariat, sharpshooter extraordinaire, hell-raiser deluxe, Helen Damnation was Perdition's own daughter. A legend across the violent plains of the Old West, her real name and her origins are unknown. She claimed to have given birth to herself on a bed of barbed wire and broken whisky bottles.

A lot of people felt that her skills with a rifle were too good to be natural and that she must have sold her soul to Lucifer to get them. She enthusiastically agreed, but said the Devil didn't want her soul once he got a look at its condition, so she had to beat his secrets out of him instead.

The truth lies somewhere in between. She didn't mention, for example, that she also bargained with the forces of darkness for eternal life. Eternal life, eternal youth, eternal violence and chaos as well as a limitless capacity for vice. There was a catch, but she thought little of it. As the embodiment of the West's reckless, savage spirit, she could only survive where the open plains spread lawless and untamed.

For decades she sang and drank and killed and spread glorious havoc hither and yon. Then the West began to evaporate beneath her. Barbed wire and the railroad strangled the world she loved, driving her deeper and deeper into the Northwest. Actual uninhabited wilderness would not do, for she found it intolerably dull-she liked the fringes of civilization where there were bets to win and whisky to drink and people to kill. Those fringes had worn very thin by the 1890s.

By the turn of the 20th century she had taken up residence in Alaska, her legend and powers fading as civilization relentlessly marched North. In 1910 she went down to the city of Chicago, hoping to die when she set foot on its streets. Instead she accidentally discovered that there were whole huge areas of the urban landscape where she was as strong as she had ever been, for they knew no law but the gun.

And then the legend of the West began to grow, exerting more and more power over the minds of Mankind. As it grew, so did the strength of her own legend and so did her power. Killers passed her secret tales to one another and made strange offerings to her on makeshift altars in tenement basements and deserted rail yards.

Yet as the cities grew better organized (largely due to organized crime, at first) her territory once more began to shrink. A disastrous trip to Peoria in 1935 extinguished her corporeal form entirely, and since then she has had to manifest herself in the bodies of others. Every ten or twenty years some luckless killer conjures up the soul of Helen Damnation and is consumed by her. She burns up bodies like fuel, causing so much trouble and chaos that despite the blessing of eternal youth her host soon gets killed. She generally dies laughing.

Helen will only inhabit the bodies of women, and only if they are to her tastes. She presently walks in the form of Seiko "Psycho" Suzuki, a part-time drug dealer and full time lunatic assassin for one of the lesser-known Yakuza families in Honolulu. Seiko was wild, crazy and dangerous enough before Helen Damnation came a-calling.

In person Helen is quite a handful. She doesn't completely subsume the host personality, so there's still a lot of Psycho Suzuki left in her. She talks fast and often incoherently, in a kind of childish 19th century slang that seems to be partly derived from pulp adventure novels. Constantly loud, constantly breaking things out of spite, largely driven by impulse, she has a savage mean streak and her crazy antics always culminate in violence. It's not a good evening if no one gets killed. She is oddly asexual, and doesn't hold with what she calls "mush stuff." Any display of

physical affection is enough to set her off and provoke a potentially fatal reaction.

One odd final note. In 1965 a historian named Morris Hipplewaite proved conclusively that Helen Damnation never existed and that she was in fact the creation of two different pulp authors, Hubert Stickle and Leonard Creech, who both independently thought the character up in 1868, apparently without any knowledge of each other. There never was such a person, or even such a folktale. Yet here she is.

If asked about Morris Hipplewaite Helen just shrugs, giggles and says "*He daid.*"

Using Helen Damnation in your

campaign: If the Player Characters kill Seiko, Helen may or may not be back. If she does reappear in someone else's body, she'll remember them but unless the PCs gave her a really exciting fight she won't go out of her way to mix it up with them.

While she doesn't give a damn for honor or fairness, she also doesn't hold grudges and won't particularly resent an opponent who beats her. Indeed, she doesn't seem to much care whether she wins or loses a fight—she just finds the noise and motion stimulating.

Adventures With Helen Damnation: 1) A Fistfull of Damnation

The Osamu Yakuza and the Matsumoto Yakuza are at war. Their invisible empires stretch all around the world, and their soldiers clash in secret from Sydney to Osaka to Berlin. But their distant branches in the Player Characters' home city have no desire to fight each other. Boss Hojo is too reasonable and Boss Yokoyama is too old (and in any case far too cowardly). The two clans have made only the most tentative jabs at each other, and that purely for the sake of form.

Enter Psycho Suzuki, AKA Helen Damnation. She's determined to provoke a conflict and will kill as many people on both sides as are required to provoke a war.

She hits Yokoyama's nephew at a karaoke bar, she hits Hojo's wife's brother while he's getting a massage, but unfortunately both men were hated and feared by their bosses, who are actually relieved to have them dead. She kills more people, but the more havoc she wreaks the more the two men resist doing what she wants. It's obvious to Hojo that this is all her doing, and Yokoyama is willing to believe him (or anything else that will allow him to watch old samurai movies and play dominoes undisturbed).

After she has killed enough of their soldiers, both Oyabuns finally have no choice but to declare war—on Helen Damnation!

In the course of chasing her around Little Tokyo, it becomes clear that she's more than they can handle, so they call in the Player Characters. Both Oyabuns would like to make a deal. If the PCs can stop Helen Damnation from slaughtering any more of their nephews and grandsons, they will both turn

themselves in to the authorities. Clever players may suspect a trick, but in fact both men are completely sincere. Yokoyama was looking for a way to retire anyway and Hojo figures he can still run things from behind bars.

Unfortunately, neither one wants to risk losing more men, so the PCs will have to face Helen Damnation on their own. She shouldn't be hard to find. Just go down to Little Tokyo and follow the trail of carnage.

2) An Evening with Helen Damnation

Helen Damnation is on the loose and on the town. Over the next hours she will raise random havoc until she is stopped.

Just after midnight she turns up at an illegal dice game in a parking garage. She bets with a lot of bravado, but she loses. This makes her mad, so she shoots the place up, wounding three people.

Then she drives her motorcycle the wrong way through traffic and shows up at a karaoke bar at about 1:30. She doesn't like the music, hassles whoever is at the microphone, and when they throw her out of the bar she shoots out all the windows.

She's driving the wrong way down another busy street when she shoots the spotlight off a police car at 2:00 and leads them on a brief chase.

At 2:30 she crashes her bike into a video arcade and continues on foot.

At 2:50 she spies a young Asian couple holding hands in a park and is infuriated by this display of "mush stuff." She chases them down and beats them both savagely, putting the boy in the hospital when she finds that he won't kiss dog excrement even with a gun to his head.

At 3:10 she steals a bike from a Japanese cycle gang and leads them on a chase through traffic the wrong way. By 3:40 she has lost them, but the cops spot her and she leads them on a second, longer chase.

At 4:15 she enters an illegal motorcycle race that a different gang is sponsoring out on the freeway by the edge of town. She wins the race, by cheating viciously. When she gets disqualified she steals the prize, and roars off into the night, pursued by the cycle gang, then the cops as well, and then the other gang she stole the bike from.

By 5:00 in the morning she's leading a huge chase through town as the sun starts to peek over the horizon. If the Player Characters haven't caught up to her already, they should encounter her here.

While the PCs can stumble across Helen Damnation at any point in her rampage, the scenario often works better if they hear reports of her bad behavior at the dice game or the karaoke bar and pursue her across town, trying to catch up as she spreads more chaos.

Chapter 3: Major Threats

The Snow Queen, aka Cold Marla, aka the White Lady

Real Name: Marla Frost

PL: 15

Str: 10 (+0) **Dex:** 16 (+3) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 16 (+3) **Wis:** 12 (+1) **Cha:** 16 (+3)
Initiative: +2 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +6
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +8 **Defense:**
+18/15 **Speed:** 30
Damage Save: +2/+15 (Force-Field)
Fortitude Save: +6 **Reflexes Save:** +8
Willpower Save: +7

Skills: Bluff +7, Diplomacy +9, Sense Motive +8,
Spot +7, Taunt +8

Feats: Accurate Attack, Attack Focus (Energy
Blast), Connected, Dodge, Expertise, Immune to Cold,
Infamy, Iron Will, Minions (Up to 35 PL1 thugs, 3
PL2 thugs, 1 PL3 thug and 1 PL4 thug) Point Blank
Shot, Power Attack, Power Immunity, Precise Shot

Powers: Amazing Save (Fortitude) +4 (Extras:
Reflexes, Willpower; Cost: 2pts), Energy Control
(Cold) +15 (Extras: Energy Field, Energy Shapes,
Force Field; Power Stunts: Energy Blast; Cost 5pts),
Slick +5 (Cost: 2pts), Teleport +10 (Extras: Extended
Teleport; Flaws: Can Only Teleport By stepping into a
mass of snow or ice, and can only Teleport out of
another mass of snow or ice on the far end; Cost 2pts)

*“I have 56 flavors of agony on special
today. Which one would you like?
Oooh, a triple-decker! That’s a popular
order.”*

She’s cold. Marla Frost hasn’t felt anything about anything for a long, long time. By now she’s been a criminal for so long, seen and done so many awful things that it all blurs together, all feels like it happened to somebody else. She can’t remember everyone she’s killed, maimed or ruined. Long past guilt, long past going into emotional shock, long past being surprised at what she’s capable of doing. Even her cruelty feels muffled to her.

But while she may just be going through the motions, she still does it awfully well. The Snow Queen deals coke, primarily, but she can be hired on a

short-term basis for just about any criminal enterprise, from assassination to bank robbery. Highly sought after, she has a reputation as a complete pro—steady under fire, fearless and responsible. She takes orders without complaint, she always shows up on time and she never shows up stoned.

Marla keeps moving when she isn’t in prison. She’ll blow into town with a big pile of coke, cut some unpopular local dealer out of his action, leave his frozen, shattered corpse as a reminder for his friends and relations not to trifle with her, make enough money to buy more coke, and move on the moment things start to get too hot.

She likes warm weather. Despite her powers, she despises cold climates—not because it causes her discomfort, but because it reminds her of her childhood in Duluth. She hates the sight of people staggering through snowy streets, wrapped up in heavy coats with their noses leaking snot into their mufflers.

Although the Snow Queen likes sultry temperatures, she knows that her immunity to cold puts her at an advantage, so her lair will usually be inside a refrigerator truck, industrial meat locker or some other big refrigerated place. Her henchmen and other criminal associates will stand there shivering and passing out from the cold, while she calmly discusses business, clearly unconcerned with their discomfort. This helps inspire fear.

Sometimes she uses paid henchmen and sometimes she doesn’t, depending on the nature of the job. If she does hire thugs then she tries to keep them afraid of her, but unlike some supervillains she doesn’t kill or cripple them for making trivial mistakes. It’s too much effort to hire new people, particularly if you give yourself a reputation for butchering the help.

Superbly gifted at the art of intimidation, she makes threats and talks trash with the best of them. She also knows that fear is a better intimidation tool than actual violence. You can’t kill someone twice, dead men don’t pay their debts and people with nothing left to lose make bad enemies. She will certainly threaten a prospective enemy’s loved ones (if she knows who they are), she may kidnap one and leave another one dead and frozen on their doorstep as a warning, but she’ll try hard not to take away everything a mark has—unless of course that’s the assignment.

Her fighting style varies according to the kind of combat she finds herself involved in. If she’s up against a powerful opponent, or if she’s here to kill a particular person and get away clean then she’ll hit and run as fast as possible, using the element of surprise if she can. If on the other hand she’s there to beat somebody up and terrorize them, she’s showy,

dramatic and cruel, fond of taunting the victim and of tricks like freezing and shattering their fingers, ears, or lips.

In person she seems distant, distracted, forbidding and sadistic. She often looks as though her mind is somewhere else, but she still has a wicked sense of humor. Only seldom does she bother to raise her voice.

While she speaks standard English, and has only the very faintest trace of a Minnesota accent, her background is a white-trash chamber of horrors. Her family lived in a run-down trailer somewhere outside of Duluth. She had one little brother, now deceased. Her parents screamed at each other and wasted their money on crank, while her schoolmates taunted her for her ragged Salvation Army clothes.

When Marla was 12 her Mom stabbed her Dad and got taken away by the cops. Dad wound up in the hospital, much too far away for his kids to reach him on foot. The family had been fighting eviction for a month, and with both parents out of action, there was nothing to prevent it now. Marla and her little brother wound up living in the woods at the end of the block.

Their Dad went into a coma and their nearest relatives were in Ohio—and hated their branch of the family in any case. It was a bleak November for the Frost kids.

And then a cold snap hit, sudden and savage as lightning. One night it was forty degrees, the next night it was fifteen and Marla and her brother were in immanent danger of death. By the time they realized that they weren't going to survive the night outside, both kids were already suffering from hypothermia.

Little Tom was overcome first, so his sister carried him. When she could carry him no further, she left him in the snow and wandered on alone. She collapsed herself a few hundred yards away.

It was Thanksgiving, she suddenly remembered. What a strange time to die.

And as the snow covered her up, the spirits of the cold North Wind came to her. They were intrigued, they explained, by the way she had left her little brother to die, just to have a few more minutes of life herself. They respected that kind of thinking, and they were prepared to offer her a deal. She could have her life and have their power, if she agreed to walk away and never tell anyone that little Tommy was dying there in the snow. This sounded reasonable to her.

A few days later, she managed to hook up with a coke dealer that mom knew, who liked girls Marla's age. She moved in with him for just long enough to learn his whole client list, then froze him to death with her new powers and took his stash.

She liquidated as much product as she could and headed south, looking for somewhere warm.

For a long time Marla tried to keep her powers secret, only using them when her back was to the wall. This was a sound policy. She was actually thrown in prison and used her powers to escape twice without anyone finding out that she was a parahuman. She was able to lie low for long enough to take a lot of community college courses, study elocution and

nearly get a Master's Degree in Psychology.

Once the cat was out of the bag she used her status as a supervillain to her advantage, playing the role as well as she could, making people fear her and landing big jobs with organized crime when she wasn't in school or prison.

She supposes her parents are probably both still alive out there, somewhere, but she's never bothered to check.

Using the Snow Queen in your

campaign: A versatile adversary, the Snow Queen can be used as a kind of low-level master villain, complete with henchmen, a secret base and a minor Master Plan (usually something like: steal a big diamond, trade it for lots of coke, sell the blow at a massive profit, kill everyone who knows about her and get out of town). Or she can be a mercenary villain, a temporary member of a team or even a personal arch-nemesis. She's done it all. And none of it really satisfied.

Adventures With The Snow Queen:

1) **Death, With Sprinkles on Top**

A drug dealer named Jimmy Mack Alcazar comes to the Player Characters for help. He swore to look after his brother's kids while he's in prison, and now one of them is dead and one of them is missing and he's so upset he can't think straight and he doesn't know what to do.

It's the Snow Queen. She rolled into town just a few days ago, somehow figured out that he knew about a major coke deal that will be taking place tomorrow, left his 16 year old nephew frozen and shattered on his doorstep and took his 8 year old niece away.

Then she called Jimmy Mack on his cell phone and told him that she would appreciate his assistance with her plan to rip off the coke. She didn't let him speak to his niece or anything, he doesn't know if the little girl is alive or dead, but he gave it all up anyway, told her everything he knew. She never gave his niece back and anyway everyone is going to know that Jimmy Mack tipped off the Snow Queen so he's dead anyway and they'll probably kill his niece too. The PCs have just gotta help him, he says. He'll do anything.

And the strange thing is, he's telling the truth. The Snow Queen is up to her usual tricks. She appeared in town last week, scoped out the drug scene, froze some fingers and ears off people until she found someone who could tell her something useful, and is now getting ready to steal a big shipment of cocaine.

To help out with the heist and with distributing the blow afterwards, she has recruited a gang of thugs, dressed them up in ice cream man uniforms and christened them the "Waffle Cone Gang." With their scars, tattoos and gold teeth they don't really look like the kind of guys you'd want to buy ice cream from, but they do look like the right kind of guys to sell you

coke. They drive around in ice cream trucks and they turn the music on when they're about to do a drive-by shooting.

The Snow Queen's current lair is a meat locker in a warehouse out by the airport. She doesn't keep Jimmy Mack's niece there. In fact the little girl rides around in the back of one of the ice cream trucks and has been having a pretty good time eating ice cream all day and playing with the thugs.

The coke deal is going to take place in the parking lot of a used tire depot, under a huge grinning fiberglass statue of a gorilla. Both parties know and trust one another, and neither one is bringing a lot of bodyguards. And then the tinkling sound of ice cream trucks is heard in the distance...

2) A Dish Served Cold

The Snow Queen always assumed that her useless parents were still alive out there somewhere. In fact her mom died years ago in a prison brawl, and her father, who never fully recovered from his injuries, died from a botched surgery just last spring.

Due to an administrative foul-up they actually performed the wrong surgical procedure on her father. Ordinarily, the doctors performing the surgery would have noticed that something was wrong, but the chief surgeon was blasted out of his mind on coke (ironically enough) and none of the other staff wanted to question his judgment.

The Snow Queen was shocked by how badly the news of her parents' death has affected her. She thought she was long past caring about anything like this, and yet it has made her a weeping wreck.

At first she considered pursuing litigation against the people responsible for her father's death, but the state where her father lived in the last years of his life has a law that limits medical malpractice suits to a ridiculous pittance. After talking some more with lawyers and doing a little independent research of her own, she has noticed that there was a startling rise in the number of malpractice-related deaths in that state, once the law went into effect.

She takes a certain grim satisfaction in the knowledge that a lot of other people are suffering the way she is. Nevertheless, it's not enough. Everyone must die. The assisting doctors who should have corrected the chief surgeon, the filing clerk who made the error, the hospital administrators who overworked the staff until they started making lethal mistakes, the lobbyists who got the law passed, the legislators who voted for it, the governor who signed it, the head of the medical association that pushed for it, and maybe the board of the insurance company that backed them, if she has time. They will all die. Horribly.

She's saving the chief surgeon for last, for she wants him to know that she is coming. She hasn't decided whether or not to kill herself afterwards, for selling the coke that eventually found its way up his nose and into his brain, shorting out his judgment and killing her Dad.

Black Thunder

Real Name: Powers Cage

PL: 16

Str: 14 (+2) **Dex:** 16 (+3) **Con:** 20 (+5)
Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 18 (+4) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: +7 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +17
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +18 **Defense:** +19/+15
Speed: 40
Damage Save: +16 **Fortitude Save:** +5
Reflexes Save: +3 **Willpower Save:** +4

Skills: Hide +10, Knowledge (Southeast Asian Criminal Underworld) +5, Languages (Chinese, Indonesian, Spanish, Thai, Vietnamese), Listen +9, Medical +5, Move Silently +10, Spot +8, Survival +9

Feats: All-Out Attack, Chokehold, Dodge, Durability, Expertise, Improved Critical ("Strike" attack), Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Infamy, Power Attack, Rapid Takedown, Surprise Strike, Stunning Attack, Takedown Attack, Track

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +6 (Cost: 1pt), Deflection +6 (Cost: 2pts), Running +2 (Cost: 2pts), Strike +10 (Cost: 2pts), Super-Strength +5 (Extras: Amazing Save [Damage], Protection; Cost: 6pts)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Won't harm innocent bystanders or allow them to come to harm.

"Stop trying to kill me for a minute and I'll tell you what really happened at Muy Trahn."

One of the most wanted criminals in American history, he's been running from the law for thirty years and hasn't been caught yet. He's a traitor, a killer, a selfish monster and one of America's most dedicated enemies.

A front-line superhero in Vietnam, he was always dangerously unstable, prone to anti-American tirades and disobeying orders. The Army put up with his bad attitude and Communist leanings perhaps more than it should have, since he was tremendously effective on the battlefield—but then again no one could have known what he was eventually going to do.

During the defense of Muy Trahn Village he fought bravely against impossible odds, almost single-handedly fending off a massive Viet Cong assault. He felt he deserved the Medal of Honor for that, and when he received a Silver Star instead, he deserted and joined the other side.

At first no one wanted to admit that this could have happened, that any American serviceman could be selfish enough to drag shame down on his country, fighting his own comrades and staining the honor of the Armed Forces. Yet it was so. For the next twenty

years he turned up all across the Far East, fighting America's allies, getting entangled in the international drug trade. After that he seemed to slow down, perhaps feeling his age, but all the signs indicate that he's still out there somewhere, plotting the downfall of America.

Capturing Black Thunder has been a high priority for the American Intelligence community for the past three decades, but despite a few close brushes they haven't caught up with him yet. If the Player Characters ever manage it, perhaps they'll find out the truth. He's eager to talk about what really happened, and he'll gladly tell anyone who listens.

As you may have guessed, most of the official story on Black Thunder is a lie, but some of it is just an oversimplification.

He made a lot of mistakes, he freely admits. Powers Cage was a happy-go-lucky, carefree teenager from Georgia. He's older and wiser now, but in 1968 he was a wild and thoughtless kid. The restrictions black folks had to endure in rural Georgia didn't sit well with him and his family was sure that he would mouth off in front of the wrong people and get lynched, sooner or later. They encouraged him to join the Army, and he did. Somehow he didn't grasp that this would mean getting sent to Vietnam.

The Army detected his latent superhuman powers in Basic Training, and had him sent to a special six-week program at Fort Dix. After a course of stimulant injections and Rage Therapy, his abilities manifested and he was ready to be transferred to Fort Meade in Maryland for advanced parahuman training. It never happened. Superhumans were desperately needed on the front lines, so they shipped him off to Da Nang without anything more than the most basic instruction in how to use his powers. He was issued a costume and assigned to an infantry platoon as a combat specialist. He hadn't had time to go to Officer Training School, so they made him a Private, First Class.

His unit was deep in the back country of Da Nang Province, a heavily contested zone. They had encounters with the enemy every week out there.

It didn't take him long to realize how useless his superhuman powers were in jungle warfare. He was really strong, and he could project energy out of his fists, drastically enhancing the power of his blows. If he concentrated really hard he could throw a bolt of energy out of his hands, and fry a man in his boots up to a few yards away. None of which made any difference at all, except in close combat, which never seemed to happen.

His energy blasts didn't have the range of a rifle, and they made a lot more noise. He could actually form a kind of energy shield that would block incoming bullets, but only if he knew what direction they were coming from—something you never knew out in the bush. What did it matter that he could lift a jeep over his head? When was that ever going to

come up in a war like this one?

Worse, his costume made him a walking target for snipers. They always killed the guy with powers first. The other grunts in his platoon didn't even want to stand near him on patrol. After he figured this out he tried to wear his super-duds as little as possible, even though the officers got on his case about it.

Like a lot of guys, he took drugs to dull the constant stress and tension. This got him written up on suspicion a couple of times, which he compounded by getting involved in the "Dap" controversy.

The "Dap" was a special, super-complicated handshake that black servicemen gave each other to show their solidarity with one another. It could go on for minutes, if you let it. In 1969 the Armed Forces cracked down on the Dap, on the grounds that it was a symbol of "Black Power" subversion. Nobody told Black Thunder this until he was caught doing the Dap by a new lieutenant (who was himself black) and disciplined for it.

It was tough being a black man in the Army, fighting for a country that oppressed you at home. Lynching was still a fact of life in the South, black people had only gained the universal right to vote four years earlier. A lot of black servicemen felt conflicted about the war.

The enemy knew this, and would periodically distribute leaflets aimed at undermining their will to fight. Crudely made and badly translated into English, they were a hoot to read and sometimes a group of black soldiers would gather around to chuckle over a particularly silly one. Black Thunder got caught doing this (by the same officer who caught him doing the Dap), and this time he was nearly sent up on charges for reading commie literature.

All of these things weighed heavily on him, but he was too busy trying to stay alive to let it get him down. And stay alive he did, one way or another, until he was finally getting close to the midway point of his term, and his first extended leave.

He had his heart set on going to Bangkok, where the other guys said that the food was cheap, the women were extremely friendly, and nobody cared that you were black.

Then along came the incident that would make him into first a hero and then a fugitive.

There were two ways of handling a patrol. You could go from point Alpha, to Point Bravo, to Point Charlie, to Point Delta, like you were supposed to. Or if you knew the guys in your patrol, you didn't like getting shot at and you all agreed not to snitch, you could just go off somewhere else and make sure to turn up at point Delta on time.

As his hours in the bush grew short, Black Thunder grew jealous of his life and started ditching his patrols more and more. He liked to spend time in the nearby village when he could. A country boy himself, it always interested him to see how the farmers lived, how different their lives were from his own.

One evening, he and the guys had ditched their patrol, and were wandering through the village of Muy Tranh, when they unexpectedly came under fire. The

Viet Cong had marked this hamlet as being loyal to the wrong side, and they were here to teach it a lesson.

The four American soldiers returned fire, which surprised and alarmed the attacking VC, who suddenly weren't sure how heavily defended the village might be. Darkness fell, the four Americans were effectively pinned down, and the fighting dissolved into confusion as a heavy evening thunderstorm settled over the village.

Some time around nine o'clock the VC decided to take the hamlet, and moved in among the huts despite the pouring rain and the terrible visibility. This was the moment Black Thunder and his abilities had been made for.

He crept between the houses, keeping low and killing any VC he found, the sound of the storm masking the sound of his powers in action. He's not sure now, but he must have killed between fifteen and twenty men that night. The rest panicked, the VC pulled out, unsure of the enemy's strength, and Black Thunder began to wonder if they would give him the Silver Star instead of a Court Martial. It was not to be.

Wounded in the fighting, he was sent to a field hospital, where he spent the rest of his time before they put him on the plane to Bangkok. To his amazement, nobody back at headquarters seemed to know or care that his patrol hadn't been where they should have been on the night in question. They were eager to have superhuman heroes, and bent over backwards to give him his Silver Star.

But they take a soldier's entire service record into account when deciding what decorations to award, and they denied the other three men their medals, on the grounds that all three of them had at one point or another been seen giving the "Dap" handshake and reading commie pamphlets. This galled Black Thunder badly.

On the transport plane, headed for Bangkok, he could hear anti-aircraft fire and he began to wonder if he was going to be one of those unlucky souls who got blown up on their way to take leave. Everything he hated about the Army seemed to come crashing in on him at once.

When they arrived, he found Bangkok to be as great as everybody said it was. It was a fascinating city, the people were nice, and for the first time in his life, no one seemed to care that he was black. Soon he hooked up with a young lady who was far too pretty to have ever gone out with him back home, and he began to seriously consider deserting.

A lot of guys went AWOL in Bangkok. The MPs always found them after they burned through their money and their girlfriends kicked them out the door. But it seemed to him that there had to be a lot of places like this all across Southeast Asia, and that if he went far enough, they wouldn't catch him. He's been running ever since.

Black Thunder had no idea that his powers would make him such a target. In fact his desertion made headlines nationwide. It was a grave embarrassment to the Nixon Administration, and their inability to catch him made it worse. The armed forces and the

intelligence community have a serious grudge against the man, more for what he symbolized than for what he actually did, and many within their ranks still hate him with an irrational fury.

Life on the run was not as easy as he had hoped. He tried hiding in Laos, then Malaysia, then Indonesia, then the Philippines.

He was able to rent his powers out to various armed factions in Laos and to the occasional bandit gang. He never felt good about doing this, but he had to eat. He liked bodyguard work best, because it was easy and he usually didn't have to hurt anybody.

More than one secret CIA strike force came after him, and a couple of superhero teams got close. He always tried to do them as little damage as he could while making his escape, but some guys got killed anyway.

By the early 1980s he had saved enough money to settle down for a while in Bali, a place he has come to dearly love. He lives quietly there and keeps a very low profile.

The CIA hasn't come close to him in years. In fact they may not be trying very hard any more. However, Jim Flint of the mercenary super-team Executive Solutions hates Black Thunder in a way that isn't entirely sane, and continues to hunt for him in a low-key kind of way. Whenever the PCs get a lead on Black Thunder's whereabouts, Flint will too, and he'll send an assassination squad.

Black Thunder has regularly tried to send cash home to his family, but they regard him as a shameful disgrace and will have nothing to do with the money he sends. He can't blame them. They endured a lot of grief from the FBI on his behalf.

In person, he is thoughtful, calm and reasonably articulate. He's grown up a lot since his days as a young hothead and he no longer has anything to prove. It's difficult but not impossible to get him riled. While he has a lot of regrets, he is basically cheerful by nature and tries not to burden other people with them. Aware that he hasn't had a chance to get much education, he is interested in the world around him and always enjoys learning new things.

He has had to kill more people than he likes, and tries hard not to do it if he doesn't have to, but he is still capable of murder if he's pushed too far or his back is to the wall. The sad truth is, he enjoys killing a lot more than he cares to admit to himself.

Using Black Thunder in your

campaign: This is the guy your Players will all want to fight eventually—the legendary supervillain who no one ever caught. The PCs should hear about Black Thunder long before they ever get even the faintest lead on where to find him.

He is a tough combatant, not so much because of his raw power as because of his experience and skill. However, if the PCs fight him he'll probably be more focused on getting away than on taking them down—although he might teach a cocky young hero a brutal lesson to keep them off his trail.

If you'd rather bring Black Thunder to your Player Characters, rather than send them halfway around the world to chase him, there are only two things that might tempt him back onto American soil. The possibility of amnesty, or a threat to his surviving family members. Whenever he surfaces or wherever the PCs hunt him down, rest assured that the boys from Executive Solutions are just one jump behind him.

Adventures With Black Thunder:

1) Echoes of Distant Thunder

The Player Characters suddenly get the first fresh lead in years on one of America's most wanted criminals—Black Thunder himself. We'll tentatively say he's in Indonesia, but that's really just one way to run the scenario. In fact you could have the PCs find Black Thunder anywhere in the Far East but Japan.

Perhaps the right thing to do would be to notify the federal authorities of his whereabouts, but few PC groups will ever take that route. Most Player Characters will instead want to personally confront him.

But someone else has also found the lead, and sent the lads from Executive Solutions after the same target. Executive Solution M (the former superhero once known as Major Maximum) hates Black Thunder with a mad passion, despite having never met the man, and will jump at the chance to kill him.

The PCs catch up with Black Thunder first, and find that he's willing to talk to them, either before or after they capture him. The old fugitive has just finished telling his story when the goons from Executive Solutions break down the door. Even if the PCs have already captured and bound the man they will attack, clearly intent on killing him. If the PCs look tough and already have Black Thunder prisoner, the team from Executive Solutions will demand that the PCs hand him over for an "on-site field execution."

How the PCs deal with this situation and whether or not they're willing to fight beside one of America's most hated enemies is up to them.

2) My Brother is the Thunder

Black Thunder's younger brother, Quentin Cage, has made a real success of his life. He's a tax lawyer by trade, and lives in the suburbs of the PCs' home city. A retiring man with little interest in public life, Quentin has the same superpowers as Black Thunder, but he tries to conceal them. One night he gets pushed too far—perhaps his daughter gets murdered or dies of a drug overdose, and he kills the person responsible. The coroner can see that the dead criminal has been killed by Black Thunder (nobody else's powers leave marks like that). Can the country's most wanted supervillain actually be back on American soil?

To complicate things, the real Black Thunder catches wind of this in the press, knows instantly who must have committed the crime and comes back to

America to take the rap for his little brother. But first he intends to lead the authorities on a merry chase, just for old time's sake. And then just as the PCs figure out what's really going on, the team from Executive Solutions breaks down the door...

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The Death Angel

Real Name: Ibrahim bin Ismail

PL: 16

Str: 14 (+2) **Dex:** 16 (+3) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 13 (+1) **Wis:** 16 (+3) **Cha:** 16 (+3)
Initiative: +7 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +17
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +18 **Defense:**
+19/+15 **Speed:** 30/ 80 (Teleport)
Damage Save: +14 **Fortitude Save:** +4
Reflexes Save: +5 **Willpower Save:** +5

Skills: Diplomacy +6, Hide +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Terrorist Underground) +5, Knowledge (European Nightclub Scene) +5, Languages (English, French, Turkish), Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Survival +6

Feats: Ambidexterity, Attack Finesse, Connected, Dodge, Expertise, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Infamy, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Penetrating Attack (Big Scary Knives) x2, Surprise Attack, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +10, Teleportation +16 (Extras: Energy Blast, Explosive Effect, Extended Teleport; Power Stunts: Fullisade [Note: the Death Angel cannot use his energy blast attack in the same round as he makes a Fullisade attack], Power Immunity, Turnabout; Flaws: Energy Blast has no range and cannot be aimed at anyone specific—it just radiates out of the Death Angel's position in an explosive blast, Energy Blast only detonates when the Death Angel teleports out of a location; Cost: 3pts)

Equipment: Pair of Big Scary Knives (+5 Lethal Damage; Cost: 1pt)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Fanatically loyal to his comrades (albeit not to Islam) would never rat any of his fellow terrorists out or give up any information that would interfere with their plans, even if this puts him at a disadvantage.

Quirk: Bigot (Cannot work effectively with Jews, women of loose virtue or anyone he suspects of being homosexual; he will attack these targets in preference to anyone else, even if this puts him at a tactical disadvantage)

“Three hundred years ago there was no crime, no drugs, no homosexuality, no women’s liberation. Because people still are fearing God. You must understand that these things are all a Western invention--the West fears Islam and will sink to any depth to destroy it. Even inventing homosexuality is not beyond

them. But now the fist of God is here to drive it down their throats. And I am he.”

Everyone can now see that the Angel of Death was a bad idea. But back in the 1980s, when he was fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan, it didn’t seem like such a poor concept to back a superhuman Muslim Fundamentalist with a lust to kill infidels. We weren’t the infidels he had in mind. At least not yet. Alas, in recent years this has changed and now the Angel is coming for us all.

Ibrahim bin Ismail was an upper-middle class Omani, educated in America, seemingly destined to be a corporate lawyer like his father. He affected a kind of angry, radical Islamic posture at Yale, since it impressed girls and gave him some bad-boy swagger. He was one of many rich young tough guys, fond of vintage scotch, cashmere sweaters, new model Mercedes and vicious anti-Semitism.

Like most of his associates he felt that Reagan was the only hope for America, that poor people had better shut up and stop whining, that Salman Rushdie had to die and that sorority girls were implicitly asking for it if they willingly entered your frat house. And of course that Allah was the One True God and Muhammad was his prophet.

Always eager to outdo one another and prove that they were hard, many of them went to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan, at least for a little while. As the muhadjjadin rebels advanced on Kabul, a surprising number of them wore designer sunglasses and really expensive shoes. An even more surprising number of them stayed on to join the Taliban once the Soviets were driven out.

We don’t know exactly when Ibrahim’s powers first manifested themselves. We do know that he first went to Afghanistan in 1982, while taking a semester off from Yale, and that he was almost immediately using his superhuman abilities to wreak bloody havoc on the Russians. He made a number of trips over the next two years, and was growing wildly in popularity with the rank and file muhadjjadin when the CIA contacted him.

The Company felt that a muhadjjadin superhero was an irresistible asset. They gave him some training, plus a course of operations at a semi-legal clinic in Switzerland to enhance his powers yet further, and began to funnel a lot of money and equipment to his ever-growing band of followers. They named him The Angel of Death.

He did a spectacular job, and in so doing met the one great love of his life—war. Ever since he was a child he had a taste for hurting things, but he found that in combat it blossomed into a bottomless, never-ending hunger.

While he met some of the other rebel leaders, Abdul Haq and Muhammed Omar and Osama bin Laden, he always stayed somewhat aloof from them. Nor did he ever bother to do much actual leadership, even though men gathered around him constantly. He

was always a bit of a lone wolf and it was always the fighting itself that most interested him.

When the Soviets finally left, he could easily have played a role in the new government but he wanted to go where people were still killing each other. Over the course of the 90s, he has fought for the militant factions of the PLO, for the Chechen rebels, for the Taliban and for the Muslim Sudanese in their unending war against the non-Islamic tribes in the south of the country. He has even worked in Lebanon for Hezbollah, despite the fact that they are a Shiite organization (he himself is proudly Sunni in his beliefs). He has never been an active member of Al Quaida, although they have his phone number.

In person he is utterly ferocious, as well as being something of a pompous jerk. He loves to hold forth about the decadent West with its crime and drugs and homosexuality etc, ad nauseum. A spoiled brat for the first half of his life, it has never left him, entirely. While he claims to conduct himself honorably in combat, and that he won't strike a man in the back, take hostages or kill innocent people, as soon as the fight starts to go against him he will forget all this and do whatever he thinks will work.

He still likes nightclubs and good whisky and Rolex watches and is incapable of seeing his own hypocrisy. Despite his rhetoric, his faith is weak and chiefly serves as an excuse to hurt people. The real god he worships in his heart is war.

Using The Death Angel in your

campaign: One of the big threats lurking in the background, make sure your PCs have heard all kinds of awful stories about the Death Angel before they meet him in person. They can encounter him in any part of the Islamic world, although he may also perform the odd assassination in Europe or even the US itself. He always works for Islamic groups and he always seeks out combat. He's much more comfortable fighting in an actual bush war than in some kind of urban insurgency, but these days he isn't picky and can turn up anywhere that Islam's enemies need to be killed.

Adventures With The Death Angel:

1) Look Homeward Angel

The Death Angel's old CIA handlers want to draw him into a trap, but don't want to draw attention to the fact that they used to be associated with the man. So they leak his contact information, secret code-phrases, countersigns and so forth, to an underworld snitch who has connections to superheroes.

This particular snitch knows the Player Characters, and runs straight to them with the information. The PCs are now in a position to set a trap for one of the most wanted men on earth.

We're not going to be very specific here about how you would actually contact the Death Angel, or what the snitch is like, so as to make this easier to work into your campaign. If the PCs are at a point in their

adventures where they could just drop everything and travel halfway around the world, then have them go to a non-working payphone in the Paris Metro, press some code word into the keypad and then go wait behind the metal detectors at Charles de Gaulle airport (or go through something equally elaborate).

If the PCs are working stiff who can't afford plane fare out of state, they should leave a message and five hundred dollars in a particular locker at the bus station, and call a certain cell phone number, so that the Death Angel's cousin Ali knows to come pick the money up and tell Ibrahim that somebody wants to see him (or something equally simple).

The snitch's CIA handlers give him a cover story on how he got the information, but it's rushed, flimsy and easy to dismantle with a little detective work. Shortly after giving the PCs the contact information, the snitch turns up dead.

CIA Case Officers Hawley and Geffen introduce themselves to the PCs soon after the snitch dies, and explain that they would like to help them trap the Death Angel. The Death Angel's people must have killed the snitch, they explain. Hawley and Geffen were tracking him, thinking he had information on Ibrahim, which is how they found the PCs.

Austin Hawley is a plump, distinguished looking older gentleman with a huge swoop of white hair and expensive taste in suits. Glenora Geffen is a tiny dark woman with short hair and a thick southern drawl. Both are accomplished liars and both are willing to kill to achieve the mission objective, but neither one is particularly athletic or an especially good shot. They kill people by writing memos. Let the help do the manual labor.

They agree to assist the PCs set the trap and they even provide the services of a sniper, on loan from a security contractor in North Carolina, who can watch the target area in case things get dicey. They will also be willing to give the PCs as many weird spy gadgets as they might care to request. They're not allowed to carry out operations on American soil, so this will officially be the PCs' operation, and they won't officially be involved.

Hawley and Geffen are as good as their word, but something really doesn't seem right about them. They are horribly condescending and fake, treating the Player Characters like children, explaining things too slowly and repeating them too often. If the PCs reject their help they will have them tailed, and a sniper will be waiting at the scene regardless of what they do or where they set up the meeting.

Unfortunately for everyone involved, when the Death Angel appears, his first words are: *"What could the CIA possibly want from me this time? It's been more than ten years since we've been in touch. Could I still owe you any favors, Mister Hawley?"*

Case Officer Hawley will frantically signal the sniper, who will attempt to kill the Death Angel and the PCs. A three cornered fight is likely to erupt, and the Death Angel is likely to get away.

2) An Angel in the Outfield

The day before a major sporting event, a Player Character spots the Death Angel scouting out the venue. It seems incredible, but there he is, one of the most hunted men in the world, standing there on a crowded public place in broad daylight.

This scenario works best if the PC is in their secret identity, with friends who don't know their secret. Their friends haven't noticed the Death Angel, and if they do, they're convinced that it couldn't really be him. Not here on the street in the middle of the day.

Whether the PC is with their friends or not, the Death Angel is standing in the middle of a big crowd of people—if he teleports away he might kill dozens of them.

How is the PC to deal with this situation?. If they try to trail him, he may very well spot them and a fight will erupt right there on the spot. If they succeed in trailing him discreetly, he goes to a mid-price hotel downtown, where he is staying in the room of another guest—a businessman from Saudi Arabia. It may be safer to fight him there, but he could still damage the hotel and cause a lot of collateral damage in the process. And what sinister plan does he have in store for tomorrow?

If the GM is feeling mischievous, then the Death Angel has no sinister plan at all—he's just here to watch the big game!

Doctor Moloch, Phd.

Real Name: Dr. Moloch, Phd.

PL: 16

Str: 20 (+5) **Dex:** 18 (+4) **Con:** 18 (+4)
Int: 18 (+4) **Wis:** 18 (+4) **Cha:** 16 (+3)
Initiative: +4 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +20
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +19 **Defense:**
+29/+25 **Speed:** 30
Damage Save: +4 **Fortitude Save:** +4
Reflexes Save: +4 **Willpower Save:** +4

Skills: Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (Blasphemous Secrets and Forbidden Lore)+14, Listen +7, Spot +6

Feats: Darkvision, Durability, Immunity (Aging, Cold, Heat, Pressure, Radiation, Starvation, Sufocation)

Powers: Super-Strength +13 (Extras: Protection, Thunderclap; Cost 6pts)

Weaknesses: **Vulnerability:** Holy objects. And not just Christian ones. The object must be genuinely revered by someone—you can't just hold two sticks up like a cross to fend him off, but any such object will do (unless of course it's revered by satanists).

“Why Captain Eldritch! How good it is to see you again! And how is Liberty Lass these days? Recovering well from our last encounter, I hope? I hate to have to say it, but I’m afraid my current master wants me to kill you in some truly disgusting ways—he seems to think I should be terribly impressed by his boring depravities, as though these uninspired mutilations of the flesh weren’t something I already see every day in Hell. But I don’t mean to waste your time with my difficulties. Shall we just get down to it then?”

Filth-Lord of the Third Infernal Legion, Plangent Wrecker of Obscenities on the Heads of the Lost and the Damned, and Professor Emeritus of Depraved Studies at the Burning College of the 34th Hell; for the living incarnation of absolute evil he's not really such a bad guy. Certainly he intends to wreak wondrous and unthinkable abominations upon Mankind, but it's really just a job to him. The truth is that he's deeply bored with Evil. He is unimpressed with bloody sacrifices and demented acts of worshipful carnage.

Unspeakable perversities make him roll his eyes—he's seen it all before. Any idiot can slaughter children over a bowl as far as he's concerned.

In person he is pleasant, congenial, and a good host (although he does often have a tired and rueful air about him). He will greet the players cordially if he's met them before, ask about the health of mutual acquaintances and how things are going in their own lives before he gets down to the business of killing them.

Despite his weary contempt for human evil, it is his job and he knows a lot about it. In any conversation with Doctor Moloch, he's likely to utter at least one hideously accurate insight into the nature of the universe, but he does it distractedly, as though he can barely be bothered to pay attention. When he makes a point, he likes to use examples from *Seinfeld* (you'd think that as the embodiment of all that is foul and wrong he'd be more into *Friends* than *Seinfeld*, but in fact he's fond of George Costanza). He does have his dignity and he doesn't like to be taunted, but he's more likely to look hurt than enraged if someone insults him. Sarcastic is about as aggressive as he gets, at least in conversation.

In combat, on the other hand, he goes right for the throat. A swift and efficient fighter, he wants the brawl to be over as quickly as possible so he tries to incapacitate or kill his opponent as fast as he can, preferably by hitting them in a weak spot with everything he has. It is true that he may sometimes handicap himself against really puny opponents, reading a book or doing a crossword puzzle with one hand while he fights them with the other. But he doesn't do this to show off—he does it because he's bored.

It's really quite unusual to encounter demons this powerful outside of Hell itself. Someone at his level of the Infernal Hierarchy shouldn't be running around the Material Plane kicking in bank vaults and battling superheroes hand-to-hand, he should be attending Planning Committee sessions and teaching advanced seminars in Evil.

Alas, three years ago the late sorcerer Hubert Shackley found Moloch's true name and published it on the Internet. How someone like Shackley managed to get his hands on such an incredibly potent secret remains unknown, but it hardly matters. Now any cheapjack magician with a web-browser and a set of black candles can yank poor Dr. Moloch up out of Hell and force him to run their shabby errands.

He is forever having to miss Planning Committee sessions and interrupt seminars to come up here and waste his time kicking in bank vaults and fighting superheroes hand to hand. He's not really sure what to do about it, although he supposes that human civilization will fall eventually.

If the players manage to destroy his physical form he can still be summoned at some later date, in which case he won't hold a grudge.

If they get access to his true name (which he is compelled by the laws of Darkness not to tell them himself) then he will be only too grateful to obey

commands like “return to Hell, ye devil-spawn” or “never again shalt thou trouble Mankynde” and he will thank them for it. However, only an actual sorcerer can use his name effectively, and then only if they are willing to go through a lengthy, disgusting and morally dubious ritual. The GM should improvise the details, but it should be the kind of thing that you can’t do in the middle of combat and that you wouldn’t want to go through again if you could avoid it.

Dr. Moloch is a loyal ally—as a summoned and bound entity he frankly doesn’t have any other choice. He will frequently make wry observations about what an idiot his current boss is, but he’s not willing to betray them or to reveal anything about them that a superhero could use to their advantage. He already has a few choice plans for his current master once they reach his domain, and he’s willing to wait.

Be warned, whenever Doctor Moloch appears in person on the Earth, the Forces of Light send Azeraphel the Screaming Angel to stop him, and she’s a lot less pleasant than he is. See her individual entry to learn all the frightening details.

Using Doctor Moloch, Phd. in your campaign:

While he can turn into a one-joke character if you’re not too careful, Dr. Moloch can actually get funnier and funnier each time the PCs encounter him, as they come to understand his plight better and he gets to know them and enjoy their company.

His plot hook, while it’s really specific, is actually flexible enough that you can use him for a bunch of different types of crimes. Because he’s forever getting sent on petty, trivial errands by idiots, he could participate in amazingly minor or amazingly major capers—whatever works for your campaign. Even so, use him sparingly to keep the joke from getting stale.

Adventures With Doctor Moloch, Phd.:

Seven Crowns of Stupid and a Diamond or Two

Doctor Moloch, PhD, gets dragged up out of Hell by a twenty year old Svengali named Melvin Dumbrowski, who wants to impress his pack of giggling teenage girlfriends. Melvin orders him to retrieve the Seven Crowns of Crime—lost artifacts of the Black Atlantean Age, now scattered and vanished. Whosoever possesses them will know the ultimate embrace of shadows and become the Lord of Night, master of darkness and blood.

Doctor Moloch patiently explains that he can’t retrieve the Seven Crowns of Crime because there’s no such thing—in fact Melvin just made them up now. But Melvin and his pimply handmaidens won’t listen. They will have Seven Crowns of Crime, and that’s that.

The first Crown of Crime is supposed to be located in a secret chamber underneath the Museum of Natural History. Inwardly rolling his eyes, Dr. Moloch smashes his way into the Museum at midnight. He breaks open a secret chamber under the basement and

does in fact find a lost forbidden book of blasphemous secrets from beyond time and space (the dreaded *Gerflugelmacht Codex* of Manfred the Unbelievably Insane), but of course no Crown of Crime.

Alas, Melvin is not satisfied with the book and declares that Doctor Moloch has failed him. The next crown must be in a safety deposit box kept by an ancient European family in one of the city’s most exclusive private banks. Of course Dr. Moloch doesn’t find it there, although he does find some swell diamonds—one of them as big as a sparrow’s egg. But Melvin didn’t want diamonds, he wanted a Crown of Crime. And so it goes.

The PCs find out at some point in Dr. Moloch’s pointless crime spree that someone is breaking into creepy, ominous locations and stealing who-knows-what kind of arcane artifacts for some terrible unknown purpose. All the signs point to a demon of incredible power—the kind of entity who almost never gets summoned to the earth in the flesh. What frightful scheme is afoot? How to stop it?

To complicate matters, one of Melvin’s acolytes has started reading the *Gerflugelmacht Codex* for herself. And then Azeraphel the Screaming Angel shows up...

Azeraphel, the Screaming Angel

Real Name: Azeraphel

PL: 16

Str: 20 (+5) **Dex:** 18 (+4) **Con:** 18 (+4)
Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 14 (+2) **Cha:** 16 (+3)
Initiative: +4 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +20
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +19 **Defense:** +29/+25
Speed: 30/50 (Flight)
Damage Save: +4 **Fortitude Save:** +4
Reflexes Save: +4 **Willpower Save:** +2

Skills: Acrobatics +8, Intimidate+10, Knowledge (Punishments), Listen +8, Spot +12

Feats: Detect Evil, Durability, Immunity (Aging, Cold, Heat, Exhaustion, Pressure, Radiation, Suffocation), See Invisibility, True Seeing

Powers: Flight +10 (Cost: 2pts), Super-Senses +9 (Cost: 2pts), Super-Strength +12 (Extra: Protection; Cost 5pts), Telepathy +10 (Cost: 2pts)

Equipment: Flaming Sword +15 (Lethal Damage)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Crazy fanatic, will attempt to punish bystanders for trivial crimes even if it distracts her from her mission or puts her at a tactical disadvantage.

Quirk: Incapable of lying.

“Stop struggling! This is going to hurt a lot worse if you keep wriggling around that that! Disgusting little mortals, why will none of you sit still for your rightful punishment?!”

A tedious angel, sent here to oppose the evil Doctor Moloch. For the living embodiment of all that is good, she's a royal pain to deal with.

She has no idea how human society works and no desire to learn, so she is forever making grievous errors and wreaking havoc whenever she appears in the mortal world. Intolerant and humorless, if she sees someone commit a sin, no matter how trivial, she will attempt to punish them for it (usually by inflicting pain on them with her mental abilities—only the very worst sins merit maiming or death). Time and again, she will detect someone committing some minor act of wickedness like eating when they aren't really hungry or wishing they didn't have to go to work, scream “Gluttony!” or “Sloth!” and administer discipline on the spot.

This often brings down the wrath of superheroes who don't understand that she is above mere human law. Inevitably they commit the heinous sin of

attacking her and must be punished quite severely. She does not bother to explain herself to the heroes she finds herself fighting. If you attack her, you're clearly damned in any case, so what would be the point of trying to talk with you?

As you might expect, her tendency to get sidetracked by minor evils hampers her effectiveness at blocking Doctor Moloch's activities.

In person she is tiresome, dangerous company. Incapable of relaxing or being anyone's friend, prone to screechy rants about the power of light, she does not care about anything but her mission.

It's rare to see angels of her rank down here in the sordid, itchy realm of physical reality, and she is keenly aware of the fact that it's beneath her (see the entry on Doctor Moloch to find out why two such unreasonably powerful supernatural entities keep getting summoned to the Material Plane). She hates it here, and considers it a huge indignity to have to descend into the grubby imperfection of mere reality.

Heroes who try to ask her about big philosophical questions or cosmic truths will get some arrogant response about people with impure hearts not being capable of understanding the answers. She may even consider these questions to be impertinent or prideful, and try to punish the questioner.

A supernatural hero who knows what she is can probably talk her into an alliance, provided that they are willing to help her hunt Doctor Moloch and don't mind submitting to her leadership. She will probably want to punish them for Pride, especially if they wear a costume, but once she has done this she will regard the matter as settled and won't pester them about it again. It's tough to be her ally, since she won't be questioned and demands such impossibly high standards of behavior.

Not a subtle combatant, she considers any form of stealth or subterfuge to be dishonorable and won't tolerate it in her allies. She announces her presence loudly and demands that opponents face her head on. Honorable to a fault, she won't hit an opponent from behind or strike them while they're preoccupied with some other combatant.

If she encounters Doctor Moloch she will refuse to do anything but attack him until either he or she is dead.

Using Azeraphel, the Screaming Angel in your campaign:

The Screaming Angel is a great way to lead the player characters onto some scheme that Doctor Moloch has been dragged into. She only appears if her nemesis has been summoned to the earth once more, (although now that his true name has gotten out on the Internet this happens far more than she would like). Unless she gets completely sidetracked any adventure which involves her is likely to lead to a confrontation with her enemy. In fact, that's about the only place it *can* lead.

If the Screaming Angel actually gets destroyed, she can come back in a later scenario anyway, just like Doctor Moloch.

Adventures With Azeraphel, the

Screaming Angel: Typically, a Screaming Angel scenario goes something like this. Azeraphel appears in the middle of an urban area, beats up a bunch of luckless civilians for crimes like coveting a flashy car or touching themselves improperly at night, draws down the wrath of the Player Characters and gets incapacitated by them.

After knocking her out of action, the players learn that she was sent here by the Forces of Light to oppose some unbelievably powerful Force of Darkness. Something so huge and terrible that it's almost unheard of in the secret occult history of the world— Doctor Moloch (Phd) himself! And now they've just clobbered the only thing that could stop him! Ulp!

It looks like the PCs will have to face the evil Doctor Moloch themselves, but could any mere mortals be up to the task? Then it turns out that he's actually been summoned by some pointless pimple-faced adolescent Satanist to go rob a bank, or something equally banal.

The Hammer of Doom

Real Name: Khalid al Warhadi

PL: 17

Str: 16 (+3) **Dex:** 18 (+4) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 16 (+3) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: +4 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +18
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +19 **Defense:**
+19/+15 **Speed:** 30/85 (Flight)
Damage Save: +7 **Fortitude Save:** +2
Reflexes Save: +4 **Willpower Save:** +10

Skills: Bluff +5, Diplomacy+6, Forgery +5,
Languages (Arabic, French, Parsi, Pashtun),
Profession (Businessman) +5, Spot +7

Feats: Connected, Immunity (Cold, Heat,
Suffocation, Pressure), Indomitable Will, Infamy, Iron
Will

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage, Will) +5 (Cost:
2pts) Energy Control (Light) +17 (Extras: Explosive
Effect, Flight, Force Field; Power Stunts: Energy
Blast, Power Immunity; Cost: 5pts), Sensory
Protection +5 (Cost: 1pt)

“You continue to defy me. I think you must have a sick and crazy appetite for your own self destruction. I admire that, I respect it, but don’t think this will save you. You see I am the sort of fellow who feels only two things—contempt for the weak and disgust for the crude. I haven’t yet decided which to kill you for, but I shall.”

Something of a legend in law-enforcement circles, Khalid al Warhadi is one of the most dangerous men alive. He’s committed spectacular acts of theft from India, to Pakistan, to Malaysia, to New York City, and has never spent a night in jail.

People are often surprised to find out that he’s a New Yorker by birth, and that English is his first language.

He was always a criminal. His father was a Syrian drug dealer on the streets of Brooklyn, and Khalid and his brothers grew up to follow in his footsteps.

When he was six, some bigger kids overpowered Khalid at an alley game of soccer, and sent him home bruised and crying. His father beat him worse and told him to go out there and get revenge. To everyone’s surprise, he grabbed a kitchen knife, ran back out into the alley and stabbed a big kid in the throat. Alas, it wasn’t one of the right kids. People in

Khalid’s family were still laughing over this funny little episode decades later.

To this day he says that was the last time he ever killed in anger, for he had learned a crucial lesson from it—if you kill in anger, you make mistakes and people laugh at you. He killed a few more times over the course of his childhood, and once had to execute one of his little brothers on his father’s instructions, but he never did it out of anger.

By the time he was twelve he had grown into a seasoned hood, and helped his father out with every aspect of the business. Then one day a superhero fell from the sky over Brooklyn. Badly hurt and unable to speak, the caped man lay bleeding on the curb and gestured desperately for help. People didn’t know what to do about it, so they called Khalid’s dad, who was an important man and would surely have some idea. And he did. Draining off some of the caped man’s blood and spinal fluid, he injected it into three of his sons, to see if it would give them superpowers.

Two died, but Khalid did not. Reasoning that Khalid had survived because he was the oldest, Father injected himself. He guessed wrong, and perished in agony, leaving Khalid to carry on the family business.

The boy had bigger ambitions than being a mid-level drug dealer, and there was no way for an Arab to move beyond that level in New York—the Sicilians had things locked up tight. So he liquidated as much product as he could, turned most of the business over to his uncles and started hiring out his newly acquired superhuman talents to the underworld at large.

He put himself through prep school and was halfway through college by the time he participated in an infamous drug-house massacre (the so-called “SoHo Bloodbath” that the New York Post gleefully made into a household name) and had to leave the country. He was 17.

Going to the Middle East was the best thing he had ever done. Things were wide open over there and a man could rise as far as his talents might take him, provided he was willing to get his hands a little dirty. By the time he was 20 Khalid was an internationally famous supervillain and his wealth and fame have kept growing ever since.

A professional super-criminal with no ambitions beyond getting rich and staying alive, Khalid has no desire to rule the world, blow it up, or turn it into an Islamic paradise. Instead he wants to gamble, buy expensive cars, date pretty girls and drink really good wine. Not that he appreciates really good wine, but he feels that it’s the kind of thing a successful man ought to drink.

Despite his humble origins he has trained himself to speak knowledgeably about things like wine and gourmet food. He sometimes tries too hard to show off his new-found sense of taste, and he still often gets things wrong, to the amusement of the aristocratic master villains he imitates. He’s trying to learn how to appreciate art, but his total lack of feeling hampers him here. He may want to ask a captured superhero about art, if they look suave and “classy”, discussing the subject stiffly and uninterestingly until he gets

frustrated and has them killed.

He has no regular contact with his family anymore. If anyone were to track them down they would find a gang of quarrelsome, murderous drunks, stabbing their cousins over ancient grudges and a few grubby yards of Brooklyn street. Only one of his brothers is still alive, and Khalid hasn't seen him in years. Khalid claims to feel vaguely sentimental about his surviving niece and nephew, but if someone were to hold them hostage he would let them die and get even with the kidnapper later.

Quiet and guarded, he seldom gets mad, and real hatred is as foreign to him as mercy or compassion. Above all else, he is reasonable.

Khalid won't hesitate to torture or kill if it's expedient, but he takes little relish in it—people are just silly toys made of meat to him.

Calm and professional, Khalid doesn't bother with grudges or losing his temper. He also doesn't leave witnesses. Tidy and methodical about cleaning up after a job, he has no qualms about killing someone who only might have seen too much.

He'll take hostages if he has to, and he'll kill them if it makes sense to, but on the whole he tries to avoid messy situations like that. Better not to get yourself into the kind of jam where you'd have to take a hostage in the first place.

While Khalid does sometimes rent himself out as muscle or for bodyguard duties, he's much happier if you hire him to plan and execute a major act of theft. He prefers to steal from other criminals, since they can't go to the police and he prefers to hit locations without any bystanders (it's a lot harder to hunt down and kill potential witnesses when there are fifty of them). He might knock over a semi-truck full of smuggled cocaine out on the freeway, or nab a shipment of AK-47s on the docks at midnight, but he most certainly would not walk into a crowded bank at noon and demand that they give him all their money.

It is not safe to be his partner for any length of time. People who team up with him eventually learn too much about him and that can't be allowed to happen. Dead men tell no tales, he often says, and shrugs.

It's almost a shame that he doesn't do more mercenary work—he's highly sought after and respected in that world (or at least he was until September 11, 2001).

He's a genuine rarity in the criminal underworld, a true professional. A good hireling, he takes orders without complaint and stays absolutely loyal (until the moment his personal security is threatened). He doesn't show up late, he never drinks on the job, he doesn't pick fights with the other guys and he doesn't try to grab more than his fair share. That's nothing short of a miracle.

September 11th badly disrupted Khalid's life and career. He couldn't give a damn for Islam, but because he's an Arab supervillain everyone assumes he's a fanatical Muslim terrorist and no one wants to work with him. In fact there are American gangsters that he's known for years who would now kill him on

sight. His jobs are drying up and his contacts won't talk to him. For the first time in his life, he's not sure what to do.

Using The Hammer of Doom in your campaign:

The Big Bad Villain from overseas—the Player Characters should hear about the Hammer of Doom long before they ever meet him. Build up a confrontation with the man before it happens. Let them know they're in trouble.

While he makes a tough opponent for a team, your players may be relieved to find that he's unlikely to become the personal nemesis of any individual PC. He would hunt someone down if he thought their survival might pose a threat to him, but he wouldn't do it just because they beat him in a fight, or anything stupid like that.

Adventures With The Hammer of Doom:

1) Seventeen Ghost Swords and a Hammer of Doom

The Hammer of Doom allies himself with the 17 Ghost Sword Triad in Hong Kong. Unsure what to do with this powerful but dangerous new resource, the Ghost Swords send him to the US, to destroy their competition in a number of big cities.

He annihilates the White Lotus Society in San Francisco, lays waste to the Long Fang Tong in Chicago, decimates the 39 Crazy Fist Gang in Cleveland, and he may be on his way to your town right now.

Once it becomes clear that Khalid is back on American soil, every superhero in the country is going to want to fight him, as will quite a number of villains and organized crime families. The challenge is in predicting where he'll next appear. Give the Player Characters a chance to figure out the pattern to his attacks before any of the other hunters kill or imprison him. Once the PCs realize that he's eliminating the enemies of the 17 Ghost Sword Triad, it will be easy to figure out from the last attack where the next target is going to be. He's hitting them as efficiently as he can, always moving to the closest possible target by the most direct route.

The nearest enemies of the Ghost Swords are... well in fact we're going to leave the specific name and location open, so as to make this easier to work into the campaign. The target could be in the PCs home city, but it could also require them to make a trip to some distant metropolis, depending on the resources available to them.

Unfortunately, at least one supervillain figures the pattern out too, and shows up at the last second to attack Khalid themselves, complicating the fight and (probably) letting the Hammer of Doom escape.

Once this happens, the 17 Ghost Swords realize that someone in the US must be on to them, and they drop Khalid like a hot skillet. He is now stranded deep inside the country, with no support and nowhere to hide. He's going to have to fight his way out and it isn't going to be pretty. Neither is what's going to

happen when he gets back to Hong Kong. The Hammer of Doom is going to come down on the 17 Ghost Swords Triad like a... well, like a Hammer of Doom.

When the PCs next catch up with him, he will offer them an interesting deal. Why not help him escape? It would prevent a lot of additional havoc and he's on his way to punish the people responsible for all this chaos right now. If they stop him now, they'll be letting the Ghost Swords slip through the net, and they're the real criminals here—or so Khalid says.

2) The Hammer Drops

The Hammer of Doom decides that the Player Characters have meddled in his affairs for the last time, and conceives a fiendish plan to be rid of them for once and for all. It will take some effort and expense, but his cost-benefit analysis shows that it will be worth it in the long term.

To make this work, he will first need a secret lair. In order to save funds and time, he appropriates the deserted headquarters of a superhero team he wiped out in the late '90s. Then he gets some disgraced nuclear technicians from a former Soviet Republic in Central Asia to build a crude atomic pile to power the base. An unscrupulous security firm in Denmark provides him with security staff—mostly former members of elite European military units, selling their expertise to whoever can pay. His headquarters is crude, improvised and uncomfortable, using only a fraction of the leaky old base, but it will serve for the purpose at hand.

He kidnaps a troop of girl scouts, locks them up near the reactor, and then alerts all the major news outlets, mailing them all videotapes that explain his demands (none of them are willing to play any of these tapes on the air, but they're all happy enough to report on the contents)

He wants a hundred million dollars in ransom. That's not as much as it sounds like—the operation itself cost sixty million. If the city doesn't pay, he'll send the atomic pile into a meltdown, killing the hostages and rendering a lot of the surrounding territory uninhabitable. He says that he wants the PCs to come handle the negotiations. If anyone else sets foot on the premises, he'll set off the chain reaction.

This is all a trap. The moment the Player Characters enter the complex, the guards start firing on them and a voice starts counting down from ten minutes. When the PCs smash their way down to the bottom level, or when five minutes are left, the countdown suddenly stops, Khalid's voice comes on over the intercom and says "*sorry—I lied.*" The reactor's cooling tanks rupture, the lower level floods with boiling radioactive water, the Hammer of Doom starts calmly walking toward the secret escape hatch, and everybody else dies.

Like most of Khalid's schemes, this one is incredibly risky and unbelievably ruthless. To murder the PCs, he is also prepared to kill everybody connected with this enterprise. The hired mercenaries, the technicians, the kidnapped scouts, thousands of

innocent bystanders—they're all going to die.

It will be very hard to beat him. The Hammer of Doom is on the far side of the complex from the overheating nuclear reactor. The PCs can rescue the girl scouts, try to contain the impending atomic disaster, or go catch the Hammer of Doom. At most, they should be able to accomplish two of these objectives. Even if they divide their forces enough so that they can have some heroes working on the reactor controls while others get the scouts to safety and still another group goes after the Hammer of Doom, they're unlikely to have enough manpower to actually take him down without risking the other two objectives.

As an added twist, perhaps after he gets out, the Hammer of Doom thinks for a moment about how pointless and unsatisfying everything turns out to be in this dull gray world, changes his mind, and walks back into the complex to die.

Captain Valiant

Real Name: Rex Skinner, Capt USAF

PL: 19

Str: 19 (+4) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 18 (+4)

Int: 10 (+0) **Wis:** 13 (+1) **Cha:** 12 (+1)

Initiative: +1 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +9

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +6 **Defense:**

+15/+14 **Speed:** 30/95 (Flight)

Damage Save: +14 **Fortitude Save:** +14

Reflexes Save: +1 **Willpower Save:** +1

Skills: Bluff +7, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Law) +6, Knowledge (Super-Criminals) +6, Listen +8, Profession (Astronaut) +5, Spot +8

Feats: Attractive, Connected, Durability, Fame, Headquarters (the Valiant Retreat--a palatial estate in Maui where he goes for solitude. His closest neighbors are George Hamilton and Charo, isolated on their own fortified estates. The Valiant Retreat is equipped with a state-of-the-art Communications Center, a Dock for private boats, an automatic Fire Prevention System, a giant Garage that can accommodate the vehicles of whoever might come to visit him, an Olympic-quality Gymnasium that has been specially equipped to meet the special needs of the superhumanly strong, a Hanger and landing strip for any private aircraft a guest might bring with them, a fully stocked Infirmary, an Isolated Location, the Captain's famous Crime Library, Living Space for up to 19 guests, a giant heated indoor Pool, its own independent Power System, the best Security System that Honeywell can design, a dedicated household Staff [consisting of 40 PL 1 servants and maintenance personnel, 4 PL 2 Security Consultants, 2 PL3 Mechanics, a PL 4 shiatsu massage therapist and a PL5 physician], and a seldom-used Workshop; it also has PL4 assigned to "Gadgets" [super heroic visitors are always leaving one or another gadget lying around and the Trophy Room is full of weird stuff captured from various master villains] which Captain Valiant may be able to use to surprise unwelcome guests), Immunity (to Cold, Heat, Poison, Disease, Pressure, Suffocation), Minions (the Valiant Scouts [a worldwide group of 110 PL1 junior detectives dedicated to emulating the life and legend of Captain Valiant, most of them juvenile delinquents who joined the Scouts under court order as an alternative to jail], plus 11 PL 2 hangers on [various assorted members of his entourage and personal staff], 6 PL 3 lawyers, 3 PL 4 publicists, 2 PL 5 business managers and 1 PL 6 bodyguard), Penetration Vision, Ultra-Hearing

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +10 (Extras: Fortitude Save; Cost: 2pts), Flight +19 (Power Stunt: Super-Flight; Cost: 2pts), Super-Strength +19 (Extras: Protection, Thunderclap; Cost: 7pts)

"Look at this. It's the medal President Ford gave me. See, it says 'a grateful nation thanks you'. You got one of these? Because when you do, then you'll have earned the right to question me."

He's not the world's mightiest man, or America's most popular superhero. In fact there may be as many as two or three superheroes who are better known and have more personal power than Captain Valiant.

He's fought America's enemies around the globe since the 1960s and has battled some of the most terrible monsters ever to walk the earth. He's stood on the surface of the moon and visited other dimensions. Three different presidents have pinned medals on his chest. He may even have saved the world.

None of which makes him a very nice guy. As a superhero, he has few equals. As a human being, he has grave flaws.

Captain Valiant is as much an industry as a individual now, and his publicists and business managers keep his public image wholesome (although lately he's been toying with the idea of trying more of a "bad boy" thing) but in person he is all but unbearably obnoxious. Vengeful, quick to take offense, callous to his wife and distant to his children, he is so aggressive and competitive that he compulsively dominates any social situation that he finds himself in. He will hit on your girlfriend right in front of you. He will take food off your plate, taste it and insist that the waiter bring you something else whether you were enjoying it or not. He will not be questioned.

Captain Valiant has never been a government-sanctioned hero, but most law enforcement agencies willingly cooperate with him and he has become something of a law unto himself. He has long enjoyed limited immunity from prosecution, and after the September 11 attacks he was granted the legal authority to execute super-criminals on the spot if there is no other recourse and they pose a grave threat. He's never had to use it, yet.

Using Captain Valiant in your

campaign: A change of pace from super-thieves and world-conquering arch-villains, Captain Valiant is meant as a personal rival/nemesis for an individual Player Character. Not a criminal per se, he is still a bad enemy to have. Powerful, popular, well-connected and immune to most forms of prosecution, he makes an implacable and dangerous foe. Of course, this is also a more subtle kind of enmity than having someone kick in the roof of your secret headquarters and challenge you to fight. The theme has to be introduced with some care. Try the adventure below for some ideas.

Adventures With Captain Valiant:

Forever Valiant

Try introducing Captain Valiant to your players the following way. In an unrelated adventure, the PCs hear on the news that Captain Valiant has killed a villain that they have fought themselves. This should be a supervillain that the PCs know isn't really dangerous. Don't go so far as to make it someone as sympathetic as, say, the Unicorn or Broken Arrow. A pitiful crazy villain like Grim Diddle would be just about ideal, as would an honorable villain like Mr. Fist or some poor lost soul like Woodchuck Man.

This is the first time Captain Valiant has actually had to use his authority to kill a supervillain and it has caused some controversy. When television reporters ask him why he did it, he tells them *"This was a paranormal criminal, which makes that my call. Life and death, it's my choice to make and it's not open to question. Criminals should be aware of that. It sends an important message."*

When the reporters press him further, he says that they don't understand the paranormal threat, and tells a disgusting anecdote about some foul atrocity a super-criminal committed twenty years ago, as though it were somehow relevant. To the PC's surprise, the assembled reporters treat this as though it were a real answer and seem favorably impressed. This is the last the PCs ever hear of the incident. It abruptly vanishes from the news the next night.

Several adventures later, one of the male Player Characters with a secret identity gets a chance to have dinner at a really hip, expensive restaurant with his girlfriend. If he doesn't have a regular girlfriend then make it a woman he's romantically interested in--maybe she is a beautiful co-worker who has always scorned him in his secret identity while yearning for his superhero self. In either case it should be someone he doesn't live with and who doesn't know his secret identity.

Some sort of minor crisis comes up (make it a mugging if there's nothing going on his personal life that you can use) and the PC arrives late. To his surprise, Captain Valiant and his entourage have picked tonight to visit this particular restaurant, and the PC's girlfriend is sitting with them.

The Player could attempt to deal with this in a bunch of different ways. Whatever he does, things go badly wrong.

If he tries to sit down at the table with Captain Valiant, the headwaiter and the manager intervene and try to prevent him. If he asks his date to come sit with him, she agrees and looks embarrassed. The manager will present himself and tell the PC that the lady is Captain Valiant's guest and that he must stop harassing her (in fact the Captain just walked in, saw her sitting by herself and had the manager invite her over to sit with him). The lady will insist that she's all right and the manager will reluctantly depart.

Even though there are other tables available, the staff will seat the PC and his date right beside Captain Valiant's party, who are loud and smoke cigars and

can't be persuaded to stop.

At a certain point, the PC will catch Captain Valiant staring at him, puffing on a cigar. Then he shakes his head with contempt and looks away.

Dinner conversation may become strained. Whenever the PC and his date leave, a seedy looking member of Captain Valiant's entourage walks after them, hands the young woman a card and whispers something in her ear. He goes back to the table after giving the PC a long cold look.

When the PC asks his date what that was about, she says shamefacedly *"He said 'once that guy drops you off, call this number and we'll come pick you up.'"*

Things remain awkward for the rest of the evening. When the PC drops her off, she doesn't want him to come up, explaining that she's really tired and kind of wierded-out from the evening's events.

If he stays to watch, she does indeed go upstairs. If he decides to stand guard in a jealous fury, some urgent crisis suddenly comes up across town.

If by this point you have the player worked up into a such a paranoid frenzy that he actually neglects his duty and keeps standing there, Captain Valiant averts the crisis and saves the day, winning himself yet more glory.

No matter what happens, the PC's girlfriend (or date) stops answering her phone for two weeks. Then Captain Valiant leaves town, and she suddenly becomes available again.

If pressured, she says that yes she did hang out with Captain Valiant and his entourage a little over the past two weeks. It was fun. He was a real gentleman. If the PC is ignoble enough to ask her if anything happened, she giggles and says *"We just talked. He's a really nice guy."*

If the PC pouts or complains that he was treated unfairly, she scowls and points out that nobody got physical with him. Not everybody who has a run in with a celebrity gets off that easy. The rap singer RZ Dawg Killah's bodyguards beat a guy to death in the same kind of situation just last year. They got away with it too. The PC was lucky that Captain Valiant is such a nice guy. She won't discuss the matter further. Whether the PC wants to continue seeing her is his affair.

The next time the PCs encounter Captain Valiant, he swoops down unexpectedly out of the sky and defeats the villain they were fighting. What happens next depends on how the PCs react.

Some players will no doubt want to attack him right there, bewildering their teammates and bringing down the ire of the authorities. Most will be angry with the Captain and make insulting remarks about his conduct as a hero.

He will take offense, boast about his accomplishments (see the quote at the top of this section) and fly off in a huff. He won't try to take credit for the villain the players just took down, but the papers will give it to him anyway. The PC who insulted or questioned him has just made a dedicated, lifelong enemy.

For one last twist of the knife, a little while later

the nation is stunned as Captain Valiant stands accused of murdering his wife. The player characters have to track him down (or they get a good lead on his whereabouts, perhaps through the wronged PC's former girlfriend).

When they find him, he claims that an evil robot duplicate committed the deed and that he's tracking the machine back to whichever of his old enemies built it. This robot has been running around impersonating him and fouling up his reputation for some time, he claims. Or maybe it was mind-control--things like this happen to him a lot and he can't bother to keep them straight anymore. Anyway his actions are above question, his record speaks for itself and he doesn't know what kind of person would be unpatriotic enough to suggest that he's actually guilty of the crime.

The PCs probably won't buy this and will attack him. After the PCs beat him, or when both sides are exhausted from fighting, an evil robot duplicate of Captain Valiant bursts onto the scene and attacks everyone. But does that mean that he was telling the truth? Could he have had the robot built himself and told it to kill his wife? It's salvaged memory banks will seem to show that he did, but is that a trick?

And here's an added detail; the robot has only been active for a few weeks. It was really Captain Valiant himself who killed that harmless supervillain and ruined the PCs date. Even if he is innocent, he's not a nice guy. Nor will he ever forgive the PCs for attacking him.

If someone has a chance to ask him candidly why he killed that supervillain, he'll grin and say that it was an experiment--he's been thinking about trying for a tougher, "bad-boy" kind of image and he wanted to see if it would work. Did they like it?

If asked about breaking up the PC's big night out, he doesn't remember it that well, and keeps getting it confused with a similar incident that happened a few weeks earlier in Pittsburgh. He does however point out that: *"You know a lot of guys are proud when I do their woman. Sometimes they even ask me to. I guess that just shows the limits of your patriotism."*

Chapter 4: Teams

The Nowhere Men

Membership: Woodchuck Man (A scrofulous, lice-ridden and unsavory human woodchuck, who prowls the city's alleys late at night, looking for food), The Ratcatcher (arch-wino and urban shaman, he communes with the pavement and knows all the secrets of the rat, the pigeon and the roach), Grim Diddle (a hapless, insane old derelict who moans instead of speaking, and who has been cursed with the ability to drain the life force out of others).

They say that something haunts skid row. Even the gang kids won't go there after dark in groups of less than ten. Bums whisper to one another of something that has claimed the territory for its own, and although none of them will say the name, they all know where to find the freshly scribbled graffiti that reads "The Nowhere Men." Now the tabloids are starting to take an interest, which might prove to be unwise...

The Nowhere Men are a collection of misfits and outcasts who live in the tunnels underneath the PCs' city. They steal food to survive and occasionally come to blows with the youth-gangs who prey on homeless people. Setting derelicts on fire used to be a popular way for the city's youth to spend their evenings, but it isn't any more.

Out of the three Nowhere Men, only the one called Grim Diddle is actually dangerous, and even he isn't precisely evil--just muddled and insane.

The one called the Ratcatcher is a sort of urban shaman who lives in communion with the city and can feel disturbances in the flow of its systems. Some time last year he detected a pair of strange presences, lost and hungry, wandering through the tunnels beneath the streets. He was curious about these strangers, and had the city lead them to his lair. They were a weird but friendly woodchuck-man and an insane old derelict whose skin glowed blue in the dark. The three of them banded together for mutual support and they have been looking after one another ever since.

Once they started getting in fights with gang-kids, the Ratcatcher came up with the idea of painting their name on their turf, to show that certain locations were under their protection. That way they wouldn't have to get in fights all the time--the kids would know to avoid certain areas and leave the bums there alone. This policy has worked, although it has also led to rumors and urban legends about the "Nowhere Men" and may lead superheroes to come investigate them.

The city's homeless population doesn't know much about them, apart from the name, although they are

certainly aware that someone has been keeping the gangs off their case. Most of the city's homeless would be willing to aid and shelter the Nowhere Men in a crisis, particularly the Ratcatcher, who has long been a semi-mythical folk hero to the wretches on Skid Row.

We don't know quite where Grim Diddle and Woodchuck Man came from--neither one of them can speak articulately. When the Ratcatcher found them Woodchuck Man was already trying to care for Grim Diddle on his own. For the GM's convenience we're going to leave it undetermined. Perhaps they both broke out of the same bio-warfare lab or perhaps Woodchuck Man just found Grim Diddle lying in an alley somewhere and decided that he needed help.

Threat Level: Scary though they can seem, the Nowhere Men aren't much of a threat to anything. They want to be left alone, and to keep any more bums from getting set on fire. This seems to be the limit of their ambition. They aren't even particularly interested in hurting the gangs--they just don't want them to set anyone else on fire. Grim Diddle can be a menace if left to his own devices, but they try to keep that from happening as much as possible. Still, there are occasions when Woodchuck Man is off scavenging for food and the Ratcatcher is too drunk to keep Grim Diddle from floating off on his own, moaning and muttering and spreading fear as he goes.

Base of Operations: The Nowhere Men live in the service tunnels under the city where the Player Characters operate. They change their lair on a regular basis, sometimes taking up residence in a storm sewer, sometimes in a service shaft off a subway tunnel (if the PC's city has subways) or in some other warm dry spot. They don't need much space, just enough for the three of them to lie down. The Ratcatcher is inhumanly gifted at finding them one good niche or other in which to hide.

Wherever they have set up their lair, it looks much the same--a pile of flattened out boxes with old clothes heaped on top of them to provide a sleeping space, with empty bottles of inexpensive wine scattered all around.

Woodchuck Man will probably have set up a web of threads nearby, which will ring a tiny bell next to his ear and wake him up if anyone approaches them while they sleep. The Ratcatcher can detect intruders with his powers, but he's often too drunk to do it.

Organization: The Nowhere Men can barely be said to have any organization at all. They don't

exactly have a leader, since each of them has personal limitations that prevent them from playing that role. Grim Diddle is too crazy, the Ratcatcher is too drunk and Woodchuck Man can't speak. In any case they don't really seem to need a leader. They just share their meager resources and give one another support.

The Ratcatcher watches over Grim Diddle while Woodchuck Man is off stealing food and Woodchuck Man watches over them both when the Ratcatcher is too drunk to be of much use. They like one another and they get along very well—even Grim Diddle seems somehow comforted by the presence of the other two.

Tactics: If they are trying to fend off a group of young toughs who are intent on setting winos on fire, the Nowhere Men will try to be as scary as possible when they attack, while at the same time roughing the kids up as little as they can. The Ratcatcher's ability to control rats, roaches and pigeons works well here, as does Woodchuck's Man's foul smell and fearsome appearance.

If they are about to scare off some kids, then the Ratcatcher will summon up a swarm of roaches, rats or pigeons, make them spell out some kind of threatening message, and then once everyone is already freaked out by the sight Woodchuck Man and/or Grim Diddle will suddenly pop up and look scary. This is the only strategy they have. It has always worked, every time they use it, the kids all run away. The Nowhere Men have no idea what they would do next if they tired it and the kids didn't run—they'd probably get scared and flee the scene themselves.

In any actual brawl they will all fight as individuals, with no coordination whatever, but they're much more likely to panic and try to get out of there.

Using The Nowhere Men in your

campaign: The Nowhere Men are a small, low-powered team, intended as a challenge for heroes who are just starting out. They are a mystery to be solved as much as an enemy to fight.

Even though they aren't that tough, the GM can make them plenty scary by keeping them mysterious. Adventures that involve the Nowhere Men should have lots of dark, dingy alleys, hissing steam grates, figures glimpsed for an instant on rooftops, roaches and rats scuttling around in a weird and unnatural way (the Ratcatcher loves to scare people off by having his little friends spell out words like "Stay Away" or "The Nowhere Men"). Everything should happen at night.

Once the Players have solved the mystery of who and what the Nowhere Men are, they will then have to resolve the more difficult question of what to do about them. They really don't mean anyone any harm, yet they have to steal to stay alive.

It's not going to be possible to reintegrate somebody like the Woodchuck Man into normal human society, especially if sinister forces are ready to drag him off to some secret lab the moment he

resurfaces. Grim Diddle's chances look almost as bleak, and Woodchuck Man won't let anyone take him away.

If the PCs decide to let the Nowhere Men continue their shadowy existence, they won't hold a grudge even if the PCs beat them up.

The Ratcatcher is a wonderful source of information when he's sober, and could make an excellent part-time ally.

Adventures With The Nowhere Men:

Guardians of Nowhere

The PCs are drawn to Skid Row by the reports of mysterious happenings there. Or perhaps they have a midnight encounter with Woodchuck Man, stealing some edibles from a shuttered fast-food restaurant, and the strange creature flees to Skid Row, where the PCs suddenly remember that weird things have been happening.

The homeless folks who inhabit the area after dark aren't willing to say much about the Nowhere Men, but they are willing to direct the PCs to the graffiti which the Ratcatcher leaves to mark their turf. As soon as they see the graffiti, the Nowhere Men notice them and strange stuff starts to happen. Rats and crows seem to watch them as though spying on them. Swarms of roaches cross their path. Perhaps they catch a brief glimpse of Woodchuck Man watching them from a rooftop, or hear Grim Diddle moaning and muttering in the storm sewers beneath them.

Then, while they are out patrolling for signs of the Nowhere Men, the PCs instead come across a bunch of cruel rich teenagers (under a bridge or in a vacant lot or possibly even in the tunnels under the street, if the PCs have gone there), who are nervously trying to work themselves up to doing something—the PCs can't quite see what it is. They are whispering about the Nowhere Men, and why nobody does "this" anymore, but it's all too unclear to make out. There's a lot of nervous giggling.

Then a swarm of roaches erupts across a facing wall, the rustle of pigeon wings is heard from everywhere and rats begin to scuttle across the edges of the scene. Before everyone's horrified eyes, the swarming roaches form the words "Get Out!" and the rats all squeak at once. Then, Woodchuck Man leaps out into plain view, waving his arms and chittering freakishly, while Grim Diddle appears on the other side, glowing and moaning and floating through the air. The teenagers scream and run.

If the PCs choose this moment to intervene the Nowhere Men panic and run for it too, except for poor Grim Diddle, who they are going to have to come back and rescue.

As soon as the PCs enter the fray, they can see that the teenagers were about to set an unconscious bag lady on fire. How they deal with this situation is up to them.

Woodchuck Man

Real Name: Unknown (may not even have one)

PL: 8

Str: 16 (+3) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 20 (+5)

Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 14 (+2) **Cha:** 8 (-1)

Initiative: +2 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +10

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +9 **Defense:**

+20/+20 **Speed:** 40

Damage Save: +5/+7 (Evasion) **Fortitude**

Save: +7 **Reflexes Save:** +2 **Willpower**

Save: +2

Skills: Hide +9, Move Silently +9, Listen +9, Spot +9, Survival +8

Feats: Dodge, Durability, Evasion, Fast Healing, Great Fortitude, Improved Grapple, Surprise Strike, Tracking, Ultra-Hearing

Powers: Combat Sense +3 (Cost: 1pt), Natural Weapons +6 (Cost: 2pts), Running +2 (Cost: 2pts), Super-Senses +4 (Cost: 2pts)

Weaknesses: Disabled (can't speak to either human beings or woodchucks)

Disturbing (Looks like a hairy great woodchuck, suffers a -5 penalty on Bluff and Diplomacy checks, can't function in normal human or groundhog society)

Vulnerable (to Dazzle attacks).

"Squeak! Chee-chee!" (gestures inquisitively at a PC's wristwatch)
"Eep-squeak?"

A scabby, filthy, lice-ridden woodchuck-man, who roams the city at night, looking for things to eat. His hygiene is appalling, his habits are gross and uncivilized, he knows nothing of humanity's laws. Yet he is also friendly and cheerful, happy and good natured. He can't speak and only understands a few words of English, but if approached the right way he's more likely to offer the PCs some of his meager food than he is to attack them.

The Woodchuck is extremely loyal to the other Nowhere Men, particularly Grim Diddle, who he senses is unwell and needs care. He's better equipped to scavenge for food than they are and spends more time away from their lair. He is likely to be the first team member the PCs encounter, as he is the one who commits the most crimes (theft, breaking and entering, skulking around looking like a giant woodchuck, etc.)

If confronted while stealing food his first impulse will be to drop everything and run away. He'll fight if cornered, or if he has some item he's unwilling to drop.

Not a particularly sophisticated tactician, he will always be more interested in getting away than in

hurting anybody. He won't attack non-combatants and he certainly won't take hostages.

Woodchuck Man may present something of a moral dilemma for heroes who capture him. He's a lawbreaker, but he's not malign. Prison clearly isn't the right place for him and removing him from the urban environment isn't really a viable way to help him. He knows nothing but the city and the sewers. If some well-meaning superhero released him into the wild he would be terrified and all but incapable of coping. Integrating him into human society is going to be a slow and difficult process. Perhaps the best option is actually to leave him alone, but supply him with enough food so that he doesn't have to steal.

Woodchuck man bears the scars of many surgical procedures under his fur, but although he's clearly escaped from some kind of illegal lab somewhere, he can't really explain how or where.

The GM should feel free to use him to lead the PCs to whichever mad scientist or secret gene-warfare lab seems appropriate to the campaign. This will help to link adventures together, and to move the Player Characters from the Nowhere Men to more powerful opponents.

Adventures With Woodchuck Man:

Somebody Stop That Woodchuck!

One night at around 2:00 AM, Woodchuck Man finds a woman lying on a street corner. She is dying from the injuries her fiancé gave her while explaining his concerns about the state of their relationship.

Woodchuck Man can tell that she is unwell, so he brings her to a place where he can see lots of other humans (a hip outdoor café) and leaves her there. She has a wonderful shiny thing around her neck, which he keeps, unaware that it's a diamond necklace. He also doesn't realize that at least twenty people saw him stooped over her form, and that one of them took his picture.

Soon the city is in an uproar, panic is in the air and everyone is talking about the monster. His victim languishes in a coma, unable to tell the story of the attack, but her injuries speak for themselves.

Her fiancé, Chad Armitage, is distraught and wracked with remorse at having lost the necklace. It belonged to his grandmother and it's supposed to be given to the woman who will become his wife—it's a family tradition. He's desperate to have it back.

By an odd coincidence he was one of the rich young bravos who used to set bums on fire down on Skid Row. He has actually seen the Nowhere Men once before, and has some idea where to find them. He also has some bored, violent young friends from his old gang who would be willing to help him hunt for the necklace, and maybe do the Nowhere Men some harm just for old time's sake. Meanwhile he and his influential family pester the authorities and the press about having the monster caught and the necklace recovered.

The Player Characters should enter this situation unsure of what is really going on. Then, as Chad, the police and perhaps an angry mob are about to get into

a confrontation with poor puzzled Woodchuck Man,
the victim wakes up and tells everyone what really
happened. But is there still time to prevent a lethal
conflict?

The Ratcatcher

Real Name: Jacob "Jake" Bukowski

PL: 7

Str: 8 (-1) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 16 (+3) **Int:**

16 (+3) **Wis:** 18 (+4) **Cha:** 14 (+2)

Initiative: +5 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +6

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +8 **Defense:**

+18/+17 **Speed:** 30

Damage Save: +8/+10 (Evasion) **Fortitude**

Save: +10 **Reflexes Save:** +1 **Willpower**

Save: +9

Skills: Craft (Chef) +2, Hide +5, Move Silently +4, Knowledge (His City) +10

Feats: Detect (danger to his city), Dodge, Evasion, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +5 (Extra: Fortitude, Willpower; Flaw: Only works inside the limits of his city; Cost: 2pts), ESP +6 (Flaw: Only works inside his city; Cost: 1pt), Obscure (cloud of bugs and pigeons) +7 (Flaw: Only works inside the limits of his city; Cost: 1pt), Telepathy +7 (Extra: Mind Control; Flaws: Only works within the city limits, only works on vermin [rats, pigeons, cockroaches, etc] or on native-born lifelong residents of his home city; Cost: 1pt)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Hopeless drunk (spends much of the time in a useless inebriated stupor)

"Well sit yerself down young feller. Have a taste of hobo stew. The city told me you'd come—whispered it to me on her reeking asphalt breath. I know you're here to kill me, but yer still a guest until you do, so pull up one a them cushions an' let's us talk a while."

A grinning, filth-smeared wino who wears a motley assortment of mismatched clothing. He looks a bit like a clown with his comical assemblage of clothes, and his five-o'clock shadow and his constant smile reinforce this effect.

The Ratcatcher communes with the city's living heart and knows its secret ways. He can speak the language of the pavement and learn who walks or drives upon her. He is friend to the pigeon, the rat and the roach. He knows their secret tongues and can see through their eyes.

He doesn't much care for violence, but he will reluctantly protect his two comrades if he must, smiling and uttering strange drunken/wise pronouncements about the city all the while. He's not a sadistic man, and would never take hostages or

endanger innocents. While he can call upon swarms of vermin to protect himself and his comrades, the Ratcatcher only does this as a last resort—he's afraid of getting his little friends hurt.

While the Ratcatcher is usually drunk and often incoherent, he knows an enormous amount about the city and will gladly share his knowledge with anyone who cares to ask. He's almost always happy and has a kind of jovial Zen-like calm, having found Enlightenment in the bottom of a wine bottle. Rats and roaches crawl across him constantly and he treats them like his children.

Is he the living incarnation of the city's spirit? That's hard to say—he didn't just appear out of nowhere, he has a birth certificate and parents and a former life. If he is some kind of living urban deity then he became one, rather than being born that way.

If the Player Characters approach the Ratcatcher as a friend rather than an enemy, they'll find him to be an incredibly useful source of information, when he's coherent enough to talk. He can also be a difficult and tenacious foe, if the PCs have done him some lasting harm. He might seek revenge against an opponent who kills one or both of his friends, but he'll maintain his jovial demeanor the whole time.

Befriending him is easy. Helping him get off the streets is difficult. He prefers to live in the tunnels and he wants to remain a drunk. In fact his powers and his role as an urban shaman are both dependant on his being a kind of arch-derelict and he doesn't want to neglect his duties as the city's secret confessor. If he isn't there to listen to the city's awful hidden agonies, who will be?

Adventures With The Ratcatcher:

Lord of Winos, Prophet of Doom

The Ratcatcher sees something coming—something that will reduce his beloved city to rubble. Unable to cope with this terrible vision, he has lapsed into an alcoholic stupor, and then delirium tremens. As he suffers and sweats through the sickness and hallucinations, the city begins to convulse. Power systems flicker erratically, in disturbing patterns. Vermin come scuttling up from the sewers, spelling out frantic, incomprehensible messages. Street psychotics chant ominous scraps of Shakespeare and Baudelaire.

After the Player Characters have seen a few of these weird signs and portents, a deformed pigeon comes to them. Fluttering crookedly with its malformed wings, it tries to lead the PCs to the Ratcatcher's sickbed. The PCs must overcome Woodchuck Man's suspicions, help keep Grim Diddle from getting loose, and interpret the critical clues that the Ratcatcher gives them in his raving delirium.

Meanwhile, on a rooftop high above the city, a group of cultists nears the completion of their work. It has taken the Sisterhood of the Screaming Stars fifty years to create this moment, and now within a day they will draw down destruction on the metropolis. For the stars have aligned and the rituals have been performed and the coming of the Unthinkable One is

at hand!

The Unthinkable One kills cities, but it doesn't just munch them up like Godzilla—it rots them from within, kills their soul, invisibly wrecks their economy and fragments their populace. Over the next few years the city will fall to wrack and ruin, with the invisible miasma of the Unthinkable One hanging over it all.

It will begin with the death of the Ratcatcher (from alcohol poisoning). No arch-derelect will rise to replace him and the city's screams will go unheard, unsoothed by drink.

The Sisterhood conducts its rites on top of a bizarre-looking art deco skyscraper that their founder designed shortly before killing himself. It looks like the work of a madman, but it's one of the most exclusive addresses in the city.

The strange, non-Euclidian designs on the roof serve as a focusing lens for unwholesome energies, and the building has been the site of a surprising number of bizarre deaths and weird disappearances. In fact anyone who lives there for any length of time starts to develop odd compulsions and neurotic habits, which they practice in secret. None of the PCs have ever been inside.

All five of the ranking members of the Sisterhood are wealthy society doyens in their eighties or nineties. Four of them are confined to wheelchairs. There are about twelve younger members, ranging in age from seventy to sixteen—all of them morbid, shy women from the city's best families.

When the ritual reaches its climax, all seventeen cultists will jump off the top of the building, trusted nurses shoving the older members' wheelchairs over the side. None of them will ever hit the ground, or ever be seen again.

Breaking up the ritual or preventing the mass suicide will permanently foil the Sisterhood's efforts, and gain the players their enmity. A lot of these ladies have the money and power required to do the Player Characters some serious damage. But a wave of depression and suicide decimates their ranks not long after the PCs stop them, limiting their ability to strike back.

The Ratcatcher recovers, and the city lumbers on its unhappy way.

Grim Diddle

Real Name: Unknown (does not remember it himself)

PL: 9

Str: 10 (+0) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 20 (+5)

Int: 6 (-2) **Wis:** 8 (-1) **Cha:** 6 (-2)

Initiative: +1 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +9

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +10 **Defense:**

+20/+19 **Speed:** 30/40 (Flight)

Damage Save: +10 **Fortitude Save:** +7

Reflexes Save: +1 **Willpower Save:** +-1

Skills: None

Feats: Darkvision, Durability, Great Fortitude, Immunity (Starvation, Suffocation), Trance

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +5, Drain (Constitution) +9 (Power Stunt: Penetrating Attack x2; Cost: 2pts), Flight+8 (Cost: 2pts), Mental Protection +9 (Cost: 2pts), Paralysis +9 (Cost: 2pts), Protection +9 (Cost: 2pts)

Weaknesses: **Disturbing** (insane old derelict with glowing blue skin, suffers a -5 penalty on Bluff and Diplomacy checks, can't function in normal human society)

Quirk: Totally Nuts (behavior is almost random and frequently harmful to both himself and others, incapable of meaningful conversation)

Vulnerable (to Dazzle attacks.)

“Unnnh! Maaaaa! Whether up through my skins of flaming heart burning burning so cold over the sky--Lutes! Lobsters! Nuuuuuuuuuh!”

A lost, tormented street psychotic, incapable of taking care of himself. Grim Diddle doesn't even have what it takes to survive as a bum.

Instead of speaking, he moans. His skin is pale and glows faintly in the dark. His eyes do not look human.

The Woodchuck and the Ratcatcher tend to him, try to calm him through his nightmares and see that he is fed. They are amazingly patient and understanding with him, and somehow he senses their affection, and knows not to use his powers on them. Yet sometimes he escapes their care and wanders off to commit random acts of havoc.

Grim Diddle has been cursed with the ability to suck the life force out of anyone he comes near. Constantly cold, he craves the warmth of others and when he isn't curled up in a heap or rocking back and forth muttering to himself, he roves aimlessly around seeking warmth to drain. His companions try hard to keep him from wandering off and drawing attention to himself, but the Woodchuck is frequently gone and the Ratcatcher is frequently too drunk to know what's

going on.

Although he won't attack his caregivers, no one else is safe from him. When he comes floating down the street at midnight, glowing a ghostly blue and mumbling insane nonsense, look out! He isn't so much merciless as he is unaware of the harm that he does—perhaps incapable of understanding.

In combat, he really doesn't use any tactics at all. He directly approaches his chosen target, but can get distracted if some other warm body gets in the way. If hurt, he retreats. If cornered, he lashes out. He won't take hostages or threaten non-combatants—that's far beyond his mental capabilities.

No one but the other Nowhere Men can reason with him, even via telepathy, but he'd respond well to Emotion Projection.

No one really knows where he came from or how he got his powers. The other Nowhere Men have no idea, and if anyone ever manages to cure his shattered mind, they'll find huge gaps in his memory that effectively obscure it.

Like Woodchuck Man, Grim Diddle can be used as a bridge to the monster-making mad scientist or secret government and/or corporate laboratory of your choice. Once the PCs have subdued and studied him, they can follow the clues (his surgical scars, the place where Woodchuck Man and the Ratcatcher found him) back to the master villain responsible.

Adventures With Grim Diddle:

1) A Midnight Snack

Late one night Grim Diddle gets away from his caregivers and floats off down the subway tunnels.

First he scares off a pair of maintenance workers, then the half-asleep passengers on a late train spot him through the windows, and then he floats onto an almost deserted subway platform and panics everyone there.

Reports reach the Player Characters of a monster in the subway, working its way down the line. Or perhaps a PC happens to be on the train that passes him in the tunnels, or walks on to the subway platform just as everyone is fleeing.

If the PCs don't catch him in time, he will reach a station where two major lines come together, just as a sporting event lets out and the tunnels flood with spectators on their way home.

Meanwhile, Woodchuck Man and the Ratcatcher are also tracking Grim Diddle, and will catch up with him just after the PCs do.

2) We Love You Grim Diddle, Come Home!

Fliers with Grim Diddle's face on them start appearing all over the city. “Have you seen this man?” the fliers ask. There is a phone number.

If the Player Characters call the number, they speak with an attractive woman in her forties who gives her name as Lorna Canby. She doesn't want to talk about this on the phone, and asks to meet them in person.

Grim Diddle is her father, she says. His real name is Victor Lang. He was a career government worker

from Pennsylvania, who didn't talk about the details of his job, even to his family. He used to go on long trips overseas that he would never discuss. They always assumed he was a spy.

About five years ago he took on some kind of outside consulting work for something called the IF Foundation and disappeared. Before left, he told Lorna's mother that he might be gone for two months. That was the last his family ever heard from him, until Lorna saw his face in a tabloid piece on the Nowhere Men. His wife has been dead for three years and he doesn't even know. Can the Player Characters help her find him?

Alas, this is all a lie. "Lorna" (her real name is Hilda Glick) has been hired by some Russian mobsters who want to catch Grim Diddle and have him fight other superhumans in a pit. She has a tranquilizer dart-gun on her person, a van with stolen license plates and a pair of burly Russo-American henchmen named Greg (Gregor) and Mikey (Mikhail) who work as bouncers at a local club.

In fact she knows nothing about Grim Diddle's origins. Or, if the GM wants to use Ms. Glick as a bridge to whatever supervillain or sinister conspiracy produced Grim Diddle, she's working for them. In this case she still has no idea who he really is and she doesn't know much about her employer, either. Her thugs know even less. None of them are agents of anything, just part-time criminals who've been hired to do a job.

Vernichtung 5

Membership: The Moebius Man (the closest thing the group has to a leader, an articulate, cruel young man who has the ability to warp space with the power of his brain), Der Shriek (a dimwitted, violent, incoherent teenager who can knock walls down with the force of his screams), Blitzenhammur (a lightning-wielding supervillain from the Nazi era, who is beginning to feel serious doubts about having signed on with an outfit as disturbing and dangerous as Vernichtung 5), Der Totenkopf (a horrible, psychotic madman with vast atomic powers, who the team unwisely broke out of a secret prison near Wurms) and Zyclon B (a silent and deeply disturbed teenage girl, whose very thoughts are poison).

Vernichtung 5 (usually called "V-5" for short) is a loosely organized gang of superhuman teenage white supremacists, who have spread havoc and death all across Germany for the past year. The name means something like "Annihilation 5," although it doesn't translate very well.

V-5 is the brainchild (if the term can be applied to a group this short on brains) of the Moebius Man, an infamous young German neo-nazi paranormal. One of Germany's most hated new supervillains, the Moebius Man is more articulate than most skinheads, and an inspiring leader to the collection of psychotics and super-thugs he has gathered around himself. The group's aims are unclear, apart from a vague and hopeless desire to somehow return the Third Reich to power.

From Berlin to Stuttgart, from Munich to Hamburg, they have crisscrossed the country in a bloody trail of random carnage, killing hapless guest workers and robbing banks with little purpose or plan.

And now they just got really dangerous. At a facility outside of Wurms, they found the secret prison built to hold Der Totenkopf, a world-class supervillain whose very existence is a closely guarded secret. They let him out, and he joined the team in gratitude. Or at least we think it was gratitude—the man is so hopelessly insane that it's hard to understand anything about his motives. No one seems to know what he intends, but how could it possibly be anything good?

Threat Level: Before they unleashed Der Totenkopf on the world, Vernichtung 5 was a disorganized rabble of angry superkids with relatively low-level powers. They were particularly weak on defense—almost all their powers were attacks of some kind and they had no idea how to coordinate them effectively. They had no formal rules or established tactics. Only the Moebius Man's strong personality kept them together.

All these things are still true, but now they have Der Totenkopf standing silently at their side, ready to melt their opponents into radioactive sludge. They have already defeated a team of young Austrian super-

anarchists (der Nachtmuzik), killing three of them in the process, and devastated one of the European Union's special anti-parahuman police units.

The German media likes to comment on Vernichtung 5 as though they were some kind of insane, inexplicable aberration, which just came out of nowhere. Yet the sad truth is that there are people who sympathize with their views all across Germany. They are heroes to innumerable angry young skinheads, who treat them like celebrities.

White supremacists in nearly every town in Germany are willing to hide V-5 from the authorities, provide them with drugs and groupies and whatever else they need. As a result, the team can go to ground and vanish between jobs, moving invisibly through the skinhead underground until it's time to surface once again.

This works particularly well in conjunction with the Moebius Man's powers. He's a teleporter, and is powerful enough to whisk them away to one of their safe havens in a flash if they suddenly need to retreat. This is what kept them alive until they found Der Totenkopf.

Organization: Vernichtung has no common uniform or theme (apart from neo-nazism). The Moebius Man has had some emblems with the team's "V-5" logo put together for them to wear on their costumes in an attempt to drum up more team solidarity, but not all of them can be persuaded to wear them.

Nor does V-5 exactly have rules. The Moebius Man is the team's center and he dominates the others through his strong personality and the strength of his oratory. Der Shriek is totally devoted to him, although he's too uneducated and distractible to understand much of what his idol is saying. Zyclon B is a loose cannon (but then again aren't they all?), bloodthirsty and difficult to control. She's in love with der Totenkopf but mortally afraid of him. She never speaks, and it's hard to predict what she's going to do next. Blitzenhammur is a hired gun who the Moebius Man brought on board to replace a dead team-mate (Der Totenkopf killed him for some senseless, crazy reason). While Blitzenhammur is easily the calmest, most experienced and most disciplined member of the team, he now has serious doubts about V-5 and the kinds of things they might ask him to do. He might have considered deserting, despite this being against his rigid code, but frankly he's so scared of Der Totenkopf and the Moebius Man that he doesn't dare betray them—at least not yet.

For his part, der Totenkopf stays apart and aloof from the rest of the team. He could be the leader if he wanted to, but he seems to either be uninterested in the job or too crazy to understand it. When the team attacks a target he attacks it too, when they come under attack he helps to defend them, but for the most part he just follows them around. Sometimes he stays silent for days, other times he rants and raves for hours on end. He's extremely scary, and even the Moebius

Man is beginning to regret associating with him.

Base of Operations: The Moebius Man's powers allow Vernichtung 5 to turn up all over Germany. They spend more time in the small industrial towns of the East than anywhere else, since that's where their grassroots support is strongest. They have no single fixed headquarters, but people are always willing to put them up.

If they come under too much pressure from the authorities, or if they should suddenly decide to get as far away from Der Totenkopf as possible, then they could easily relocate to Norway, where many kids in the Black Metal scene would be willing to give them aid and shelter. They could just as well go to Austria or Russia, where they also have fans, or who knows, maybe the United States? The Moebius Man is powerful enough that with some effort he could relocate them almost anywhere on Earth. The only reason they've never ventured outside of Germany before is that they're scared to. None of them speak Norwegian, let alone Russian, and the Moebius Man is the only one who is articulate in English.

Tactics: V-5's tactics might be charitably described as simple and direct. They prefer to pick on targets who are weaker than they are, stalking, taunting and threatening them before murdering them. They particularly like to terrorize victims into performing grotesque acts to save themselves, and then kill them anyway.

They aren't yet used to facing opponents of equal strength, and haven't quite worked out how to do it. When faced with other superhumans, V-5 will all attack at once, possibly getting in one another's way or even getting caught in one another's attacks. Der Shreik is way too enthusiastic in combat and doesn't always make sure his teammates are out of the range of his attack. Zyclon B barely even cares if she accidentally hits a teammate and Der Totenkopf doesn't care at all.

If the Moebius Man ever figures out how to coordinate his powers with the others, they could become incredibly effective. As of yet, he hasn't, and he may not live long enough to do it. He has realized that he can use his powers to block incoming attacks against his teammates as well as against himself, but that's about the limit of his tactical sense.

Using Vernichtung 5 in your

campaign: Vernichtung 5 is either a gang of self-destructive youths on a rapid course to their own doom, or a powerful recurrent enemy that is just in its earliest stage of development. Which it turns out to be depends on the both the GM and the players.

V-5 can be encountered in a number of different ways. While they do have an agenda that vaguely involves world domination, they also pull hold ups and attack random civilians. The PCs could be called in to stop them from blowing up a nuclear power plant, to foil their efforts to rob a bank or even face

them as an American white supremacist's hired muscle. Perhaps they'll spend their whole career in Germany, or perhaps they'll turn up in the PCs home town tomorrow, on the run from the European authorities and spoiling for trouble.

They make a good nemesis for a team that is just starting out, and if they don't self-destruct it can be a lot of fun to watch them grow and evolve with the PCs.

They're plenty scary and evil, but weak enough for most PC groups to beat. Even Der Totenkopf is nowhere near as much a threat as the press makes him out to be—his weaknesses are just too crippling. He may space out or get obsessed by some pointless thing in the middle of a battle and he's far too insane to direct his attacks wisely. The others trip over one another like homicidal keystone cops. In fact the Moebius Man is really the team's most dangerous and durable member. He just doesn't know it yet.

Adventures With Vernichtung 5:

1) Coming Soon to a Fistfight Near You

Vernichtung 5 appears in the Player Characters' home town, eager to start some trouble. The heat was getting too intense back home, so the Moebius Man finally decided that it was time to emigrate. He's not quite sure how he managed to transport them that far, and he's not sure he could do it again.

A white supremacist youth organization called the Vanguard is putting them up for the time being. The Vanguard has chapters all over the US, but they can't offer the team nearly as much protection as their European counterparts, so here they have to keep a lower profile. Back home in Germany V5 managed to stay above the petty squabbles that divide the white supremacist community, but here in the states that isn't possible.

One of the few things that can make a white supremacist group a lot of money is skinhead hate music. There is a huge underground market for this stuff, which the Vanguard has long been cut out of. But now with V5 at their disposal, that is quickly going to change.

After making a couple of public appearances and holding some rallies, V5 sets out to consolidate the Vanguard's power. They will visit all five of the current underground white power music labels, and convince them to surrender or die. All five of them are paranoid, twitchy skinheads, of course, and most have heavily armed gangs of thugs backing them up.

Once the Player Characters realize that there's a war on for the control of white supremacist music, they may be faced with a moral dilemma. They don't want to have to defend nazi punks, yet if they don't make some kind of a stand, not only are people going to die, but the American neo-nazi movement will change from a fractious, disorganized tangle of different warring factions, into a unified, well organized, well funded movement with it's own supervillain team.

2) Coming Soon to a Fistfight Near Nobody

Vernichtung 5 appears in the Player Characters' home town, eager to start some trouble. The heat was getting too intense back home, so the Moebius Man finally decided that it was time to emigrate. He's not quite sure how he managed to transport them that far, and he's not sure he could do it again.

But this is not like Germany, the team quickly discovers. Here they have no friends, nowhere to stay, no supporters that they can reach. The big slum areas of an American city are not a hospitable place for a gang of White Supremacists who barely speak English.

There may be places in the decaying blue collar neighborhoods near downtown or out in the redneck areas beyond the suburbs where they could find allies, but they have no idea where these places are or how to reach them. So instead they take up residence under an abandoned factory in an industrial zone and venture out only for food and other supplies. The tension is unbearable, and Der Shreik, Zyclon B or der Totenkopf is almost sure to go out on a rampage sooner or later.

And this is the way the PC's encounter V5, as a unit of soldiers lost behind enemy lines, committing random acts of savagery and havoc until the Moebius Man drags them home to their secret lair. Either the PCs will eventually track them down and end everything in a huge climactic battle with the factory collapsing all around their ears, or der Totenkopf will start walking toward some major American landmark with the intention of ripping it down with his bare hands. And perhaps he'll succeed, if the PCs don't stop him.

3) Coming Soon to a Fistfight Near Everybody

Vernichtung 5 appears in the Player Characters' home town, eager to start some trouble. The heat was getting too intense back home, so the Moebius Man finally decided that it was time to emigrate. He's not quite sure how he managed to transport them that far, and he's not sure he could do it again.

They have no allies at hand and no way to find them, so they steal a Winnebago and set out on the road to see their new country and try to make contact with other neo-nazis. They slice a bloody arc across the heartland of America, spreading pointless terror and mayhem wherever they go, stealing to stay alive and killing for the sheer twisted hell of it. A lawless pack whose only rule is "thrill me," on a crazed cross country mission of murder. Can anyone stop this gruesome rampage?

The Moebius Man is capable of creating warps big enough to drive their whole land-yacht into, which makes it almost impossible to catch them with roadblocks. Yet the PCs can certainly track them across country (just follow the screams and smoke), and der Totenkopf's love of demolishing famous landmarks and blowing up nuclear power plants makes it all too easy to tell where they're headed next.

As an added complication, after V5 has been on the

road for a few months, they actually do gain a following among the scattered gangs of white power lunatics that spread like lice across the nation's underbelly. This network isn't as strong or as all-pervasive as the neo-nazi underground in Europe, but so long as they stay in the right places V5 can always find shelter, and soon they may have a ragtag army riding with them.

Der Totenkopf

Real Name: Unknown

PL: 13

Str: 18 (+4) **Dex:** 10 (+0) **Con:** 20 (+5)
Int: 8 (-1) **Wis:** 8 (-1) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: +1 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +10
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +7 **Defense:** +16/+15
Speed: 30 (60 while flying)
Damage Save: +4 **Fortitude Save:** +4
Reflexes Save: +0 **Willpower Save:** +8

Skills: Intimidate +12

Feats: Chokehold, Durability, Improved Grapple, Immunity (to Cold, Disease, Heat, Poison, Suffocation, and Radiation) Infamy, Power Immunity

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +8 (Source: Mutation; Cost 1pt), Amazing Save (Will) +9 (Source: Mutation; Cost 1pt), Energy Control (Radiation) +13 (Extras: Energy Field, Energy Absorption, Explosive Blast; Power Stunt: Penetrating Attack; Source: Mutation; Cost 5pts) Super-Strength +10 (Extras: Protection, Shockwave: Cost: +6)

Weaknesses: **Disturbing** (looks like a burning nuclear skull, makes all Bluff and Diplomacy checks at a -5)

Quirk: Totally Insane (does weird, random, irrational stuff, frequently getting into trouble or putting himself at a disadvantage)

“The world is dying of cancer. It needs radiation therapy. It must bathe in the warm nuclear glow of my love, to be purged of its impurity.”

Created to be a secret living weapon that the G-8 nations could call upon to discreetly solve their problems, Der Totenkopf was a terrifying failure. An atomic superman with crazed messianic fantasies and a crusader's zeal, he was about the worst thing that could have possibly come crawling out of the test chamber.

His creators put him under continual sedation at a secret sanatorium outside of Wurms, while they tried to figure out how to un-create him. Then they forgot about him. This was a mistake, for Vernichtung 5 found him, woke him up and suddenly went from being a pack of hateful bullyboys to a genuine menace. With the Totenkopf on their side they can threaten a lot more than a few guest workers.

He is headstrong, megalomaniacal and far too crazy to control, but of course this isn't such a problem in a group like V5, where control isn't really an issue. Der Totenkopf loves to rant about Nietzsche and fascism, the purity of Nordic blood and his crusade to cleanse the world in atomic fire. He likes to quote

Nietzsche, passing the mad philosopher's observations off as his own. He can sound surprisingly reasonable when he does this, but it's only because he doesn't understand what he's saying.

He has no friends, no close associates outside of his team-mates and almost no memory of his former life. His current beliefs were probably always a part of him, but they became impossible to hide once he underwent the transformation process and had a psychotic break.

His current mental stability is tenuous at best and he is prone to irrational and pointless acts of savagery. As an example, when the team woke him up, told him that they were Vernichtung 5 and that they wanted him to join them, he wanted to accept, but was terribly upset by the fact that there were already five of them. How could he join the team if it was already full? He immediately killed two of their members so that there would be room for him to join, and then apologized for having miscounted and killed one person too many.

If you are using the second book in this series ("More Bad Guys") then Der Totenkopf was considered for membership in the Legion of the Damned, but they rejected him--this is the guy whom even the Aleph and Doctor Zed think is too crazy and dangerous. The Moebius Man probably wouldn't mind stepping aside and letting him lead the group, but the Totenkopf isn't really equipped for it and while he doesn't take orders he doesn't give them either.

He visibly isn't human anymore and is extremely unnerving to be around for any length of time. It's not just that he never takes off his skull mask, or talks about anything but his obsessions. He also doesn't breathe, or sweat. He holds utterly still when he isn't in motion, like a mannequin. He also sleeps standing up, with his eyes open. You don't want to look at those eyes, even when he is asleep. You don't want to see what is in them.

Adventures With Der Totenkopf:

1) Why Didn't I Think of That?

Der Totenkopf has conceived a cunning plan that cannot fail! At least it sounds cunning to him.

He will leave his erstwhile allies in V5, go to a crowded train station at rush hour, kill a bunch of people at random and take the rest hostage in the station's main atrium. This should attract lots of cops and superheroes, whom he can then kill. In the meantime, he'll kill some hostages, one at a time, so as to keep from getting bored.

And that's it. That's the whole plan.

If someone asks what his demands are, he'll say something like “*send more cops.*”

After a while the Moebius Man appears and asks him what the next part of the Plan is. The atomic monstrosity becomes confused and says that he hadn't thought of anything.

The Moebius Man gently asks if this is another one of those plans where eventually they have to send

everybody, so he gets to kill everybody in the whole world?

Yes, der Totenkopf replies. He thinks so. But that would take too long—could they just go home instead? The Moebius Man agrees.

2) And Zarathustra Said “Two Scoops of Rum Raisin in a Waffle Cone, Please.”

An irrational craving for ice cream siezes der Totenkopf. He starts walking towards a big industrial park, muttering “*I shall have it*” to himself, with the rest of the team trailing nervously behind him.

They get spotted from the air and the government tries to intercept them before der Totenkopf can reach his target. There are at least three potential targets in that park which he could cause widespread havoc, and they move to block his path to all three. But they have miscalculated. He isn’t headed for the chemical works or the foundry or the power plant, but for the frozen desert factory, off to one side.

The Player Characters arrive at the scene just in time to see him change abruptly change course. Where can he be going? The authorities are trying to intercept him at the wrong spot! They’ll never be able to re-deploy fast enough---it’s up to the PCs to catch up with him and stop him from committing some horrible crime.

To their surprise, instead of going into the frozen desert factory itself, he walks into the refrigerated warehouse next door. What sinister deed does he intend to commit there? “*I shall have it*,” he mutters.

When they confront him in the warehouse, he is gorging himself on a five gallon tub of ice cream, but when he sees the Player Characters, he roars “*No sprinkles! For so Zarathustra spake unto Nietzsche! No sprinkles—he really said that!*” and attacks.

As soon as the Moebius Man figures out what is really going on here (the big radioactive weirdo wanted some ice cream) he will teleport V5 to safety in disgust, taking der Totenkopf with them.

The Moebius Man

Real Name: Karl Anton Moebius

PL: 10

Str: 12 (+1) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 14 (+2)

Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 12 (+1) **Cha:** 16 (+3)

Initiative: +2 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +4

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +5 **Defense:**

+13/+12 **Speed:** 30/50 (Teleportation)

Damage Save: +2/+5 (Evasion) **Fortitude**

Save: +2 **Reflexes Save:** +2 **Willpower**

Save: +1

Skills: Diplomacy +5, Hide +5, Intimidate +5, Move Silently +5, Speak English +3, Taunt +5

Feats: Dodge, Evasion, Leadership, Inspire

Powers: Deflection (Teleports incoming attacks away from himself; Extras: Deflect Others x2 [can deflect any attack within 100 feet, whether aimed at himself or not], Reflection; Cost 5pts), Teleportation (Extras: Extended Teleport, Portal; Cost 4pts)

Equipment: Armor +3 (thick leather coat), Bayonet (+3 Lethal)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Bigot (The Moebius Man is not capable of cooperating with members of other ethnic backgrounds and he will attack them in preference to all other targets, even if doing so puts him at a tactical disadvantage)

"Kill your parents. Then eat them. This is the only way you will ever be free."

Karl Anton Moebius isn't a typical German neo-Nazi. Articulate and educated, the product of a good home, he doesn't even shave his head. His parents are successful, politically progressive, upper middle class Yuppies from Stuttgart.

His mother, Maria Moebius, was once a member of a tiny Maoist parahuman terror group called the "Red Legion" in the late 1970s. The Red Legion carried out a few random bombings and one failed bank robbery before it broke up in an argument over some little ideological point.

Many of the other members went to jail, but Maria's superhuman abilities kept her out of the clutches of the law for long enough to marry a handsome young banker and move to a house in the suburbs. She was a cold, self-absorbed parent, but not an abusive one.

It's hard to freak your parents out when your mom knew the Bader-Meinhoff gang, but Karl managed to find something she'd disapprove of. He listened to Norwegian black metal, read white supremacist literature and hung around with lower class skinheads all through his teenage years.

When he was 17, Karl accidentally discovered that

he had inherited his mother's parahuman abilities, and could fold space with the power of his mind. This made it easier to sneak out after dark, and gave him the idea for what became his life's central ambition. He would assemble a group of skinhead supervillains and bring the world to its knees.

In college he became a vocal student advocate for the far right, and continued to search for superhuman white supremacists like himself. By his sophomore year his parents had enough of him and severed all contact and financial support. He hasn't spoken to them since, which is a shame, since his real notoriety was just beginning.

That summer he helped stomp an Ethiopian guest worker to death, got caught, and came up with a legal defense that made headlines across Germany. He couldn't be held for murder, he claimed, since his victim was black, and therefore wasn't human. He would be willing to plead guilty to a lesser charge of cruelty to animals, he said. When the authorities responded with a shocked refusal, he announced that they had in that case forfeited their right to hold him, and teleported out of custody.

This incident made him a hero to Germany's skinhead underground, which combined with his superpowers and natural leadership ability, suddenly made him a force to be reckoned with. Certain that he would be gunned down by the cops at any moment, Karl intensified his search for others like himself, and within six months he found Der Shreik, Zyclon B and two other parahuman kids (both now deceased) who shared his vision. Calling his group Vernichtung 5, he set out on a campaign of random terror and havoc across central Europe.

They probably would have slaughtered a few more hapless guest workers and perhaps blown up a landmark or two before getting captured or killed, but last month they made an amazing find which has transformed the group into something far more dangerous. On the outskirts of Wurms, they discovered the secret prison of an unbelievably powerful white supremacist supervillain called der Totenkopf, and released him.

The Moebius Man has no intention of challenging der Totenkopf for the leadership of the group, but in fact the Totenkopf seems to have no interest in being in charge, so for the moment he remains the de facto leader of V5. He's also starting to have nightmares, and to wonder if this was ever such a good idea.

The Moebius Man is a scary presence, with his ghostly white makeup and air of quiet, horrible intensity. In love with the supervillain mystique, he likes to wax philosophical and poetic about his beliefs and frequently posts on the Internet. However, he isn't as clever or as educated as he thinks, and often comes across as a pretentious, affected fool.

Now that his group actually has the firepower to wreak some world-class havoc, he isn't quite sure which target they should pick. To tell the truth, he hadn't really thought it through.

Unbeknownst to the Moebius Man, if he ever gets himself into a situation where he is about to die in

public, his mother will suddenly teleport onto the scene and come to his aid, wearing her old costume from the Red Legion, screaming Marxist slogans and embarrassing him half to death. She tells herself that she's doing this because she loves her son in spite of everything, but in fact she also feels jealous of all the fun he's been having, and hates to be upstaged. See her stats later on in this section. She's a lot more powerful than her wayward son.

Adventures With The Moebius Man:

1) Play That Funky Music, White Boy

The Moebius Man was frustrated in his efforts to turn V5 into a band (they're all the kind of guys who would have to play bass) but he is determined to make a name for them in the White Supremacist recording world nonetheless. He wants to put together a spoken word album and he's on his way to Kalispell, Montana to make contact with a maverick producer named Lemuel Scroggins, who runs an underground label called White Death Records.

The Moebius Man doesn't realize that the American nazi scene is a maze of dangerous, violent, heavily armed factions who constantly struggle to control the music trade, and that allying himself with Scroggins will upset a lot of other factions.

Not long after word reaches the PCs that the Moebius Man has been sighted in Montana, the national neo-nazi organization that Lemuel Scroggins belongs to (the so-called "Blood-Banner Front") collapses in an internal conflict and the struggle is on to gain control of White Death Records. A rival group tips off the PCs as to where they can find Karl Moebius and just as they arrive at Lemuel Scroggins' basement apartment in Kalispell, a hit team from a rival gang arrives at the scene and riddles the place with bullets.

A three way battle probably ensues. If the Moebius Man gets away, then he's unsure whether his powers are strong enough to return him to Germany without killing him, and so he is stranded here for now, on the run and looking for a way to survive.

2) A Good Day to Die Badly

The Moebius Man suddenly turns up in West Virginia, frightened and alone. He presents himself at the fortified compound of Taylor Dane, a prominent white supremacist who publicly supports V5, and takes refuge there.

Dane is the leader of a national organization called the Invincible White Brotherhood of the Iron Fist—one of America's larger post-Klan hate groups. Someone in his large, fractious organization lets it leak that one of Europe's most wanted supervillains is staying with at the Brotherhood's compound, and pretty soon Dane and the Moebius Man find themselves surrounded by the federal authorities. A standoff develops, which turns into a siege.

The PCs are called in to help (or show up on their own once it comes to their attention that a notorious

supervillain has been cornered) and discover that the Moebius Man is actually desperate to talk to them. That's why he hasn't just teleported away.

Der Totenkopf has gone crazy, he explains. He's about to lead the rest of the team in an attack on a nuclear power plant that could devastate a huge swath of central Europe. The Moebius Man doesn't want to die, and now that he's had a chance to think about it he doesn't really know if he's wants all those millions of people to die either. The attack is probably underway right now, but he could take the Player Characters there, if they let him.

If your Player Characters have no easy way to get to Europe and you sense that they would never trust the Moebius Man enough to let him teleport them there, then the plant is actually in Western Pennsylvania rather than in Germany.

There is one additional complication. Unlike the Moebius Man, Taylor Dane is a fanatic who would love nothing more than to die in a blaze of glory. If the PCs leave the scene, the siege will continue and innocent people really could get hurt. Yet the lives of millions could be at stake! How to resolve this ethical dilemma?

Meanwhile, the other four members of V5 really are attempting to assault a nuclear power plant. Their chances of causing a lethal meltdown are up to the GM, depending on where the campaign is going. The attack could be a shabby exercise in stupidity, with little to no chance of success, or this could be the final climactic conflict that brings V5 down at last. If it turns out to be the latter then Der Shreik will switch sides when he sees what his friend the Moebius Man is doing, and Blitzenhammur will wish that he could (alas, his code prevents it). The army will show up, the press will show up, and so could Mother Moebius.

Blitzenhammer

Real Name: The Honorable Baron Heinrich von Hammurhold

PL: 10

Str: 16 (+3) **Dex:** 18 (+4) **Con:** 15 (+2)
Int: 10 (+0) **Wis:** 12 (+1) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: +4 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +12
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +11 **Defense:** +23/+19
Speed: 30
Damage Save: +2 **Fortitude Save:** +2
Reflexes Save: +6 **Willpower Save:** +1

Skills: Acrobatics +5, Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (Nazi underground) +3, Knowledge (World War 2) +5, Spot +5, Speak Portugese +5, speak Spanish +2

Feats: Attack Finesse, Attack Focus (Armed Melee), Immunity (Aging), Lightning Reflexes

Powers: A gentleman would not stoop to having anything so deplorably vulgar as superpowers (ugh!) See "Equipment" instead.

Equipment: The Strangshield: Deflection +10 (Flaw: Device; Cost: 1pt), The Blitzenhammur: Energy Control (Electricity) +10 (Extras: Energy Absorbition, Energy Field; Flaw: Device; Cost: 3pts), Weapon +10, Armor +4 (Cost: 1pt)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Unwavering, irrational devotion to the 19th Century European officer's code. Among other things, it forbids him to harm a fellow officer who has surrendered, drive an automobile (a gentleman will not lower himself to the status of a servant by driving his own car), betray his side's secrets, disobey an order or let an insult go unavenged by violence.

"Just shut up and die, you pointless, dirty little person."

The world is full of haters and white supremacists, but actual real-live nazis are a rarity these days. Old age claimed the ones who weren't killed in the war or hunted down by the Israeli security services. Time devours all things. Yet it hasn't devoured Blitzenhammer, who still looks as young today as the first moment he put on his Wehrmacht uniform in 1939.

He is the last surviving member of Einsatzgruppen X, a German parahuman team assigned to hunt down Allied superheroes on the battlefield. A titled Baron from Swabia, in the easternmost part of Germany, he inherited his powers from his father, and his father before him.

His ancient, powerful, moribund family goes back to the era of the Teutonic knights and beyond. At least since the days of Charlemagne the eldest male heir of his family has been the secret protector of the

Lightning Hammer and the Strangshield, ancient occult artifacts of incredible power. The Blitzenhammer may actually have been the hammer of Thor, or perhaps the thing that the legend of Thor was based upon.

The Von Hammurhold family itself has always been apolitical, far too rich and ancient to concern itself with kings and Reichs and their affairs. But when Swabia was threatened in the first World War, the Junkers of the Blitzenhammer sent son after son to protect the family's possessions in the trenches. All of them wielded the Blitzenhammer and Strangshield against the Prussian Empire's enemies and all of them died. By the war's end the family fortune was in tatters and its lineage all but depleted of sons. They barely noticed the rise of the Nazis, joining the National Socialist Party purely because that was what one did.

Heinrich, the family's last heir, answered Germany's call in 1939 and was shipped off to invade France with a parahuman unit known as Einsatzgruppen X. Throughout the war Heinrich saw little of the Nazis' dark side and never really understood what was happening to the Jews sent out of France for "resettlement." His smug, stolid aristocratic outlook and lack of imagination shielded him well—but it still doesn't excuse him.

Once the tide of the war turned, Einsatzgruppen X found itself pushed back further and further into central Europe, taking terrible losses as they went.

During the Battle of Berlin the surviving members were supposed to sacrifice themselves in the city's defense, but Heinrich didn't see the need to shed his noble blood for a grubby little lower-middle-class politician like Hitler. Instead he lay low. Then after the war he made his way back to France and like so many former Wehrmacht and SS soldiers, he joined the French Foreign Legion.

This seemed the proper course—he was the only Von Hammurhold left, his family estate was gone, absorbed into communist Poland, and he had nothing left to protect but the family's occult relics. The rigid European officer's code would have normally required him to blow his brains out, but since his mortal duties weren't yet completely discharged, a disgraceful death in the ranks of Le Legion seemed an acceptable substitute.

To his surprise, he found that the Legion was full of Germans, although they only spoke their native language to one another in whispers after lights-out. The penalties for speaking any language but French were incredibly severe. Beatings were standard punishment for even the most trivial offenses in the Foreign Legion, and Heinrich heard more than one of his new comrades grumble that discipline hadn't even been this harsh in the SS. He spent some unhappy years fighting insurgents in Algeria, before they shipped the Legion off to Vietnam.

By now it was the 1950s, and Heinrich noticed that he wasn't getting any older. He supposed that this was because he hadn't created any heirs and couldn't pass the family relics down. The Blitzenhammer

didn't want to be left without a welder, although it was going to be hard-pressed to keep him alive in Vietnam.

As the Legion marched through the streets of Paris prior to its departure, it struck Heinrich as funny that the crowds were wildly cheering so many of the same men who had tramped through these streets as hated occupiers, not long before.

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s the French steadily lost the first Vietnam War, years before America had a chance to do the same. The Foreign Legion was pretty well annihilated over the course of the war, the bones of former SS men and Hitler Youth littering the jungle.

Better-connected Party officials were living safe lives in South America, and after few years of service in Southeast Asia Heinrich was determined to join them. He got a transfer to French Guiana, cashiered out of the Legion there and set off to what he hoped would be a comfortable existence in Buenos Aires. It didn't last.

The Nazi community had deep roots in Argentina, but once its pro-fascist leader, Juan Peron, fell out of power they were scattered to the winds. Many fled to places like Paraguay and lived hand-to-mouth, one step ahead of the nazi hunters.

This seemed undignified to Heinrich, who instead moved to Portugal, and began hiring himself out on a short-term basis to whoever would pay him. He spent part of each year fighting in squalid third-world conflicts and the rest of the time stretching his pennies as far as he could, to avoid having to take another such job for as long as possible.

By the mid 1980s the mercenary wars in Africa had all but completely dried up and he was forced to hire himself out part-time to criminal organizations.

The 1990s bought him some extra work in the former Yugoslavia, but they wanted him to do repellent things there and he tried to stay out of their clutches as much as he could.

The Moebius Man had heard of Blitzenhammer, who was something of a legend in neo-nazi circles, but never suspected that he was real until the Totenkopf said something about remembering his phone number. To the Moebius Man's shock the number worked and Blitzenhammer was more than willing to sing on with Zerstoiten 5. He now regrets taking the job.

An actual Nazi, he is nonetheless shocked and horrified at how vicious, brutal and crazy the Moebius Man's organization is. He always managed to maintain his psychological equilibrium by denying that the Nazi atrocities ever happened, but these kids actually seemed to revel in them—not even the Serbs did that.

It's against his cold and rigid code to betray an employer, but he wants to get away from Vernichtung 5 as fast as he can. The problem is, he's scared to death of them.

Adventures With Blitzenhammer:

1) Storm Warning

V5 attends a skinhead rally, which turns into a riot. Blitzenhammur is left wounded and unconscious on the field. His teammates lost sight of him in the brawl and had to leave when the authorities turned up in force.

To make this incident easier to work into your campaign, we're not going to specify exactly where it happens. Depending on the characters' reach, it could be Europe or it could be their own hometown. It may actually work best if the incident happens in a relatively small community outside the city that will take the PCs a little time to reach, but that isn't a complete hardship to get to.

The local authorities have taken Blitzenhammur into custody, and they are nervously waiting for a special federal unit to show up and take him off to a confinement facility for parahumans. Their police station is reasonably secure, but it's not up to withstanding a supervillain attack. They would greatly appreciate the PCs assistance in guarding him.

Blitzenhammur has regained consciousness by the time the PCs arrive, but true to his code he will say nothing to his captors, whom he regards as being as far beneath him as the center of the earth. The Strangshield and the Blitzenhammur are under lock and key at the station and will be transported separately.

V5 will almost certainly try to rescue him (unless he's wounded too badly to move, in which case they'll kill him instead), either at the police station or in transit to the federal facility. Once they break him out of his restraints, the team's first priority will be to retrieve his hammer and shield, which may result in the comic and surreal picture of V5 breaking him out of the police station and then breaking back in again to get his things.

To complicate matters, everyone expects V5 to mount some kind of rescue attempt, which means that any local superhero (or supervillain) with a grudge against V5 will now know where to find them and may well stakeout the police station and wait.

2) Mother, I've Brought Friends

Blitzenhammur excuses himself from the rest of the group, and goes home to the ruins of his family estate.

A group that monitors the activities of prominent white supremacists notices what he is doing, takes note of his probable destination, deep in the forests of Eastern Germany, and suddenly they figure out who he really is.

And if this is who they think it is, then his family history is actually quite alarming. His relations were said to be the hereditary keepers of the Blitzenhammur, the Strangshield and who knows what other ancient, terrible secrets. The hammer and the shield turned out to be only too real. Is he about to dig something even worse out of the ruins?

The group hastily gets in touch with the Player

Characters and presents them with their findings. Blitzenhammur is traveling by train and he'll have to walk the last few miles on foot. The PCs could probably catch up with him, and the group is willing to pay their airfare to Germany if they need it.

Meanwhile, the Moebius Man is also wondering what Blitzenhammur could be up to, and is discreetly trailing him across the country.

In fact, while no one has noticed it before, Blitzenhammur actually makes this trek once every ten years, if he can. He's going home to pay his respects to his mother on the anniversary of her death and he will not be pleased to have such a private moment intruded upon.

Zyclon B

Real Name: Gerte Dingle

PL: 8

Str: 10 (+0) **Dex:** 13 (+1) **Con:** 16 (+3) **Int:**

10 (+0) **Wis:** 14 (+2) **Cha:** 16 (+3)

Initiative: +1 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +8

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +9 **Defense:**

+19/+18 **Speed:** 30

Damage Save: +11 **Fortitude Save:** +5

Reflexes Save: +1 **Willpower Save:** +4

Skills: Hide +8, Move Silently +8, Spot+5, Intimidate +8

Feats: Dodge, Evasion, Great Fortitude, Iron Will

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +8 (Cost: 1pt), Energy Field +8 (Extras: Energy Blast +8, Explosive Effect, Subtle; Power Stunt: Energy Blast is a Penetrating Attack x2; Flaw: Only does damage to living tissue; Cost 4pts),

Equipment: Armor +5 (Cost: 1pt), Darkvision (Light-amplification Goggles), Immunity to Suffocation and Poison (Gas Mask and Oxygen Tank)

Weaknesses: Disabled (Mute)

Quirk: Fanatical Bigot (finds it impossible to work or cooperate with members of other ethnic groups and will always attack them in preference to all other available targets, even if doing so puts her at a tactical disadvantage)

Quirk: Crazy (does irrational and pointless things, frequently getting herself in trouble or putting herself at a disadvantage)

"Sssssssssssssss!"

Gerte Dingle was always a strange child, hateful and withdrawn. Molested by her father, brothers and a host of uncles, she had nowhere to retreat but the darkest depths of her mind. Soon her head was full of crazy, violent fantasies and she took no interest in school or family life.

This would not do for a young lady who was supposed to grow up to be a surgeon like her father or a lawyer like her stepmother. They sent her to a lot of therapists, until she bit one half to death. With a feeling of mingled shame and relief, her parents had her committed to indefinite psychiatric care (although it's fair to say that her uncles were genuinely sad to see her go).

Alas, the facility they sent her to made extra money by illegally testing a host of experimental drugs on its patients. After a few rounds of excruciating treatments her mind gave way completely, she lost the power of speech and her powers erupted.

The clinic staff studied her new abilities for about six months. Then she poisoned everyone on her ward and walked out the door into the night.

She lived on the street for a while, staying at squats with other kids. Then she noticed the skinheads.

Their ideas were appealing, their anger inspired her and she determined to become one of them. She didn't talk and they didn't know anyone in common, so she just shaved her head and started hanging around them.

It's tough to be a skinhead and a girl, particularly if you won't have sex with anyone. She had to kill many times to get her new friends' respect. This drew a certain amount of unwelcome attention from the authorities, although she managed to avoid getting caught.

In 1999 the Moebius Man learned that there was a skinhead in Dusseldorf with superhuman powers and sought him out as part of the original line-up of Zerstoiten 5. He found a madwoman with an insane lust for death.

He didn't need to convert her to the cause, or coax her into killing a homeless person to prove that she could take a life. She was already far more radical than he was himself and she was ready to kill at the drop of a hat. His real task was to restrain her from getting too excited, going on a rampage and getting gunned down too soon.

These days Zyclon B has found a kind of fragile equilibrium. Perhaps the most dedicated nazi of the group, she believes in the ideology with mad lunatic zeal. It's the only stable mental framework she has.

No horror or outrage is beyond her, she's much too nuts to grasp that other people's suffering is real. She still won't speak and hates anything sexual with a crazy passion, but she gets enough violence and has enough friends to feel content. Unable to really relate to others, she looks totally withdrawn from the group, but she does take comfort from their presence and she was horrified to see Der Totenkopf kill two of them.

She is still terrified of Der Totenkopf, but the fact that she's also in love with him helps take the edge off it.

Adventures With Zyclon B:

1) Papa, Look How Big and Weird I've Grown!

Zyclon B impulsively decides to visit her father at the hospital where he works. It does not occur to her that he won't recognize her in her costume or that the moment she walks through the front door everyone is going to panic. Soon this turns into a police siege, with SWAT teams and sharpshooters surrounding the building.

Zyclon B does not care if any of her "hostages" walk away and pretty soon everyone who is capable of leaving the hospital under their own power will have drifted out the door, leaving her to sit on her terrified father's desk and stare at him in silence.

After a while, the Moebius Man arrives to rescue her. As he takes her away, he gently tells her that that isn't her father anymore, that her father is Germany, now. And suddenly her dad knows exactly who she is.

Zyclon B's secret identity is about to become public knowledge, perhaps with drastic consequences for her family.

If you have no good way to arrange for the PCs to be in Germany when this happens, then her father is attending a medical conference in the US when she decides to drop in on him. Instead of a hospital, the setting is a big expensive hotel, but the rest of the plot remains the same.

2) Just a Little to the Left...

While skulking down the street one night, Zyclon B spies an interracial lesbian couple, and while the sight of them fills her with rage and horror, it fascinates her, too. She stalks them to an art opening, and if a Player Character doesn't find her and stop her, she follows them inside.

The patrons at the show are alarmed when Zyclon B walks in the door, but they're also curious to see how this infamous neo-nazi supervillain will react to the art on display. She doesn't seem violent at first, and is clearly engrossed by the work, drifting through the gallery, staring in silence through her mask.

Then the screaming starts. Zyclon B grabs people at random, shoves them in front of one or another work of art, poses them and then kills them. She's interested in seeing what they look like dying in front of those particular pieces—what their death agonies contribute to the work.

This is a lot of fun. She never really took an interest in art before, and there is clearly so much to learn. Most of all she would like to see what the couple she followed in here would look like, dying in front of one particular mural. But they're hiding behind an installation.

If the Player Characters don't stop her, she eventually finds and kills the two girls, gets disappointed by what it looks like, decides that art is boring and walks out the door.

Der Shreik

Real Name: Klaus Schlager

PL: 9

Str: 10 (+0) **Dex:** 15 (+2) **Con:** 14 (+2)

Int: 8 (-1) **Wis:** 8 (-1) **Cha:** 9 (-1)

Initiative: +2 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +6

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +8 **Defense:**

+17/+15 **Speed:** 30

Damage Save: +10 **Fortitude Save:** +8

Reflexes Save: +7 **Willpower Save:** +1

Skills: Bluff+4, Hide +9, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (German Skinhead Underground) +7, Move Silently+9, Taunt+10

Feats: Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Rapid Healing, Surprise Attack, Toughness,

Powers: Amazing Save (Fortitude) +6 (Extras: Reflex, Damage; Cost: 3pts), Energy Control (Sonic) PL 9 (Extras: Deflection, Energy Field, Explosive Blast; Power Stunts: Energy Blast; Cost: 5pts)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Silly, stupid and has no self-control.

"I shout! I shout! Yer brains fall out!!"

A damaged kid who likes to hurt people--stupid, addled, loud and cruel. He talks a lot, but none of it makes much sense. He seldom thinks beyond the present moment and is always misbehaving and trying to get attention.

Born in public housing in East Berlin, he was the youngest child of a dangerous mother. She punished her offspring for whimsical reasons and regularly sent them to the hospital with broken limbs or burns from her electric iron. When he was five she killed two of his siblings in front of him. He would have been next, but his powers manifested for the first time and she died instead.

He spent the next ten years in foster homes and the East German state orphanage system, where he learned lessons in pain, humiliation and fear that his mother had never even begun to teach him.

And then things got worse. After the Berlin Wall came down, the state orphanage system slowly ran out of money and collapsed. By 1995 he was fifteen and on the street.

He was a rent-boy for a while, and a doper. Sometimes he would make trouble with his power, but he always ran away before the authorities arrived and so was never arrested for anything worse than possession of drugs. It never occurred to him to use his power to steal things.

In 1999 the Moebius Man heard rumors that there was a street kid in East Berlin who had the power to shatter windows with his voice. It took him quite a while to find Der Shreik but it was easy to win his

trust. He taught the poor lout about Nazism and built up his pride. Although Der Shreik had never been a white supremacist and didn't really understand the ideology, beating up foreign guest workers was already a way of life in the East, and he took to that part with relish.

He is probably the Moebius Man's closest ally on the team and the only one with no ambitions of being leader. No strategist, he doesn't know when to retreat and easily gets distracted from the mission objective if he isn't given careful guidance. Yet he's actually a good team member, because he's just smart enough to know that he doesn't know anything about anything, and that his safest option is to do what the Moebius Man says.

Adventures With Der Shreik: Night of Screams and Giggles

Der Shreik goes out for a night on the town, spreading random mayhem as he goes. The Player Characters may catch up with him at any point in his rampage.

He hasn't told any of his teammates where he is going, and they will get increasingly restless and worried as time goes on. Eventually the Moebius Man and Blitzenhammur set out looking for him, and may stumble over the PCs on his trail. If der Shreik gets arrested or is in immediate danger of losing his life, the Moebius Man catches up with him and rescues him.

First der Shreik will go to an underground skinhead concert and pick fights with people outside. He doesn't have a ticket.

Then once he gets bored with this he will go to a house where he thinks an old friend of his lives, and when he finds out that they don't really live there, he will scream the place down.

Then he'll decide to go to the beach, whether there is one in this town or not. On the way to the beach he stumbles across an exhausted Chinese waiter named Marvin Wu, staggering home after a long and hellish shift, and taunts, chases, terrorizes and eventually kills him.

Then he gets on a bus that he thinks is headed for the beach. But he gets distracted when the bus crosses a freeway overpass, and jumps off there. Then he stands on the overpass and tries to see if he can shout every fifth car off the road.

This gives him an idea, so after a little while he will go down to the train station, stand on the tracks and try to shout an oncoming passenger train off the rails (we didn't say it was a good idea). If the Moebius Man hasn't already caught up with him and brought him home, it happens here.

Mother Moebius

Real Name: Maria Moebius

PL: 15

Str: 10 (+0) **Dex:** 16 (+3) **Con:** 16 (+3)
Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 10 (+0) **Cha:** 16 (+3)
Initiative: +3 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +7
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +10 **Defense:**
+24/+20 **Speed:** 30/70 (Teleport)
Damage Save: +3 **Fortitude Save:** +3
Reflexes Save: +3 **Willpower Save:** +0

Skills: Profession (homemaker) +3, Performance +6

Feats: Dodge

Powers: Teleport +14 (Extras: Deflection [Deflect Others, Reflection], Disintegration [Restoration], Energy Blast [Explosive Effect], Extended Teleport, Portal; Cost: 11pts)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Willing to die to protect her witless son.

Quirk: Distrusts anyone in authority, won't listen to any advice, no matter how useful or important, if it comes from an authority figure, defies anything any authority figure tells her to do, even if this is severely to her disadvantage.

"I am the screaming fist of the people, Mr. Uncool Businessman! This boy is mine—you won't feed your evil machine with his blood! By the holy names of Marx and Mao, I sentence you all to execution!"

Far more powerful than her son, the so-called Moebius Man, she hasn't been an active supervillain since the 1970s and finds it much more satisfying to sell real estate in the Stuttgart suburbs than to overthrow the forces of world capitalism.

She will only reappear if her son is in deadly peril. If Karl is about to die, and she knows about it (perhaps by watching the incident on television) she will teleport back into her old costume and instantly appear at the scene.

Her leather pants are old and cracked, but the rest of her is in exceedingly good shape for a woman who is nearly fifty. She clearly works out and has a good plastic surgeon.

Her brief stint as a terrorist in the 1970s wasn't enough for anyone to form a clear impression of just how powerful she is. The Maoist group she belonged to, the so-called Red Legion, didn't manage to accomplish very much before it fell apart in an argument over whether or not some piece of dogma had already been invalidated by Chairman Mao's more recent teachings. They were able to pull off two bombings, abandon a third, and make an unsuccessful

attempt at a bank robbery in Munich.

During the course of these adventures, Maria barely had a chance to use her powers at all. If she did, the police would have searched for her a lot more vigorously. The lady is a one-woman apocalypse.

She can teleport bullets and energy blasts out of the air, hold them outside of time for as long as she likes, and then make them reappear, pointing in the opposite direction. She can teleport the heart out of an opponent's chest or the top half off of a skyscraper. She has been shot at and has had grenades thrown at her on a number of occasions, and has stored the projectiles in timeless extradimensional space, ready to be let out whenever the moment is right.

The GM should save this effect for dramatic purposes until after the PCs have seen her teleport and reverse the course of a few bullets. Once the PCs understand that she can do this, have her materialize a grenade that a policeman threw at her in 1978. As you describe the attack, mention how and when it originated, even though the PCs would really have no way of knowing this. It will help to underscore how powerful she is.

Her motives for coming out of retirement are more complex than they seem. Maria and her husband, Klaus, have long since turned their backs on their wayward son. But they have kept track of him and his exploits. Every time he kills someone, they send the family some money and make a donation to an Anarchist group that kills skinheads.

Yet more and more, as she watches the Moebius Man on TV or reads about him in the newspapers, Maria has begun to remember her own glory days as a young hell-raiser, and how brief they really were. She remembers what it felt like to live on the run, staying up late and plotting mayhem with friends so close you thought you'd die for them. It didn't seem fair that it all ended for her so quickly. Karl has had more than two years—Maria only had a few months. More and more she wants some of that lost glory for herself, and her son's imminent demise gives her an excuse to go grab a piece of it.

In combat she will be as ruthless as she thinks is required to save her son and herself, and may very well use lethal force if it seems appropriate. You'd think that she'd just teleport them both far away and end the fight, but in fact she's also here to show off and snatch some of her son's fame for herself, so she will probably stick around for more rounds of combat than are strictly necessary.

To complicate matters, the Moebius Man may refuse to leave the scene (he'll be mortified that his mom is showing up and getting in the way of his big moment with her dopey, embarrassing Marxist talk) and may keep teleporting back into the battle after she has already sent him home. How the whole thing ends is strictly up to the GM.

Using Mother Moebius in your

campaign: Maria is a wild card who may never turn up at all, particularly if her son gets killed in

secret. She's there to add an extra wrinkle to the plot, especially if the Totenkopf is about to do something crazy that will devastate a big chunk of central Europe and has already beaten the PCs. She hates the Totenkopf for bullying her son and for being a Nazi, and will most certainly try to kill him if she gets a chance.

The whole thing may well end with Maria slumped dying over her dying boy, trying to shield him with her arms, murmuring "*Ah, bubby, if your real father were here, we'd have shown them the wrath of the people.*"

Or with Maria and the Totenkopf killing each other in a small but spectacular thermonuclear explosion. Or even with Maria and her son vanishing from sight entirely, never to be seen again (perhaps to some alternate dimension where no one has ever heard of Mao or Hitler?)

The Corpus Christi Good-Time Boys

Membership: Cimarron Starr (a living atomic weapon with a self-absorbed and grandiose personality), Johnny Black (a paranoid, bullying speed freak who wields a legendary enchanted pistol), The Texas Twister (an impulsive killer, prone to lethal temper tantrums, who can create whirlwinds with the power of his mind), the Lone Star Lady (a shy, sullen energy-drainer, who constantly complains about everything), Mr. Fist (an aging unarmed combat expert who the team hires from time to time, famous and well-regarded in criminal circles), the Grease Monkey (another hireling—she's a quiet, polite gadgeteer who dresses in spotless mechanics coveralls), Doctor Destructor (a giant killer robot with an upper-crust accent and a gentle demeanor).

The Corpus Christi Good Time Boys are a gang of professional supervillains with a story as tangled and outrageous as any rock band. The team's leader, Cimarron Starr, has stolen the Lone Star Lady's boyfriend, Johnny Black. The Lone Star Lady has by way of revenge taken up with Cimarron Starr's boyfriend, the Texas Twister. This arrangement has left no one happy, and the dangerous, self-important, grandiose and unstable personalities of everyone involved haven't made things any easier. Nor has Johnny Black's problem with methamphetamines (although to be fair, he's manic and irrational even when he isn't high).

The team hasn't always been this dysfunctional. The Corpus Christi Good-Time Boys were founded by the deathless cowboy supervillain called Jim Dandy and his sidekick, Boy Howdy. The two of them had haunted the Texas gulf coast for nearly a century, committing minor acts of highway robbery and knocking over the occasional store for extra funds.

In the 1990s Jim Dandy was seized with an uncharacteristic attack of ambition, and decided it was time to finally make a go of his criminal career. He and Boy Howdy hired a legendary pugilist called Mr. Fist and a gadgeteer who called herself the Grease Monkey, and the four of them started robbing banks and armored cars.

Things went well, but the team lacked the raw power to stand up to superheroes, so after some looking around they brought the beautiful Miss Cimarron Starr (then calling herself Winter Steele) on board. The lady was a walking talking H-Bomb, and despite her obnoxious, vain personality she rounded the team out well.

Soon her ne'er do well boyfriend, the Texas Twister joined the core of the group (Mr. Fist and the Grease Monkey were just muscle they hired for big

jobs, and didn't spend much time with the rest of the team) and they had all the raw power they could have asked for.

Then Jim Dandy and Boy Howdy both got killed sticking up a liquor store. They had done it out of habit, without the rest of the team and without needing the money, and finally found the bullets with their names on them.

This left Cimarron Starr in charge, looking desperately for new recruits before the money from the last job ran out. She still had Mr. Fist and the Grease Monkey's phone numbers, but she didn't have anything to pay them with.

Then she found a wandering superhuman duo, the twitchy, paranoid Johnny Black and his whining, murderous girlfriend the Lone Star Lady, fresh from an unsuccessful stint in the adult film industry, raising havoc up and down the gulf coast. They were both only too glad to pool their meager resources with a team, and Johnny Black found himself drawn to the proud, imperious Cimarron Starr.

For her part, she liked his forceful, angry, brooding personality better than her own boyfriend (who always tried much too hard to please her) so she threw over the Texas Twister and stole Johnny Black away from his girl.

The Texas Twister is more powerful than Johnny Black, and has a long and troubled history of murderous tantrums. Yet he's so devoted to Cimarron Starr that he accepted her decision and determined to worship her from afar. Then the Lone Star Lady gave herself to him, and the object of his obsession switched completely. He now loves the Lone Star Lady with his usual hopeless doglike devotion. Alas, she's still totally in love with Johnny Black and painfully eager to get his attention. This has not done the Texas Twister's perilous mental stability much good.

Johnny Black, in the meantime, is enraged that someone else would dare touch the Lone Star Lady, and if it weren't for the fact that his new girlfriend is strong enough to cause him serious harm, he would have killed the Texas Twister (he sees no contradiction in any of this). Nor is Johnny's relationship with Cimarron Starr exactly blissful. They yell and scream and throw things at each other and make terrible accusations. This is just force of habit—neither one has ever been in a relationship that wasn't this bad.

Cimarron Starr briefly ran back to the Texas Twister's arms a few weeks ago (mostly to show the Lone Star Lady that she could, if she wanted) and this has made things even worse.

Threat Level: The Corpus Christi Good Time Boys are a low to mid-level team. They could be a lot more effective if they spent less time quarreling among themselves and more time planning robberies. Their teamwork is weak and their dysfunctional lives hamper them on the job. They aren't really capable of thinking in terms larger than bank holdups and

revenge killings and have no dreams of ruling the world. Their ambitions run more along the lines of being famous and having lots of money.

Base of Operations: The team has no single base or headquarters. They stay on the move most of the time, stealing cars and vans as need be. Sometimes, when they're plush on funds, they'll get a suite in a big hotel for a few weeks, spending lavish amounts of money on room service and partying wildly. They have public storage units scattered around east Texas, with spare equipment and supplies if they need it in an emergency.

In the event of a really dire emergency, the team owns a house in a brand-new suburban subdivision way outside of Houston, where they can lay low for a while. Last year they bought a pretty good-sized chunk of the housing development as an investment, and they kept this one unit vacant, just in case they ever needed it. The house is completely empty and unfurnished, but there's a hidden room in the basement that's big enough for four people to sleep in.

The Corpus Christi Good Time Boys see themselves as a wide-ranging, well-traveled team, because in spite of their name they don't spend all their time on the gulf coast and have gone as far away as Lubbock and even Amarillo on occasion. West Texas makes them uneasy—it's too alien, almost like a foreign country. Yet they're comfortable enough across the border in Matamoros and Veracruz.

There is a country-western nightclub in Corpus Christi called the Pines, where they can often be found partying on the weekends (even though the Lone Star Lady can't stand the place—she doesn't like music, hates the way it stops her from thinking about herself, insists on its own importance). A lot of their heists get planned in one of the booths or in the back room.

The club's owner, Big Mack Briscoe, isn't a criminal himself, but he knows enough to be afraid of the Good Time Boys and lets them pretty much have the run of the place. He's thinking about retiring soon.

Organization: Cimarron Starr is the team's leader, partly because she's the longest standing member, partly because of her forceful personality, and mostly because she's stronger than any of the others. She's a bad leader, selfish and given to lording her position over the team's weaker members. Johnny Black feels that his status as her present boyfriend gives him authority, and picks on the Texas Twister and the Lone Star Lady whenever he can.

Yet the team pulls itself together whenever Mr. Fist and the Grease Monkey show up. They all want to look like professionals around a famous supervillain like Mr. Fist and they like the Grease Monkey for her calm, self-effacing personality. Even though the two of them are really just hired help, they bring out the best in the group's troubled core members.

Cimarron Starr and Johnny Black have contacts in the Mexican Mafia who can help the team liquidate stolen assets, launder money and so forth, but relations

with them are tricky and difficult. Cimarron Starr is a lousy negotiator, Johnny Black constantly antagonizes people, and these things have not endeared them to the mob. The fact that neither Johnny nor Cimarron Starr trusts non-whites makes things doubly awkward. The team might or might not be able to get rid of stolen goods in a reasonable amount of time and every time they visit their contacts there is a risk that it will end in violence.

While the team seems to be constantly broke, they do have ambitions of saving their money up and they have tried to make a few investments. Some of them (most notably in real estate) have paid off well but for the most part they've just been flinging cash at harebrained schemes.

Their accountant is the nervous, semi-competent V.J. Gupta, who operates out of a run-down strip mall in Brownsville. They rarely see him face to face, and mostly deal with his personal assistant via phone.

Tactics: The Corpus Christi Good Time Boys specialize in robbing banks, jewelry stores, armored cars and so forth.

Their tactics (such as they are) work better for stealing stuff than they do in big super-brawls. The Grease Monkey provides them with the technical assistance they will need to bypass alarms, open vaults and so forth. Doctor Destructor subdues resistance or creates a distraction, the Lone Star Lady and Johnny Black pick off any particularly powerful targets at a distance and Mr. Fist does his best to fend off armed guards while Cimarron Starr and the Texas Twister concentrate on making off with the loot.

In a flat out combat situation with another supergroup they will send Doctor Destructor in first, using his giant body for cover as they advance and come to grips with the enemy. Then each of them will pick an opponent their powers seem to be suited to fighting and try to face them one on one, with no coordination or broader strategy.

They don't even trust one another enough to lay down covering fire—it's pretty much every man and woman for themselves.

Using The Corpus Christi Good-Time Boys in your campaign:

The Corpus Christi Good Time Boys are a good recurrent nemesis for low to mid level teams of player characters. Their lack of coordination and woeful group dynamics make them less effective than an equally powerful but better organized PC group.

They can be hired to perform almost any kind of crime, and for enough money or a personal grudge they would be more than willing to leave Texas and come face the PCs on their home ground. They hate to leave their home state, but they're not completely helpless in a setting like New York City—they just complain about it a lot.

The GM can make good use of the team's tangled internal politics, having team members show up late or shout at one another as they fight. After the PCs have

encountered the Corpus Christi Good Time Boys more than once, the GM can draw the PCs into their crazy soap opera of a back story--perhaps Cimarron Starr or the Lone Star Lady comes rushing into an attractive male PC's arms, just to make their current boyfriend even more jealous.

Perhaps Johnny Black gets an irrational conviction that one of the PCs is seeing Cimarron Starr, and tries to goad her into attacking the Player Characters to prove it isn't so.

Perhaps the Lone Star Lady lets the PCs capture her, to prove that Johnny Black still loves her and make him come running to her rescue. Perhaps he does, but not because he loves her—he wants to make sure that she doesn't give up any of his secrets. Perhaps Cimarron Starr finds out where Johnny Black has gone and goes off in a jealous rage to stop him. Perhaps the Texas Twister follows her, eager to prove that he still loves Cimarron Starr, etc., etc.

Adventures With The Corpus Christi Good-Time Boys: 1) Corpus Christi 78411

Johnny Black and Cimarron Starr are both convinced that the PCs intend to steal the name "The Corpus Christi Good Time Boys" for their own. Nothing will convince them that this isn't true (this works particularly well if one of the PCs has previously made some ironic, sneering comment about their name—something like "*Gee, great name, wish I'd thought of that.*")

The Corpus Christi Good Time Boys issue a challenge to the Player Characters. The PCs should come face them in abandoned industrial park on the Texas gulf coast, to battle for who gets to use the name.

Even though the Player Characters know that this is a misunderstanding, it does also represent a chance to capture one of Texas' most wanted supervillain groups. Anyway what superhero team could resist a challenge like that?

The other Good Time Boys are skeptical of Johnny Black and Cimarron Starr's claims. If the PCs show up for the confrontation and vociferously protest that they have no designs on the team's name, the others will remonstrate with Cimarron Starr.

When she can see that even Mr. Fist has taken the other side, she'll concede that maybe the PCs don't want to steal their name after all, maybe Johnny was wrong about that, but they're here for a fight now and the honor of Texas must be answered once she has been called forth. This makes sense to the others, who will reluctantly agree that they have to fight now.

Industrial park fights can be a lot of fun, with broken down forklifts and rusty old barrels full of toxic waste to throw at one another, I-beams and sections of chainlink fence to beat on one another with and no innocent bystanders who might hurt. Maybe there's even a catwalk or two to for the combatants to chase one another across, or dangle from.

If the PCs win, Cimarron Starr will insist that the PCs didn't fight fair, and her team will keep the name.

2) Nice Day for a White Wedding

Johnny Black calls the PCs from a pay phone in Las Vegas. If he has no way of getting their phone number then he sends them a letter, or has a contact meet them in person and hand them a cell phone. He wants a three day truce.

Johnny sounds excited and happy, bursting to tell them something, and even if the PCs don't ask him why he wants a truce, he blurts it out. He is going to marry Cimarron Starr. They decided to get married on impulse, just yesterday. They're not in Vegas to raise hell or steal anything, they just want to spend three days at a "classy" hotel, get married and go home.

PCs who are familiar with Johnny Black may note that it's just like him to be so paranoid and self-absorbed that he thinks they have nothing better to do than to track his movements and speculate about why he's in Las Vegas.

Johnny adds that he fears some of his teammates may have caught wind of his upcoming nuptials, and that he wants no violence to mar his wedding day. Can the PCs come to Vegas and run interference for him? He wants them to stop the Texas Twister or the Lone Star Lady if they show up in town and do something crazy. He'd even be willing to testify against them if the PCs catch them getting up to anything, despite the fact that it would violate his moral code to rat out a fellow crook.

If the PCs take Johnny up on his offer, neither the Texas Twister nor the Lone Star Lady shows up. In fact neither one has even guessed what might be afoot.

However, as the hour of her wedding approaches, the bride develops cold feet, gets drunk and runs amok on the Strip in her wedding dress, smashing anything she can lay her hands on. If the PCs try to stop her, they will be breaking the truce, and Johnny will swear revenge.

Johnny Black

Real Name: Thomas Tanner

PL: 9

Str: 12 (+1) **Dex:** 18 (+4) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 10 (+0) **Wis:** 10 (+0) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: + **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +10
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +13 **Defense:**
+19/+14 **Speed:** 30
Damage Save: +11 **Fortitude Save:** +2
Reflexes Save: +13 **Willpower Save:** +9

Skills: Drive +5, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Texas Criminal Underworld) +2, Listen +5, Spot +5

Feats: All-Out Attack, Dodge, Evasion,

Equipment: Enchanted Pistol (Energy Blast +9:
Extras: Amazing Save [Damage, Reflexes and Willpower], Deflection; Power Stunts: All-Around Sight, Blind-Fight, Darkvision, Far Shot, Multishot, Penetrating Attack x2, Penetration Vision, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Ricochet Attack, Quick-Draw, See Invisibility; Cost: 5pts)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Paranoid speedfreak, does stupid irrational things that screw up both himself and his comrades.

"I'm gone show you who you're trifling with, son. You like pain much? 'Cause this here would be a great time to start."

A career criminal long before he gained his superpowers, Thomas Tanner has always been obsessed with the legendary gunfighters of the old west, and particularly with the infamous Johnny Ringo.

A cruel, erudite man with a taste for Plato, Thucydides and meaningless slaughter, John Ringo remains one of the most enigmatic and frightening figures of the 1870s. Always ready to confound listeners with his carefully reasoned arguments about the hopelessness and futility of the Universe, and twice as ready to kill them dead, he was as adept with a pistol as he was with a classical allusion.

His contemporaries knew that there was something very wrong with the gun he carried, though they spoke of it only in whispers. We don't know how many human lives this weapon took. He used to refer to it as a living thing, which hungered for the blood of men. She would come for him someday, he said, when she had drunk her fill. And so she did. While some amateur historians contend that anyone from Wyatt Earp to Buckskin Frank Leslie murdered Johnny Ringo, the fact remains that he shot himself.

Not a lot of people saw the gun outside its holster and lived to talk about it. Those who did said that it superficially appeared to be a .45 caliber revolver, but was in fact is something much stranger. Neither the

caliber nor the make were at all standard—Johnny Ringo must have had his bullets custom-made. The Cylinder was said to hold five oddly-shaped chambers, while the firing mechanism operated according to what one Arizona gunsmith called "*a simple, ingenious but wholly unfamiliar principle.*" The gunmetal was rumored to be some unfamiliar alloy, with a peculiar greenish tint, covered with a complex design that smacked distinctly of the occult.

After a decade of searching, Tom Tanner stole the weapon from a private collection in Laredo. This weird enchanted gun has made him the fastest gunfighter alive, given him the ability to shoot through walls and around corners, (and incidentally let him give up his unsuccessful career as an adult entertainer) but it hasn't improved his disposition.

He's a paranoid, manic, overbearing bully, convinced that the people around him are planning to cheat him and that he can intimidate them into admitting it. A trial to be around, he constantly questions, threatens and browbeats anyone in reach. He has been known to kill people preemptively, before they can do him wrong, or to betray them before they can betray him. If he suspects anyone of having more education than he does (or worse yet, catches them actually reading a book) then he singles them out for special punishment. For some reason he doesn't apply this rule to women, the Grease Monkey is relieved to note.

Johnny Black never seems to sleep, both because of his paranoid, hypomanic personality and because he takes far too much speed. He has also been known to crash and collapse for days on end, going to ground in some crummy motel room until he can get himself together.

Despite his bad behavior, he can't be kicked out of the Good-Time Boys. He's Cimarron Starr's current boyfriend and what she says goes. Although she could easily fry him in his snakeskin boots, he often yells at her for no reason and accuses her of unfaithfulness. Amazingly, he gets away with this.

His background is depressingly familiar. His father was a small time hood, who taught young Tom how to steal and fight and kill without remorse. Tom grew up in the back of a Winnebago with a bunch of half-brothers and whichever unfortunate woman Pa was dating at the time.

Pa got into a drunken knife fight with Tom on his sixteenth birthday, cut him bad and drove him off.

After Johnny Black gained his powers, but before he hooked up with the Corpus Christi Good-Time Boys, he roved the Texas gulf coast with his whining codependent girlfriend, the Lone Star Lady. One look at Cimarron Starr and he knew it was time to trade up. He pushed out her crazy loser boyfriend, the Texas Twister, and was shocked and enraged when the Twister then took up with the Lone Star Lady. He seriously thought about murdering the Twister, until he realized that Cimarron Starr would probably kill him for it. Nonetheless, things have been rather strained of late.

Adventures With Johnny Black:

1) I Know What You Done

Johnny Black gets it into his speed-crazed head that one of the PCs has been having an affair with Cimarron Starr, and the thought torments him well nigh unto madness. He will seek the PC out and challenge him to a duel.

When he can't find the PC, he decides that the best way to get in touch with him would be to commit a crime. Over the next 24 hours he commits eight totally pointless robberies, sticking up stores and stealing whatever random objects happen to catch the fancy of his drug addled brain. At each crime scene, he leaves the PC's name spray-painted on the wall, along with the words "I Know What You Done."

When the PC finally manages to track him down and confront him, Johnny is holding the Korean couple who run a minimart hostage, pointing his gun at them and talking irrational nonsense. The speed is starting to wear off, and he's crashing really badly (he's been up for five days straight). Johnny won't be able to put up a fight and if the PC makes any effort to negotiate with or talk to him he will actually lie down on the floor and lapse into a deep dark sleep.

However, Cimarron Starr has been tracking Johnny Black, convinced that he's sneaking off to see another woman. When she sees that he has been captured, she will attempt to rescue him from the PCs. If she isn't tough enough to do it by herself, then the Lone Star Lady has also been chasing Johnny, convinced that Cimarron Starr intends him harm. Perhaps the Texas Twister is pursuing the Lone Star Lady, convinced that she's running off to a secret tryst with Johnny Black...

2) The Unwelcome Apotheosis of Johnny Black

Johnny Black's gun is shifting and unfolding itself into something else—something bigger and stranger. He can't seem to put it down anymore and he's getting really scared.

His teammates have deserted him, except for the Lone Star Lady, who he drove away. He's in a lot of physical pain, and tormented by visions in which everyone the gun has ever killed comes up and stares at him.

In agony and terror, Johnny Black runs out into the depths of the East Texas swamps, looking for a legendary Native American shaman called Burning Wind. Everyone says Burning Wind, if he exists, is powerful enough to shake the mountains, so perhaps he's strong enough to help Johnny Black.

And Johnny finds him, and he does in fact have the power to help Johnny, so the gun kills him.

The old man's body has come to light and Johnny is now hunted through the swamps by both the law and Burning Wind's vengeful relations. And as his gun changes, it begins to erode reality, and rabid extradimensional abominations start to appear in its wake.

The PCs can get involved in this mess when news reaches them of Burning Wind's death, or when

slobbering obscenities from outside time and space start turning up in East Texas. Or perhaps the Lone Star Lady runs weeping to a Player Character for assistance, and offers to be their girlfriend for a while if he helps Johnny.

Once the PCs catch up with Johnny, it is possible to trick his gun into thinking that the time is not yet right for it to assume its true form. Any PC with the ability to cast spells can do this with a roll vs. DC 20.

If the team has no spellcaster, then Burning Wind left some notes on a yellow legal pad that explain which symbols to draw on the ground and what words to intone. It requires a Will roll vs. DC 25 for a non-spellcaster to successfully perform the ritual.

However, the gun will try to shoot anyone who attempts to fix the problem, and the ritual takes at least 3 rounds of total concentration on the part of whoever is performing it.

If the PCs manage to save him, Johnny Black will show no gratitude. It seems to him that the PCs took an awfully long time to fix things, like maybe they enjoyed watching him suffer. And they seem to know an awful lot about what went wrong with his gun. If they was able to fix it so damn easy, how is he to know they didn't cause it in the first place?

Cimarron Starr

Real Name: Tammy-Rae Mulford

PL: 12

Str: 18 (+4) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 20 (+5) **Int:** 10 (+0) **Wis:** 9 (-1) **Cha:** 15 (+2)

Initiative: +1 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +10

(Attack Bonus (Ranged): +7 **Defense:**

+16/+15 **Speed:** 30 feet, (fly 60)

Damage Save: +5 **Fortitude Save:** +4

Reflexes Save: +1 **Willpower Save:** +7

Skills: Innuendo +4, Taunt +4

Feats: Aerial Combat

Powers: Amazing Save (Will) +8 (Source:

Mutation, cost 1pt), Energy Control (Radiation) +12

(Extras: Flight, Force Field; Power Stunts: Drain

Energy; Source: Mutation; Cost: 4pts), Super-Strength

+10 (Extras: Immunity, Protection; Source: Mutation; Cost 6pts)

"Yes, I've robbed, I've killed and maimed. I've taken drugs, betrayed friends and had improper thoughts just like everybody does. But I don't let it define who I am. My tender womanly heart, my unwavering faith in Jesus, these things are more important than who I slay or cripple or what I steal from them."

A walking H-Bomb with a temperament to match. She's the team's de facto leader, largely because she could kill any of the others without much difficulty.

She once used the alias "Winter Steel" but too many people started calling her "Nuclear Winter", so she changed it. She'll probably change it again once enough people point out how much her current name sounds like a racehorse (or a stripper). Perhaps she'll be "Angel Blayze" next.

Self-absorbed and melodramatic, her hair is large, her makeup is overdone, she wears boots with six-inch heels in the middle of combat. She likes to talk about herself in the third person, as in: *"Who is Cimarron Starr? Woman of mystery, with a heart as wide as the Texas sky and as warm as the prairie wind..."* etc.

Cimarron Starr is a Christian, as she will smugly tell anyone who cares to listen, although this doesn't stop her from getting drunk, stealing someone's boyfriend or robbing banks. She can be manipulated through her beliefs, although you won't ever be able to convince her that she is wrong or that anything is her fault. It would, for example, be easy to convince her that she shouldn't steal from a bank owned by a televangelist, or that she shouldn't trust someone

because they haven't been "saved."

Saved or not, her life is dysfunctional mess. Whenever the Player Characters encounter her, she is screaming at some former friend on her cell phone, even if she is walking into combat. Unfortunately, she's radioactive and her powers interfere with cell phones when she gets mad. This does not improve her mood.

Although she is easily the most powerful member of the group, Cimarron Starr is so used to being mistreated by the men in her life that she'll put up with an amazing amount of emotional abuse from her boyfriend, Johnny Black, without doing anything worse than screaming back at him.

She claims to always fight fair, and that she would never harm a child or an animal, but she mostly says this to annoy the Lone Star Lady. While taking hostages and hitting people who are trying to surrender isn't normally her style, once the tide of battle turns against her she will promptly forget her principles and become capable of anything.

She claims that her powers are a gift from God (although it's not clear why He would want her to rob banks with them) which most people assume means that she's a mutant. She writes startlingly bad poetry, and sometimes she recites it, too.

Adventures With Cimarron Starr:

1) This is Not a Stick-Up

Cimarron Starr walks into a bank. She's not there to rob the place, she's there to complain about some extra fees that she feels shouldn't have shown up on her statement. She claims that there's a special exception to the rules that should keep her from having to pay the extra fees—the whole thing is complicated and she's not very good at explaining it.

Amazingly enough, she's right. Her bank has actually cheated her out of about \$12 in total. However, the branch manager doesn't like her tone and recognizes her as Cimarron Starr. So he trips the silent alarm and claims that she's robbing the place.

Exasperated and indignant, she insists that this is not a stick-up, she's just here for her money—but the cops won't listen. A standoff develops, and the Player Characters get called in to resolve the crisis.

She will attempt to explain things to them while she's fighting them, but even if they do take her complaint seriously, how can they help her now? She's already taken hostages and injured police officers. And now she's attacking them.

After the PC's defeat Cimarron Starr (or get defeated by her and watch her fly angrily away) the smirking bank manager points out that she really was right, but it was cheaper to call the cops than to pay her the twelve bucks.

2) This is Not a Stick-Up Either Oh, Wait...

Cimarron Starr walks back into the same bank. She's fuming mad, but she's not here to rob it this time either, she just wants to close her account and give them a piece of her mind. Unfortunately, whether or not she's out on bail, the government has frozen her

account, and the terrified tellers can't give her any money.

Then the bank manager walks in and sees her. He panics and calls the cops again.

When she hears the sirens coming for the second time Cimarron Starr has had it, and decides to rob the place after all. She only wants the money from her account. Plus twelve dollars.

The PCs get called in again, and find that she's desperate to explain things to them. Whether she wins or loses this fight isn't that important to her. What she's really afraid of is turning up on that reality show about America's stupidest criminals, for trying to rob the same bank twice in one week. Can they explain things to the TV people? She doesn't mind jail so much, but she couldn't bear it if she turned up on that show.

Grease Monkey

Real Name: Miss Phoebe Klokholm

PL: 8

Str: 8 (-1) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 10 (+0) **Int:**

18 (+4) **Wis:** 15 (+2) **Cha:** 13 (+1)

Initiative: +6 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +4

(+6S, Gadgets) **Attack Bonus (Ranged):** +7

(+7S, Gadgets) **Defense:** +10/8 **Speed:** 30

Damage Save: +0/+8 (Armor) **Fortitude**

Save: +0 **Reflexes Save:** +2 **Willpower**

Save: +2

Skills: Computers +10, Craft (Mechanical Devices) +10, Craft (Electronics) +9, Disable Device +9, Open Lock +9, Repair +10, Science (Robotics) +10

Feats: Evasion, Expertise, Hero's Luck, Improved Initiative, Photographic Memory, Talented (Craft, Robotics), Talented (Computers, Repair), Talented (Disable Device, Open Lock)

Equipment: Toolkit (Effect: Gadgets +8; Flaw: Device; Source: Super-Science; Cost 1pt; Total 8pts), Armored Coveralls (Effect: 8 points of armor; Cost 1 pt; Total 8pts), Small Can of Anti-Antagonist Spray (Effect: Weapon, does PL 7 Stun)

"Yes, I'm sorry to hear that, Ms. Starr. It is difficult when people don't understand you. Would you like to look at these schematics for the new death ray? Would that cheer you up a little?"

An occasional member of the Good-Time Boys, she's a gadgeteer for hire and works with them whenever Cimarron Starr decides that they need a technical expert. She looks a little like a female Mr. Goodwrench and wears mechanics' coveralls, which are always spotless and neatly pressed.

Nobody really knows much about the Grease Monkey's background. She works out of Dallas, New York and Berlin and has no detectable accent of any kind. Professional, polite, a little reserved, the Grease Monkey stays carefully aloof from the crazy soap opera which is the Corpus Christi Good-Time Boys, and as a result is everyone's favorite team-mate. All of the others bring their problems to her eventually, pouring out all the latest developments, while she makes neutral remarks and pretends to listen.

She's not unattractive physically, but with her quiet personality, short, sensible ponytail and complete lack of makeup, she's the very opposite of Johnny Black or the Texas Twister's "type", so neither one has yet made a pass at her. If either one of them did, she would simply ignore it, and avoid ever being alone with them again.

No killer herself, she probably wouldn't raise any

objections if her teammates killed someone in front of her. She tries to avoid the messy side of being a supervillain, but she's aware that unfortunate things sometimes happen.

Her detachment does have limits, however. She would not participate in any plan that involves killing a lot of innocent people, taking hostages or anything as stupid as world domination. While she is a pro and wouldn't betray her employer for money, if you asked her to help unleash a killer virus on Houston she'd call the cops.

Superhumanly adept at finding new uses for existing technology, her genius is practical rather than theoretical. She doesn't invent new technology outright, or create blatantly impossible machines.

She's more the kind of person you'd have install rocket engines and flamethrowers on your wonder-car than the kind who would build you a weather-control device or an earthquake machine. However, if you were to give her a weather control device, she'd figure it out in a flash and could probably improve on its design. She could rebuild or reprogram a giant combat robot (in fact she has—see Doctor Destructor later in this section) but she lacks the financial resources to build one from scratch. Nor does she have access to the kind of money and manpower required to build giant death rays or the kind of laser you'd use to write your name on the moon. Offer her that kind of money and the plans for a giant death ray, and she'd certainly be intrigued.

Adventures With Grease Monkey:

1) Monkey Business

The Grease Monkey takes on an emergency job in the Player Characters' home city. A gang of cheap hoodlums has found a warbot lying unused in a government warehouse. They have instructed it to steal a huge gun safe from a store that sells firearms and model trains.

The warbot does as they ask, walks into the store with them and rips the safe out of the wall. Unfortunately, when it's carrying the safe it's too heavy for the floor to hold. The robot takes three steps and falls halfway through the floor.

This makes it think it's under attack, and initiates a combat sequence that the gang doesn't have the passwords to countermand. In this mode it will shoot anything that moves, so its erstwhile masters find themselves pinned down, frozen in place.

Fortunately, one of them is facing a wall when this happens, and he knows the Grease Monkey's phone number. He carefully dials her up on his cell phone, trying to move as little as possible, explains the nature of the problem and offers to hire her on a short-term basis to get them out of it.

She agrees, but she isn't anywhere nearby and it takes her nearly six hours to get there. In the meantime, the police have surrounded the building and the PCs have arrived at the scene.

The warbot attacks anybody who gets too close to

the building and there is a strong risk of collateral damage—there are apartments directly above the shop and no one can get out of them until the warbot gets deactivated.

As the PCs are trying to figure out what to do, the Grease Monkey appears out of nowhere and politely explains to the PCs that she's here to fix the problem, but she will need their help getting inside. She can indeed deactivate the robot, once she gets a look at its serial number, and she can even help make it light enough to get out of the floor (by cracking the safe and taking the guns out). She will however need some assistance getting into the building without being shot, and getting out again without being arrested.

2) The Death Ray, the Monkey and the Six Dollar Man

The Grease Monkey receives a set of plans for a giant death ray from a mysterious patron who wishes to remain anonymous. She is intrigued, and although she doesn't have anything like the resources required to construct a full-sized working prototype, she builds a small model and finds that it does indeed work—and violates a number of established principles of physics in doing so.

Then the anonymous patron gets back in touch and suggests that she talk her friends the Corpus Christi Good Time Boys into stealing enough money to pay for building a full-sized ray. The patron can provide some manpower and some design contacts if she can put up the funds, and he knows the location of a gold shipment that would pay for about half of the entire project. He promises a very high return on the investment.

The Grease Monkey is no fool and immediately suspects that the patron intends use the ray to pull off some major act of extortion or something even worse. She tries to notify the authorities, but they won't listen to her, so she contacts the Player Characters.

The patron is going to rendezvous with her right after the gold shipment heist to discuss further plans. They can probably intercept him and take him down there.

Things are worse than she realizes. Her patron is the loathsome cyborg assassin who calls himself the Six Dollar Man (or someone equally treacherous and despicable). He stole the plans from someone much bigger and scarier than himself. Use the biggest meanest evil gadgeeter or world-conquering arch-villain in your campaign. Or, make it the Hammer of Doom (see page 48) or perhaps a cabal of doddering old Nazis in South America.

The Six Dollar Man has no interest in using the plans himself, which he's sure would get him killed once their owner finds out who took them. His real target is the gold shipment.

He learned about the shipment from an unrelated source (his most recent girlfriend worked for the Swiss bank that is transporting the gold) and while it sounded like a great idea to rob it, this also sounded like a lot of hard work. Much easier to get someone else to steal it for him.

But killing off the Corpus Christi Good-Time Boys also seemed like it would take too much effort, so instead he has tipped off the owner of the plans, who is sending a hit squad to intercept them after they knock over the gold shipment at the rendezvous point he picked out for them.

They'll probably do each other a lot of damage, and he can then finish off whoever is left and walk away with the gold. But he hasn't counted on the PCs getting involved.

Doctor Destructor,

aka Murder Machine

Real Name: Unknown

PL: 10

Str: 20 (+5) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 20 (+5)
Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 10 (+0) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: +2 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +11
(+15 S Punch) **Attack Bonus (Ranged):** +8
Defense: +16/+14 **Speed:** 30
Damage Save: +4 **Fortitude Save:** +4
Reflexes Save: +2 **Willpower Save:** +1

Skills: Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (Fine Wines) +3

Feats: Durability, Immunity (Aging, Critical Hits, Disease, Poison, Pressure, Starvation, Suffocation,)
Sidekick ("The Grease Monkey" PL 8, see individual description below).

Powers: Gadgets +5 (1pt), Super-Strength +10
(Extras: Protection; Cost 5 pts)

Equipment: Vehicle (Doctor Destructor rides concealed in the back of a specially modified motorhome, piloted by the Grease Monkey; it has 7 Movement Ranks [top speed of 128 mph], a Hardness of 11, and 7 points of Armor)

Weaknesses: **Disturbing** (looks like a hulking great killer robot)

"Good afternoon! I'm afraid we are going to have to have to smash open your vault and take all the money. I hope you'll accept my apologies in advance, as well as my condolences for any loss of life you may suffer during the course of the robbery. If it's any consolation to you, my meteorological indicators show that it will be a lovely day tomorrow."

Doctor Destructor is the Grease Monkey's favorite gadget. A huge killer robot with a Harvard accent and no memory of his past, he doesn't know if "Doctor Destructor" is really his name, or if it's just what the Grease Monkey calls him. We don't know who built him or where she found him, but he's definitely hers, and is somehow compelled to follow her orders whether he wants to or not. She is clearly proud of her favorite toy and is forever fussing over him, tinkering with him and adjusting his systems.

Doctor Destructor is as friendly and personable as a big killer robot can be, although his ridiculous Kelsea Grammer voice does tend to set his teammates' teeth on edge. He doesn't have a lot of built-in weapon

systems, but he's ideal for things like tipping over armored cars and throwing police cruisers at pursuing superheroes.

He always greets his enemies politely, always says "please" and "thank you". If he hurls a tank at you he will probably say "excuse me" as he does it.

Doctor Destructor regrets committing acts of havoc and savagery, but there doesn't seem to be much he can do about it, so he attempts to maintain a cheerful outlook. He reads the New York Times and the Utne Reader, and wishes he had time to learn golf.

Adventures With Doctor Destructor:

Rampaging Robot Reunion

The Grease Monkey gives Dr. Destructor a book on crime, in hopes that he will learn more about being a criminal. He halfheartedly peruses it, and finds a picture of the robot gangster known as Johnny Machine, AKA the Steel Deuce. See page 105 for a lengthy description of this unpleasant individual.

He looks weirdly familiar to Doctor Destructor, who grows very interested in whether or not the Steel Deuce might know something about his own origins. So Doctor Destructor has himself shipped to a random address in Brooklyn, the town where Johnny Machine operates.

When the truck drops him off and he bursts out of his shipping container, the addressee protests that he didn't order no giant killer robot and he ain't paying for no giant killer robot. Doctor Destructor apologizes for the inconvenience, thanks him for his time and lumbers off to find Johnny Machine. The addressee places a complaint with his city councilman, which makes its way to the PCs and draws them into the case if nothing else has.

When the Steel Deuce hears that a big whussy robot is walking around the neighborhood showing people his picture, he figures his weird brother Guiseppe must somehow be back from the dead and goes off to find him and put him put of his misery.

The Steel Deuce has correctly guessed Dr. Destructor's real identity. Guiseppe's central brain unit survived his brother Johnny's assault and the Grease Monkey somehow acquired it, years later. She already had a chassis for a giant battle robot, but no brain. She put the two of them together and they worked just dandy, apart from a little amnesia.

The Steel Deuce walks down the street with murder in his eye. He smashed Guiseppe into little pieces once and he'll do it again. But when he sees how big his kid brother has grown, he takes to his heels instead.

Once Doctor Destructor chases down the Steel Deuce and gets the whole story out of him, he thanks him for his time and goes away. He's not interested in revenge. He just wanted to know.

The Texas Twister

Real Name: Donnie Craven

PL: 10

Str: 14 (+2) **Dex:** 13 (+1) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 10 (+0) **Wis:** 10 (+0) **Cha:** 12 (+1)
Initiative: +1 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +6
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +5 **Defense:** +15/14
Speed: 30
Damage Save: +4 **Fortitude Save:** +4
Reflexes Save: +3 **Willpower Save:** +0

Skills: Acrobatics +8, Balance +8, Bluff +4, Climb +6, Forgery +4, Hide +4, Intimidate +4, Jump +6, Knowledge (Texas criminal underground) +4, Listen +4, Repair +8, Spot +8, Swim +5

Feats: Great Fortitude, Identity Change, Instant Stand, Lightning Reflexes, Power Immunity, Toughness

Powers: Energy Field +10 (Extras: Explosive Effect [Energy Field Covers a circular area up to 50 feet in diameter], Variable Effect [the Twister can increase the field up to a 50 foot diameter or contract it to no range at all as a free action], Variable Effect [the Twister can also decide whether to do Stun or Lethal damage with this attack, depending on how much hard and/or sharp debris his vortex has picked up] Obscure [Flaw: Only Partial Obscurement], Protection [Flaw: does not protect against light or radiation-based attacks], Shockwave [Anyone caught in the Energy Field must make a Strength or Dexterity check, whichever is higher, against the power of the field, or be rendered Prone], Telekinesis [Anyone rendered Prone by the Shockwave is swept 10 feet in a counterclockwise direction from where they were standing; Flaw: only works on targets that have been knocked down by the Energy Field]; Cost: 6pts), Sensory Protection +10 (Cost: 1pt)

Equipment: Armor +4

Weaknesses: Berzerker

Quirk: Flies into a rage if anyone mocks or insults his hairstyle.

"I'm a whirlwind a' beefcake with a side order a' mean an' hash browns a' grievous bodily harm! Yee-ha!"

Yet another bad result of the IF Foundation's research into psychic enhancement drugs. The Texas Twister looked at first like one of their few real successes. A powerful telekinetic, but unable to exert any fine control over his power, he couldn't lift anything or manipulate objects with his mind, but he was able to generate a kind of swirling destructive maelstrom which surrounded the spot where he was standing.

This was good enough for IF, which tried to sell him to the Department of Defense as a superhero. They didn't pick up the program, but the State of Texas was just then trying to assemble a super-group of its own (the "Lone Star Rangers") and bought him at a discount.

Alas, he was much too angry and violent to be useable and was kicked out almost at once. He drifted into crime and got locked up for trying to rob a Piggly Wiggly in Brownsville.

During the two years he spent in prison, he started corresponding with Supervillainess known as Cimarron Starr, who was also incarcerated at the time. When they both got out, they struck up a relationship and then a partnership in crime. They made a good couple. He's almost as childish, self-absorbed and melodramatic as she is.

Anyone who spends much time with the Texas Twister won't be surprised to hear how he got kicked out of the Rangers—the man is a blatant menace to himself and everyone around him. Prone to frightening temper tantrums, he's a furious whirlwind of rage and always seems to be holding back a murderous outburst. Whenever he throws a fit, someone is almost sure to die. He is not however devoid of conscience and feels really bad about killing people, until loses his temper and does it again.

He seems to be making a valiant if doomed attempt to control his anger. The crazy, dysfunctional atmosphere in the Good-Time Boys does not help.

Cimarron Starr's former boyfriend, he's now involved with the Lone Star Lady. He's passionate about his new girlfriend, but she's still completely hung up on her ex-boyfriend, Johnny Black. This has caused more than a little friction. Putting up with Johnny Black's craziness hasn't been easy for him, either. Only the calming influence of Mr. Fist and the fact that Cimarron Starr could easily kill the Twister has kept him from doing something fatal to one or another of his teammates.

You would think that the IF Foundation would know better than to give a violent sociopath superhuman powers, but the fact is that they were just recruiting their test subjects from the general pool of guys who turn themselves in for paid medical experiments. They barely even bothered with a background check.

If they had paid more attention, they would have hastily sought another candidate. The Twister has been in and out of jail on assault charges since he was fifteen.

One word of warning about his hair. The Twister is extremely touchy and proud about his haircut. He thinks his hairstyle is called "bad-ass hair" because he's never heard the term "mullet" and that it makes him a rebel (instead of a guy whose life peaked in high school). He threw the tantrum which got him kicked out of the Lone Star Rangers when they asked him to update his haircut and he's grown more sensitive about it since then. The Twister is quite capable of killing people for disrespecting his hair, although to his credit he'll feel pretty sorry about it afterwards.

Adventures With Texas Twister:

1) Twisted!

The Texas Twister has had another one of his temper tantrums, and killed a Houston TV reporter who made a crack about his haircut. This time the Twister has finally had enough—he intends to turn himself in to the Player Characters and take his punishment.

If he doesn't know how to get in touch with the Player Characters, then he will go out into the middle of a field somewhere and create the biggest twister he can make, holding it in place until the authorities take notice. He tells the cops and the media, if they show up before the PCs, that he will only surrender to the PCs themselves. He's frankly a little scared of the treatment the Texas state authorities might give him. He intends to die for his crime, but he wants to do it in a dignified, official setting, not in the back of a police cruiser.

If the Texas Twister has never actually met the PCs before then he's heard about them, possibly seen them on the news, and he thinks of them as good, fair, trustworthy guys. There should be some anxiety on your players' minds about whether or not this might be some kind of a trap, but it's not.

However, while the PCs are transporting him to jail, it comes out that his victim didn't actually die—she's in stable condition at a Houston hospital and is expected to recover. The Twister suddenly changes his mind about going back to jail and will do his best to break loose and lead the PCs on a cross-country chase.

Worse, the rest of the Corpus Christi Good Time Boys may show up and accuse the PCs of having used some kind of mind control on the Texas Twister to make him turn himself in. They will want to rescue their comrade, but also to make the PCs suffer for the insult.

2) I Shouldn't be Wearing White and You Can't Afford no Ring

The Texas Twister asks the Lone Star Lady to marry him. She agrees, hoping it will get Johnny Black's attention.

But for his part, the Texas Twister is eager to avoid letting Johnny know anything about the wedding, for fear that it might provoke the kind of lethal confrontation he's been trying to avoid. He is determined to kill no more of the people he knows (not even Johnny Black) and this time he's going to stick to it.

In an effort to do this discreetly, he has found a tiny wedding chapel down near Brownsville where nobody knows them. He wants to have a best man. It won't feel real enough if nobody else even knows about it. It will be like his wedding never even happened. But where to find a best man who would never blab to anyone on the team?

On impulse, the Twister asks one of the PCs—preferably one who hates Johnny Black. Can they have a truce, he asks? Just long enough for him to get married, just so somebody else was there and

witnessed the thing.

Alas, complications ensue. On the morning of the big day, the bride is banging on the door of Johnny Black's mobile home, crying and screaming and begging him to come out and see her. When she doesn't appear at the wedding chapel, the Texas Twister will blame the PCs, accusing them of kidnapping his bride for some nefarious purpose. This happens whether or not a PC agreed to stand in as his best man.

If the GM is feeling particularly mischievous, then just as a fight is about to break out, Johnny Black bursts into the room, spoiling for a piece of the Texas Twister. And then perhaps Cimarron Starr barges in, furious with all parties and everyone starts hitting everyone.

Mr. Fist

Real Name: Winton Casey Bunyard

PL: 11

Str: 18 (+4) **Dex:** 20 (+5) **Con:** 16 (+3)
Int: 12 (+1) **Wis:** 12 (+1) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: +9 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +11
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +12 **Defense:** +21/+21 **Speed:** 30
Damage Save: +3/+5 (Evasion) **Fortitude Save:** +3 **Reflexes Save:** +7 **Willpower Save:** +3

Skills: Acrobatics +10, Balance +10, Bluff +4, Drive +9, Escape Artist +5, Hide +10, Jump +6, Knowledge (Criminal Lore) +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +10, Sense Motive +7, Spot +5, Taunt +8

Feats: Assessment, Blind-Fight, Dodge, Evasion, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Infamy, Instant Stand, Iron Will, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Rapid Strike, Surprise Strike, Takedown Attack

Powers: Combat Sense +5 (Source: Training, Cost: 1pt)

“Just what I wanted for my birthday, a fight! And it ain’t even my birthday!”

An older, wiser criminal than most of the Good-Time Boys, Mr. Fist is a kind of surrogate father to them all.

A legendary pugilist, he has ranged all across the West for a quarter of a century, competing in illegal bare-knuckle brawls. He's the undisputed champion of that world. The Michael Jordan or Muhammed Ali of dirty fighting, one of America's great unsung athletes. In between bouts, he steals, when he isn't in jail. There are less fights than there used to be, "Ultimate Fighting" videos are killing the market off, so he supports himself more and more through robbery these days.

Cimmarron Starr hires him for big jobs, whether she strictly speaking needs an unarmed combat expert or not. The Good-Time Boys think it's cool to get to hang out with Mr. Fist, and he exerts a calming influence on the group. Everyone wants to look like a pro around him, so they misbehave less.

Mr. Fist is surprisingly short, scarred up and old. His hair is starting to get thin and gray, some of his teeth are missing and some are made of gold. It's been years since he's gotten any new tattoos and the old ones are starting to blur and fade. His voice sounds like he smokes cigarettes with broken glass in them. He affects a grizzled handlebar moustache.

Despite his stern voice and grim appearance he's actually quite friendly with younger criminals, concerned and sympathetic about people's problems,

eager to hold forth and explain how to be a good crook.

A seasoned professional, he has a personal code of ethics and would never abandon or betray a teammate, never show up late for a job or show up drunk. Mr. Fist has had to kill people on a number of occasions, but he doesn't enjoy it and won't do it if he can avoid it. He might take a hostage if he absolutely has to, but he would never actually kill them. He's a criminal to the core, has spent half of his life in jail and knows that he'll never lead a normal existence now. Yet he's determined to be as good a guy as he can. Beware of taking too much of his advice—he may have grown up a little by now, but he didn't get where he is today by being mature and responsible.

Mr. Fist has no fixed abode. He was a biker for a while but the codes and rituals of that world didn't suit him, so these days he rides the rails like an old-time hobo. He usually shows up by hopping off a freight train, down at the Corpus Christi railyards.

Adventures With Mr. Fist:

1) What, Me Worry?

Mr. Fist is visiting the supermarket, browsing through biker magazines and the latest issue of Mad, when three thugs decide to hold the place up. That doesn't bother Mr. Fist—maybe he'll get to keep the magazines for free.

But these three robbers are incompetent and bloodthirsty, the heist rapidly turns into a hostage situation and then starts sliding toward a bloodbath. The cops besiege the store, the robbers start killing hostages and Mr. Fist starts getting disgusted.

When the PCs arrive outside, he text-messages them on a cell-phone he finds lying around, lets them know he's hiding in the magazine section and asks if he can help.

The three thieves are Lonnie Biggs, Pennsylvania Pete and his girlfriend Mountain Mama Annie. All three are killers, but the shy, quiet one called Mountain Momma Annie is particularly casual about taking human life and her boyfriend does whatever she says.

Lonnie Biggs is a violent loudmouth, but he's beginning to wonder if it was really a good idea to get involved with these two. He's not dumb enough to question their actions, though. If Lonnie sees a known supervillain like Mr. Fist decimating his friends, then despite his bluster he's likely to make a run for it.

Once the situation is resolved, Mr. Fist will attempt to slip past the Player Characters before they can apprehend him.

2) Little Marvin and Her Uncle Fist

Mr. Fist pays a visit to some old biker friends. We purposefully won't specify which state they live in, so as to make it easier to work into your campaign.

Unfortunately, Mr. Fist's old buddy Big Marvin Goines has ripped off a crank lab owned by a powerful gang of outlaw bikers known as Satan's Little Helpers.

These guys are bad, bad news, and they aren't just a local organization, they're a national club—a real organized crime family. Mr. Fist cautions Big Marvin to make himself as scarce as possible, but he won't listen and anyway it's too late.

That very night, Satan's Little Helpers show up and riddle Big Marvin's shack with bullets. Mr. Fist only survives because of his habit of sleeping outside. As he picks through the wreckage the cops arrive, and he has to run for his life with the massacre's only other survivor—an eleven month old girl.

Mr. Fist flees cross country, by freight train, hitchhiking and by stolen motorcycle, with the baby slung across his back, trying to cope with the demands of unexpected fatherhood as he struggles to keep them both alive and one step ahead of the law. Will the Player Characters catch him before he gets to Mexico? Will Satan's Little Helpers?

Lone Star Lady

Real Name: Patience Coyle

PL: 10

Str: 12 (+1) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 20 (+5)
Int: 10 (+0) **Wis:** 12 (+1) **Cha:** 12 (+1)
Initiative: +2 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +6
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +7 **Defense:**
+20/+18 **Speed:** 30/35 (Flight)
Damage Save: +5 **Fortitude Save:** +5
Reflexes Save: +2 **Willpower Save:** +1

Skills: Hide +8, Knowledge (Soap Operas) +5,
Move Silently +8

Feats: Darkvision, Durability, Immunity (Cold,
Heat, Starvation, Suffocation)

Powers: Flight +7 (Cost: 2pts), Drain +10 (Extra:
Ranged; Power Stunt: Penetrating Attack x2; Cost
3pts), Protection +10 (Cost 2pts)

*“Oh yeah, like you never killed no kids
before!”*

A whiner, a complainer and a heartless killer to boot, the Lone Star Lady is probably the worst member of the Corpus Christi Good-Time Boys, and certainly the most annoying. Sulky, sullen and underhanded, she constantly gripes about everything, so lost in her own self-pity that she's capable of almost any thoughtless crime. She holds grudges over tiny things and will bring up some minor unfairness that she once suffered years after the fact.

The Lone Star Lady dresses like a trashy Vegas lounge act, but that's just because Johnny Black designed her costume—she's actually rather shy. Cimarron Star picks on her and stole her boyfriend, but the Lone Star Lady is at least as angry with her for taking a code-name that sounds too much like her own. She's convinced that Cimarron Starr did it on purpose, and she may even be right. Johnny Black and the Texas Twister look down on her too, and she almost seems to invite their abuse.

Wanted for the cold-blooded execution of six elementary school kids during a hostage situation in Beaumont, the Lone Star Lady resents the way her teammates constantly throw that dishonorable crime in her face. Like it makes them better than her. She's far too codependent to even think of harming or leaving the teammates who emotionally abuse her, although she's capable of killing just about anyone else without thinking twice.

Her origins are murky. Although she appears to be in her early twenties, she's actually closer to eighty-five. She was buried alive by her kin back in the 1930s for some awful, sneaky act of treachery and in 1988 she rose from her grave, suddenly able to fly and to draw the life force out of anyone within reach. It's

uncertain whether she's a creature of supernatural evil, or just a really odd mutation. We do know that she drifted into stripping, and then making "amateur" adult movies in Galveston, where she met and fell in love with Johnny Black.

He was already obsessed with Johnny Ringo, and with finding that legendary killer's gun. And it just so happened that she knew where it could be found.

Lovers and partners in crime, the two of them rampaged across southeastern Texas in fine fashion until they met up with the Twister and Cimarron Starr. Johnny Black promptly threw his murderous, whiny doormat girlfriend over for the wild and tempestuous Ms. Starr. The Lone Star Lady took up with the jilted Texas Twister by way of revenge, but she's still completely obsessed with Johnny Black and desperate to get his attention.

Barely literate, tasteless and crass, she can't find Texas on a map, doesn't know cheese doodles from filet mignon and doesn't want to know.

The Lone Star Lady's willful ignorance and whining self-absorption have actually helped her adapt to the present day. She's not really interested in the world around her, so she can't really be shocked by it. She takes no pleasure from listening to music, so she can't feel alienated by how much it has changed since the 1930s. She likes soap operas, but has no interest in knowing how the TV is able to dispense them. She has no idea how a cell phone works, but she doesn't want to know any more than how to use one to pester Johnny Black.

By now she has more or less completely assimilated into the 21st century. She barely remembers her former life, and doesn't really wish to.

Adventures With the Lone Star Lady:

Jilted by the Devil

The Lone Star Lady has a dream, in which the Devil tells her he will come for her in three days. She wakes up terrified, and determined to reform her evil ways.

She has three days in which to put things right with everyone she has wronged. She decides to start with the Player Characters, and either tracks them down or creates some kind of public incident to draw their attention. If they don't attack her on sight, she will explain why she has come to see them. However, she doesn't have any idea how to set things right with the PCs—in fact she didn't think that far ahead. Can they think of anything?

Whatever they suggest, she whines that it would take far too long, she has so many people to make up with, and only three days to do it. She begins to list all the terrible things she has done (the GM can generate some black humor by making her list of atrocities ridiculously long and foul) and before she's even halfway through, she realizes her mistake. There's no way she can ever make up with all those people in three days.

Another plan occurs to her, and she abruptly flies

away. Since she's going to Hell anyway, she may as well take as many people with her as she can. And so she goes off to poison the nearest city reservoir.

Whether or not the PCs can stop her in time, the devil never shows up. Perhaps he didn't want her soul once he got a better look at it.

Jim Dandy

Real Name: Does not remember, may not have one.

PL: 10

Str: 14 (+2) **Dex:** 18 (+4) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 13 (+1) **Cha:** 18 (+4)
Initiative: +4 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +12
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +14 **Defense:** +24/+20
Speed: 30
Damage Save: +2 **Fortitude Save:** +2
Reflexes Save: +4 **Willpower Save:** +1

Skills: Diplomacy +4, Handle Animal +9, Hide +5, Survival +9

Feats: Far Shot, Immunity (Aging), Point-Blank shot, Quick-Draw, Sidekick (Boy Howdy; PL 9), Tracking

Powers: Incorporeal (Affected by Mentally-Based attacks) +10 (Extra: Immune to Disease, Poison, Pressure, Starvation, and Suffocation while Incorporeal: Cost: 3pts)

Equipment: Lariat (Snare +10; Flaw: Device; Cost 1pt), Pistol (Weapon +5; Extra: Variable damage [fires spectral bullets that can pass through the target and Stun them, or materialize and punch holes through them]; Cost: 2pts)

Weaknesses: Naïve

Quirk: Foolishly loyal to associates, even when it is severely contrary to his advantage.

Jim Dandy and Boy Howdy got themselves killed a couple of years back, but if for some reason you need their stats, here they are.

Jim Dandy was as laid back, fun-loving and good natured as any professional criminal you'd be likely to meet. It was almost impossible to get him riled—he'd laugh off insults and shrug at threats. Boy Howdy was much the same, but even more lazy and even less inclined to plan ahead.

They used to stick up travelers on the road, and occasionally knock over isolated businesses. Friendly and congenial robbers, they were always at pains to put their victims at ease and to keep from upsetting them too badly.

We don't really know much about their origins, but we do know that they lived the life of Texas outlaws for a hundred and fifty years. They ranged all up and down the gulf coast, camping out in the wilderness for the most part, coming into town only to buy supplies or steal things as needed. Sometimes their victims would be the only people they had spoken with in weeks, so they were always eager to make conversation and share news.

Only very slowly did they realize how much the world was changing. Some time in the 1950s they began robbing isolated gas stations and liquor stores as

well as travelers, and later the spread of all-night convenience stores became a positive bonanza for the two of them. As the open country vanished, they spent more time living in cheap motels, which they had to admit was a lot more comfortable than camping out on the range, even though it cost more.

In the 1990s Jim Dandy found out about supervillains, realized that he was one, and suffered a completely uncharacteristic attack of hubris. It was time to do the responsible thing, he decided—to grow up, be a man and get serious about his criminal career. For his part, Boy Howdy went along with whatever Jim Dandy said.

They set about trying to put together a supervillain team, which they understood was what one did. Jim Dandy hired an unarmed combat expert he knew slightly, called Mr. Fist (they had seen Mr. Fist fight a few times down at the railyards and had talked to him a little). He in turn put them in touch with the Grease Monkey, who brought her giant killer robot into the team with her. The five of them became the original Corpus Christi Good Time Boys, robbed a bank or two and then discovered the hard way that they didn't have the raw power required to stand up to a superhero team.

After some searching they located Cimarron Starr (who still called herself "Winter Steele" in those days) and she shortly brought her boyfriend, the Texas Twister, into the group. This gave them all the power they needed, and then some.

The team got along fairly well in the early days. Jim Dandy and Boy Howdy didn't let Cimarron Starr's obnoxious temperament bother them, and they were a calming influence on the tormented Texas Twister.

The future looked bright, until the evening Jim Dandy decided to knock over one last liquor store for old times sake. People say he did it out of force of habit, and it is certainly true that he didn't need the money. It may however also be the case that he didn't feel comfortable with his new life, that his new ambitions didn't wholly satisfy him and that he felt nostalgic for the old days. We'll probably never know. We do know that Jim Dandy and Boy Howdy walked into the store just after midnight, robbed the place, and spent a few minutes making conversation with the clerk, who then shot them both in the back as they walked out the door, and killed them.

Boy Howdy

Real Name: Does not remember, may not have one.

PL: 9

Str: 14 (+1) **Dex:** 18 (+4) **Con:** 14 (+2) **Int:** 14 (+2) **Wis:** 12 (+1) **Cha:** 16 (+3)

Initiative: +6 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +11

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +13 **Defense:**

+23/+19 **Speed:** 30

Damage Save: +2 **Fortitude Save:** +2

Reflexes Save: +4 **Willpower Save:** +1

Skills: Handle Animal +9, Hide +5, Performance (Harmonica) +7, Survival +8

Feats: Far Shot, Immunity (Aging), Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Quick-Draw, Tracking

Powers: Incorporeal (Affected by Mentally-Based attacks) +9 (Extra: Ghost Touch: Cost: 3pts)

Equipment: Lariat (Snare +9; Flaw: Device; Cost 1pt), Pistol (Weapon +4; Extra: Variable damage [fires spectral bullets that can pass through the target and Stun them, or materialize and punch holes through them]; Cost: 2pts)

Weaknesses: Naïve

Quirk: Can't do lethal damage to anyone unless they have attacked him first.

The Four Deuces

Membership: Double Deuce (a hot tempered little psychopath with the ability to see the weak points in everything), the Steel Deuce (aka Johnny Machine, a robot who pursues a life of crime around the clock with inhuman mechanical determination), Lady Deuce (a kid-killing murderess with the ability to dampen superhuman powers), Diamond Deuce (a witless, wife-beating, super-strong flying thug), the Ace of Wounds (one of America's greatest commandoes, now fallen on hard times and forced to fall in with the likes of the Four Deuces) and sometimes Bones (zoot-suit wearing master criminal from the 1930s, who has been blessed by the forces of death and paints his face like a skull). That's more than four, of course, but who's counting?

The Four Deuces are a tight-knit professional crew of super-criminals, based in Brooklyn. None of them are "Made Men", but the team is deeply intertwined with the New York Mafia and they know that world very well.

Founded by the infamous gangster supervillain who calls himself "Bones", they've terrorized the New York City metropolitan area, in a low-key kind of way, for nearly twenty years—longer than almost any other supervillain team. They owe their longevity and success to careful planning, solid organizational skills and to the fact that the team's two core members always kill off the new guys before they've had time to betray them.

They are careful about who they recruit, everyone on the team is a seasoned pro, used to working smoothly as a unit. They never take on jobs that are too flashy, they keep the cops paid off, they always give the Mafia its cut and they never defy the local mob Capo.

Bones is still nominally the team's leader and the boys do still give him money and visit him in prison from time to time, but these days he doesn't really have much influence over what they do. His boy sidekick, Double Deuce (now in his forties) is the only original team member left.

The Four Deuces mostly specialize in robbery and hijacking. They like to pull a few really big jobs every year, all up and down the East Coast. In between they plan, rest up, tend their individual criminal schemes and sometimes run errands for the Mafia. They do assassinations for hire and they may be willing to perform bodyguard work as well, especially if the Mob asks them to. If superheroes cause the Mafia too much grief, this is the team they'll send in to stop them.

Threat Level: The current incarnation of the Four Deuces is about the best and most effective line-up they've had. It's also lasted the longest, although Double Deuce now plans to kill off its two newest members.

Not a threat to world peace and security, they don't

have any broader goals than getting rich and staying that way. No individual member has the ability to knock down skyscrapers or blow up Manhattan. Yet they are arguably far more dangerous than a lot of teams with much greater raw power, because they work together so effectively and plan so well. Everybody knows their own role, everybody does it without question and as a result, this version of the Four Deuces works like a well-oiled machine.

Exceedingly ruthless, they won't hesitate to kill, to take hostages or to threaten a hero's friends and family. Their connections with organized crime make them doubly dangerous.

Organization: Bones set the rules up carefully. There are supposed to be only four of them, and they're supposed to name themselves after the four deuces in a pack of cards. They aren't supposed to know anything at all about one another apart from their code names.

In the eighteen years since Bones was sent away to prison, all of these rules have gotten weaker. There are now five of them, plus Bones, they know way too much about one another and even their names don't really follow the convention anymore. But these days the Deuces barely even need a set of formal rules. Everyone already knows that they shouldn't blab any of the team's secrets to outsiders, show up for a caper late or inebriated, do things that will draw too much attention to the crew, or attack a teammate while they're on the job. The penalty for most of these mistakes is death, although none of them would ever be unprofessional enough to commit them (with the possible exception of Diamond Deuce, but he's much too scared of the Steel Deuce to screw up in front of him).

Double Deuce is the ideas man—a genius at conceiving a heist, paranormally gifted at seeing the flaws in security systems, he plans nearly all their crimes. Whenever the team finds itself in a combat situation, the Ace of Wounds temporarily takes over the leadership role. He's a superb small-unit tactician, trained by some of the best minds in the US armed forces and he knows exactly how to use everyone's abilities to the greatest advantage. In all other matters, the Steel Deuce has the final say. He's the smartest and arguably the most ruthless of them, and he's the one all the others are scared of. He owns the bar where they meet, he invests their money for them and he deals with the mob on their behalf. They know not to defy him and he in turn knows not to interfere with them in their areas of expertise.

Double-Deuce frequently takes on jobs outside of the crew, and the Steel Deuce constantly does—in fact the team is just one of his ongoing criminal enterprises. Lady Deuce may take on the occasional outside job, and certainly has some other identity ready and waiting to step into the moment she leaves her comrades behind. Diamond Deuce and the Ace of Wounds, on the other hand, have no professional life outside the team, because the former is too stupid and

the latter is a pariah in the underworld.

Double Deuce and the Steel Deuce don't kill their own team members after every heist—that would cause too much disruption and would force them to constantly readjust their tactics. An average Deuce lasts about a year until they figure he knows too much. This version of the team has lasted a lot longer than most. Their newest member, the Ace of Wounds, has now been with them for two years. Double Deuce's trigger finger grows itchy...

Base of Operations: People sometimes ask Bones how he came up with the team's name. He always tells them: *"The thing with the four deuces is, that's a low and dirty hand that almost always wins."*

This may be a cool answer, but it's a lie. The team is actually named after the crummy waterfront bar they hang around. A friend of Bones named Red Morgan owned it, but more recently the Steel Deuce bought the place.

It used to be that the "Four Deuces Lounge" was down by the water, far away from everything else, but during the boom of the 1990s the area around it got built up. Now you reach the bar by turning down a narrow alley into a dank and sunless courtyard. It has an unsavory reputation and the locals never go there at certain hours of the night.

The bar itself is surprisingly big, although there never seems to be much business. It's booths are done up in tacky red vinyl and there is nasty scuffed red carpet on the floor. The pinball machines work indifferently. A shady looking fat Irish guy called "Red Junior" tends bar during the day. His eyes don't point in the same direction and he talks too much. At night the bar is tended by a huge black dude with an eyepatch and a crooked scar across one side of his face. He never gives his name, and says nothing.

The Steel Deuce and his crew meet in the back room, surrounded by boxes of liquor and cartons of cigarettes. A small apartment above the bar (reachable from the street or the back room) provides living space for the Ace of Wounds and for any hostages they may have kidnapped. There is also a large and cluttered basement, with a concealed tunnel leading out to the water.

A trip to the basement tends to be a one-way deal. That's usually where they kill guys, so as not to have to drag them as far to the water. There are a lot of empty barrels, and a surprising number of bags of cement down there, as well as a nasty-smelling little room with a steel door, which contains nothing but a bathtub and a shelf with a chainsaw and some bolt cutters sitting on it. The tools are stained and crusted with things you don't want to know about.

Should superheroes chase the Four Deuces out of their lair, they will meet in the back room of any of another half dozen bars, restaurants or adult bookstores that the Steel Deuce owns, either in Brooklyn or in Queens. The Deuces aren't as comfortable in Queens as they are in Brooklyn and won't go there unless the heat is really on something fierce. Should the Steel Deuce's financial empire

come crashing down around his ears, leaving them with no base of operations, they'll meet at Diamond Deuce's big, tacky house up in the Long Island suburbs. Really all they need is a secluded place to meet, plan and possibly to kill people.

Tactics: The Ace of Wounds' keen tactical sense is one of the team's greatest assets. In a combat situation they smoothly coordinate their attacks, backing one another up as needed.

In a typical attack pattern the Diamond Deuce will fling himself at the biggest, toughest opponent, distracting the opposing team while everybody else gets into position.

The Ace of Wounds will hang back and coordinate the attack, hitting targets at a distance with his sniper rifle.

The Steel Deuce will provide cover for the more lightly armored team members, moving into an offensive position when he can see that they're safe.

Double-Deuce will try to come to grips with an opponent who would be particularly vulnerable to his attack—guys in powered armor are his favorites.

Lady Deuce will coordinate her power with one of the other low-powered members of her team, shutting down the parahuman defenses of a target just before the Ace of Wounds puts a bullet in them or the Steel Deuce gouges them up. She tends not to coordinate with Double-Deuce, since their powers have a similar effect.

Although that's a typical pattern, they can vary their tactics completely if it's what's called for. They love to set ambushes, they love to hit the target by surprise, they love to pull fake retreats that draw the enemy into a vulnerable position.

They will hit opponents when they're down, they'll shoot people who are trying to surrender, they'll take hostages if need be, they'll endanger innocents so that the Player Characters have to go rescue them rather than continue the fight—they play to win. Yet they won't hold their ground if it looks hopeless. Nor will they hang onto the loot if dropping it ensures a clean getaway. There's always more stuff out there to steal.

Using The Four Deuces in your

campaign: The Four Deuces are a good recurring nemesis for east coast campaigns. They're tough and durable, ready to come back for more punishment again and again. As both thieves and mercenary supervillains they can be involved in almost any kind of criminal activity. Player Characters can try to foil one of their crimes, run afoul of them while breaking up a mob operation or face them as the minions of a master villain or a crime boss.

Primarily an East Coast outfit, they feel most comfortable operating in the New York metropolitan area, and especially in what's left of the old Irish and Italian neighborhoods in Brooklyn. Yet if Double Deuce sees the opportunity for a good heist, or if the Mafia sends them out to kill somebody, the crew may find itself anywhere on earth. Diamond Deuce whines

a lot whenever they go overseas—he finds other countries incomprehensible and terrifying, but then again he feels the same way about Los Angeles.

Once the PCs get to know the opposition a little better, you can start introducing plot complications based on their back-stories. The individual characters have a lot of potential plot hooks. What happens when Fat Tony D'Ambrosio comes back to finish off the Ace of Wounds? Or when Double Deuce decides it's time to eliminate the two new team-members? Or when Lady Deuce finally finds her long lost cousin Miranda?

One of the best (but most complicated) wrinkles you can add is the whole question of what's going to happen once Bones gets out of prison. We have some notes on that below, under Bones' individual entry, but feel free to do whatever seems best for your campaign.

Adventures With the Four Deuces:

1) A Contract With God

They say the Steel Deuce could corrupt God himself, and he's about to prove it. He finds out about a shipment of stuffed toys that will be passing through a particular warehouse just before Christmas. These particular toys, the "Power Ponies and Magical Friends" are going to be this year's top seller—by Christmas eve every parent will be desperate to have one and there won't be any for sale. The Four Deuces intend to help themselves to a pocket full of Power Ponies in advance, and make a killing at Christmas time.

But what would the Christmas season be without God? They need a big distraction to make his plan work, and who better than God to cause a really big one? The Steel Deuce finds the telepathic cult leader who goes by that name (see his individual description, elsewhere in this book) and smooth-talks poor weak-willed God into going along with his plan. God will appear at the Christmas Carnival across the river from the warehouse, cause pandemonium, draw down enough police attention that their response time will be compromised enough for the Steel Deuce to get out before the alarms draw them down on top of him.

Then God will hypnotize people into thinking they saw all five Deuces at the carnival, right when the robbery was taking place across the river. It's not a bad plan, but it's God's first major crime and he makes hideous mistakes. He shows up too late, he panics at the sight of the cops and orders the mesmerized crowd to attack them. The whole affair turns into a bloodbath, with innocent civilians and police getting killed left and right. He also forgets to implant the fake memories in anyone's mind.

Meanwhile, because the heist started late, the warehouse robbery gets under way before the distraction starts, the police show up and the Four Deuces have to kill six of them. Everyone gets away, but the whole debacle turns into front page news. God will pay for this.

Meanwhile, God has fled back to his fortified

compound upstate, announced to his cultists that the end of the world is nigh and prepared for the coming siege.

The Player Characters may have gotten involved at any stage in the unfolding drama, but they should certainly arrive for the grand finale—the siege of Heaven. Both the state and federal authorities have surrounded the compound, they don't work well together and they're making a mess of it. The Four Deuces have put a contract out on God, and who knows what kind of supervillain scum may turn up to collect. God has more than one hundred brainwashed faithful who will gladly act as human shields or carry out suicide attacks on their besiegers. And then just as things look like they couldn't get any worse, the Four Deuces enter the fray.

2) Four Deuces Beats a Full House

One of America's mightiest heroes, Captain Valiant himself, has been laid low by an unknown assailant. He's in a hospital in New York City, unconscious, barely able to breathe.

Despite the best efforts of the NYC authorities, the news has slipped out, and the consequences could be disastrous—who knows who or what might show up at the hospital looking for revenge? The authorities beg the Player Characters for help. They have a squad of officers ready to protect Captain Valiant's room, but they're afraid that this might just tip off his enemies as to which room he is in. Anything might be coming to finish the job, and they might not stand a chance against it. Whatever it is, if it felled Captain Valiant, it's big.

For most PC groups this scenario should happen before the players realize just what a jerk Captain Valiant really is. However, if you think your players would feel conflicted about guarding somebody they dislike, but would do their best to protect him anyway, then by all means play that card—it will make the scenario seem much richer.

In fact the Four Deuces have knocked Captain Valiant out of action—he surprised them robbing a truck full of cigarettes and Double Deuce got close enough to him to blow some powdered glass up his nose ("Gee, I guess his lungs wasn't all that bulletproof.") The Deuces left him for dead, and were shocked to see him turn up on the news.

They hate the idea of doing such a high profile hit, but what choice do they have? He saw them.

Before they show up themselves, they'll try to get a patsy to do it. God owes them a favor and although God would normally be no match for Captain Valiant, He might be able to get the man's doctors to poison him or something of the sort. God will make a sincere effort to kill the comatose captain, but will flee at the first sign of serious trouble from the PCs.

Once he has failed, the Four Deuces will come themselves, hitting the PCs in the dead of night with as much strategic sense as possible. A hospital is full of good hostages and hideous distractions. Perhaps they call the PCs in Captain Valiant's room and threaten to unleash Diamond Deuce on an operating

theatre with a live patient in it—or to send Lady Deuce up to the children's ward.

Meanwhile, other villains may be heading to New York from all across the country, eager for a slice of Captain Valiant. Use as many of them as you think appropriate. Some of them may actually be willing to fight the Four Deuces, to make sure they get the first swipe at Captain Valiant.

At a certain point in the proceedings the patient may wake up, and suddenly spring to the PCs' rescue at the last second. Or he may mistake them for attackers and wreck everything at the last second.

Whatever happens, Captain Valiant takes the credit for the whole adventure. On the news, they say he fended off a wave of superhuman assailants from his hospital bed. Even incapacitated, he was more than a match for anything the forces of villainy might throw at him.

If the PCs ask the new York authorities why that was their official story, they hastily explain that it was to protect the PCs. It looks as though the attackers had strong ties to organized crime. Captain Valiant lives with that kind of danger every day, but they can't ask the PCs to take a risk like that. They've already done enough. Captain Valiant is unavailable for comment.

Double Deuce

Real Name: Peter "Little Pete" Scarpia

PL: 11

Str: 16 (+3) **Dex:** 20 (+5) **Con:** 16 (+3)
Int: 12 (+1) **Wis:** 14 (+2) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: +9 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +10
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +11 **Defense:** +21/+16
Speed: 30
Damage Save: +3/+5 (Evasion) **Fortitude Save:** +3
Reflexes Save: +7 **Willpower Save:** +4

Skills: Balance +8, Bluff+6, Escape Artist +8, Intimidate +8, Hide+8, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Sense Motive +5, Taunt +8

Feats: Assessment, Connected, Dodge, Evasion, Expertise, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Penetrating Attack x5 (Light-Caliber pistol), Penetrating Attack x6 (Knife), Power Attack, Surprise Attack, Throwing Mastery

Powers: Disintegration +10 (Extra: Subtle [the affected object will break down and cease to function, irreparably ruined, but it won't actually disappear into thin air]; Flaws: Will not work on any object with the "Impervious" Extra, Must actually touch the object to make it disintegrate; Cost: 1pt), Drain +5 (Flaw: Only works against the power "Protection"; Cost: 1pt),

Strike +5 (Cost: 2pts)

Equipment: Knife (+5 Lethal; Cost: 1pt), Light Caliber Pistol (+5 Lethal; Cost: 1pt)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Adheres absolutely to the Mafia code. Will not under any circumstances rat out a fellow criminal, call the police for assistance (no matter how dire the situation) or defy the word of a "Made Man."

"Say, I wonder how bulletproof your eyelids are?"

A nasty, vicious little man, and one of the greatest thieves alive. He's committed some of the biggest heists on the East Coast, and he's always on the lookout for something even more spectacular. In love with his own sinister reputation, he courts the press as much as he can.

Just to taunt the authorities, he always leaves a 2 of Spades at the scene of his thefts. He can't always leave one at the scene of every murder he commits, since there are too many of them and he tends to do it without any advance planning. But he tries.

He would love to be seen as a dashing gentleman thief, romantic, suave and debonair. He gives money to the bank tellers he robs (if they're pretty and he hasn't killed them). He sends roses to the cops who

chase him. He sometimes throws money into the crowd at Times Square on New Year's Eve. To a certain extent the press buys this act, since it makes good copy. Yet in fact he's anything but a gentleman.

Not actually from Brooklyn, he grew up in Queens, in the Mob haven of Bensonhurst. His father was a bus driver who wanted to be respectable, and beat his four sons savagely if he thought they were hanging around with the neighborhood's bad element. They weren't at first, but he beat them anyway, constantly accusing them of being thieves and hoodlums in their hearts. It wasn't long before little Pete started to catch and torture animals, and to start dreaming of being a gangster just to spite his pop.

His older brother Vinnie started cutting school to hang around the Mob guys at the corner drugstore. Pete joined him from time to time, and the two of them began running messages and minor errands for the drugstore guys. Pop caught on eventually and beat both boys until they could barely walk. But as soon as he could, Vinnie was back at the drugstore.

He asked his new friends if they would help him get even with his Pop, and they found the idea hugely amusing. So, on Christmas Eve some goons picked Pete and Vinnie's dad up after work, terrorized him, broke his nose and told him not to mess with Vinnie again.

For the next three days Pop lay on the couch and wouldn't speak. Then he marched all four of his sons down under the El tracks and shot them each in the head. Ma wept and wrung her hands, but she knew her man and she knew better than to interfere.

Little Pete lay on the ground with a bullet in his brain, seeing weird new colors as he bled into the snow, but he did not die. In fact the bullet had done something strange to him—hurt his brain in some ways but changed it in others. Stepping over his dead brothers, the little boy stumbled through the frigid streets, no longer able to smell or to see certain colors (or to feel certain things like remorse) but suddenly able to perceive the weak spots, the fracture points in everything.

This was a wonderful Christmas gift his father had given him, and he couldn't wait to repay the man. Later he would go down to the drugstore and show Vinnie's friends what he could do. But first it was time to make an orphan of himself.

Pete spent the rest of his childhood as a Mafia mascot when he wasn't in Juvenile Hall. They called him "Double Deuce" (slang for a .22 caliber pistol) because of his small size and explosive temper.

At first he just fetched and carried for the big guys, but it wasn't long before the Mob supervillain known as "Bones" noticed the kid's superhuman aptitude for breaking stuff, and took him under his wing. Double Deuce's ability also let him see the weak points in things like security systems, so he became Bones' idea man as well as his hot tempered little sidekick.

Bones gradually put together a powerful crew of superhuman toughs, who became the Four Deuces. The only original member of the team left, Double Deuce stuck with it longer than any of the others.

Unlike most members of the team, Double Deuce was in fact a pure-bred Sicilian, and although his family wasn't "connected" he probably could have risen as high in the Mafia hierarchy as his intellect and ruthlessness would allow. Everyone thinks he stuck with the team and gave up the opportunity to be a full-fledged Mafioso out of loyalty to Bones, but the truth is that Double Deuce doesn't have those kinds of feelings about anyone. He just likes stealing stuff and has no inclination toward running things.

Double Deuce does indeed look on Bones as a father, but that doesn't mean the same thing to him as it does to you and me (I hope). For a while he visited Bones every week in prison, but that was because they had business to discuss.

Quick to take offense, vengeful and cruel, he veers between wild affability and terrifying sudden violence. He's a lot of fun to be around—a regular party animal. He tells good stories, he pays for all the drinks, he leaves huge tips. Outrageous and irresponsible, he's the kind of guy you could call up at two in the morning to go play some insane prank on somebody.

Always laughing and telling jokes, Double Deuce is prone to sudden, random acts of generosity. But he's just as prone to impulsive acts of unspeakable cruelty. He kills people for saying he's short, for showing him disrespect, for wearing flashier clothes than he has on, and often for no discernable reason at all. Anything can set him off, especially when he's been doing coke, and no one is safe from his anger.

On a job, he's crazy mean. He'd sooner kill a bank teller than leave them alive. He'd rather torture a captive than not do it. He comes up with excuses to do the most blood-curdling things, and his teammates sigh and shrug their shoulders. What can they do? He's their little Double-Deuce, and everyone knows that Double Deuce just does stuff like that.

Because of his peculiar ability to see the weak spots in security systems and in other peoples' plans, Double Deuce is the team's idea man as well as their resident loose cannon.

A hair-trigger killer who has no honor, principles, or moral scruples of any kind—he'd sooner murder his teammates than pay them, because it's cheaper. He's the chief reason for the team's high turnover rate, and always seems to have a ready excuse to kill some new ally or hireling when the job is done.

By now the other two long-term team members, Diamond Deuce and the Steel Deuce, know that he'd rather take a life than not, and they listen to him with a little more skepticism. Only the fact that they're more physically powerful than he is has kept them safe. That, and the fact that he's fallen into the habit of not trying to kill them.

Even though he's just a little guy, he looks like a menace. His head is shaved, the lower-right part of his face is covered with disfiguring scars (a rival slashed him up really bad, years ago). He has four gold teeth in front, which you can see every time he flashes his nasty grin. His body is covered with jailhouse tattoos, some of which bleed up onto his neck. He looks like he's had a lot of time to work

out—probably in a cell-block exercise yard. A bullet hole marks one side of his skull. He dresses with expensive bad taste, favoring five hundred dollar blue or black silk shirts with solid red ties. He wears a lot of jewelry and has a huge gold hoop earring.

Adventures With Double Deuce:

1) That Certain Special Spot You Know so Well

Double Deuce has found something amazing. There's a weak spot in the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, a single point no bigger than a dime that could make the whole thing collapse within two hours if you poked it hard enough.

He can't resist the temptation and he gives the spot a poke. Then he panics, grabs some poor random guy off the street, and forces him to call a Player Character, tell them what's about to happen and beg them to stop it. When he's finished, Double Deuce sticks a paper clip in the guy's brain and leaves him dead in the phone booth.

Always quick to seize an opportunity, he calls over a couple of thugs he knows, and the three of them lie in wait, ready to bushwhack the superhero once they finish repairing the bridge. He plans to get the press to blame the whole incident on the dead hero.

If you think Double Deuce wouldn't pose enough of a threat with his pair of machine-gun-toting mooks, he calls in Lady Deuce, as well.

By the time the PC arrives at the bridge, it's already starting to vibrate pretty badly, but the city authorities haven't yet taken any action. It's not quite rush hour yet, but it will be by the time the bridge starts to shake itself apart.

The PC has 80 minutes in which to act. After that, the bridge will collapse. Anyone with spellcasting, city-manipulating, cosmic, or earth-animating powers can fix the bridge with two successful consecutive rolls vs. DC 20. They can try for two consecutive rolls as many times as they like, but each try takes 5 minutes and every time they fail two rolls in a row, it actually makes things worse, and speeds up the bridge's collapse by 20 minutes. If two characters with any of the appropriate powers collaborate, the DC goes down to 18, but both of them have to make both their rolls for the bridge to be fixed. If three characters collaborate, the DC drops to a puny 15 and if four or more of them work together then success is automatic within 5 minutes.

Anyone who used their powers to fix the bridge can feel that the trouble originated at one spot underneath the Brooklyn terminus. This of course is where Double Deuce is waiting for them.

2) Of Sweaters and Splavine

A journalist named Marika Splavine has written a book on the New York Mafia, in which she talks a little too much about Double Deuce. She lives and works in the Player Characters' home town, which by a coincidence is about to play host to an oil minister from Bahrain and his entourage.

Always one to seize on an opportunity, Double Deuce slips into Miss Splavine's apartment and leaves her an envelope with the ace of spades in it. As an expert on major criminals, she immediately knows what this means. The police pooh-pooh her concerns, so (just as Double Deuce hopes) she will turn to the PCs for help.

If the PCs don't yet know Double Deuce, she explains to them who he is and what that card means.

Meanwhile, Double Deuce recruits a gang of rich teenage preppies who desperately want to be criminals. He dresses them in matching sweaters and ties and calls them his "Sweater Gang."

He has a few members of the Sweater Gang hang out around her building and look ominous. A florist delivers a bunch of grave-lilies with an ace of spades tucked into the card and a vaguely threatening poem. Someone leaves a Polaroid photo of Marika sleeping in her bed. The photo appears right in the middle of her coffee table, while no one is looking.

Then just as the tension starts to get unbearable, the manager of a swank hotel down the street plummets to his death from one of the upper balconies. By a freak coincidence, Marika happens to see it. This is the first real mistake Double Deuce has made. For in the meantime, he and the Sweater Gang are planning to rob the suite that Bahrain's oil minister is staying in, and make off with a fortune in jewels and cocaine.

Once the PCs were too preoccupied with protecting Marika Splavine to notice, the Sweater Gang cased the joint, juiced all the information they could out of the hotel manager and threw him off the balcony (making it look as though he slipped on a banana peel—the kind of flourish Double Deuce approves of).

They are going to rob the place the very next night, after which Double Deuce will stick around just long enough to kill off all six members of his gang. Over the next few days two of them will be found burned to death in their dad's expensive car, one will found dead in a dumpster with a plastic bag over his head, one of them turn up asphyxiated on his parents' huge lawn, with a game of croquet scattered around him and a ball hammered neatly into his mouth by a single inhumanly precise blow.

If the PCs don't manage to foil the robbery in progress, one of the two surviving members of the gang comes to see them a few days later, in fear of his life and eager to tell them where they can find Double Deuce (he's supposed to meet the kid on the roof of a crummy bar at 11:45). This should lead to a scary midnight chase across some rooftops, and finally to a direct confrontation with their shadowy foe. But the PCs must be quick and careful, for if they catch Double Deuce he will claim that he has already sent the gang's last member over to murder Marika Splavine. He'll tell them how to stop the kid if time if they let him go.

Is he telling the truth? And has the oil minister from Bahrain become annoyed enough to bring in the Hammer of Doom?

Ace of Wounds

Real Name: Silvio Strozzi

PL: 12

Str: 17 (+3) **Dex:** 20 (+5) **Con:** 18 (+4)
Int: 13 (+1) **Wis:** 18 (+4) **Cha:** 12 (+1)
Initiative: +10 **Attack Bonus (Melee):**
+12 **Attack Bonus (Ranged):** +12
Defense: +26/+15 **Speed:** 30
Damage Save: +6 **Fortitude Save:** +6
Reflexes Save: +10 **Willpower Save:** +9

Skills: Bluff +4, Balance +10, Climb +10, Demolitions +10, Diplomacy +4, Escape Artist +10, Hide +10, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (Military Procedure) +5, Listen +15, Move Silently +19, Search +11, Sense Motive +6, Spot +18, Survival +5

Feats: Accurate Attack, Assessment, Attack Finesse, Dodge, Evasion, Far Shot, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Move Silently), Takedown Attack, Talented (Listen and Move Silently), Talented (Demolitions and Spot), Toughness, Track

Powers: Super-Dexterity+5 (Extras: Super-Senses, Super-Strength, Super-Wisdom; Flaw: Only applies to skill checks; Cost: 9pts)

Equipment: Body Armor +8 (Cost: 1pt), Pistol (+3 Lethal Damage), Specially Modified Sniper Rifle (+10 Lethal Damage)

“You’re dying. Now be quiet and do it like a man.”

Silvio Strozzi was marked by his last name. Growing up in his old neighborhood in Brooklyn, everyone who heard that name could tell at once that his father’s family came from Toscano in northern Italy. Forever denied a place in the Mafia by his tainted ancestry, he avoided crime altogether as there was no percentage in it. The problem was, in his neighborhood there wasn’t much percentage in anything else, either.

He avoided the youth gangs, since time wasted with them was time he couldn’t spend delivering newspapers or sweeping out shops or making money any other way he could. His schoolmates resented his high-and-mighty attitude and soon he came to take his lumps from them on a regular basis. He had to become a brawler, though he resented the amount of time he had to waste on learning to box and lifting weights.

Since he had no gang affiliation to protect him, he wound up spending increasing amounts of time incapacitated with injuries. By his seventeenth birthday he was sure that this was a losing battle, so he joined the Army and expected to leave the

neighborhood behind forever. It was not to be.

Silvio excelled as a soldier. Tough, disciplined, smart and ready to follow orders, his ambition and his quiet self-control took him far. He was an obvious choice for commando school and quickly became first a Ranger, and then a member of a secret, super-elite shadow unit called “Team Seven”. Even on Team Seven he was exceptional. By the time he was thirty-five he was about as tough a guy as the Armed forces had at its disposal.

Somewhere along the way he learned to love his country and gained a sense of honor. It embarrassed him to think about his origins, not because they were humble, but because it pained him to remember the grasping little hustler he had been.

Then on a disastrous covert mission to Syria, he lost an eye. He was lucky—most of the other guys in the unit got killed or crippled, but not quite lucky enough. For the Army’s rules were clear. The loss of an eye constituted a disabling injury, so they had to retire him.

A lifer with nowhere else to go, Silvio found himself back in his room in his Mom’s apartment in Brooklyn. He didn’t have any friends outside Team Seven (and since their real names were all classified there was no way to get in touch with them) or a lot of skills apart from shooting people. Worse, because so much of the work he had done was classified, there was a huge hole in his employment record, which anyone who saw his muscles and eye-patch was going to assume he had spent in prison. But he wasn’t one for self-pity, so he picked himself up and got moving.

He worked fast food, he worked as a security guard, he pumped gas—for the next two years he never seemed to have less than three crummy jobs at one time. He figured he’d live with Ma and help her out until he got enough saved from his jobs and his pension to make a go of things.

It was easier to fall back into hustling for a buck than he had thought, and the ghost of his former self haunted him more than a little.

Guys his age who have lousy jobs and live with their mothers don’t get a lot of dates, but after a while he hooked up with a neighborhood beauty named Theresa (who was way too young for him, but what the Hell) and things started to look a lot better. The two of them were about halfway to being able to buy a pizza place, when fate smacked them in the head.

The kids who used to hassle Silvio were grown men now, but some of them still gave him grief. A lot of the ones who had been deep in the gangs were dead. Some of the others were now made guys.

One of them in particular had it in for him—a guy they called Fat Tony D’Ambrosio. Fat Tony was an obnoxious slob who women didn’t like, and it galled him that a nothing like Silvio could have a girl like Theresa. So he raped her, and messed up her face.

A few days later, it occurred to Fat Tony that Silvio was a big tough looking guy, and that he might want revenge, so he went by the Strozzi’s apartment with some of the boys. They set the building on fire and shot anyone who tried to get out. The cops and

firemen knew to stay away, so the incident claimed the lives of six people, including Silvio's mother, uncle and little brother.

Silvio wasn't home—he was spending another fruitless night trying to get Theresa to talk to him. The next day he came back, stood in the ashes of his Ma's building and wondered what to do next. It was then that a guy called Double Deuce approached him, expressed his sympathies and put a gun in his hand.

Silvio didn't really care about revenge. He'd seen too many guys do too many stupid things over Vendetta to believe in it. But it was clear to him that he was now a marked man, and that with the Mafia out to kill him, there was nowhere on earth to hide. So he pretended to be grateful and he asked Double Deuce what he wanted in return.

In fact the Four Deuces had been casually keeping an eye on Silvio for some time. They had fought Team Seven once and guessed the rough details of his background, knew he could be an asset and were eager to find a way to recruit him. Now they had a ready-made opportunity.

Double Deuce told Silvio that the Four Deuces could protect him from the wrath of the D'Ambrosios, and that they'd help him get revenge just as soon as they could. In the meantime, he'd help them out in return. To take revenge against an outfit like the D'Ambrosios, they were going to need money and a lot of it.

Silvio was about ninety-five percent certain that this was some kind of con, but the part about having protection sounded good, so he negotiated protection for Theresa and the surviving Strozzi into the deal. He also wanted Double Deuce's assurances that they wouldn't kill any innocent people. Double Deuce enthusiastically agreed, thinking to himself that no one was exactly innocent.

On their first heist Double Deuce saved the Silvio's life, gunning down an off-duty police officer who got the drop on Silvio while they were robbing an armored car. On their next outing, The Ace of Wounds saw a bank guard catch Double Deuce flatfooted, and he owed Double Deuce his life, so despite his reservations he killed the man. And now he'd done it—he'd killed an innocent person—a working stiff like himself who'd just been doing his job. Killing “innocent” people got easier and easier with each passing crime.

For the past two years Double Deuce has been telling Silvio that they'll take on the D'Ambrosios just as soon as they're strong enough, and while he doesn't believe the Deuce (or want to kill any D'Ambrosios), Silvio tries to look interested. He doesn't know that Double Deuce thinks he may get wise soon, and is planning to kill him before it happens. He should have noticed that his name “The Ace of Wounds” sets him a little apart from the permanent members of the crew, reminding them not to get too attached to him.

Life is surprisingly good for Silvio right now. Theresa still won't talk to him, but there are other girls who hang around the team and Lady Deuce is willing to let him sleep with her from time to time. He has

money in his pocket and for the moment he's safe. The Ace of Wounds would in fact be willing to stay loyal to the team forever, despite having no illusions about who they are, if Double Deuce weren't about to have him killed.

In person, Silvio Strozzi is quiet, confident and somewhat guarded. He won't kill anybody without a good reason, but he's not dumb enough to question Double Deuce's behavior, either. A charming guy when he wants to be, he can tell a good joke or a funny anecdote, but for the most part he hangs back and watches the room, ready for signs of danger or of something he might turn to his advantage.

He's a brutally effective combatant, a superb tactician who doesn't care a thing for fighting fair and always gives himself every advantage in a battle. Not as powerful as some of the actual superhumans he fights, he wears a lot of body armor and tries to hit super-opponents from a distance, taking them by surprise if he can.

He occasionally tortured people during his stint with Team Seven, but he doesn't like doing it, and will always let someone else do it if it has to be done. God knows there are enough guys in the Four Deuces who enjoy it more than he does. If faced with a choice between taking a hostage and losing his freedom, he would pick going to jail, to his own enormous surprise and relief.

Adventures With the Ace of Wounds:

1) Ace of Fools

Theresa vanishes. The Ace of Wounds is convinced that Fat Tony must have taken her, but he doesn't dare try to go get her back—if he picks a fight with the D'Ambrosios on his own, Double Deuce is sure to have him killed. In desperation, knowing that he doesn't have much time, he gets in touch with the Player Characters (possibly by setting a fire or committing some other big crime that he knows will get their attention).

When they show up, he apologizes for the commotion (if he had to cause one) and offers to turn himself in if the PCs will listen to him. He tells them his whole story, even though it will blow his secret identity, leaving out only the parts that might expose the other Deuces. He needs the PCs to get Theresa back and he'll do anything at all if they do it for him. He'll turn states evidence, he'll wear a wire to a Four Deuces meet, he'll do whatever they say.

Unfortunately, when the PCs arrive at Fat Tony's restaurant (called “Fat Tony's”) they find that the D'Ambrosios are presently engaged in a nervous sit-down meeting with a Russian gang.

It's important to remember here that Fat Tony, while he is a “made guy” is not a capo. In fact he's kind of a lowly, unpopular guy in the mob hierarchy, largely because of the way he treats women. All eight of his brothers and cousins are present at the meeting, heavily armed and ready to kill, but he doesn't have hordes of loyal gunsels ready to die for him. Could a

guy like Silvio Strozzi wipe them out all by himself? Probably, but then the mob would come kill what's left of his family and anyway he's never seen the point.

The Russian gang under Crazy Joe Snagarov is a little bigger, and has about twelve active members present. That's still more than enough thugs in total to give the PCs a lively time when they come bursting into the room.

Meanwhile, Theresa prepares to get on a bus at the Port Authority Terminal with her new boyfriend. His name is Markie Savanelli, and he's an auto mechanic with a huge disfiguring birthmark covering one side of his face. He's a pretty nice guy, strong, shy and quiet.

One of Fat Tony's cousins knows all about this, and when the PCs demand to know where Theresa is, he laughingly tells them. Silvio has found out too, and he's headed down to the Port Authority right now. The PCs may well want to try and stop him, before he does something crazy. But the truth is that he really just wants to see her one more time, and maybe, if he has a chance and she doesn't look too scared, to say goodbye.

The future looks uncertain for the Ace of Wounds. He's changed his mind about turning himself in, but even though the PCs didn't actually rescue Theresa he will keep his word about everything else, and will give the PCs any information they may want about the Four Deuces. Unfortunately, if Fat Tony has died in the fight then Double Deuce will assume that his hold over Silvio is dead as well, and the Ace of Wounds will soon find himself making one last trip to the basement.

Lady Deuce

Real Name: Eliza Agani (but she seldom uses it, and instead goes by a huge number of aliases)

PL: 12

Str: 12 (+1) **Dex:** 18 (+4) **Con:** 18 (+4)
Int: 16 (+3) **Wis:** 16 (+3) **Cha:** 16 (+3)
Initiative: +4 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +11
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +14 **Defense:** +26/+22 **Speed:** 30
Damage Save: +8 **Fortitude Save:** +4
Reflexes Save: +4 **Willpower Save:** +5

Skills: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +5, Forgery +5, Hide +8, Intimidate +8, Pick Lock +4

Feats: Assessment, Attack Focus (Armed), Connected, Detect Parahumans, Dodge, Expertise, Iron Will, Indomitable Will, Penetrating Attack x2 (Knife)

Powers: Neutralize Power +12 (Extras: Neutralizing Field, Nulification [does not require concentration to maintain]; Cost: 5pts), Amazing Save (Damage) +4

Equipment: Big Scary Knife (+5 Lethal), Big Scary Gun (+5 Lethal), +2 Armor

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Sadist (Commits shocking acts of cruelty, would sooner take a life than not)

“Close your eyes, honey. I’ve got a surprise for you.”

Sometimes, for one reason or another, the Four Deuces will need to kill a child. In a case like this, they always give them to Lady Deuce. Not that the Steel Deuce would object to killing kids himself, but it doesn’t fit his image and she enjoys it so much more.

And this fact sums her up pretty well. A vindictive, clear-eyed sadist, there is nothing Lady Deuce isn’t capable of. Nothing at all. She kills, she maims, she mutilates, she glories in it. But even though she’s actually more vicious than Double Deuce, she’s also in much better command of herself, and never lets her love of carnage and pain get in the way of her objectives. She does prefer to kill children, (because they’re small and helpless and sometimes trust her), but she would never stalk and murder them in her spare time—that would be stupid.

Her age is difficult to judge, as is her nationality. She could be anywhere from her mid twenties to a well-preserved thirty-five (in fact she’s forty). She can pass for Turkish, Italian, Arabic, Greek or Hispanic (in fact she’s of Albanian ancestry).

Her mother was a career criminal, who taught her how to lie and steal and do people wrong, in between stints in jail. When Mom got sent away to prison

forever, little Eliza became a ward of the state, spending the rest of her childhood in a variety of foster homes, orphanages and reform schools.

A “problem client” she became increasingly prone to acts of wild, destructive cruelty. Other kids just weren’t safe around her, and her magnetic personality and talent for leadership made her even more dangerous.

When she was nine the state authorities managed to locate her father’s family in the run-down Flatbush neighborhood in Brooklyn, so she went to live with a distant aunt, uncle and their four children. Within a week she had killed their puppy. Within a month she killed the baby. She managed to get both episodes blamed on the family’s eldest daughter Miranda (Eliza told Jane, the younger daughter, that she would kill their little brother Sammy if she didn’t back up her story). Then after Miranda got sent to reform school Eliza killed little Sammy anyway, and it became impossible to conceal what kind of creature she was. So she killed everyone else and burned the house down.

After this, it was clear that Eliza was going to spend the rest of her life on the street or in an institutional setting, and even though she liked reform school she chose the street. There were a lot of street kids in New York in the mid 1970s, living by begging and petty crime and the occasional act of prostitution. It was easy to vanish into their midst. Arrested and thrown in lockup many times for truancy, no one in the judicial system seemed to figure out that she was the same Eliza Agani who had vanished from the burning house in Flatbush, years before.

By the time she was 11 she had killed six more times, for both profit and fun, and had started running with the teenage gangs. Popular, pretty, charismatic and well-liked, she had her own girl gang by the time she was fifteen and had killed another eight people. Her crew, the Screwhead Chicks, were unusual in that they weren’t just a female adjunct to a male gang. They were a criminal enterprise in their own right, and swiftly became known for their willingness to kill at the drop of a hat. They dealt speed, they shook down businesses for protection, they even robbed banks

In fact they caused such a ruckus in Brooklyn that they attracted the attention of a superhero called Mr. Groovy, who determined to put a stop to their deadly hijinks. He confronted the Screwhead Chicks in the act of setting a Salvation Army warehouse on fire. Protected by his force field and his bulletproof skin, Mr. Groovy felt pretty confident as he presented himself and demanded that they stop. He was giving them a lecture on not wasting their lives in a gang, when Eliza stabbed him in the face out of sheer defiance. To her amazement, he fell down, choked on his own blood and died. It seemed that she had the power to shut down other parahuman abilities at will, but had never had the chance to find this out before.

They burned Mr. Groovy’s body in the warehouse and decided to lie low for a while. Eliza was already thinking of how she could turn her newfound superhuman ability to her advantage. Pretty soon she

turned the Screwhead Chicks over to her second in command and started hanging out with the Mafia instead of the gangs. Her ability to detect superheroes was even more useful than her ability to shut their powers down and the Mob always had a use for her.

Over the past twenty-five years her life has been one constant adventure. She has hung out with one crew or another, taken on freelance criminal work in Russia, Israel, Italy and Hong Kong. She has done everything from organized credit card fraud to elaborate con jobs to kidnapping to dealing dope, and she loved it all. She's also spent a lot of time in prison, but she loves that too. These days women's prisons are full of soft young drug offenders who are like meat on a plate to Lady Deuce. Brooklyn is the closest thing she has to a home, and she always comes back to it.

Three years ago she hooked up with Four Deuces and life has been even better. They're a tight crew, where everybody knows his job and nobody tries to grab more than their share.

In person she is wild, carefree, and hideously cruel. Forthright, confident, charismatic and articulate, she smiles a lot and always looks whoever she is speaking to straight in the eye. Much more careful than Double Deuce, she never kills or brutalizes anyone impulsively, but she can think of a lot of good reasons to do either one. She's a good team player despite her personal limitations, takes orders well and isn't afraid to put herself at risk.

Even though she's incredibly brave and totally defiant if captured, she isn't actually willing to die for anyone or anything and knows when to run. She always has a scam or two running on the side, always has a backup plan and an escape route. If it were them or her, she would betray her team mates without hesitation. Otherwise, she's loyal.

Largely self-educated, apart from some City College courses in business and computers, she wishes she had more time to study and find things out about the world. Her Brooklyn accent can be anywhere from really thick to totally undetectable, depending on who she is talking to. She loves dancing, sings well and is always up for a good time.

It seems to her that Double Deuce is starting to get uneasy about how long she's been with the team and how much she knows about their past crimes. He'll probably have her killed soon, she figures, but he'll probably ask her to kill the Ace of Wounds first, so that will be her cue to get out of Dodge.

So far no one has been able to link her to the Flatbush murders, but she is acutely aware that she has one surviving family member out there somewhere, who may have guessed the truth. She has searched for her surviving cousin many times, but after Miranda was released from reform school on her 18th birthday, she changed her name and vanished. She is in fact a waitress at a truck stop in the Yukon, and has spent a good part of her life looking over shoulder, getting ready for the day Eliza finds her at last.

Adventures With Lady Deuce:

1) **Ain't Love Grand?**

Lady Deuce has been hired to hit a superhero who has incredible strength and the ability to fly. If you don't have an NPC superhero like that in your campaign, then use the stats for the "Original" archetype from the M&M Core Book, and call him Captain Justice.

The PCs know him a little, but not too well. He's kind of a square, unimaginative and workaholic. A celebrity, Captain Justice takes his fame just a little too seriously. He cares a lot about his reputation and keeping up appearances—maybe more than he does about actually fighting crime. At least, this is the impression the PCs have of him. Great hero, not such a great guy. Does not deserve to be cruelly murdered by the likes of Lady Deuce.

And the Lady has thought of a truly horrible way to do him in. She waits on a rooftop near one end of a bridge with a light sniper rifle. Then she calls in a major supervillain alert—either someone she knows Captain Justice (or whoever the target is) hates personally, or a heavy hitter like the Death Angel.

When Captain Justice arrives, she shoots the tire out of a passing vehicle, and sends it careening off the bridge. Any vehicle will do, but in fact when the crucial moment occurs she spots a schoolbus full of kids—fate is kind! When Captain Justice picks up the bus, she will turn off his powers and he will die, crushed under the bus' weight or drowned in the river. Either way, the kids probably die too, and Captain Justice looks like a real jerk. In fact his last thought will probably be *"I look like a real jerk"* which will suit Lady Deuce just fine.

It's a beautiful hit. There's just one complication. Captain Justice's wife hired Lady Deuce to kill him, and at the last moment she gets cold feet and runs to the Player Characters. Can they stop Lady Deuce in time to save one of America's most beloved heroes?

Once Captain Justice finds out who hired the assassin, he will decline to press charges against Lady Deuce. Not that he loves his wife, but the scandal would be more than he could bear. If it ever came out, America would be irreparably harmed, he explains to the PCs. Two years later he dies under suspicious circumstances. Lady Deuce has an alibi.

2) **Big Fat Hairy Deal**

Lady Deuce runs a certain number of scams on the side, socking away money for the moment when she finally has to go on the run. One of the more harmless ones involves selling shoddy, defective printer cartridges over the internet through a shell company she calls "International Productions" and then selling the debt to a collection agency when the mark refuses to pay for them.

Unfortunately for everyone, her latest mark is a guy named Harry Deal. If one of the PCs works in an office, then Harry is their office manager. He's a loud, fat, obnoxious guy, red-faced and angry. He bullies people while pretending to kid them around, he

holds petty grudges, he ignores his wife and five year old daughter.

When Harry gets snared by the printer cartridge scam, he won't stop complaining about it. He constantly posts warnings about International Productions on the internet, he hassles and pesters the police about having Lady Deuce prosecuted, he tries to have her served with writs from his lawyer.

So she nabs his little girl, Dora, and gives him a call at the office. If Harry wants Dora back, he will have to walk into the 20th Precinct at 12:15 AM, any night this week, and ask to speak with officer Norton Haselbeck. When he meets Haselbeck, Harry will recite a list of accusations at him, (which Lady Deuce will fax right over), and then Harry will shoot him six times in the head. *"Otherwise, little Dora is gonna be Dora the Explorer"* Lady Deuce cheerfully explains.

If a PC works with Harry, then he is inexplicably absent from work for two days while he thinks over his options. That is utterly, totally unlike the guy—Harry is such a workaholic that he's even in the office on Sundays.

Lady Deuce, meanwhile, has been doing a surprisingly good job of taking care of Dora, letting her stay up late and watch anything she wants, feeding her ice cream and treats and sometimes just a little heroin to make her go to sleep. It's more fun playing Mom than she expected.

She picked Officer Haselbeck more or less at random. They met once at a social function. He seemed like a nice enough guy. But he happened to tell her what shift he works, and she knows when he'll be at the precinct. Frankly she doesn't care which cop Harry kills, just so long as he gets gunned down in the process and discredits himself by acting like a paranoid maniac.

She's already sold his little girl to some Arabs, who will arrive to pick her up on the night things come to a head.

For his part Harry is no fool, he's sure that the cops will shoot him and that Lady Deuce will kill his little girl anyway. So instead of going to the Precinct house, he walks into a part of town that he knows the Player Character regularly patrol, and smashes every store window on the street. When the PCs show up, he apologizes and explains everything to them. Can they help him get his little girl back?

Alas, Lady Deuce thought he might pull something like this, and has been following him. As soon as he finishes telling his woeful story, she calls Harry on his cell phone. The PCs can hear her cheerful voice say: *"I know a little girl who's going to be very, very disappointed that her daddy did something he wasn't supposed to."* Then she switches off the meanest looking Player Character's powers and attacks.

She'll actually try not to hurt Harry Deal, since she still wants him to go through with shooting Officer Haselbeck. If the Players beat her, then she'll explain that the Arabs are on their way, and that if the PCs let her go she'll tell them how to get there in time. She's as good as her word, for once.

3) **A Bouquet of Bullets for the Deuce of Hearts**

Eventually, Lady Deuce's life is sure to fall apart. If the PCs don't bring down the Four Deuces then Double Deuce will eventually decide to have her killed.

Once she has to go on the run, she vanishes utterly for a while. Everyone assumes that she's either relaxing on a beach in Tahiti or lying on the bottom of the East River in a barrel of concrete. But in fact neither one is true.

Lady Deuce's retirement hasn't gone well. She had to leave New York too quickly and she wasn't able to get her hands on as much of her emergency cash as she wanted. She's cruising aimlessly around the west in a sport utility vehicle, burning through what little money she has left, enjoying her freedom, marveling at the beauty of the landscape. She never had time to do this before and she's amazed that America is actually such a gorgeous place. It puts a new perspective on things for her. In fact she's barely killed anyone since she left New York.

A few months later word reaches the PCs of a strange murder in northern British Columbia. A Canadian superhero called the Masked Mountie has been found dead by the side of the Alaska Highway. He was bulletproof, and yet someone shot him through the face with a light caliber pistol. Now whose *modus operandi* does that sound like?

If the PCs pursue Lady Deuce up the long and lonely road to Alaska, they will reach her at around the time she walks into the wrong truck stop, somewhere near Kluane National Park, and comes face to face with her cousin, Miranda.

Eliza has long since forgotten what Miranda looks like, but Miranda will never forget Eliza. She will drug Lady Deuce's coffee if she gets a chance, and then gently walk her out the back door. The PCs will arrive at the truck stop to find Lady Deuce's SUV parked outside, but no sign of her. The regular waitress, who everybody knows as Julie, is also unaccountably absent.

Somewhere out in the woods nearby there is a tiny cabin, where Miranda keeps certain things—sharp things mostly. She has had a long time to think about what she's going to do if she ever gets Eliza through the door of that cabin, and she may finally be about to get her chance to do them all.

Diamond Deuce

Real Name: Izzy Schwartz Jr. (usually just called "Junior")

PL: 11

Str: 18 (+4) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 18 (+4)

Int: 9 (-1) **Wis:** 9 (-1) **Cha:** 10 (+0)

Initiative: +1 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +9

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +6 **Defense:**

+15/+14 **Speed:** 30/50 (in flight)

Damage Save: +4 **Fortitude Save:** +6

Reflexes Save: +1 **Willpower Save:** +1

Skills: Intimidate +12, Knowledge (the Underworld+5), Listen +9, Repair +6, Spot +9

Feats: Durability, Great Fortitude, Immunity (Disease, Pressure, Suffocation), Improved Grapple, Power Attack

Powers: Energy Blast +10 (Cost 2 pts), Flight +10 (Cost: 2pts), Super-Strength +11 (Extras: Protection, Shockwave; Cost: 6pts)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Will attack anyone who disrespects his hair, clothing, car, girlfriend or other possessions, cannot stop attacking them until they are unconscious or he spends a villain point.

“Well look at this. Your hand already didn’t look so good, and now they just dealt you the Deuce.”

Big, dumb, vicious and hard to kill—these traits have kept the Diamond Deuce alive longer than almost any member of the Four Deuces to date.

Double Deuce feels pretty uncomfortable with letting any of his teammates live this long. Who knows what kind of stuff they might come to know about him, about the Deuces and about their crimes? Much safer to have them killed after a year or so. Then again, killing the Diamond Deuce has always seemed like a whole lot of work and it’s hard to seriously accuse somebody that dumb of knowing too much about anything. Anyway he owes the Four Deuces everything, and one of his few good traits is his stupid, doglike loyalty.

Fifteen years ago he was a star of the illegal underground boxing circuit. Getting his head broken for a crummy buck was all he seemed to be good for—and he was starting to feel his injuries more and more as he got older. In his off hours he got high, wandered the streets and picked fights with guys in bars. If he won, he went home and slept. If he lost, he found a hooker and beat her up instead. By 1989 he was headed nowhere fast, and dimly aware that he wanted something more.

The Mob was then experimenting with ways to give its soldiers superhuman powers, and he

volunteered as a test subject on impulse. The process was cruel, but ingenious. They were trying to implant stem cells taken from captured superhumans into the test subjects, who they kept under wraps at an improvised clinic in a Jersey City warehouse. Alas, most of the subjects died or went crazy.

The whole operation was about to be shut down and the remaining subjects disposed of, when Diamond Deuce manifested his abilities. He ripped through his restraints, smashed his way out of the warehouse, and went on the run (more test subjects may have escaped during the confusion, and some of them may have superhuman powers of their own—it’s up to the GM).

Afraid that the Mob would still be after him, he tried to commit enough robberies to get out of New York, even though he’d never left the area and the thought terrified him.

He was a miserable excuse for a supervillain, brash, impulsive, murderous and sloppy. He was afraid to rob banks, so he wasted his considerable powers on botched and bloody supermarket heists, never taking in more than a few hundred dollars at a time. Fortunately for him, the Steel Deuce found him before the capes or the feds did.

A big, dumb, violent kid at heart, he’s as silly as a child. He never seems to learn his lesson or improve his behavior. He’ll fight against superior odds, he’ll antagonize guys who he should already know are tough enough to beat him. He’ll stay too long at a crime scene so that he can keep hitting people. Fortunately for him, he likes Double Deuce and fears the Steel Deuce enough that they can keep him in line when they’re on a job.

He loves being a supervillain, revels in his power, likes his code name and likes to work it into conversation (see the quote above). Just as he did in the ring, he likes to taunt and threaten his opponents and would gladly fight for its own sake, even if no money were at stake.

Vulgar and crass, he’s also extremely vain, particularly about his ponytail. He spends a lot on hair care products and styling for his tail. Insult it at your peril.

A compulsive bully, he abuses women savagely. He has a pretty blonde wife named Gwen up in the Long Island suburbs, six girlfriends and ten sons by one or another of them.

All of his boys are named Junior, after himself. He’s foolishly proud of his sons, constantly showing off their pictures and passing out cigars whenever a new one is born. Yet he’s a terrible dad when he’s around. People who are weaker than he is bring out the bully in him, and he can no more resist beating his kids than he can keep himself from beating his wife and girlfriends (or hookers, when they aren’t available). He’s already killed his two oldest sons by punishing them too hard.

Right now his oldest surviving boy is the subject of his special attention. Diamond Deuce senses that Junior is turning out to be a wimp, so he has to beat him up every day to make him tough. If he dies, that

will be a terrible shame—it will mean that the wimp part of him was stronger than the strong part. Since this has already happened twice, Diamond Deuce is starting to wonder if it's some kind of failing on his part that's causing this, if he's not really a good enough father to raise his sons strong.

Double Deuce is perfectly aware of how grotesquely wrong this is, but he finds it very amusing, and often tries to draw Diamond Deuce out on the subject of his troubles, nodding earnestly as he wonders aloud at how tough it is to be a good dad.

Adventures With Diamond Deuce:

Deuce of Diamonds, Knave of Hearts

Rebecca Katzenbaum is a pretty, fragile young concert cellist whom a PC knows slightly. Perhaps she is the friend of their love interest, or a former classmate at the Julliard, or even a member of a PC's family. She lives on Long Island with her parents, and has become the Diamond Deuce's latest girlfriend.

Not that she ever wanted to have anything to do with the man. He took a fancy to her while he was driving into the city, and saw her practicing in the window of her parent's home. He determined to have her, just to show everybody that he wasn't no low-class thug. A girl with class, that's a mark of distinction—a feather in a man's cap. So he began to harass her and to bully her family.

Her middle class parents were at first indignant, but they shortly came to fear the man and his visits so much that they stopped interfering. The first time they tried to send their daughter away to some relatives upstate, where she might be safe from his advances, he had a pair of crooked cops bring her back to her parent's house and explain that the Deuce would be there to see her on Friday. Once this happened, her parents broke down completely—they couldn't even go to the police, the police were on his side!

These days, the Katzenbaum home is full of silence and despair. Depressed by the atmosphere and by the constant weeping, the Deuce has moved Rebecca out to an apartment in the city, which has actually upset her family even worse.

He took her away from her job and broke her cello to make sure she didn't have anything in her life that was bigger than him. The first set of bruises have already begun to fade on her face, but they will soon be replaced by many more. He's thinking of having her long, lovely hands smashed to make sure she can't play music again, so that she can give herself to him more completely. Already she stumbles through her days in a bleary haze, hoping for death. Perhaps it will get here soon—the Deuce is already beginning to tire of her.

And this is when the PCs stumble onto the situation. They either see Rebecca in some public place, looking lost and tragic with bruises on her face, or they realize that it's been a long time since they've heard from her, or her parents run to them for help. There are a dozen other ways the PCs could be drawn

into this situation—she could even be a total stranger who comes running out of an alley and collapses at their feet (and there's always the old “you hear a scream” hook).

The Diamond Deuce's friends are perfectly willing to back him up if the PCs start to make life difficult for him.

The Steel Deuce

Real Name: Gianni "Johnny Machine"

Gaspari

PL: 14

Str: 18 (+4) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 18 (+4)

Int: 16 (+3) **Wis:** 16 (+3) **Cha:** 16 (+3)

Initiative: +2 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +10

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +8 **Defense:**

+18/+16 **Speed:** 30/60 (Leaping)

Damage Save: +10 **Fortitude Save:** +6

Reflexes Save: +2 **Willpower Save:** +9

Skills: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Forgery +8, Intimidate+10, Knowledge (Crime) +10, Pick Lock +9, Profession (Legitimate Businessman) +3, Spot +11, Sense Motive+12

Feats: Connected, Dodge, Durability, Great Fortitude, Expertise, Headquarters (crummy bar called "The Four Deuces Lounge", with a Communications Center [a police radio and some illegal wiretapping equipment] a Computer [a super-sophisticated desktop model which the Steel Deuce stole from a gadgeteer, buried in the clutter of the bar's back room], Concealment [appears to be nothing more than a crummy dive bar], a Dock [or at least a trapdoor in the basement which leads to the river], a Fire Prevention System [although the fire extinguishers haven't been checked in years and the sprinkler system might not be up to code], a Gym [or at least a set of weights in one room of the apartment upstairs from the bar], an Infirmary [there is some medical gear in the basement and although it's none too sterile, a surprising number of surgical procedures have been performed in the bar's back room], Holding Cells [a specially reinforced room in the basement and another one in the apartment upstairs, both with a Hardness of 15], Living Space for 15 people [if they cram into the apartment really tight--but hey, it's New York. They're probably used to it], a separate Power System [an illegal tap on the Brooklyn power grid, plus a gasoline-powered generator in the basement], a Security System [a seldom-used burglar alarm for those rare hours when the bar is unoccupied], and a Workshop [that same reinforced room in the basement holds a lot of materials for dismembering corpses, and the rest of the basement holds a number of empty barrels and bags of cement, as well as less lethal tools. The Steel Deuce comes down here to repair himself] and a baseball bat behind the bar [Weapon, +3 Lethal Damage], Immunity (Aging, Disease, Exhaustion, Poison, Starvation, Suffocation), Iron Will, Minions (in a pinch he can call on as many as 60 mooks, thugs, punks and other such PL1 employees, scattered around his various businesses and criminal enterprises, as well as 6 PL2 goons, 3 PL3 criminals of greater experience, 2 big mean PL4 guys who tend bar at the Four Deuces Lounge, a PL5 mob doctor who knows better than to

ask questions about gunshot wounds, and a PL6 lawyer), Power Attack, Rapid Takedown, Startle, Surprise Strike, Takedown Attack

Powers: Amazing Save (Willpower) +4, Energy Blast +12 (Flaw: Reduced Range, Cost: 1pt), Gadgets +10 (Extra: Gadgets don't require separate devices and are instead built into the Steel Deuce; Cost: 2pts), Super-Strength +12 (Extras: Leaping, Protection; Cost 6 pts)

"Regrets? Yeah, like the song says, I got a few. If there was ever a day that I didn't wreck for somebody, if I ever spent a nickel I didn't steal, if I ever went a minute without hurting nobody—that I regret. But you know, I don't think there was a lot of days or a lot of nickels like that. Not even a lot of minutes."

Also known as Johnny the Robot ("because he's a robot, see") Johnny Machine and Johnny Bionic. He doesn't like that last name, and no one dares call him Johnny Bionic to his face. He's been one of Brooklyn's most ruthless street-level criminals for forty years, pursuing a life of crime with inhuman mechanical efficiency.

There used to be four Robot Brothers, but now there's only one. A sweet little old man named Dr. Giovanni Gaspari built them. He was one of the world's greatest pioneers in artificial intelligence, decades ahead of his peers.

They mocked his theories and hounded him out of his career at CalTech. He found himself back in the run-down neighborhood in Brooklyn where he had grown up, trying to eke out an existence on Social Security and an academic's pension.

Although Dr. Gaspari felt no malice toward the world that had scorned him, he was determined to find a way to continue his researches. He had appropriated a lot of materials from his lab and crammed them into his small, drafty apartment. A tireless worker, he wrote code by night and repaired people's electrical appliances by day to supplement his meager income. He had never married and had no family to support, which gave him all the time he needed.

After some years of labor he had four small prototype robots scuttling around his apartment like infants and felt he must be the happiest man alive. He named his metal sons Paul, Joseph, Gianni and Guiseppe. After a brief period of infancy he built them reasonably lifelike human bodies and introduced them to the world. The press reported it with only lackluster interest, and suggested that the four boys were in fact clever remote-control mechanical dolls, rather than thinking, self-aware organisms.

Enfeebled by age and by his disappointments, Dr. Gaspari wasn't able to look after his boys as well as he would have liked, and they were soon making foolish

mistakes and misbehaving like any small children. It wasn't long before all of them but Guiseppe (who seemed to enjoy nothing but reading and listening to old opera records) were running with the neighborhood's bad element, committing petty crimes and getting into trouble. He had built them to adapt to and learn from their environment, and they did this well. Unfortunately, their environment was Brooklyn.

Dr. Gaspari took his three wayward steel lambs aside and attempted to set down some firm rules with them, but he was old and inexperienced and they ran rings around him. Soon he took to his bed, while Paulie, Joey, Johnny (Gianni) and their hoodlum friends ran wild in his deserted workshop.

Guiseppe stood guard outside his father's door all night, for he had heard talk of having something done about the old man. One morning, Dr. Gaspari found that someone had smashed poor Guiseppe to bits. The old man was never really the same after that, his heart was broken and he died soon thereafter. His apartment became a den of vice for the Sicilian gang kids and his notes were trampled, strewn and lost.

Gianni, the smartest and most aggressive of the surviving brothers, realized that they would need some of Dr Gaspari's tools to repair and upgrade themselves, and soon found that they were also useful for breaking and entering.

The Robot Brothers rapidly became known as rising stars of the Sicilian gangs. Because they didn't sleep or eat, they could pursue crime around the clock and were more efficient predators than their flesh and blood competition. They had a wicked sense of humor, dressed up as boy scouts when they mugged old ladies, and killed rival gang members by jumping out of windows with them.

The Mob took an interest in the Robot Brothers early on, but decided after much grave deliberation that because they had no blood, they could by implication have no Sicilian blood and hence could never become Made Men. So instead they flourished as mid-level criminals, robbing trucks and jewelry stores and anything else they could get their greedy metal hands on.

Gianni is the only one left now. Paulie got broken fighting a superhero back in 1978 and two years ago Gianni had to have Joey dismantled for cheating him on a shipment of stolen designer bathroom fixtures.

Johnny the Robot hooked up with the Four Deuces shortly after Bones got put away, and soon became their leader. He owns the club where they meet, he resolves disputes among the members of the group, he hands out discipline where it's needed. He's a better strategist and personnel manager than any human being could be, and he takes care of their money better. Plus, everyone on the team knows to be deathly afraid of him—an important consideration when leading a gang of sociopaths.

Inhumanly ruthless, inhumanly determined, as implacable as any machine, this is the guy that even Double Deuce fears. He has had his body upgraded many times, and he no longer resembles a child. Instead he looks almost like a caricature of a robot

gangster. He likes the fact that this makes him look a little silly—it helps to have people underestimate him. Constantly changing and updating his weapon systems, he always seems to have some lethal new trick up his sleeve (hence all the points he has in “Gadgets”).

He wears really expensive silk suits (Brionis are his favorite) and has far better taste in clothes than Double Deuce. His Brooklyn accent is thicker than any of the other Deuces, although his voice sounds oddly mechanical and his lips don't move. In person he is funny, warm and very Italian. Everybody's best friend, he wants to know how you've been, he wants to make sure you're having a good time, he remembers everything about you, your family, your friends, their birthdays, their history and what's going on with them now. It's impossible to tell if he genuinely likes you or if he's about to have you killed. This is the secret of the terror he inspires.

But while he is an absolute stone cold killer, he's not a maniac like Double Deuce. He will do whatever it takes to achieve his goals, no matter how treacherous or diabolical, he'll kill people just to maintain his reputation or to make sure they won't someday turn on him, but he doesn't seek out needless violence. Nor does he kill people purely for the joy of it.

He is a criminal to the bone (or would be if he had bones) and would rather steal a dime than earn it. He's incredibly vengeful when shown disrespect. Yet even these traits are largely an act he maintains to help keep up his reputation.

Unburdened by mental exhaustion or the need for sleep, he works around the clock and never stops planning, calculating or running his various businesses. He owns dress shops, a construction firm, a collection agency and a number of clubs and he runs them all amazingly well. It is probably a good thing for the Mafia that they never let him enter their ranks, because he's a more effective gangster than any human being could be.

Adventures With The Steel Deuce:

1) Dealer Takes The Pot

The Steel Deuce leans on a stoolie he knows to go stick up an old lady right in front of the PCs. Let him give the PCs a good chase to warm things up. Once nabbed, the squealer blurts out that he knows something really big—something that could hurt the whole city real bad. If the PCs let him go, he'll tell them everything.

If they bite, he says that there's a shipment coming in on the docks, tonight, from this Romanian freighter. These Russian guys are making some kind of a heavy buy down there, for a supervillain they call the Hammer of Doom (or some other very heavy master villain—use whichever one would be the scariest). The stoolie isn't sure, but he thinks it's plutonium. Whatever it is, it comes in a big sealed metal case.

There's gonna be at least one cape watching the

loot, and all kinds of heavy security. Telling the cops is no good, he figured. After all, he heard about this from two cops who ran him in the other night—they thought he was unconscious so they were talking about it in the squad car.

He's got to get out of town, but he doesn't have the bread. That's why he robbed the old lady, even though he knew it was a low and despicable thing to do. He doesn't want anybody to get killed if this turns out to be a terrorist type thing, but whose going to believe a bum like himself?

Whether the PCs let him go or not, it hardly matters. Down at the docks, somewhere near four AM, a group of Russian mobsters in indeed offloading an illegal cargo from a Romanian freighter, and it is indeed meant for the Hammer of Doom, but it's not plutonium—it's cocaine. He is throwing a birthday party at a private island retreat off North Carolina and he needs a lot of coke. To keep things tidy, he has hired Russians to transport the blow, without knowing what it is or who they are delivering it to. They will hand it off to some Syrians in the middle of the night at a rest stop in Virginia, without ever seeing the pickup men.

The goons are wearing body armor and carrying military weapons, but if you don't think they're enough of a challenge for your PCs, then the Hammer of Doom has hired the Snow Queen to watch over the handoff at the docks.

The Steel Deuce has no desire to tangle with all those goons with all that hardware, let alone the Snow Queen, and he certainly doesn't want an arch-uber-villain like the Hammer of Doom to know who ripped him off. So he'll wait in the shadows and then take the case from the PCs once they have it in hand.

If the stoolie has gone with the PCs to the docks, he gets separated from them in the ensuing fight. In either case, once they get away with the case, they hear the stoolie screaming and crying out to them for help. When they go down the alley to see what's going on, they find the Steel Deuce and as many of his cohorts as he deems necessary, holding a trash bag that contains the sliced up remnants of the stoolie.

The Steel Deuce greets the PCs and says he stopped by to give them their rat back (here he gives them the bag, or throws it to them and the stoolie's head rolls out). He wondered if they'd like to switch bags. Fun and hijinks no doubt ensue.

If it seems too nasty to have NPCs flinging around bags full of body parts, or if it just doesn't work with your campaign style, then the Steel Deuce steps out of the darkness with the stoolie standing behind him, grinning.

"You done good, kid" the Deuce tells him. He hands the stoolie a couple of twenties and a small bag of (poisoned) junk. *"Now amscray—us grownups got business to talk."*

The stoolie runs off and the Steel Deuce asks for the case. *"There's no plutonium in there, just a bunch of cocaine—and what're ya gonna do with that? Better let me take it off yer hands."*

When they refuse to give him the case, he says

"Okay. But wait, I got a better plan. Why don't I just kill you and take it?" We will see how his plan works out.

2) The Deuce of Nothing

Good news! The feds are finally ready to arrest Johnny Machine, the so-called Steel Deuce, for murder. If the PCs have been trying to have him arrested for murder (of the stoolie in that last scenario, for example) then this is the crime he's going down for. Otherwise, it's a truck dispatcher named Ken Scarpia, whom the Deuce executed for the crime of knowing too much about a hijacking the two of them collaborated on.

The police would very much appreciate having the PCs assistance in apprehending Johnny Machine. And for once, the authorities know exactly where to find him. He's at his victim's funeral, consoling the man's wife and assuring her that he'll find the guys who got Ken.

The Steel Deuce admonishes the cops for disrupting a funeral and showing the deceased such disrespect—Ken was a fine, decent man who deserved better, the Deuce says.

When the cops read out the charges against the Steel Deuce, the dead man's mother screams *"I knew it!"* and stabs the Deuce in the chest. She would have hit his heart, if he had one. Instead she hits an emergency reset system that nobody knew about, and blanks out his personality and memory.

Which raises all sorts of interesting questions. The new Johnny is completely innocent, naïve, curious about the world around him and eager to please whoever he is speaking to. Can this poor unworldly creature be executed for Johnny's awful crimes? Is Johnny only faking his condition? Well, in fact he isn't—but how do the PCs know that for sure? To make matters worse, once news of his condition leaks out his friends will be coming to rescue him and any number of old enemies will try to do him harm.

Then, after the PCs have run themselves ragged keeping Johnny alive and out of the execution chamber, a backup system kicks in and his sinister old personality reasserts itself.

Bones

Real Name: Jack Doyle

PL: 15

Str: 16 (+3) **Dex:** 16 (+3) **Con:** 18 (+4)
Int: 14 **Wis:** 16 (+3) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: +3 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +13
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +13 **Defense:** +26/+23 **Speed:** 30
Damage Save: +6 **Fortitude Save:** +4
Reflexes Save: +3 **Willpower Save:** +5

Skills: Forgery +5, Gather Information +5, Intimidate +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +10, Sense Motive +7

Feats: Connected, Darkvision, Durability, Immunity (Suffocation), Infamy, Iron Will, Penetrating Vision (blocked by living tissue), True Vision, Startle

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +2 (Cost: 1pt), Incorporeal +10 (Affected By: Mystical Attacks; Extras: Ghost Touch, Phase Attack; Cost: 4pts), Mind Control +10 (Flaw: Only One Command [Be Afraid]; cost: 1pt), Paralysis +10 (Cost: 2pts)

“We’re all born sobbin’ and screamin’—we don’t got no choice about how we come into the world. But a guy can choose how he leaves it.”

Bones is a gangster from the 1930s—old time Irish muscle, and he’s quietly plagued the superhero community almost from the beginning. Masked avengers fought him in the ‘30s, back when he was just a mook in a pinstriped suit, the star-spangled heroes of the 1940s fought him on the homefront when they weren’t busy overseas. In the fifties he gained his superhuman powers and battled a whole new generation of costumed heroes. He spent the sixties and seventies in jail, and was really only out in the world for long enough to found the Four Deuces. He’s spent more than half his life in prison, all-told and may no longer fully understand the outside world.

Bones is the living avatar of death, in a minor kind of way. He spent a lot of the 1950s in Cuba, working for the mob. Cuban organized crime was intertwined with the occult and after seeing some of what the Cuban Brujos were capable of, Bones tried to learn all he could about their arts.

On a fetid dank midnight he drank the bloody rum, spoke the Forbidden Words and summoned up the Lords of Death within himself. The powers that they gave him should only have lasted a week, but the Lords of Death decided that they liked Bones. They have stayed with him ever since, and probably won’t leave until he himself dies.

Cursed with a big agile brain, Bones was always an

idea man as much as he was a thug. This makes him a leader, which has always made him a target for anti-crime crusaders.

Over the years the Irish gangs he ran with faded away, and he could never be a “Made Guy” in the Sicilian Mafia, so he formed his own crew and contented himself with smaller goals than ruling the underworld. As a mid-level criminal and supervillain, he was quite a success.

Although he’s been in jail for the past twenty years, he’s still the nominal leader of the Four Deuces and the guys still come to him for advice. They lend him money and help him out in little ways when they can, just to show their respect, but the truth is that they visit him less and less. Even Double Deuce, who used to be his boy-sidekick, hasn’t seen him face to face in more than a year.

In fact they forgot when last his parole hearing was, so they’re going to be surprised when they learn that he got out of prison two days ago.

What this will mean for the Four Deuces is difficult to say. Will they accept his leadership? Will Double Deuce see him as an ally against the Steel Deuce, or as another rival? They’ve been dealt a wild card.

What comes of this depends on how the GM wants to play it. It may even be that Bones has no desire to return to his life of crime, but they won’t take no for an answer. Or perhaps they’re willing to let him be, but then he feels compelled to take up his gun again when he finds out that his old crew has hired, betrayed and killed some old supervillain friend of his.

In person Bones is grim, unhappy, ferocious and old. An emotional but untalkative man, he is wracked by many regrets. Every year, on the anniversary of the day he killed his old friend Jimmy “The Red Corsair” Grogan, he visits Jimmy’s grave and stands there in silence. Bones is driven by a vague desire to make things right, but he doesn’t have a clear idea of what that would mean or where to begin. Events may propel him any of a number of different ways, as the GM sees fit.

While his powers have greatly slowed his aging process, he really is getting old now and he feels the lack of time acutely. He harbors a lot of affection for Double Deuce (and mistakenly thinks the kid returns it) but he knows what kind of a rotten little monster his protégé is. Sentimental, aggressive and easily moved to tears, he’s prone to violence when drunk, and so has vowed off the sauce.

He’s killed a lot of people for a lot of reasons and is painfully aware that he’s become too casual about it, so he has sworn to go as long as he can without killing anyone. This makes him almost comically reluctant to resort to violence, even when sorely provoked. Will Bones be able to hold true to his pledge? We shall see.

Adventures With Bones: 1) Rolling the Bones, First Version

Bones walks out of jail, a free man for the first time in decades. He’s full of regrets and while he doesn’t

age the way the regular guys do, he is finally old now. Determined not to kill anybody for as long as he can, he wants to breathe fresh air and put his life into some semblance of order. He has no idea how to begin.

New York's superhero community isn't making things any easier for him, either. Bones gets threatened almost as soon as he leaves prison by more than one masked vigilante. They know he's up to no good (although he isn't) and they've got their eye on him. In light of this fact, going to see the Four Deuces doesn't seem like the right thing to do, at least not at first.

But when he starts asking around, Bones is amazed to find out how many former members of his team are dead now. All the signs point to Double Deuce having killed them, but he doesn't want to believe that. Bones starts investigating on his own.

Word reaches the Player Characters that Bones is finally out of jail, seeing old underworld associates, and that his crew is suspected of having just pulled off a major job. If they confront Bones he won't bother trying to convince them that he means no harm. Long years of dealing with cops have taught him that no one ever listens to a crook's side of the story, and he will instead act hostile and sarcastic, although he will be careful not to pick a fight.

If they tail him they will find that he is visiting the widows and orphans of a number of his former associates, hanging around crummy bars asking people questions, and generally acting suspicious.

If they go to see the Four Deuces, they find that the Steel Deuce is more than happy to talk to them. He's friendly, and charming, and he expresses concern when he hears that Bones is out of prison. The Steel Deuce may have done some bad things himself, that's just in his nature, he explains, but he's always tried to be as decent a guy as he can be. That Bones, though—he's real different. The Steel Deuce actually feels kind of afraid of him, he confesses.

Once the Steel Deuce knows (either because the PCs have told him or through some other source) that Bones is out of the joint and that he hasn't come to see them yet, he calculates an unacceptably high probability that the old man intends them some kind of harm. When he learns that Bones is asking about old friends who Double Deuce has killed, this confirms it. Bones has got to die. In fact, maybe it's time to burn the whole outfit and start fresh.

The first time the PCs think of tailing Bones, he goes to a huge cemetery in Queens to make his yearly pilgrimage to Jimmy Grogan's grave. As he stands there to pay his respects, the Ace of Wounds tries to kill him. Bones notices the sniper waiting for him and says: *"You don't look like you're afraid I'll kill you. And that's just how it is with young guys, I know. But you oughta be. I put you in the ground right here, and you'll never get out of Brooklyn."*

The Ace of Wounds laughs and points out that they're already in Queens. Bones laughs too, and the fight begins.

In the course of the conversation, the PCs learn what's really going on. They also learn that the Ace

of Wounds feels no loyalty to the Four Deuces, that they'll probably have him killed soon himself (in fact Lady Deuce is going to cut his throat in bed tonight, as soon as he gets done killing Bones).

How the fight goes depends on the GM and on the actions of the Player Characters. Bones may take a mortal wound, but he doesn't have to die here. Whatever happens, the PCs now know that Double Deuce and perhaps the Steel Deuce are responsible for murdering perhaps as many as eight of their former associates over the years. It looks like a big super-battle may be in the works very shortly.

2) Rolling the Bones, Second Version

Bones walks out of jail, a free man for the first time in decades. He's full of regrets and while he doesn't age the way the regular guys do, he is finally old now. Determined not to kill anybody for as long as he can, he wants to breathe fresh air and put his life into some semblance of order. He has no idea how to begin.

And things aren't easy on the outside. More than one superhuman vigilante hassles him (including perhaps the Player Characters), his old crew hasn't come to see him in prison for months and nobody will hire a guy with a skull tattooed on his face. Maybe he belongs in the joint after all.

After being hassled one time too many, Bones loses his patience and starts to plan another heist. This one should either set him up through his retirement or put him back inside forever, either one of which would be okay with him. It's a tricky thing to plan, though, since he needs to make sure that nobody gets killed.

Bones doesn't go to the Four Deuces for help—he's still too offended at the way they stopped coming to see him. Instead he tries to talk to other old criminal associates, but most of them are dead. Bones doesn't notice that the evidence suggests Double Deuce is responsible for the deaths of so many old friends—he's much too preoccupied with making plans.

But the Steel Deuce is alarmed to hear that Bones is out of prison and that he's been talking to the relatives of guys the Four Deuces have killed. It's time for Bones to die. In fact, maybe it's time to kill Diamond Deuce, Lady Deuce and the Ace of Wounds, too.

The first time the PCs tail Bones, he goes to a huge cemetery in Queens to pay his yearly respects at Jimmy Grogan's grave. Lady Deuce attempts to bushwhack him there, and unless the PCs somehow intervene he is going to kill her in self-defense. Either way, this new development angers and depresses Bones. His own crew is trying to have him killed—for nothing!

If the PCs haven't thrown him back in jail, he continues trying to put together his final caper. It is in fact a jewel heist. Bones intends to hit a major money launderer coming back from the middle east with a load of diamonds to trade for American drug money. It's perfect. No civilians get hurt, no decent people lose a dime, and it's big enough to set Bones up for life. But the attacks continue.

The Ace of Wounds tries to kill Bones outside a

bar in Brooklyn Heights and in the crossfire a six-year-old boy gets wounded. This is intolerable. Bones may lose his temper and start to hunt the Four Deuces down one by one (complicated by the fact that the Steel Deuce may be about to kill them off himself).

Bones would be just as willing to frame the Steel Deuce for the crime he is about to commit and vanish with the loot forever, if the PCs are willing to help him do it.

3) Rolling the Bones, Third Version

Bones walks out of jail, a free man for the first time in decades. He's full of regrets and while he doesn't age the way the regular guys do, he is finally old now. Determined not to kill anybody for as long as he can, he wants to breathe fresh air and put his life into some semblance of order. He has no idea how to begin.

Despite his earnest desire to somehow put things right, the world seems determined to thwart him. His crew has deserted him, he can't get a job, and everybody looks at him like some kind of a monster. He's trying to keep it together, trying to keep himself from doing anything stupid, but then things take a sudden turn for the worse that sends him off the rails completely.

A superhuman vigilante roughs Bones up, telling him to stay out of trouble. Bones gets sarcastic and defiant with the guy (perhaps it's even a Player Character) and gets beaten savagely. The very next day, another superhero does the very same thing to him.

Meanwhile, the Steel Deuce hears that Bones is out of prison and that he's been talking to superheroes. He calculates an unacceptable probability that the old man has gone straight in his final days and that he's trying to make up for his past misdeeds by telling the authorities everything he knows. It's time for Bones to sleep in the ground—in fact maybe it's time to burn the whole crew and start fresh.

The Steel Deuce sends Double Deuce to assassinate his old mentor. Instead Bones reluctantly kills him. And it now seems to him that the entire city is rotten to the core. Neither the cops nor the crooks deserve to live—humanity is a cancer on the face of the world. He goes to visit some old criminal associates over the next few days, and although most of them are dead, he manages to get the information he needs.

It should be obvious to the PCs by now that Bones is up to something. If nothing else, the sudden discovery of his old sidekick's body should let them know that something is up. The first time the PCs trail him, he goes to a huge cemetery in Queens. There, in front of his old pal Jimmy Grogan's grave, he meets Khalid al Warhadi--the man they call the Hammer of Doom.

Khalid has problems of his own that have also driven him to desperation. See his character description for the details.

As the two men talk, hidden PCs can learn the whole back-story.

Khalid has brought a "dirty bomb" full of

plutonium, with him, and the two of them are going to set it off on top of the Empire State Building, purging this vicious, twisted abomination of a city from the world forever. They will both die (or almost—Khalid's nerve fails him and he flees at the last minute) but they'll take the Big Rotten Apple with them. Unless of course somebody stops them.

Executive Solutions

Membership: Executive Solution M (a.k.a. Major Maximum, disgraced all-American superhero and commie fighter), Executive Solution Z (a.k.a. the Gray Golem, giant hammer-wielding man of stone, the team's resident troublemaker), Executive Solution X (deathless and unspeakably cruel superhuman soldier who has fought on at least two sides of every major war in the past three hundred years), Executive Solution R (a.k.a. Dan Dauntless, Rocket Ranger, weary, shell-shocked Bosnian rocket-man, utterly fearless, beyond caring if he lives or dies), Executive Solution D (sadistic Serbian psychic, Dan Dauntless' former arch enemy) Executive Solution Q, (a.k.a. "The Obscenity," shambling sentient heap of quagmire, who could lose his mind at any second), Jack Flint (the former "Agent Twelve" who fought America's secret wars throughout the mid 20th century, now old and confined to a wheelchair, he leads and owns Executive Solutions), Mr. Smith (Jim Flint's mysterious right hand man, powers unknown) .

A small private security firm based in Charleston, South Carolina, Executive Solutions supplies parahuman talent for whatever purpose its clients require. Over the past twenty years Executive Solutions personnel have quietly fought to protect the interests of governments and multinational corporations in low-level conflicts around the world. Their mercenary super-humans have battled local insurgents, third world armies, and sometimes other corporate mercenary teams on every continent except Antarctica.

Executive Solutions keeps a very low profile outside of military and intelligence circles, but then again so do most other mercenary outfits. The general public is largely unaware of how many of these companies there are in this country, or how great their reach is. Private firms presently supply elite mercenaries to guard America's nuclear power plants, Air Force bases, the facility at Groom Lake (Area 51) and of course the homes of the very rich. If the CIA needs a sniper for some black book operation overseas, they don't send one of their own staff out into the field with a rifle—they pick up the phone and call a vendor. If they need a superhuman assassin, they call Executive Solutions.

Founded by legendary secret agent Jim Flint, Executive Solutions claims to be pro-American and to be dedicated to eradicating communism and terrorism from the world. Yet the truth is that they have no broader agenda than making money—you can hire them for any task, no matter how unsavory it might be. There is a saying at the CIA's Operations Directorate: *"If you want a dirty job done fast, call Executive Solutions."*

Base of Operations: Executive Solutions' main headquarters is located in the Charlottesville suburbs. They have a large, well-protected compound off in the woods, with living facilities for any superhuman Resources who want them, an airstrip, a helicopter landing pad, a firing range, workshops to repair super-equipment, an infirmary, exercise rooms and an obstacle course for the Resources to keep themselves in training.

The Charlottesville facility has its own security and medical staff, and has an understanding with the local authorities—they can take care of their own problems. No local police or paramedics will attempt to set foot in the facility without an invitation, and they have never yet received one.

There is another, much smaller facility on an island off the western coast of Ireland, outside the reach of American law enforcement. This second facility serves mostly as a place where a superhuman might lay low until the heat is off. It's just a drafty, crumbling stone cottage, and its resources are pretty minimal, although it does have a small infirmary and a lot of food stored in the basement.

Only one full-time staff member serves the Ireland facility—a grouchy caretaker named Fergus, who is himself on the run from the law and asks no awkward questions.

The company's business offices are located in the Virginia suburbs of Washington DC, midway up a shiny new skyscraper in a remote office park. The office has a staff of about six people, all of them purely administrative, watched over by a stern, weary, hugely overweight office manager named Morgan Colglazier. Few members of the ever-changing office staff have any clear idea as to what Executive Solutions actually does, and even Mr. Colglazier doesn't know any of the firm's real secrets.

The only one who knows where the bodies are buried apart from Mr. Flint is his lawyer, B. Coleman Black, of the unthinkable powerful and ancient Chicago law firm Corvus, Corvus, Corwin and Black Associates.

Mr. Flint almost never visits the Virginia site, despite having a palatial private office on the premises. He spends most of his time out of the country and almost always attends business meetings via teleconference.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for his ferocious personal assistant, Miss Zelma Zimmer, who often puts in unexpected appearances and throws the whole office into an uproar. She is said to be the one person Morgan Colglazier fears.

Few clients ever see the facility in South Carolina, unless Mr. Flint wants to impress them. Virtually all of the organization's business is transacted through the Virginia office. Whenever superhumans or scary looking clients have to come tramping through the place Colglazier sends the regular office workers home, so that they won't see or hear anything

untoward.

Threat Level: Executive Solutions is neither as big nor as responsible as they present themselves to be. They have about eight superhumans on staff presently. All are experienced combat veterans, all of them are superbly dangerous, just as he claims. Yet they are also an odd collection of personalities, with quirks and petty rivalries that can and do undermine their effectiveness as a team.

Their powers and capabilities are pretty widely varied, but that's a far cry from being able to "*provide the exact superhuman talent your job requires*" like their promotional literature claims.

Even though they aren't as potent a force as they say, they're still one of the most powerful, determined, ruthless, well-trained group of supervillains a Player Character group is ever likely to encounter.

If the PCs send a team member to jail, Mr. Flint might or might not be able to get them out, depending on the nature of the crime. Certainly Corvus, Corvus, Corwin and Black will do their best on the imprisoned villain's behalf, and that's quite a bit. If it looks hopeless, Flint will just abandon them and deny all knowledge of their actions.

Organization: The Resources follow a quasi-military set of rules, but they don't have ranks, don't salute and don't call anybody "sir" but the old man himself. If the company sends more than one of them on a job, Mr. Flint will appoint a team member to serve as the Field Commander.

Team members can be punished for insubordination, causing too much collateral damage, drawing the wrong kind of attention to Executive Solutions, blabbing secret information, endangering teammates, brawling on the job, getting drunk on the job, showing up late or for failing to achieve the mission objective. Punishment usually takes the form of docking the offender's pay. There have been one or two field executions when Resources have gone insane or tried to murder a teammate, but by and large parahumans are too rare and expensive to kill, no matter how badly they behave. Mr. Flint will certainly yell at misbehaving Resources, and threaten to fire them if they screw up again. Yet no one has ever actually been fired.

The Resources are all known by one-letter code names; "Executive Solution D", "Executive Solution R", "Executive Solution X" and so forth. Officially none of them are ever supposed to know anything about one another but their code names, but this has proved difficult to enforce. Executive Solution Y was famous before she joined the team, so everyone knows who she is. Executive Solution R and Executive Solution D knew each other in their previous careers, while Executive Solutions M and Z have actually become a couple. Because there's not much he can do about these breaches in protocol, Mr. Flint pretends not to notice.

All of the Resources are officially independent contractors, paid strictly on a per-mission basis. They have no benefits (and the office staff in Virginia barely have any—Mr. Colglazier likes to hire long-term temps rather than salaried employees)

Resources can live at the Charlottesville facility if they like, but they have to pay rent. They can buy medical services and insurance from the company, but it comes out of their pay, as do legal fees, weapons, ammunition and repairs. There is no retirement plan, no 401K. Since they get paid seven figures for each job, this isn't as onerous as it sounds.

Tactics: Depending on the nature of the job, they might send one Resource or they might send a bunch of them. All of them are skilled tacticians and cagey fighters, with the possible exception of Executive Solution D. If they are on an assault mission, they'll hit hard and fast, using the element of surprise as much as possible. They strike to kill unless they are under specific orders not to—and then sometimes they do it anyway. The team won't hesitate to leave a wounded man behind if it means reaching the mission objective. Frankly there's little camaraderie in the unit and most of them don't really like one another that much. They won't risk their lives to save one another (except for Major Maximum and the Gray Golem—more on them below) but they'll gladly do it to achieve the mission objective.

Using Executive Solutions in your campaign:

Executive Solutions makes a particularly good nemesis if the PCs are themselves mercenaries. In this case Jim Flint's merry lads are the Other Guys, the competition, the bad, amoral team that takes on dirty assignments, roughs up civilians and fights without honor. If you get sent to topple a brutal dictator, these are the guys the brutal dictator hires. Otherwise, this is the team that an evil corporation or sinister government agency will call in if you trifle with them one too many times.

It's rare to encounter the team inside the borders of the US, since they're not supposed to undertake operations (apart from bodyguard work) on American soil. But if they get riled enough or if they're tracking down someone they believe to be a traitor or a terrorist, they might well be willing to ignore that rule. Depending on how much collateral damage they inflict the authorities might or might not be willing to turn a blind eye.

Sometimes individual team members take on outside jobs—the Six Dollar Man is particularly prone to this. If one of them commits a crime and gets arrested, the others might bust him out just to keep him from talking, even though Mr. Flint is sure to yell at them for it.

Adventures With Executive Solutions:

1) Showdown at Lumbaga

Executive Solutions has been retained to defend the Lumbaga oil fields, deep in the interior of a west African country (use a fictional large, corrupt military dictatorship with huge oil reserves and a squalid capital city—or just use Nigeria). All signs indicate that the oil fields may soon come under attack from rebel forces that are now in the region.

The PCs have been sent to the region to see if they can provide humanitarian assistance for the famine that the war has brought to the interior, or perhaps to help fight the rebels. As they get into the vicinity of the oilfields, they either witness or hear about a shocking double murder that a member of the oilfield security staff has committed (perhaps it's Executive Solution D, or perhaps it's just some security goon—whoever he is, he hates women and has killed both his local girlfriend and her father, who tried to protect her).

The local constabulary accompany the PCs to the oilfields, where the killer has fled, but the security staff insult them, threaten them and won't let them enter. Executive Solutions simply won't give the man up. They need him for the coming battle, and in any case they don't trust the local courts.

The only way for the PCs to bring this man to justice is to retrieve him by force, and they'll have to fight their way through Executive Solutions to do it.

How many superhuman Resources have been committed to this assignment depends on the strength of the PCs. The whole team might be here, or it might just be one or two of them, with a bunch of hired mercenaries and local army goons, depending on how many Player Characters face them. The GM shouldn't make beating them an impossible task, but this one should be no cakewalk.

To complicate matters, the rebels actually show up during the course of the fight, and they have brought a superhuman resource of their own—the living incarnation of Ogun, the Iron God (use the “Powerhouse” archetype from the basic rulebook for Ogun. His powers are “Mystical” in their origins).

2) The Colonel's Very Private Matter

An old Venezuelan colonel has a beautiful, rebellious granddaughter. She is his favorite, and has been since she was a little girl. Alas, she has run off with her hippie boyfriend and joined a group of Marxist insurgents up in the mountains. The old man is filled with dismay, and gets in touch with his friend Jack Flint. He wants the whole hippie gang of them tracked down and killed—especially his granddaughter. There is a piece of jewelry he gave her for her twelfth birthday, a phenomenally valuable diamond brooch, which he wants returned as well.

Jim thinks he knows just the man for the job—it seems tailor made for Executive Solution X. After X is already on his way, the old man suddenly suffers an attack of regret and calls in the PCs to stop the

assassin. But then once the PCs are on their way, he suffers another attack of regret and tells Jim Flint what he has done.

Flint sends more resources down to the South American jungles to stop them. How many guys Flint sends depends on the size and strength of the PC's party. Executive Solution D is likely to be one of them, as is Y. M and Z could be as well. He's less likely to send Dan Dauntless or the horrible Executive Solution Q, but the Six Dollar Man might also show up if he isn't lying drunk on a bender somewhere.

For an added twist, the colonel's granddaughter didn't go off to join the rebels at all. In fact her psychic powers were just beginning to manifest and the thoughts of all the millions of people in Caracas were crashing in on her, driving her insane. Her boyfriend wanted to get her as far away from other people as possible while she learns how to control her new mental abilities. He brought her up to a little organic farm that some friends of his own off in the mountains, and together the two of them have been slowly exploring her newfound mental abilities. She's very powerful—use the stats for the standard psychic hero archetype in the basic rulebook. Executive Solutions is in for a surprise.

3) Operation Apocalypse

A tiny African republic has just managed to weather a coup attempt (either invent a country, or use a real one that seems appropriate—Gambia would be ideal). Democracy has been restored and the kindly old president who has run things for twenty years is back in power. The state is damaged, its one university has been destroyed and it's precious water treatment plant will take a lot of foreign investment to repair, yet with a little help and a little luck, they're going to survive.

This is good news for Africa. That tiny state was one of its best run democracies and a real stabilizing force in the region.

Unfortunately, the CIA doesn't want the region stable. Chaotic and corrupt countries are much easier to influence than stable and democratic ones. In any case, they backed the leaders of the coup, and will not be deprived of their prize. To show the world what happens when you oppose them, they have hired Executive Solutions to do a complete “Carpet Job” on the republic, ruining it so utterly that its people will live in misery for decades.

In a single predawn raid, they will smash its power plant, wreck its telecommunications infrastructure, tear up its roads, destroy its storehouses of food, fuel and medical supplies, destroy its only hospital, annihilate its army, murder all its leaders and kill as many random innocent people as possible. They will do their very best over the next day or so to leave this place with nothing.

The first thing they will try to is to wreck the country's communications infrastructure, cutting it off from the rest of the world.

The PCs are with a UN fact-finding mission in a neighboring country, perhaps tracking the

whereabouts of some major arch-villain or cleaning up after a natural disaster, when everything over the border goes silent. The lights have all gone out up there, too.

Perhaps someone manages to get a final desperate message to the outside world, perhaps someone stumbles over the border, wounded, bleeding and desperate or perhaps the PCs go up there to investigate on their own.

Executive Solutions has brought the whole team for this job, although if that makes them too powerful for the PCs to beat the GM may decide that they have split up into little groups of two or three, each squad focusing on a different atrocity.

Executive Solution D

Real Name: Dr. Vlade Andric, PhD

PL: 12

Str: 16 (+3) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 20 (+5) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: +1 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +6
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +9 **Defense:**
+18/+17 **Speed:** 30/50 (Flight)
Damage Save: + 2/+8 (Evasion) **Fortitude**
Save: +2 **Reflexes Save:** +7 **Willpower**
Save: +11

Skills: Bluff +8, Concentration +8, Intimidate +10, Listen +8, Profession (Child Psychologist) +5, Sense Motive +8, Spot +8

Feats: Evasion, Indomitable Will, See Invisible

Powers: Amazing Save (Reflexes) +6 (Extra: Willpower; Cost: 2pts), Telepathy +10 (Extra: Mind Control; Cost 4pts), Telekinesis +10 (Extras: Energy Blast, Flight, Force Field; Cost 5pts)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Sadist. Would sooner torture or kill a target than not. Must spend a villain point to resist staying too long at the scene of a battle to inflict more anguish on the target.

“Hey wait! We almost forgot the part where we stab you in the face--and that's the best part!”

Vlade Andric grew up with his aunt in Mostar, in what was then the dismal little socialist republic of Yugoslavia. Auntie beat him for looking like a Turk. She might have slowly killed him over time, but fortunately the Andrics had rich cousins in Chicago, who agreed to sponsor young Vlade through his high school and college years.

He went to Northwestern University and eventually pursued an advanced degree in child psychology. By the time he was thirty Dr. Andric had settled into practice in New York City and wrote the occasional children's book.

He drank too much, he wallowed in pointless self-pity, he used his psychic powers to abuse his young clients and put psychological time bombs in their brains. Why should they be allowed to have happy, well-adjusted childhoods when he felt so miserable all the time? It wasn't fair.

Then in 1992 his country went up in flames. Yugoslavia came apart at the seams and people started killing one another. Once the new nation of Bosnia imploded and Bosnian Serbs like himself were massacring every Turkish looking person they could lay their hands on, he felt the noble Serbian blood in his veins roused to action. In Manhattan you had to live by rules and law and society's tenets—to drive the right car and attend the right parties and wear the right

shirts. But in this grand new Bosnia a man could do anything, be anything he chose! He could even kill women and kids if he wanted, and who wouldn't want to do that? He was getting excited just thinking of it.

So he left his practice, sub-let his apartment and set out for wonderland. He was not disappointed.

For the next two years a lot of old people, women and children seemed to die wherever he went. Life was good. His psychic powers became stronger every time he used them to kill, and his reputation grew until he came to the personal attention of General Ratko Mladic, field commander of the Bosnian Serb forces.

In his headquarters at Pale, in the old compound left from the Winter Olympics, they were trying to create super-soldiers. The process wasn't safe by any means (it had been developed in Uganda by the Idi Amin regime), but General Mladic assured Vlade that if his heart was strong and the Serbian blood in his veins was pure, he would emerge from the treatment like a living god.

Vlade was petrified—this was certain death, but then again guys who defied General Mladic didn't tend to live so long, either. He moved into the dirty little improvised clinic in Pale and submitted to a painful course of injections and the agonizing hallucinations that followed.

But despite the months of suffering and terror, his powers did in fact grow tremendously. He could fly with his telekinesis, he could use the power of his mind to enhance his physical strength, burn off his beer belly, grow a set of huge rippling muscles. And he did. General Mladic was greatly pleased, and assigned him to the siege of Sarajevo.

They gave him a costume, which made him feel even more powerful, although he didn't like the way it failed to conceal his face. For the next three years he fought the embattled Sarajevo militias, coming to blows with the city's flying superhero “Dan Dauntless” on many occasions. He never bothered to take a superhero code name himself—it was too hard to think of one that sounded scary enough.

Unfortunately for Vlade, he was still fighting at Sarajevo when the giant massacre at Srebrenica took place. One of the war's worst atrocities, nearly 8,000 civilians lost their lives up there, inside a UN safe zone. Vlade was beside himself with envy and frustration. To this day, having missed the fun at Srebrenica remains one of his great regrets. That and never getting to kill Dan Dauntless.

After the mid 1990s things started to fall apart. NATO moved in to keep the peace, the siege of Sarajevo ended, General Mladic had to go into hiding and things looked bleak. Vlade heard that some of the guys were trying their luck in the Congo War, fighting for Laurent Kabila's rebels, and even though black people made him uneasy it seemed like the best available option.

He both loved and hated the time he spent in Central Africa. The food, the people, the living conditions, all of these things he loathed. But the war itself was paradise. In the Congo he was free to give up all pretense. He wasn't fighting this war for the

Serbian people or to prove he didn't have Turk blood. Here you could fight for the love of fighting, kill for the love of death. And kill he did, so well that the CIA got in touch and asked him to do a few things over the border in Rwanda.

He soon gained a reputation with the CIA as a reliable man, in the sense that he would do absolutely anything the Agency paid him to do.

When Kabila's army finally won the conflict, Vlade grew desperate and scared. He was running out of war—the rebels in Columbia and Sierra Leone wouldn't let outsiders join up, and the rest of the civil wars then in progress were all in Islamic countries where a Serb Nationalist would no doubt be shot on sight. So he begged the CIA to take him on full time. They declined, but were happy to give him the number for Executive Solutions.

He has never gotten along with the rest of the team, largely because of his personality. Boastful and aggressive, desperate to make an impression, he is hypersensitive to criticism and takes himself far too seriously. He throws murderous temper tantrums and only the fact that he's afraid of other parahumans has kept him from killing a teammate. A bigot, he makes disparaging remarks about other peoples' ancestry (note to the GM: keep this mild if you think your players would be too upset and offended by it), but anyone who says anything about Serbs in his presence is in deep trouble (unless he's afraid of them).

Vlade complains a lot on missions, but it's not like the way the Gray Golem gripes. Rather than carping about little things, he whines that they're not being paid enough for this type of assignment, that the operational plan is going to get them killed, and so forth. He's also weirdly desperate for affection and respect. A published author, he writes bad, pseudo-experimental short stories and poems and frequently tires to get his teammates to read them.

Vlade is shocked to find himself fighting alongside his old nemesis, Dan Dauntless, and has been making an unsuccessful effort to befriend him.

Adventures With Executive Solution D: The Great Guatemala Bauxite Caper

A financial planner from a giant accounting firm nervously approaches the PCs. His name is Seymour Durwood, and he has found some things that make him very anxious.

He's been doing an internal audit for a firm called C2M Hill, and he thinks it's a dummy—a shell corporation slapped together by some big New York investors. Officially, C2M Hill is a mineral consortium, and they own a central American mining company called Stroessner-Reinhold Ltd. Everyone knows there's no bauxite in Guatemala, and yet Stroessner-Reinhold has purchased a failed bauxite mine in the Guatemalan highlands, an unstable region that still has pockets of guerilla activity. They hired some vendor to take some samples at the mine, and they're shipping the cores back to be tested at the University of Colorado's geology lab in Denver.

To everyone's surprise, the Guatemalan

government has insisted on transporting the samples themselves, under police escort, to ensure that no one tampers with them. And now C2M Hill has retained the services of a shadowy organization called Executive Solutions. They bought one airline ticket for Executive Solutions, headed for Guatemala City. Why would they only need one ticket, Durwood wonders?

In light of the fact that everyone at Durwood's firm whispers that Executive Solutions is a supervillain-for-hire outfit, this looks really ominous. The fix is surely in, or at least it looks that way to Durwood. A supervillain is going to intercept the police convoy, substitute some samples that have been seeded with bauxite, and blame the attack on the guerillas.

The moment everyone thinks that there's bauxite in Guatemala, investors are going to be beating a path to C2M Hill's door. The stock will shoot up in value, and the investors will sell the moment before the mine goes bust. Durwood's firm can't take another Enron fiasco, and he knows that as the assistant chief auditor for the C2M Hill account he's going to get thrown to the wolves once everything comes out.

He's right, but things are actually even worse than they appear. The entire scheme is the brainchild of C. Graydon Kingsland, the coke-sniffing ne'er do well son of one of America's most powerful families. Mr. Kingsland has raised the ire of a certain Colonel Santos, late of Guatemala's death squads, who senses that a scam is in the works and resents not having been offered a cut. Colonel Santos' influence has resulted in the heightened security in Guatemala, and forced Mr. Kingsland to retain the services of Executive Solutions.

Sensing that this is a delicate matter, Jim Flint has sent Executive Solution D, in hopes that he can use his telepathic powers to nab the samples without anyone being the wiser. But that's just not D's style. He will hit the convoy on a narrow mountain road with a cliff on one side, and he'll try to kill as many people as he can get away with.

When the PCs go to Guatemala to stop him, they will find it to be a frightening place. Death squads were still operating here ten years ago, and there are ugly secrets everywhere. In fact the army may still be quietly trying to exterminate the country's Indian population up in the mountains, and the PCs may or may not stumble onto evidence of this.

Colonel Santos will not be pleased to have them operating on his turf, but he won't interfere with them.

If they manage to capture D and bring him back to the US, everything comes out over the next few weeks, there is another round of financial scandals, C. Graydon Kingsland's associates get dragged out of their offices in handcuffs (although he himself remains untouchable) and Guatemalan hit teams will attempt to assassinate everyone with any connection to the matter, including Seymour Durwood, C. Graydon Kingsland and the PCs.

Executive Solution D gets extradited back to Yugoslavia, to stand trial for war crimes, and the sympathetic Serb authorities allow him to escape

within a day. As an added twist, Colonel Santos knows Jim Flint, has worked with him before and complains to him about his involvement in the affair. Mr. Flint apologizes, and then assigns Executive Solution D to work with the hit-squad that's after the PCs.

2) Blood Orgy on Zombie Island

There are ominous rumblings from the tumbledown megalopolis of Djakarta, capital of Indonesia. Someone has been collapsing abandoned buildings in the city's dying industrial zone, somehow imploding them without the use of explosives. What can this mean?

There is a big and potentially violent election coming up and the Indonesian authorities are getting spooked. They're not sure they can handle this themselves, and they're willing to accept outside aid—by which they mean they might turn a blind eye if foreign superheroes were to turn up and quietly resolve the matter. They would prefer a team with no official ties to any national government. The PCs would be ideal.

To spur the players along, someone at Executive Solutions thinks the PCs are getting involved and that they know way more about this situation than they actually do, so they foolishly try to scare them off. A PC encounters a ringing payphone outdoors in some public place. When they pick up the phone, an electronically distorted voice snarls "*Stay the @\$%*& away from Chang-Gura!*"

It just so happens that Chang-Gura is the name of a small jungle island in the isolated Banda province of the Northeast archipelago, a wild and primitive region still occupied by Neolithic tribes. Chang-Gura is officially uninhabited, except for a small hospital and recuperation center run by a philanthropic organization called Helping Hands International.

A Dutch non-profit, the charity seems to have no existence on paper apart from the Chang-Gura clinic. It's only major donor is a giant multinational drug firm called ProVox Unlimited.

Which brings us to what is really going on here. ProVox has a secret research facility on Chang-Gura island, masquerading as a hospital on paper. They've been performing all kinds of ethically dubious tests out there, and one of them has been a real breakthrough. Professor Dreyfus Graven (now deceased) has perfected a psionic enhancement drug that may be able to give ordinary people temporary superhuman powers. Unfortunately, it also has a way of turning them into mindless ravaging zombies with a taste for human flesh.

One of ProVox Unlimited's rivals, a smaller, less ethical company called Human Dynamics, sent a mercenary squad out to Chang-Gura to seize the drug, but things did not go as expected and the facility was shortly overrun by slobbering cannibalistic psi-zombies.

Unbeknownst to either party a third drug firm, Lippinor-Zarin, has also hired a team to retrieve the drug. While they are a big multinational firm, they

don't have anything like the resources available to Human Dynamics, let alone a giant like ProVox Unlimited. Lippinor-Zarin wouldn't survive a protracted battle in the courts with either one of them. Therefore, they have elected to conceal their involvement by killing everyone in the complex, and collapsing it on top of their bodies. A supervillain attack would be the ideal way to do this, so they contacted Executive Solutions, which had the very man for the job.

Executive Solution D isn't sure how to use his powers to collapse a really large building, so before he goes out to the island he's been practicing in Djakarta.

He needn't have bothered. Most of the complex is underground.

Neither Executive Solutions nor Lippinor-Zarin knows that the tunnels are crawling with psychic man-eating zombies, or that the Human Dynamics team is still alive down there, besieged but willing to kill anyone who tries to take the drug away from them. Hasn't it been too long since your players enjoyed a really good dungeon crawl?

3) Masks of Desperation

The tiny central African nation of Zangara is in grave trouble. They broke away from Equatorial Guinea last year, after decades of suffering from the central government's mismanagement and ethnic discrimination. The UN is on the verge of recognizing them, if they can just make it through this year. Otherwise Equatorial Guinea is sure to invade, possibly with the help of the notorious army from the People's Republic of the Congo and they are going to be merciless.

Zangara is landlocked, desperately poor and largely covered by rain forest. They want to preserve their forest from logging and start up a tourism industry, but to do this they first have to get some capital and right now they're struggling just to prevent a famine. This year's crop has failed, their armed forces are getting restless, and if they can't buy enough food to get through the next planting season things are going to get really bad really quick.

But where to find the money? They actually have some diamond mines, but they're fearful about developing them. The big South African diamond consortiums are unbelievably powerful and incredibly ruthless toward competitors. They crush little nations who get in their way.

Fortunately, Zangara's hand-carved wooden masks are internationally famous and although they aren't as lucrative as diamonds, a big load of them should still fetch a high enough price at auction to let the country squeak through the next harvest. The masks take decades to create, and they are sacred to the people of Zangara, but what choice do they have?

Unfortunately, the big South African diamond firms believe in taking no chances. Even though Zangara hasn't yet opened its diamond mines and started competing with them, they're going to crush the little country anyway, just to be sure. They hire Executive Solutions, which sends Executive Solution

D.

He burns the warehouse where most of the masks are stored, but the Zangarans are able to scrape together one last load of them from other places. The warehouse fire looks very suspicious, and has all the hallmarks of a supervillain attack, so Zangara complains to the UN, which asks the PCs for assistance. Their task is to safely get the load of ceremonial wooden masks to auction in New York City, with Executive Solution D dogging their heels at every stage.

In case the PCs misdirect D and take an alternate route out of the country, through the dangerous upper reaches of the Congo river basin, D has tipped off an infamous rebel warlord (“Colonel” Gonagara) just over the border, who will hunt the PCs once they enter his domain. He thinks they’re carrying a load of diamonds, and will be displeased to find nothing but useless wooden masks.

Colonel Gongara is something of a bloodthirsty fiend, although he is also a jovial fellow who laughs a great deal. He’s a giant of a man, physically the equal of many superheroes who derive their powers from “training” and he relishes fighting opponents man to man. Use the stats for the “Martial Artist” archetype from the M&M Core book if the PCs come to grips with Colonel Gongara. He’s PL 10.

Executive Solution M, aka "Major Maximum"

Real Name: Major Buck Stone

PL: 13

Str: 18 (+4) **Dex:** 16 (+3) **Con:** 18 (+4)
Int: 10 (+0) **Wis:** 12 (+1) **Cha:** 12 (+1)
Initiative: +2 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +9
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +7 **Defense:**
+19/+16 **Speed:** 30
Damage Save: +4 **Fortitude Save:** +4
Reflexes Save: +2 **Willpower Save:** +6

Skills: Intimidate +8, Jump +5, Knowledge
(Military Procedure) +7, Spot +5, Survival +5, Taunt
+5

Feats: All-Out Attack, Choke-Hold, Dodge,
Durability, Improved Grapple, Iron Will, Power
Attack, Rapid Strike, Surprise Strike, Takedown
Attack

Powers: Energy Blast +13 (Flaw: Reduced Range,
Cost: 1pt), Super-Strength +10 (Extras: Protection,
Thunderclap; Total Cost: 6 pts)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Insanely Gung-Ho (Can't
willingly work with anyone who seems to be less than
100% patriotic or who looks "weird" or somehow
subversive. He will attack "unpatriotic" or foreign
targets first, even if doing so puts him at a tactical
disadvantage)

*"Stand down or die squealing. You
pick."*

Buck Stone was an American hero. Beloved by
millions, the crowning glory of the US Parasoldier
program, he battled Marxist insurgents in El Salvador
and Granada, the Bhopal disaster in India and villains
like Dr. Frightful on the streets of New York City. The
Army's superhuman program had a lot of expensive
failures over the years, but Major Stone (aka Major

Maximum) was a shining success.

Then he killed a prostitute. To this day he's unable
to account for why. It wasn't like she had called him
gay. He had beaten up hookers before if they
questioned his manhood (he had some intermittent
difficulty performing with professionals, which he
attributed to stage fright) but he had never actually
killed one. Not even if they called him gay. So what
was it about this particular girl that made him go
berserk? When it turned out that he was too tired to
party, she was actually pretty nice about it and she
certainly didn't insult him. Yet it felt incredibly
satisfying to rip her in half.

He truly hated being called gay. Not because he
feared that name but because it wasn't fair. He

enjoyed his infrequent explorations with men better
than anything he had ever done with a woman, but that
was because it was secret and forbidden, not because
he was gay. Of this, he was sure.

When the investigation began to point toward
Major Maximum, the Pentagon knew it had a serious
problem. His image was clean, but it wasn't exactly
wholesome. Major Maximum never claimed to be a
nice guy, just a hard man who wouldn't let America
take crap from anybody. He was gung ho, not gee
whiz. Hardly the boy next door, the public wasn't
going to just assume he was innocent. There were
barely even any pictures of him smiling.

Under the circumstances, even though he seemed
likely to beat the rap (and he did) it would be better for
him to retire. They farmed him out to private
enterprise, where he shortly found that the work was
easier and the pay was better.

After freelancing for a few years he found a place
at Executive Solutions that suited him perfectly and he
met the love of his life--the eight-hundred pound stone
giant called the Gray Golem. Life has been good for
the past decade or so. Buck doesn't even have to
worry about the gay thing anymore. His partner isn't
technically human which means the fact that the guy is
officially male doesn't count. So long as he sticks with
the Golem, Buck isn't gay. The Gray Golem himself
is pretty skeptical of this line of reasoning, but Buck
doesn't care.

Despite how well things worked out, the former
Major Maximum still misses the glory of his public
career. The Army has done a good job of erasing his
memory from the public consciousness. No one ever
makes reference to him in any official materials about
superheroes, his name is never spoken on the news
and after 15 years he's as forgotten as Spandau Ballet
or the Thompson Twins. That really hurts Buck and he
still bears a grudge. He often jokes that he wishes the
girl he killed was still alive so that he could kill her all
over again for what she did to him.

Neither Buck's powers nor his personality are
subtle, but he's very tough and an extremely
competent soldier, so Executive Solutions sends him
on missions where overwhelming force is needed.
They generally send the Gray Golem with him, since
otherwise the two of them worry about each other.
They do bodyguard work as well, since they're both
great at looming and looking scary. It doesn't appeal to
them nearly as much as throwing some third world
army's tanks around.

Adventures With Executive Solution M:

A Kingdom by the Sea

A tiny kingdom in the Caucasus is about to slide
into chaos and war. Once a Soviet Republic, when the
Eastern Bloc collapsed in the 1990s they brought back
the descendant of their traditional royal family, King
Ottar IX. He had been living quietly in Paris, getting
his PhD in Political Science, and had no idea that he
might one day actually have to ascend to the
Tourmaline Throne.

Things haven't been easy since his return. He's a thoughtful, humane, and capable leader who has no intention of running his country like a dictatorship. However, he is scared to death of his huge, bullying right-wing uncle Zogor, who has an important position in the country's army and treats the peasants like cattle. Every time he tries to give the press more freedom or to rectify some inequity in his country's social system, Uncle Zogor is there to bully him out of it.

Now a giant multinational oil company wants to build a pipeline across his country, and even though the king knows that it could wreak environmental havoc on his country if it isn't built carefully enough, they are so desperately poor that he has reluctantly agreed.

Then he discovers that the oil company is going to bring in outside labor and intends to give his government only a pittance for the use of its land. If there are jobs for the locals, they will be in supplying alcohol and vice to the pipeline workers. King Ottar finds this intolerable, but doesn't quite know what to do about it.

The executives who are building the pipeline sense that he feels tentative and conflicted about the project. So they go to his uncle and offer to back him in a coup. Zogor is glad to be rid of his weakling nephew and happily agrees to take the crown.

They have king Ottar shot, and by the time his eleven year old daughter leaves her school in England to come assume the throne, half the army is in open rebellion and tanks are rumbling toward the capitol. Her honor guard will no doubt fight bravely on her behalf, but she's only a child, her generals have no confidence in her and the rest of her army is melting away.

A sad, wistful, unsmiling little girl, when she sits on her throne her feet don't reach the floor. Little does the enemy suspect that while she is only eleven, Queen Yzalda has a measured IQ of 185 and is more than capable of running the nation herself. In fact she was in the middle of her sophomore year at Oxford when she was pulled away from her studies.

Even though she feels overwhelmed with grief at her father's demise, she begins pulling the remaining defenders together with remarkable efficiency. But just to make sure that things go to plan, the oil company has engaged the services of Executive Solutions, and Executive Solutions M and Z march at the head of the advancing tanks. Her forces will fight fiercely, but they can't stand against Major Maximum and the Gray Golem.

There is a media blackout in effect and the oil company has been circulating the rumor that the child-queen is being held prisoner in her own castle by crazy Marxist elements of the former government and that they support the rebels' efforts to rescue her. She surely won't survive the rescue attempt—at least with her brain intact. Who can save this little kingdom by the sea?

Executive Solution Z

aka "The Gray Golem"

Real Name: Unknown (may not even have one)

PL: 13

Str: 20 (+5) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 20 (+5)

Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 16 (+3) **Cha:** 9 (-1)

Initiative: +2 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +11

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +8 **Defense:**

+16/+14 **Speed:** 30

Damage Save: +4 (+17 with Super-Constitution)

Fortitude Save: +4 (+17 with Super-

Constitution) **Reflexes Save:** +1 **Willpower**

Save: +4

Skills: Intimidate+12, Knowledge (Mercenary Underworld) +5, Search +6, Sense Motive +10, Taunt +11

Feats: Durability, Expertise, Immunity (Aging, Critical Hits, Disease, Poison, Starvation, Suffocation), Indomitable Will, Power Attack, Rapid Healing

Powers: Super-Strength +13 (Extras: Protection, Super-Constitution; Power Stunt: Lethal Damage; Cost 5 pts), Weapon (Big Hammer) +10 (Cost: 1pt)

Equipment:

Weaknesses: **Disturbing** (looks like a huge stone statue with a nasty sneer on its face. Can't pass in normal society, suffers a -5 to all Bluff and Diplomacy checks.)

"I know it's none of my business, but are you trying to lose this fight? You one of those guys who likes to get beat on?"

At the end of World War 2, the hunt was on for Germany's secret weapons, scientists and supermen. The Americans and the Soviets grabbed everything they could, sometimes with little regard for the ethical implications.

An advance team of US army rangers found the strange creature they called the Grey Golem inside a warehouse in Prague. A giant made of stone with an enormous stone hammer by his side, he appeared to have been recently killed (or rendered inert at any rate—he bore no visible wounds). Six dead SS officers lay around the giant in bloodied occult robes, smashed and broken like roaches on the floor. Clearly some terrible battle had taken place here, and both sides had lost.

The rangers retrieved the fallen stone titan and sent him back to the US for study. No one could figure out how he had been killed or for that matter how he ever could have been alive in the first place. After many

rounds of failed tests, the creature was left in storage at an Air Force base in the Nevada desert.

In the mid 1970s the Mossad requested permission from the Americans to study the stone giant. The Air Force agreed, and Mossad sent their kabalistic sorcerer "Doctor Solomon" to the hanger in Nevada.

Dr. Solomon immediately identified the creature as a thing out of Yiddish legend, the Golem. Presumably some forgotten cabalist had built this artificial man to protect Prague's Jewish community from the nazis. Considering what had become of the Jews of Prague, the Golem hadn't been finished in time to do much good. Someone had inactivated the creature by blotting out one of the magic letters written on the top of its head, but this was easy enough to fix.

Curious about the golem's origins, Dr. Solomon drew the missing letter back into place and brought the creature to life. It acted surprisingly human, in that it was a sneering, sarcastic and thoroughly disagreeable being, who refused to answer any of Doctor Solomon's questions out of sheer obstinacy. It did however accept his offer to come work for the Mossad.

The Israelis wanted to put the Golem through Basic Training and a set of courses in military intelligence, but it refused to cooperate, so they just dumped it directly into a secret parahuman unit called "the Forgotten Men" and started giving him covert assignments.

Over the next fifteen years the Grey Golem fought the Egyptian Secret Service, the PLO and various armed factions in Lebanon, clashing with other superhumans many times. He never got along with the rest of his unit, partly because his super-abilities were badly matched with theirs (most of the Forgotten Men had stealthy, subtle powers) but also because of his personality.

He remained as cynical, sarcastic and truculent as when Dr. Solomon first revived him. Impossible to get along with, he would constantly snipe and jeer at the other members of the team, undercutting their confidence and provoking mischief for no reason. He used excessive force, he defied orders for the heck of it.

In the late 1980s the Forgotten Men got wiped out on a mission to Iraq. Only the Grey Golem survived, and that was because he had missed his flight. It made him think. Why was he busting his hump for a little money and the joy of fighting? He could fight guys and get rich.

After a few bungled attempts at supercrimes in Europe, he got wise and hired himself out to Executive Solutions. There he met the love of his life, the disgraced American superhero who used to be known as Major Maximum. Their relationship is pretty tempestuous, but despite his rotten disposition the Golem really tries to keep it together. He tells himself that he's only doing this because its so difficult to find anyone he can get physically intimate with (at least without killing them) but he's lying to himself. The truth is that he's finally found the one thing in his life that he doesn't want to crush.

Love has mellowed the Grey Golem quite a bit, but he's still impossible. Contrary, sarcastic, stubborn and petty, he constantly sneers and makes cutting remarks. He's selfish and defiant, and will oppose other people even when it's to his advantage to go along with them.

Even though he doesn't need to eat and can barely feel anything through his stone skin, he loves his little creature comforts and will cause all kinds of havoc if someone else gets in the way of them. He wants the best seat on the airplane, he wants the biggest sandwich on the plate, he wants the best chair in the briefing room and he'll cause trouble if he doesn't get it. He's the kind of guy who will smash the pie and throw it out the window if he sees that you have a bigger slice.

Smarter than most people think, he's good at manipulating others and loves to provoke fights. He claims to have never believed in anything, but if you see the way he looks at Major Maximum you'll know that's a lie.

Not a subtle opponent, the Grey Golem's powers aren't suited for stealth. But years of fighting other superbeings have made a tactician out of him. He wants to win, and he'll calmly do what it takes. If he has a chance, he'll spend a moment sizing his opponent up, figuring out how their powers work and whether he can find a weak spot while his teammates soak up some damage. He'll usually attack the target who looks most vulnerable to physical attack, and will only come to grips with other super-strong bruisers if he has to (or if that's clearly what would make the most sense).

He constantly talks trash and jeers at his opponents. Not only does this make them mad (a goal in and of itself, as far as he's concerned) it also makes them think he's a prancing buffoon and underestimate him.

He will kill if it's a part of the mission or if it seems like the most expedient way to solve a problem, but he won't do it casually or in an impulsive rage. His anger burns cold, instead of hot.

While he loves combat, he never gets completely swept away by the joy of battle. He knows when to withdraw and he has no intention of dying for anyone or anything. He tells himself that this includes Major Maximum, but deep down he knows that isn't true.

Adventures With Executive Solution Z:

Prince of Skulls

Cabot Collier-Dunbarton III, alias Skullbone, is the wayward, homicidal son of one of America's wealthiest families. He wants to be a gansta and has been trying to ingratiate himself with an inner city gang. They treat him with amused contempt, but they are intrigued by the amount of money he has to throw around.

In order to impress them, he has murdered the girlfriend of a rival gang member. The cops have taken an interest, his new friends have sold him out and the press has gotten wind of the whole sordid affair.

Skullbone isn't from a segment of American society that normally has to worry about things like prosecution, but a young and idealistic assistant DA has actually gotten a warrant for his arrest. The press has descended on the Collier-Dunbarton compound upstate and the police have arrived to serve the warrant. They have a search warrant as well, but the Collier-Dunbartons are refusing to acknowledge its authenticity, and their security people won't let the police inside.

Only a few hours remain before the Collier-Dunbarton attorneys get a superior court to nullify the warrants and put young Cabot on a private plane to Switzerland, where he can spend the rest of his life skiing and boasting about how easy it is to get away with murder. In desperation the Assistant DA turns to the PCs. Can they help her serve the warrant?

There is, alas, one small complication. The Collier-Dunbartons have also retained the services of Executive Solutions, who have sent over Executive Solutions M and Z—Major Maximum and the Gray Golem. They won't give Skullbone up without a fight, even though they find his strutting faux hip-hop mannerisms thoroughly annoying.

Executive Solution X

Real Name: He always signed his recruitment papers with an "X." If he had a name before that, he neither knows nor cares.

PL: 18

Str: 18 (+4) **Dex:** 20 (+5) **Con:** 18 (+4)
Int: 16 (+3) **Wis:** 20 (+5) **Cha:** 16 (+3)
Initiative: +4 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +21
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +21 **Defense:** +35/+24
Speed: 35
Damage Save: +6 **Fortitude Save:** +4
Reflexes Save: +5 (+12 with super-Dexterity)
Willpower Save: +5

Skills: Climb +5, Hide +10, Intimidate +8, Move Silently +10, Profession (Soldier) +5, Spot +10, Survival +10, Swim +5

Feats: Darkvision, Far Shot, Headquarters (Equipped with a Dock [adjacent to the lagoon, hidden from the air], Concealed [the villa is hidden beneath the trees on a seemingly deserted island that is not marked on any of the standard nautical charts], an infestation of biting flies that carry the debilitating disease known as the Bleeding Fever [4 levels of Drain; Extras: Delayed Effect and 2 levels of Slow Recovery; Flaw: Only Drains Constitution] which X happens to be immune to, an ancient howitzer hidden behind the house just in case X suddenly has a need to shoot down any incoming aircraft [+8 Lethal Damage Energy Blast], a Gym, a seldom-used aircraft Hanger and concealed airstrip some distance away from the villa, a small but well-stocked Infirmary in one room of the villa, a set of reinforced Holding Cells [concrete lined pits full of sludge] for unruly guests, an Isolated Location [on a jungle island somewhere in Indonesia], a jumbled and disorganized Library full of wierd tomes and trashy adventure novels that X has accumulated over the years, Living Quarters for roughly 17 people, a Pool [or at least ready access to a sheltered lagoon, suitable for an improvised submarine pen], a separte Power System, a Security System [consisting of a number of tame monkeys and parrots who wander the grounds and shriek at the first sign of a stranger's presence on the island], its own Staff [if you can really call them that--about thirty tame PL1 pit-vipers, 3 PL2 cobras, a PL 3 Leopard and a big mean PL 4 shark rove at will around the island. All of them somehow know not to attack X], two levels of Time Control [time flows weirdly on the island--either two days or half a day passes for each day in the outside world, slowing down or speeding up seemingly at random], and a Workshop where X tinkers with, cleans and repairs his weapons), Immunity (Aging), Improved Critical, Improved Disarm, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid

Takedown, Scent, Startle, Takedown Attack, Tracking

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +2, Running +1 (Cost: 2pts), Super-Strength +8 (Extras: Leaping, Super-Dexterity, Super-Senses; Cost 7 pts)

Equipment: Sword (+4 Lethal Damage; Power Stunt: Penetrating Attack +6; Cost 1pt), Rifle, (+4 Lethal Damage), Weird Green Gem (Telepathy +4; Extras: ESP, Mental Protection; Flaws: Device, Only Allows Communication; Cost: 2pts)

Weaknesses: Berzerker

Vulnerable: Dazzle attacks.

"The look on a dead child's face is its own reward and its own justification. It makes you feel like you're in love. 'This child is dead' you say 'but me, I live' and your twisted heart rejoices. You can admit these things to me. I know how it is."

He doesn't know how old he is. The past two centuries are fairly clear in his mind, the century before that he can only recall dimly, and before about 1650 it's all a blur, lit by occasional flashes of violence. He's always appeared to be about thirty five, or maybe just a little older. He has always been a soldier--of that he is somehow sure. They call him "X" because that was always the way he signed his enlistment papers.

War is his heart, his soul, the center of his being. He has sampled every bloody conflict Europe has had to offer, and it all was sweet to him. Whatever mercy or sympathy he might have once possessed are long, long gone. He revels in carnage and grue and he loves to talk about it. Treacherous and savage, cruel and cunning, his eyes glint with sadistic mirth. He looks confident and relaxed in situations that most of us would run screaming from and he never loses his brutal sense of humor.

It's not strictly true that he'd kill noncombatants without a second thought--in fact he relishes it, will go out of his way to harm innocents (if it doesn't jeopardize the mission) and boast about it afterwards. He likes to claim to follow the 19th century officer's code, and to conduct himself as a gentleman, but he can always find some sneering excuse to violate it. (*"Honor, for a dirty peasant who hasn't yet killed his first man? Surely you're joking! Honor is for real men."*)

He's as hard a man as you're ever likely to encounter. But he is not without his secret fears. Everything dies, he has found. People, nations, alliances, ideologies, ways of seeing the world.

As the last three centuries rolled past he found that even the things which are supposed to be eternal cosmic absolutes die. The Divine Right of kings, the earth's fixed position at the center of the cosmos, the innate superiority of the Noble Class, the position of Woman as Man's loyal servant and helpmate--these

things can't die, they're laws of the universe, older than the world. And yet these things die, too.

For a long time he gloated over the idea that only war was eternal, that the sound of the cannon's roar and the thunder of the cavalry's hooves was the only lasting truth. Then World War One came along and even the nature of armed conflict changed completely. Time devours and obliterates all things, it seems. Except for him.

And he is well-equipped to survive. Stronger, swifter, fiercer and more durable than any human being, he can quickly recover from almost any injury and he has the senses of a wild beast. None of these things would save him on a modern battlefield, of course.

He only just barely survived both world wars, which left him baffled and afraid. He fought on both sides in World War Two, first for the Latvians against the Russian invaders, then with the right-wing Polish nationalists against both the Soviets and the Nazis, then with the Germans against everybody else.

The twentieth century was not a good time for mercenaries, on the whole—it was an age of huge conscript armies, where everyone wanted to check your identity papers when you tried to sign up. The French Foreign Legion seemed like the last place in Europe where soldiers without a past might be welcome, so after the war he signed up, along with a great many former Wehrmacht and SS men, and was promptly shipped off to the killing fields of French Indochina.

He fought in le Legion's parhuman unit, alongside such former Nazi ubermenschen as Blitzenhammer (later of Vernichtung 5). As the French slowly lost Vietnam the Legion was badly devastated, and the parahumans were hit particularly hard. Yet even though they were losing, he loved this war more than he had any conflict for a long time.

When the French pulled out, he stayed on and kept fighting for the South Vietnamese. When the Americans took the whole show over he was referred to the CIA as a man who could get things done. He undertook some covert missions for them in Laos and Cambodia, but to tell the truth they were always afraid of him, and used him less and less as time went on.

He withdrew for some years to a small island he had purchased off the coast of Borneo, and occasionally hunted men for sport on his jungle estate. While he tried to interest himself in a few sordid little conflicts in places like Africa and Yugoslavia, he feared that he was finally beginning to succumb to ennui.

Executive Solutions heard about him through their old CIA contacts, and while they were shocked to learn that he was more than just a legend, they were eager to have him on board. For his part, he feels renewed and rejuvenated in his new job. Death and blood taste good to him again.

When using Executive Solution X, it is important to remember that although he feels out of place in the modern world, he knows how to function in it. He can operate a cell phone, he knows how to use a fax

machine and although he doesn't have a license, he can drive a car.

He can be used as an independent master villain, particularly if the Player Characters are unlucky enough to find themselves on his island, but he works better as a hired gun. He won't try to take over the world, but he might well attempt to provoke a major war if he saw an opportunity to do so.

Adventures With Executive Solution X:

The Most Violent Man in the World Contest

X has become bored, and has done a silly thing. He has used his contacts to obtain some normally inaccessible documents—proof of American citizenship and a signed pardon from the President of Indonesia. He then offers them as a prize in a no-holds barred fighting competition, which will take place on his private island. Killers, pirates, gunfighters and other assorted scum from across the Indian Ocean flock to the contest, eager for a chance at a new life in America.

Perhaps the Player Characters get wind of the contest and decide to join. Perhaps someone sends them to infiltrate it. Perhaps X kidnaps them and forces them to participate.

Conditions on the island are primitive and sanitation is poor. The only house is X's villa, which he lets no one approach (the skulls and corpses on sticks outside his door serve as a reminder to stay away). There's not enough fresh water and not enough food. But most of the contestants are desperate men in any case, used to hardship of every kind.

The rules of the contest are fairly lax. Contestants pick who they will fight by mutual agreement. Fights may or may not be to the death—that's up to the combatants, as is the choice of weapons. If they want to blast away at each other with firearms, X has no objection. If an unarmed man wants to fight a fencing expert armed with a chainsaw, that's his own concern. They can fight on the beach, among the rocks, in the jungle or even in the water (despite the problem with man-eating sharks)—anywhere that X can get a good view of the fight.

There will be quite a few PL 5-7 fighters in attendance, as well as a few actual supervillains and one or two PL 10 assassins. At least one of the combatants is secretly here to settle an old grudge with X. At least one is an infiltrator from some international law-enforcement organization. Some will try to cheat, some will try to eliminate their rivals before the contest begins. On an island full of seasoned killers without enough food or water, fights unrelated to the contest are sure to break out, some of them lethal. And midway through the contest, X enters the competition himself.

Executive Solution R aka Dan Dauntless, Rocket Ranger

Real Name: Zoran Draskovik

PL: 12

Str: 12 (+1) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 12 (+1)
Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 14 (+2) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: +1 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +6
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +6 **Defense:**
+15/+14 **Speed:** 30/50 (in flight)
Damage Save: +3/13 (with Armor)
Fortitude Save: +1 **Reflexes Save:** +8
Willpower Save: +8

Skills: Intimidate +12, Knowledge (Bosnia) +6, Performance +5, Repair +6, Search +10, Spot +11, Survival +5

Feats: Aerial Combat, All-Out Attack, Attack Focus (Energy Blast), Dodge, Evasion, Far Shot, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Move-By Attack, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Talented (Performance and Intimidate), Toughness

Powers: Amazing Save (Willpower) +10 (Cost: 1pt)

Equipment: Armor +12 (Extras: Energy Blast, Explosive Effect, Flight; Power Stunts: Blind-Fight, Blindsight, Darkvision, Radio Broadcast, Radio Hearing, Super-Flight; Flaws: Device; Cost 4pts), Oxygen Supply, (Grants Immunity to Suffocation and Pressure; Flaw: Device; Cost 2pts)

"Ah, don't take it so hard. I'll get mine eventually. Everybody dies all twisted up and scared and alone. I will, too. You just get to do it first."

He used to be Dan Dauntless, Rocket Ranger. Now he's no one and nothing—just another faceless black ops killer who can barely remember his own name. This should make him bitter, he thinks, but in fact it gets harder and harder to feel anything at all.

When Bosnia slid into bloody chaos, and the Serbs were closing in on Sarajevo with murder in their eyes, a ragtag assemblage of gangsters and super-criminals came to the city's defense.

Zoran Draskovik was neither—just a coffeehouse folk singer who didn't want to see his city burn. He fell in with an informal militia under a guy they called "Yuko", a crazy, angry, funny street criminal who didn't seem to care whether he lived or died. Draskovik was a Serb himself, but he had nothing against the Bosnian Muslims and he felt that his first loyalty was to Sarajevo. And he was enough of an

asset to Yuko's group that they didn't even grumble much about his Serbian ancestry, at least to his face.

Zoran had done his stint in the Yugoslav army, back when there was such a place as Yugoslavia, and had qualified as a divisional marksmanship champion. He had even been trained as a helicopter pilot, which might come in handy if the gang ever managed to lay its hands on a helicopter.

Instead they found something much better. Breaking into an old military warehouse, looking for ammunition, Yuko's gang discovered a prototype flying suit, with a jet pack attached. Apparently the old Yugoslavian regime had abandoned the project because of its expense and put their only completed suit in storage.

It was relatively easy to use, and only killed the first two men who put it on. A former Air Force Lieutenant named Danil Zvornik was the third, and he was a good enough pilot to use the suit effectively.

As the best marksman in the unit, Zoran Draskovik was made Danil's spotter, and the two of them wreaked bloody havoc on the advancing Serb militias. Danil Zvornik was utterly fearless, willing to take insane risks. People started calling him "Dan Dauntless" after an old comic book character. It's arguable how much he actually accomplished, since the rocket-pack's range was never great enough for him to flush the Serbs out of their positions around the city, but people loved him anyway. He gave them hope, at a time when the desperately needed it.

He wasn't much of a hero on the ground, being prone to drink and harassing women and explosive fits of violence. But in the air he was exactly the man they needed.

As the war ground onward, Bosnia grew better organized and the wild and disorderly Sarajevo militias became a liability. They looted, they appropriated good apartments and gave them to their friends, they abducted civilians and made them dig trenches. And there were darker hints as well. While Yuko didn't particularly hate Serbs, it was said that some of the other militia leaders were quietly exterminating Sarajevo's Serbian population, bit by bit.

When the President attempted to integrate the irregular units into the new Bosnian Army's command structure, they refused to obey orders or to let the government investigate their actions. Zoran Draskovik thought this might be a good time to leave.

A friend of his had recently lost a thumb in a firefight and it made Zoran think hard about his own future, and about what that kind of wound would mean to someone who played the guitar for a living. If he were to get crippled that way, he could never go back to being a musician, war would be all he'd ever be good for, and he was already sick to death of war. He didn't want to be like Yuko.

Not that Zoran had any idea what he'd do if he gave this life up. He lived in his grandmother's apartment, he had no money and as a Serb things wouldn't be safe for him once he left the unit. Nonetheless he had to try.

He resigned his post and tried to get out of town. Yuko appointed Dan Dauntless a new ground observer, who wasn't as good and who promptly got him killed. And then the Serbs launched a murderous new winter offensive, raining rockets and sniper fire down on the hapless citizens of Sarajevo, staining the snow-choked streets with blood. There was no way out now. Someone had to put on the suit and Draskovik was the only one with any knowledge of how it worked.

Yuko was about to try it on himself (despite this being almost certain death) when Zoran returned. Some guys in the unit grumbled about him being a traitor and a Serb, but Yuko let him fly anyway.

Zoran lost three fingers on his first mission. But that was all right. His grandmother was dead, his guitar was broken and his city was in flames. It was time to die.

But instead something else happened. The Serb marauders were pushed back, more UN peacekeepers arrived and the course of the war finally began to turn toward the Bosnians. No one outside Yuko's group seemed to know that he wasn't the original Dan Dauntless, but that was okay, too. He was a better symbol this way.

The CIA got in touch shortly thereafter. It seems they had regularly been asking Danil Zvornik to come and work for them as an independent contractor. Zoran told them to get stuffed. He was too busy trying to die. But then the Bosnian government finally cracked down on the independent militias.

Yuko's unit was declared rogue, and left town. He set himself up as a warlord in the mountains north of the airport, extorting money and supplies from anyone who passed through his domain. Zoran had no desire to follow Yuko up into the mountains—that looked like a dead end. He did visit Yuko briefly to try to reason with the man, but was cruelly rebuffed.

None of the other militia leaders seemed likely to want to talk to anybody named Zoran (that's a Serb name), except maybe for the superhuman gangster they called the Masked Marauder. Alas, just as Zoran prepared to approach him, the crackdown began in earnest. The Masked Marauder was the government's first target, killed by the Bosnian Army in a running battle that lasted for three days and took about thirty lives.

Zoran had no desire to die fighting against his own side, so he took the CIA up on their standing offer (they had no idea that he wasn't the original Dan Dauntless), and they turned him over to Executive Solutions. For years he has fought in whatever ugly little conflict they assign him to, spending his off hours practicing his marksmanship or fine-tuning his equipment. It amuses him that his old enemy, the Serbian supervillain named Vlade Andric, is in the same unit. Dr. Andric seems determined to make friends with him, but Zoran is past being friends with anyone now.

Last year he heard that someone shot Yuko to death at a rest stop in Belgium. Something about this news made him want to go home again, so he took some

time off and went back to Sarajevo. The city was at peace, the cafes were full of vacationing American students and all of his old friends were dead. No one spoke of the past, no sign of the war remained. Sarajevo kept its secrets to itself, these days.

He doesn't think he'll ever go back. His war didn't end here on these blood-spattered streets, but it will end somewhere like it, someday. Soon.

In person, Dan Dauntless is cold, formidable and exhausted. Absolutely unfazable, he knows no fear and nothing surprises him. His years surrounded by hostile comrades in the field forced him to learn how to be a bully, but he takes no pleasure in it. He is forever trying to intimidate people and he will never back down or let up on someone who has insulted him or shown weakness in front of him. Even in combat he constantly seeks the psychological edge over his opponent, taunting and belittling them. Yet he does it coldly, calmly, without passion. For it's all just a matter of habit to him.

He hates killing and has bad dreams about everyone he's ever put in the ground, but he'll do it anyway, if the mission requires it. If he corners a defeated Player Character and no one else is watching, he'll let them go, rather than execute them, whispering urgently that they had better not tell anyone he let them escape.

In combat, Dan Dauntless shows an unusual, unhealthy lack of fear. He has no objection to fighting against vastly superior odds, nor will he attempt to withdraw if he is wounded. He'll leave the field when he is ordered to, but not before. Yet he won't just hurl himself at the opposition like a kamikaze, either. A shrewd and canny fighter, he'll stay airborne and pick targets off from a distance if he can, but he doesn't mind getting close up and physical.

Adventures With Executive Solution R:

1) Dan Dauntless and the Billion Dollar Box

Mr. Flint sends Dan Dauntless to intercept a light aircraft that will be carrying a box of laundered Euros from Juarez to a hidden airstrip somewhere south of Yuma. He's more than fast and maneuverable enough to catch it in the air, but it leaves ahead of schedule, and he isn't in position in time. He winds up having to pursue the plane deep into American airspace, which is both illegal and against the rules that Executive Solutions operates under.

The PCs presumably get drawn into the matter when they hear that a small, fast-moving object has breached American airspace over the Arizona desert, near the old Barry Goldwater Air Force Gunnery Range. This looks pretty ominous and most PCs will want to have a look.

Dan Dauntless won't explain anything about his mission and he is totally dogged in his pursuit of the target. Unless they ground him with a serious injury, the best the PCs will be able to do is to drive him away for a little while.

If they manage to keep him from hitting the plane before it touches down at the airstrip, the box with the

money inside will be transferred to a professional getaway driver named Heck Corliss, who drives a battered-looking, heavily customized Barracuda that's capable of speeds in excess of two hundred miles per hour on the straightaway. But of course Dan Dauntless is faster, and he's coming.

A quiet, guarded kind of guy, Heck neither knows nor cares what's in the box. He's just the driver. However, he is almost as determined as Dan Dauntless, and will use every trick he knows to get the box to its destination.

In California's Imperial valley, at the mean and skanky end of the Salton Sea, there is a dismal, dusty little town called Nyland, where Heck Corliss will hand the box off to a second driver—a French woman of Vietnamese extraction named Henrietta Ong.

Miss Ong drives a souped-up Mercedes sports car and is looking forward to testing it on America's legendary wide-open highways against an opponent like Dan Dauntless. Her car isn't quite as fast as Heck Corliss' Barracuda, but it's a lot more maneuverable.

If Dan Dauntless or the Player Characters don't stop her, Henrietta Ong will park her car on the street in downtown San Diego, pull the box out of the trunk and carry it to an outdoor public plaza, within sight of the harbor.

There, under the palm trees, she will hand the box to a dignified, white-bearded diplomatic courier from Oman. The courier, Wahid Azimi, handcuffs the box to his wrist and rides off in the back of an armored Rolls-Royce limousine. He is headed for the airport, where he will wave his diplomatic passport, get on an international flight and vanish into the Middle East. The money will then find its way into the coffers of the Palestinian radical group Hamas.

If the PCs haven't put Dan Dauntless out of action by the time the Azimi walks through airport security, he will actually attempt to break his way into the airliner in mid-flight and nab the box. He'll be careful not to let it reach the altitude where it would cause explosive decompression to break into the cabin. Determined though he is, he genuinely does not want to hurt any civilians.

He also doesn't care what happens to the money in the box, so long as it doesn't reach Hamas. His mission was to keep the box from reaching its destination and it doesn't matter to him if the PCs burn the money, blow it up or even keep it for themselves. Of course Hamas might feel differently about that.

2) Dan Dauntless and the Eight-Year-Old Enemy of America

Mr. Flint sends Dan Dauntless into the mountainous northernmost reaches of Pakistan, up by the edge of the Himalayas. The international boundaries are loose and poorly charted up there, with autonomous tribal groups on both sides of the official borders.

Dan Dauntless is supposed to hit the mountain encampment of a clan that is giving shelter and aid to the Taliban—and possibly Al Quaida as well. Technically the target is inside the borders of the

People's Republic of China, which makes the mission extremely sensitive.

Unfortunately, the intelligence is faulty and he winds up annihilating a whole mountain clan that had nothing to do with the Taliban, let alone Al Quaida. A Chinese doctor was with them, participating in a study on high altitude medicine. So was a documentary film crew. Everyone is dead, and this is going to cause a lot of important people a lot of embarrassment when and if it gets out.

Fortunately, the only two surviving witnesses are Dan Dauntless himself and an eight year old girl. The home office instructs Dan Dauntless to hunt the girl down, hide her body with the others and return to his drop-off point. Instead he takes her under his protection and flees deeper into the mountains, unsure where to go or what to do once his fuel runs out.

As an added complication, one of the generals overseeing the mission hates Executive Solutions. He has ties to another, similar firm called International Consultations and is enraged that the Intelligence officers on this mission managed to get their favorite vendor on board instead of his own. He intends to retire soon to a comfortable Vice Presidency at International Consultations and doesn't want anything rocking the boat.

Out of spite, he arranges to have a bunch of complete outsiders brought in to hunt down Dan Dauntless—the Player Characters. They are told that he's a fanatical Bosnian Muslim, who has slaughtered a bunch of moderates and kidnapped a little girl as part of some crazy attempt to foment a war with China. The General hopes they'll bring the whole truth to light and cause Executive Solutions a lot of public embarrassment, which may actually make the folks at International Consultations grateful that he didn't win them the contract.

But Jim Flint is not so easily circumvented as that, and he has a backup plan already in play. He has sent Executive Solution X up into the mountains to finish the job if the PCs fail to kill Dan Dauntless.

Executive Solution Q

aka "The Obscenity"

Real Name: Bruce Hollander

PL: 15

Str: 20 (+5) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 20 (+5)

Int: 12 (+1) **Wis:** 10 (+0) **Cha:** 14 (+2)

Initiative: +2 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +11

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +8 **Defense:**

+16/+14 **Speed:** 30

Damage Save: +4 (+17 with Super-Constitution)

Fortitude Save: +6 (+21 with Super-

Constitution) **Reflexes Save:** +2 **Willpower**

Save: +1

Skills: Intimidate+12, Listen +5, Move Silently+8, Repair +2, Spot +5

Feats: Darkvision, Durability, Great Fortitude, Heroic Surge, Immunity (Aging, Critical Hits, Disease, Poison, Starvation, Suffocation), Improved Grapple, Improved Pin, Power Attack, Rapid Healing, Startle, Surprise Strike

Powers: Regeneration +15 (Extras: Back From the Brink, Regrowth; Cost: 4), Super-Strength +15 (Extras: Protection, Super-Constitution; Power Stunt: Lethal Damage; Cost 5 pts)

Equipment: A small pointy stick that he can use to press the buttons on his laptop.

Weaknesses: Disabled (Mute)

Disturbing (looks like a suppurating mass of sludge, suffers a -5 on all Bluff and Diplomacy checks)

"..."

A hideous, shambling, squelching pile of proto-matter, vaguely shaped like a man. His eyes are awful and empty, like the eyes of a dead fish. They only send out Executive Solution Q on jobs that require the Resource to be extremely scary.

He actually volunteered for the treatment which turned him from a human being into something far, far less. Like many of Executive Solutions' Resources, he was a soldier in an elite military unit (the US Delta Force, in his case). He showed so much promise that one of the Defense Department's private security contractors hired him before his tour of duty was even up. He worked as hired muscle for one or another of the big security firms for a few years, guarding nuclear power plants and secret aerospace design labs until he was offered the chance to volunteer for an experimental man-amplification program.

Most of his body tissues were replaced with Plast-o-Flesh, turning him into a sentient shambling heap. This wasn't what the firm who designed him had intended, so they didn't renew his contract and he found himself both out of work and unemployable.

Executive Solutions offered him the best available deal, and now he works for them.

He has always been a careful, quiet, methodical soldier, although in the Delta Force he had a reputation for being wound a little too tight. Underneath his calm exterior he is a boiling cauldron of repressed rage, which is now creeping closer and closer to the surface. He will never have a normal life, people he trusted betrayed him and turned into a loathsome freak, Executive Solutions probably isn't working on the cure they have promised him for his condition--the stress that all this generates is intolerable. Even someone who isn't so brittle and repressed wouldn't be able to cope with his situation indefinitely.

So far he has reacted by growing even quieter and more withdrawn, but it's only a matter of time before he snaps and runs amok. They already know this at Executive Solutions, and have made arrangements to kill him when it happens.

Adventures With the Obscenity:

1) Happy Birthday to Nobody

A retired KGB general has taken up residence in the Cayman Islands, where he may or may not be selling his expertise to private clients. Jim Flint has a personal grudge against the old scoundrel and has determined to kill him in front of his grandchildren. He wants the general to die as horribly as possible, so he has carefully waited until the General's youngest grandson comes to the island for his fifth birthday party, and has sent and unexpected guest to attend the festivities—Executive Solution Q.

However, Q has been spotted multiple times since setting his squelching foot on the island and the general has gotten wind of his presence. No fool, the wily old dog at once guesses that Flint has sent a Resource to kill him, and calls in the PCs for protection. The general foolishly thinks Flint is an honorable opponent and is sure that Q will wait until his grandson's birthday party is over before he acts.

In person the general is warm and funny, fond of dirty jokes and wry observations about life. He's confined to a wheelchair these days, just like his old enemy Jim Flint, and feels that it may be long past his time to die. Yet he would prefer not to do it in front of his grandchildren with a birthday hat on his head.

2) The Strange Case of the Obscenity and the Non-Dairy Whipped Topping

Executive Solutions decides to have the Obscenity killed. They send him out on a very rare kind of assignment—an assassination on American soil. His target is Doctor Winston Wong, the inventor of Plast-O-Flesh (and of a famous non-dairy whipped topping, which he talks about constantly and brews up in his bathtub by the gallons for special and extremely private parties).

Executive Solutions then anonymously tips off the Player Characters. They claim that Q has gone

berserk, and intends to kill the mad doctor responsible for his creation.

To their credit, Dr. Wong really is fairly strange—he's a forty year-old punk rocker and an incurable party animal, with a graying New Wave haircut and a taste for heavily pierced guys half his age. He's hardly insane, but he's also not likely to listen the PCs warnings. He will however flirt shamelessly with rough-looking male PCs.

Meanwhile, when Q sees that he's being sent to kill one of the men responsible for his creation, he knows they must be about to dispose of him, and sets a plan of his own in motion. He writes the PCs a clumsy, poorly typed e-mail message (his fingers don't type very well anymore), in which he invites them to go to the deserted office of a huge junkyard at midnight, and instant-message him on the office computer.

If the PCs do this, he will break into a nearby public library, hunch down over a computer terminal, and IM them back, punching the keys with a pencil. He will laboriously explain to the Player Characters that this assignment is a set-up, that someone is going to try to get them to assassinate Dr. Wong's assassin. He'll tell them anything they want to know about Executive Solutions, although it's often hard to understand his typing. He is however shy about revealing exactly who he is.

When the PCs arrive at Winston Wong's big cluttered loft, the Obscenity will be nervously lurking in the shadows outside, and if they figure out that he was the one instant messaging them, they may be able to strike up some kind of alliance with him.

Q does not know that Executive Solutions already has a backup plan in motion. There is a huge bomb in Dr. Wong's building and if Q doesn't kill Wong or get smashed to bits by the PCs before a certain amount of time elapses, the bomb goes off and kills everybody.

3) Rampant Obscenity

Executive Solution Q finally snaps. He breaks his restraints and goes on a rampage, smashing his way out of the Charlottesville facility and killing two people in the process. Executive Solutions moves at once to cover up the incident and hunt down their wayward employee.

Q is not just running around smashing stuff at random. He intends to make his way north to Executive Solutions' business offices in Virginia and kill Jim Flint. He doesn't know that Flint is almost never there and he will be very disappointed when he finds out.

Any Player Characters who join the hunt for Q get a stern warning to back off from the Resources who are already on his trail. This will almost certainly make them try harder to interfere.

Major Maximum and the Gray Golem are likely to get assigned to this mission, as are X and Dan Dauntless. Jim Flint is less likely to send someone as unstable as Solution D or as untrustworthy as the Six Dollar Man, but feel free to use as many of the Resources as you need to give your players a challenge.

The first time the PCs catch up with Q he tries to escape, rather than attacking them. The second time he attempts to explain his situation. Q can be reasoned with, and he is willing to come in from the cold and tell the world his story, rather than making a doomed and futile attempt to kill Jim Flint.

However, taking Q in and protecting him is going to be an extremely dangerous thing to do. Not only will Jim Flint try his best to have him killed, but there are numerous men in the intelligence community who fear what might come to light if Agent 12 ever gets put on trial, and who are willing to dedicate considerable resources to wiping out the Player Characters. But if they survive, this could be the scandal that brings Executive Solutions down at last.

Executive Solution F

aka the Six Dollar Man

Real Name: Ronald Jerome Houston
PL: 12

Str: 18 (+4) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 12 (+1) **Cha:** 16 (+3)
Initiative: +2 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +10
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +8 **Defense:** +20/+18
Speed: 35
Damage Save: +2 **Fortitude Save:** +2
Reflexes Save: +2 **Willpower Save:** +1

Skills: Bluff +13, Diplomacy +8, Hide +8, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Sense Motive +7, Taunt +10

Feats: Chokehold, Connected, Darkvision, Immunity (Suffocation), Improved Grapple, Radio Reception

Powers: Running +1 (Cost: 2pts), Sensory Protection +4 (Cost 1pt), Super-Strength +10 (Extra: Protection; Cost 5 pts)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Compulsive Liar (must make a Willpower Saving Throw vs. DC 20 to tell the truth)

"I'm gonna hurt you so bad, you'll feel like me on one of my good days. Heh. I'm just a rotten useless scumbag, aren't I?"

A failure as a combat cyborg but an even bigger failure as a man, he knows he's a worthless piece of crap and he's determined to prove it to the rest of us. The Six Dollar Man constantly has a sheepish, hangdog smile on the part of his face that isn't made of steel. That smile sums him up perfectly.

He's a loner and an outsider, sick alienated, self-absorbed and self-loathing—he has a lot of bad traits, but no one can say that he doesn't have a sense of humor about himself. He tells mordant, self-deprecating jokes almost constantly, which makes him seem less dangerous than he is.

For he is truly despicable, and richly deserves every bit of the shame he feels. Completely devoid of honor, he's capable of any outrage, either to save his worthless skin or on a vindictive impulse. He feels really bad about the harm he does, for what little that's worth. He almost always keeps smiling his loser's craven smile, no matter how angry he feels or how badly things are going for him.

His personal history is sad, shabby and sordid, as one might expect. A perpetual college student and heavy drug user, by the time he was twenty six he was running out of money, excuses and healthy veins. After a long and tangled series of misadventures in Europe, he found himself in a Byelorussian prison

with rotting gangrenous infections in all four limbs and collapsed veins all over his torso.

When the authorities gave him a chance to get out of this jam, in exchange for undergoing a set of dangerous surgical procedures, he figured he didn't have a lot to lose. He was wrong, of course, but of course hindsight is 20-20.

The Byelorussians were contracting out their semi-legal medical facilities to a super-secret British military program—Project Abbadon. The kind of surgical experiments they needed to perform were illegal everywhere in Britain, so the actual operations had to be performed on foreign soil, on non-citizens who were already multiple amputees.

After they chopped off his limbs, took out most of his innards and covered half his face with stainless steel, they told him that he would have to work for British Intelligence for the rest of his life to pay for the expense of the surgery. Unless of course he would rather get shoed out the door right now, with no arms and legs. He agreed to the terms, they replaced his missing limbs and organs with stronger and more durable artificial ones, and then shipped him off to commando school. He toughed it out for a little while and then deserted the first time they sent him to America.

Not exactly a career criminal, he consults with a private firm called Executive Solutions, which rents him out to various intelligence agencies for black ops and muscle work. In between these infrequent jobs he takes on work for the Mafia and for any other such criminal conspiracy that might care to get in touch. The Player Characters will probably encounter him in this capacity, although if someone came to him with an attractive plan for a major crime, he would certainly consider it.

The Six Dollar Man neither fits in nor feels comfortable anywhere, although he's too laid back to look nervous in social situations. It would be a real mistake to team up with him, but other villains have tried. He will warn people that he's not a team player, but if someone is fool enough to recruit him anyway, he figures that's their tough luck.

He is terrible to have on your side. Treacherous, given to cowardly backstabbing, he tells a lot of malicious lies. In fact one of the most unnerving things about fighting him is the way he constantly makes insinuations about the people you trust. In any encounter with the Six Dollar Man, whether the players characters engage him in combat or not, he should tell them at least one mean-spirited falsehood, designed to undermine their faith in a teammate, a loved one, their country or an organization they belong to.

For some reason certain women find him irresistible, even though he's careful to explain that he's no good. He always seems to have some unfortunate young woman to live off of, although the turnover rate is high. He devotes himself to draining their resources and making their lives hell when he isn't on a job.

Hideous on the outside, worse on the inside, if

someone points out that he's a disgusting wretch he will heartily agree.

Adventures With the Six Dollar Man:

Tower of Lies

The Six Dollar Man has been assigned to capture a rogue combot that has taken over the upper floors of an office building. This sounds like a lot of work, so he's come up with a way to make it easier. He will lure prospective heroes into the building to run down the combot's batteries and use up its ammunition. He has already sent a pair of Federal Marshals to their doom, as well as a minor superhero called the Golden Ghost.

At around this time his girlfriend, Polly Pratchett, started to get on his nerves, so he told her that he was a spy and that as a test of loyalty to her country she would have to go up there and try to disarm the combot. If she didn't do it, he said, the secret government agency he worked for would kill Polly's dad.

This didn't as insane or as improbable to Polly as you might think. She has an advanced degree in computer science and might conceivably be able to come up with some sort of way to disable the robot. She's also active in the anti World-Bank movement, and paranoid enough about the US government to believe almost anything about it. And her father is a notorious old radical from the sixties who made a lot of enemies in federal law enforcement. The fact that she loved and feared the Six Dollar Man helped too, as did her self-destructive, fantasy-prone personality.

The Six Dollar Man suspects that she's still alive up there somewhere, so when he tries to send the Player Characters to their doom on the thirtieth floor, he tells them a carefully crafted set of lies about her. He gets in touch with the PCs and asks them to meet him in the parking lot of the infested office building.

It may take a little while for them to get there. The building stands by itself, way out in the most distant suburbs, surrounded by trees and cornfields (or the desert, if your game is set in the Southwest). Once they arrive he tells them that he represents a secret branch of the defense department, which has been testing killer robots for combat in Iraq.

Doctor Polly Pratchett, the head of the design team, went a little nuts and has started testing her robots in urban settings—dropping them into shopping malls and office parks and counting the numbers of civilians they kill. It's his job to clean up messes like this when they happen, and he's sick of it. He's willing to testify against his superiors and tell the world the whole story. The evidence is upstairs on the thirtieth floor.

The combot is still rampaging around up there, but if they feed it the following sequence: RJATIMOR113 they will activate its secret override function and shut it down. He would go up to help them, but the thing is equipped with an EM p device built in that would fry his cybernetics and kill him in a second.

The PCs should be extra careful—Doctor Pratchett

is up there too, wounded but alive. She's a very dangerous woman. Believe nothing she says. Remember, this person is responsible for the deaths of countless people most of them American citizens killed on American soil.

Before the Player Characters even enter the building, they start to see signs that they have been lied to. A pair of Federal Marshals lie dead outside the front door. Why didn't he mention this?

The building seems to have been evacuated for a fire. A lot of it is new, and a lot of it is still unoccupied, but the thirtieth floor is occupied by an electronics firm called BioSim Unlimited. They seem to have some kind of research facility up there. When they find the body of the Golden Phantom they may have more questions—what's a dead superhero doing in here?

As soon as they reach the thirtieth floor Polly Pratchett comes on the intercom and warns them to duck. A shot goes past over their head. The combot then scuttles off and hides as they take cover, without them getting a good look at it.

Polly is injured, but she's lying in a sheltered spot on the floor below them, in a security station. She can see them on the building security cameras and she can talk to them through the intercom. She has figured out most of what is really going on, although she doesn't know about Executive Solutions, and will desperately try to explain things to the PCs.

Her boyfriend is a liar and the destruct sequence he's given them is a sham. He's been hired to deactivate the combot and he's sending people up here to run its batteries down. She has no idea what he's told them about her, but she'd be happy to tell them the truth.

If the Combot gets the better of the PCs, it will suddenly run out of power just as it's about to finish them off. Then they hear the elevator doors open. The Six Dollar Man is here to mop up the loose ends. Including Polly and including the PCs.

If on the other hand they have broken the robot he shows up and flies into a rage. *"You broke it! The Ukrainians won't pay for a broken robot!"* He yells. He'll try to kill them here too, out of spite. If confronted about his lies, he grins and says *"Yeah. I just suck, don't I?"*

Executive Solution Y

aka the Burning Woman

Real Name: Myra Savage

PL: 15

Str: 10 (+0) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 13 (+1) **Wis:** 12 (+1) **Cha:** 12 (+1)
Initiative: +2 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +13
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +15 **Defense:**
+17/+15 **Speed:** 30/50 (Flight)
Damage Save: +2/+17 (Force Field)
Fortitude Save: +7 **Reflexes Save:** +7
Willpower Save: +6

Skills: Acrobatics +9, Bluff +8, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +6, Knowledge (Northern Ireland's bloody secrets) +5, Spot +8

Feats: Accurate Attack, Aerial Combat, Expertise, Identity Change, Immunity (Cold, Heat, Suffocation), Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Power Immunity, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Surprise Strike

Powers: Amazing Save (Fortitude) +5 (Extras: Reflexes, Willpower; Cost 3pts), Energy Control (Fire) +15 (Extras: Flight, Energy Field, Explosive Effect, Force Field)

Weaknesses: Vulnerable: Water attacks.

“Have you ever wondered why people are so afraid of being burned alive? Would you like to know more?”

Jim Flint is usually suspicious of letting women in the armed forces and doesn't want them on his team. But when he heard that Myra Savage, the Burning Woman might be available, he hastily decided to make an exception.

The Burning Woman has been a legend in Northern Ireland for a decade. An Ulster Unionist from Londonderry, she was already fighting the IRA when she was fifteen. While nobody is sure where her powers came from (she's either a mutant or the living incarnation of Northern Ireland's burning rage, whichever the GM prefers) she always seems to have been able to set things on fire.

When she was twenty her adoptive family was wiped out in a power struggle between two factions of the Royalists and she became persona non grata in Protestant circles. So she had herself baptized as a Catholic and joined the IRA. This felt wrong to her, but all her Protestant friends were either dead or out to kill her and she didn't know how to do anything but fight, so it seemed like her only option.

Afraid that she would get killed too quickly if they kept her in Ireland, the IRA sent her to London, gave her a cover identity and told her to “make some noise.” Always an obedient and unquestioning

soldier, she carried a number of terrorist attacks on British landmarks, killing civilians and getting declared one of the UK's most wanted foes.

And she learned a funny thing. They told her she was hard as stone, cold as ice and that human life meant nothing to her. In fact the people she loved and trusted had been telling her this since her early teens. And yet it wasn't true. Every time innocent people died by her hand, it hurt worse and worse. Pretty soon her head was full of nightmares and she slunk around feeling guilty and tormented all day.

Then things got worse. The long war in Northern Ireland finally seemed to be coming to a close. There were peace talks, lasting agreements, ancient grudges settled. People were laying down their arms for good.

The IRA leadership was almost sure to give her up as part of the deal—she was so widely feared and hated by the British that she would make an incredibly good bargaining chip. Plus she was a Protestant by birth, and had no family to object if the IRA sold her out. Even someone as loyal as Myra could see how expendable she was.

Nor would it make sense to switch sides again, or to join one of the radical splinter factions. The remaining shreds of the Royalist Militias and the Provisional IRA were degenerating into criminal gangs, and they only had the craziest, most bloodthirsty or most cynical people left on board. There was no future in Ireland for Myra, and certainly none in England.

God alone knows how or why she had the CIA's number, but she knew exactly who to contact in order to sell her talents to the Americans. The CIA gave her a mission in Belarus, she handled it well, so they put Jim Flint in touch.

Serious, stoic and professional on the outside, on the inside Myra is lonely, tormented, anxious and eager for approval. She is keenly aware that she's an outsider and is getting desperate to prove herself to her comrades. She never complains about anything, always takes the most dangerous, thankless assignments, always gives 120% and never shows any trace of hesitation or pity despite her moral qualms and the nightmares she always has when she kills somebody.

Nor does she ever respond to the abuse her teammates give her over being a girl. For the lads haven't exactly been making her feel welcome. Major Maximum and Executive Solution D openly hate having a woman on the team. They feel it weakens them and is sure to lead to trouble and neither one minds telling her this to her face.

Executive Solution X doesn't like it either, but holds D in such contempt that he seldom expresses his distaste in front of the man.

The Gray Golem doesn't care, but contradicts anything D says out of habit, while Dan Dauntless actually feels some faint sympathy for Myra and would try to help her if he had any idea how. Alas, he's only good at bullying people and breaking stuff.

The Obscenity has barely noticed—he's much too busy worrying about whether he will remain a

loathsome freak forever.

They've all hit on her except for Dan Dauntless and the Obscenity (yes, even Major Maximum has tried) and while she would be willing to sleep with any of them if it made them accept her, she somehow senses that in this case it would just make things worse.

Adventures With Executive Solution Y:

1) Bloody Opals and Burning Snow

An Irish gangster named Gravis O'Grady is ready to turn states evidence on his former colleagues. He was a high-ranking guy in Ireland's mob, and his testimony will be extremely damaging to a lot of powerful people. Because he doesn't trust the authorities to keep him alive until his trial, he wants to surrender to independent superheroes—to the Player Characters, in fact.

Gravis lives in Australia, these days, but he gets word to the PCs that he is staying under assumed name at a ski chalet in Switzerland and that they can pick him up there. He's grown a little paranoid, and he wants to stay in a place where he can see trouble coming from a long ways away.

After the PCs arrive a snowstorm blows up, and while they wait out the storm Gravis tells them why he's finally going to turn himself in. He was one of the few lucky souls who made a lot of money from his years in the IRA, and when he went into semi-retirement in Australia a few years back, he used his funds to buy an opal mine. The mine performed quite well and made him a much richer man. He used his opal money to finance this or that criminal enterprise, as much out of boredom as from any need for capital.

Last year he put up the funds for the wildest caper he ever heard of, and the whole thing exploded in his face. It was the biggest gamble of his life, and the only one he lost.

There's a rebel group in Nigeria that came up with a scheme to grab a major oil pipeline and hold it for three billion dollars in ransom. Gravis bought them the guns and explosives they needed for the job and he was going to handle the ransom negotiations for them. But the oil company that owns the pipeline somehow got wind of the plot and things fell apart.

Gravis' business partner in Oslo, Norbert Yamaguchi, has vanished without a trace and his house has burned to the ground. Gravis thinks they may have hired a supervillain firm he's heard whispers about, for the MO used on poor old Norbert's house sounds exactly like an Irish supervillain he used to know—a horrible, heartless killer they called the Burning Woman.

Gravis is right. In fact the Burning Woman is on her way up to the chalet right now. She will lurk in the snow until she sees a good chance to attack, and then will burn her way inside.

And here comes the big surprise. She's not here to kill Gravis. She just wants his suitcase, which contains all the opals he has left—the sum total of his remaining wealth.

2) The Secret Torture Dungeon of Hitler's Doctor Satan

The ruined lair of a forgotten arch-villain from the Nazi epoch comes to light (use one from your own campaign, or if your campaign doesn't yet have any guys like that, call him Dr. Reinhold Strunk, aka Doctor Satan, who conducted unspeakable cybernetic experiments on live human subjects and was one of the few supervillains from that period who vanished completely after the war, never to be heard from again). Located in the frigid and desolate Bransfield Archipelago, off the coast of Antarctica, it seems to have been undisturbed since the 1940s. Who knows what secrets it might yet hold?

Unfortunately for the Player Characters, a group of ancient, doddering ex-Nazis is wondering exactly the same thing. What terrible secrets might be revealed about them and their network once the base is unearthed?

Here too, if you already have some organization of former national socialists plotting lethal mischief down in South America, use them. Otherwise, this is a group of about five very old men (there used to be seventy of them) scattered around the world, who call themselves Der Spinner (the Spider). They live in places as far flung as Australia, Portugal, Montevideo and Baltimore. All of them are rich and paranoid, more focused on preserving their wealth and prolonging their own wretched existence than they are on anything as unlikely as taking over the world.

The PCs are sent or hired to investigate the ruins, or perhaps they just decide to do it on their own. Der Spinner hires Executive Solutions to stop them. Jim Flint sends the Burning Woman, and as many of the others as the GM thinks would be required.

The leaky old underground bunker is not without its own dangers. A lot of the complex is under the ocean, and at a certain point in the festivities someone is almost sure to knock a hole in a wall and sent countless tons of frigid seawater flooding through the tunnels.

And could Doctor Satan still be alive down there in the darkness somewhere?

3) Belfast Welcomes Careful Travelers

An Irish journalist in Africa catches footage of the Burning Woman on tape, and recognizes her as the infamous terrorist who caused so much havoc in London, a few years ago. After a little more research, he has enough data to blow her identity wide open, and he's figured out who she works for. She's got to kill him, before he publishes the story and Jim Flint has her killed.

Although the Burning Woman hates going back to Ireland, where she's wanted by cops and criminals alike, she has little choice. She actually still has some contacts on both the Loyalist and the IRA side who are willing to help her kill the journalist, or who fear her enough to do whatever she says.

In the meantime Jim Flint has figured out what happened in Africa (though he has no idea just how much the journalist knows). Mr. Flint has decided to

give the Burning Woman a chance to put things right, and has sent Executive Solution D to kill her if she fails.

The journalist runs to the Player Characters for help and protection. Hounded by the Burning Woman, beset by attacks from both Loyalist and IRA forces, can they get him and his footage to safety?

To complicate matters further, the Burning Woman is willing to back off if the PCs give her the footage and help her defeat Executive Solution D. She may also be willing to negotiate if the PCs offer her a chance to disappear altogether.

Jim Flint, Agent 12

Real Name: Has used so many aliases that no one is sure. "James Flint" is the one he has settled on for the past forty years or so.

PL: 14

Str: 8 (-1) **Dex:** 10 (+0) **Con:** 10 (+0) **Int:** 14 (+2) **Wis:** 18 (+4) **Cha:** 18 (+4)

Initiative: +4 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +8

Attack Bonus (Ranged): +10 **Defense:**

+15/+15 **Speed:** 10 (in wheelchair)

Damage Save: +2 **Fortitude Save:** +0

Reflexes Save: +0 **Willpower Save:** +9

Skills: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (Espionage) +10, Sense Motive +7

Feats: Chokehold, Connected, Headquarters (Complex in South Carolina; Features: Combat Simulator, Communications Center, Computer, Fire Prevention System, Garage, Gym, Hanger, Infirmary, Living Space, Pool, Power System, Security System, Staff [15 PL1 Security flunkies and a PL2 Unit Commander, supplemented by additional Executive Solutions personnel as needed], Workshop), Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Indomitable Will, Inspire, Iron Will, Leadership, Minions (135 PL1 security goons and other employees, 13 PL2 officers and managers, 7 PL3 elite troops, 4 PL4 bodyguards, 1 PL5 yacht captain, 1 PL5 lawyer, 1 PL6 personal assistant)

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +2, Telepathy +14 (Extras: Memory Alteration, Mental Blast, Mind Control; Cost: 5pts)

Equipment: Wheelchair (Running 10 ft; Flaw: Device; Cost 1pt), Pistol (+3 Lethal Damage), Vehicle (Yacht) 30pts (Size: Huge; Movement: 6; Hardness: 13; Armor Bonus: 10; Features: Communications Center, Computer, Gym, Living Space, Infirmary, Isolated Location, Power System)

Weaknesses: Disabled (Unable to walk, makes all Dexterity-related skill checks at a -5)

Quirk: Can never admit that he's wrong, no matter what kind of a disadvantage this puts him at)

Quirk: Refuses to use his psi powers unless his back is absolutely to the wall and all other options have already been exhausted.

"Deny everything, admit nothing, make counter-accusations. That's still true today, son, and it still makes get all hot and bothered just saying it aloud. It's my Viagra."

Jim Flint has lived in the shadows since World War

Two. One of the most promising young men in the OSS, after the war he was recruited on an unofficial basis to use his talents for murder and subversion against the Reds. They called him by a simple code name—Twelve.

Over the next two decades Agent Twelve worked for the OSI, the Office of Naval Intelligence, the CIA and many other "Black Book" agencies that the general public has never even heard of. Yet he was never officially employed by any of them. He fought America's invisible wars on all its secret fronts, but he never got a medal for it. Not that he ever complained—finding out people's secrets and betraying them was always its own reward, as far as he was concerned.

Yet the years eventually took their toll. He nearly died in Vietnam, he lost an eye in the jungles of Central America and by the 1980s he was getting so old that he could barely kill a man with his bare hands anymore. In any case CIA Director William Casey hated him and wouldn't use him if he could help it.

A lot of the guys Jim knew were getting rich in private industry. This or that famous spy would retire from public service, set up a private security firm, provide muscle and corporate espionage for the big multinationals or take on dirty work that the CIA didn't want to handle. He'd always resisted the urge to go that route because he knew he'd miss the smell of blood in his nostrils, but after he got cut out of the Iran-Contra deal altogether, he figured it was time to take the hint.

In the 80s the field was crowded and he didn't have the funds to set up more than a small operation, so he decided to supply the one commodity most private merc firms couldn't handle—superhuman talent. He knew Major Maximum and he had a good idea how to find the man called X. The others came to him, over time.

Once Director Casey was dead, Twelve's old contacts at the Agency were happy to send him more work than he could handle, and of course the big multinationals always need help in the Third World.

A lifelong smoker, Flint has lost a lung and his voice box to cancer, and has recently been confined to an electric wheelchair. He's still an arresting presence with his thick mane of white hair, his craggy, battle-scarred face and his eyepatch. He talks a lot about politics, but for someone who knows as much about the secret history of the world as he does, his opinions are odd and inconsistent.

He claims to hate big government and to feel that only private industry can accomplish anything, yet he has proudly spent his whole adult life working for the feds. Generally conservative, he nonetheless worships John F. Kennedy (not for his policies, but because he was so much fun to hang out with in Las Vegas during the Rat Pack era) and he swears that Kennedy was killed by left wing elements in the State Department.

He feels that women should know their place, he mistrusts people of color and he still thinks the Civil Rights movement was a foreign plot. He grudgingly admits that this wasn't the case with the anti-Vietnam

movement, but only because he spent so much time fighting them and came to know them so well. He loved Richard Nixon and keeps a picture of him on the wall of his office, but he never trusted Ronald Reagan or his commitment to fighting the Cold War. He hates hippies and environmentalists with a passion that isn't wholly sane, yet he's a vegetarian and had experimented with both Zen philosophy and psychedelic drugs as early as 1955.

Perhaps Flint's perspective on things is best summed up by the dominant feature of his office—an eight foot portrait of himself.

These days Flint lives mostly on his yacht, in international waters. His clients sometimes get to meet him in person, but his Parahuman agents seldom do. More often, the Resources are ushered into his office and listen to his orders on speakerphone, underneath his gigantic, glowering portrait.

A crotchety, irascible old man, while he isn't senile he sometimes misunderstands what people say to him. He can go on and on about some idiotic thing he thinks someone has said, sometimes bringing the imaginary incident up months or years later. It is utterly impossible to convince him that he has misheard anyone, and it can prove fatal to contradict him too any times.

While he understands a great deal about various types of high-tech spy gear, he doesn't understand the internet and won't allow it to be mentioned in his presence (fortunately his staff are more competent in this area). A bachelor, he hates kids and jokes that anyone who brings one aboard his yacht risks being thrown overboard in mid-ocean along with their brat. At least we think he's joking.

Mr. Flint is accompanied everywhere by his personal assistants, the blankly malevolent Miss Zelma Zimmer, who does everything for him, and the merely blank Mr. Smith, who appears to do nothing at all. Smith always stands just behind Mr. Flint on the right. Neither Mr. Flint nor Miss Zimmer ever look at Mr. Smith or seem to acknowledge his presence. On very rare occasions he will lean forward and whisper something in Mr. Flint's ear, but the old man never seems to react to this.

In fact Smith is Flint's ace in the hole—he's a parahuman with the ability to detect and shut down other parahuman powers. He's quiet, loyal and nondescript, a hovering presence that few people really notice.

Flint rarely goes anywhere without at least a few bodyguards, mostly ex-special forces personnel hired through a separate division of his company. Give him enough bodyguards to impede your players, but not enough to overwhelm them.

Anyone who gets past both Mr. Flint's security staff and Mr. Smith will face the man's own formidable psychic powers—a trait he has managed to conceal all these years. Because his psionic abilities are his most carefully guarded secret, he's not likely to let anyone live who has actually seen him use them.

For games set in the 50s and 60s, here's what Agent 12 looked like in his glory days.

Agent 12 in his prime

PL: 12

Str: 16 (+3) **Dex:** 20 (+5) **Con:** 18 (+4)

Int: 13 **Wis:** 20 (+5) **Cha:** 12 (+1)

Initiative: +10 **Attack Bonus (Melee):**

+11 **Attack Bonus (Ranged):** +11

Defense: +24/+13 **Speed:** 30

Damage Save: +6 **Fortitude Save:** +6

Reflexes Save: +10 **Willpower Save:** +10

Skills: Balance +10, Climb +10, Bluff +10, Demolitions +7, Diplomacy +11, Disable Device +4, Drive +8, Hide +10, Intimidate +10 Knowledge (Espionage) +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +10, Search +10, Spot +8, Survival +5

Feats: Accurate Attack, Assessment, Attack Finesse, Chokehold, Connected, Dodge, Evasion, Far Shot, Great Fortitude, Improved Grapple, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Psychic Awareness, Quick-Draw, Talented (Listen and Spot), Toughness, Track

Powers: Powers: Super-Dexterity +5 (Extras: Super-Senses, Super-Strength, Super-Wisdom; Flaw: Super-Strength only applies toward skill checks; Cost: 9pts), Telepathy+8 (Cost: 2pts)

Equipment: Pistol (+3 Lethal), Rifle (+3 Lethal)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Irrationally obsessed with concealing his psi powers, will use them only in the most dire emergency conceivable.

Zelma Zimmer

PL: 6

Str: 8 (-1) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 12 (+1) **Int:** 14 (+2) **Wis:** 16 (+3) **Cha:** 10 (+0)
Initiative: +1 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +3
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +4 **Defense:** +7/+6 **Speed:** 30
Damage Save: +1 **Fortitude Save:** +1
Reflexes Save: +1 **Willpower Save:** +5

Skills: Diplomacy +4, Innuendo +5, Intimidate +8, Listen +8, Profession (Personal Assistant) +9, Spot +9

Feats: Connected, Far Shot, Iron Will, Indomitable Will, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Talented (Intimidate and Profession: Personal Assistant)

Powers:

Equipment: Big Ugly Pistol (+5 Lethal), Can of Mace (+5 Stun attack)

Weaknesses: **Quirk:** Fanatically Loyal to Mr. Flint

Jim Flint's redoubtable assistant. She looks like a badly preserved sixty-year old, but in fact she's seventy-five. Spite keeps her young, as does her unwavering fanatical devotion to Mr. Flint. She does everything for him, has devoted her life to helping him rid the world of Communism, and she's more than a little in love with the man.

All of the office staff are afraid of Miss Zimmer, and with good reason. Blank and emotionless, yet also cruel and mean—she wants it to be known that she is a powerful person and that she can have you destroyed.

Everything she says is couched in carefully precise business-speak. Nor does she ever raise her voice above a threatening murmur. She never unwinds, never smiles, never makes small talk or any kind of informal remarks. Most of all she never, ever says please or thank you for anything. Yet you are required to say please and thank you to her. She speaks for the great man, Mr. Flint himself. Everything in this office is his. Therefore everything in this office is hers. She is not required to say please.

Despite her insistence on rigid office protocol, if Miss Zimmer senses weakness on the part of any member of the office staff, she will try to force them to buy the crappy rip-off long distance service that her loser boyfriend sells, or Amway products, or diet remedies or whatever shabby pyramid scheme the two of them are into this month. No one ever seems to see this boyfriend, but he's real enough (his name is Harvey Glick, and he's a classic watery-eyed, whining, sixty-five year old ne'er-do-well).

There are no personal objects on Zelma's desk, apart from a single dead plant.

Mr. Smith

Real Name: Thomas and Peter Smith

PL: 12

Str: 12 (+1) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 12 (+1) **Wis:** 16 (+3) **Cha:** 10 (+0)
Initiative: +1 **Attack Bonus (Melee):** +11
Attack Bonus (Ranged): +11 **Defense:**
+21/+20 **Speed:** 30
Damage Save: +2 **Fortitude Save:** +2
Reflexes Save: +1 **Willpower Save:** +5

Skills: Spot +10, Listen +10, Innuendo +4, Move Silently +10, Swim +6

Feats: Detect (superpowers), Iron Will, Psychic Awareness

Powers: Neutralize +13 (Extras: Neutralizing Block, Neutralizing Field, Nulification, Nulify Without Concentrating; Cost: 6pts)

Equipment: Concealed Body Armor +4

Mr. Flint's silent shadows, Tom and Peter Smith are his ace in the hole. They're also Flint's only living sons.

Identical twins, the Smith brothers look and dress completely alike. They never appear together and most people have no idea that there are two of them.

Either one or the other Smith always stands behind their dad's left shoulder, quiet, nondescript, making no facial expression at all. "Smith" never seems to say or do much of anything. While Zelma Zimmer fusses and makes phone calls and adjusts my Flint's tie, Smith just stands there.

Both Smith brothers dress conservatively but unostentatiously, wearing business clothes even on Mr. Flint's yacht. Neither one ever seems to sweat.

The Smiths' superhuman powers are simple yet deadly effective. They can detect parahumans and can snuff out their powers at a distance. Their power-suppression ability is invisible—they don't have to say or do anything to make it happen, which makes it very hard to tell where the effect is coming from.

If a disguised parahuman enters Flint's presence, the Smith boy on duty will lean down and whisper the information in Mr. Flint's ear. Flint never outwardly reacts to this information, but he will most certainly be thinking about it.

The Smith boys' mother was a Russian parahuman agent who lived under in deep cover in Baltimore. She was a very attractive woman, so Flint blackmailed her into having an off-again, on again affair with him for a few years back in the early seventies.

Despite the shabby way he treated their mom, both Tom and Peter are fascinated by and totally loyal to their dad.

Mr. Flint's Bodyguards

PL: 4

Str: 16 (+3) Dex: 14 (+2) Con: 14 (+2) Int: 13 (+1) Wis: 12 (+1) Cha: 10 (+0) Initiative: +6 Attack Bonus (Melee): +10 Attack Bonus (Ranged): +9 Defense: +16/+14 Speed: 30 Damage Save: +2 Fortitude Save: +2 Reflexes Save: +2 Willpower Save: +1
--

Skills: Intimidate +4, Listen +5, Spot +6

Feats: Attack Focus (Armed), Attack Focus (Ranged), Chokehold, Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Talented (Listen and Spot)

Powers:

Equipment: Pistol (+3 Lethal), Body Armor +2

Weaknesses: Quirk: Willing to die for Mr. Flint.

These guys are pretty tough. Culled from the best of America's elite forces, they don't have as much armor or as high tech weaponry as a lot of villainous super-agents, but they're still very effective with what they have.

They tend to be a little older than most security personnel, men in their thirties and forties with as much combat experience as possible. All of them are personally loyal to Mr. Flint and his vague pro-American, anti-communist credo. None of them are fanatics, but as bodyguards they won't hesitate to lay down their lives for their employer if they have to.

Appendix A: Villains by PL

PL 4 **Jim Flint's Bodyguards** (Page 139)

PL 6 **Zelma Zimmer** (Page 137)

PL 7 **The Ratcatcher** (Page 53)

PL 8 **Grease Monkey** (Page 79), **Sicko the Clown** (Page 5), **Zyclon B** (Page 67)

PL 9 **Big John** (Page 8), **Boy Howdy** (page 89)
Doctor Shock (page 10), **Johnny Black** (page 75)
Mano del Muerte (page 12), **Der Shreik** (page 69)

PL 10 **The Lone Star Lady** (page 86), **Jim Dandy** (page 88), **Doctor Destructor** (page 81),
The Texas Twister (page 82), **The Moebius Man** (page 62), **Blitzenhammer** (page 64),
Broken Arrow (page 14), **UgoGrrrl** (page 17),
The Unicorn (page 18), **Vampire Girl** (page 20), **Wolf-Dog** (page 22)

PL 11 **Mr. Fist** (page 84), **Double Deuce** (page 94), **Diamond Deuce** (page 103)

PL 12 **Ace of Wounds** (page 97), **Agent 12 in his prime** (page 136), **Cimarron Starr** (page 77), **Executive Solution D** (page 115), **God** (page 24), **Helen Damnation** (page 27), **Mr Smith** (page 138), **Executive Solution F** (page 130), **Lady Deuce** (page 100)

PL 13 **Der Totenkopf** (page 60), **Executive Solution M** (page 119), **Executive Solution Z** (page 121)

PL 14 **Jim Flint**, **Agent 12** (page 135), **The Steel Deuce** (page 105)

PL 15 **Bones** (page 108), **The Snow Queen** (page 29), **Executive Solution Y** (page 132)

PL 16 **Azeraphel, the Screaming Angel** (page 41), **Black Thunder** (page 32), **The Death Angel** (page 36), **Doctor Moloch, PhD** (page 39)

PL 17 **The Hammer of Doom** (page 43)

PL 18 **Executive Solution X** (page 123)

PL 19 **Captain Valiant** (page 46)

Index

<i>Ace of Wounds</i> -----	97	<i>Jim Flint, Agent 12</i> -----	135
<i>Agent 12</i> -----	135	<i>Jim Flint in his Prime (stats)</i> -----	136
<i>Azeraphel, the Screaming Angel</i> -----	41	<i>Jim Flint's Bodyguards</i> -----	139
<i>Big John</i> -----	8	<i>Johnny Black</i> -----	75
<i>Black Thunder</i> -----	32	<i>Johnny Bionic</i> (see "Steel Deuce, the)	
<i>Blitzenhammer</i> -----	64	<i>Johnny Machine</i> (see "Steel Deuce, the)	
<i>Bones</i> -----	108	<i>Johnny the Robot</i> (see "Steel Deuce, the)	
<i>Boy Howdy</i> -----	89	<i>Lady Deuce</i> -----	100
<i>Broken Arrow</i> -----	14	<i>Limited Immunity to Prosecution</i> (New Feat)---	4, 17
<i>Burning Woman, the</i> (see "Executive Solution Y")		<i>Lone Star Lady, the</i> -----	86
<i>Campaign World</i> -----	3	<i>Major Maximum</i> (Executive Solution M)	
<i>Captain Valiant</i> -----	46	<i>Mano del Muerte</i> -----	12
<i>Cimarron Starr</i> -----	77	<i>Moebius Man, the</i> -----	62
<i>Corpus Christi Good-Time Boys, the</i> -----	72-74	<i>Mother Moebius</i> -----	70
<i>Dan Dauntless, Rocket Ranger</i> (see "Executive Solution R")		<i>Mr. Fist</i> -----	84
<i>Death Angel, the</i> -----	36	<i>Mr Smith</i> -----	138
<i>Der Shreik</i> -----	69	<i>Murder Machine</i> (see "Doctor Destructor")	
<i>Der Totenkopf</i> -----	60	<i>New Feats and Powers</i> -----	4
<i>Diamond Deuce</i> -----	103	<i>Nowhere Men, the</i> -----	49-50
<i>Doctor Destructor</i> -----	81	<i>Obscenity, the</i> -----	128
<i>Doctor Moloch, PhD</i> -----	39	<i>Ratcatcher, the</i> -----	53
<i>Doctor Shock</i> -----	10	<i>Der Shreik</i> -----	69
<i>Double Deuce</i> -----	94	<i>Sicko the Clown</i> -----	5
<i>Executive Solutions</i> -----	111-114	<i>Six Dollar Man, the</i> (see "Executive Solution F")	
<i>Executive Solution D</i> -----	115	<i>Snow Queen, the</i> -----	29
<i>Executive Solution F</i> -----	130	<i>Steel Deuce, the</i> -----	105
<i>Executive Solution M</i> -----	119	<i>Teams</i> -----	49-139
<i>Executive Solution R</i> -----	125	<i>Texas Twister, the</i> -----	82
<i>Executive Solution Q</i> -----	128	<i>Threats, Major</i> -----	29-48
<i>Executive Solution Y</i> -----	132	<i>Threats, Minor</i> -----	5-12
<i>Executive Solution X</i> -----	123	<i>Threats, Moderate</i> -----	14-28
<i>Executive Solution Z</i> -----	121	<i>Der Totenkopf</i> -----	60
<i>Feats and Powers, new</i> -----	4	<i>U-Go-Grrrl</i> -----	17
<i>Flint, Jim</i> -----	135	<i>Unicorn, the</i> -----	18
<i>Four Deuces, the</i> -----	90-93	<i>"Using This Book"</i> -----	3
<i>God</i> -----	24	<i>Vampire Girl</i> -----	20
<i>Gray Golem, the</i> (See "Executive Solution Z")		<i>Vernichtung 5</i> -----	57-71
<i>Grease Monkey, the</i> -----	79	<i>Winter Steele</i> (see Cimarron Starr)	
<i>Grim Diddle</i> -----	55	<i>Wolf-Dog</i> -----	22
<i>Hammer of Doom, the</i> -----	43	<i>Woodchuck Man</i> -----	51
<i>Helen Damnation</i> -----	27	<i>X</i> -----	123
<i>Jim Dandy</i> -----	88	<i>Zelma Zimmer</i> -----	137
		<i>Zyclon B</i> -----	67

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16

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