

DIGITAL HERO

#22

AUG 2004



In this issue:

- Mystics
- Killers



- Radio Codes
- Code-Talkers
- Whispers



- Explorers
- Challenges
- Locales

Table of Contents

HERO HIGHWAY

WHEN LAST WE LEFT OUR HEROES...

Keep up with the news from Hero Games. This issue – *The Mystic World* and *Fantasy Hero Grimoire 2*. 2

HEROGLYPHS

See how Steve Long himself answers rules questions. This issue – encrypted radio transmissions. 3

YOU GOTTA HAVE CHARACTER

Mungo Park, explorer of the dark continent of Africa, set the stage for other explorers to follow. 5

LEFTOVER HERO

Take a tour of the forgotten realms of *The Mystic World*, or at least these that didn't fit into the book. 11

RESOURCE ROAD

CHALLENGES FOR BRICKS

Many bricks are known for nigh-indestructibility, but there are other ways to give them a good contest. 16

RIGELLIAN CODE-TALKERS

These aliens have developed astounding abilities with their unusual sets of vocal chords. 21

THE PRINCIPALITY OF SEALAND

Off the coast of England sits a small platform that has declared its independence, and become the world's smallest country. 37

CHARACTER CORNER

A PAIR OF JACKS

These two serial killers terrorized Victorian England, and were never captured. 51

WHISPER AND DECEIVER

This vengeful ghost and master assassin have destinies intertwined with each other as well as with VIPER. 57



DIGITAL HERO

Publisher

Hero Games

Editor

Dave Mattingly

Authors

W. Jason Allen
Bob Greenwade
Steven S. Long
Ray Lowery
David Rakonitz
Dean Shomshak
Michael Surbrook
Jason Walters

Artists

Bill Jackson
Shawn Richter

Cover Artist

DT Butchino

Online

herogames.com

To Subscribe

herogames.com/digitalhero

HERO System™ is DOJ, Inc.'s trademark for its roleplaying system.
HERO System Copyright © 1984, 1989, 2002 by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games. All rights reserved.
Champions Copyright © 1984, 1989, 2002 by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games. All rights reserved.
Justice Inc., Danger International, Dark Champions, Fantasy Hero, and Star Hero Copyright © 2002 by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games. All rights reserved.

No part of this electronic magazine may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or computerization, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Publisher: DOJ, Inc., 1 Haight Street, Suite A, San Francisco, California 94102.

Issue #22 (August 2004)



When Last We Left Our Heroes...

by Steven S. Long

The Hero bullet train continues! Just like last month, this month we've got two products comin' down the tracks right to you – both filled with magic!

WORLDS MOST MYSTIC

First up is *The Mystic World*, written by Dean Shomshak and developed by little ol' me. Mystical characters and creatures have a long and proud tradition in the comics as well as in the Champions Universe, and this book takes a look at that side of superheroing. After all, mystical characters don't exist without a context. Super-sorcerers must learn their magic somewhere; demons, gods, and spirits come from realms of their own; ancient relics need someone to make them. *The Mystic World* offers that context for *Champions*. It's a guide to the realm of the mystic and arcane in the Champions Universe and other Champions campaigns. It provides resources for players who want to make mystical characters, and GMs who want to make the supernatural an important part of their game.

Chapter One, *Worlds Upon Worlds*, describes the dimensions beyond Earth, ranging from nearby dimensions such as the Astral Plane and Quaternion Realms (Faerie, the Netherworld, Elysium, and Babylon) to the furthest reaches of the Multiverse. Mystics frequently interact with these supernatural realms: they visit other dimensions, or encounter beings who come from them. This chapter explains the structure of the Multiverse, details the five dimensions mentioned above, and provides lesser descriptions of many other realms.

Chapter Two, *The Shadow World*, explores the mystical subculture on Earth. Mystics gather in factions and occult conspiracies; this chapter describes the most important groups and individuals, and how they interact with each other. It also describes locations of occult power that mystics exploit.

Chapter Three, *The Book Of Wisdom*, covers magic itself from a superheroic perspective. In addition to a distinctive style of comic-book sorcery (featuring over two dozen spells, most with numerous variants), this chapter describes several potent magic items heroes or villains might own or seek. It also has a few notes about game elements frequently used to create mystic characters or their powers, such as the *Extra-Dimensional Movement Power*.

Chapter Four, *Mystic Master Villains*, describes three of the greatest evils to confront mystical heroes: Tyrannon the Conqueror; Skarn

the Shaper; and the enigmatic Dragon. Each master villain comes with an assortment of henchmen... or hench-creatures. (For even more of Dean's mystic villains, you'll have to wait a month or two for *Arcane Adversaries* – he sent in so much material, I had to turn it into two books!)

SPELLS, SPELLS, AND MORE SPELLS

Next up on the Hero Hit Parade is *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire II: The Book Of Lost Magic*. The first FHG was a really popular product, so we decided you might like to have even more spells. Rather than go over the same ground as the FHG, the FHG2 covers ten arcana of magic that FHG didn't have room for:

- ☛ *Arcanomancy*, spells pertaining to magic, fundamental magical forces, and spellcasting.
- ☛ *Areomancy*, also known as Battle Magic, spells for use in warfare.
- ☛ *Black Magic*, spells that invoke evil energies or which spellcasters use for particularly evil ends.
- ☛ *Chaos Magic*, the wizardry of the powerful but unpredictable force called Chaos.
- ☛ *Monster Magic*, spells learned and cast by various types of monsters.
- ☛ *Naming Magic*, spells that derive their power from the caster's knowledge of the target's True Name.
- ☛ *Professional Magic*, spells that adventurers and everyday folk in High Fantasy campaigns use to make their jobs easier and safer.
- ☛ *Rune Magic*, the magic of carved and painted runes of power.
- ☛ *Shamanism*, magic involving spirits and the Spirit World.
- ☛ *Song Magic*, spells cast by or involving singing, poetry, jests, and the like.

The FHG2 adds approximately another 2,000 spells (counting all options) to the FH repertoire of magic, meaning we have well over 6,000 spells in print! I think you'll find that the FHG2 really adds some new and exciting options to FH games, and I hope you'll agree. ;-)

— Steven S. Long
HERO System Line Developer



HEROglyphs by Steven S. Long

Scrambled!

Encrypted Communications in The HERO System

I've been working on *Dark Champions* a lot recently, and naturally that's turned my mind to thinking about various subjects pertaining to modern-day action-adventure. One of those subjects is encrypted communications – ways for two (or more) characters to communicate without others being able to overhear (and/or understand) what they're transmitting.

Using the *HERO System* rules, there are at least five ways I can think of to represent encrypting and decrypting transmissions:

CONCEALED

The first is to apply the *Concealed Sense Modifier* to the Sense doing the transmitting. In this case the special effect of the Sense Modifier could be one of two things: either “transmission cannot be detected” (which is what Concealed is normally used for); or “even if detected, the transmission cannot be understood.” The end result is the same – the enemy doesn't have a transmission he can comprehend (though in the second case he might have one he can triangulate on). Decrypting this sort of encryption requires decoding equipment built with an Enhanced Sense that can “perceive” through the encryption. If a character buys a set of radios (or the like) which all have Concealed, it's safe to assume each of them can understand (decrypt) the transmissions of the others – the encryption/decryption process is programmed or hardwired into the devices.

Encrypted Radio Handsets: Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group), Concealed (-5 to Radio Group PER Rolls), Usable Simultaneously (up to eight persons at once; +1) (30 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 15 points.

Improved Encrypted Radio Handsets: Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group), Concealed (-10 to Radio Group PER Rolls), Usable Simultaneously (up to eight persons at once; +1) (40 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 20 points.

Alternately, instead of relying on the fallible (but more “realistic”) Concealed, characters can buy Invisible Power Effects (invisible to tracing) for their radios. That way, no matter how good a Systems Operation roll an enemy makes, he can't perceive the transmission (he may not receive it at all, or at best it sounds like meaningless static).

Ultimate Encrypted Radio Handsets: Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group), Invisible to Tracing (+¼), Usable Simultaneously (up to eight persons at once; +1) (22 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 11 points.

LANGUAGE VARIABLE POWER POOL

Page 118 of *Champions* describes another way to scramble transmissions: a Variable Power Pool for Languages. Only a person with another radio device, programmed with the same “language,” can understand what's being sent. This method requires the GM's permission, since Skills are Special Powers, and therefore cannot be bought in Power Frameworks without the GM's approval – but since this is an intriguing, fun, and not especially abusive construct, most GMs will probably allow it.

To encrypt a transmission, the characters simply agree on which Language their radios will use. They don't necessarily have to be real languages; the characters can simply call them Language A, Language B, and so on. Identifying the language precisely doesn't matter; the Languages are just a way to represent the special effect of “encrypted communications” in *HERO System* terms.

The Language VPP method is cheap and easy, but it has some drawbacks. A successful Cryptography roll can decrypt a scrambler “language,” but the users can counter the cryptographer by changing the computer-generated “language” at frequent intervals. This constitutes changing the Pool and requires 1 Minute. To change the Pool in just a Full Phase, the character must buy a Skill to do so, though GMs should consider allowing characters to use ordinary Cryptography or Systems Operation instead of making them buy a separate Skill.

Radio Handset with Scrambled Transmission Option: Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group) (10 Active Points); OAF (-1) (total cost: 5 points) **plus** Variable Power Pool (Scrambler Pool), 4 base + 2 control cost; OAF (-1), Only For One Language at a Time (-1) (total cost: 5 points). Total cost: 10 points.

This sort of scrambling is also vulnerable to certain types of decryption equipment. In game terms, you can represent that equipment with Universal Translator that Requires a Systems Operation Roll.



BATTLE CODES

Another way for characters to keep their communications secret is to develop their own unique language – a “battle code,” if you will. When used with an encryption system, a unique language (or a very rare real-world one, such as Navajo) provides a double layer of security. However, it is vulnerable to characters or equipment built with the *Universal Translator* Talent.

MIND LINK

Another way to create a closed, untappable communications system is Mind Link. The character defines the number of radios he has, and that tells him how many people he can communicate with at once. (Alternately, he can buy Mind Link to Link with one other person who has bought the same power.) For true privacy/encryption, leave the Mind Link as a Mental Power, meaning that only other characters with appropriate Mental Powers, or decryption devices built with those Mental Powers, can penetrate the communications net. But more realistically, characters should apply the Limitation *Affected as Radio and Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group* (-1/2) – that way things like Darkness to the Radio Group can block their transmissions.

Closed Radio Link (Type 1): Mind Link, Specific Group of up to Any 8 Minds, No LOS Needed (35 Active Points); OAF (-1), Affected as Radio and Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-1/2). Total cost: 14 points.

Closed Radio Link (Type 2): Mind Link, Any One Mind, No LOS Needed (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), Only Can Be Maintained With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected as Radio and Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-1/2). Total cost: 7 points.

CRYPTOGRAPHY

The fourth method is to give the radio equipment its own *Cryptography* Skill to represent its ability to encrypt its transmissions (and to decrypt those it receives, though as long as two users agree on the form of encryption the decryption will be automatic). Decrypting this sort of encryption requires decoding equipment built with its own *Cryptography* Skill to crack the code in a Skill Versus Skill Contest.

Radio Handset with Encryption System: Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group) (10 Active Points); OAF (-1) (Total cost: 5 points) **plus** Cryptography 20- (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), Only to Encrypt/Decrypt its Own Transmissions (-1) (Total cost: 8 points). Total cost: 13 points.

SYSTEMS OPERATION

Similarly, a radio could be built with its own *Systems Operation* Skill. The character trying to send an encrypted transmission makes a Systems Operation roll to reflect his ability to hide/encrypt the transmission; a character trying to intercept the transmission makes a competing roll to locate/decrypt it. In either case, Computer Programming, Cryptography, and/or Electronics may act as Complementary Skills.

Radio Handset with Encryption System: Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group) (10 Active Points); OAF (-1) (Total cost: 5 points) **plus** Systems Operation 20- (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), Only to Encrypt/Decrypt its Own Transmissions (-1) (Total cost: 8 points). Total cost: 13 points.

The Range of Transmit

Usually it's not necessary to establish an exact range over which a Sense with the *Transmit* Sense Modifier can “broadcast” – the GM can simply establish ranges for Transmit on a case-by-case basis, depending on special effects, the technology used in the campaign, common sense, and dramatic sense. In situations where knowing the exact range is important, GMs can use one of two methods.

For strict precision, give any Sense with Transmit a broadcast range of 1 kilometer per Active Point. To increase this range, apply the *MegaScale* Advantage, with the +1/4 level increasing it to 10 km per Active Point, and so on up the *MegaScale* Table from there. Characters may need to apply *MegaScale* as a naked Advantage, or put Senses in a Multipower (one slot *MegaScaled*, one not), to create both short-range and long-range communications systems.

For more “dramatic” results, assume a transmission can reach anywhere within an area defined by the GM (one city, one nation, one planet, one solar system, or the like). For each +5 Character Points, the character can increase the range of transmission by one step down the *MegaScale* Table.



You Gotta Have Character

by Jason Walters

“Life is lived forwards, but understood backwards” — Kierkegaard

“Though all the Europeans who are with me should die, and though I were myself half dead, I would still persevere, and if I could not succeed in the object of my journey, I would at least die on the Niger.” — Mungo Park

Carried along by the current, the awkward boat drifted downriver at a leisurely pace. Its cargo of men and munitions were spread out haphazardly below a massive canvas-covered lean-to which had been erected on its stern, right above the spot where some thoughtful soul had written H.M. Joliba in blood red ink. There were eight of them all told; five white, three black, all heavily armed with muskets, machetes, and long knives. Their eyes darted nervously out into the impenetrable jungle every few moments as if the very plants and rocks were wild savage animals preparing to attack at any moment.

One of the white men, however, sat rigidly upright upon a makeshift stool that had been hacked from a rubber tree log, writing furiously in a journal which was perched precariously upon an equally makeshift desk constructed from a supply crate. The word “jerky” was stenciled on his “desk” in large black letters. The man wrote using what could only have been an ostrich feather, stopping periodically to dip it into a small wooden dish filled with ink. Unlike his companions he seemed no more ill at ease in his station than would an Oxford professor enjoying his afternoon tea in the university library. He paused periodically to mouth soundless words from parched lips as if he were giving silent speech to the murder of Tsetse flies that hovered above his sunburned face like a swarm of bloodthirsty midge vultures intent upon their carrion meal. Finally after some considerable scribbling had passed through his palm, he closed his journal with a loud slap like a gunshot that made all of his companions start nervously.

“Martyn, old bean, I think it would be a good idea if you and Armadi laid off of the shake-shake for a bit,” he commented dryly in an educated British

accent that was colored somewhat by an obvious Borderer upbringing.

“What in bloody hell for,” shot back one of his companions, a lanky man who somehow appeared to be pale in spite of the massive sunburn that covered his sharp features from every angle. He handed an earthenware jug to his dark-skinned companion. “When I meet my maker, which I fancy shan’t be that long from now, I will do so drunk like an Englishman. My esteemed African companion here informs me that he wishes to meet his heathen god likewise inebriated. Who are you to offer up criticisms at this point anyhow, Captain? You keep writing in that damned book as if we weren’t about to shuck off our mortal coils at any moment!”

The captain chuckled darkly.

“Lt. Martyn, my dear countryman, it is precisely because I expect to lay quietly in a watery grave or rot syphilitic in some Mohammedan slave pit that I am making careful entries into our exploration’s log, even as you two kill your livers by imbibing that insult to fermentation which you so lightly call alcohol.” He waved his quill at the querulous soldier like a mother scolding her children with an angry finger. “Plus we have more pressing matters to contend with at this very moment.”

“Like what, Park?” he retorted angrily just before a crude arrow imbedded itself into the wooden railing next to his head.

“Well, like those fellows for example.” The Captain motioned casually with his quill to six canoes that had seemingly emerged from nowhere. With a dozen rowers each they were gaining rapidly on the unwieldy catamaran as it floundered in the slow current. Without another word Mungo Park set down his writing implement, grabbed a loaded rifle from between his legs, and shot a native archer from the bow of one of the pursuing vessels with a practiced airiness. The man screamed in the river as he was almost immediately ripped to pieces by crocodiles.

Without further comment Martyn and the other occupants of the *H.M. Joliba* grabbed their rifles and

MUNGO’S JOHNSON

Johnson (*Katunga Oyo*)

10 STR	11 DEX
14 CON	12 BOD
13 INT	10 EGO
10 PRE	10 COM
6 PD	4 ED
2 SPD	5 REC
28 END	25 STUN

Abilities: +1 with Hand-to-Hand Combat, AK: Niger River Basin 12-, KS: West African Tribes 12-, Linguist; Languages: English (Conversation, Literate), Igbo (Conversation), Mandingo (Conversation), Swahili (Idiomatic), Yoruba (Conversation), Navigation (Land) 12-, Persuasion 11-, WF: Blades, Early Percussion Firearms

25+ Disadvantages: Normal Characteristic Maxima, Age: 40+

Notes: The good-natured and optimistic Johnson a.k.a. Katunga Oyo is Mungo Park’s guide, interpreter, and companion. Kidnapped and sold into slavery as a young man, Johnson was shipped to a plantation in South Carolina where he learned to read and write. Later his master took him to England where he became involved in an unfortunate duel with a nobleman’s servant that resulted in that



opened fire on the attacking Africans with the sort of grimly damned determination that a man in the final stages of terminal consumption uses to draw breath through his ravaged lungs. It wasn't something you did to keep yourself alive. It was something you did because you weren't dead just yet.

After a few tense moments the men in the canoes broke off their attack, vanishing into the foliage on the shoreline as suddenly as they had emerged from it. With a sigh the Captain set his rifle back down before once more picking up his pen. With a thoughtful

expression he once again set to his purposeful wordless pantomime punctuated by scribbling. Martyn and Armadi likewise went back to their drinking without any sort of comment. They had done this sort of thing an uncountable number of times before. They would do it an uncountable number of times again before the Niger River finally took them, as it had taken every other man who had tried to explore it. Silently both men cursed Mungo Park for his incredible hubris, one in Gaelic and the other in Mandingo.

Then they both had another slug of shake-shake.

Mungo Park



DIGITAL HERO #22

Mungo Park

14	STR	4	12-	Lift 175kg; 2½d6 [1]
11	DEX	3	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
13	CON	6	12-	
18	BODY	16	13-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
14	COM	2	12-	
8	PD	5		Total: 8 PD (0 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total: 6 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	9		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	2		
40	STUN	8		

Total Characteristics Cost: 75

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
 Leaping: 2½"/5"
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
7	<i>Manly Art of Fisticuffs</i> : HA +2d6 (4½d6 with STR); HA Lim (-½)	1
10	<i>Manly Toughness</i> : Physical Damage Reduction, 25%	0

Perks

- 12 *The Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa*: Contact (Useful Skills or Resources, Good Relationship, Organization) 11-
- 1 Fringe Benefit: Medical License
- 5 *Johnson (Katunga Oyo)*: Follower
- 6 Reputation: Great African Explorer (Europe) 11-, +3/+3d6

Talents

- 3 Bump of Direction

Skills

- 2 +1 OCV with Fists
- 2 +1 OCV with Rifle
- 3 AK: West Africa 12-
- 3 KS: West African Tribes 12-
- 1 Language: Arabic (Basic)
- 2 Navigation (Land) 12-
- 3 Paramedics 12-
- 3 PS: Author 12-
- 3 PS: Physician 12-
- 4 Survival (Tropical, Desert) 12-
- 3 TF: Riding Animals, Small Rowed Boats
- 2 WF: Blades, Early Percussion Firearms

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 75

Total Cost: 150

75+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: European in Africa (Not Concealable, Commonly-Used Senses, Not Distinctive in Some Cultures)
- 10 Hunted: Arab Slavers 8- (Mo Pow, Limited Geographical Area, Harsh)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Fanatical Explorer (Very Common, Total)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Unable to Fit Back into European Society (Common, Moderate)
- 5 Rivalry: Professional (Other African Explorers, Rivals are As Powerful, Seek to Outdo, Rivals Aware)
- 15 Unluck: 3d6

Total Disadvantage Points: 150

Mungo Park was a Scottish surgeon and explorer who was selected by the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa to head an expedition in search of the source of the mysterious Niger River and the fabled city of Timbuktu. After a series of early disasters that cost him most of his equipment as well as all of his fellow European adventurers, he embarked unaccompanied (save for his luckless native guide Johnson) on his quest. He endured tremendous hardships during his journey into the heart of West Africa: he was repeatedly robbed, spent several months imprisoned by the Moorish Emir Ali Ibn Fatoudi, and came close to dying of starvation and thirst while finishing his journey alone. Without much of an idea of where he was going he relied entirely on the surprising generosity of local tribesmen for food, shelter, and directions throughout his eventful eighteen-month journey. He eventually managed to reach the River Niger, traveling along part of its course before returning to the coast. Traveling back to Europe he authored a book entitled *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa*. Published in 1799, it influenced generations of subsequent adventure writers including Melville, Conrad, and Hemingway.

MUNGO PARK PLOT SEEDS

For King and Country: With revolutionary France poised to ravage Europe under the leadership of Napoleon Bonaparte, a desperate English sovereign dispatches a crack team of explorers, soldiers, and scientists to Africa in search of gold and silver. Led by the famed (if slightly mad) Captain Mungo Park they must fight their way past hostile natives, dangerous animals, and Muslim slavers if they are to reach the legendary mines of Timbuktu.

Revenge! The year is 1820. Almost forgotten by the modern world a fifty-year old Mungo Park has at long last emerged from the impenetrable jungles of the Congo with tales of an unspeakable horde of treasure guarded by an ancient snake cult. He approaches the PCs with an offer: equal shares of the treasure if they will accompany him back to the hidden temple of Nama. Are these tales the insane ranting of a malarial lunatic, or is there really uncountable wealth hidden in the heart of the Dark Continent?



Rescue: Desperate to discover the fate of her lost husband, Alice Park has hired the PCs to follow his footsteps along the Niger River basin in the hopes that they will locate and rescue him. Can they succeed where every other European has failed?

Background/History: Mungo Park was born in Selkirkshire, Scotland on the 20th of September 1771, the seventh in a family of thirteen children. The son of a well-to-do farmer with a passion for education, he was apprenticed to a surgeon named Thomas Anderson before attending the University of Edinburgh for three sessions. After receiving his diploma in 1791 he set out for London to seek his fortune. Through his brother-in-law William Dickson, a botanist of no small repute, he became acquainted with Sir Joseph Banks, the president of the Royal Society and a famed explorer who had circumnavigated the globe with Captain James Cook. With Sir Banks' assistance Park obtained the position of assistant-surgeon onboard the East Indiaman *Worcester*. In 1792 he made the journey to Benkulen in Sumatra, returning the following year to present descriptions of eight new species of fish to the British Linnaean Society.

At the time of Park's return to England, two important questions had begun to dominate the discussions held in the drawing room of the prestigious Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa: where was the exact location of the semi-mythical city of Timbuktu and what was the course of the River Niger? They knew that the mighty river flowed west to east but they were curious to know where the river emerged. Three theories had been formed to explain its flow: it emptied into Lake Chad, it curved around to join the Zaire, or that it reached the coast at the Oil Rivers.

The Association had launched a previous expedition to the Niger lead by a Major Daniel Houghton, which had entirely perished in the vast Sahara dessert. They were eager to try again. Supported by Sir Banks, Park applied to the Association to lead their next suicidal expedition to explore the area. Upon successfully acquiring their backing he set out for West Africa in 1795, arriving at the mouth of the River Gambia in June. From there he ascended 200 miles upstream to the British trading station of Pisanian where he met with his contact Dr. Laidley, who provided him with equipment, advice, and a skilled guide and interpreter named Johnson. Dressed in European clothing, which included an umbrella and a tall hat that he used as a container to store his notes, they started their hike into the unknown interior accompanied by a slave named Demba, who had been promised his freedom upon completion of their journey.

The three traveled across the upper Senegal basin then through the desert region of Kaarta. They were robbed by Bondou tribesmen who stole all of their equipment save for Park's tall hat and his compass. Upon reaching the Muslim settlement of Ludamar the three men were imprisoned by the local Moorish Emir Ali Ibn

Fatoudi. Demba was taken away and sold, but Johnson, who was considered too old to be of any value, was allowed to stay with his English employer. After four months of beatings and torture, Park managed to escape with Johnson's help. Back in the jungle the two men parted ways, Johnson heading back to Pisanian while Park continued on alone with no equipment save for his hat and compass. Relying on the kindness of African villagers he continued his dogged search for the River Niger, finally reaching Segu on the 21st of July 1796 where he became the first European to gaze upon its waters. He followed the river 80 miles to Silla, where he was obliged to turn back due to exhaustion. On his return journey he took a southern route to Bamako, traveling all told some 300 miles along the river's length. After recovering from a bout of malaria at Kamalia he returned to England by way of the United States.

Park was greeted as a hero upon his return to his native land. Having long been given up for dead by his sponsors, his descriptions of the lands and peoples along the River Niger were met with great enthusiasm throughout the West. Bryan Edwards authored an account of his journey for the African Association before a more detailed narrative from his own pen entitled *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* was published in 1799. This engaging book was so rich in its natural detail, unflinching in its portrayal of local people, and was presented in such an unaffected style that it quickly became extremely popular. Even in the 21st Century it is still considered a classic in the genre of safari literature.

With the help of a generous royalty check from the sales of his book, Park settled in Selkirk where he opened a medical practice. He married the lovely young Alice Anderson, the daughter of the surgeon to whom he had been apprenticed. But before very long this settled life became too boring and repetitive for Park to bear. He began looking for a new expedition: but this time he wanted one that would pay him well for the hardships he was certain to endure. Because of this he turned down an offer by the Royal Society to lead a meagerly funded expedition into the Australian Outback. In the autumn of 1803 he accepted an offer by the British government to lead a well-funded expedition back to the Niger River basin, but the start of the expedition was delayed. Determined not to repeat his earlier mistakes Park hired an Arabic language teacher named Sidi Ambak Bubi, who moved from London to Selkirk to give him lessons (much to the shock and bemusement of the local villagers). He also developed a warm friendship with novelist and intellectual Sir Walter Scott, who gave him a variety of tips on how to more effectively interact with Muslim cultures.



Finally, in September of 1804 he journeyed to London where he was given a Captain's commission in the British army. He was then joined by four boat builders from Portsmouth that had been commissioned to construct a forty-foot vessel upon reaching the banks of the Niger River. Along with second-in-command Lt. Alexander Anderson (his brother-in-law) and draughtsman George Scott they set out for Africa, where they were joined by a Lt. Martyn, 35 privates, and two seamen at Goree. Against all logic and advice they set off from the Gambia in the rainy season. Within ten days, his men were succumbing to dysentery. After five weeks, one man was dead from disease, seven mules had been lost, and most of their equipment had been destroyed in a forest fire. By the time the expedition reached the Niger only eleven of the original 40 European adventurers were left alive. Still Park persevered, constructing a new boat out of two old canoes with the help of the only soldier not too sick to move. They christened this new vessel the *H.M. Joliba* after the native name for the river. They then rested for two months but the death toll continued to rise. By November, only five of them remained alive.

Still, Park remained determined to prove a pet theory of his: namely, that the Niger and the Congo were a single river... which, unfortunately, they weren't. He sent one of his native guides back to Gambia with his journals, a letter to the Colonial Office, and a letter to his wife before setting off down the Niger with Lt. Martyn (who had become addicted to a native beverage called "shake-shake"), a guide, three slaves, and the three remaining soldiers (one of whom had gone mad from malaria). Well equipped with firearms and ammunition but little else they opted for a policy of minimal contact with natives along the shoreline to avoid Muslim slavers. They traveled some 1000 miles down the river, and actually managed to reach Timbuktu, repulsing a variety of attacks from natives in canoes as they went. Then at the Bussa rapids their craft became stuck fast upon the rocks in the center of the river. In one of history's great ironies the men were mistaken for Muslim slavers by the natives along the shoreline, who began to pepper them with arrows and spears. Realizing that their position was untenable, Park, Martyn, and the two remaining soldiers sprang into the river where they were quickly drowned.

The sole survivor of Park's second expedition was one of the slaves, who gave the details of the expedition's demise to a subsequent group of adventurers led by Richard Lander. Although he managed to retrieve some of Park's personal effects such as his cartridge belt, his personal journal was never recovered nor was any physical trace of his remains ever discovered. In 1827 a rumor that Mungo Park

still lived in Muslim captivity reached his son Thomas, who quickly organized an expedition. Landing on the Guinea coast that year the younger Park intended to make his way inward to Bussa where he had received word that his father was being held. Sadly, Thomas died from a mysterious illness before he could make it more than a few days into the interior, leaving the rumor of Park's survival forever uninvestigated.

Personality/Motivation: While Mungo Park has some shortcomings (like insatiable wanderlust) he is above all else an explorer, an adventurer whose life is dedicated to the investigation of strange new places as well as the flora, fauna, and people located in them. Once he has embarked upon one of his quests he is unbending and insensitive; Park will sacrifice men, beasts, material, and even his own life in his single-minded determination to achieve his goals. Although he is in no way egotistical or megalomaniacal, Park is so focused on his explorations that signing on with one of his expeditions is nothing short of suicidal.

Still, by fulfilling his mission to find the Niger River and in documenting its potential as an inland waterway for trade and commerce, Park played a significant (if unintentional) role in opening Africa to European economic interests. His modest, low-key heroism has made it possible for the British public to perceive themselves as a civilizing force in Africa, ushering in an era of colonial expansion and missionary work. His descriptions of its native peoples and wildlife have inspired numerous subsequent explorers to penetrate the interior of the Unknown Continent in search of that peculiar variety of scientific immortality which seems to haunt the souls of British naturalists.

Quote: "Whatever way I turned, nothing appeared but danger and difficulty. I saw myself in the midst of a vast wilderness, in the depth of the rainy season, naked and alone, surrounded by savage animals, and men still more savage. I was five hundred miles from the nearest European settlement. At this moment, painful as my reflections were, the extraordinary beauty of a small moss in fructification irresistibly caught my eye. I mention this to show from what trifling circumstances the mind will sometimes derive consolation; for though the whole plant was not larger than the top of one of my fingers, I could not contemplate the delicate conformation of its roots, leaves, and capsule without admiration. Can that Being, thought I, who planted, watered, and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern upon the situation and sufferings of creatures formed after His own image? Surely not. I started up, and,

disregarding both hunger and fatigue, traveled forward, assured that relief was at hand, and I was not disappointed.”

Powers/Tactics: Mungo Park is an explorer completely possessed by the desire to explore West Africa. To this end he has developed a variety of appropriate skills including Survival, Navigation, and AK: West Africa. He is also a trained surgeon and physician able to practice medicine as well as any other doctor of his time, which is to say not very well (although he can splint bones, remove bullets, and sew up wounds with the best of them). He is also a skilled author, somewhat conversant in Arabic, and equally handy with both his fists and his rifle depending on what the situation requires. His sense of direction is nothing short of miraculous, although even Park has been known to make mistakes upon occasion.

Parks has an extremely good working relationship with the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa, a quasi-governmental organization comprised of those members of the esteemed Royal Society who are interested in such things. They can be relied upon for information and legal support if not always for financial succor. As the first internationally famous African explorer, Park is recognized all over Europe. Correspondingly, he is usually welcome wherever he goes

Campaign Use: Mungo Park is the kind of NPC who gets PCs into trouble. Eager to sign them up on an adventure into the insanely dangerous interior of pre-colonial Africa yet largely indifferent to their subsequent welfare, he is the very picture of a deranged English explorer of the Dark Continent because he was the *original* deranged English explorer of the Dark Continent. He is also a beloved public figure, so PCs could just as easily find themselves asked to go in search of the explorer should he disappear. If they are lucky enough to encounter him in England, however, this early explorer will cheerfully serve as a useful source of information on the African landscape, its curious animals, and dangerous inhabitants.

Since he was more or less the first of his kind, Park became the archetype that many subsequent African explorers modeled themselves upon. His book had a great deal to do with this, literally causing generations of doomed Europeans and Americans to don the pith helmet and machete of African exploration. Famous French explorer Rene Callie (who visited Timbuktu), German missionary and diarist Johann Rebmann, Scottish traveler David Livingston, and infamous romantic adventurer, author, and translator Richard Burton were all inspired by Mungo Park’s example. His character sheet could be used as a template

should the GM wish to introduce any of these historical characters into his *Victorian Hero* campaign, or an inspiration should he wish to create an imaginary explorer for some other purpose.

Appearance: Mungo Park is a young, slender, and fair-haired man with the charming mannerisms of an upper class Englishman. His eyes, however, betray a certain aging beyond his years as well as the telltale yellowing signs of hepatitis, a disease he has acquired during his travels. Odds are good that, should the PCs encounter him in Africa, he will be emaciated, sunburned, feverish, and clad in the tattered remains of his safari clothing. He wears a large sturdy hat with a secret compartment in the top wherever he goes, be it in England or Africa, and usually has a rifle slung over his shoulder.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Boyle, T. Coraghessan. *Water Music*. Viking Press, 1983

Capstick, Peter Hathaway. *Death in the Long Grass*. St. Martin’s Press, 1977

Parks, Mungo. *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa*. Duke University Press, 2000

Websites

africanhistory.about.com/cs/biography/p/bio_park.htm

47.1911encyclopedia.org/p/pa/park_mungo.htm



Leftover Hero: The Mystic World

by Dean Shomshak

Chapter 1: Astral Plane

ALL-ASTRAL CAMPAIGNS

With a little work, GMs can create campaigns set entirely on the Astral Plane, or at least that center on that dimension.

Haunted Hero

The characters are all ghosts. Possible goals include avenging their own murders, helping their still-living loved ones, or stopping evil ghosts and spirits from causing harm. Ghost stories and movies provide plenty of inspiration.

The characters need some way to interact with the living, but the limitations on such contact provide part of the drama for a Haunted Hero campaign. Perhaps the character can only produce small poltergeist effects, or can manifest visibly but not affect solid objects, or can only communicate with rare, psychically sensitive mediums. Each ghost might have different powers: Giving the team a wider mix of powers than any single ghost can attain encourages the characters to stay together.

For a looser campaign, possible character types include mortal mediums, shamans, and mystics capable of astral projection. This somewhat removes the difficulties that an all-ghost group of characters faces. GMs need to watch out for situations where only the mortal characters can act and the ghost characters are left twiddling their thumbs, or only the ghosts can act and the mortals are impotent.

CHARACTERS FROM THE ASTRAL PLANE

Both heroes and villains can come from the Astral Plane. Ghost characters, for instance, normally exist on the Astral Plane (even if the character sheet uses Desolidification to represent walking through walls and similar abilities). Strange and powerful magic might thrust an imaginary person into the material world and turn him real. Other characters might gain superpowers by merging their physical and astral bodies, or a person's projected spirit might materialize as a superhero while his non-powered, physical body rests safely back at home. Characters with "dream powers" typically have some connection to the Astral Plane, whether they are trained mystics or not.

Chapter 1: Faerie

CAMPAIGNS IN FAERIE

The Land of Legends offers many potential settings for campaigns. After all, it's a place built on stories. The characters may be mortals lost in Faerie, or natives – anything from mortal children to aspiring demigods.

Escape From Fairyland

The characters are contemporary humans trapped in the Land of Legends. To find their way back to Earth, they must undertake a quest that challenges their courage, abilities, and judgment. Their final test is whether they really want to go home, or whether they would rather become legends themselves.

Escape From Earth

Let's turn the story around: The characters are people from Faerie cast away on Earth, a world where they do not belong. Can they find a way home without ending up in jail, an insane asylum, or a freak show? The campaign becomes especially challenging and poignant if the characters are merely Heroic-level faerie-folk or mortals, so they cannot slip into the ready-made roles of superhero or supervillain.

Mythic Worlds

Faerie includes demesnes patterned on many different mythologies, from mythic Greece to the Old West. GMs can set a campaign in any of these realms.

Sneaky GMs can even start a campaign without telling the players it's set in Faerie. At first the campaign might seem to be set in the world of Greek myth, a weird Western, or any other sort of fantasy adventure. Gradually, the clues pile up and the characters realize their setting is part of a wider world of varied mythic traditions. The heroes might even learn that their entire world is simply a projection of Earth, the true world.

OUTTAKES FROM THE MYSTIC WORLD

When Dean was writing *The Mystic World*, he ended up with more material than he needed on some subjects. Where he could, he trimmed it down to a more reasonable amount – but fortunately, he saved the “full version” and sent it to Hero Games in case we could use it. Steve actually worked some of it into the TMW and *Arcane Adversaries* manuscripts, but here's the rest for your delectation. We haven't fully edited or reviewed this material, though, so it may conflict with TMW in minor ways.

Chapter 1: Netherworld

NETHERWORLD CHARACTERS

Demons and devils provide a limitless source of mystical villains, ranging from feeble minion imps to evil gods like Beelzebub and Mephistopheles. Other villains might be mortals who sell their souls for power.

Heroes may owe their origin to the Netherworld as well. Some Eastern traditions stress that demons exist to punish sin, not encourage it (though the demons may forget their proper duty). Buddhism describes an especially large panoply of such “righteous demons.” Western devils might prove less likely to reform and turn their wrath to constructive ends, but a mortal might be fused with a demon or discover partial diabolical parentage, and strive to use his powers for good. Such characters find themselves torn between their human morals and demonic passions – good for some angst-ridden roleplaying.

Chapter 1: Elysium

CHARACTERS FROM ELYSIUM

Elysium makes an excellent source for heroes. Elysians all possess strong moral codes. An angel or bodhisattva could easily decide his duty lies on Earth, among mortals. Such a hero probably suffers a form of exile for placing mortals above doctrine, but sets an example of virtue second to none.

Other heroes may receive their powers as agents of Elysium. For instance, wizard-saints like Albertus Magnus or Lao Tzu could give super-powers to people of great moral courage, so they could help humanity to resist the Netherworld’s minions.

Supervillains may come from Elysium as well, but these villains are not so much evil as inflexible. Their rigid minds may perceive as “sin” an act that a human would excuse. For example, a warrior angel may seem like quite a villain if he rampages through a city, wrecking “infidel” Hindu and Buddhist temples, “sinful” porno theaters, and “impious” businesses that stay open on the Sabbath. The angel exists to destroy the enemies of God – left unsupervised, that’s what he does, without regard for secular law.

Chapter 1: Babylon

CHARACTERS FROM BABYLON

Many heroes and villains call Babylon home. Some of them might move to Earth. The City of Man’s most distinctive local heroes resemble characters from tall tales. Most tall tale heroes, such as Paul Bunyan and Pecos Bill, are rural, but a few came from cities. For instance, a few tales are told about Joe Magarac, the Pittsburgh foundryman who was himself as tough and strong as steel. Players can easily create more working-class heroes.

On the other hand, urban legends suggest some very grim villains. Jack the Ripper spawned a slew of mythical urban predators, such as the Candyman and Bloody Mary. If one of these horrors escaped to Earth, heroes could face a killer as elusive as a dream.

Other characters might include Babylon as part of their background. If GMs don’t want to bring time travel into their campaign, they can still introduce characters who seem to come from ancient Rome or other great cities of the past; but they actually come from suitable districts of Babylon. Just as heroes or villains might gain their powers from a sojourn in Faerie, characters might instead receive training or gifts of power during a stay in Babylon. For instance, a young castaway from Earth might gain skills through years in Babylon’s Boy Scouts, then receive a magic weapon from a conurbite whose life he saves. Finally, the spirits, mages, and secret society members of Babylon themselves could come to Earth for humanity’s benefit or harm.

CAMPAIGNS IN BABYLON

The cross-cultural setting of Babylon combines high fantasy with gritty realism and historical fiction for the ultimate in urban fantasy. Here are two sample campaigns set chiefly in Babylon:

Cops in Babylon

The characters belong to Babylon’s police force. City guards have existed as long as cities, so characters can come from any age of history or imagination, all working in the same precinct house. Babylon cops face dangers ranging from aristocratic Roman poisoners to alligators in the sewers to Count Dracula. Dredge up every cop movie cliché you can imagine, give them a Babylon twist, and go wild.

Babylon PD characters are Heroic-level characters, with excellent Skills and weapons. The Babylon PD SWAT teams, however, could have sufficient magical powers, martial arts, or gadgetry to qualify as low-powered superheroes.

Babylon Scout Troop 51

“Be Prepared” gains new meaning in a supernatural city. The characters are teenaged members of a Babylon scout troop. They learn familiar scouting subjects such as knot-tying, first aid, and orienteering... and sometimes must apply them in situations such as tying up a captured War Pig, extracting bullets from the scouts it attacked, and finding their way back from the unfamiliar district where the attack occurred. Advanced merit badges become even more interesting: Subjects include negotiating with spirits and taming wild cars. In fact, any Skill in the HERO System list can become the subject of a Babylon Scout Troop merit badge.

Of course, the Boy Scouts were formed to bring urban youth into the manly wilderness, and Babylon’s scouts are no exception. New scouts look forward to their first hiking and camping trip to the Land of Legends. Afterward, they are a bit more ambivalent and cautious.

The characters start as Normals, or at most Competent Normals. They should earn experience quickly, however, so that senior scouts are definitely Heroic-level characters.

Chapter 4: Skarn

ADVENTURES IN THE CONGERIES

Most obviously, PCs can go to the Congeries to fight Skarn. Of course, attacking Skarn on his home turf, with his Cosmic Pool and palace guard, is a bit suicidal unless the PCs work out a clever strategy. Heroes may visit the Congeries for other reasons than a fight, though.

Rescue: Skarn, or one of his minions, captures a DNPC, a mentor, or someone else important to the characters. The PCs go to the Congeries to rescue the person from duration vile.

Spying: The PCs need to know more about Skarn and his plans. They slip into the Congeries in disguise to gather information.

Foment Revolution: This is difficult, since Skarn has spent centuries training the Congerites to obey him without question. Revolutions only succeed when the existing regime becomes feeble and mild. A strong, brutal tyranny may experience palace coups, but never genuine social revolutions. So it is with Skarn. As soon as his secret police find evidence of serious disloyalty, his army occupies the region while Skarn turns everyone into something loathsome. Building a true revolutionary movement could take years, and even then, the PCs and revolutionaries must wait for a time when Skarn is weakened or absent.

Prospecting: A PC making a magic item or planning a ritual might need a special substance, like a purple moonstone or the bile of the Great Crested Whatamore. Unfortunately, this substance existed only on one dimension, which Skarn conquered and merged into the Congeries. The characters must enter the Congeries, find the substance in the remains of the dimension, and get out again without Skarn noticing them.

Deal with the Devil: Skarn may be a villain, but he’s also one of the mightiest sorcerers in the Multiverse. If the heroes cannot research a potent spell or locate an obscure dimension any other way, they can beg Skarn for help. The GM can raise the stakes by placing the whole Earth in danger... but the characters know that Skarn has the power to stop the threat. If characters approach him properly, they can talk him into doing just about anything – for a price. For a minor favor, Skarn may insist that the PCs become his quarry in a hunt: He promises to give them what they seek if they can escape the hunting preserve before he kills them.

For a world-sized favor, Skarn demands a world-sized favor in return. At the very least, he demands that the PCs release him from any vows to leave Earth alone. Skarn might even ask the characters to conquer a pocket dimension for him. (Kindly GMs might make the target dimension a hotbed of evil, so that heroes don’t feel too bad about handing it over to Skarn.) The Shaper never dickers, however: His first offer is his only offer.

Chapter 4: Tyrannon

ADVENTURES IN THULKOS

The heroes' first visit to Thulkos probably happens as part of a fight against Tyrannon. The characters might pursue one of the Conqueror's forms to his home dimension. Tyrannon might construct a magical superweapon that can attack across dimensions, and so the heroes must enter Thulkos to destroy it. After a few clashes with the Thousand-Headed God, characters might launch preemptive strikes into Thulkos.

These do not exhaust the possibilities for adventures in Thulkos, however. Like any dimension, Thulkos may possess some special substance, creature, or artifact that the heroes need for reasons that have nothing to do with Tyrannon. For instance, an ancient Lemurian scroll might tell how to forge a blade that deals true death to gods, but one of the ores comes from Thulkos. Characters who visit Thulkos several times may also develop personal relationships with people from that dimensions. Heroes might need to help allies escape to the star-ring, or rescue a friend from being sacrificed.

CHARACTERS FROM THULKOS

A hero from Thulkos would have great motivation to fight the Conqueror. Players who enjoy grim, driven characters might consider a refugee from Thulkos.

The gods imprisoned by Tyrannon tend to be quite powerful, comparable to his Lesser Thrones, but some of the gods who fled and hid are no more powerful than his Emissaries... or typical starting superheroes. Such a godling might escape to Earth and defend his new home against the Conqueror. A mightier god might also escape from Tyrannon's mystical prison, but lose much of his power in the process.

Old Thulkosian weapons provide another source for characters. A Thulkosian might find a long-lost device of sufficient power to make him a superhero. Pursued by Tyrannon's forces, he jumps through the same dimensional bridge Tyrannon uses to invade Earth, and joins the other defenders against the invasion.

People with super-powers can also come from realms that Tyrannon conquered, whether or not he has merged them to Thulkos. The Conqueror kills anyone who defies his reign, especially if they possess power of their own, which gives such a character a very good reason to escape Tyrannon's empire. Such characters could have any sort of powers or origin – mystic, mutant, weapon, anything – and be distinguished only from other heroes by his background.

OLD THULKOSIAN SPELLSMITHING

Before the rise of Tyrannon, Thulkosians made magic items through a combination of alchemy, smelting, and mechanics. Spellsmiths created special alloys, glasses, and ceramics in their forges, and shaped these magical materials into bars, plates, globes, or other simple shapes. Simple, low-power magic items might consist of a single shape, though even these might contain complex internal structure that looks like integrated circuits. More powerful items consist of two, three, or more shapes, linked together in strange machines.

To activate and control an Old Thulkosian magic item, a character must succeed at two Skill Rolls. First, the character may attempt either a Spell Research Roll (unmodified) or a Power: Magic Roll (at -1 per 10 Active Points of the device). The character also needs to succeed at an Electronics Roll to puzzle out the strange magical technology.

Tyrannon suppresses knowledge of Old Thulkosian Spellsmithing. He does not want his subjects to know about any power that does not come from him. Nevertheless, a determined or lucky searcher might find an Old Thulkosian device hidden in some long-lost bunker or ruin. A spellsmithing artifact might provide a way to defeat or threaten Tyrannon, whether because of the sheer power of some devices or because the magic that enabled Tyrannon to achieve his power can also bypass his defenses.

Someone who could study both Old Thulkosian Spellsmithing and Lemurian forge magic would find strong parallels between their methods, materials, and devices, though Old Thulkosian magic items look more "solid state" than the industrial style of Lemurian magic items. Did Thulkos have contact with Earth, thousands of years ago? Nobody knows... except maybe Tyrannon.

Old Thulkosian Magic Wand: The Old Thulkosians built a variety of "wands" as magical sidearms and multi-purpose tools. A typical wand consists of a rod of silvery glass with a golden handle and a collar of multi-colored jewels. The collar turns to bring the jewels in line with a pointer on the handle. Each jewel corresponds to one Power of the wand. These wands typically follow a theme, such as light powers, force powers, or earth powers, in a Multipower.

DIGITAL HERO #22

Tyrannist Divination: When servants of Tyrannon seek advice from their master, they toss their figurines into a circle and interpret how they fall. The arrangement of the idols – which one fell near another, the angles between them, and so one – reveal the future or the influences at work in a situation. The system is just as complex and detailed as astrology, the I Ching, or any other Earthly system of divination. It's also just as phony, if the diviner lacks the proper mystic training. A true sorcerer merely uses the pattern of the figurines to stimulate his supernatural intuition.

Tyrannist Divination: Precognitive Clairvoyance (Sight Group) (40 Active Points); Precognition Only (-1), Extra Time (1 Turn, -1¼), OAF (figurines, -1), Requires a KS: Blood Idolatry Roll (-½), Time Modifiers (-½). Total cost: 8 points.

Deadly Wrath of Tyrannon: Just about every Blood Idolator knows how to call on one or more aspects of Tyrannon to punish their enemies and the enemies of their god. As with Tyrannon himself, the special effect of the attack can vary: spontaneous human combustion for the Fire Throne, withering and aging for the Reptile Throne, an illusion of a deadly attack for the Octopoid Throne, and so on.

Deadly Wrath of Tyrannon: RKA 1d6, BOECV (+1), Does BODY (+1), Continuous (+1), Variable Special Effects (up to 8 throne-based effects, +¼) (64 Active Points); OAF (figurines, -1), Gestures (god-form postures, must Gesture throughout, -½), Incantations (must incant throughout, -½). Total cost: 21 points.

Dimensional Bridge Stabilizers: These are an appendage to Tyrannon's own power to create Gates through space and between dimensions. Tyrannon himself can guide untrained people to create stabilizing devices; so can any trained Blood Idolator. A small (One Hex) dimensional bridge requires a hex-sized disk that bears the images of the eight thrones, with the Avian Throne in the center. A large bridge employs a disk bearing the Avian Throne's image, ringed with seven pylons bearing the images of the other seven thrones. These disks and pylons are easy to craft and can be made from stone, metal, concrete, or any other sturdy material. Their magic comes from the consecration rite, which involves a sacrifice to each of the thrones. The disk and pylons do not enhance Gates produced by anyone except Tyrannon.



Challenges for Bricks

by David Rakonitz

The author of *The Ultimate Brick* gives us a look at plot hooks for bricks by examining the story of the most famous brick of all time.

The Labors of Hercules

The tale of the twelve labors of Hercules is one of the most recognized stories from Greek mythology. As atonement for certain crimes, Hercules performs twelve tasks set for him by King Eurystheus. This article discusses how elements of that mythical saga can be used to assist GMs in designing more interesting plots and sub-plots for brick characters in any genre. It first examines the kinds of opponents that make particularly interesting foes for bricks and then discusses other kinds of challenges that are particularly appropriate for bricks. When designing plots for archetypes other than bricks, GMs can apply the same principles to those archetypes.

This article uses the same definition of a brick as *The Ultimate Brick*. “A brick is any character whose strength (and usually resistance to injury as well) is greater than the average character in the campaign, and who is defined to some degree by these attributes.”

The Nature of the Plot

When developing a plot line for a brick, give some consideration to what kind of challenges the character is likely to face. Since the GM is developing a plot line with a brick in mind, the plot should provide opportunities to highlight various aspects of the brick’s Skills, Powers, and personality. Many of Hercules’s tasks involved acts of strength.

Hercules had to perform in order each task or die trying. In a roleplaying game, GMs often avoid this heavy-handed approach, as it reduces a player’s ability to choose his character’s path. Still, Player Characters often have to react to events set in motion by others or face the consequences of their inaction. A self-motivated character, however, can set in motion a plot line without the help of an instigator. An alien brick who is stranded on Earth might try to discover information about his race and whether they had previously visited Earth. This is a different kind of plot than having to stop Dr. Destroyer from taking over the world.

Archenemies for Bricks

We often judge heroes by the challenges that they face. These challenges can be a recurring foe, the brick’s own inner demons, or a meteor heading towards a planet. In the case of Hercules, one of the main antagonists throughout his life was the goddess Hera. She did not really confront the hero directly, but she set numerous obstacles in his path. During Hercules’ labors, the cowardly Eurystheus played the role of an untouchable taskmaster and recurring villain. When a brick has a foe that reappears periodically and particularly hates the brick, it can make both victories and defeats more meaningful because the brick and his nemesis have established some history together. The archenemy might be responsible for grand campaign-altering plots, or his goal might be limited to proving that he is a better fighter than the brick. In either case, the contrast between the brick and the archenemy should enrich the campaign.

When selecting an archenemy for a brick, a GM should remember that certain archetypes create an interesting contrast between a brick’s style and their own. This helps make the conflict more interesting. One can separate classic opponents for bricks into a few broad categories: foes who rely primarily on intelligence or wits to win a conflict, opponents who rely upon speed and agility, opponents who rely upon skill, and other bricks. These categories can overlap. Martial Artists, for example, often rely upon both skill and speed to win a fight. The nature of the campaign will determine how these generalizations apply.

Listed by genre are the descriptions of archetypes that often find themselves in conflicts with bricks. Most of the descriptions are self-explanatory. The reference to Masterminds refers to opponents who prefer not to get into fights themselves but let their minions take care of it. This category includes corrupt corporations and other organizations that are hostile to the brick. In the Pulp genre, the Mastermind’s fighting skills are usually minimal or non-existent. In other genres, the Mastermind might be a fierce combatant.

Not surprisingly, bricks often find themselves opposed by other bricks. For example, two super-strong brothers might have received their powers from the same source. Yet, fate and their choices in life have led them down different roads, and now, they are on opposite sides of a conflict. The nature of the conflict could be so intense that they become archenemies.

CLASSIC OPPONENTS BY GENRE

Fantasy

- Alchemists
- Archers
- Bricks (This includes giants and other monsters that rely primarily on strength)
- Mages
- Monks/Martial Artists
- Tricksters (This includes thieves, imps, and other characters that rely on subterfuge)

Modern, Pulp, and Science Fiction

- Bricks
- Mad Scientists
- Martial Artists
- Masterminds
- Sharpshooters

Superhero

- Bricks
- Gadgeteers
- Martial Artists
- Masterminds
- Mentalists
- Sharpshooters

These classic opponents not only make good archenemies; they also make good intermediate challenges for bricks. In Marvel Comics' *The Incredible Hulk*, the Leader, a powerful mentalist and skilled inventor, would often manipulate other characters into fighting the Hulk, while he watched the battle. Yet, by the climax of the story, he would face the Hulk directly as he sought to show that his intellect was more than a match for the Hulk's strength.

Some archenemies are functionally immortal. They may get thwarted, imprisoned, or even killed. Yet, they keep coming back. GMs need to monitor closely how often they use an archenemy. An archenemy, sometimes, needs to be absent for an extended period of time so that his next appearance will be fresh. Other times, the archenemy might truly be gone, but his legacy remains to confound the hero.

The Hydra: The Many Faces of Villainy

Just as the hydra had many heads, there are many different kinds of opponents that a character might face. Although the technique can be overused, there is nothing wrong with creating opponents who are designed to counter a brick's favorite Combat Maneuvers or Powers. The list below indicates some viable responses to characters who overuse certain standard Combat Maneuvers.

ANTI-BRICK TACTICS

<u>Maneuver</u>	<u>Response</u>
Grab & Squeeze	Damage Shield Desolidification Martial Escape Teleportation
Haymaker	Agents with Held Actions, to provide support fire Desolidification Energy Blast with Double KB Force Wall Martial Block Martial Dodge Physical Damage Reduction (only versus Haymakers)
Move Through	Agents with Held Actions, to provide support fire Force Wall Knockback Resistance Martial Throw Physical Damage Reduction (only versus Move Throughs)

Ideally, this type of opponent should not have so much power as to be able to crush the brick casually; the brick should be able to win if he is willing to use some different maneuvers and approaches. Thus, a brick who likes to use the Grab and Squeeze maneuver might face the Sinister Porcupine with his Damage Shield that has the Double Penetrating Advantage.

Double Teams/Distractions

If a group's brick is particularly tough and dangerous, capable opponents will recognize this. A supervillain group might send its martial artist against a superhero brick with the intent of just keeping the brick busy with Blocks and Dodges, while the rest of the villains concentrate on the brick's more vulnerable friends. Of course, they might just send their own brick after the troublemaker.

In the superhero genre, well-trained agents for a villainous organization might aim their guns at cars and other objects that a brick likes to throw. Not only will this destroy a brick's weapons of opportunity, it might also create a fire to distract and delay the brick and his friends. Agents can also wait for a brick to perform a Move By or Move Through and then launch a barrage of attacks against the brick, whose DCV is now significantly lower. In the fantasy genre, the evil baron might decide to stop wasting his minions by sending them into hand-to-hand combat against the mighty barbarian and instead have his archers fire at the intruder from the battlements.

Fires, walls collapsing upon innocents, and other disasters can distract a brick from the combat. These incidents might be set up by the villain or may just be a natural consequence of the fight. In some cases, the event might not qualify as a distraction at all. If a victim is about to be sacrificed as part of a horrible summoning ritual, the brick needs to stop fighting the cultists and rescue the victim before it's too late.

Power Drains and Transfers

Special consideration should be given to Power Drains and Power Transfers. If a brick does not have Power Defense, STUN Drains and STUN Transfers are particularly effective against a character with very high regular defenses. Like an attack with the NND Power Advantage, Drains and Transfers ignore regular defenses; additionally, the lost points only return slowly. Drains and Transfers against the brick's defenses can make the character vulnerable to attacks, which he would normally ignore, but it is important to remember that the amount rolled is halved because the Drain or Transfer is directed against a Defensive Power.

Since bricks are built around STR and rely upon it very heavily, they are particularly vulnerable to STR Drains and Transfers. Unless the brick has a secondary attack, a brick with reduced STR is going to have a difficult time using his standard strategies, and will need to adopt a different approach. Instead of grabbing and crushing an agent's gun, the brick might satisfy himself with a Disarm Maneuver or using a Grab and Throw. More shocking, the brick might try to take advantage of the villain's Psychological Limitations or the tactical situation.

STR Drains are particularly effective against bricks in certain campaigns. Bricks in fantasy campaigns and superhero campaigns tend to rely on their STR to subdue opponents. In Modern Era campaigns, a brick is more likely to have access to weapons that are not powered by physical strength, such as guns. Low level STR drains are not as crippling on that kind of character. In science fiction campaigns, bricks may have access to various sophisticated weapons that are not dependent upon their current STR. If the STR Drain returns very slowly, the GM should make sure that there are still things for the weakened brick to do. It can be very discouraging for a player to have a completely ineffective character.

It's Not Just Combat: Other Kinds of Challenges

Not all of a brick's challenges are personified by a tangible opponent. The situation itself can be the challenge.

THE NEMEAN LION: IT'S ALL ABOUT STRENGTH

Hercules beat the Nemean Lion by strangling it. Without his strength, he could not have succeeded. Bricks have a high strength and should get the opportunity to use it in non-combat situations. In a high-powered galactic superhero game, the brick might have to make a serious of STR Rolls to push a meteor off course, so that it will not hit a planet. In a fantasy hero game, the brick might need to use a bench to ram open a locked and barred door. When a mine is collapsing, let the brick, even though he lacks super-strength, grab some beams, brace the walls, and buy his teammates a few extra Phases if he can make a successful STR Roll.

The Ultimate Brick gives the effective STR and movement rates of asteroids, avalanches, and tidal waves. In the super hero genre, a brick might need to use both his strength and his intelligence to divert an avalanche. The brick will need to choose whether to divert the avalanche or try to get everyone out of the way. In order to make the situation more dramatic, the GM can map out the area and consider the possible consequences of the disaster. This extra planning will give the players greater satisfaction when they overcome the problem. If the GM does not intend for the natural disaster to be a significant encounter, the GM can more quickly resolve the situation with a series of appropriate rolls. A STR Roll with appropriate modifications and complementary rolls can determine whether the brick's barrier is able to divert the flood, or at least shield the people behind him.

A fire generates heat damage (an Energy Blast or a Killing Attack) and damage from smoke (typically a NND attack). The resulting smoke can obscure vision (Darkness). If the GM wants to make extinguishing a fire a major encounter, the GM can map where the fire is located, how much damage it is generating and where it's located. The GM would then place on the map Normals who are threatened by the fire and determine the sorts of materials that might be damaged by the fire or feed it. If a building for some reason contains tanks of liquid oxygen, the heroes have to either make sure that the fire never reaches the tanks or else get everyone to a safe distance before the fire ignites the tanks.

A skyscraper damaged in a fight between superheroes and supervillains may need to be braced at a number of different points or else it will collapse. This problem becomes even more difficult if Mechanon has released hunter-killer robots into the damaged building to slay a scientist who threatens one of Mechanon's schemes. In a heroic level campaign, the brick might not be able to deflect the disaster completely, but his actions, if successful, can still make a difference. For example, he could

DIGITAL HERO #22

brace a wall, which would allow civilians to get to safety.

For those interested in a sample disaster scenario, the old *Champions* supplement *Challenge For Champions* contains an adventure that requires the heroes to respond to a large-scale industrial fire.

THE STABLES OF AUKEIAS: SOMETIMES STRENGTH IS NOT ENOUGH

Many of Hercules's tasks required more than the direct application of force. He needed his skills as a hunter to capture the hind sacred to Artemis, and he diverted a river to cleanse the stables of Augeias. He had to get Hades' permission to remove Cerberus from its post. Some of the most difficult challenges for a brick are not physical threats but are based on social interactions. The character can have difficulty interacting with his supervisor, fellow employees, or an IRS auditor. This problem could be because of a misunderstanding, the other party being in a bad mood, or perhaps the manipulations of an outside enemy. Physical force is not going to effectively solve these problems. Persuading a frightened witness to testify against a mobster requires some empathy and social skills. A brick can also be confronted with moral challenges. Upon learning that a thief has been stealing technology in an effort to save his daughter's life, does the character hand over the thief to the authorities or let him go?

In other situations, the brick's strength can cause him trouble. In some campaigns, bricks are rather cavalier about property destruction. In a superhero campaign, law enforcement might take a very dim view about a brick who smashes a target with a car and then uses his heat beam projector to ignite the car's gasoline tank in order to do more damage to the target. It will not matter that no civilians were hurt; that sort of extensive property damage is expensive to repair. If law enforcement agencies can be persuaded that the damage was necessary because the alternatives were worse, individuals may, depending upon the type of superhero campaign, still seek reimbursement for their losses. They might file civil suits against characters to compensate them for the damages, lost wages, and possibly the intentional infliction of emotional distress. If this kind of aggressive property damage occurs at a supervillain's isolated base, it is not usually much of a problem.

One technique to keep a superhero brick from constantly throwing cars and other large objects on the battlefield is to give the character a reason to keep the property from being destroyed.

Example: As Ironclad lifts the car and prepares to throw it at Ogre, he hears a

startled cry coming from the car and realizes that a small child had been sleeping in the back of the car.

Perils along the Way: Doors and Wall Traps

For some of Hercules's labors, getting there was part of the challenge. If a GM wants bricks to be a little more cautious before they break down a door or wall, the GM might decide to install any of the following in a dungeon or a mastermind villain's base.

SHOCK ABSORBERS

A cushion of absorbent material is placed in the wall and the exterior of the wall is coated with an absorbent material that will disperse kinetic force. This modification makes the wall more resistant to physical damage and less likely to be destroyed by Haymakers using STR and Move Throughs. In game terms, this design is built as follows:

Shock Absorbing Wall: Armor +4 PD (6 Active Points); Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50% (30 Active Points); Only Against Physical Haymakers And Move Throughs (-1½). Total cost: 18 points.

WALL AND DOOR SNARES

Some bad guys have designed their bases so that anyone who tries to punch or tunnel his way through will discover that the wall or door contains a dangerous "filling" or snare. This filling will damage the character trying to punch through the wall. No roll against the attacker's DCV is necessary because of the Damage Shield Advantage. Some of these snares function only once and then exhaust themselves. Alternatively, they might remain until the wall or door is breached. If a villain wants only some portion of the base to have this defense, the snare may be purchased with the Partial Coverage Limitation. While there are a variety of possible snares, they are purchased in the same fashion. A GM may want to reduce the BODY of the modified door or wall containing these snares to represent that the door or wall is partially hollow, not solid.

Model 1 ("One Shot"): 60 Active Point Power, Damage Shield (+½), Fully Invisible (+1), Trigger (wall damaged, +¼), Continuous (+1) (225 Active Points); 1 Charge (-2), Immobile (-1), Only Applies If the Wall or Door Takes BODY (-1¼). Total cost: 43 points.

Model 2 ("Ongoing"): 60 Active Point Power, Damage Shield (+½), Fully Invisible (+1), Trigger (wall damaged, +¼), Continuous (+1) (225 Active Points); Immobile (-1), Only Applies If the Wall or Door Takes BODY (-1¼). Total cost: 69 points.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Larousse World Mythology, edited by Pierre Grimal (1976).

Some snares are even more effective against characters who attack with Haymaker and Move Through maneuvers, since these maneuvers leave the character off balance and more vulnerable to the snare. To represent this type of snare, purchase any additional Power Points for the snare with an additional -1½ Limitation on those Power Points.

Some possible snares are described below.

ACID

A thin elastic bladder filled with highly corrosive acid has been placed in the wall. When the wall is damaged, the bladder ruptures and the acid pours out. The walls are specially treated so that they will not also be dissolved. A Killing Attack with the Armor Piercing and Penetrating Advantages could be used to represent this attack, or a GM could give the attack the No Normal Defense Advantage if it is exceptionally corrosive acid.

ELECTRICITY

Cables conducting large amounts of electricity are run through the base's walls. Another approach is to store the electrical energy into capacitors that are placed in the wall. Either way, if the wall is breached or takes damage, the attacker receives a nasty shock.

GAS

Pipes containing a knockout gas or something more lethal are located in the wall. Damaging the wall will damage the pipes and release the gas. If the gas will fill an area once the Damage Shield is triggered, the snare should also have the Area Effect or Explosion Advantage in addition to the previously mentioned Advantages and Limitations.

FROST

An ultra-cold liquid is contained in pipes running through the base or perhaps a permanent spell of cold has been placed on the walls. This may be purchased as an Energy Blast with the NND Power Advantage with the defenses being Life Support: Cold, thick fur, or an active Energy Damage Shield. Alternatively, it might be designed as a Power Drain, which saps a character's STR and STUN.

MONOFILAMENT WEB

Very thin, strong filaments have been strung from one end of a frame to another. A series of these frames are then slid into sections of the wall so that they are parallel to the wall. Anyone who tries to smash his way through a wall will be sliced by the monofilaments. This snare is typically purchased as a physical Killing Attack with the Armor Piercing and Penetrating Advantages.

Apples of Hesperides: Bricks and Death Traps

After Atlas secured the apples of Hesperides, he tried to leave Hercules with the responsibility of holding up the sky, but Hercules was able to fool Atlas into taking back his old burden. During that encounter, Hercules found himself in a type of death trap, and he could not use his strength to escape it.

Deathtraps oriented toward a brick can provide an exciting challenge. A brick can escape from the simplest death trap by breaking free from a restraint or shattering a barrier. A more complex trap requires the brick to focus his STR against a specific portion of the trap. Some parts of the trap are heavily armored, but other parts of the trap are vulnerable. For example, the door out of the cell might have DEF 15 and BODY 8, but the small locking mechanism, which requires a PER Roll to locate, might only have DEF 11 and BODY 2. The death trap becomes even more complex if the brick needs to use his STR to manipulate the trap so that the brick can escape. For example, straining against his manacles, Defender forces the chain, which connect his manacles, into the path of the laser cutter. The laser cutter slices the chains en route to Defender. Now, with his arms free, Defender can wreck the conveyer belt that was carrying him towards the laser cutter.

One way to force a brick to look for more subtle ways to escape a death trap is to temporarily reduce the brick's STR. This drain could be caused by energy siphons or simply represent that the brick is so tightly bound that he does not have enough leverage to effectively use his full STR. Once a character is away from the energy siphons or free from these restraining bonds, he, of course, gets all of his STR back immediately.

Some of the most dangerous death traps put a normal, usually a DNPC, in jeopardy in addition to the brick. The brick might be able to survive swimming through a pool containing hungry sharks, but the DNPC would never make it. A good death trap needs to be solvable, but the solution does not have to be obvious. Let the brick use his head!

Putting It All Together

In his labors, Hercules faced a mix of opponents and challenges. Some represented physical threats. Others required him to use his strength and brains creatively. All the while, he was plagued by a recurring villain. When the labors were completed, there remained a story that is one of the best known in Greek mythology. Hopefully, this article has provided you with more tools to make your own adventures as memorable.

Rigellian Code-Talkers

by Bob Greenwade

Almost since their first contact with Humans in the early 2200s, Rigellians (detailed on page 32 of *Alien Wars*) have possessed and exercised vocal gifts beyond – occasionally *well* beyond – the abilities of most other species.

While the Rigellians themselves readily, if casually, exploited these abilities for their own purposes, Humans were surprisingly reluctant to do so. This may have been because of a distrust of a species with abilities they did not possess, or simply a lack of creativity. In any event, for nearly a century and a half of contact only a handful of entrepreneurial Humans joined with the Rigellians in finding new applications for Rigellians' vocal talents.

That changed during the last half of the Xenovore War, shortly after Admiral Aleksandr Zhukov took over command of the United Earth military. Among his many other improvements over his predecessor's practices, Zhukov took a page from 20th Century Earth history and employed Rigellians as couriers of secret information. In recognition of the Navajo "Code-Talkers" of Earth's Second World War, he dubbed them Rigellian Code-Talkers.

Rigellian Code-Talkers

The main talent Zhukov sought to exploit was certain Rigellians' ability to "embed" a message for a specific individual into otherwise normal-sounding speech. By broadcasting from ship to ship with this method, communications could appear to say one thing when in fact they were saying something else entirely.

Eventually the Code-Talkers even developed a word-substitution code using animals, geographic locations, historical figures, and other features specific to Rigel V, in order to further confuse the enemy. For example, the Xenovores themselves were referred to as *lambritta*, after a small scorpion-like mammal living on Rigel V. (Like most codes, this qualifies as a Language, though its maximum level is 2 points.)

The success of the Code-Talkers was one instrumental factor (along with other significant Rigellian contributions to the Xenovore War) leading to the granting of a Senatorial seat to Rigel during the Terran Empire period. This, in turn, led to the continued use of Rigellian Code-Talkers during those three centuries. Rigellians were employed extensively as undercover police in both planetary and Imperial law enforcement (though more went to the ISP than the TSS), as couriers or undercover agents for the TIC, and as communications officers in the Imperial Navy. When the Terran Rebellion broke out in earnest during the 2670s, Rigellian Code-Talkers were instrumental in the efforts of both sides.

Shortly after the formation of the Galactic Federation, several Rigellians (and a few non-Rigellians who had learned the technique) formed the Society of Code-Talkers. With its headquarters in downtown Ngailith, Rigel's largest city, it's as much a guild for singers, speech therapists, and other voice-related professionals as it is a training ground and licensing society for the old Code-Talking practice. Society membership is a 1-point Perk; an actual Code-Talker could be a full member for 2 points. Neither is required to practice as a Code-Talker.

The Package Deal shown here is applicable to Code-Talkers during the Xenovore Wars period, starting with the formation of the service in 2356. Those during the Terran Empire period would take the Rigellian Substitution Code as an option (more likely early in the period), though otherwise it's valid into the Galactic Federation and beyond. It is taken *in addition to* any service Package Deals, such as the UE Navy (during the Xenovore Wars), intelligence services, or law enforcement (during the Terran Empire).

This Package may *only* be taken by Rigellians, unless the player can demonstrate an *extremely* good justification (though the justification requirement may be relaxed somewhat in the Galactic Federation era and later).

RIGELLIAN CODE-TALKER PACKAGE DEAL

Cost Skill

- 3 Cryptography
- 3 Ventriloquism
- 9 Advanced Rigellian Embedded Messaging (at the *High Secrecy* level or greater; see below)
- 2 Language: Rigellian Substitution Code

Total Package Cost: 17 points

Options

- 2 Membership: Society of Code-Talkers

POWER LEVELS

The GM should be very wary about letting PCs have the truly advanced versions of any of these abilities. In the wrong hands, they can be *extremely* powerful and unbalancing, potentially making a mess out of the GM's carefully-crafted storylines.

At the same time, those high levels are rather expensive, for exactly that reason – and the GM may actually *want* to run a high-powered game featuring advanced Code-Talkers, high-level psis (see *Terran Empire*, pages 129-131, and *Digital Hero* #8, pages 17-21), powerful cyborgs, Mandaarian technology, and similar features.

IN ADDITION...

Besides the abilities listed in the main text, many Rigellian Code-Talkers also take the following:

- Acting
 - Analyze Rigellian Vocal Tricks
 - Analyze Voice Stress (see the *Voice Stress Analysis* ability in the main text)
 - Bugging
 - Concealment
 - Conversation
 - Mimicry
 - Oratory
 - Persuasion
 - Professional Skills in various forms of music (most often singing) and public speaking
 - Rigellian Code-Talking (as a form of the *Power Skill*; prior to the Xenovore Wars, this would be called *Rigellian Vocal Tricks*)
 - Perfect Pitch
 - The *Blasé* or *Immovable* variations of Resistance (5E page 65 sidebar)
 - Up to 12 points of Hearing Group Flash Defense (possibly more, with the GM's permission)
- If the GM has *Fantasy Hero*, he may also allow the *Fascination* and *Inspire* Talents (see pages 103-104 of that book).

At the GM's discretion, some Code-Talkers – particularly those in the *Galactic*

CONTEMPLATORS

In the early 25th Century a group of Rigellians, founded by some of the original Code-Talkers, established a center on Rigel V for training and development in Code-Talking. By the century's end this center was renowned, and its instructors, known as the Contemplators, were widely respected.

To most people, the name "Contemplator" seems like a misnomer or (for those of a more paranoid or racist bent) euphemism. However, those who most closely study Rigellian vocal abilities do indeed lead lives of quiet contemplation, and find philosophical insight from sound and analogies to sound. Many of them even have something of a reputation for pacifism, and while this isn't always necessarily earned or even accurate it does tend to soften the force of their commands and make them targets for bullies.

By the end of the 26th Century, Rigellian Contemplation Centers can be found in every city in the galaxy with a sizeable Rigellian population (that is, above roughly 5,000). Contemplators don't just teach the vocal tricks of Rigellian Code-Talking; they also train singers and public speakers of all species.

The package shown here is for a full-fledged Contemplator. A Contemplator Apprentice, just starting in training, would have a 1-point Membership; a qualified Code-Talker would have a 2-point Membership.

CONTEMPLATOR PACKAGE DEAL**Cost Skill**

- 3 Analyze Rigellian Vocal Tricks
- 3 Rigellian Code-Talking (see sidebar)
- 2 KS: Philosophy
- 2 PS: Singer
- 6 Choose two from: Bugging, Cryptography, Conversation, Language, Lipreading, Oratory, Persuasion, Ventriloquism
- 3 Membership: Contemplator
- 20 20 points of Code-Talker powers

Talents

- 3 Perfect Pitch

Disadvantages

- 15 Psychological Limitation: Contemplative Lifestyle (Very Common, Moderate)

Total Package Cost: 21**Options**

- 2 Language: Rigellian Substitution Code
- 5 Reputation: Pacifist 8-

Code-Talker Powers (Rigellian Audio Tricks)

Whether employed as Code-Talkers, sworn as Contemplators, or from some other walk of life, Rigellians have a number of tricks and talents they can learn using their vocal and hearing abilities. Though some were developed by and for the community of Code-Talkers during the Xenovore Wars, most date from the days of feudalism and mystic legends, or at least to the Age of Heroes (corresponding to the Superheroic Age on Earth, 1938-2020; see the sample character Blue Screamer for more on this). In any case, by the time of the Terran Empire most are available to any Rigellian with the inclination to learn them.

That said, any given Rigellian generally only knows two or three of these talents at most, and rarely does anyone learn mastery in more than one. The few who do master several, typically on the order of five or more, normally lead lives of contemplation, practice, and teaching (the Contemplators, above) rather than lives of adventuring – though fate has its way of dealing anyone an unexpected hand.

In the write-ups below, the first version is the most basic form of the ability, as it would be initially learned by a practitioner, while subsequent options are listed in the approximate order in which advancement is normally made; thus, the listed cost of each assumes that all preceding options are also taken. Taking any later option before (or without) one of its predecessors is unusual, and allowed only with the GM's permission (and of course the cost calculation is up to the player).

Except where noted otherwise, these abilities may *only* be possessed by Rigellian characters, or (with the GM's permission) members of other species with cybernetic larynxes and some form or source of Ultrasonic Hearing. On the other hand, any existing Rigellian (or otherwise eligible) character should be allowed to learn them, *if* they fit into the character's conception *and* if the character can find someone to teach them to him.

DIGITAL HERO #22

ADVANCED RIGELLIAN EMBEDDED MESSAGING

Effect: Hearing Group Images, Single Target

Target/Area Affected: Self

Duration: Constant

Range: No Range

END Cost: 0

Description: Some Rigellians are able to “embed” one spoken message inside another. While the most basic form of this (as described on page 32 of *Alien Wars*) can be represented with a simple -4 to the *Ventriloquism* Skill, a more advanced form allows the speaker to target the intended individual even over broadcast and recorded speech.

The Skill Versus Skill in the *Requires a Skill Roll* Limitation is an outside observer’s PER Roll against the user’s Cryptography or Ventriloquism Roll, whichever is made by less. In more advanced versions of the ability, PER Roll penalties apply to the outside observer’s PER Roll for these purposes. However, the observer must be attempting to perceive a hidden message (the PER Roll is not automatic).

If the speaker misses his Cryptography Roll, the message is perceptible to all observers with a simple, automatic PER Roll. If he misses his Ventriloquism Roll, the message is unintelligible. If he misses both, it’s both generally perceptible and unintelligible.

Advanced Rigellian Embedded

Messaging: *Hearing Group Images, 1” Radius, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2) (7 Active Points); Incantations (Throughout, -1/2), No Range (-1/2), Requires a Cryptography Roll and a Ventriloquism Roll (Subject to Skill versus Skill, -1), Single Target (-1). Total cost: 2 points.*

Options:

- 1) *Improved Secrecy:* -3 to PER Rolls for detecting and perceiving the hidden message. 21 Active Points; Total cost: 5 points.
- 2) *Refined Technique:* The Required Skill Rolls are -1 per 20 Active Points. Total cost: 6 points.
- 3) *High Secrecy:* -6 to PER Rolls for detecting and perceiving the hidden message. 34 Active Points; Total cost: 9 points.
- 4) *Reliable Embedding:* Remove Cryptography as a required Skill. Total cost: 10 points.
- 5) *Maximum Secrecy:* -9 to PER Rolls for detecting and perceiving the hidden message. 48 Active Points; Total cost: 14 points.
- 6) *Expert Technique:* Remove Skill versus Skill. Total cost: 15 points.
- 7) *Master Technique:* Remove the Required Skill Roll altogether. Total cost: 16 points.

ADVANCED RIGELLIAN MIMICRY

Effect: Shape Shift to Hearing Group

Target/Area Affected: Self

Duration: Constant

Range: Self

END Cost: 1

Description: As an extension of the *Mimicry* Skill, this ability – a sort of “super-mimicry” – enables the individual to disguise his voice so well that even most experts can’t recognize it. It’s a difficult technique at first, with beginners having to rely heavily on their natural *Mimicry*, but true masters can fool even the most sophisticated machines.

Advanced Rigellian Mimicry: *Shape Shift (Hearing Group, Any Humanoid Vocal Pattern) (15 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV, Only to Activate, -1/2), Extra Time (1 Turn, Only to Activate, -3/4), Requires a Mimicry Roll (Skill versus Skill Applies, -3/4). Total cost: 5 points.*

Options:

- 1) *Quick Change:* Reduce Extra Time to Full Phase (-1/4). Total cost: 6 points.
- 2) *Tireless Use:* Add Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2). 22 Active Points; Total cost: 9 points.
- 3) *Refined Technique:* The Required Skill Roll is -1 per 20 Active Points (-1/2). Total cost: 10 points.
- 4) *True Mimicry:* Add the *Imitation* Adder. 37 Active Points; Total cost: 17 points.
- 5) *Improved Focus:* Reduce Concentration to 1/2 DCV (-1/4). Total cost: 19 points.
- 6) *Very Quick Change:* Remove Extra Time. Total cost: 21 points.
- 7) *Improved Technique:* Remove Skill versus Skill from Requires a Mimicry Roll (-1/4). Total cost: 25 points.
- 8) *Complete Focus:* Remove Concentration. Total cost: 30 points.
- 9) *Instant Change:* Add the *Instant Change* Adder. 45 Active Points; Total cost: 36 points.
- 10) *Master Technique:* Remove Requires a Mimicry Roll. Total cost: 45 points.
- 11) *Selective Method:* Add the *Selective Advantage* (+1/4). Total cost: 52 points.
- 12) *Absolute Mimicry:* Add the *Cellular* Adder. Total cost: 70 points.

Champions era – may have talents or abilities not in the “usual catalog.” Such abilities may be based on those found in the Sonic Powers section of the *UNTIL Superpowers Database* (pages 192-198), or the hearing-based abilities in the Hypersenses section of the same book (pages 105-108). They may also be created whole cloth, subject to the GM’s approval. The new powers should follow the power levels and other limitations exemplified here.

**LIMITATION:
VOICE RANGE
(-¼)**

This Limitation, introduced in *Fantasy Hero* as a form of the *Incantations*

Limitation, is applicable for many genres.

Characters sometimes use their voices not for spoken words of power, but to represent a power that only works if the target of the power can hear the character speaking, singing, or the like. This assumes a relatively normal volume of speech – the character may increase his voice slightly to “project” better, but cannot shout or scream. As a default, assume hearing has a range of 20” if no other noise is present. If anything interferes with a target’s ability to hear – such as other loud noises in the vicinity, heavy headgear, or plugging one’s ears – the GM should reduce the effective range of the power, remove some of its Active Points of effect, or rule that it cannot affect the target at all. (A deaf target is automatically immune.)

When combined with *Area Of Effect (Radius)* at the +1 level, and if appropriate the Limitation *No Range, Voice Range* allows a character to affect anyone who can hear him with this power.

**ADVANCED RIGELLIAN
VENTRILOQUISM**

Effect: Hearing Group Images

Target/Area Affected: One Hex

Duration: Constant

Range: 25”

END Cost: 1

Description: Normal ventriloquism doesn’t actually cause the speaker’s voice to come from a different location; rather it’s an illusion – a sort of “vocal legerdemain,” similar to sleight of hand tricks – based on the observer’s expectations. However, some Rigellians learn to actually focus the projection of the voices so the sound actually does come from another source.

This is the only ability in this list that non-Rigellians can learn without special surgery or equipment – even a few standard Humans have learned it.

Advanced Rigellian Ventriloquism:

Hearing Group Images, 1” Radius (5 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV Throughout, -1), Incantations (Throughout, -½), Requires a Ventriloquism Roll (-½), Set Effect (Own Voice, -1), Voice Range (-¼). Total cost: 1 point.

Options:

- 1) *Improved Precision:* Add -2 to PER. 11 Active Points; Total cost: 3 points.
- 2) *Greater Precision:* Increase PER penalty to -4. 17 Active Points; Total cost: 4 points.
- 3) *Improved Focus:* Increase Concentration to (½ DCV Throughout, -½). Total cost: 5 points.
- 4) *Refined Precision:* Increase PER penalty to -6. 23 Active Points; Total cost: 6 points.
- 5) *Reduced Effort:* Add Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼). 29 Active Points; Total cost: 8 points.
- 6) *Full Focus:* Remove Concentration. Total cost: 9 points.
- 7) *Improved Technique:* Decrease the penalty for Requires a Ventriloquism Roll to -1 per 20 Active Points (-¼). Total cost: 10 points.
- 8) *Vocal Effects:* Reduce Set Effect to Own Voice, Including Effects Possible with Other Code-Talking Abilities (-½). Total cost: 12 points.
- 9) *Master Technique:* Remove Requires a Ventriloquism Roll. Total cost: 13 points.
- 10) *Superior Precision:* Increase PER penalty to -8. 36 Active Points; Total cost: 16 points.
- 11) *Effortless:* Increase Reduced Endurance to (0 END, +½). 43 Active Points; Total cost: 19 points.
- 12) *Master Precision:* Increase PER penalty to -10. 52 Active Points; Total cost: 23 points.

AMPLIFIED VOICE

Effect: Hearing Group Images, +2 to PER

Target/Area Affected: Self

Duration: Constant

Range: Self Only

END Cost: 3

Description: A character with this ability can speak much more loudly than others, and project his voice farther. While the initial ability is relatively minor and unreliable, a true master can be easily heard over nearly any background noise.

This is usually the first ability (after the *Ventriloquism* Skill, of course) learned among the few non-Rigellians recruited into the Code-Talker program. It’s also the one ability regularly taught by Contemplators to those not qualified to be Code-Talkers (that is, singers and speakers under their tutelage).

Amplified Voice: *Hearing Group Images, +2 to PER (11 Active Points); Set Effect (Only to Amplify Character’s Voice, -1), Increased Endurance Cost (3 × END, -1), No Range (-½), Requires a Ventriloquism Roll (-½), Self-Only (-½). Total cost: 2 points.*

Options:

- 1) *Refined Technique:* Reduce the Active Point Penalty for Requires a Ventriloquism Roll to -1 per 20 Active Points (-¼). Total cost: 3 points.
- 2) *Improved Amplification:* Increase to +4 to PER. 17 Active Points; Total cost: 4 points.
- 3) *Reduced Effort:* Remove Increased Endurance Cost. Total cost: 5 points.
- 4) *Reliable Technique:* Remove Requires a Ventriloquism Roll. Total cost: 6 points.
- 5) *Greater Amplification:* Increase to +6 to PER. 23 Active Points; Total cost: 8 points.
- 6) *Minor Effort:* Add Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼). 29 Active Points; Total cost: 10 points.
- 7) *Master Amplification:* Increase to +8 to PER. 36 Active Points; Total cost: 12 points.
- 8) *Minimal Effort:* Increased Reduced Endurance to 0 END (+½). 43 Active Points; Total cost: 14 points.
- 9) *Ultimate Amplification:* Increase to +10 to PER. 52 Active Points; Total cost: 17 points.

DIGITAL HERO #22

ECHOLOCATION

Effect: Active Sonar

Target/Area Affected: Self

Duration: Constant

Range: LOS

END Cost: 1

Description: A Rigellian can emit high-pitched, or even ultrasonic, “pings” and listen to the sound as it bounces back to sense his environment.

Echolocation: *Active Sonar (15 Active Points); Costs END (-½), Incantations (throughout, -½), Requires a Ventriloquism Roll (Active Point Penalty is -1 per 5 Active Points, -1). Total cost: 5 points.*

Options:

- 1) *Simpler Technique:* Reduce the Active Point Penalty on the Ventriloquism Roll to the normal -1 per 10 Active Points (-½). Total cost: 6 points.
- 2) *Full Range:* Add Increased Arc Of Perception (360°). 20 Active Points; Total cost: 8 points.
- 3) *Tireless Technique:* Remove Costs END. Total cost: 10 points.
- 4) *Improved Technique:* Reduce the Active Point Penalty on the Ventriloquism Roll to -1 per 20 Active Points (-¼). Total cost: 11 points.
- 5) *Fine Sensing:* Add Discriminatory. 25 Active Points; Total cost: 14 points.
- 6) *Master Technique:* Remove Requires a Ventriloquism Roll. Total cost: 17 points.
- 7) *Recognition Sensing:* Add Analyze. 30 Active Points; Total cost: 20 points.
- 8) *Silent Sonar:* Remove Incantations; the sense becomes Passive. Total cost: 30 points.

PIERCING VOICE

Effect: EB 2d6, AVLD (Hearing Flash Defense)

Target/Area Affected: Explosion

Duration: 1 phase

Range: No Range

END Cost: 3

Description: The character can make a piercing, high-pitched squeal so loud and powerful it can cause dizziness and even unconsciousness. At the beginning level only those standing very near the character would be affected at all, but blasts from more advanced practitioners can be quite devastating.

Because of its combat application, the GM should be even more careful about letting this ability into his game than with the other abilities described here. It can become too great of a temptation for some players used to playing *Champions* to make an Alien Wars or Terran Empire campaign look more like a superhero game.

Piercing Voice: *Energy Blast 2d6, AVLD (Hearing Flash Defense, +1½), Explosion (+½), Personal Immunity (+¼) (32 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV, Totally Unaware of Nearby Events, -¾), Extra Time (Full Phase, -½), Incantations (-¼), No Range (-½), Side Effects (Voice Flash 6d6, Always Occurs, -1). Total cost: 8 points.*

Options:

- 1) *Less Strain on the Larynx:* Reduce Side Effects to Voice Flash 3d6 (-½). Total cost: 9 points.
- 2) *Mental Focus:* Reduce Concentration to 0 DCV (-½). Total cost: 10 points.
- 3) *Less Tiring Method:* Add Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼). 35 Active Points; Total cost: 11 points.
- 4) *Increased Volume:* Increase Energy Blast to 3d6. 52 Active Points; Total cost: 16 points.
- 5) *Improved Mental Focus:* Reduce Concentration to ½ DCV (-¼). Total cost: 17 points.
- 6) *Minimal Strain on the Larynx:* Remove Side Effects. Total cost: 21 points.
- 7) *Improved Projection:* Increase Explosion to (-1d6 per 3”, +1). 60 Active Points; Total cost: 24 points.
- 8) *Quick Attack:* Remove Extra Time. Total cost: 30 points.
- 9) *Full Mental Focus:* Remove Concentration. Total cost: 34 points.
- 10) *Devastating Attack:* Increase to Energy Blast 4d6. 80 Active Points; Total cost: 46 points.
- 11) *Effortless Attack:* Increase Reduced Endurance to 0 END (+½). 85 Active Points; Total cost: 49 points.

Note that Vocal Range works on “Line Of Hearing” – the target must be able to hear the character directly, whether the character can see the target or not. This does not include sound broadcast over radio or other communications equipment; the sound must carry directly. (This can be overcome with the *Indirect Advantage* at the +½ level.) Vocal Range also imposes normal Range Modifiers on the power even if it normally would have none (as with Mental Powers).

VOICE FLASH

[[CAUTION]]

Normally, a character's voice cannot be Flashed, nor can any Sense with the *Transmit* Adder. It's considered a part of the Hearing Sense Group for purposes of the *Darkness* Power, but even a deaf person can (usually) speak. There are some legitimate exceptions, however.

Voice Flash as a Side Effect for certain Rigellian Code-Talking abilities is one of those exceptions – particularly since their special abilities derive from their voices. Other possible exceptions might include a fantasy wizard's spell to silence his opponent's voice, or a martial arts maneuver designed to momentarily paralyze the larynx (performed as a Martial Flash).

While affected by a Voice Flash, a character cannot speak or utter any other vocal sound. This stops not only regular speech and similar communication, but also any Power with the *Incantations* or *Voice Range* Limitations, or with Special Effects that involve use of the voice.

The GM should keep an eye on any ability using Voice Flash, whether as a primary effect or as a

SCREECH

Effect: Hearing Group Flash 5d6, Explosion, No Range

Target/Area Affected: Explosion

Duration: Instant

Range: No Range

END Cost: 15

Description: A character with this ability, the most basic of Code-Talking's volume-based abilities (with the possible exception of *Amplified Voice*, above), can shout so loud that everyone in his immediate vicinity is momentarily deafened.

Screech: *Hearing Group Flash 5d6, Explosion (+1/2), Personal Immunity (+1/4) (26 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV, Totally Unaware of Nearby Events, -3/4), Extra Time (Full Phase, -1/2), Incantations (-1/4), Increased Endurance Cost (3× END, -1), No Range (-1/2), Side Effect (Voice Flash 6d6, Always Occurs, -1). Total cost: 5 points.*

Options

- 1) *Reduced Effort:* Reduce Increased Endurance Cost to 2× END (-1/2). Total cost: 6 points.
- 2) *Wider Effect:* Increase Explosion to -1d6 per 2" (+3/4). 30 Active Points; Total cost: 7 points.
- 3) *Improved Power:* Increase to Hearing Group Flash 6d6. 36 Active Points; Total cost: 8 points.

SUBLIMINAL SUGGESTION

Effect: Mind Control 2d6, Cumulative

Target/Area Affected: One Target

Duration: Instant

Range: Voice Range

END Cost: 1

Description: A character with this ability, a relative of Advanced Rigellian Embedded Messaging, can hide a subliminal command in a spoken message. As with the other ability, the message is coded to be heard by only one person, but the reception in this case is subconscious. This enables the character to affect the target's mood, emotions, perceptions, and even actions.

At its basic level, the character must audibly speak the desired suggestion; the vocal modulations serve only to burrow into the target's will. With experience, practitioners can

- 4) *Quick Work:* Remove Extra Time. Total cost: 9 points.
- 5) *Awareness:* Remove Totally Unaware of Nearby Events from Concentration. Total cost: 10 points.
- 6) *Increased Power:* Increase to Hearing Group Flash 7d6. 42 Active Points; Total cost: 11 points.
- 7) *Reduced Strain:* Reduce Side Effects to Voice Flash 3d6, Always Occurs (-1/2). Total cost: 13 points.
- 8) *Improved Awareness:* Reduce Concentration to 1/2 DCV (-1/4). Total cost: 14 points.
- 9) *Moderate Effort:* Remove Increased Endurance Cost. Total cost: 17 points.
- 10) *Greater Power:* Increase to Hearing Group Flash 8d6. 48 Active Points; Total cost: 19 points.
- 11) *Full Awareness:* Remove Concentration. Total cost: 21 points.
- 12) *Strain-Free:* Remove Side Effects. Total cost: 27 points.
- 13) *Easy Effort:* Add Reduced Endurance (1/2 END, +1/4). 54 Active Points; Total cost: 31 points.
- 14) *Broad Effect:* Increase Explosion to -1d6 per 3" (+1). 60 Active Points; Total cost: 34 points.
- 15) *Effortless:* Increased Reduced Endurance to 0 END (+1/2). 66 Active Points; Total cost: 38 points.

hide the commands within seemingly-innocuous speech, in a manner similar to *Advanced Rigellian Embedded Messaging* (described earlier; the GM may wish to require that ability before allowing it in conjunction with this one).

Subliminal Suggestion: *Mind Control 2d6, Cumulative (48 points, +1) (20 Active Points); Based on PRE (works versus PCV, Defended by Hearing Flash Defense, -1/4), Concentration (0 DCV, Totally Unaware of Nearby Events, Must Concentrate Throughout, -1/2), Extra Time (Full Phase, -1/2), Incantations (-1/4), Must Achieve PRE+20 Effect to Make Target Believe Actions Were His Own Idea (-3/4), Requires a Ventriloquism Roll (-1/2), Voice Range (-1/4). Total cost: 4 points.*

Options

- 1) *Open Awareness*: Increase Concentration to ½ DCV and remove Totally Unaware of Nearby Events. Total cost: 5 points.
- 2) *Improved Effect*: Increase to Mind Control 3d6. 30 Active Points; Total cost: 7 points.
- 3) *Improved Time*: Remove Extra Time. Total cost: 9 points.
- 4) *Superior Effect*: Increase to Mind Control 4d6. 40 Active points; Total cost: 11 points.
- 5) *Full Focus*: Remove Concentration. Total cost: 13 points.
- 6) *Reduced Effort*: Add Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼). 45 Active Points; Total cost: 15 points.
- 7) *Refined Technique*: Reduce the Active Point Penalty on the Ventriloquism Roll to -1 per 20 Active Points (-¼). Total cost: 16 points.
- 8) *Master Effect*: Increase to Mind Control 6d6. 67 Active Points; Total cost: 25 points.
- 9) *Flexible Effect*: Reduce Must Achieve PRE+20 Effect to Make Target Believe Actions Were His Own Idea to simply Must Achieve PRE+20 Effect (-½). Total cost: 27 points.
- 10) *Effortless*: Increase Reduced Endurance to 0 END (+½). 75 Active Points; Total cost: 30 points.
- 11) *Reliable Technique*: Remove Requires a Ventriloquism Roll. Total cost: 33 points.
- 12) *Open Effect*: Reduce Must Achieve PRE+20 Effect to Must Achieve PRE+10 Effect (-¼). Total cost: 37 points.
- 13) *Supreme Effect*: Increase to Mind Control 8d6. 100 Active Points; Total cost: 50 points.
- 14) *Free Effect*: Remove Must Achieve PRE+10 Effect. Total cost: 57 points.

VERTIGO

Effect: Drain DEX 1½d6

Target/Area Affected: 2" Radius (Centered on User)

Duration: Instant

Range: No Range

END Cost: 3

Description: The character modulates his voice in such a way that anyone standing near him loses his sense of balance.

Vertigo: *Drain DEX 1½d6, Area Of Effect (2" Radius, +1), Personal Immunity (+¼) (34 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV, Totally Unaware of Nearby Events, -¾), Extra Time (Full Phase, -½), Gradual Effect (1 Turn, -¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires a Ventriloquism Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points, -1), Side Effects (Flash Voice 6d6, Always Occurs, -1). Total cost: 7 points.*

Options

- 1) *Improved Technique*: Reduce the Active Point Penalty on Requires a Ventriloquism Roll to -1 per 10 Active Points (-½). Total cost: 8 points.
- 2) *Less Tiring*: Add Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼). 37 Active Points; Total cost: 9 points.
- 3) *Reduced Vocal Stress*: Reduce Side Effects to Flash Voice 3d6, Always Occurs (-½). Total cost: 10 points.
- 4) *Improved Focus*: Remove Totally Unaware of Nearby Events from Concentration. Total cost: 11 points.
- 5) *Improved Effect*: Increase to Drain DEX 2d6. 50 Active Points; Total cost: 14 points.
- 6) *Instant Effect*: Remove Gradual Effect. Total cost: 15 points.
- 7) *Master Technique*: Reduce the Active Point Penalty on Requires a Ventriloquism Roll to -1 per 20 Active Points (-¼). Total cost: 17 points.
- 8) *Increased Focus*: Improve Concentration to ½ DCV (-¼). Total cost: 18 points.
- 9) *Minor Vocal Stress*: Remove Always Occurs from Side Effects. Total cost: 20 points.
- 10) *Immediate Attack*: Remove Extra Time. Total cost: 25 points.
- 11) *Effortless Technique*: Increase Reduced Endurance to 0 END (+½). 55 Active Points; Total cost: 27 points.
- 12) *No Vocal Stress*: Remove Side Effects. Total cost: 31 points.
- 13) *Reliable Technique*: Remove Requires a Ventriloquism Roll. Total cost: 37 points.
- 14) *Powerful Effect*: Increase to Drain DEX 2½d6. 69 Active Points; Total cost: 46 points.

Side Effect. In *Fantasy Hero* and other settings where the *Incantations* Limitation is very common, it can completely cripple a target (at least, if the target is a magic-user). On the other hand, if the character already doesn't use his voice much, then Voice Flash as a Side Effect isn't worth much.

LIMITATION: BASED ON PRE (-¼)

A Mental Power with this Limitation works against PRE instead of EGO. Because characters (in nearly any genre) are more likely to buy higher PRE than EGO, and because PRE costs half as much as EGO, it's worth a Limitation bonus of -¼.

When determining the success of a Power with this Limitation, PRE is used in place of EGO – if an Effect Roll of EGO+20 would normally be needed for a particular effect, PRE+20 is needed instead. The target's Breakout Roll is also based on his PRE Roll instead of his EGO Roll.

The Power may be targeted using ECV, or (with the GM's permission) "Presence Combat Value" or PCV figured at PRE/3. The player determines when the Power is bought

whether the defense is Mental Defense or Presence Defense (PRE with the -1 Limitation *Defense Only*); with the GM's permission, he may also choose some other special defense (such as Hearing Flash Defense, as in Subliminal Suggestion).

As with the *Based on CON* Limitation (5E, page 82), a Power with this Limitation is treated as a normal Power. It does not provide its owner with Mental Awareness and must be perceptible in the same way as other non-Mental Powers.

VOICE STRESS ANALYSIS

Effect: Detect Voice Stress

Target/Area Affected: One Target

Duration: Constant

Range: Self

END Cost: 0

Description: With training, a Rigellian can listen to someone speak and determine, based on audible (at least, to a Rigellian) stress in the speaker's voice, whether that person is telling the truth or lying. Particularly skilled listeners can even determine what part of a particular statement is false, how extreme a lie is, and sometimes even the reason for lying (in broad terms, such as fear of retaliation, covering up a misdeed, protecting a loved one, or the like).

With a successful *Analyze Voice Stress* Roll, a true master of this ability can even detect levels and types of emotion on each individual word, possibly deducing things about the character's background.

At the beginning level, the individual must listen carefully and intently, usually with eyes closed, to listen for voice stress. More advanced listeners often don't even look like they're doing anything special.

Rigellians with this ability often go into law enforcement as investigators or recorded audio technicians; in the Galactic Federation, such individuals are in high demand. Certain non-Rigellians can learn the skill, but the learning curve is much steeper for species with a range of hearing Humans would call normal than for those who can hear into the ultrasonic range.

Voice Stress Analysis: *Detect Voice Stress (Hearing Group, Passive), Increased Arc of Perception (360°) (10 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV Throughout, -1), Extra Time (Full Phase, -½), Requires a Conversation Roll (-½), Single Target Only (-1). Total cost: 2 points.*

Options

- 1) *Less Concentration:* Reduce Concentration to ½ DCV Throughout, -½. Total cost: 3 points.
- 2) *Full Conversation:* Remove Single Target Only. Total cost: 4 points.
- 3) *Stress Breakdown:* Add Discriminatory. 15 Active Points; Total cost: 6 points.
- 4) *Improved Sensitivity:* Add +2 to Perception. 17 Active Points; Total cost: 7 points.
- 5) *Quick Analysis:* Remove Extra Time. Total cost: 9 points.
- 6) *Casual Analysis:* Remove Concentration. Total cost: 11 points.
- 7) *Expert Sensitivity:* Increase Perception bonus to +5. 20 Active Points; Total cost: 13 points.
- 8) *Expert Technique:* Reduce Requires a Conversation Roll to -1 per 20 Active Points (-¼). Total cost: 16 points.
- 9) *Expert Breakdown:* Add Analyze. 25 Active Points; Total cost: 20 points.
- 10) *Master Sensitivity:* Increase Perception bonus to +8. 28 Active Points; Total cost: 22 points.
- 11) *Master Technique:* Remove Requires a Conversation Roll. Total cost: 28 points.

Lieutenant Khanal Tsamliew

Background/History: Born on Europa Nova, Khanal Tsamliew was one of the non-Human “underclass.” Her father was a porter for a shipping company owned by one of the local noble families, and their squalid apartment had a perfect view of the owner’s luxurious estate.

The uncaring, haughty cruelty of her father’s employer had a profound effect on Khanal. She saw that this was what a person could do with the right power and authority – and she sought that power for herself.

In the meantime, her father worked hard to find a better life for Khanal, as well as for her four brothers and three sisters. Khanal was the seventh in line, so the best her father could do for her was buy passage to Rigel V.

Back on her ancestral homeworld, Khanal quickly found a job and worked her way through an educational certificate in law enforcement. At the university she met Professor Yiha D’jenn, a descendant of three of the original Code-Talkers from the Xenovore War. He became her mentor in the art of Code-Talking, and the two remain in frequent contact to this day.

After graduating, Khanal joined the police force in Thomli (Rigel’s capital city), and rose through the ranks quickly enough to gain the attention of the Terran Security Service. At the age of 25, she became the youngest Rigellian ever to work for that agency.

She’s continued to rise through the ranks in the twenty years since, though at a somewhat more modest pace than she did on Rigel V. She finds that she enjoys “field work” quite a bit – in other words, she likes to interrogate suspects and prisoners, using the full force of her authority, sadistic pleasures, and Code-Talking abilities to humiliate and intimidate them. Instead of high rank, she’s parlayed her top-notch work performance (in that she almost always goes away with what she came for) into an itinerant position, allowing her to travel to wherever her skills are most needed.

Personality/Motivation: Khanal Tsamliew is a cruel, sadistic woman. She genuinely cares for very few people, and most of those are fellow Rigellians (her family and Professor D’jenn). If she can find a way to cause pain – emotional pain is the best – she’ll find an excuse to do it.

This sadistic streak affects her entire job performance, and she finds the subtle touches to be the most effective. She likes to flirt with female prisoners not because she’s more attracted to women than men (she actually likes both equally), but because she knows it makes them feel uncomfortable. She’s developed a taste for Ackalian food not because it tastes better, but because she enjoys watching her underfed prisoners’ expressions when she eats it.

Nonetheless, Khanal does have the typical Rigellian sense of curiosity, and this sometimes leads to interrogation time wasted on tangents and digressions, or on the pursuit of a seemingly minor question. She’s learned to occasionally turn this tendency to her advantage, using it as a psychological diversion to throw her subjects off guard, but it causes more problems than opportunities.

Though one-dimensional on the surface, deep down she’s actually rather complex. She likes to focus her rage on people who abuse their power – especially Humans, who remind her of the cruelty of her father’s employer – while never acknowledging that she does so herself. Her occasional sexual flirtatiousness is more than just a power bid and means of torment; it’s also an expression of her essential loneliness, as her mean nature has left her without a lifemate.

Quote: “I promise you – when I leave here, I will know what I came here to find out. How pleasant or unpleasant the process becomes is up to you... *mostly.*”

Powers/Tactics: Though well-trained, Lieutenant Tsamliew has little experience in any sort of fight, and is only an average combatant. Fortunately for her, she’s rarely called upon to exercise that skill – she much prefers the interrogation room over the battlefield.

Of her Code-Talking skills, the one she employs the most is Voice Stress Analysis. Because she can tell not only when a person is lying but how severe the lie is – and often even discern the nature of the lie – simply by listening to the person’s voice, she can quickly narrow the focus of her conversation to the exact information her subject has and she wants. She fills her interrogations with non sequiturs, seemingly irrelevant or innocuous questions, and various other elements to wear away her subject’s will and keep him mentally off balance.

When the results of that are unsatisfactory, she throws in small “bits” using her Advanced Rigellian Embedded Messaging. She might secretly say something to one of two suspects in the room to sow confusion, send a message to a fellow interrogator to support a lie or scenario she’s telling, or sound like she’s giving a simple order to a guard (“Escort him to the door and send him safely on his way”) when she’s really ordering him to do something else (“Toss him into the facility’s trash compactor”).

Though she likes the effect and efficiency of Subliminal Suggestion, she prefers to avoid it if she can for two reasons. First, it’s tiring, and she can quickly exhaust herself with it, especially if her subject is strong-willed and highly motivated. Second, it’s a shortcut, and she enjoys the unpleasantness the “long route” can cause for her subject.

LIEUTENANT KHANAL TSAMLIEW PLOT SEEDS

One of the PCs’ enemies is framed for treason (or some other serious crime against the Empire).

Lieutenant Tsamliew is assigned to investigate the case – and she recognizes the frame-up attempt immediately.

Naturally, the prime suspects are the PCs themselves, and Tsamliew is skeptical about their story of “being framed for framing” their enemy.

Lieutenant Tsamliew learns that a major criminal on the TSS’ fugitives list (perhaps Dashana, described on page 136 of *The Ultimate*

Brick) can be found on the planet where the PCs happen to be. To capture her quarry, she recruits the PCs’ help – though this will probably not be a pleasant experience for them regardless of their standing with Imperial law. She may even resort to using Subliminal Suggestion on the PCs’ leader to guarantee their cooperation!

Following the assassination of Empress Marissa III and ascension of her son Stephen, Lieutenant Tsamliew begins a quick ascension through the ranks thanks to her aggressive tactics and

strong distrust of powerful leaders. Of those officials creating “trumped-up charges and mysterious accidents,” she becomes one of the most powerful – eventually achieving the rank of Grand Marshal (the highest-ranking Rigellian ever in Imperial government) under Emperor Sigismund. And woe to the PCs should she decide they stand in her way to the top....

Campaign Use: Lieutenant Tsamliew can be good as a plot complication in any *Terran Empire* campaign. Whenever the TSS is investigating rebellion, insurgency, or (especially) official abuse of power and the situation becomes difficult and drawn-out, she’s likely to show up sooner or later to interrogate prisoners.

If the PCs are rebels, she can become one of the campaign’s chief villains. She rarely leaves the safety of TSS facilities and transports unless she’s on a relatively placid planet (such as Earth or Rigel V), so she’ll generally have the upper hand in any face-to-face confrontations, but if nothing else she can become an extra motivation to escape from TSS custody, or rescue captured fellows.

If the PCs are government agents, her function becomes that of a professional foil – especially if they’re with the ISP or Mind Police, with whom the TSS has an ongoing rivalry. If there’s a high-handed tactic she can use against her rivals, she’ll take it: snatching investigative jurisdiction, taking credit for the PCs’ work, having the PCs’ suspects and witnesses released to serve her own purposes, and so forth. She will do very little to endear herself to the PCs and their organization, and everything she can to humiliate them.

With some adjustment to her background and (to a lesser extent) Disadvantages, Khanal Tsamliew can also be used in an *Alien Wars* campaign, especially during the reign of Joseph Krutch.

Lieutenant Tsamliew does not, as an individual, typically Hunt anyone. Those whom she has targeted in the past have generally been those in power who have abused their position; such individuals, in her mind, deserve a generous dose of their own medicine. She is tenacious and generally implacable, and not above pulling some pretty underhanded – or even cruel – tricks to dispense her version of justice.

Appearance: Khanal Tsamliew is a tall (1.8m), slender Rigellian woman with sky-blue skin, and tawny brown hair worn in loose shoulder-length curls to enhance her attractively aquiline features. Her figure is attractive and well-balanced, reflecting the effort she puts in to keeping it in shape.

Through her eyes, though, one can easily see the cruel malice behind the beauty. She often has a sadistic smile on her lips, or an expression of pure hatred across her face. Even before she says or does anything – for that matter, even in still photographs and holographs – the meanness of her heart is plain for all to see.

Khanal’s casual clothes, for those infrequent occasions when she wears them, are of traditional Rigellian style, though still reminiscent of her TSS uniform.

Lieutenant Khanal Tsamliew



DIGITAL HERO #22

Lieutenant Khanal Tsamliew

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [3]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-/14-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
16	COM	3	12-	
3	PD	0		Total: 3 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	7		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
26	END	0		
25	STUN	0		

Total Characteristic Cost: 62

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Leaping: 3"/6"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
2	<i>Rigellian Ears:</i> +1 PER with Hearing Group	0
3	<i>Rigellian Ears:</i> Ultrasonic Perception (Hearing Group)	0
12	<i>Advanced Rigellian Embedded Messaging:</i> Hearing Group Images 1" Radius, -9 to PER Rolls, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Set Effect (Spoken Message, -1), Single Target Only (-¾), Incantations (Throughout, -½), No Range (-½), Requires a Ventriloquism Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points, -¼)	0
25	<i>Subliminal Suggestion:</i> Mind Control 6d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼), Cumulative (144 points, +1); Mandatory Effect PRE+20 (Must Always Achieve Target Believing Actions Are Natural, -¾), Based on PRE (Works versus PCV, Defended by Hearing Flash Defense, -¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires a Ventriloquism Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points, -¼), Voice Range (-¼)	3
13	<i>Voice Stress Analysis:</i> Detect Voice Stress 18- (Hearing Group), Discriminatory, Increased Arc of Perception (360°); Requires a Conversation Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points, -¼)	0

Perks

10	<i>TSS Database:</i> Computer Link
8	Interstellar Police Powers
5	Membership: TSS Lieutenant
7	Security Clearance

Skills

16	+2 with all Non-Combat Skills
3	Analyze Voice Stress 13-
3	Bribery 13-
3	Bureaucracies 13-
3	Cryptography 13-
3	Conversation 13-
3	Deduction 13-
3	High Society 13-
3	Interrogation 13-
2	KS: Imperial Law 11-
2	KS: The Espionage World 11-
2	KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-
2	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-
5	Language: English (Idiomatic, Literate, Rigellian is Native)
3	Lipreading 13-
3	Mimicry 13-
3	Oratory 13-
3	Persuasion 13-
2	PS: Security Officer 11-
3	Seduction 13-
3	Sleight OF Hand 12-
3	Ventriloquism 13-
4	WF: Human Small Arms, Human Advanced Small Arms

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 165

Total Cost: 227

75+ Disadvantages

5	Age: 40+
5	Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed)
10	Psychological Limitation: Devious and Deceitful (Common, Moderate)
15	Psychological Limitation: Malicious (Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Rigellian Curiosity (Common, Strong)
5	Rivalry: ISP and Mind Police (Professional)
20	Social Limitation: Subject to Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
77	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 227

RIGELLIAN RECORDS OF SUPERHEROES?

As they were on Earth, nearly all records of superhuman powers were wiped out on Rigel during the Xenovore Wars, and for much the same reason (*Alien Wars*, pages 18 and 43). Tales of superpowered Rigellians were thereafter treated with the same skepticism and general apathy as were tales of superpowered Terrans.

Rigellian Code-Talking in Other Genres and Settings

The vocal tricks listed here, along with others like them, can be used in genres other than *Star Hero*.

CHAMPIONS

Characters with superpowered voices are a staple of superhero settings. The Champions Universe itself has at least Warcry and Howler (pages 41 and 162, respectively, of *Conquerors, Killers, and Crooks*). While the “special effects” of a particular character’s vocal powers may be very different from a Rigellian larynx (as it is with those two characters), most should be able to find at least one appropriate ability in the list.

In many cases – especially for established characters – the GM should allow a character to take a new ability at its most basic level, and build it up with experience (that is, experience *points*) and practice. Often characters can add the *Power Skill* (usually under a name like Sonic Tricks or Vocal Tricks) to the *Requires a Skill Roll* Limitation, or use it in place of an existing Skill. If the character already has a power similar to one of those listed here, then these can serve as a guide for expanding the existing ability.

The GM may also allow a *Champions* character – even a Rigellian, such as the sample character Blue Screamer – to have powers similar to, but not identically matching, those given here. Rigellian Code-Talking is not nearly as codified during this age of superheroes as it is during the *Terran Empire* era; even in the *Galactic Champions* period, the sudden resurgence of magic can change the dynamics of Rigellian voice powers, either across the board or for particular individuals.

Also, *Champions* superpowers – especially in *Galactic Champions* – tend to be somewhat more powerful than the weapons and alien powers of *Star Hero* and other Heroic genres. The GM may therefore allow characters to make their abilities more powerful than those shown here, both in terms of the base power and by eliminating some of the Limitations. This may be balanced somewhat by allowing or imposing additional Power Limitations, such as *Does Not Work in Vacuum* (-1/4).

PULP HERO

Pulp stories are full of heroes (and occasionally villains) whose unusual powers have mysterious overtones, but are simply extensions – albeit rather extreme ones – of a normal person’s abilities. The abilities listed in this article can serve as an example.

Since the background of Rigellian Code-Talking is steeped in the Hero Universe’s space setting, the GM (or the player of a character with

some of these vocal powers) will need to develop a new background to fit into the setting.

However, that new background can be quite similar to the one given here if it would fit into the GM’s world. For example, perhaps monks at a Tibetan monastery have been studying the abilities of the human voice for centuries, and the character studied with them; while arguably trite, such a story would fit in perfectly with a typical pulp setting.

One significant general difference between “special powers” in a science-fiction game and those in a pulp game is that, in pulp fiction, stories of the powers rarely seem to get around, or at most are widely disbelieved. If a hero has some of these powers, the villains will usually be caught off guard by them – rare is the villain who, without firsthand experience, prepares for a hero with unusual vocal talents no matter how many stories he’s heard. There are many exceptions to this, of course; if the character’s abilities are well known and villains take appropriate precautions, it may be worth a *Reputation* Disadvantage.

FANTASY HERO

Fantasy stories tend to involve magic rather than odd, non-magical “racial abilities.” Thus, in most cases the vocal abilities shown here are inappropriate as presented.

That’s not to say they couldn’t be used at all. At the very least, Code-Talking abilities can serve as a starting point or inspiration for some sonic-based or voice-based magic. They could even be used as written from a game mechanics point of view, using an all-new background steeped in mystical flavor and “magic” as a Special Effect.

OTHER GENRES

The appropriateness of these powers in any other genre should depend on how frequent such “special powers” are in the genre.

Wild martial arts settings, such as those in anime or (less often) Hong Kong cinema, are full of characters whose unusual powers have little or no resemblance to martial arts as we know them, usually as “an extension of the character’s *ch’i*.” These vocal tricks are prime examples (the Tibetan monastery mentioned for *Pulp Hero* earlier would fit just as well here).

In *Cyber Hero*, a character can have a synthetic larynx (and, presumably, cybernetic ears) to provide him with special abilities. The enhanced body parts would naturally be special powers of their own, but the Code-Talking abilities here are as possible in *Cyber Hero* as they would be for a cyborg in *Star Hero* or *Champions*.

Monsters and villains in *Horror Hero* might have some of these abilities, especially at the

DIGITAL HERO #22

high end; they can be very frightening to unsuspecting PCs who, at first, don't know how to handle them. The PCs, on the other hand, should generally not be allowed these powers (or any "special abilities" for that matter, unless allowing special abilities for PCs is specifically part of the setting concept).

These special vocal tricks would not generally be appropriate for *Western Hero*, *Dark Champions* (as defined under 5th Edition HERO), or other genres where unusual abilities and

"super-skills" don't exist. An individual GM may find two or three that he'd be willing to allow as "non-powered Powers," but they should be used carefully.

An exception to this rule regarding *Dark Champions* is in *Dark Champions: The Animated Series*. With its more "superheroic" atmosphere, this type of setting can easily have characters with "super-trained voice" abilities such as those presented here.

Blue Screamer



BLUE SCREAMER PLOT SEEDS

While foraging for food, Yoingazh eavesdrops on a conversation among a group of suspicious-looking men in green-and-yellow uniforms. He can't understand the words, but some of the gestures and illustrations they make, and their general attitude, leads him to believe that they're planning on bombing a significant building in town – perhaps even the PCs' headquarters. How does he alert the PCs without risking capture by the Warlord?

Mentalla (*Conquerors, Killers, and Crooks*, page 73) makes mental contact with Blue Screamer and manipulates him into working for Eurostar. Rather than dominating his mind (though she certainly could), she manipulates him into believing that Eurostar is a heroic organization fighting oppressive government regimes – of which the PCs are agents.

As Yoingazh gradually repairs the electronic devices in his armor, Warlord becomes more certain than ever that Blue Screamer could help develop more weapons systems for the War Machine. He increases his efforts to find the alien –

Blue Screamer

Background/History: Rigel V has a history of superheroics nearly as rich and varied as Earth's. It has less contact with extraplanetary species – probably due to most species' assumption that a blue-white supergiant wouldn't have any planets at all, let alone a native population – but in terms of breadth of power origins, variety of power levels, and societal impact, its superheroes and their enemies are otherwise quite comparable to our own.

One element common to the Rigellian superpowers scene but not often seen on Earth is the *beykhang*, or “superpowered citizen.” Such individuals have powers comparable to those seen among superheroes, but choose to use them for purposes other than committing or fighting crime. Yoingazh Tsoedl is one of that class of people – though his mutant voice powers are impressive enough to be competitive with most superheroes' abilities, his true passion has always been piloting aircraft. The government of his homeland, the Republic of Yampeln, has one of Rigel's most successful aerial and space exploration programs, and Yoingazh is a twelve-year veteran and a well-known space pioneer.

Yoingazh' experience and notoriety made him the natural choice to pilot the Yampelnic Agency for Exploration's first journey to the next planet out in the Rigellian system. What wasn't known was that the systems engineer on that mission, Thori Ngev, had exaggerated his credentials in order to improve his chances of going on the mission. Ngev got the job – but he wasn't up to the task.

It was Ngev's responsibility to monitor, maintain, and manage the ship's experimental spacefold drive. In his defense, the drive suffered from a fatal design flaw that had nothing to do with him; however, a truly competent systems engineer could have saved the ship and returned its ten-person crew returned safely home.

The unfolding of the malfunction, the unraveling of Ngev's lies, and the panic of trying to minimize the damage may one day make a fascinating, adrenaline-pumping tale. The short version is that the ship went careening through interstellar space into the Sol system, and Yoingazh' piloting was barely enough to land the ship at all. It came down in a large freshwater lake (Lake Michigan), and all hands were lost, except Yoingazh himself.

The landing injured his head, and he suffered a moderate concussion. He ejected from his ship as soon as he could and swam to shore, and even though the ship's discovery happened right in his field of view it didn't register on his consciousness. He still believes that his landing was somehow undetected by the local population.

Since then, he's been struggling just to survive on the streets of Millennium City. He doesn't use his super-voice powers much, except in self-defense or the defense of people who are clearly being victimized; those few occasions have led the locals to refer to him as the Blue Screamer. Much of his food comes from restaurant scraps, though occasionally some kind soul gives him some fresher food, and he takes advantage of the local soup kitchens when he can.

Soon after his landing, the Warlord (*Conquerors, Killers, and Crooks*, page 36) heard about the blue-skinned castaway, and concluded that this Blue Screamer was another “Blueboy” – that is, a Hzeel. Though he's quite wrong, the contingent of Shadow Army Soldiers he's deployed to locate and capture Blue Screamer has seriously spooked Yoingazh, who now carries a distrust of uniformed figures on this alien world.

Personality/Motivation: Yoingazh' main purpose in life right now is to get home. Survival has a higher priority, of course, and his natural Rigellian curiosity or sense of duty to help others occasionally sidetrack him, but on the whole he just wants to return to Rigel and see his family.

His unfamiliarity with Earth's culture extends to his ignorance of other alien species – since Rigel V has little contact with other species, he has no idea that some of the aliens currently residing on Earth could potentially take him home, or at least help him find his way. In most cases he doesn't even recognize them as extraterrestrials, but has assumed that the odd appearances of many superhumans has to do with physical transformations (as actually is the case with Grond, Ogre, Leech, the Crowns of Krim, and various others).

Quote: “Please, I desire nothing more than to return home to my family.”

(This assumes anyone can learn to translate from the Yempelnic language – which is only a distant relative of the tongue that will eventually become the universal “Rigellian” language in another 200 years – or teach him English).

Powers/Tactics: Given a choice, Blue Screamer will not fight. If attacked, he'll be more likely to use his self-defense training than his super-voice powers; his voice is his “reserve power,” used only when his martial arts aren't enough or when he's combating a group. He'll start with Blocks and Dodges, trying to communicate his unwillingness to fight; if that fails, he'll try to work in a Legsweep, followed by a Nerve Strike, reserving the Fast Strike for truly difficult cases. If closely surrounded he'll let loose with his Piercing Voice to disorient his opponents – more than once if he has to – and try to escape.

DIGITAL HERO #22

Blue Screamer

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [3]
25	DEX	45	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
17	CON	14	12-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-/14-
17	EGO	14	12-	ECV: 6
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2 ½d6
14	COM	2	12-	
3	PD	0		Total: 3/11 PD (0/8 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 3/11 ED (0/8 rED)
5	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
6	REC	0		
34	END	0		
31	STUN	1		

Total Characteristic Cost: 113

Movement: Running: 9"/18"
Leaping: 3"/6"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
30	<i>Power Voice:</i> Multipower, 60-point reserve; All Slots Require a Voice Tricks Roll (-½), Incantations (-¼), Voice Range (-¼)	
2u	1) <i>Amplified Voice:</i> Hearing Group Images 1" Radius, +10 to PER Rolls, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Set Effect (Only to Amplify Character's Voice, -1), Requires a Voice Tricks Roll (-½), Incantations (-¼), Voice Range (-¼)	0
3u	2) <i>Piercing Voice:</i> Energy Blast 3d6, Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Explosion (-1 DC/2", +¾), Attack Versus Limited Defense (Hearing Flash Defense, +½); Requires A Voice Tricks Roll (-½), Incantations (-¼), Voice Range (-¼)	0
3u	3) <i>Screech:</i> Hearing Group Flash 8d6, Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Explosion (-1d6 per 2", +¾); Requires a Voice Tricks Roll (-½), Incantations (-¼), Voice Range (-¼)	0
15	<i>Echolocation:</i> Active Sonar (Hearing Group)	0
25	<i>Toughened Ears:</i> Hearing Group Flash Defense (25 points)	0
2	<i>Rigellian Ears:</i> +1 PER with Hearing Group	0
3	<i>Rigellian Ears:</i> Ultrasonic Perception (Hearing Group)	0
6	<i>Athletic Legs:</i> Running +3" (9" Total)	1
16	<i>Explorer's Armor:</i> Armor (8 PD/8 ED); OIF (-½)	0

13 *Explorer's Armor:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe in High Pressure, High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum, Zero Gravity); OIF (-½) 0

Martial Arts: Rigellian Defense System Maneuver OCV DCV Notes

5	Block	+1	+3	Block, Abort
4	Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Abort
4	Fast Strike	+2	+0	10d6 Strike
3	Legsweep	+2	-1	9d6 Strike, Target Falls
4	Nerve Strike	-1	+1	4½d6 NND
4	Reversal	-1	-2	55 STR to Escape, Grab Two Limbs
20	+5 Damage Classes (already added in)			

Talents

3	Lightsleep
4	<i>Lightning Reflexes:</i> +4 DEX to Act First with Piloting
3	Perfect Pitch
4	<i>Zero-G Training:</i> Environmental Movement (No Penalties in Zero Gravity)

Skills

6	+2 with Rigellian Defense System
6	+2 with Combat Piloting, Navigation, and PS: Space Explorer Pilot
3	Breakfall 14-
3	Climbing 14-
3	Combat Piloting 14-
3	Conversation 12-
3	Cryptography 13-
3	Deduction 13-
3	Electronics 13-
3	Mechanics 13-
3	Mimicry 13-
3	Navigation (Air, Space) 13-
3	Oratory 12-
3	Paramedics 13-
2	PS: Space Explorer Pilot 11-
3	Rigellian Vocal Tricks 11-
5	TF: Industrial & Exploratory Spacecraft, Science Fiction & Space Vehicles, Spaceplanes, Combat Aircraft, Helicopters, Large Planes, Small Planes
3	Ventriloquism 13-

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 237

Total Cost: 350

though Warcy, feeling jealous and threatened in his position over this rival voice-powered newcomer, could throw a proverbial monkey wrench into both Warlord's plan and any concerns for public safety.

SKILLS AND EXTRA- TERRESTRIALS

According to *Alien Wars* (page 96) and *Terran Empire* (page 125), characters of a given species suffer penalties to certain skills, notably *Paramedics* and *Transport Familiarity*, when attempting to use them on members or devices of other species. As it applies to Blue Screamer, this would give him a -1 to his *Paramedics* Roll when trying to help Humans, and vice versa; he operates Human vehicles at a -2 penalty, and needs an extra Half Phase to maneuver.

However, since Blue Screamer is a *Champions* character rather than a *Star Hero* character, the GM should consider this rule optional, or only apply it where specific known differences (such as skin color, the larynx, hearing, or the number of fingers on a hand) exist.

200+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Blue-skinned, Eight-Fingered Man (Concealable)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Martial Arts Style (Not Concealable, Detectable by Large Group)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Mutant (Not Concealable, Major Reaction, Unusual Senses)
- 10 Dependence: Rigellian Dietary Requirements (Incompetence: -1 to Skill Rolls and Related Rolls per 6 Hours, Weakness: -3 to Characteristic Rolls, Difficult to Obtain)
- 20 Hunted: the Warlord 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
- 10 Money: Destitute
- 10 Physical Limitation: Inhuman Physiology (Infrequently, Greatly)
- 20 Physical Limitation: Unfamiliar With Earth Culture and Language (All the Time, Greatly)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Rigellian Curiosity (Common, Strong)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Protective of Innocents (Very Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Wants to Return Home (Common, Strong)

Total Disadvantage Points: 150

Though he's as capable as any beginning standard-level superhero, Blue Screamer is not inclined to fight side-by-side with PCs or other heroes. If a fight breaks out in his presence – even after a way of communicating with him is eventually worked out – he'll hold back, protecting bystanders or giving other support if the need arises but otherwise doing his best to keep out of the way.

He continues to wear his Yampelnic explorer's armor, though most of the electronic gear is too damaged to use; it at least offers him some physical and environmental protection, and the rebreather is in good working order.

Campaign Use: Blue Screamer is a “mysterious figure” kind of character – sort of an “urban legend” hero who goes around helping people in the course of pursuing his own issues. PCs might hear rumors about him, and might even write him off as an urban legend until they finally meet him face to face.

A large part of the challenge of dealing with him is that he doesn't speak English, or any other Earth language; only some form of telepathy, or another alien who happens to speak Yampelnic, can overcome that barrier. Furthermore, his experiences with the Warlord's Shadow Army, whom he believes to be government agents, has caused him to distrust uniformed figures in this area.

Shy and forgiving by nature, Blue Screamer does not Hunt anyone. He has a hard enough time telling who on this world are good guys and who are bad guys, so he assumes that anyone who does anything against him either has good reason or will be properly dealt with sooner or later by the local authorities. He only steps into a situation in the first place when it's clear that one side of a conflict is innocent and overwhelmed.

Appearance: Yoingash Tsoedl is a healthy, good-looking Rigellian man in his early thirties. With royal-blue skin and tightly-curved black hair, he has many secondary features that Humans typically associate with Africans. His Yampelnic explorer's armor resembles a Russian cosmonaut's space suit, though the color is deeper (sort of a cranberry red) and the writing on it is considerably different from Russian.



The Principality of Sealand

by Ray Lowery

History

At the start of World War II, the German Navy launched a massive campaign to close Great Britain's shipping lanes with magnetic influence mines. In just a few months, these mines sank over a hundred ships in the Thames estuaries and killed hundreds of sailors.

The British countered this threat by placing numerous gun towers in the North Sea. Two types of Maunsell sea forts were built ashore on concrete barges and towed to their permanent locations, where the barges were sunk on sandbanks 5-20 meters underwater. Each fort housed 100-200 troops to monitor radar units and man anti-ship and anti-aircraft guns. Altogether, they destroyed one boat, 22 aircraft, and 31 V-1 flying bombs. Most importantly, they kept Britain's sea-lanes open.

After the war, these forts served as Cold War radar stations until they were abandoned in 1956. Some were later demolished but one that remained was Fort Roughs Tower, located six nautical miles off England's coast in then-international waters.

From a legal standpoint, the fort's location on the high seas and state of abandonment made it extra-national territory, free for the taking. Former British Army major Roy Bates occupied Roughs Tower in 1965 with plans to use it for a pirate radio station. The sea fort changed hands several times between Bates and another pirate radio operator before Bates took over the fort in a pitched battle involving shotguns and Molotov cocktails.

On September 2, 1967, Bates proclaimed the fort's independence from Great Britain, naming it the Principality of Sealand with himself and his wife as sovereigns (Prince Roy and Princess Joan). The principality has created a constitution and flag, printed stamps, minted gold and silver coins (Sealand Dollars), and issued passports.

In 1978, a German and Dutch consortium lured Roy and Joan to Austria, then took Sealand by force and the Bates' adult son Michael hostage. Prince Roy recaptured the fort a few days later with some of his own men (including a Bond movie helicopter stunt pilot). Most of the raiding party was allowed to leave, but German Bernot Putz was held and charged with treason since he was also a Sealand citizen. Bates later pardoned and released Putz after meeting with a German diplomat.

When Britain extended its territorial waters to 12 miles in 1987, Sealand did likewise. No country officially recognizes Sealand as a nation, though several British court cases and the

German diplomatic meeting seem to bolster Sealand's claim to independence.

Sealand also has a sinister double, a fake shadow state selling falsified passports and "official" principality documents. Spanish police raided a "Sealand diplomatic mission," a fake with no connection to the North Sea nation, and found evidence of large-scale arms dealing including fighter jets and surface-to-air missiles.

After over 30 years as Sealand's sovereign, Prince Roy stepped down in 1999, appointing his son Prince Regent Michael as Sovereign pro tempore. Shortly after, a deal was made leasing space to HavenCo Ltd. for secure Internet colocation and offshore data storage services.

HavenCo's concept is to give companies a place to host web pages, email servers, and the like without worrying about sabotage, information theft, or content restrictions from the hosting country. In theory, courts in other nations would be unable to subpoena email or other computer files due to their location in a "nation" that would ideally refuse all legal challenges.

If you find all of this hard to believe, there's more information at www.fruitsofthesea.demon.co.uk/sealand and www.havenco.com.

Fictional (Gaming) History

Shortly after HavenCo set up shop on Sealand, the company was taken over by British tycoon Jason Carver. Carver is secretly a high-ranking member of ARGENT (Advanced Research Group Enterprises). He had his eyes on Sealand for years and secretly acted as its fake "shadow state" since 1995.

After changing HavenCo's name to SafHaven, Carver met with Prince Regent Michael to discuss expanding the sea fort. During dinner, Carver surreptitiously drugged Michael and has tried to keep him drugged and compliant ever since. The Prince Regent is an unwitting (and unwilling) figurehead on Sealand, forcibly kept from revealing Carver's illicit operations.

Carver has also managed to get several countries (France, Spain, and any fictional country the GM chooses) to officially recognize Sealand as a sovereign nation. This doesn't sit well with British government officials, who are trying to pin down Carver's connections within those governments.

SEALAND'S LEGAL STATUS

Sealand has been involved in several legal cases, but results haven't been consistent as to whether the sea fort is indeed independent. A 1968 British court ruling said Roughs Tower is outside the country's legal jurisdiction; however, a later ruling ignored this precedent and claimed it is still part of the UK.

For the purposes of this article and the gaming universe, it is assumed that Sealand was, is, and will remain an independently ruled principality.

DESIGNER'S NOTE

While Sealand's original history and physical dimensions are correct, the maps provided here don't match the fort's exact layout. I'm sure neither Sealand's government nor HavenCo's owners would want plans of the sea fort generally available, so the maps that follow are close enough to be plausible without being 100% correct.

ARGENT now operates regularly, if covertly, from Sealand. In addition to using SafHaven's resources for cyberespionage, their scientists have labs on Sealand. Agents occasionally practice piracy and nautical sabotage, though mostly as diversions for other operations.

Location

Sealand sits in the North Sea at 51°53'40" North, 01°28'48" East in waters seven meters deep. The nearest town is Felixstowe, an industrial port in Suffolk in southeast England. Sealand is just off a main shipping channel, and is easily visible from ships heading into the Thames River.

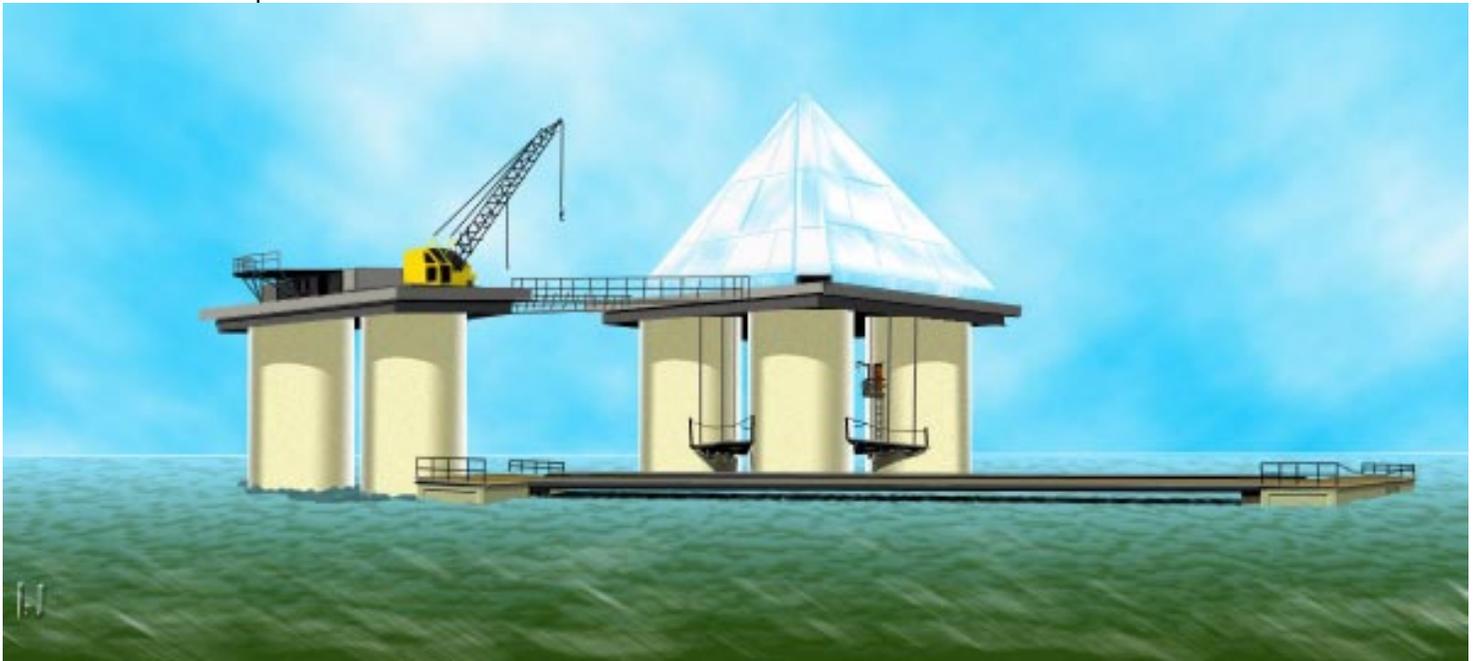
Structure

Sealand's original structure consists of two hollow concrete towers 18 meters tall topped with a steel platform 12 meters above sea level. A single-story steel structure sits atop this platform. The roof serves as a helipad.

Satellite dishes and undersea fiber optic cables to England and Holland provide computer and communication access for SafHaven, Sealand Telecom, and ultimately ARGENT.

In 2001, Carver expanded the original fort by adding a triangular platform atop three concrete towers similar to the original pair. Ships can go to either a sea-level dock below this platform or a concrete dock at the end of a 200-meter pier, though cargo vessels do not visit Sealand very often.

The Sealand Telecom Building, a seven-story pyramid-like structure, was just completed on the new platform. Officially, it's a simple office building, but most of it serves as a communications center and staging area for ARGENT operations in the North Sea.

Sealand

DIGITAL HERO #22

SUPPORT TOWERS

The support towers are seven meters in diameter with reinforced concrete exteriors 30 cm thick. Each tower has seven floors; samples are described below. Exact arrangements are listed later but can be changed to fit GM plans.

Close Quarters levels sleep eight men in bunks split between two rooms. They all share a single bathroom. (If this seems rough, consider that 120 British troops shared two bathrooms during WWII.)

Each **Normal Quarters** level has two private rooms sharing a bathroom. These rooms are fairly comfortable, usually furnished with a twin bed, dresser, and desk, along with a small closet.

The only **Luxury Quarters** in Sealand are Prince Michael's suite. They are comfortably appointed, though not what you might expect from royal chambers. His "bodyguards" keep him here most of the time.

The **Mechanical** level features twin diesel generators. A small machine shop contains an arc welder, drill press, tools, and other equipment.

An **Office** level holds two comfortable but unspectacular offices, plus a small bathroom.

Computer levels hold most of SafHaven's equipment. The bulk of each level is a single room with racks of servers, data storage devices, and other hardware, accessed through an airlock.

The computer hardware rooms are filled with pure nitrogen instead of air (to keep out unwanted visitors, inhibit rust, and reduce the risk of fire). Special breathing gear is kept on SafHaven's office level if somebody needs to perform physical maintenance on clients' equipment.

The **Laboratory** level is provided for running the *Lucky Break* plot seed. The lab is at slightly negative air pressure (any leak will pull air into the lab, not let it out) and accessed through an airlock. A keypad-locked refrigerator holds racks of vials, and tables are covered with appropriate equipment (centrifuges, glove boxes, and so on).

The **Utility** level contains a furnace, water heaters, and laundry facilities. A large tank holds fresh water obtained from a borehole through the seabed, and a septic tank holds waste.

In addition to the above, the **Utility/Airlock** level has an airlock for divers to leave the Telecom structure undetected. Cabinets hold wetsuits, flippers, and masks; sets of air tanks rest on the floor by a wall-mounted air compressor.

Finally, there is the **Entry** level on the East Tower's fifth floor. The outside door is armored (8 DEF, 8 BODY) and can be locked from the control room in the Telecom building.

Inflatable Zodiac boats are stored inside, along with outboard motors, containers of fuel, and cabinets with other supplies. A lounge for Sealand Telecom employees takes up the rest of this level.



NORTH TOWER (ORIGINAL PLATFORM)

A steep metal circular staircase provides access to this tower, which houses SafHaven's office and hardware. The layout, from top to bottom, is:

- 7) Mechanical
- 6) Office
- 2-5) Computer
- 1) Empty

The Office level is where SafHaven's staff monitors customer hardware and verifies internet connections. The staff can power off, erase, or destroy client machines from here.

The bottom level isn't really empty. It holds scrap metal, pipes, and other stuff pulled from the floors above during renovation.

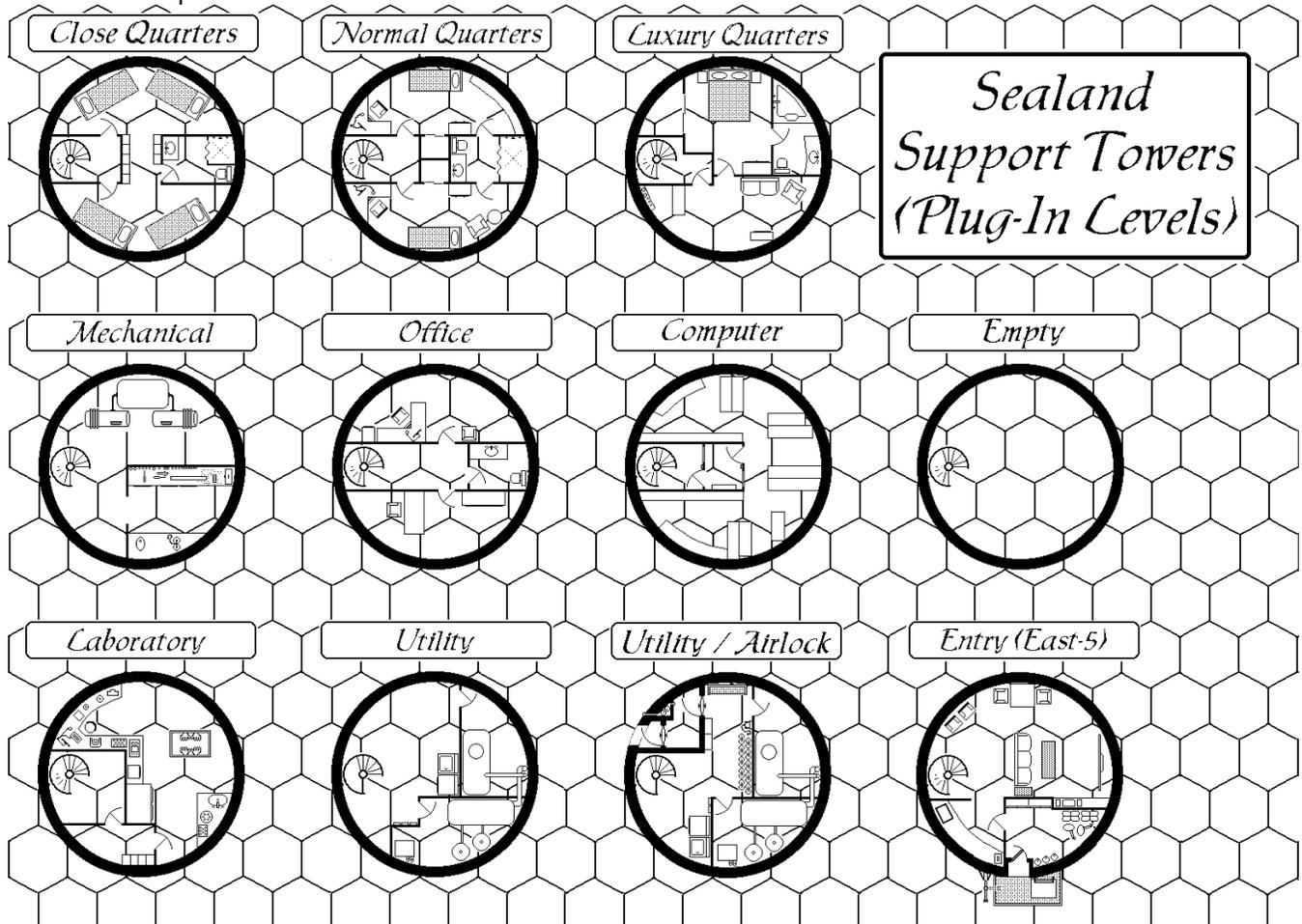
SOUTH TOWER (ORIGINAL PLATFORM)

Sealand's security, SafHaven's staff, and Prince Regent Michael live here. From top to bottom, the layout is:

- 6-7) Close Quarters
- 3-5) Normal Quarters
- 2) Luxury Quarters
- 1) Utility

Sealand's "official" guards (now replaced by covert ARGENT agents) bunk in the top two floors, while SafHaven's staff lives in normal quarters. Prince Michael's quarters are on Level 2.

Two of Carver's men – supposedly Michael's bodyguards – attempt to keep the Prince Regent drugged and under control. This is becoming increasingly difficult as he fights his "medication" and tries to find a way out of his predicament.



DIGITAL HERO #22

ORIGINAL PLATFORM

Measuring 10 meters wide, 26 meters long with a one meter-tall solid wall on all sides, the sea fort's deck is made of steel. Before the Telecom dock was added, sea-borne visitors had to be winched aboard the sea fort.

Sealand's 3.7-inch gun sits at the platform's north end next to the original winch. The fort's original ammunition cabinets cover much of the building's wall facing the gun. The south end has a crane for lifting cargo from the pier below. A forklift may also be found here along with some cargo crates and steel drums (contents, if any, are left up to the GM).

The building atop the platform is made of welded and riveted steel. Many doors are also steel; if necessary, steel shutters can be lowered over windows for further protection. The helipad atop the roof extends five meters to either side, overhanging the sea below.

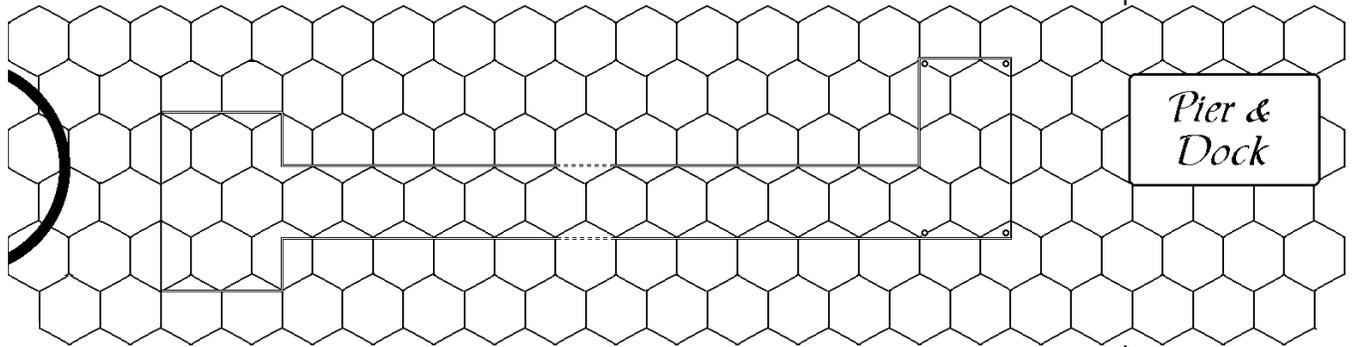
The platform building contains a kitchen, exercise room, small library, bathroom, storage space, and an entertainment room with computer, stereo system, and television.

PIER AND DOCK

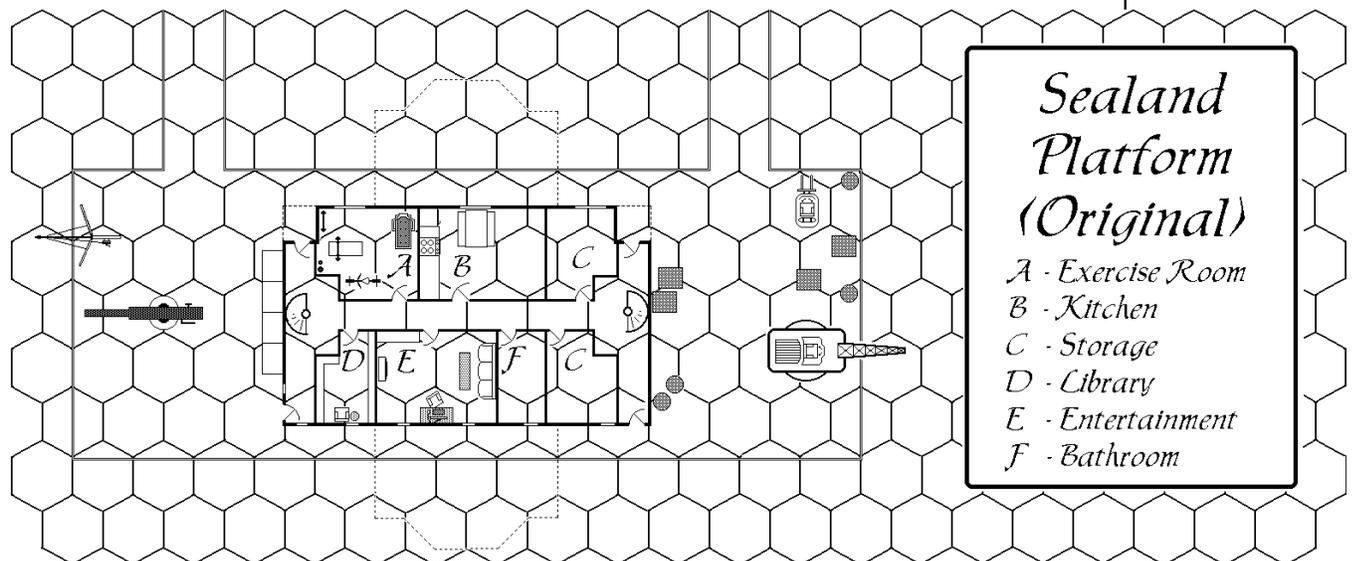
Most supplies to Sealand are brought by ship to the concrete dock at the end of a 100-meter pier and then lifted by crane to Sealand's original platform. A channel was covertly dredged to the main shipping channel for deeper-draft ships, though this is not used very often.

Sealand's staff uses a small forklift to move supplies along the pier. This forklift is stored on the platform above when not in use.

Pier and Dock



Original Platform



TELECOM SEA-LEVEL DOCK

This metal-grate platform is connected to tracks on Telecom’s three support towers. It can be raised and lowered hydraulically from the control room on the Telecom Building’s fifth floor; when not in use, it is raised six meters above sea level.

A steel ladder on the exterior of the east post leads up to a platform and an armored door into Level 5 of that post. A block and tackle is mounted on an overhead swivel arm for raising and lowering equipment (like the Zodiacs and motors).

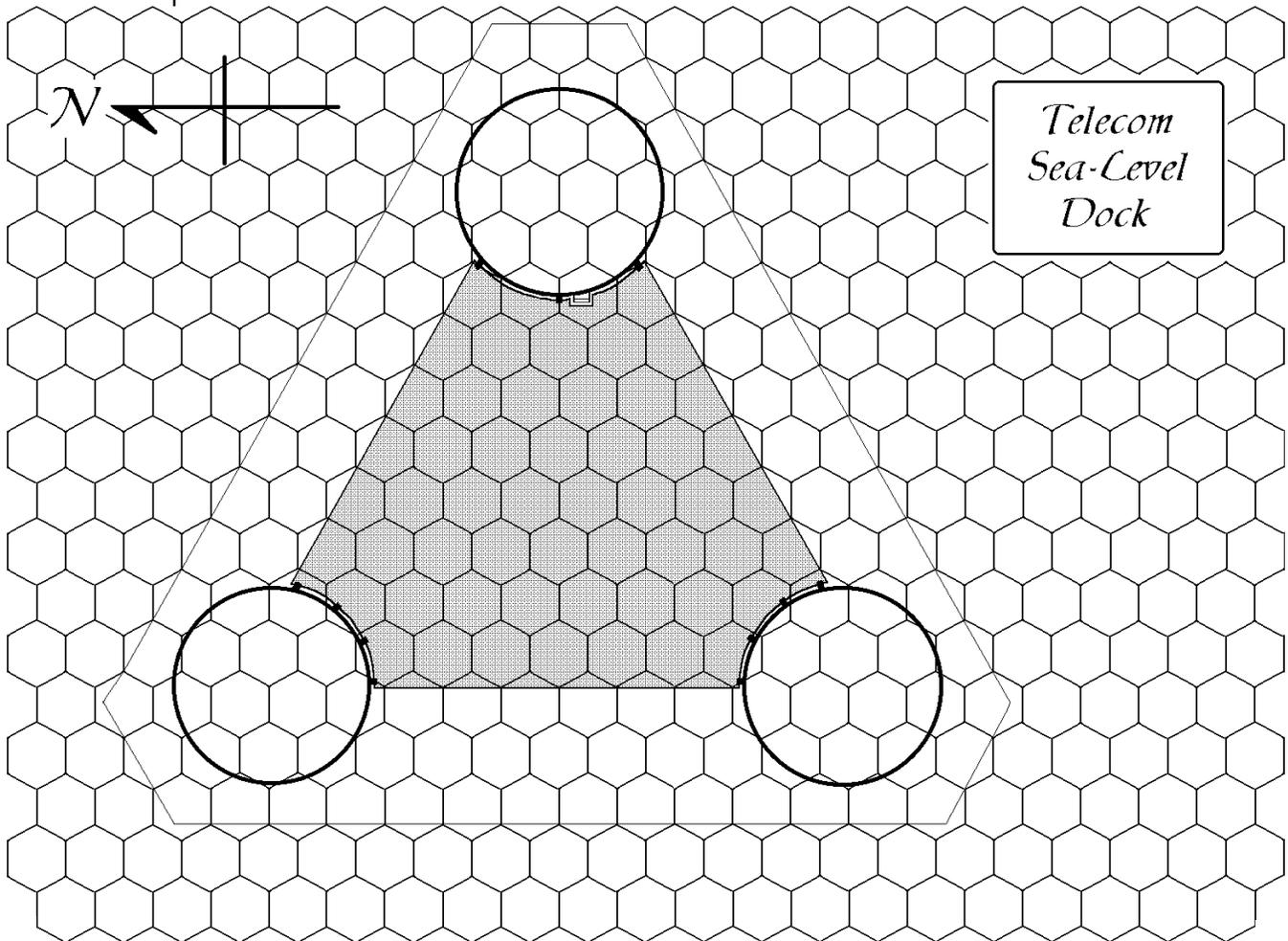
EAST TOWER (TELECOM)

Legitimate employees of Sealand Telecom live on four levels of Normal Quarters (levels 6 and 2-4). The fifth floor is an Entry level, and the bottom floor is a Utility level.

NORTH AND SOUTH TOWERS (TELECOM)

Armed ARGENT agents bunk in Close Quarters on the top two floors of each tower, while ARGENT scientists have Normal Quarters on the next three floors. The bottom floor of each tower is a Utility / Airlock level.

Telecom Dock



DIGITAL HERO #22

TELECOM PLATFORM

The triangular platform sits at the same height as the sea fort's original platform. It is made of steel, 22 meters on a side, with a one-meter steel wall on all sides. Two 2-meter wide walkways connect it to the original platform. The Sealand Telecom building takes up most of the platform.

TELECOM BUILDING (GENERAL INFO)

This building has mirrored one-way windows on all sides. The sides slope up to a small flat top 18 meters above the platform. This top is covered with radio and radar antennae, plus a satellite dish.

An elevator accesses all levels, with a stairwell spanning floors 1 through 4. Circular

staircases in all three corners lead down to the support towers. Unless stated otherwise, walls are 5 DEF, 5 BODY.

The bottom two floors are used for legitimate Telecom operations; the rest is used by ARGENT.

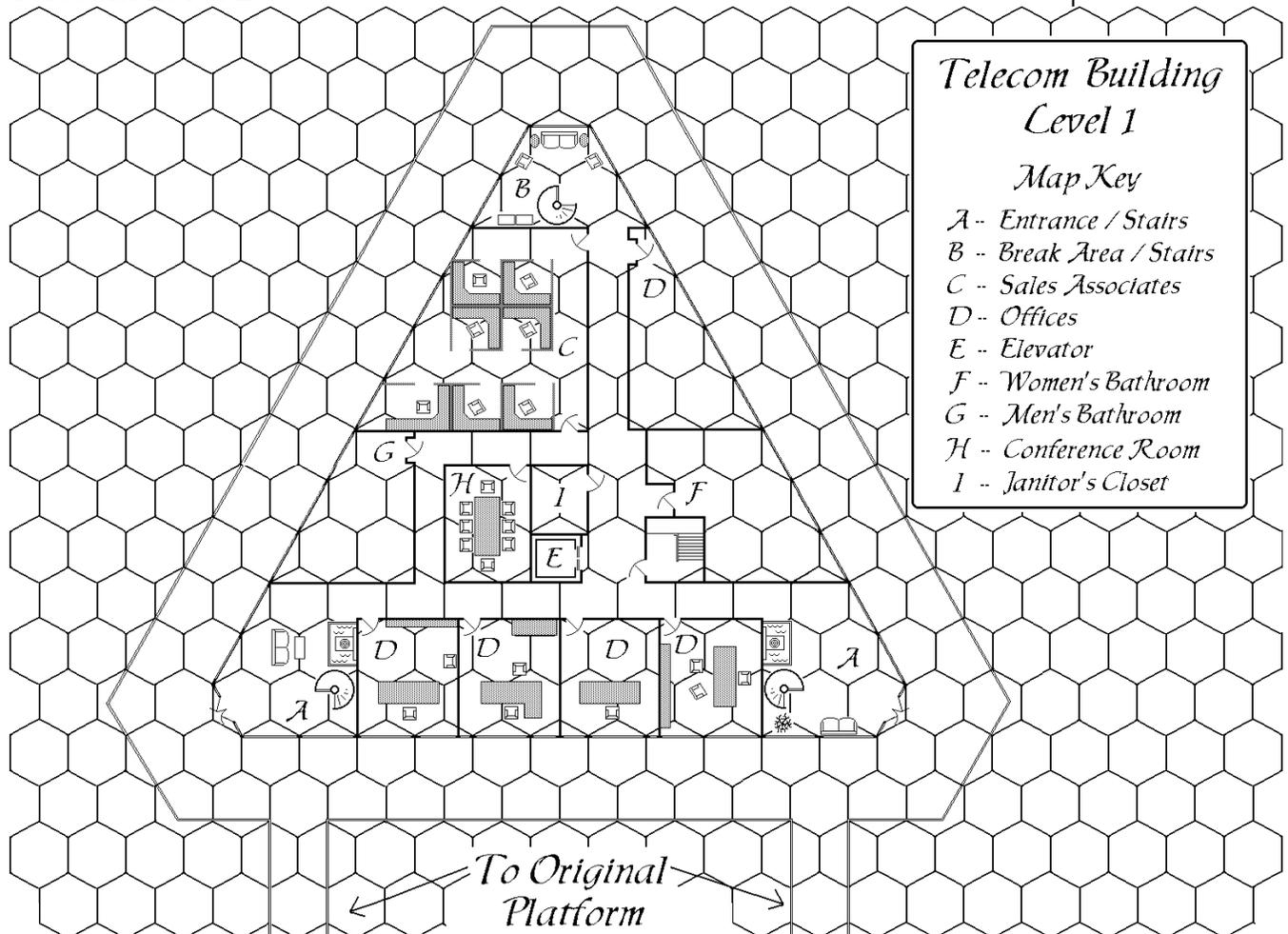
TELECOM BUILDING (LEVEL 1)

Employees on this floor handle Sealand Telecom's and SafHaven's legitimate business. A dozen people in cubicles and small offices deal with clients by phone, fax, and computer.

These employees are aware of ARGENT's presence on Sealand, but they're paid well to keep their mouths shut and provide a legitimate business front for visitors.

Besides office space, this floor has a break room, conference room, restrooms, and elevator.

Telecom Level 1



TELECOM BUILDING (LEVEL 2)

This level has more office space, as well as a kitchen and cafeteria. When Sealand is free of visitors (as it usually is), this floor is where ARGENT agents and Sealand Telecom employees interact most often.

The cafeteria seats two dozen comfortably. Vending machines and microwaves are available for times the kitchen is closed.

A large and well-appointed conference room is used for meetings, occasional training classes, and other Telecom employee activities.

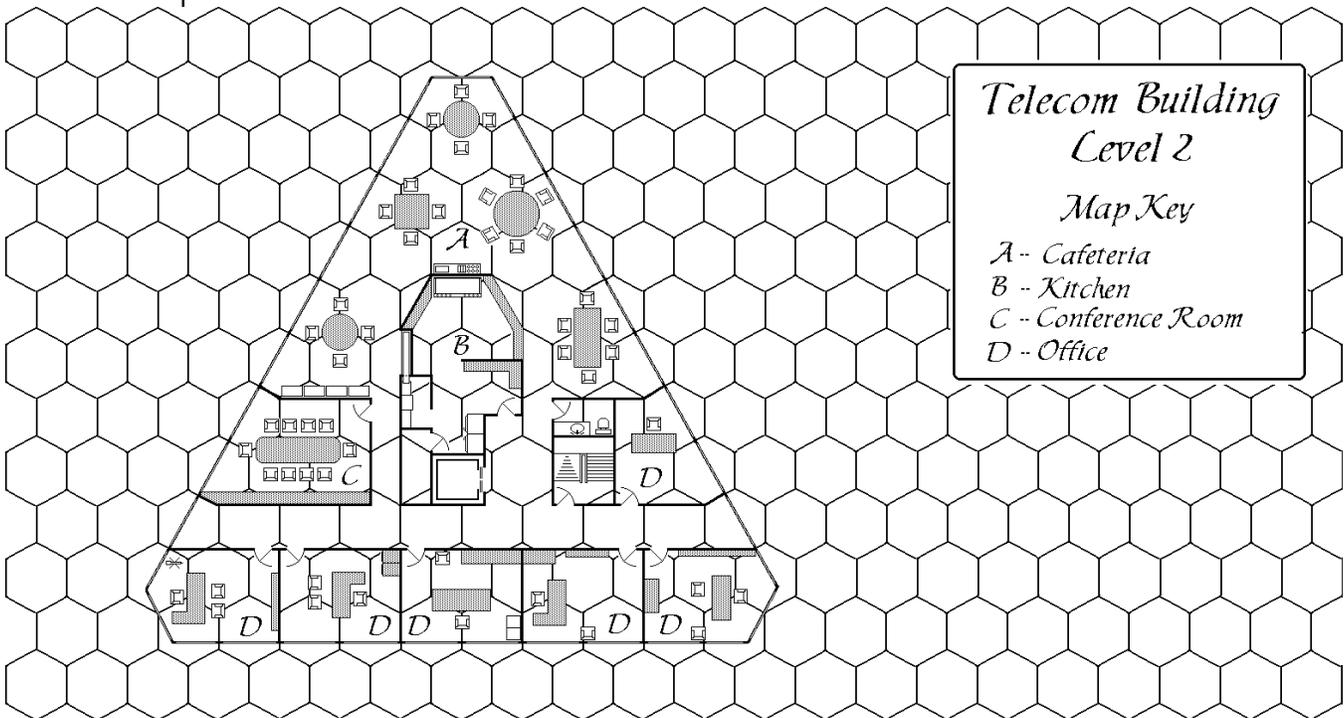
TELECOM BUILDING (LEVEL 3)

Most of this floor is taken up by labs to be determined by the GM. Suggestions include: Genetics (creating paranormals), Biological (developing an intelligence-sapping drug), or Electronic (building radar-disrupting devices).

A separate area has cells for test subjects. The cells have 10 DEF, 10 BODY. In *Champions* games, increase the DEF and add Advantages or Powers like Affects Desolidified or Mental Defense as needed.

This floor also has a break room with a wide-screen TV, stereo system, and computers with high-speed internet connections. Four agents (one from each team) are always playing poker in this room. This game has been played continuously for six months, with players changing each shift.

Telecom Level 2



DIGITAL HERO #22

TELECOM BUILDING (LEVEL 4)

ARGENT's briefing room and armory are here, as well as Carver's suite of rooms and ARGENT's computer room.

The armory is armored (12 DEF, 12 BODY) and holds small arms and ammunition, as well as grenades, heavy weapons, and racks of spearguns and other underwater weapons.

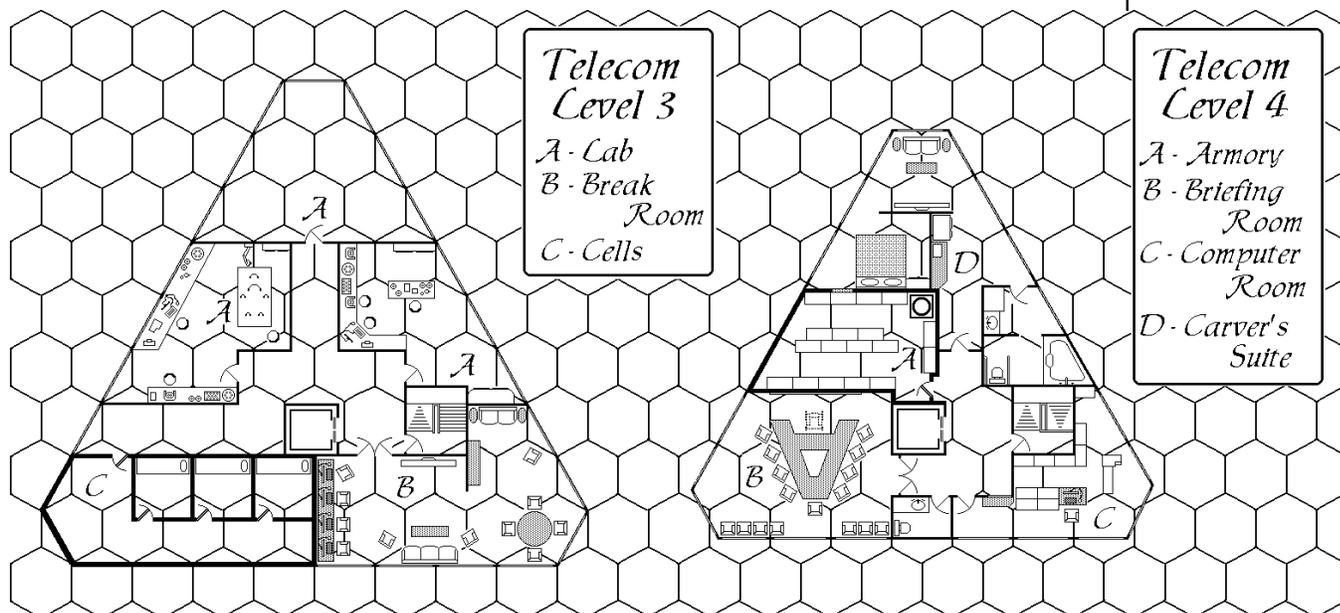
A hydraulic lift mechanism fills one corner. Controlled from Carver's wheelchair, it allows him to travel between levels 5-7. In an emergency, the lift can be lowered enough for him to climb atop it on level 4, though this hasn't happened yet.

The briefing room seats 16 comfortably, with a small bathroom just outside the door. The computer room next door has top-of-the-line supercomputers and mainframe systems for ARGENT's computing needs. Two cryptoanalysts work here, decoding UK and UNTIL radio and data intercepts with moderate success.

Carver's suite is relatively small but comfortable, with plush carpeting and carved oak furnishings. It has a kitchenette, bedroom, living room, and bathroom. Everything is arranged for easy wheelchair access (including lower sinks, drawers, and counters).

Of particular note is a secret panel between Carver's bedroom and the armory. It is well hidden (-4 to Concealment rolls).

Telecom Levels 3 and 4



TELECOM BUILDING (LEVEL 5)

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this level are armored (10 DEF, 10 BODY), although the exterior looks like mirrored windows.

Two agents stand guard behind a reinforced bulletproof one-way mirror (7 DEF, 5 BODY) facing the elevator. Each mans a heavy blaster cannon pointing out a closeable gun port (14d6 EB, 2 clips of 8 shots each, Immobile OAF, with a 60° arc).

A corridor leads to a mini-armory with cabinets for weapons, armor, and other combat equipment (gas masks, etc.). Both the entry lobby and corridor can be gassed (EB 4d6, NND (appropriate Life Support), Area Of Effect (3 Hexes), Continuous).

The nerve center for ARGENT-Sealand takes up most of this level. Some agents monitor radar, sonar, and security cameras while others track ongoing operations.

Two key points here are (1) an experimental mini-reactor to meet all of ARGENT's electrical needs and (2) Carver's hydraulic wheelchair lift. In an emergency, the lift can drop far enough into the main armory below to provide an escape route or access to more weapons.

TELECOM BUILDING (LEVEL 6)

This is Jason Carver's penthouse office. The elevator only goes to this floor with a special key, and opens into a reception area where Carver's executive assistant (Maria Bowman) works.

Carver's office is relatively small but nicely decorated. All exterior walls are bulletproof glass (mirrored on the outside), giving a great view of the waters and ships passing by. Carver's mahogany desk is the centerpiece, with a minibar by the door and a bathroom to the side. Japanese artwork is displayed on walls and shelves.

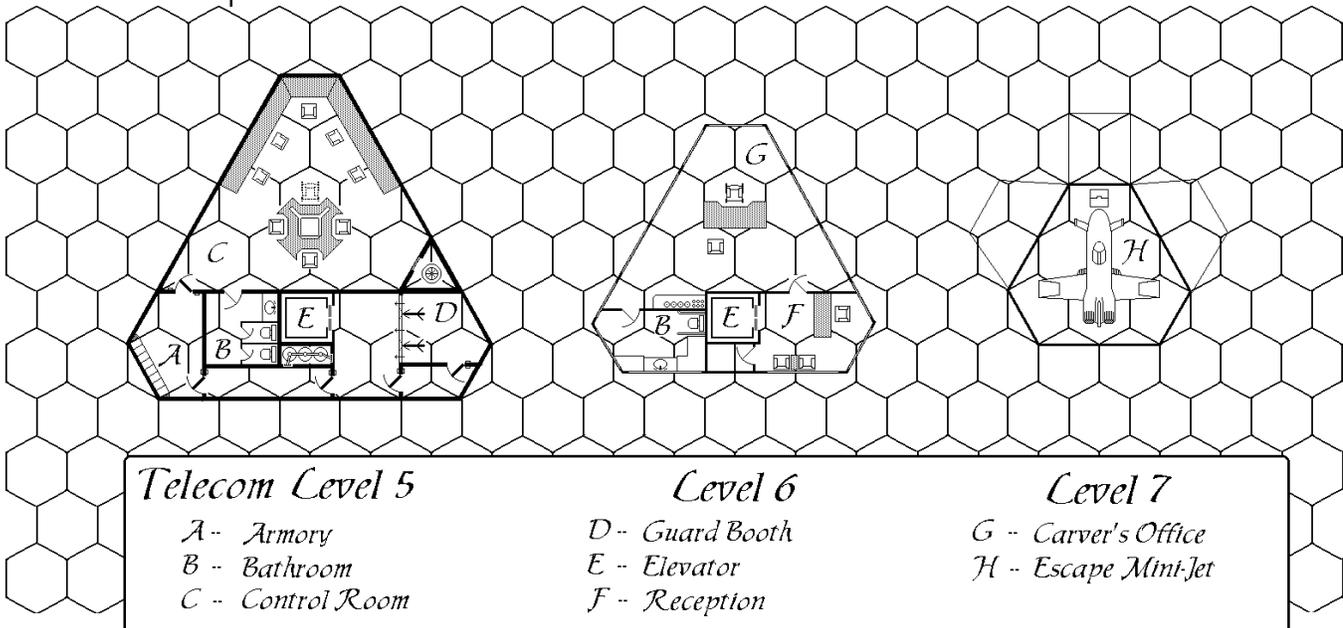
Carver's desktop flips up to reveal a high-tech computer screen. With the right command codes, this terminal can access Sealand Telecom corporate files, ARGENT files, and the feed from all Sealand security cameras.

Carver's chair can be hydraulically lowered to the command center or raised through a concealed ceiling hatch into the level above.

TELECOM BUILDING (LEVEL 7)

A floor hatch is the only access to this level (shielded with lead and psionic jamming circuitry in *Champions* games). It contains a one-man mini-jet accessed through a hatch in the bottom. Carver can be inside and ready for launch in three Phases. Three outside walls open for launching, and a one-shot rocket theoretically boosts the mini-jet to flight speed before it can hit the water.

Telecom Levels 5, 6, and 7



Sealand Personnel

JASON CARVER

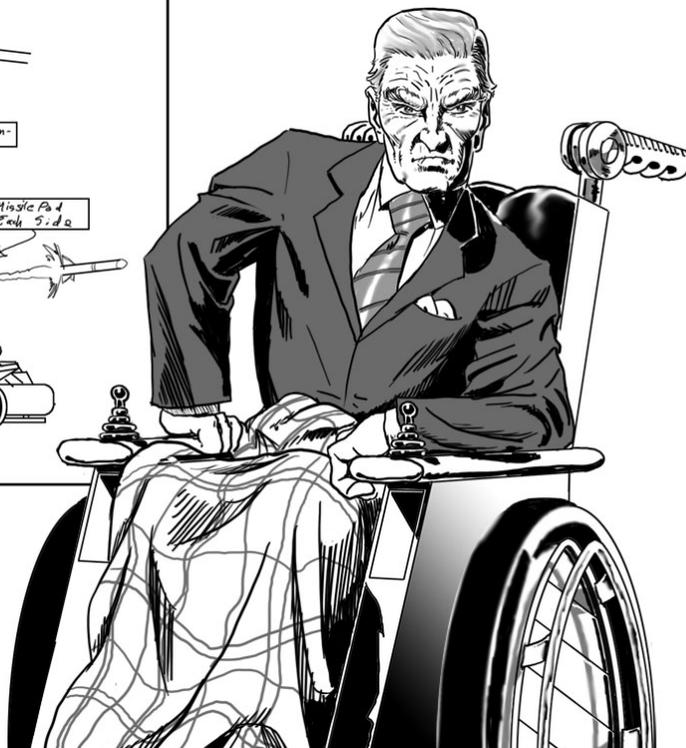
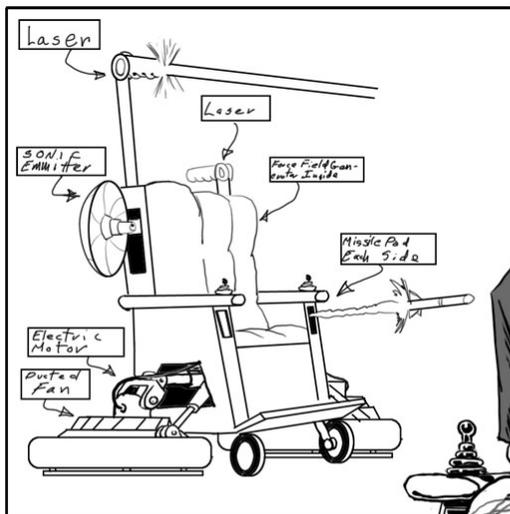
16 STR	14 DEX	20 CON	11 BODY
15 INT	20 EGO	23 PRE	16 COM
4 PD	4 ED	4 SPD	
9 REC	40 END	33 STUN	

Abilities: Acting 14-, Electronics 12-, Persuasion 14-, Security Systems 12-, Systems Operation 12-, KS: ARGENT 12-, PS: Business 13-, TF: Wheelchairs, Small Motorboats, & Planes, WF: Blades, Small Arms, and Wheelchair Weapons System, Fringe Benefit: ARGENT Membership, *Crippled Legs*: -4" Running & -1" Swimming, *Covert Armor*: Armor (7 PD, 7 ED), IIF, Activation 14-, *Blaster Pistol*: 8d6 EB, Armor Piercing, OAF, 12 Charges, Vehicle: Wheelchair.

125+ Disadvantages: Hunted by UNTIL 11- (NCI), Distinctive Features: Crippled Legs, Psychological Limitation: Power Hungry, Social Limitation: Subject to Orders.

Notes: Carver is the President of ARGENT-Sealand, having previously served as VP (Finance) for an ARGENT corporation in Spain. Most of his wealth is currently tied up in Sealand.

Carver had polio when he was a child, and it left him crippled. He can walk with braces on his legs, though he always uses his motorized wheelchair in public. Many people (including his own agents) believe he is a paraplegic and can't walk at all.



JASON'S WHEELCHAIR

0 SIZE	(1/2"x1/2", 50 kg, -0 DCV, -0" KB)
13 STR	14 DEX 11 BODY 4 SPD
8 DEF*	*Does Not Protect Passenger

Abilities: *Wheels*: 8" Running; OAF, Only on Smooth Surfaces; *Duct Fans*: 5" Flight, Must Stay Within 2" of a Surface; *Duct Fans*: 5" Swimming; Force Field (12 PD/12 ED), 2 Charges Lasting 5 Minutes; HRRP; Radar; *Air Tank*: Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing, 1 Fuel Charge Lasting 1 Hour; *Weapons Systems*: Multipower (60-point reserve), all OIF; a) *Smoke*: Darkness to Sight Group 4", 0 END, No Range; b) *Laser*: RKA 2d6, Armor Piercing, Reduced Endurance (0 END); c) *Sonic Emitters*: EB 3d6, NND (Deafness or Flash Defense versus Hearing), Explosive Cone (*Digital Hero #10*, page 52, or use AOE Cone with Reduced by Range), Reduced Endurance (0 END), No Range; d) *Radar-Guided Mini-Missiles*: RKA 2 1/2d6, No Range Modifier, 4 Charges.

130+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features: (Custom Wheelchair).

Notes: This high-tech wonder doesn't look dangerous, but it is. It has a smoke generator, pop-up laser, sonic emitters, and concealed mini-missiles, as well as a force field generator and radio/radar suite. Powerful duct fans turn it into a hovercraft or propel it through water.

ARGENT STRUCTURE

As of this writing, Hero Games hasn't presented an official version of ARGENT's organizational structure. The "corporate" structure presented here, based on suggestions from the Hero Games discussion lists, is just one possibility.

A "corporation" president commands the local base, with vice presidents heading departments relevant to that base. ARGENT "corporations" commonly have departments for Production, Research, Sales, and Security.

A small number of Auditors act as watchdogs and answer only to the "head office" (the nickname for ARGENT's Board of Directors). Everyone fears the Auditors.

Departments vie for portions of the base's "budget," so in-fighting is common. Most departments only communicate or cooperate well in an emergency.

ARGENT-Sealand is arranged as follows:

- President: Jason Carver
- VP (Production): Tony Cooke
- VP (Research): Dr. Sarah Jemison
- VP (Sales): Michelle Crownover
- VP (Security): Trent Newcombe

DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY?

Although most nations don't officially recognize Sealand as an independent nation, Jason Carver and his officers have appointed themselves official ambassadors of the principality. Diplomatic Immunity is not listed on their character sheets, since Sealand's status is not generally recognized, but it's enough for Carver to make the claim to immunity. If nothing else, it would be enough to tie up a court case for months or even years.

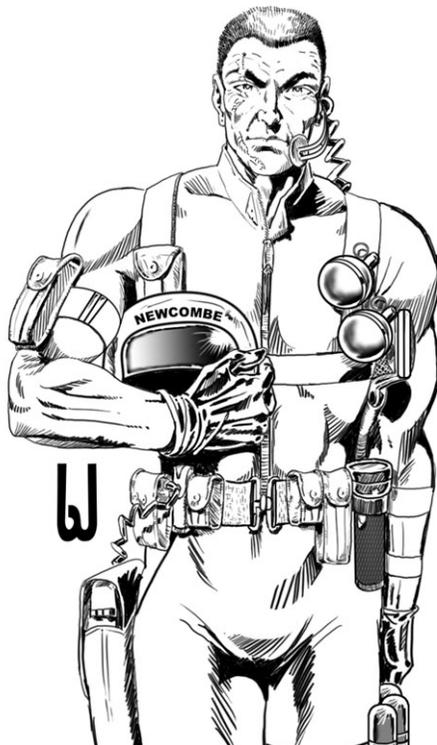
TRENT NEWCOMBE

18 STR	16 DEX	18 CON	11 BODY
15 INT	16 EGO	19 PRE	8 COM
4 PD	4 ED	4 SPD	
8 REC	38 END	32 STUN	

Abilities: +1 with Combat; Martial Arts (4 maneuvers); Breakfall 12-; Combat Driving 12-; Concealment 12-; Interrogation 13-; Stealth 12-; Survival 12- (Temperate, Marine Surface); Tactics 12-; TF: Small Motorboats, SCUBA, & Advanced Parachuting; WF: Small Arms, Blades, and Thrown Blades; Environmental Movement: no penalties Underwater; KS: The Military World 11-; KS: ARGENT 11-; PS: Leadership 11-; Fringe Benefit: ARGENT Membership; *Security Uniform:* Armor (7 PD, 7 ED), OIF; *Helmet Visor:* Flash Defense (6 points vs. Sight), OIF; *Helmet Radio:* HRRP, Concealed (-4 to Radio PER), OIF; *Laser AutoPistol:* 2d6 RKA, Armor Piercing, Autofire (3), OAF, 4 clips of 15 charges.

125+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Feature: Facial Scar (Concealable, Major Reaction); Hunted by UNTIL 8- (NCI); Psychological Limitation: Driven to Succeed; Social Limitation: Subject to Orders.

Notes: Trent Newcombe is VP (Security) for ARGENT-Sealand. A former British commando, he is admired and feared by his men. Newcombe is a hard-nosed man who accepts no excuse for failure. He has a wicked scar from above his right eye down to his chin, giving him a menacing appearance.



MARIA BOWMAN

11 STR	12 DEX	13 CON	10 BODY
16 INT	16 EGO	19 PRE	14 COM
3 PD	3 ED	3 SPD	
6 REC	30 END	24 STUN	

Abilities: Bureaucratics 13-; Conversation 13-; High Society 8-; Persuasion 13-; KS: UNTIL 11-; KS: ARGENT 11-; PS: Business 13-; WF: Pistols; TF: Small Motorized Boats, Waterskiing.

25+ Disadvantages: DNPC (8-) normal half-sister Joan Palmer; Hunted by UNTIL 8- (NCI, Watched); Psychological Limitation: Greedy; Social Limitation: Secret Identity.

Notes: Maria Bowman is Jason Carver's executive assistant (don't call her a secretary). She is a competent businesswoman, handling all aspects of Sealand Telecom and many ARGENT details with calm efficiency. Carver hired her away from UNTIL, where she was secretary for a British government liaison. She loves her new job, especially the high salary and perks.

The GM can optionally make Bowman a paid informant for UNTIL (change Disadvantages and add skills as appropriate). This could lead to the heroes rescuing Bowman or her sister after Carver discovers her duplicity, or her helping any captured heroes escape.



DIGITAL HERO #22

SEALAND SECURITY

13 STR 14 DEX 13 CON 10 BODY
15 INT 14 EGO 13 PRE 12 COM
4 PD 4 ED 3 SPD
7 REC 28 END 26 STUN

Abilities: +1 with SMG; Martial Arts (3 maneuvers); Acting 12-; Stealth 12-; 2 Personal Skills; KS: ARGENT 11-; TF: SCUBA, Jetskis, & Small Motorboats; WF: Small Arms; Fringe Benefit: ARGENT Membership; *Uniform:* Armor (5 PD, 5 ED), IIF; *Walkie-Talkie:* Radio Perception/Transmission, OAF; *Sub-machine Gun:* 1d6+1 RKA, Autofire (3 shots), 2 clips of 30 charges, OAF.

75+ Disadvantages: Hunted by British Government 8- (NCI, Watching); Psychological Limitation: Personal (usually Greedy or Power Hungry); Social Limitation: Subject to Orders.

Notes: A dozen covert ARGENT agents are “official” security for Sealand.

SEA SLED

1 Size (1”x3/4”, 50 kg, -0 DCV, -1” KB)
15 STR 11 DEX 8 BODY 3 SPD
5 DEF* *Does Not Protect Passengers

Abilities: 5” Swimming; *Water Only:* -6” Running; *Air Reserve:* Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing, 2 fuel charges of 1 hour duration, OAF; *Spearguns:* 2d6 AP RKA, Reduced by Range, 2 recoverable charges, OAF, Limited Arc: One Hex Line; *Ink Cloud:* Darkness to Sight Group (4” Radius or 8” Line), Limited Range and Arc (directly behind), 4 uses of 1 turn duration, OAF; *Mines:* 1d6+1 RKA, Penetrating, Proximity Trigger (3”), Explosion (-1/2”), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier, Limited Range and Arc (4” directly behind), 2 charges, OAF.

27 + Disadvantages: Hunted (11-) by UNTIL (NCI).

Notes: These vehicles pull divers through the water at speeds up to 9 knots (nautical miles per hour). The driver can fire mounted spearguns at forward targets or discourage pursuit with ink clouds (4” radius if stationary or 8” line if in motion) and/or mines, often released together. ARGENT-Sealand has ten sleds stored under the triangular dock.

ARGENT SEA ASSAULT AGENTS

13 STR 14 DEX 13 CON 10 BODY
13 INT 14 EGO 13 PRE 12 COM
5 PD 4 ED 3 SPD
8 REC 32 END 28 STUN

Abilities: +1 with Combat; Martial Arts (3 maneuvers); Stealth 12-; 2 Personal Skills; KS: ARGENT 11-; SS: (one science) 8-; TF: SCUBA, Jetskis, Small Motorboats, and Small Submersibles; WF: Small Arms & Spearguns; Environmental Movement: no penalties Underwater; Fringe Benefit: ARGENT Membership; +1” Swimming; *Uniform:* Armor (7 PD, 7 ED), OIF; *Helmet Visor:* Flash Defense (7 points vs. Sight), OIF; *Helmet Radio:* HRRP, Concealed (-4 to Radio PER), OIF; *SCUBA:* Life Support: self-contained breathing, OIF, 1 Recoverable Fuel Charge of 4 hours; *Weapons:* Variable Power Pool, 60 points, all OAF, only change in armory or other weapons cache.

75+ Disadvantages: Hunted (11-) by UNTIL (NCI); Psychological Limitation: Varies (Usually Greedy or Power Hungry); Social Limitation: Subject to Orders.

Notes: Sealand’s ARGENT agents are well versed in underwater combat, though they’re no slouches on land. Three dozen agents are split into four 8-man teams, plus four command staff. Their weapons include, but aren’t limited to:

Speargun: 1½d6 RKA, Invisible to Hearing, OAF, Reduced by Range, 4 Clips of 1 Recoverable Charge. (37 active points, 14 real)

Speargun option – Tether Line: 8” Stretching, 0 END, OAF, Only to Grab and Hold, No Velocity Damage, Always Direct, Only if RKA did BODY damage. (60 active points, 17 real) This adds Limited Range to the Speargun, but simply leaving the tether line unattached removes this limitation so the speargun’s real cost shouldn’t be adjusted.

Gyrojet Rocket Pistol: 1½d6 RKA, Armor Piercing, OAF, 7 charges. Fires underwater without penalty. (37 active points, 15 real)

Knife: ½d6 HKA, OAF. (10 active points, 5 real)

Billyclub: +2d6 HA, OAF, HA Lim. (10 active, 4 real)

Styer AUG Carbine: 1½d6 RKA, +1 Increased STUN Multiplier, Autofire (3), OAF, 2 Clips of 30 Charges. +2 OCV, OAF. (60 active points, 30 real)

Tazer: 4d6 EB, NND (Insulated), OAF, 8 charges, No Range. (40 active points, 13 real)

Grenades: 2d6 RKA, Explosion, OAF, 2 charges. +1 Increased STUN Multiplier, Only in Water. (45 + 7 active points, 13 + 2 = 15 real)

Campaign Use

The Principality of Sealand presented here was designed for use in *Super Agents* or *Dark Champions*, though it is easily modified for a spy or detective campaign. Sealand doesn't have to be an ARGENT base; Jason Carver can be a spy, mob leader, or supervillain.

If you want modern-day realism, remove the triangular addition and let your mind wander on what unscrupulous people could do if they took over an independent micronation with its own secure computer data storage facility.

SEALAND MINI-ADVENTURE

This is an adventure for spy or super-agent characters, though it can be used with superheroes by beefing up the opposition. If you wish, replace ARGENT with another enemy agency or international criminal organization. Player characters are assumed to belong to a government agency or affiliated with one, though they can be drawn into the adventure in other ways (a friend was on the missing ship, for instance).

The PCs are briefed that the *Tara Lynne*, an electronic intelligence-gathering ship masquerading as a freighter, was found in the North Sea with most of her crew shot to death. Top-secret papers, equipment, and some key personnel are missing. Explosive charges were found on the hull below the waterline; they failed to go off when the timer malfunctioned.

What Happened: Carver's men tampered with *Tara Lynne's* engines before she sailed from Southampton, forcing a detour to Margate. There, divers used magnets to attach themselves to the hull below the waterline as the engines were repaired. After she sailed, the divers waited until evening, then boarded and took over the ship while a nearby support ship jammed calls for help. They took people, equipment, and papers to the support ship and sailed back to Harwich, where everything and everybody was transferred onto a ship to Sealand.

The PCs are told or can eventually learn the following:

1) The *Tara Lynne* left Southampton for the Baltic Sea but stopped in Margate for engine repairs, leaving in the late afternoon.

2) A freighter, the exact same type as the *Tara Lynne*, sank a month ago in the North Sea without survivors. The PCs may dive on it and discover the crew was shot and the ship sunk with explosive charges. (This was a practice for the real thing.)

3) Both ships passed through the same waters (within two miles of Sealand) before the attacks.

4) Radar records show each ship stopping at sea for a while before starting back up (the practice ship sank a few hours later). In each

case, the stricken ship was followed and approached by another ship (different ships, leased in cash). Both times, the leased ship blocked shore radar from seeing goings-on between the two ships when they stopped.

Lay out enough clues to make them suspicious of Sealand but aren't certain it's involved. Possible clues can be: a person who worked on the *Tara Lynne* in Southampton was a former Sealand guard and has since disappeared; the sunken ship once delivered a cargo to Sealand; or the British Navy picked up coded radio signals from Sealand while the *Tara Lynne* was at Margate.

Eventually, the PCs will investigate Sealand, hopefully rescuing the kidnapped personnel and recovering the stolen equipment and papers.

SEALAND PLOT SEEDS

Misplaced Secret: One of SafHaven's clients unknowingly receives information that compromises national security or imperils a hero's secret identity. This information is stored on Sealand. Can the heroes sneak in and destroy backup copies, or is it an elaborate trap?

Royal Rescue: While Carver is away from the principality for a month, Prince Regent Michael fights the effects of his "medication," slips past his guards, and sends a call for help. Unfortunately, the message was garbled and the heroes must investigate goings-on aboard the sea fort.

Lucky Break: Carver decides to expand by covertly taking over Fort Knock John, another sea fort. He doesn't know that the Brits have secret biolabs in the fort's support towers, and a scientist gets off a quick SOS. The heroes have to find Carver's men and recover whatever was stolen. (Use the original Sealand towers and platform for Knock John's layout, with Laboratory and Office levels in one tower. Add a second level to the platform building; Sealand's was removed in 1966.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Maunsell Sea Forts by Frank R. Turner, 1997.

The Sealand Story by Frank R. Turner, 1997.
Sealand's Official Website:

www.fruitsofthesea.demon.co.uk/sealand

HavenCo's Website: www.havenco.com

Wired article on Sealand and HavenCo:

www.wired.com/wired/archive/8.07/haven.html

"Sealand Business Foundation":

www.principality-of-sealand.de (sells fake Sealand passports)

For an opposing viewpoint on Sealand:

www.freebornjohn.com

A Pair of Jacks

by Michael Surbrook

You Don't Know Jack

In 1888 a man managed to terrorize all of London with a series of brutal and horrific murders. He was never identified and never caught, and his name has since become synonymous with the very concept of the term “serial killer.” He is, of course, Jack the Ripper.

What few people realize is that the Ripper wasn't the only Jack to strike fear into the people of London. In 1837 there was the bizarre figure of Springheeled Jack, who bounded about, cackling madly and spewing gouts of flame. And like the Ripper, this Jack was neither captured nor identified.

Springheeled Jack

Background/History: In 1837 London was plagued by the terrifying antics of a strangely garbed figure the press dubbed “Springheeled Jack.” This bizarre criminal traveled in great leaps and bounds, and assaulted a number of women, tearing at their clothing with sharp fingers. Jack became such a menace that the Lord Mayor of London formed a vigilance committee in order to catch him, but he eluded all pursuers and eventually vanished from sight. Forty years later, in the late 1870s, Jack or someone like him was spotted again, leaping and bounding his way across the English countryside. In 1938, a Jack-like figure was spotted in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, where he assaulted his victims by breathing flame in their faces.

Personality/Motivation: By all accounts, Jack is a dangerous individual. He comes and goes as he pleases, leaping walls and barriers both to attack his victims and to escape retribution. Jack will attack almost any target, but prefers women, and seems to be driven either by sexual urgings or by a hatred for females. What drives him to make these attacks is unknown, but the threat of capture by the police seems to not be much of a deterrent to his activities.

Quote: Springheeled Jack was not known for speaking, but he often emitted great bellowing laughs as he bounded about.

Powers/Tactics: When making one of his assaults, Springheeled Jack will often use trickery or deceit to get close to his victim, and in one case imitated the voice of a policeman to call a woman into his clutches. When he does attack, Jack will either attempt to tear a woman's clothing away, or will simply terrify his target with his startling appearance and a blast of blue-white flame breathed in their face. Once he has made his initial attack, Jack will quickly bound away, leaping any obstacle in his path and easily escaping any pursuers.

Campaign Use: Simply put, Springheeled Jack is as bizarre as they come. His identity has never been determined, and the original Springheeled

Jack was never caught. He managed to terrify all of London for a while, and was quite well-known until a more famous Jack, Jack the Ripper, eclipsed his fame in the late 1880s. Interestingly, in the late 1860s, Springheeled Jack became a sort of Victorian superhero, leaping about the city of London, and bringing justice to various criminals and evildoers. At least three plays were written about him and his alleged exploits.

This character sheet presumes Springheeled Jack is a real person, not an alien or simple figment of the hysterical imagination – two explanations which have been offered by theorists and researchers. It also presumes he is an inventor of some sort, having created several odd devices in order to carry out his rather unusual life of crime. It should be pointed out that although this version of Jack uses springheeled boots, it is not physically possible to actually leap about using such a device. The Germans in World War II tried to equip their soldiers with just such an invention, and ended up breaking quite a few ankles before abandoning the idea. As for his true motivations and origin, that is up to you, and you should feel free to fill in such details as needed.

Springheeled Jack could be used in any number of genres, although this version, at only 160 points, is best suited for low-powered horror and pulp action campaigns. If used in a superhero campaign, it is recommended you increase his physical characteristics and equipment to bring him up to 250 points.

Springheeled Jack may or may not Hunt a PC hero; it really depends on what you decide are his motivations.

Appearance: Springheeled Jack is a tall man, standing over six feet in height. He has a thin, but powerful build, and is dressed in a close-fitting suit of some shiny white material. Over this he wears a long black cloak, which he swirls about to disguise his movement and actions. His face is long and narrow, with burning eyes and tapering ears. On his head he wears a metal helmet.

artwork by Shawn Richter

Springheeled Jack



DIGITAL HERO #22

Springheeled Jack

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 HTH [2]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6(9)
15	CON	10	12-	
11	BODY	2	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
6	COM	-2	10-	
8	PD	4		Total PD: 8 (0 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total ED: 6 (0 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
7	REC	0		
30	END	0		
30	STUN	1		

Total Characteristics Cost: 83

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Leaping: 8"/16"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
12	<i>Blue Flames:</i> EB 2d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); No Knockback (-1/4), No Range (-1/2) plus Sight Group Flash 1d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); Linked (-1/2), No Range (-1/2)	0
9	<i>Iron-clawed Fingers:</i> HKA 1/2d6 (1d6+1 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); OIF (-1/2), Reduced Penetration (-1/4)	0
5	<i>Helmet:</i> Armor (6 PD/6 ED); Activation Roll 8- (Locations 4-5, -2), OIF (-1/2)	0
10	<i>Long Cloak:</i> +3 with DCV; OIF (-1/2)	0
5	<i>Springheeled Boots:</i> Leaping: +4" (8" Total), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); IIF (-1/4)	0

Skills

3	Acrobatics 13-
3	Breakfall 13-
3	CK: London 12-
3	Climbing 13-
3	Concealment 12-
5	Inventing 13-
3	Mimicry 12-
5	Shadowing 13-
2	SS: Mechanical Engineering 11-
3	Stealth 13-

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 77

Total Cost: 160

75+ Disadvantages

15	Distinctive Features: Strange, Tight-Fitting Costume and Inhuman Appearance (Concealable, Major Reaction)
15	Hunted: London Police 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Geographical Area, Capture)
10	Psychological Limitation: Disdain for Authority and the Law (Common, Moderate)
15	Psychological Limitation: Lecherous and/or Misogynist (Common, Strong)
15	Reputation: Assaulter of Women 11- (Extreme)
15	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 160

WHO WAS JACK THE RIPPER?

Numerous candidates have been put forward for the identity of Jack the Ripper, ranging from that of a deranged midwife (a.k.a. Jill the Ripper), to Masons bent on some occult rite, to Prince Albert Victor Christian Edward, to Charles Dodgson (better known as Lewis Carroll). Currently, an American Doctor named Francis Tumblety is one of more popular of the serious suspects.

On pages 82-84 of the *Dark Champions* sourcebook *Murderer's Row* one can find a very powerful and very dangerous write-up of Jack the Ripper. The Ripper in this case is Sir William Withey Gull, Queen Victoria's physician-in-ordinary, operating under the name of "Passion Killer." Sir Gull has been a popular, if unlikely, candidate for the identity of the Ripper over the years, mainly due to his Masonic connections.

Jack the Ripper

Background/History: In the fall of 1888 the city of London witnessed what can probably be called the first modern serial killing spree. From late August to early November of that year, the police had to contend with the activities of a man the press dubbed "Jack the Ripper" (the name taken from a letter sent to a contemporary news bureau), who was killing prostitutes in and around the Whitechapel district of London. Despite the efforts of the police, and of many local vigilance committees watching the streets, the killer was never caught, and his identity remains unknown to this day.

The facts about the case are surprisingly scant, although one can infer a great deal about the killer from the methods he used to kill his victims. It is commonly accepted the Ripper killed five women (Mary Ann Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Catharine Eddowes, and Mary Jane Kelly), although there is evidence to suggest Martha Tabram (killed in early August) was also one of his victims. Speculation and popular opinion at the time of the slayings has the Ripper killing nine women, with the final number usually agreed on by researchers as being between four and six.

Personality/Motivation: It is not known what motivated Jack the Ripper to commit his crimes. The Federal Bureau of Investigations Behavioral Science Unit did a profile of the killer in 1988, with the end result describing the Ripper to most likely to be a single white male, employed, of the lower or middle classes, and a sexual deviant. One thing is known for sure: the Ripper wanted attention. He left most of his victims lying out in plain sight for anyone to discover. By doing so, he hoped to shock the city of London and make its population (and through them, the whole world) take notice of him and his actions.

Quotes: "I am down on whores and I shant quit ripping them till I do get buckled."

"youll hear about saucy Jackys work tomorrow double event this time number one squealed a bit couldn't finish straight off."

"I send you half the Kidne I took from one women prasarved it for you tother piece I fried and ate it was very nise I may send you the bloody knif that took it out if you only wate a whil longer"

"The Juwes are the men That Will not be Blamed for nothing."

The first three quotes are taken from various letters sent to the police (or in the case of the third quote, to George Lusk, who headed a Whitechapel vigilance committee). Current opinion is that the first two quotes are not from letters written by Jack the Ripper, and may in fact be the work of a London journalist. The

third quote, however, is taken from a letter that accompanied half a human kidney, and claimed the organ had come from Catharine Eddowes. Eddowes was missing one of her kidneys when discovered, and thus this letter may be genuine. The last quote was found chalked over a door near the site of Eddowe's body, and is thought to have been written by the killer.

Powers/Tactics: Recent examination of the evidence behind the Ripper slayings has led to a fairly full understanding as to how the murders were committed. Initially, the Ripper would approach his victims on the street and proposition their services as a prostitute. Once an agreement was made, he would accompany his target to an appropriate location, and than wait for her to turn and face him. As she was occupied with lifting up her skirts, the Ripper would wrap his hands around his target's throat and strangle her into unconsciousness and then death. He would then lay his victim down on the ground, her head to his left, and cut the throat. The actual murder accomplished, the Ripper would then mutilate the body, usually removing some portion of the inner organs as trophy.

Due to the nature in which the bodies were mutilated it is generally thought the killer had some form of anatomical or medical knowledge. Organs were removed cleanly, with no damage to the surrounding area. In addition, due to the location of the killings (outside and in the dark), the Ripper almost certainly was well-skilled with his knife.

Campaign Notes: Jack the Ripper is, without a doubt, the most famous serial killer of all time. His actions, coming as they did at a time where newspapers were becoming widely read as a source of current events, instantly made him into a figure of national (and eventually international) renown. The fact he was never caught only helped add to his mystique, not to mention the vast body of rumors, speculations, and opinions that have been put forth in the years since the killings. He struck fear into an entire city, and for a few months managed to totally terrorize the district of Whitechapel.

This write-up attempts to present a logical and realistic depiction of the killer. His STR allows him to restrain a struggling woman while his DEX enables him to be quick with a knife. His skills depict the popular opinion the Ripper was a medical man (or, at least, had some knowledge of anatomy).

The optional powers allow you to make Jack the Ripper a touch more frightening by playing on some of the more common rumors about the Ripper. The Choke Hold should let the Ripper disable his victim in a Phase or two, especially since the typical Whitechapel prostitute of the time would have CON of around 6-8 and a

Jack the Ripper



Jack the Ripper

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
11	CON	2	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll: 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
3	PD	0		Total PD: 3 (0 rPD)
3	ED	1		Total ED: 3 (0 rED)
3	SPD	7		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	0		
22	END	0		
24	STUN	0		

Total Characteristics Cost: 39

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Leaping: 3"/6"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost Perks

- 1 Fringe Benefit: Doctor's License

Skills

- 4 +2 OCV with Grab
- 4 +2 OCV with Knife
- 2 CK: London 11-
- 2 CK: London's East End 11-
- 3 Concealment 12-
- 3 Disguise 12-
- 1 Language: English (Literate)
- 3 Paramedic 12-
- 2 PS: Doctor 11-
- 3 PS: Surgeon 12-
- 3 Seduction 12-
- 3 Shadowing 12-
- 2 SS: Anatomy 11-
- 2 SS: Medicine 11-
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 3 Streetwise 12-
- 1 WF: Knife/Scalpel

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 45

Total Cost: 84

25+ Disadvantages

- 20 Hunted: Scotland Yard, 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Geographical Area, Capture)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Antisocial Personality Disorder (Very Common, Strong)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity as the Whitechapel Murderer, a.k.a. "Leather Apron" (Frequently, Major)
- 4 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 84

OPTIONS

Cost Optional Ripper Powers

- 27 *Choke Hold:* EB 3d6, NND (defense is solid armor over the neck, or no need to breathe; +1), Does BODY (+1), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Attack Must Be Aimed at Head Location or No Effect (-¾), Must Follow a Successful Grab Maneuver (-¼), No Range (-½) 3
- 3 *Move Silently:* Running 6", Invisible to Hearing Group (+¼) 1
- 11 *Vanish Without a Trace:* Teleport: 12"; No Noncombat Multiple (-¼), Only to "Vanish" When No One is Looking (-½), Only to Places the Character Can Normally Reach (-½) 2

BODY score to match. To correctly depict the effects of the NND, the "Does BODY" Advantage should not be applied until after the victim reaches 0 STUN. The other two powers allow the Ripper to move silently through the back alleys and side streets of the East End, or to escape from an enclosed or confined yard, as the real Ripper did seem to come and go as he pleased. In order to give the PCs a better chance of catching the Ripper, you may wish to have both of these powers have an Activation Roll, with the roll based on the Ripper's DEX or Stealth skill.

This version of the Ripper, at only 84 points, is not meant to face a group of well-armed PCs of virtually any power level in open combat. His power is one of fear – fear he creates by his ability to strike at any time, anywhere, and by the horrible nature of his crimes. Thus, he could be used in both Heroic and Superheroic settings with ease. In either setting, the Ripper cannot be stopped simply through force of arms, but must be tracked down through the use of extensive detective work and investigation. You could create a more powerful version of the Ripper of course, simply by increasing such stats as STR, DEX, CON, and SPD to desired campaign levels.

As Jack the Ripper only preyed on female prostitutes, it is doubtful he would Hunt a PC hero.

Appearance: Aside from being a white male (or so it is presumed), nothing is known of the Ripper's actual appearance. Eyewitness reports describe a number of persons in the vicinity of each killing, but none of them match up very well. A rough estimate puts the killer of average height (in this case around 5'7") and build, and well dressed.

Whisper and Deceiver

by W. Jason Allen

Whisper

Background/History: Marla Goldstein loved to dance. She even learned acrobatics and other gymnastics to improve her dancing skills. When she got to college, she immediately entered the performing arts department to earn a degree in dance. Unfortunately, like her brother Peter (also known as Stonework, seen in *Digital Hero #10*), life got in the way.

VIPER kidnapped Marla to coerce her brother into working for them. She had no idea he was a superhero until that point, and afterwards she tried to convince him to go to the authorities, but he didn't. He was too afraid of what VIPER would do to her. Marla didn't care about that; her brother was forced to become a criminal, and it was as good as her fault!

After several months of doing VIPER's dirty work, Peter finally went to the authorities. Marla never knew what hit her. One moment she was in her apartment, folding her laundry, and the next she felt a sharp pain in her neck. The first thing she saw when she opened her eyes was herself, lying dead on the floor. She watched, motionless, as her brother burst into the room and exploded in anger and grief. He cursed the heroes he had gone to for help, and fled. She has not seen him since.

After the heroes left, Marla realized that nothing was happening to her. She was dead, obviously, and she could feel herself floating just above the floor, near her body. No white light appeared to lead her to heaven; no demons came to drag her down to hell. "I must be a ghost," she finally decided. Then, fear and anger began to set in. She had been murdered! And for no other reason than that her brother had finally done the right thing and gone to the authorities for help. VIPER must pay for what they did to her! But how? She was dead, a ghost, not able to touch things or affect the real world.

"Marla Goldstein, I presume." She turned, and was confronted with the classic visage of Death. His voice was distant and cold, but did not seem cruel. If she weren't already dead she'd have passed out.

"Y-yes? How do you know my name? Who are you?"

"It is my business to know you. I am Death, come to guide you into the afterlife. Normally, I am not needed, but occasionally, one of strong will who desires to remain in the physical world will not pass over into the afterlife. Such is the case with you. I must lead you to heaven, for that is where you belong."

Marla thought for a moment, considering this fearsome specter of death.

"Do not fear me, Marla. I am here to assist you, to lead you to your proper reward."

"What if I don't want to go? What if I want to stay?"

"That is your choice, Marla. The longer you linger, however, the more likely it is you will never see heaven."

"I was murdered, Death! I want the monsters who did this to me punished! I want vengeance!"

"You wish vengeance? Very well. You may remain and seek vengeance, though the results may not be to your liking. You are dead, and I cannot change that. I can however, empower you beyond what an ordinary ghost is capable of doing. Some ghosts who remain learn to influence the physical world after spending several years attempting to do so. Others are able to become visible almost immediately after death. For you, Marla, I shall grant you those abilities, plus the power of Possession, the ability to enter another's body and take control of it. Several talents shall develop from this gifting; it is your choice as to how you will use them. Remember, though – what you do affects your ability to enter heaven when you decide to leave this physical world. Should you fall into vengeance and do evil, your place in heaven will be forfeit."

Death touched Marla on the forehead, and she felt a small tingle as the world went black, then a rush of energy and knowledge. When Marla opened her eyes, the shrouded figure was gone.

Marla smiled. She achieved her vengeance against VIPER. It was almost too easy. All she did was find the hidden VIPER Nest, possess one of the engineers maintaining the power system, and use his knowledge to destroy the generators. Then she used the engineer to call 911, got a team of PRIMUS agents on the way to the base, and she was done. Few casualties, nice and neat. The only strange thing the PRIMUS agents found was an engineer outside the generator room, curled up in a little ball muttering, "It whispers, it whispers in my mind. Make it stop...."

Personality/Motivation: Whisper, as Marla now calls herself, has become a full-time hunter of criminals. She does not often kill, but if the situation warrants a death, she will not hesitate. Her first, very successful strike against VIPER did not satisfy her thirst for vengeance, even though she enabled PRIMUS to bring down the main nest in Atlanta. Moving from city to city, she acts against VIPER as often as possible. After running into a DEMON Morbane who almost captured her, though, she acts with more caution.

WHISPER PLOT SEEDS

Whisper possesses a VIPER agent and tries to repeat her success in Atlanta. Unfortunately, this agent doesn't have the skills necessary to bring down the nest, and what's worse, this agent knows there are multiple nests in the area, but he doesn't know any agents from the other nests, or where they are. She forces the agent to surrender to the PCs hoping they can assist her investigations.

Patrolling PCs happen on a band of DEMON agents and a Morbane attacking thin air. When he moves in, it becomes apparent they're fighting something of a mental nature, because one of the agents suddenly turns and blasts the Morbane. But what are they fighting? Do they engage the DEMON agents and try to find out?

A mystical PC is approached by a forlorn Whisper. It seems she has become despondent, weary of being a ghost with no real human contact. She wants to find a way to be physical again without possessing someone else, and without giving up her power. Hunting VIPER is still her driving motivation, but she wants something of a normal existence, too.



Her goal is to destroy VIPER utterly so they cannot do to others what was done to her, and will not rest until the criminal organization no longer exists. After seeing a news report locating her brother in the Campaign City area, Whisper went there to look for him and root out any VIPER presence. She knows he would blame himself for her death, and wants him to know she is still around, even if she is technically dead. If she ever finds the VIPER operative who killed her (the ninja assassin Deceiver, see below), she will most certainly seek that operative's death.

Aside from her quest for vengeance, Marla is personable, if somewhat withdrawn. The only time she relaxes from hunting VIPER is when she comes across a dancer in need of help or protection. Though she will never abandon her vengeance, she will pause it long enough to help such a person.

Quote: "Move over. *I* am your mind now."

Powers/Tactics: Whisper's primary ability is Possession. She can slide into a person's body and attempt to take control of it. To accomplish this, she will normally use her Will Sapping power to weaken the target's will (note the recovery rate is 5 points per hour) and then use Mind Control to establish control of the body. As long as the target's EGO is zero or below, the target is unlikely to resist her control. If she doesn't want to take control of someone, she can just wrack their mind, causing intense pain, or read their thoughts and memories. In addition to Possession, she has the Chilling Touch and Fading powers common to all ghosts, though hers are more powerful than most. Also, note that the Will Sapping, Mind Wrack, Possession, and Mind Touch powers all have the Limitation Must Merge With Victim's Body, and are not bought with the Affects Physical World advantage. This is done based on the ghost write-up in *HERO System Bestiary*, in which the restriction of having to merge with the victim counters the advantage of being able to affect said victim while desolidified.

In combat, Whisper will try to possess the most powerful foe and use his powers against his friends. Failing that, she will use her Chilling Touch or Mind Wrack powers, whichever seems more effective. If in combat while possessing someone, Whisper's defenses apply only to her. For example, a normal she is possessing is shot and takes 5 BODY and 20 STUN. This is applied against the Normal's defenses of 2 PD, non-resistant. The normal takes 5 BODY and 18 STUN. Whisper takes the same damage as her possessee even though she's desolidified, though she does get her defenses. She applies the 5 BODY and 20 STUN against her 15 PD, resistant. She takes 0 BODY and 5 STUN.

If a target is willing to be possessed, Whisper does not need to roll Mind Control for effect, but simply takes control of the body. In this situation, the host can take control again at any time, forcing her out unless she successfully attempts Possession to retain control.

If Whisper is reduced to -10 BODY by magical attacks, she dissipates and ceases to exist, dying a true death. If reduced to -10 BODY by any other type of attack, she will dissipate until her Undead Vitality brings her back to 1 BODY. When she reaches 1 BODY, she will reform in the same place in which she dissipated – disoriented, in pain, and probably very angry.

Campaign Use: Whisper makes for a very interesting plot device. Her primary motivation is the destruction of VIPER. She'd also like to find her brother, Stonework, and let him know she still exists (even if she's not alive). She would be willing to help him with whatever task has brought him to Campaign City, and he would be more than happy to help her destroy VIPER.

Whisper has also been known to help dancers like herself when they are in trouble, male or female. She has rescued dancers from attackers, helped them with their dancing skill, and generally watches out for them when she can. If a PC's DNPC happens to be a dancer, Whisper may take an interest in him, possibly even to the point of offering to "join" with him to help with practice and performances.

Her run-in with the Morbane has also attracted the attention of DEMON, who wants to capture and study her in the hopes of creating ghosts with the same abilities she has, but under their control.

Appearance: Whisper is invisible most of the time, but to those who can see her, or when she becomes visible, she is a transparent, beautiful young woman with black hair and blue eyes. Only her facial features are truly distinct; the rest of her body is normally enshrouded with spectral mist. She usually floats about half a foot off the floor. When she uses her Presence Attack, her features become skeletal and hideous.

DIGITAL HERO #22

Whisper

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg, 2d6 HTH [0]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
23	CON	26	14-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
16	INT	6	12-	PER Roll: 12-
26	EGO	32	14-	ECV: 9
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
18	COM	4	13-	
15	PD	13		Total: 15 PD (15 rPD)
15	ED	10		Total: 15 ED (15 rED)
5	SPD	22		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
9	REC	4		
46	END	0		
30	STUN	3		

Total Characteristics Cost: 154

Movement:	Running:	6"/12"
	Flight:	15"/30"
	Leaping:	0"/0"
	Swimming:	2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
40	<i>Ghost Powers:</i> Elemental Control, 80 point powers	
40	1) <i>Chilling Touch:</i> Drain STUN 2d6, Affects Physical World (+2), Armor Piercing (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
37	2) <i>Will Sapping:</i> Drain EGO 3d6, Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per hour; +1), BOECV (Mental Defense applies; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Must Merge with Victim's Body (-¾)	0
23	3) <i>Mind Wrack:</i> Ego Attack 4d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Must Merge with Victim's Body (-¾)	0
37	4) <i>Possession:</i> Mind Control 12d6, Telepathic (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Must Merge with Victim's Body (-¾)	0
29	5) <i>Mind Touch:</i> 12d6 Telepathy, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Must Merge with Victim's Body (-¾)	0
40	6) <i>Fading:</i> Invisibility to Sight, Hearing, and Smell/Taste Groups, No Fringe, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½)	0
60	<i>Ghostly Form:</i> Desolidification (affected by magic), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½), Inherent (+¼); Always On (-½)	0
20	<i>Ghostly Strength:</i> Affects Physical World (+2) for up to 10 STR	2
10	<i>Fearsome Visage:</i> +20 PRE; Only For Fear-Based Presence Attacks (-1)	0
10	<i>Undead Form:</i> No Hit Locations	0

15	<i>Undead Form:</i> Damage Resistance (15 PD, 15 ED)	0
15	<i>Undead Mind:</i> Mental Defense (20 points)	0
10	<i>Undead Mind Armor:</i> Damage Resistance (20 points Mental Defense)	0
50	<i>Undead Vitality:</i> Life Support (Total; includes Longevity: Immortal)	0
22	<i>Undead Vitality:</i> Healing 1d6 (Regeneration; 1 BODY per Turn), Resurrection (stopped by killing character with magic), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Extra Time (1 Turn; -1 ¼), Self Only (-½)	0
45	<i>Ghostwalking:</i> Flight 15", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
22	<i>Ghost Senses:</i> Spatial Awareness	0
17	<i>Life Sense:</i> Detect Life 12-, Range, Sense	0
6	<i>Undead Senses:</i> +4 PER with all Sense Groups; Only To Perceive Images Created By Means Other than Necromancy (-1)	

Skills

8	+4 with Flight
3	Acrobatics 13-
3	Breakfall 13-
4	CK: Atlanta, GA 13-
3	CK: Campaign City 12-
1	High Society 8-
3	KS: Dance Clubs 12-
4	KS: Music 13-
3	Persuasion 13-
4	PS: Dancer 13-
3	PS: Dance Instructor 12-
3	Seduction 13-
3	Stealth 13-
3	Streetwise 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 596

Total Cost: 750

200+ Disadvantages

10	Distinctive Features: Ghost (Easily Concealable, Always Noticed)
10	Distinctive Feature: Mystic Aura (Not Concealable, Always Noticed, Unusual Senses)
10	DNPC: Dancing Protégé 8- (Normal)
15	Hunted: DEMON 8- (Mo Pow, Enslave)
15	Hunted: VIPER 8- (Mo Pow, Imprison)
15	Physical Limitation: Feels What the Possessee Feels, Takes the Same Damage (Frequently, Greatly)
5	Physical Limitation: Reduced Leap, Cannot Leap (Infrequently, Slightly)
20	Psychological Limitation: Hunting VIPER (Very Common, Strong)

- 10 Psychological Limitation: Longs for a Normal Life (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Vengeful (Uncommon, Strong)
- 10 Social Limitation: Undead (Frequently, Minor)

5 Unluck: 1d6
 400 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 750

Whisper



Deceiver

Background/History: The eldest daughter of the secret Otani ninja clan, Otani Emiko showed every sign of continuing the family tradition of stealth, theft, and murder. She was even trained in the magical arts of illusion and mind control. Strong, swift, and clever, her skill surpassed the best of her father's male students. But it wasn't good enough; her father continually pushed her to be even better.

Unfortunately, her father's seeming dissatisfaction with her impressive skills and the constant ridicule and persecution of her male counterparts left a bitter taste in Emiko's mouth. She quietly collected her things and left home, easily avoiding the estate guards. Her father was furious, and sent out his ninja to bring her back. They failed, and those that returned were no longer capable of serving as ninja. Emiko's father disowned her and offered a large reward offered for her capture and return.

Emiko made her way to the United States, knowing that to be returned to her father was a death sentence. She quickly made herself available for hire to various criminal agencies as a thief, assassin, and spy, calling herself Deceiver. During a theft mission against a PRIMUS research and development facility, she obtained metallurgy research material that was intended to be used for armor shells and weapon casings. When she turned her findings over to her employer, VIPER, she suggested a change in payment arrangements. Instead of the large sum of money she had originally requested, she asked for several weapons and a light armor suit made to her specifications using the metallurgy research. In a few month's time, she had a light-weight, flexible armor suit and several deadly weapons. Since then she has performed numerous missions for VIPER. Despite her status as a freelancer, she receives a monthly stipend from VIPER as retainer fees.

Deceiver doesn't even remember the mission in which she murdered Marla Goldstein (Whisper).

Personality/Motivation: Deceiver named herself such for the pleasure she takes in manipulating others into believing what she wants them to believe. She often sets up situations that will cause someone pain, emotional or physical, and draws sadistic pleasure from doing so. Supremely confident in her abilities, she has no doubts that she will succeed in her mission, whatever it may be. Anyone who interferes with a mission, or worse, causes her to fail a mission, earns her undying hatred. She seeks vengeance against enemies at all costs.

Being an opportunistic mercenary, Deceiver seeks any opportunity for gain, financial or otherwise. Her current relationship with VIPER

is one of convenience and profit; she owes the organization no true loyalty. Her only loyalty is to herself and her continued well-being.

In her heart, hidden deep inside, she wants one thing above all else – love. She has never been appreciated for who she is, only what she can do or who she can kill. This deep desire conflicts with her mercenary lifestyle, so she suppresses it as much as she can (hence no Psychological Limitation). Rarely, she will try to have a 'normal' relationship, but it never lasts more than a few weeks. The only personal joy she has besides the satisfaction of a job well done is her dancing. She can often be found dancing at a club on her own time, and sometimes takes jobs as an exotic dancer.

Quote: "Fool. Your powers are no match for my skill."

Powers/Tactics: Deceiver's abilities, both martial and magical, come from extensive training in the mystical ninja arts. Her weapons, armor, and equipment are purely technological, and while very high quality, are subject to technological limitations. They must receive maintenance every so often (usually from a VIPER scientist) to be kept in top form. Her goggles are a new VIPER design, sleek and slim, yet containing several sensory enhancement systems. Climbing claws are concealed in her gloves and boots.

Deceiver knows that as a user of magic, she is very limited. There are many other forms of magic that she would be willing and eager to learn, but to date she has not been able to find a teacher or other source of knowledge. What she does know, however, she puts to good use. One of her favorite tactics is to create illusionary terrain or cover from which to launch an ambush, or simply attack while invisible. If she prefers to keep her distance from a target, she will use her mind spells to assault or manipulate her target.

Campaign Use: Deceiver has almost endless uses for any campaign. As a spy, thief, and assassin, she is rivaled only by other paranormals, and she knows it. Willing to take almost any contract from almost any employer, she will perform any mission she is contracted to perform. If betrayed by an employer, she will hunt the offender to the grave.

Heroes may encounter Emiko while relaxing at a club somewhere. She is very adept at recognizing body language and movement; it is possible she may recognize a hero she has fought with, even if the hero is in Secret ID. If so, she will quickly take the opportunity to make the hero suffer.

To increase her capabilities, boost her physical Characteristics, increase the Active Points of her ninja magic, and add more weapons and equipment. To lower her power level,

DECEIVER PLOT SEEDS

A PC's Hunter hires Deceiver to kill the hero. Chaos ensues as she disrupts his life, possibly revealing his secret identity if appropriate.

Deceiver is hired to acquire various technological secrets and prototypes from a high-tech company known to the PCs. What was taken? Who hired her? What are their plans?

Seeking to expand her magical abilities, Deceiver manages to contact the Circle of the Scarlet Moon. Her teacher is skilled, and she begins learning new magic. That's when the nightmares begin, visions of the flesh melting from her bones and being tortured as she has done to so many. On the verge of madness and fearing her teacher has somehow done this to her, she ambushes a PC mystic and demands his help.

decrease her skill levels, reduce the Active Points of her weapons (or simply remove some of them), and drop her Lightning Reflexes.

As a Hunter, Deceiver is relentlessly ruthless. She will harass, ambush, and otherwise make her foe's life a living hell. When she gets bored with tormenting the fool who crossed her, she ends his life in the most painful way she can imagine. Investigators who encounter the remains of her vengeance usually have nightmares from them.

Appearance: Emiko is a lovely Japanese woman, short and petite with an attractive figure. Her long black hair (past her waist) and dark eyes sparkle with intelligence and cunning. When dancing, she wears whatever is

appropriate for the dance. She has danced in many places and styles, particularly enjoying exotic dance. On her own time, she favors designer jeans and loose shirts with sandals.

Deceiver conceals her identity behind an armored mask with slim goggles covering her eyes. Aside from the short stature and obvious feminine form, no other details of her appearance are perceivable. Only her slight Japanese accent (successful PER required to notice) betrays any hint of her nationality. Her armored night-suit is midnight blue with no distinctive markings. Made from the same metal, her ninja-to and shuriken are also midnight blue. The sword is in a sheath on her back, the linegun and electrobaton in pockets on her belt, and the shuriken and grenades in various hidden pockets.

Deceiver



DIGITAL HERO #22

Deceiver

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1]
26	DEX	48	14-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
18	CON	16	13-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
26	EGO	32	14-	ECV: 9
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3 ½d6
16	COM	3	12-	
8	PD	5		Total: 22 PD (14 rPD)
8	ED	4		Total: 22 ED (14 rED)
7	SPD	34		Phases: 2,4,6,7,9,11,12
7	REC	0		
40	END	2		
30	STUN	0		

Total Characteristics Cost: 168

Movement:

Running:	12"/24"
Leaping:	8"/16"
Swimming:	4"/8"
Swinging:	15"/30"

Cost	Powers	END
22	<i>Ninja Magic:</i> Multipower, 50-point reserve; all slots Concentrate (½ DCV; -¼), Extra Time (Delayed Phase; -¼), Gestures (both hands; -½), Incantations (-¼)	
2u	1) <i>Assault the Mind:</i> Ego Attack 5d6; Concentrate (½ DCV; -¼), Extra Time (Delayed Phase; -¼), Gestures (both hands; -½), Incantations (-¼)	5
2u	2) <i>Deceive the Mind:</i> Mental Illusions 10d6; Concentrate (½ DCV; -¼), Extra Time (Delayed Phase; -¼), Gestures (both hands; -½), Incantations (-¼)	5
2u	3) <i>Conquer the Mind:</i> Mind Control 10d6; Concentrate (½ DCV; -¼), Extra Time (Delayed Phase; -¼), Gestures (both hands; -½), Incantations (-¼)	5
2u	4) <i>Probe the Mind:</i> Telepathy 10d6; Concentrate (½ DCV; -¼), Extra Time (Delayed Phase; -¼), Gestures (both hands; -½), Incantations (-¼)	5
2u	5) <i>Deceive the Eyes:</i> Sight Group Images, -5 PER, Increased Size (16" radius; +1); Concentration (½ DCV; -¼), Extra Time (Delayed Phase; -¼), Gestures (both hands; -½), Incantations (-¼)	5
2u	6) <i>Hide in Plain Sight:</i> Invisibility to Sight Group, No Fringe, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Concentration (½ DCV; -¼), Extra Time (Delayed Phase; -¼), Gestures (both hands; -½), Incantations (-¼)	0

27	<i>Ninja Weapons:</i> Multipower, 61-point reserve; all slots OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	
3u	1) <i>Titanium-Edged Ninja-to:</i> HKA 1 ½d6 (2d6 with STR), Armor Piercing (+½), Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) plus +1 OCV; OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	0
3u	2) <i>Titanium-Edged Shuriken:</i> RKA 1d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Autofire (5 shots; +½), 30 Recoverable Charges (+¾), +2 Increased STUN Multiplier (+½), Penetrating (+½); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) plus +1 OCV; OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) [30r]	
2u	3) <i>Electro-baton:</i> HA +5d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½), OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) plus EB 2d6, NND (defense is ED Force Field or Power Defense; +1), 32 Charges (+¼); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) 0,[32]	
2u	4) <i>Gas Grenades:</i> EB 3d6, Area Of Effect (4" radius; +1), Continuous (+1), NND (defense is appropriate Life Support or Force Field; +1); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), 4 Charges lasting 1 Minute each (removed by winds or rain; -¼)	[4c]
2u	5) <i>Flash Grenades:</i> Sight Group Flash 8d6, Explosion (+½); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), 12 Charges (-¼)	[12]
2u	6) <i>Peppered Smoke Grenades:</i> Darkness to Sight and Smell/Taste Groups 4" radius; OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), 4 Charges lasting 1 Minute each (removed by winds or rain; -¼)	[4c]

Martial Arts: Ninjutsu

Maneuver OCV DCV Notes

4	Chop	-2	+0	1d6 HKA (2d6 with STR)	
4	Escape	+0	+0	40 STR vs. Grabs	
4	Nerve Pinch	-1	+1	3d6 NND	
4	Strike	+0	+2	7d6 Strike (3d6 HKA with Ninja-to, 12d6 with Electro-baton)	
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added in)				
2	Use Art with Blades and Clubs				
12	<i>Fast Runner:</i> Running +6" (12" total)				2
5	<i>Strong Jumper:</i> Leaping +5" (8" total)				1
2	<i>Good Swimmer:</i> Swimming +2" (4" total)				1

- 14 *Armored Ninja Suit*: Armor (8 PD, 8 ED); OIF (-1/2), Real Armor (-1/4) 0
- 8 *Mental Wards*: Mental Defense (15 points); Nonpersistent (-1/4) 0
- 25 *Goggles*: Sight Group Flash Defense (8 points); IIF (-1/4), Real Technology (-1/4) **plus** Telescopic (Sight Group; +4 versus Range Modifier); IIF (-1/4), Real Technology (-1/4) **plus** HRRP; IIF (-1/4), Real Technology (-1/4), Affected As Sight and Hearing Groups As Well As Radio Group (-1/2) **plus** Infrared Perception; IIF (-1/4), Real Technology (-1/4) **plus** Nightvision; IIF (-1/4), Real Technology (-1/4) 0
- 10 *Linegun*: Swinging 15", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OAF (-1), Real Technology (-1/4) 0
- 7 *Sense Magic*: Detect Magic, Discriminatory, Range; Concentration (1/2 DCV: -1/4), Extra Time (Delayed Phase; -1/4), Gestures (both hands; -1/2), Incantations (-1/4) 0
- 4 *Retractable Climbing Claws*: Clinging (normal STR); OIF (-1/2), Real Technology (-1/4), Cannot Resist Knockback (-1/4), Cannot Cling Upside-Down (-1/4) 0

Perks

- 20 Contacts: GM Defined
- 3 Money: Well-Off
- 4 Reputation: Deadly Assassin 11- (in USA and Japan) +2/+2d6

Talents

- 12 Combat Luck (6 PD, 6 ED)
- 15 Combat Sense 12-
- 4 Double Jointed
- 6 Lightning Reflexes: +4 DEX to act first with All Actions
- 3 Lightsleep

Skills

- 20 +2 Overall
- 10 +5 with Shuriken
- 10 +2 with DCV
- 5 Accurate Sprayfire
- 3 Acrobatics 14-
- 2 AK: Japan 11-
- 3 Analyze Combat Technique 12-
- 3 Breakfall 14-
- 3 Climbing 14-
- 3 Concealment 12-
- 3 Contortionist 14-
- 3 Conversation 13-
- 3 Deduction 12-
- 10 Defense Maneuver IV
- 3 Disguise 12-
- 3 Electronics 12-
- 3 High Society 13-
- 3 Interrogation 13-

- 3 Language: English (completely fluent, Japanese native)
- 3 Lockpicking 14-
- 3 Power (Ninja Magic) 12-
- 3 PS: Dancer 14-
- 3 PS: Ninja 12-
- 3 Security Systems 12-
- 3 Seduction 13-
- 3 Shadowing 12-
- 3 Sleight of Hand 14-
- 3 Stealth 14-
- 3 Streetwise 13-
- 4 Survival (Mountains, Temperate/Subtropical) 12-
- 3 Tactics 12-
- 3 Tracking 12-
- 8 WF: Common Martial Arts Weapons, Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Small Arms
- 3 Scholar
- 2 1) KS: Criminal World 12-
- 2 2) KS: Japanese Criminal World 12-
- 1 3) KS: Martial Arts 11-
- 2 4) KS: Martial Arts World 12-
- 1 5) KS: Mystic World 11-
- 2 6) KS: Ninjutsu 12-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 412

Total Cost: 580

200+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Feature: Mystic Aura (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)
- 10 Distinctive Feature: Ninjutsu Style (Not Concealable, Always Noticed, Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)
- 20 Hunted: Law Enforcement 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
- 20 Hunted: Otani Ninja Clan 11- (Mo Pow)
- 10 Hunted: VIPER 11- (Mo Pow, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Enjoys Manipulating People (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Overconfidence (Very Common, Moderate)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Sadistic Prankster (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Vengeful (Uncommon, Strong)
- 15 Reputation: Deadly Assassin, 11- (Extreme)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret ID (Frequently, Major)
- 230 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 580

