



HEROES

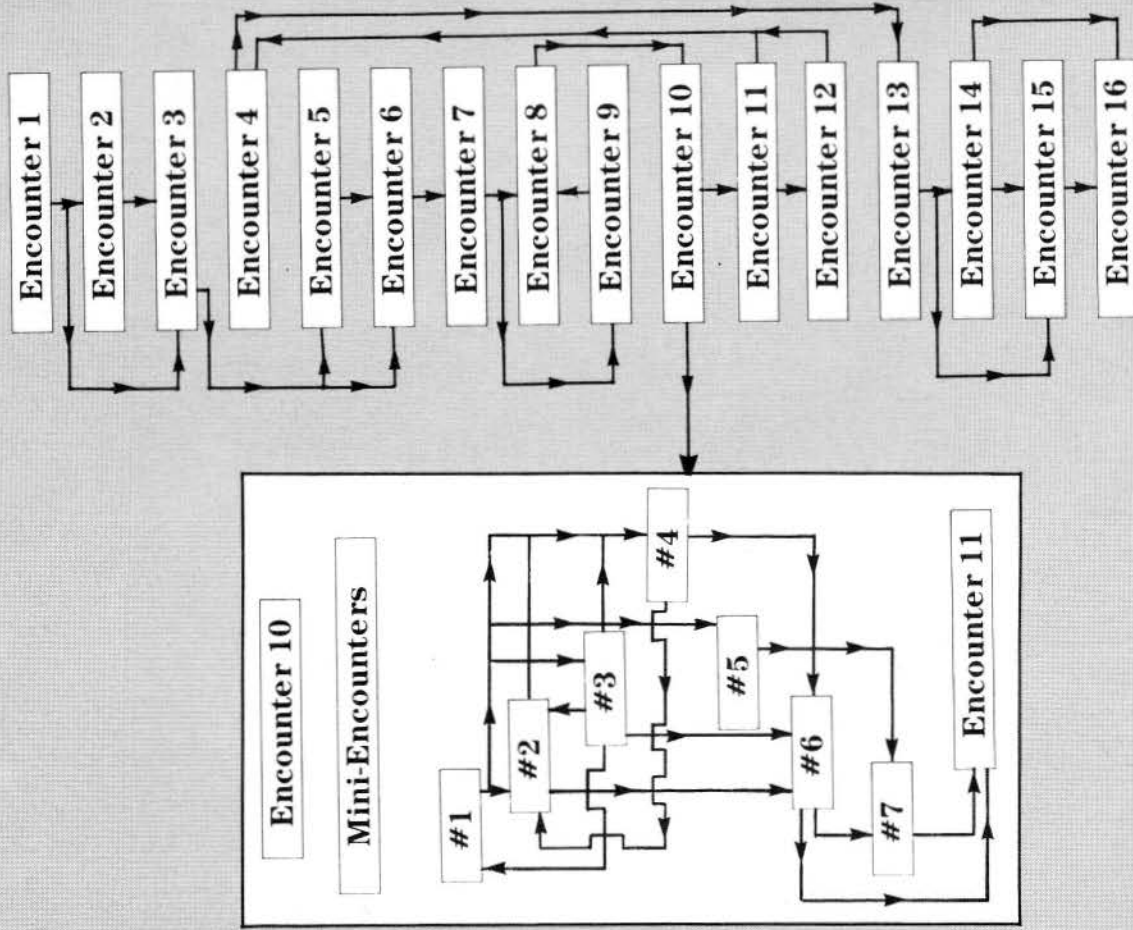
ROLE
PLAYING
MODULE

AMBUSH BUG™



by Scott Jenkins

FLOW CHART



GM: Duplicate this Word Balloon and pass it out for use during Encounter 4 when the Player Characters must communicate with Ambush Bug.

A. Bug Enterprises
Hero-for-Hire/Detective
3117 N. Orchard

"Super-Heroes Our Specialty"

Ambush Bug's Business Card

DONT ASK!

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Don't Ask!

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Author: Scott Jenkins

Editor: Thomas Cook

Cover Art

Sketch: Ed Hannigan

Pencils: Keith Giffen

Inks: Bob Smith

Color: Bob LeRose

Interior Art: Rob Davis

Maps: James Clouse

Graphic Design: Jennifer Underwood

Fanmag Magazine Designed by: Thomas Cook

Playtesters: Joe Casacchia, Mike Ciempil and RPG Unlimited, Greg Gorden, Sam Lewis, Barbara Schlichting, Phil Quanbeck, Randi Quanbeck (in absentia)

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WARNING

This is not a normal game. It was not written by normal people nor was it written under normal circumstances (the hotel's still under repair. Personal note to Binny: get me one of those Samoan War Clubs, they're great!). Anyway, the GM will need several easily obtainable props to play the game (see **Game Props** below), an open mind to weirdness, and a willingness to confuse the heck out of his or her Players.

You have been warned. *Heh Heh* (evil laugh).

Thank you.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE FOR THE PLAYERS

The heroes who are going through this adventure are assumed to be pre-existing heroes and not heroes that have been "made up." You know the type we mean: comic book heroes without comic books. Heroes that just exist in the minds of adventurers.

"Wait a minute!" you say. "You mean I can't use my own Character?"

Of course you can use your own heroes. But for the purposes of this game you should assume that your heroes are the stars of their own comic book series and that they have had these books for years (just like the Batman stars in *Batman* and *Detective Comics* and Superman stars in *Action Comics* and *Superman*... er... *Man of Steel*... uh... well, you get the idea).

Your heroes are assumed to have a friendly and financially satisfying deal with the guys at DC Comics who, every month, put out books that chronicle the Character's heroic efforts in the preservation of Truth, Justice, and the American Way (boy, that sounds familiar).

THE OTHER IMPORTANT NOTE FOR THE PLAYERS (AND THE GM, TOO)

If the Players and the GM are not familiar with Ambush Bug, try to get back-issues of his comic books or any of his current appearances.

Whether the participants of this game are familiar with Ambush Bug or not, they should all have read *Fanmag Magazine* (included in this module) before beginning the adventure. Clues are contained in the magazine which will help the Players successfully complete the game.

NOTE: There are references in *Fanmag Magazine* to some people who aren't included in this module. If the heroes wish to speak with any of these people in the game, the GM should role-play these persons and inform the Players that these people will have no information at all to help the Players during the adventure.

GAME PROPS (GM ONLY)

In certain sections of the game, the GM will need to prepare props to maximize role-playing enjoyment for his or her Players.

The GM will need:

- 1) a bowl of some sort of munchies,
- 2) one toy rubber-tipped dart gun or water-gun for each Player, (and the GM him/herself),
- 3) balloons and a felt-tipped marker for use during Encounter 4. (Photo-copyable word balloons have been included for use in place of #3 but using written-on real balloons brings greater realism to the game (they're also fun to pop),
- 4) a wall clock,
- 5) a watch,
- 6) flashlights, and
- 7) (to be hidden until Encounter 11) a cut out Ambush Bug mask (provided free-of-charge on the back cover of this module), fitted with strings or tape so it will stay on the GM's face.

Not all of these things are necessary but they are fun. And if someone walks into the room while you're playing the game, simply say "Don't Ask!" (See? We've thought of everything.)

Story Synopsis (GM Only)

Strange things are happening.

Lex Luthor, arch-villain and super-genius, announces to the heroes that he is about to take control of Time and Space and there's nothing they can do about it.

Suddenly, Ambush Bug, idiot and hopeful hero, pops into the heroes' headquarters babbling about the adventure that the heroes are about to experience.

The weird thing is that he's talking about the battle in the past tense... as if it already happened.

Ambush Bug vanishes and when the heroes try to find him again and ask him what he meant, he doesn't know what they're talking about. He psychoanalyzes them with a few sly questions to see if they're insane.

Ambush Bug or no, the heroes still have to deal with Luthor and they're on a tight schedule. They leave Ambush Bug and, surrounded by a crowd of thousands, the heroes prepare to battle Luthor. Luthor's plan is to rule the world by gaining control of Time.

Ambush Bug, worried about the sanity of the heroes, and thus their ability to fight, pops in and stops Luthor from obtaining the power the only way he knows how: he takes the power himself.

Then, troubled by a few basic inconsistencies within the DC Universe and the hero biz in general, Ambush Bug decides to take the whole thing into his hands and straighten out the whole DC Universe.

Unfortunately, because of the way Time works, Ambush Bug creates more than one time line. The DC Universe screams in agony; multiple place continuums were bad enough — multiple time continuums really screw things up.

The Phantom Stranger enters the story and starts the Players on a series of investigations that leads them to a dark night at the Yah Hah factory.

The heroes corner Ambush Bug on top of a large tank of Yah Hah. Amid searchlights, water-gun fire, and the Bug's shouts of, "*Anyway, Ma, I made it... top of the world, Ma!*", Ambush Bug leaves the game.

The Bug then shows up in a room full of Gameboys and is glad to see that he's out of the adventure. He finds out that the transfer to the real world wasn't complete — his face is still two dimensional! In the hope of saving face, he pops back into the game.

The heroes find Ambush Bug in Encounter 4, a specially-made haven for Ambush Bug (complete with thousands of TV sets, each showing a different episode of every TV show ever produced, and enough cans of Yah Hah to last forty-seven lifetimes). Encounter 4 is totally disconnected from the rest of the adventure and can only be reached by leaving the game and reentering it again at the point where play left off.

As disembodied word balloons, the Players must convince Ambush Bug to leave Encounter 4 and come back

with them to again battle Luthor and set everything straight.

Filled with the conviction of duty and realization that with great power comes great responsibility, Ambush Bug goes back alone, leaving the Players in Encounter 4 with no way to go back to the correct time. Well, almost no way.

The heroes can try to build a time machine but what with the way the Gadgetry rules are, it would be simpler to just start another Universe all over again.

There is one other option. The heroes can hit the pavement selling copies of OAT, the family newspaper. If they do this, they can get a time machine as one of the valuable prizes for selling 4,000,000 copies. Or, if they want, they can save up for a while and try to get the 26" projection TV, although this is not advised.

There is only one problem with this: the duplicate heroes that were created when Ambush Bug was fooling with time don't want to find themselves in a sudden position of non-existence (dead). These duplicate heroes will do their best to stop the real heroes from selling their copies of OAT. (This is Restraint of Trade, a crime in Her Majesty's colonies, and as such it's okay for the real heroes to beat up on the duplicate heroes.)

After a series of perfectly-matched battles, the heroes go back, renew the fight with Luthor, and (hopefully) stop both Ambush Bug and Luthor from getting the power to control time.

No, really.

Non-Player Characters

AMBUSH BUG alias Irwin Schwab

DEX: 6	STR: 2	BODY: 3
INT: 3	WILL: 3	MIND: 3
INFL: 5	AURA: 4	SPIRIT: 4
INITIATIVE: 14 * HERO POINTS: 180		

POWERS:

Reality Check: 12, Dumb Luck: 15 (see **New Powers** section for an explanation of both.)

SKILLS: None

EQUIPMENT:

Suit:

Invulnerability: 30,
Teleportation: 23

*(Initiative Special: the APs of Teleportation are added to his Initiative when Teleporting. With the use of Hero Points, Ambush Bug can boost his Teleportation power to 46 APs, making his effective Initiative 60.)

Suit Special: The suit will eat anyone besides Irwin Schwab who wears it. This is treated as a **Cell Rot** attack of 12 APs.

MOTIVATION: Thrill of Adventure

WEALTH: Struggling

JOB: Hero for Hire

RACE: Human

CONNECTIONS:

TV Repair Shop (High Level)
Costume Shop (High Level)
Sporting Goods Store (High Level)
Superman (High Level)
Guardian Angel (Low Level)

Irwin Schwab, man of mystery (and writer of this blurb) found a costume one day, put it on and became Ambush Bug, masked avenger and greatest hero of Metropolis (okay, second greatest).

NOTE: The accuracy of the above description may not hold up under questioning. Oh well.

DEADBOY

DEX: N.A.	STR: N.A.	BODY: N.A.
INT: 12	WILL: 15	MIND: 12
INFL: 9	AURA: 10	SPIRIT: 10
INITIATIVE: Special HERO POINTS: 90		

INITIATIVE:

Deadboy's Initiative is 21 plus the DEX of the host body

POWERS:

Personality Transfer: 15

LIMITATIONS:

Unlike Deadman, who can take over an entire body, Deadboy can only control one part at a time.
Ladies beware!

SKILLS:

Scholar (comic books): 20

MOTIVATION: Thrill of Death

WEALTH: What he needs, plus cigarette money

JOB: Comic Book store clerk

RACE: Humanoid

As stated above, unlike Deadman, who can take over an entire body, Deadboy can only take over one part at a time. For reasons that are too funny, embarrassing, or libelous to mention, Deadboy has been forcibly ejected from the DC Universe and the DC Heroes Role-Playing game. He tried to live in the Real World for a while but was kicked out of that, too. He now works in a comic book store.

Every so often he can sneak into the DC Heroes game but he has to go back to the comic book store within 15 minutes (8 APs of time) or a random lawyer will serve him a summons.

JONNI DC

DEX: 4	STR: 3	BODY: 5
INT: 17	WILL: 14	MIND: 14
INFL: 18	AURA: 17	SPIRIT: 18
INITIATIVE: 39	HERO POINTS: 120	

POWERS:

Reality Check: 30
Invulnerability: 20

SKILLS:

Charisma: 15

LIMITATIONS:

Can only alert others to clear up trouble; cannot do it herself.

CONNECTIONS:

Everyone at DC Comics (High Level, professional relationship)
Everyone at Mayfair Games (High Level, we slave for her; she could nail us with a glance)

MOTIVATION: To keep things ordered
WEALTH: N.A.

JOB: Continuity Cop for the DC Universe

RACE: Human/humanoid

This woman is incredible; she'll go through hell and night watch to keep things running for the true DC Fans; she's the thread which holds together the fabric of the DC Universe.

Jonni DC is there, cross-referencing comic books, working with authors and artists, questioning new characters, keeping the old ones in line, sometimes handing out subpoenas, stopping storylines, and officiating at Continuity Court hearings.

What this means is that Jonni DC preserves the illusion of reality for those people who think that comic books are real and that the events portrayed in them really happen.

That's right, there are a whole bunch of people who don't know that

all of the DC heroes and villains only pretend they are fighting when they actually are paid well to do it.

Let's face it. Not all of us have gone down to Callahan's for a couple of drinks with Luthor, Darkseid, and Ambush Bug.

CHEEKS *alias the Toy Wonder*

DEX: 0	STR: 0	BODY: 0
INT: 0	WILL: 0	MIND: 0
INFL: 0	AURA: 0	SPIRIT: 0
INITIATIVE: 0	HERO POINTS: 5	

POWERS:

Flight: (see Limitations), Water Freedom (Underwater Breathing): 1, Iron Will: 1, Stretching: 1

SKILLS:

Acrobatics: 1, Martial Artist (Taking a Blow): 1, Charisma (Intimidation): 1, Military Science (Camouflage): 1, Artist (Actor): 1

EQUIPMENT:

None

LIMITATIONS:

Cheeks' **Flight** APs are limited to the STR APs of his thrower

MOTIVATION: Thrill of Stuffing

WEALTH: Struggling

JOB: Detective-in-training

RACE: Toy

CONNECTIONS:

Ambush Bug (High Level)
Ernie's House of Really Cheap Toys (Low Level)

LEX LUTHOR

DEX: 4	STR: 3	BODY: 4
INT: 14	WILL: 5	MIND: 12
INFL: 8	AURA: 5	SPIRIT: 5
INITIATIVE: 26	HERO POINTS: 160	

SKILLS:

Gadgetry: 20, Scholar: 10,
Scientist: 25.

EQUIPMENT:

Battle Suit

[DEX: 20, STR: 49, BODY: 37]

[INT: 3, WILL: 2, MIND: 2]

Uses: 20, Duration: 37

Bio-Blast: 35, Flight: 20, Hypnotism: 12, Illusion: 6, Sealed Systems: 20, Telekinesis: 10,
2 C Omni-Gadgets: 20 APs each

LIMITATIONS:

Catastrophic Irrational Attraction for revenge against Superman

MOTIVATION: Power Lust

WEALTH: Billionaire

JOB: N.A.

RACE: Human

Lex Luthor is so dangerous he picks on Superman just for the fun of it. His motivation as listed above is Power Lust, which is true, but sometimes when he's feeling really depressed, he'll lapse into the Semi-Nihilist stage and just want to blow things up.

See **Role-Playing the Bad Guy** on page 8 for more information on exactly what a Semi-Nihilist is.

LUTHOR'S STAR RAIDER

[DEX: 0, STR: 24, BODY: 11]

Uses: 4 Duration: 21

POWERS:

Flight: 50, Sealed Systems: 25, Heat Vision (5 Lasers): 20 APs each, Force Field: 25

KID SPECTRE

DEX: 97	STR: 100	BODY: 112
INT: 115	WILL: 120	MIND: 135
INFL: 157	AURA: 142	SPIRIT: 147
INITIATIVE: 369	HERO POINTS: 800	

POWERS:

All of them, all linked

SKILLS:

All of them, all linked

MOTIVATION: N.A.

WEALTH: What he needs plus cigarette money

JOB: Comic book store owner

RACE: Humanoid

Kid Spectre is so powerful he isn't allowed in the game. He runs a comic book store for old times' sake.

THE PHANTOM STRANGER

DEX: See below	STR: *	BODY: *
INT: *	WILL: *	MIND: *
INFL: *	AURA: *	SPIRIT: *
INITIATIVE: *	HERO POINTS: *	

POWERS:

See below

SKILLS:

See below

CONNECTIONS: See below

MOTIVATION: See below

WEALTH: See below

JOB: See below

RACE: See below

* Below:

The Phantom Stranger doesn't go for any of that stuff.

GROIDS

DEX: 9	STR: 5	BODY: 12
INT: 9	WILL: 7	MIND: 5
INITIATIVE: 18	HERO POINTS: 25	

PROGRAM:

Battle Analysis (see below)

The Groids are a bunch of big, dumb robots that shouldn't be taken lightly. They have been programmed for Battle Analysis, which is a dangerous thing for a hero to come up against. After each phase of battle, a Groid will analyze its opponent's actions. This is handled by a quick roll of the Groid's INT/WILL against the INT/MIND of the hero being battled.

Any RAPs from this action are added to the Groid's DEX for the next phase (which also increases its Initiative). This addition to the DEX is cumulative; it keeps adding to the previous phase's DEX until the battle is over (either the Groid or the opponent is knocked out) or until a different opponent attacks the robot.

In either case, the Groid's Initiative is automatically reset to 18 for the first phase of combat with the next opponent.

If a Groid is Team-Attacked, it will run a Battle Analysis on the hero with the highest DEX. If there is a tie, the Battle Analysis will be run on the hero with the highest INT.

Helpful Hint

Suppose you had two Groids, A and B, and two heroes (say the Batman and Green Arrow) battling them. If each hero battled one Groid and stayed with that Groid in combat for any length of time, the Groid would become so incredibly fast (assuming it was successful in its consecutive Battle Analyses) that winning would soon become out of the question for the hero.

However, assume in phase one of the combat, Batman was fighting Groid A and Green Arrow was fighting Groid B. Further assume that after the combat in phase one, both Groids run successful Battle Analyses and have their DEX ratings and Initiatives raised. Batman and Green Arrow would be in big trouble unless they switched opponents (Batman now fights Groid B and Green Arrow fights Groid A).

In this case, the Groids' DEX ratings and Initiatives would be reset to

18 and the heroes would still stand a chance. In the third phase, if the heroes switched opponents again, returning to their original Groids, the Initiatives would be reset once again to 18, and so on.

If a hero makes a successful Perception Check (AV/EVs are the hero's INT/WILL, OV/RVs the Groid's INT/MIND) against a Groid after a reset has taken place, he/she will notice that the Groid slowed down when it was forced to change opponents.

The Ambush Bug Squadron

The Ambush Bug Squadron is what developed when a time line split and folded back onto itself. Basically, the Ambush Bug Squadron is a duplicate group of the Player Characters, with all the Powers, Skills, and Equipment that the Player Characters have but with only 2/3 of the Player Characters' Hero Points.

Each member of the Ambush Bug Squadron also has a Limitation which may help the Player Characters defeat him/her. The Player Character (and Player) is not aware of that limitation until a Player Character performs a successful Perception Check on that Squadron member.

How did this happen?

Early in this module, Ambush Bug gets the power to control Time, Space, and History. With this power, he can do just about anything he wants — yes, even make a boulder so big he can't lift it.

But Ambush Bug's a different kind of guy. He knows that it takes a special kind of person to be a hero.

Usually, there is some extreme trauma or moment of psychological clarity that makes a person feel that he/she needs to put on tights, a cape, and a mask, and risk his/her life jumping on top of buildings and swinging from ropes to beat up on dangerous criminals.

So Ambush Bug felt that if there was a kindly figure present at that moment of trauma or clarity, someone who was willing to help that budding hero realize his/her full potential, then that kindly figure would hold a prominent place in the life and mind of that new hero.

Unfortunately for the Player Characters, Ambush Bug has popped back to the time when they themselves experienced that moment of decision

and has changed their past lives. The heroes were in the Crypt of Comics (Encounter 8) when this occurred.

NOTE: The Crypt of Comics is a comic book store that is so cool it has been kicked out of the Real World, the comic book world, and the game world all at once, and now exists between dimensions. As such, the Player Characters' present selves have not been changed.

But what of their past selves...?

Influenced by Ambush Bug, the duplicated Player Characters of the past have all donned green costumes that look exactly like Ambush Bug's but do not have any of the original costume's Powers. They have joined together in a group called the Ambush Bug Squadron and are the world's most popular group.

The duplicate Player Characters have exactly the same Stats, Powers, and Skills as their "real" selves except that each has only 2/3 of the corresponding Player Character's Hero Points (if a Player Character has 120 Hero Points, his/her duplicate would have only 80 Hero Points).

In combat, each Squadron member will always attack its corresponding Player Character-self unless that Player Character is unconscious or dead, in which case the duplicate would attack randomly.

The duplicate Player Characters' origins are worked out through the Universal Secret Origins Table on page 20. The duplicates' Limitations are determined through die rolls as detailed on page 19.



New Powers

REALITY CHECK

TYPE: Standard

LINK: INT

BASE COST: 30

How do you know if the story you're in is really happening or if it is a hoax, a dream, an imaginary tale, or if it's happening on one of the Parallel Earths in *Crisis on Infinite Earths*? It's really easy as long as you use the handy-dandy new power we like to call **Reality Check**.

It is totally optional on the GM's part to place this power in an adventure or campaign, as it tends to make the game more of a free-form interaction between the GM and the Players as opposed to the normal, nice, well-constructed game.

If the GM thinks he/she can handle it — go to it... and good luck.

With **Reality Check**, a Player can cut through to the truth of the matter, much in the same way that a burst of clear thinking would work. The Player may even use it to discover if something is really happening, cutting through game-illusions or silliness created by the GM.

However, if a Player disputes something and doesn't make the roll, the power will backfire on the Player, attacking the Character's Mental Attributes as he or she tries to deal with the backfire.

To do a Reality Check, the GM's age is both the Opposing and Resistance Values and the RAPs are how much information the GM tells the Player concerning what is really happening (as per Knowledge Point rules). If the GM needs to boost the Opposing and/or Resistance Values to maintain the illusion for the Players, he/she can do so by using the amount of money that he/she has in the same manner as Hero Points. One dollar equals one Hero Point.

The GM does not have to give any money away but he/she does have to

show it to let everyone know that the cash exists. No change is allowed, only paper money, and only the good-old real-live American greenbacks (unless you're in Canada or someplace — then use the money of your own country).

When a Reality Check backfires, the APs of **Reality Check** act as both the Acting and Effect Values, with the Character's INT and MIND as the Opposing and Resistance Values, respectively. RAPs are subtracted from the current value of the Character's MIND, which will never fall below zero due to any backfire, cumulative or no.

In cases of a Reality Check where the Character's life depends on knowledge of what is really happening reality may shift (as it so often does) in an attempt to totally waste the Character. There will be a second attack on the hero's Mental Stats in the next phase as reality shifts. An example of this happens in the *Yah Hah Factory* (Mini-Encounter 8).

Remember: this power is best used in an Ambush Bug-type situation where the Character realizes he is in a comic book or game module and is working with the author of the story (the GM).

DUMB LUCK

TYPE: Standard

LINK: INFL

BASE COST: 60

Dumb Luck is a mystical power that saves Ambush Bug's neck at times and nearly causes him to lose it at others.

Use of **Dumb Luck** is considered a Simple Action, the game equivalent of rubbing a rabbit's foot, fingering a four-leaf clover, or saying "Boy, do I hope I get lucky tonight."

A Character using **Dumb Luck** rolls against his own Mystical Stats. The RAPs are the number of Column Shifts that that Character gets to use in his favor in a Resistance Action

that phase or an Attacking action the next phase.

For example, suppose a Character has **Dumb Luck** (AV/EV) of 8, an INFL (OV) of 7, and a WILL (RV) of 6. Say this Character is about to be hit by something a lot bigger than he is and wants to use **Dumb Luck** to save his skin.

He compares his APs of **Dumb Luck** against his INFL. He needs an 11 or better to make a successful Action Check.

He rolls a 13, receiving a column shift. On the Result Table, we find that this gives him 4 RAPs. This translates as 4 column shifts that that Character can use for either his Opposing Value or his Resistance Value, but which cannot be split between the two.

A Dumb Luck roll may be used to boost a subsequent Dumb Luck roll in the next phase and so on as long as the Player feels that the dice are on his side; if a Dumb Luck roll fails, all column shifts that have been accumulated are then used against that Character (which could be really rough). This will make that Character very dangerous to be near. Everybody knows something bad is going to happen to that person real soon.

In the next phase of battle (whenver that may be) all those column shifts may be used against the Character in whatever fashion the GM sees fit. Anything may happen — a Character may break his hand from hitting a startlingly resistant marshmallow or come up against someone who was never that fast or that strong or able to get in that lucky a punch before.



Role-Playing the Bad Guy

One thing one has to remember when role-playing a villain is exactly what type of villain is being played. Basically, there are two types of villain: those who say “Bah!” and those who don’t say “Bah!”

Those who don’t are simple enough to role-play: they speak like regular guys — just like you do! Unless, of course, you’re one of the twenty or so persons on Earth who actually say “Bah!” If you are, then you probably already know how to be a villain and should skip this section and turn yourself in to the authorities.

Those who say “Bah!”

- Nihilists
- Semi-Nihilists
- Power Lusting Villains
- Psychopaths
- Sheep

Those who don’t say “Bah!”

- Mercenaries
- Thrill Seekers

Those Who Say “Bah!”

The villains who say “Bah!” can make for a tough role-play. Listed below are descriptions of each villain-type to facilitate role-playing the Character.

The Nihilist: This is the single most dangerous type of villain. A Nihilist will blow up the entire world just because he feels that existence is meaningless. Because of this, the Nihilist doesn’t really care if he is blown up, too; he wants to destroy everything that exists.

The Nihilist’s hatred of existence spills over into other aspects of his life as well, most notably into his conversational skills. As existence is meaningless, so, too, are words.

A true Nihilist would probably say something like this:

Bah!”

before blowing up the world. This tends to limit the Nihilist’s dramatic appeal which is one reason the Semi-Nihilist is more often used by authors in their stories.

The Semi-Nihilist: The Semi-Nihilist is a villain who feels that ex-

istence is meaningless but who realizes that other people may actually cherish their lives (this wouldn’t matter to a true Nihilist, who wouldn’t give a dingo’s kidney for the opinions of all those meaningless people who cherish their meaningless lives).

The Semi-Nihilist has a sadistic streak — he likes to see people sweat about the fates of their existences and will normally say things like:

“Bah! There’s nothing you can do! With my [insert weaponry here], I will destroy you, then this block, then this city, then this county, then the state, then the country, then the continent, then the hemisphere, then the planet, then the solar system, then...” etc.

Sometimes this is too much of a bother to say, so the Semi-Nihilist will simply opt for “Bah!” (which is why many people often confuse the Semi-Nihilist for the Nihilist) and then blow up the world but not before leaving enough clues for the heroes to be able to stop him.

The Power Lusting Villain: This is the sort of criminal who wants to control the world. This usually stems from wanting to have things his way or from a humanitarian view of how things may be run better if only he was in charge.

“Bah!” this villain says. *“The governments of mankind are run by fools. I shall take over this world and create a Utopia!”*

Sometimes the Power Lusting Villain realizes that there are billions of people who don’t want to live in this version of Utopia (read: *Police State*) and the villain tries to take over through means of Charismatic Persuasion.

“Join me!” the villain will say, *“and we will walk hand in hand into a paradise where people are free to say ‘Bah!’ if they want to.”*

The Psychopath: Generally okay, clear-thinking person who has warped ideas about things such as morality and reality. This is the sort of villain who will hold a gun to your head and ask you to tell him how many fingers he has up.

“Bah! You haven’t the capacity, the vision, to think as clearly as I do!” This is a common psychopathic statement said when you count the number of fingers that are there instead of the number of fingers that he thinks should be there. *“Let me ventilate your brain to help you out,”* the psychopath will say before pulling the trigger.

Sheep: *n., pl. 1.* a hoofed, thick-fleeced, ruminant mammal widely domesticated and bred for wool and meat.

Those Who Don’t Say “Bah!”

The villains who don’t say “Bah!” are a lot easier to role-play because they are normal guys with just a few minor differences.

The Mercenary: While a good deal of us would do just about anything for money (work at fast-food places, write game modules, etc.), the Mercenary is more blatant about it. The Mercenary will do anything for money, no matter who it hurts or how it will affect himself. If the price is right, he’ll do it.

The Mercenary would say something like this:

“You want to what? Buy my mother?! Who are you kidding... I sold her last week.”

The Thrill Seeker: The Thrill Seeker is the true idiot of the villain world. You give some guy a skintight suit and a single power or gimmick and he thinks he can do anything.

The Thrill Seeker usually gets into trouble and then lives to regret it. But does that stop him from throwing off his street clothes in public at the next sign of something that looks like fun? Nope.

The Thrill Seeker would say something like this:

“Hey, Batman! Your mother dresses you funny!”

Most Thrill Seekers don’t last very long in the villain business.

Heeere's Luthor

SETUP

This is how the Adventure begins. Make sure you have read **Game Props** on page 3 and that you and the Players have read *Fanmag Magazine* before play begins.

For this encounter, you will need a watch set three hours fast, a wall clock with the proper time, a bowlful of munchies (corn chips, potato chips, pretzels, or whatever), and Ambush Bug's business card.

PLAYER INFORMATION

"Let's just assume that this isn't a trick."

That was the first sentence uttered by a hologram of Lex Luthor that suddenly appeared out of thin air in the middle of the table in your headquarters. You were there, reading the latest issue of Fanmag Magazine, drinking coffee, and speaking heroic words when the full-color, doll-sized transparent figure appeared and began speaking.

"Also," the figure continued. "Let's assume that this is really me, Lex Luthor, and not somebody else who's trying to use my good name."

"Now that that's established, I would also like to remind you that I beat-up on Superman on a regular basis, so I am not one to be taken too lightly. But all modesty aside, I'll be doing a few experiments later on today and what I don't want is a bunch of costumed heroes slamming through the wall when I'm in the middle of something important. Okay?"

"Right now it's noon in Metropolis. At precisely 3:47 this afternoon, I'll be running a few experiments on Time in my ultimately secret hideout at the corner of Main and Wells streets."

"You'll probably all get a queasy feeling around that time, but don't worry, it'll pass. It'll just be one of the ripple effects that will occur when I take control of the Time stream."

"Which reminds me. One last thing: by 3:48 this afternoon, I will become the master of Time and Space. Surrender all your fortunes and power to me by that time or I'll kill you before you were born."

"Drop all money and papers at my secret hideout, that's the corner of Main and Wells. I'll probably be a little busy so just slide the money under the door. Thanks. I now return you to whatever insignificant little things you were doing before my triumphant message."

The image of Luthor winks out.

Immediately, there is a call from the Police: "Heroes, we have what classifies as a major disturbance on Main and Wells that we think bears your attention."

Suddenly, there is a loud 'Pop' bearing a startling

resemblance to the sound of a giant can of "Yah Hah" being opened and a tall, skinny man in a green bodysuit appears with a confused look on his face and a small white card in his outstretched hand.

"... and be with you guys when you were making plans," he says, finishing a sentence. "Next time, call me..." the sentence fades off and the business card he was about to hand you flutters to the floor.

You know immediately that this is Ambush Bug as he is the only hero in the room that looks so little like one.

"What are you guys doing here? How'd I get here?" he asks. "Where is here? What happened to Luthor? Can I have some of those?"

NOTE: (Grab a handful of munchies and eat them.)

GM INFORMATION

The police will tell the Player Characters that no other heroes seem to be available, so they were called. If the Characters ask, the police will say,

"Yeah, we got a report of some giant 'L' hovering over a warehouse on Main and Wells. We ran the license number on the 'L' through police computers, and found the ship is registered to one Lex Luthor. Which Lex Luthor we don't know, but after that weird hologram-thingy we all received, it's probably not a good idea to take chances."

Ambush Bug has just popped back in time from Encounter 6. At the end of Encounter 3, he accidentally gets hit by a beam into which Luthor planned to step; the beam would have given Luthor the ability to move through Time at will but instead has given Ambush Bug the power of complete control over Time, Space, and History.

However, no one, not Ambush Bug, not the heroes, not even Luthor, is aware of this at the moment. This is something only the GM knows so he won't be confused by what's happening right now.

The beginning of Ambush Bug's sentence (that finished with *"... and be with you guys when you were making plans."* earlier) happened about three hours from now. Luthor had just been defeated and the heroes were slightly miffed at Ambush Bug for nearly getting them all killed.

"Hey," he will say, "I volunteered to be here with you guys because I'm a hero. Nobody's paying me for this. When I popped in, I saw you guys in deep trouble and I figured 'Gee, I could be a swell guy and help them out.' So I figured I'd pop from place to place and do what I could, because, face it; that's my power. It's not like I can pop back into time..." is as far as he got before popping back into time and completing the sentence as stated earlier.

No doubt the heroes will be just as confused as Ambush Bug. If the heroes try to ask questions about Luthor, Ambush Bug will say, *"We were just in a fight with him. We won. Hey, these are good."* (Grab some more munchies.)

All this hero-stuff can give you a heck of an appetite. Where are we?"

When the heroes answer that they are in their headquarters and that they didn't battle Luthor with Ambush Bug's help, Ambush Bug will look at them strangely. *"Are these munchies drugged? Of course we just fought Luthor. Not three minutes ago,"* he says, glancing at a clock on the wall.

"How can you call yourselves heroes if you don't even have a clock that tells you the right time? That thing's three hours slow."

If the heroes check the time, they will find that their clock is keeping perfect time. Ambush Bug is three hours fast.

"Wait a minute," says Ambush Bug. *"Now (point to your watch) is now. Then (point to the wall clock) was then. My watch is perfect. I checked it just before I went to help you guys. Are you trying to tell me that then was now and now won't happen until later, when now comes around again, or what?"*

NOTE: Ambush Bug is confused about his three-hour leap back into time and the GM is encouraged to be as confusing as possible when speaking about the fact that "now" won't happen for another three hours (as detailed in Encounter 3).

When the GM gets tired of confusing the Players like this or it seems like they are actually getting a handle on the conversation, Ambush Bug will "pop" out with a worried look on his face.

If the heroes decide to go to Ambush Bug's office to see what the heck is going on, go to Encounter 2, **A. Bug Enterprises**. If the heroes decide to attack Luthor, let them do so. Go to Encounter 3, **A Stitch in Time**.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the heroes decide to detain Ambush Bug, he will stay with them until he gets bored (about three phases) then pop out.

If the heroes think that this is a trap set by Luthor, let them. They can attack Ambush Bug in his office (Encounter 2) but he will pop out before he gets hurt.

If the heroes try to question Ambush Bug about the battle, he will be yanked out of their time frame before he can answer. The cause of this is the force of history, the inability to alter past events. Future events, however, may be altered. Since the heroes have not yet battled Luthor, the actual outcome of Encounter 3 is up for grabs.

Encounter 2

A. Bug Enterprises



SETUP

This encounter occurs right after Encounter 1. If the Player Characters decide to break into Ambush Bug's office, trash everything, and beat the stuffing out of Ambush Bug, he will assume that they have had their minds taken over by Luthor and will do his best to avenge them by going to Encounter 3.

If the Player Characters come here simply to talk about what happened in Encounter 1, Ambush Bug will look at them as if they were insane.

For this encounter, the GM will need the few clever questions provided and a copy of *Fanmag Magazine*.

PLAYER INFORMATION

Ambush Bug's office was easy to find. It's a small, dingy storefront office in the Oaktown section of Metropolis. "A. Bug Enterprises" is nonetheless a friendly-looking place.

You push the door open and the bell rings. Ambush Bug, feet propped on his desk, looks up at you from his latest issue of Fanmag Magazine.

"Hi guys! What's up?"

GM INFORMATION

Ambush Bug will not know anything. He will be totally unaware that the heroes just finished speaking to him (in Encounter 1) and will not know a thing about Luthor's message. This is because none of what happened before has happened to Ambush Bug since he just recently popped back in this time line.

"*You guys okay?*" he asks. If they don't attack, he will whip around and ask them the provided set of questions to test their psychological states. (See **Testing the Heroes' Sanity** and say "Hmmm" a lot.)

After the test, Ambush Bug will declare them legally insane and will tell them to pass on the creamed chipped beef at Arkham Asylum.

If the heroes tell Ambush Bug that they are going after Luthor, he will want to tag along. If they don't tell him where they are going, he will follow them "*to keep them out of trouble.*"

Whether they like it or not, Ambush Bug is going to battle Luthor with them.

Testing the Heroes' Sanity

When the heroes go through Encounter 2, they will say a few things that will make Ambush Bug think they are insane. To test whether or not they are, he will ask them a few strange questions (normally, psychologists use things called "Rorschach Cards" but we thought they just looked like stupid ink blots).

It should be noted that no matter how the Player Characters respond, Ambush Bug will think they are crazy.

Question: Have you stopped beating your dog?

Question: How many two-cent stamps in a dozen?

Question: Who do you think you are? **Anyway?!**

Question: Compare apples and oranges.

Question: Why is the Earth flat?

Question: Do you have any more questions you'd like to ask me?

Encounter 3

A Stitch in Time

SETUP

This is it! This is the battle that the Players have been expecting. They know where Luthor's hideout is (it's the only warehouse at the intersection of Main and Wells that has a spaceship hovering over it) and they know that he plans to activate his plan at exactly 3:47 p.m., at the height of a massive outbreak of solar flare activity.

All the heroes have to do is stop Luthor from entering the energy beam, thus preventing his becoming master of Time, Space, and History.

PLAYER INFORMATION

The neighbors were the first to notice it last night. They made phone calls to the police, who called you heroes into the case. Somehow, the word leaked out to the press and it became the subject of a late news telecast. By morning, the police had roped off the area surrounding it, the crowds gathering behind the lines waiting excitedly for something to happen.

By 8:00 a.m. the T-shirts were printed up ("I survived Luthor's Time War" and "I lost my other shirt betting on Luthor" were the big sellers) and souvenirs (Luthor Battlesuits designed to fit little babies and Cheeks dolls) were sold to the thousands of people there.

Oblivious to all the activity surrounding it, Luthor's

ship, a legally-registered massive, gleaming, red and green, floating "L," hovers over the warehouse in the Old City section of Metropolis.

GM INFORMATION

Unless the heroes have an Invisibility shield over them, there is no way that they can sneak up on Luthor. The moment they appear, the crowd will start up with a deafening cheer for the heroes, shouting their names, singing songs, and taking bets. Luthor knew something like this would happen which was exactly why he set things up like this.

Refer to the Map of Luthor's Warehouse for details on the battle inside.

Luthor's Plan

At exactly 3:47 p.m., the violent solar flares will set up a reaction that will send an amount of radiation to Earth sufficient to open up a pinhole in the space/time continuum. Using a specially-created space/time fabric altering device known as the Flux Capacitor, Luthor intends to force open the pinhole and step outside of the moment that is "now." Once this happens, Luthor will be able to move through Time and Space at will.

To protect himself, Luthor has set up five robot "Groids" that will attack anyone who enters the warehouse. These Groids are intelligent; they are able to analyze an oppo-

ment's attack and predict what the next attack will be, giving them the ability to counter the attack before it occurs.

See "Groids" in the **Non-Player Character** section on page 6 for details on the Groids and how to run them.

Once the heroes have gotten into the warehouse, the Groids will attack.

In the second phase of battle, Ambush Bug will pop in, wearing combat fatigues, a torn T-shirt, and a headband that says "*Rambug*."

"Yo!" he shouts. "*Let's get that gold-brickin', commie-lovin', chain-smokin', un-American, skinhead!*"

Ambush Bug will shout orders at the heroes ("*two heroes attack each robot*," "*stay with the robot you're battling*," etc.) which is all bad advice and the exact wrong thing to do with the Groids.

If the heroes follow Ambush Bug's orders, they stand a greater chance of being beaten to a pulp by the Groids. When this becomes evident to the Players (when a Player says something along the lines of "*Don't listen to him*" or "*these things are killing us*"), one of the Groids will Multi-Attack a Player Character and Ambush Bug (roll randomly).

On the first phase of that Multi-Attack, Ambush Bug will be hit by one of the Groids and be smashed. "*Okay, okay*," he says, "*let's try Plan B*."

Luthor is protected from the front by a force shield with OV/RV: 0/40, so it will be difficult for the heroes to do a direct frontal assault. Plan B of the attack is for Ambush Bug to Teleport around the shield and try to take on Luthor by himself.

Unfortunately, the moment that Ambush Bug pops in, an unexpected solar flare will open up the pinhole ahead of Luthor's schedule and Ambush Bug will fall in and vanish.

During his stay, Bug will be imbued with the power to do whatever he can think of, the power to control everything: Time, Space, History, and even baseball schedules. Ambush Bug obviously does not know this yet, otherwise

Chicago would have won the 1984 National League pennant.

The shock to the Flux-Capacitor will be so great that one phase later, Luthor's force shield will drop.

If the heroes have already beaten the Groids at this point, they can Team-Attack Luthor. If the heroes haven't beaten the Groids when Luthor's force shield goes down, they will be in deep trouble and a small number of people outside who bet against the heroes will stand to make a good deal of money.

If the heroes lose, they will wake up and Luthor will be gone, headed off to another part of the galaxy where he has calculated the next pinhole will show up. If the heroes follow him, go to Encounter 5, **Tag, You're It**.

TROUBLESHOOTING

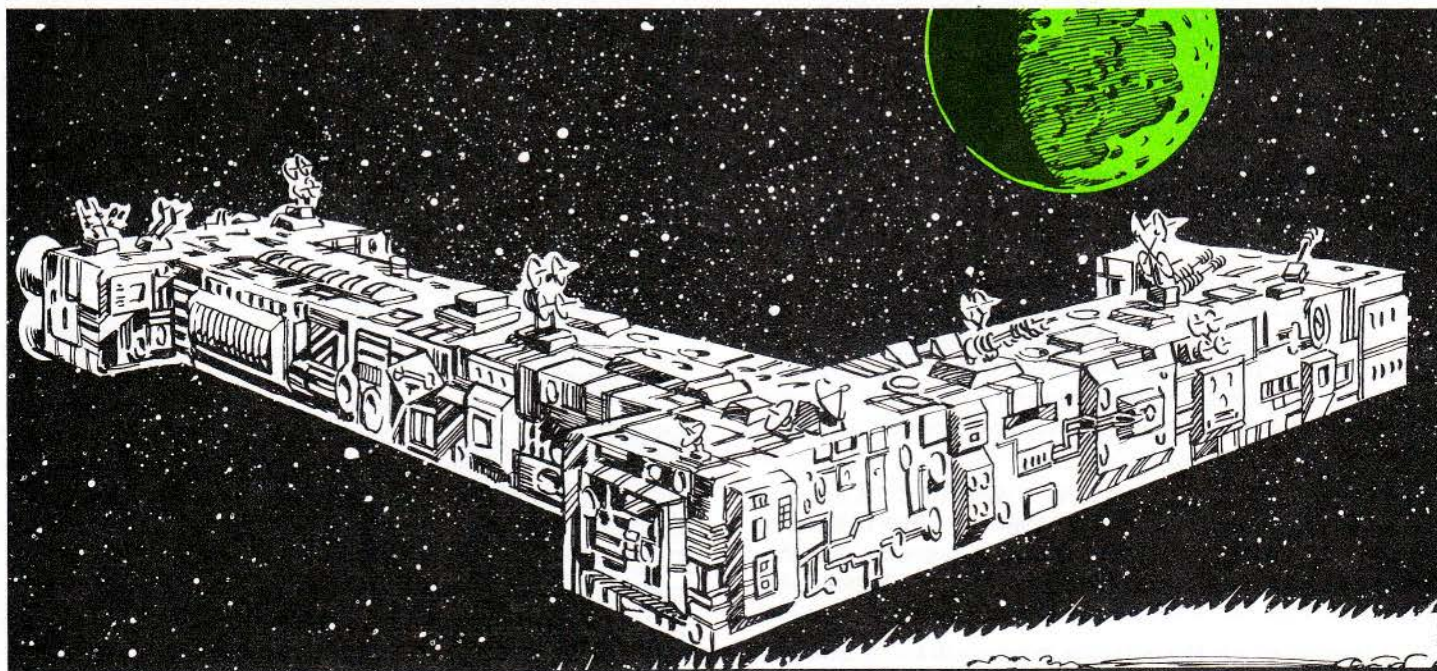
If the heroes arrive too early, a massive solar flare will shoot off ahead of schedule and the pinhole will open (as previously) and Ambush Bug will get the power to go through Time, Go to Encounter 6, **Bugaboo**.

If the heroes attack Luthor's force shield first, the Groids will immediately analyze what they are doing and enter Bashing Combat. The Groids' Initiatives begin at 18 in this case and go up as detailed in the **Non-Player Character** section.

If the BODY of Luthor's Battlesuit drops below 15, Luthor will realize that there is a good chance of his losing this one and will fight to reach his ship. Go to Encounter 6.

If the heroes decide to call in the military to help out, Luthor's ship will go on the defensive and use its heavy artillery to keep the military at bay.

If the heroes decide to call Superman or some other high-powered hero for help against Luthor, they will receive a message on that hero's answering machine that says that that hero will be out for the day. In case of an emergency, the caller should try to contact (the Player Character Group's name).



Encounter 4

You Can't Get There From Here

SETUP

This is a very special encounter in that it is impossible for anyone in the game to get here. The only way for anyone to get here, to this key encounter, is to leave the game entirely after Encounter 12, *GM's Revenge* and re-enter the game here.

If the Players cannot figure out that they should say "I'm leaving the game," then say "I'm re-entering the game again at Encounter 4," go back to Encounter 12.

Through Luthor's device, and what can only be described as a Cosmic Boo-Boo, Ambush Bug got the power to control the Universe (that is to say, Time, Space, and History). So he made this place as a haven where he can go to relax.

When the Player Characters arrive here, they do so not as heroes but as disembodied word balloons. The GM will need either photocopies of the word balloon on the inside front cover, hand drawn word balloons, or some real balloons and a marking pen.

PLAYER INFORMATION

Space floats around you in gently bobbing blobs of colorless sound. Time speeds by in small volkswagons. Reality looks like something you saw in a blender.

You are between dimensions but you are not lost. There are a number of signs leading you to your destination. One sign up ahead with wooden letters hastily scrawled across a glob of blue paint points your way: "This way to Encounter 4, You Can't Get There From Here."

When you reach Encounter 4, you find Ambush Bug sitting on a woven grass mat. His legs are crossed and his hands are gently placed, palms up, on his knees. He is staring straight ahead to a spot on the wall that is covered with television sets. There are hundreds of thousands of sets, each tuned to a different show. This is a big wall.

Ambush Bug reaches for a can of Yah Hah, pops the top, and chugs it down while staring straight ahead.

GM INFORMATION

A number of Perception Checks are needed here for the Players to realize what's happening. Any number of successful RAPs against the listed OV/RVs will reveal the respective information.

OV/RVs-2: The heroes notice that they are disembodied word balloons.

OV/RVs-4: Ambush Bug isn't noticing them.

OV/RVs-10: Each television set is showing a different episode of every television series ever made.

OV/RVs-12: There is enough Yah Hah here to last Ambush Bug at least 4 million years.



The Players can talk to each other and hear each other but the only way that they're going to communicate with Ambush Bug is to write on the word balloons. This form of communication is so silly that any Persuasion Attempt has -3 column shifts against it.

The Players have to do two things:

- 1.) Get Ambush Bug's attention and
- 2.) Get him to leave Encounter 4.

This is not going to be easy, as Ambush Bug has everything he needs for eternal existence right here in Encounter 4.

Any of the methods listed below will get Ambush Bug's attention.

- 1.) The word balloons putting on a better show than the television sets are doing. This isn't hard. OV/RV: 5 against the Character(s) Acting Skill(s).
- 2.) The word balloons coming up with a creative sound effect (as well as a description of how the sound effect is used, e.g. "sssSSSSS-PWOF-VROOOM" as a sound effect for a marshmallow falling 47 feet and landing on the back seat of a '77 Pontiac Firebird).
- 3.) The word balloons wrapping themselves around Ambush Bug's head.
- 4.) The word balloons dipping themselves in Ambush Bug's can of Yah Hah.
- 5.) A Word Balloon floating over Ambush Bug's head and saying "I think I will pay attention to these other floating word balloons" (or a similar balloon). As that balloon is over Ambush Bug's head, Ambush Bug will think that he actually said that, wonder why he did, and then examine the word balloons to find out what's going on.

NOTE: If the Players cannot think of any of these solutions, a successful Perception Check against Ambush Bug's Mental Stats will clue them in on one (roll randomly) of the methods above.

If the Characters try any violent means to get his attention (at least as violent as any certain word balloon can get — poking Ambush Bug with the pointy parts of the balloons or shaking off the old ink into his can of Yoo Hoo), Ambush Bug will turn his attention to the Player balloons.

Unfortunately, he will be miffed at them and unless the balloons explain to him why they had to be violent, a +1 Column Shift will be added to the Bug's Opposing Value on any Persuasion Attempts the balloons make.

After they get his attention, the Player balloons have to convince Ambush Bug to get back into the game to set things right. This is difficult, as Ambush Bug has no real reason to do so. He would be perfectly happy to sit here and return to a blissful state of TV-induced brain-death. The balloons' best bet is to appeal to his sense of heroic duty, his sense of honor and justice. Bug has OV/RVs of 7 against such an attempt.

Once the Player Balloons convince Ambush Bug, he will stand, put his hand over his heart and say, *"You're right, this is wrong. Being here is selfish, a horrible thing to do when there are small children who have to glue pencils together from old shavings for a living."*

"I have this power that can be put to good use, for the good of mankind and for the bad of everyone else. I want to thank you heroes for showing me the right way. Now I know what I must do: restructure the entire civilized world!" He vanishes with a "pop."

The Players must now leave the game and reenter at Encounter 13, *Crypt of Comics II: the Sequel*.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The balloons (Player Characters) must get Ambush Bug's attention on their own. If the balloons fail to convince Ambush Bug to leave Encounter 4 after one Persuasion Attempt by each of them (a Multi-Attack counts as any involved Player's attempt), Bug will sit there, smile at them, and open another can of Yah Hah. As mentioned in *Fanmag Magazine*, this turns him into a raving lunatic.

Read to the Players:

"Ambush Bug leaps up, realizes his legs are still crossed, falls down, untangles his legs, leaps up again, and screams 'What am I doing in this job? It's degrading, demoralizing, and demanding! I didn't go to college for this! Heck, I didn't even go to college. I want to be a... be a... a free-lancer! Yeah! That's it!"

"I want to live the life that's free! I want to go to the movies whenever I want to! I want to depend on other people's opinion of me so I can live!"

With that, he "pops" out of Encounter 4.

Go to Encounter 13.

Encounter 5

Tag, You're It

SETUP

If the heroes lost the battle in Encounter 3, they will wake up and Luthor will be gone, headed off to another part of the galaxy where he has calculated the next pinhole will open up.

If they are able to follow him, they should go through this encounter. Ambush Bug will be with the heroes. If the Players decide not to follow Luthor (or they are unable), they should go directly to Encounter 6.

To follow Luthor, **Life Sense** must be used. The next pinhole will open up at a point 44 APs away from the Earth. Unfortunately, Luthor will never get there in time: his ship runs out of gas. The heroes will find Luthor floating adrift looking for a space station.

If the Characters do not have **Life Sense**, they would be unable to locate Luthor in deep space. As such, to simplify the Characters' following Luthor, they will wake in his warehouse as Luthor leaves for space. If the Player Characters follow the ship, proceed with Encounter 5.

PLAYER INFORMATION

This is deep space. A big place, it's kinda dark, too. Actually, it's real dark. You couldn't see a planet if it were three feet away from you. Wait... there is a glint of light. It's shining off the corner of something spinning... It's getting clearer... It's a large, floating, red and green, gleaming letter "L" — Lex Luthor's ship.

GM INFORMATION

The ship is on Emergency Power (having run out of fuel) and Luthor will keep the ship quiet, playing possum, until the heroes actually enter. He will activate the Sealed Systems of his Battlesuit and blast away at the heroes when they approach him.

Luthor will stay perfectly still until the Player Characters are nearly upon him and will resist **Life Sense** (should it be utilized).

Once Luthor has surprised them, he will blast his way through them in an attempt to take over their ship. Should Luthor succeed, he will get away to do bad things to someone else in another book and the heroes will remain in Luthor's ship, stranded in space.

If he fails, the heroes can put Luthor and his ship in tow and head back to Earth.

In either case, play proceeds to Encounter 6.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If, in the midst of battle, both spaceships are blown up, the heroes will find themselves floating in space in big trouble. To return to Earth, the Player Characters will need to wait 9 APs until a CTA (Cosmic Transit Authority) shuttle happens by.

Bugaboo

SETUP

This encounter happens right after Encounter 3 or right after Encounter 5, whenever Luthor has been defeated.

Luthor has been defeated or has gone off into deep space and Ambush Bug now has the power to do whatever he can think of (as he now has the power to control Time, Space, and History), although he doesn't know it yet.

PLAYER INFORMATION

"We almost got killed, guys," Ambush Bug says, slightly perturbed, "and from the looks on your faces, I can guess who you want to blame it on."

(Pause. Shush any Player that looks like he thinks he's going to talk and point a finger at him.)

"Hey, I volunteered to be here with you guys because I'm a hero. Nobody's paying me for this. When I popped in, I saw you guys in deep trouble and I figured 'Gee, I could be a swell guy and help them out.' So I figured I'd pop from

place to place and do what I could, because, face it; that's my power. It's not like I can pop back into time..."

There is a backwards pop, like the sound of air rushing into a can of Yah Hah before it's sealed. Ambush Bug vanishes.

Seconds later he reappears. "Ing," he says, and pops out, leaving behind a translucent image of himself.

He reappears, says "Hap," and vanishes, leaving behind another image.

He reappears, says "What's," and vanishes, leaving behind another image.

He reappears, says "Pen," and vanishes, leaving behind yet another image.

He reappears, shouts "STOP!" and stops popping out. He turns, see four ghost images of himself looking themselves.

"Yaaahhhhhhh!!!!!" Ambush Bug and his four images all scream and run away in five different directions, waving their arms and vanishing before they hit the walls.

GM INFORMATION

To figure out what's going on, the Player Characters have to use their Mental Stats against OV/RVs of 8 on two rolls. Successful rolls will let them know two things:

1st roll (3 RAPs): Ambush Bug's interrupted speech was completed in the heroes' headquarters three hours ago.

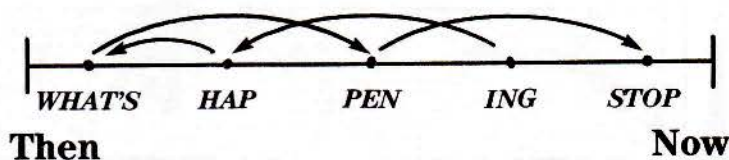
2nd roll (4 RAPs): Ambush Bug was saying, "What's happening? STOP!" but the syllables were out of sequence.

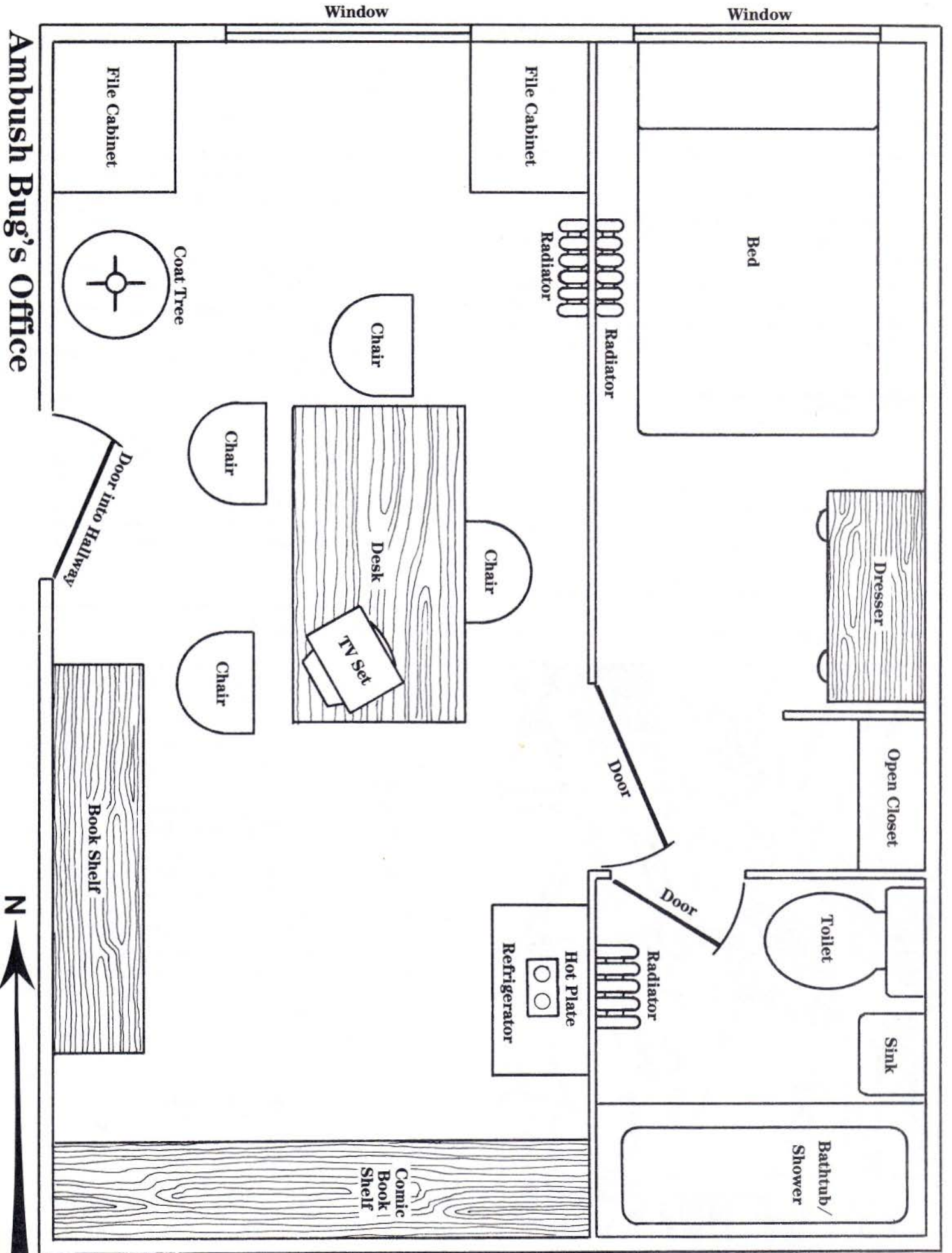
2nd roll (12 RAPs): All above information plus the fact that this could be happening because Ambush Bug was popping back and forth in time (see deluxe time line, like the ones in math books, below).

NOTE: Ambush Bug hopping randomly through time is not good. Something like this would most definitely put the delicate balance of the universe out of whack. It would rip the time line to shreds.

Go to Encounter 7.

TIMELINE





Ambush Bug's Office



One square = about ten feet



**One square = five feet
X = Groids, standing around,
just waiting for a hero
to beat up**

Encounter 7

Times Be Changin'

SETUP

The Good News: Personal income rose 1/10 of one percent during the last two Encounters.

The Bad News: Ambush Bug getting the powers to do whatever he can think of (the power to control Time, Space, and History) did worse damage to the universe than was originally thought in Encounter 6. He has no idea what he is doing and has no way to control his power at the moment. Also, the universe is about to scream.

PLAYER INFORMATION

You hear a noise like a completely stopped clock. Then it splits in two—you hear the sound of two completely stopped clocks; it splits again — there is the sound of four completely stopped clocks, then eight, then sixteen.

The sound splits and splits and splits...

The total lack of sound is deafening.

Then...

The Universe screams.

A tall, dark man wearing a dark suit, slouch hat, and a cape appears in front of you in the midst of a cosmic whirlwind. "I am the Phantom Stranger," he says in a commanding voice. "Come with me! The fate of the universe depends on your actions!"

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the heroes go with the Phantom Stranger, he will take them to a comic book store and play proceeds with Encounter 8. If they choose not to go with the Stranger, go to Encounter 9, **Read the Fine Print**.

Encounter 8

The Crypt of Comics

SETUP

The Crypt of Comics is a comic book store owned and operated by two phantoms: Kid Spectre and his faithful sidekick Deadboy. In the corner of the store rests their faithful mascot, a large and friendly-looking Phantom German Shepherd.

Both Kid Spectre and Deadboy were once teenage sidekicks of two very powerful dead heroes until the Comics Code deemed their existences tasteless. They both run this store just for the fun of making unscrupulous dealers look bad.

Because of that, the Crypt of Comics has been banned from all known realities which is why it's the only safe place to be at this moment.

But things are not so pretty...

PLAYER INFORMATION

You recognize the place immediately as the Crypt of Comics — the only absolutely perfect comic book store in existence. Everything you could ever want in the world of comics is here.

You see Aurora model kits of all your favorite heroes, M.M.M.S. cards, photos of Palisades Park, a time-telling desk version of Clock Kent, buttons that say, "I'm one of

Robin's Regulars" from All-Bran, Diamondback Decks, original cels from the Fleischer Studios Superman cartoons (and the entire run of uncut cartoons), and comic books—hundreds of thousands of comic books, all mint-condition (that almost make the Mile-High collection look silly), and all for under \$5.00 each.

Two pale young men who look as though they've happily and successfully passed the first stages of decomposition look up from their comic books and smile at you.

"May I help you?" one asks in an entirely friendly, death-tinged voice.

"Don't worry about how we look," says the other. "We're dead. I'm Deadboy. That's Kid Spectre and his big dead dog, Dick."

"We're phantoms," says Kid Spectre.

The Stranger intercedes. "We came here because the Universe is screaming."

"There goes another radioactive bat," shrugs Deadboy.

"Ambush Bug is distorting the fabric of time," says the Stranger, ignoring the corpses. "You must find him and stop him immediately, before he changes the past."

WHUF! A blue light flashes from out of the pages of a nearby comic book. Then the whole book flashes with a brilliant blue light, which then dies down, leaving the comic undamaged. Another comic book on the counter flashes blue. Then another, and another...

Within seconds, blue flashes erupt here and there, all over the shop, some glaring brightly, some mere puffs of blue light, some dim glows, creating a stellar display of dancing blue lights.

GM INFORMATION

If the heroes investigate the comic books against Opposing and Resistance Values of 4 each, they discover the following information:

1-2 RAPs: Each comic that flashed was a copy of one of each Player Character's series.

3-4 RAPs: The comics that flashed the brightest were those that showed the Player Characters' origins.

5 RAPs: The heroes' secret origins have been changed in their comics.

The Phantom Stranger will tell the heroes that Ambush Bug is disrupting Time and will send the heroes back to their own world and time so they can stop Ambush Bug. He will leave the heroes with a warning that Ambush Bug may have created another time line but because the heroes were in the comic book store between realities, they were not affected.

"Find Ambush Bug" the Phantom Stranger warns. "However, keep your origins clearly in mind. There will soon come a time when you will have to know who you are. When you get back to your world, you will find duplicates of each of you and these duplicates will definitely do all they can to stop you from righting the wrongs which have been done. Should you straighten things out, it would mean the end of their existences."

NOTE: The duplicate heroes are the Ambush Bug Squadron, the most popular hero group on Earth. Information on them is listed under "Ambush Bug Squadron" in the *Non-Player Character* section and in *Fanmag Magazine*. The method of creating their secret origins and limitations is explained in the Troubleshooting section below.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Although the Player Characters have their own comic books (a complete run of which can be purchased at the Crypt of Comics), they may not have actually read those comics. If the Players have not created secret origins for their Characters, use the Universal Secret Origins Table on page 20 for this purpose.

Pick one storyline (one item each from columns A, B, C, and D) for each hero's secret origin, change one aspect (either A, B, C, or D) about it, and you have the secret origin of the duplicate hero as outlined in the comic books that changed.

The GM should work out a Limitation for the duplicate hero from that Character's secret origin. However, the GM should not tell a Player Character this Limitation unless that Player Character reads the blue-flash altered comic book.

If a Player should think of reading the altered comic book for the duplicate hero's origin, he may find a weakness in the duplicate hero (OV/RV: 3 against the Player Character's Mental Stats) which could be exploited in a battle situation.



For example, if a Player Character was a Scientific Whiz Kid who went into an abandoned subway tunnel with a powerful toy and became a Thrill Seeker, the Duplicate Hero might be a Scientific Whiz Kid who went into an abandoned subway tunnel with a powerful toy and became a Thrill Seeker, but one with a Catastrophic Fear of Subway Tunnels, or other lonely, closed-in spaces which tend to attract graffiti.

(Roll 1D10 for both Limitation and Level)

Roll	Limitation	Roll	Level
1-3	Attribute Limitation	1-4	Minor
4-6	Fear Limitation	5-8	Serious
7-9	Irrational Limitation	9-10	Catastrophic
10	Power Limitation		

Remember, a duplicate hero has only 2/3 of the Hero Points that the corresponding Player Character has.

Play proceeds with Encounter 10.

UNIVERSAL SECRET ORIGINS TABLE

(See Encounter #8)

A	B	C	[to become]	D
Innocent Person	was hit by	a lightning bolt		a Thrill Seeker
Scientific Whiz Kid	was bitten by	yellow sun radiation		Upholder of Good
Billionaire	was inspired by	bat that flew in window		a Dark Force of Justice
Grieving person	was found by	a dying alien		the Bearer of the Power
Clean-cut Do-gooder	was covered by	chemical waste		a nervous wreck
Pimplly-faced Gamer	was born of	comic books		relatively harmless
Average Joe	was taught by	powerful suit, toy, gimmick		Keeper of the Flame
Mutant	ate a large portion of	Charles Atlas ad		omnipotent
Alien being	unknowingly discovered	a radioactive gerbil		a film critic
Outcast high-schooler	built (or was built by)	radiation-exposed parents		awe-inspiring
Grudge-holder	formed appendages of	an aging wizard		Hamburger Man/Woman
Oppressed minority	had severe psychological setback because of	juice extracted from a rare, exotic plant		able to leap tall buildings in a single bound
Literary marvel	went into abandoned subway tunnel with	strange unknown forces		an eskimo

Encounter 9

Read the Fine Print

SETUP

In this Encounter, the heroes will meet Jonni DC, Continuity Cop. The Player Characters will have reached this encounter if they refused to go with the Phantom Stranger in Encounter 7.

PLAYER INFORMATION

Suddenly you are pulled out of the DC continuity by a short, red-headed woman who has incredibly thin arms



and legs and a disc-like body with the DC Comics logo on the front. You recognise her immediately: it is Jonni DC, Continuity Cop - Tah-Dah! (dramatic entrance music).

"What do you mean you're not going with the Phantom Stranger?" she shouts. "It's in your contract. Paragraph seven, line two: whenever there's a True Cosmic Calamity that necessitates the intervention of the Phantom Stranger or the Spectre, the signing party (that's you) agrees to drop everything and go along with said mystic-type."

"Sure, you may think you can handle things as they are, but think carefully: where do you start?"

GM INFORMATION

The Player Characters may argue with Jonni DC if they wish. They may try to Persuade her, Intimidate her, dice her into julienne fries in seconds... it won't work. The Player Characters must follow the Phantom Stranger to the Crypt of Comics.

Luke, trust me.

Go to Encounter 8.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the Players still don't want to go, read them a few interesting passages from a quantum physics textbook.

Travelogue

This encounter is made up of six Mini-Encounters. The heroes locate Ambush Bug and try to stop him from tampering with the fabric of time.

The heroes will most likely begin their investigation at Ambush Bug's office but there are clues in the issue of *Fanmag Magazine* that may lead them to either the Daily Planet or the DC office in New York City.

In some of the Mini-Encounters there are battles with duplicate heroes. Refer to the "Ambush Bug Squadron" in the **Non-Player Character** section during these events. In each case, a duplicate hero will encounter his/her original, although the Player Character will not be aware that he/she is fighting his/her duplicate since the duplicate hero will be wearing an Ambush Bug outfit.

Mini-Encounter 1: Bug's Office

Setup

This is where the Player Characters will most likely begin their search for Ambush Bug.

Player Information

Ambush Bug's office, a dingy but friendly-looking storefront office in the Oakton section of Metropolis, seems empty when you arrive. When you enter, a bell rings for a few seconds then stops. A large bug skitizes across the desk, but it's not the one you're after.

The office is blanketed in a patch-work quilt of silence.

GM Information

The heroes may want to search the office for clues, a good idea as there are many clues to be found. If the Player Characters look on the desk, they will find a series of scrawled notes on a large desk pad.

The handwriting will be a bit difficult to get through and as if that wouldn't be bad enough, the way the ideas are set down will seem to follow no rational path.

The Characters should make a Perception Check (OV/RV: 3/2 plus 3 Column Shifts added to the Opposing and Resistance Values to pick out what Ambush Bug is trying to say on paper).

The Player Characters are able to figure out the following with two or more RAPs:

"What to do? What to do? Call Clark?" Next to this is "The Daily Planet" circled with red ink.

"What if Clark's not around? Howzabout the V.P. of DC? Yeh. He always seems to know what to do." Next to this, "DC head office: New York City" is circled.

"Cheeks! He's never failed me! But this is a big case and he's such a little guy" and "Wait a minute! I can call the

entire Red Lantern Corps in for this one!" are next to a third circled location: "Ernie's House of Really Cheap Toys."

If another Perception Check is successfully rolled (OV/RVs: 2), the Characters will find, beneath the pad of paper, a copy of the latest *Fanmag Magazine*. This one matches the copy that the Players have.

If the Characters go to see Clark Kent, go to Mini-Encounter #2: **The Daily Planet**. If Superman is one of the Player Characters, Ambush Bug will not be at the Planet (as he has gone to the Planet and didn't find Clark Kent/Superman). The Players should choose a different Mini-Encounter.

If the Characters decide to check out Fanmag Press for clues, go to Mini-Encounter #3: **Fanmag Magazine**.

If the Characters go to see the Vice-President of DC Comics, they must go to the DC offices in New York City. See Mini-Encounter #4: **DC Comics**.

If the Characters go to Ernie's House of Really Cheap Toys, go to Mini-Encounter #5: **Ernie's House of Really Cheap Toys** (don't you love the scientific precision of these directions?).

Troubleshooting

If the Players don't pick up on any of these clues, the Phantom Stranger will pop in and help set them on the right track (methods at GM's discretion).

If this is too obvious, the GM also has the option of letting the Characters wander around the world until they come across a way that will lead to these clues. One good way to do this is to have the duplicate heroes show up whenever the Player Characters get too close to the right track.

Mini-Encounter 2: The Daily Planet

Setup

The Characters may begin their investigation here through one of the clues in *Fanmag Magazine* (the letter explaining that when Ambush Bug gets into something over his head, he goes to his old buddy, Clark Kent).

If Clark Kent (Superman) is one of the Player Characters, Ambush Bug will not be at the Planet; he will have arrived, and, not having seen Clark, have left. The Characters should go back to Mini-Encounter #1: **Bug's Office** and make another decision (either Mini-Encounter #4: **DC Comics** or Mini-Encounter #5: **Ernie's House of Really Cheap Toys**).

The Characters may have come here from either Mini-Encounter #1 or #4. In any case, there will be three duplicate heroes here who will attack the Player Characters the moment they try to speak to Ambush Bug.

Player Information

The low hum of word processors has replaced the steady clacking of typewriters in the news room of the Daily Planet but there is still the crackle of excitement in the air as the latest edition is put together.

There is a "pop" like a can of Yah Hah acknowledging its existence and Ambush Bug appears on top of a desk, shouting, "Clark! Clark! Where are ya?"

GM Information

Ambush Bug will ask everyone within earshot if they've seen Clark Kent lately and the answers will range from, "I saw him running into the broom closet again. The man has no shame!" to "I saw him taking off his pants in a phone booth. Nice legs." However, none of this is considered strange behavior, as everyone here is either a print or broadcast journalist.

When the Player Characters try to talk to Ambush Bug, he will gesture that they cannot talk here. He will not say why but three obviously powerful people in green Ambush Bug-type costumes will appear.

Ambush Bug will vanish and the duplicate heroes (in the Bug costumes) will attack. See the "Ambush Bug Squadron" in the **Non-Player Character** section for their fighting strategies.

After the battle is over, Perry White, Chief Editor of the Daily Planet, will approach the Player Characters brandishing a rolled-up newspaper.

"Great Caesar's Ghost!" he shouts. "I am sick to death of you people from the Real World slipping into the comic world just so you can come here and wreck my newsroom."

"You want to find that idiot Ambush Bug? Why don't you go to the DC office in New York? They handle his contract! They should know how to find him."

"If he's not there, check out those guys at Mayfair Games who thought it would be funny to give Ambush Bug the power to control Time, Space, and History. Or go to a toy store and talk to one of those stupid dolls that he always plays with. Just get out of here!!"

NOTE: Any Player Character replying, "Thanks, Chief" will be hit by Perry's newspaper and have his/her subscription to the Planet cancelled.

The Player Characters can go to Mini-Encounter #4: **DC Comics**, Mini-Encounter #5: **Ernie's House of Really Cheap Toys**, or Mini-Encounter #6: **Mayfair Games**.



Troubleshooting

If the Characters try to attack Ambush Bug rather than simply talking to him, he will vanish as will the duplicate heroes. There will not be a fight unless the Characters want to pick one with Perry White for coming at them with a rolled up newspaper. If Ambush Bug is not present (one of the Player Characters is Superman), the duplicate heroes will attack as soon as the Player Characters enter the building. Run the battle normally.

Following the battle, Ambush Bug will still not be present and the Player Characters must choose another Mini-Encounter to examine.

Mini-Encounter 3: **Fanmag Magazine**

Setup

Here's another place where the heroes may begin their investigation or their investigation may continue here from Mini-Encounter #1: **Bug's Office**.

Player Information

Muffled, manic sounds of chaos filter through the heavy oak door of Fanmag Magazine. When you open the door, the noise is nearly deafening. Dozens of young men and women whip through the office at breakneck speed while type letters, write articles, and begin and confirm rumors.

A few take phone calls from flashing red phones labelled "DC" and "The Other Guys" where a secretary picks up the receiver, says "Please hold," and hangs up.

Every so often, one of these people slows down, collapses, and literally crawls to one of the strategically placed bags of processed white sugar, grabs a handful, and swallows it.

And the pace picks up again...

GM Information

If the Characters grab one of these people (OV/RV: 7 on a Persuasion Attempt to Neutral Characters), that person will tell the Characters that Ambush Bug hasn't been around since the interview and probably won't be back until the sales figures on his issue come in next week.

The Characters will be told that the best places to reach Ambush Bug would be at his office or at DC Comics.

If the Players decide to go to Ambush Bug's office, go to Mini Encounter #1: **Bug's Office**. If the Players decide to go to DC Comics, go to Mini-Encounter #3: **DC Comics**. If they leap to a wild conclusion, go to Mini-Encounter #6: **Mayfair Games**.

Troubleshooting

If the Characters get frustrated and punch or physically restrain one of the employees to stop him (employees

Stats are twos across the board, with five Hero Points), that employee will collapse and be instantly replaced by a new employee; there is an unlimited supply.

If the Characters trash the office, another office will be pulled out of a closet and business will go on as usual. The people at Fanmag are used to dealing with irate people.

Mini-Encounter 4: DC Comics

Setup

The Characters may begin their investigation here through one of the clues in *Fanmag Magazine* (the article explaining Ambush Bug and the Ambush Bug Squadron's business deal with DC). The heroes may also have come here from another Mini-Encounter.

In any case, there are three duplicate heroes present: one is answering the phones for a few minutes as the regular receptionist has run down to the deli for three tuna salad sandwiches and a corned beef on rye; the other two are on the couch, puzzling out the licensing agreement contract.

The Characters have to get through these three before they can see the Vice-President of DC Comics.

Player Information

You open the door to the corporate offices of DC Comics Inc., and see an obviously powerful person in a green, Ambush Bug-type costume behind the receptionist's desk. There are two other similarly-dressed people sitting on a couch pondering a licensing agreement.

The person behind the desk finishes taking a phone message, then looks up at you. "May I help you — eep!" He almost goes into shock when he sees you.

GM Information

In this encounter, the Characters have a Surprise attack advantage if they take control of the situation and begin fighting immediately. This is because the Player Characters were the last people on Earth that the Ambush Bug Squadron expected to see in the DC offices.

After the first phase, the Squadron will attack the Characters as detailed in the "Ambush Bug Squadron" section.

However, after the third phase of battle, the DC Vice-President will step out of his office and into the reception area to see what's going on.

"What are you doing here?" he shouts and the duplicate heroes will stop fighting. If the Player Characters continue fighting, the Vice-President will then threaten to (1) call the cops, and (2) cancel their comic books, no matter how sales are going on that title. (This is why occasionally a really good series gets the hatchet. Aren't you glad you axed?)

"What are you doing fighting in the Real World?" he asks the Characters. "And in my office, too?"

If the Characters try to tell him that this isn't the Real World, it's just a game, it will take a successful Persuasion Roll (OV/RV: 4) to convince him.

If he is convinced, he will become so enraged that his face will separate into four colors. "*How dare they take me out of the Real World and put me into a game!*"

He will give the Characters an address. "*These are the guys you want,*" he says. "*They're the ones responsible for all of this.*"

The slip of paper says "Mayfair Games." The address is in Niles, Illinois.

If the Player Characters don't tell the Vice-President that this isn't the Real World or they fail to convince him in the Persuasion roll, he will tell them to get out of his office before he gets really mad and makes them do cross-over issues with Sugar and Spike.

"*Check out Mayfair Games or the Daily Planet if you want to find out where that Ambush Bug is. Just get out of my office!*" The duplicate heroes will vanish, leaving to warn Ambush Bug.

Depending on what the Player Characters decide, go to either Mini-Encounter #2: *The Daily Planet* or Mini-Encounter #6: *Mayfair Games*.

Mini-Encounter 5: Ernie's House of Really Cheap Toys

Setup

The heroes will have come here from Mini-Encounter #1: *Bug's Office*. There are two duplicate heroes here who will attack with Surprise unless a Player-initiated Perception Check is successful.

Player Information

It's dark and Ernie's House of Really Cheap Toys is closed. There is barely enough light to see by; the tall stacks of brightly-colored boxes are grey in this light; ominous.

In one of the aisles there is a light, red glow and a voice, chanting a poem:

*"When I'm not far and I am near,
I'll beat up things that I don't fear.
Let bad guys know when I'm around.
Red Lantern's here. Get outta town."*

The voice belongs to Ambush Bug. He finishes the chant and you see him, surrounded by thirty-five Cheeks Dolls, each wearing a red, hero-style jumpsuit, and a red, glowing ring.

"Glad to see you," Ambush Bug says, glancing in your direction. "*I need as much help as I can get. I'm having a few problems here with Time. That's why I had to call together the entire Red Lantern Corps.*"

GM Information

If a Player does not initiate and successfully perform a Perception Check (OV/RV: the Player Character's own

INT and MIND), the entire group of heroes will be Surprise Attacked by two Duplicate Heroes.

If the Perception Check is successful, the RAPs of the Perception Check are added to that Player Character's Initiative (for this phase only) and the duplicate heroes lose their Surprise advantage.

The duplicate heroes will attack and battle Player Characters in the manner outlined under the "Ambush Bug Squadron" in the **Non-Player Characters** section.

The Cheeks dolls have a BODY of 0. If a hero or duplicate hero lands on, punches, kicks, fries, or otherwise gets near the dolls, the dolls' stuffings will be knocked out. After the battle, Ambush Bug will shake his head and say: "They were good men. They knew the job was dangerous when they took it but no one should have to die like this."

The GM should roll a quick Reality Check for Ambush Bug. The Opposing and Resistance Values are the GM's age (in years, not APs), plus however much money the GM has, as explained in the Reality Check section of **New Powers**. Ambush Bug will not use any Hero Points for this. If Bug succeeds, read **Paragraph A** below; if he fails, read **Paragraph B**.

SPECIAL NOTE: If you really want to go through the Yah Hah Factory Mini-Encounter (which is a lot of fun and everybody gets to shout a lot and shoot at each other) and you've already photocopied the script and you've bought the toy guns and flashlights (see the Game Props section), it's okay to cheat on Ambush Bug's Reality Check roll.

To do this, you'll want Ambush Bug to fail his Reality Check so you can go to **Paragraph B**. A good way to cheat on this is to simply roll the dice and no matter what, read **Paragraph B**.

Remember, if the Players (or anyone who's got the slightest concern about GM moral fibre) asks, the above Special Note does not exist. The author does not take responsibility for the GM's lack of Character. (Editor's Note: if Jenkins had any Character or moral fibre in the first place, this module would never have been written.)



Paragraph A

"Wait a minute," says Ambush Bug. "Die. I said Die." Then it hits him. "They're Dead!! My contract didn't say anything about this! I'm outta here! I'm outta this game! I'm going to Mayfair to rip up my contract!" There is a palindromic "pop" and Ambush Bug vanishes.

If the heroes decide to follow him, go to Mini-Encounter #6: **Mayfair Games**.

Paragraph B

Ambush Bug begins to shout: "Warning! Warning! Reality Check failed! Reality Shift impending!" Ambush Bug looks at his feet and sees a can of Yah Hah. "That's not a clue!" he says wildly. "Don't look at it!"

He grabs a toy gun from the shelf and fires it at the Characters.

NOTE: A Perception Check (OV/RV: 2) will reveal the only possible clue on the can: the address of the Yah Hah factory circled in crayon.

Go to Mini-Encounter #7: **The Yah Hah Factory**.

Mini-Encounter 6: Mayfair Games

Setup

The Characters may have come here from the Daily Planet, DC Comics, or Ernie's House of Really Cheap Toys. There is also the chance that they may have come here directly, led here by the letter in *Fanmag Magazine* in which Ambush Bug spoke of his contract with Mayfair Games.

Ambush Bug has "popped" out of the game and refuses to participate any more. He has come to Mayfair Games to sever his relations and tear up his adventure contract.

Player Information

"No. No matter what you say, I'm not going back into the story."

You found Ambush Bug sitting in the conference room at Mayfair Games, surrounded by a group of really nervous people. He finishes off a can of Yah Hah.

Managing Editor Jeff R. Leason turns to you as you enter: "I'm so happy you could come. Maybe you can talk some sense into him. He's already left the storyline. Just see if you can keep him from leaving the game altogether."

GM Information

Ambush Bug will be glad to see the Player Characters and a Persuasion attempt (OV/RV: 2/2) will get him to open up and talk about his problems.

"I don't know what's going on here," he says. "We beat up Luthor and then I start bouncing through Time. Okay. So I figure now that I've got the power to control Time, Space, and History, I can straighten out things a little bit: make this world a better place in which to live."

"Talking to people at Fanmag Magazine (did you see my issue? Isn't it great?) got me thinking about secret origins and how all my friends went through serious traumas when they decided to become heroes. So I figured that I would go back in time to help things go a little easier on you.

"And when I did, things got strange. It didn't work out. What I got was a bunch of fanatics who dress like me and treat me like I was some kind of Drill Sergeant.

"Do they treat me like friends? Do they treat me like you guys? Nooo. It's always 'Yes sir, Mister Bug!' 'Right away, Mister Bug!' It's like I don't have any friends."

If the Characters tell Ambush Bug that they are his friends, they will have an easy time of convincing him to get back in the story (OV/RV: 3). If not, they will have a more difficult time (OV/RV: 7).

If any Character fails such an attempt, another Character may try to convince Ambush Bug to get back into the story. Remember that Superman has an automatic -3 Column Shift Bonus to the Opposing Value of any Persuasion attempt on Ambush Bug.

Once there is a successful roll, Ambush Bug will decide to get back into the storyline. *"I'll do it,"* he says, *"but not right now. I have to go somewhere to think."*

Ambush Bug will pop away, leaving a decidedly confused but relieved group of people to their tracer-disc battles.

Troubleshooting

If there are no successful rolls, Ambush Bug will angrily grab another Yah Hah and chug it down. He will become a raving maniac as stated earlier, laugh sinisterly, and pop off to the Yah Hah Factory. The Player Characters will find left behind the can of Yah Hah which they may analyze as stated in **Paragraph B** on page 24.

Go to either Mini-Encounter #7: **The Yah Hah Factory** or Encounter 11: **Is This Real or WHAT?!**

Mini-Encounter 7: The Yah Hah Factory

Setup

This entire Mini-Encounter happens because Ambush Bug did a Reality Check that backfired. When coupled with his power to control Time, Space, and History, things tend to get a little strange.

The Characters will have reached this encounter if Ambush Bug fails his Reality Check at Mini-Encounter #5: **Ernie's House of Really Cheap Toys** or if all their Persuasion attempts failed at Mini-Encounter #6: **Mayfair Games**.

In this encounter, the GM hands around the toy guns (water guns, rubber-tipped dart guns, etc.) the flashlights, and some sort of plastic covering to keep the paper work from getting wet.

Use of the above toys is optional. The encounter can be just as silly if everyone points his/her index finger and says *"Bang-Bang."*

As this scene is a faithful reproduction of "White Heat" (a big, hot-shot James Cagney movie), the entire encounter is in glorious black and white, and the heroes are now dressed as T-Men, gangsters in double-breasted, pin-striped suit coats, wide-brimmed fedoras, and very shiny, black leather shoes.

A photocopy of "The Script" should be made for the Players to use.

Player Information

"Wardrobe!" shouts the director, a short, bearded man wearing a baseball cap. A rack of clothes is brought out to you and a hefty woman with a beehive hairdo walks up to each of you and measures you. *"Here are your duds. Put 'em on."*

The short man encourages you to put on the clothes (double-breasted, pin-striped suitcoats, wide-brimmed fedoras, and very shiny, black leather shoes) and describes the scene to you:

"Ambush Bug, wearing a leather jacket and work clothes, has been spotted on top of one of the giant Yoo Hoo mixing tanks. The police arrived immediately, cordoned off the area, surrounded the tank and trained their searchlights on the green-faced figure standing far above you."

"You are special detectives and you have to talk him down. Isn't this an amazing story? Here's your scripts. Action!"

NOTE: Assign the Players roles (Player #1, Player #2, etc.) and give them photocopies of "The Script," which follows. When Ambush Bug says *"Here's my answer, ya dirty —"* whip out your water gun and squirt the Players.



The Script

Player #1

"You're surrounded, Cootie. You might as well give up."

Player #2

"You haven't got a chance. Come out with your hands up."

Ambush Bug (GM Reads)

(shake the book **Don't Ask!** at them)

"I got the rest of the adventure here! It'll work out okay if ya do as I say!"

Player #3

"Cootie! It's me — I fixed it up for ya, Cootie! They don't want the game ruined! Ya come down and they got a car for ya! They'll let ya get away! It's all set!"

Player #4

"Don't listen to him, Cootie! He said that on his own, Jenkins didn't write it! There's no deal! Now, either ya come down or we come up after ya."

Player #1

"Yeah! Like he said! Talk, Bug. We'll wait ten seconds for your answer."

Ambush Bug (to the heavens)

"Come on out with your hands up," the man says, How d'ya like that, Ma? Don't know who they're talking to do they?"

(Shouting to Players)

"Here's my answer, ya dirty — "

(shoot gun or go "Bang Bang")

"That was Cootie Schwab talkin'!"

The Players can now shoot the GM (which they should be encouraged to do or the movie gets pretty boring from here on in).

Read to Players after they've shot back:

Ambush Bug staggers against the railing. He shoots a few more times at you T-Men, but realizes he's through, over, ca-put.

Ambush Bug

"Anyway, Ma, I made it. . . top of the world!"

As Ambush Bug shoots once more, the recoil of the gun knocks him back into the vat of Yah Hah. The Bug disappears forever into the carbonated depths with an audible "Pop."

GM Information

There is no body. The Bug is not dead. He's just left the game.

Say "Yea!" to yourself but keep your jubilation secret from the Players.

Go to Encounter 11.

Troubleshooting

"White Heat" is a great movie. If you have a VCR, rent the movie. If you don't have a VCR, find a friend who has one and rent the movie. If you can't find a friend with a VCR, don't worry: just keep your eye on the TV listings and this film will show up sooner or later on the Late Show.

If it seems impossible to find a showing of "White Heat," just use the above dialogue and remind the Players that you'll always have Paris.

Encounter 11

Is This Real or WHAT?!

SETUP

Ambush Bug has left the game and has gone to the only safe place he can think of: the Real World. The Player Characters will not be able to interact with him but the Players will be able to do so.

The GM should take out the Ambush Bug mask from wherever he/she has had it hidden and slip it behind the GM's Screen. The mask should have strings or tape or something to temporarily affix it to the GM's face. (Neither Krazy Glue nor rubber cement is recommended.)

There should also be a bowl full of munchies — some sort of dry snack food (potato chips, corn chips, etc.) — on the table.

As the encounter begins, the GM should dive down behind the GM Screen, make some sort of "Pop" noise, and sit up with the mask on.

PLAYER INFORMATION

"Hey! Who are you?" (Look at the bowl of food and shout.) "Food! Real food! Not that printed crud that they serve in the comic books!"

"I mean, sure, it was good — DC's printed food is a lot better than those other guys'. Well, okay, those guys do have that incredible clam chowder on Fridays but on the whole, DC's food is better. Don't tell anybody but that's the real reason I work for them.

"But real food! This is great!"

NOTE: Grab some of the munchies and smash them against the mouth part of your mask. Pause for a moment as Ambush Bug realizes what's happening, then say,

"Oh, No!! My lips are still two-dimensional! This body isn't even mine! Something went wrong! Aaaaugh!!

"I gotta go back! I'll starve to death here! I gotta get back in the game! But where? This is Encounter 11! Waitamin-it. I know!"

"I'll go back to Encounter 4!"

NOTE: Dive behind the screen, make an audible "Pop!" and take off the mask.

GM INFORMATION

Ambush Bug has breached the passage to the Real World. To make matters worse, he has gone to an encounter (Encounter 4) that can only be reached by way of passage through the Real World.

The Player Characters need to know this information so they can follow Ambush Bug. The Investigation Chart which follows has been provided for this purpose.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the GM feels silly about doing all this, then good: the sillier the better. There is absolutely nothing wrong with acting silly when you're having a good time.

Besides, there's always Encounter 12: **GM's Revenge...**

Encounter 12

GM's Revenge

SETUP

The Players, unable to figure out how to follow Ambush Bug, now have to cut a deal with the GM so he/she will tell them how to get to Encounter 4.

GM WARNING: Don't lose any friends when cutting a deal in this Encounter. This is only a game and it's not worth losing any friends over.

PLAYER INFORMATION

"You want to follow Ambush Bug, you gotta make a deal with me. I'm the GM, I paid \$7.00 for this game and went through a lot of trouble so that you could have a good time. Besides, they told me to say this in Encounter 12." (Show this paragraph to the Players.)

"You want to follow the Bug, you've got to pay the price."

GM INFORMATION

Make the Players help you with your homework or the dishes or with cleaning up after the game. Then again, if

Investigation Chart

In order for the Players to figure out what's going on, this Investigation section has been provided. Depending on the questions the Players ask and the Connections that their Characters have, the following information will be given out.

Question:

(Anything that is really general or really dumb.)

Answers:

Low Level (anywhere):

"What's that stuck to your foot?"

Medium Level (anywhere):

"What's that stuck to your navel?"

High Level (anywhere):

"What's that stuck to your nose?"

Question:

"How can we follow Ambush Bug?"

Answer:

Any Level (anywhere):

"Do like he does."

If the Players cannot figure out that they should say "I'm leaving the game" and then say, "I'm re-entering the game again at Encounter 4," go to Encounter 12. If the Players think of this method of entering Encounter 4 (or any other manner acceptable to the GM), go to Encounter 4: **You Can't Get There From Here.**

this turns out to be too much of a pain to do (like if you did better than all of them in English class last semester), it may be in your best interests to do something more simple.

Try having the Players bring the munchies to the next game or call out for a pizza right now. Everybody should chip in for the pizza, the actual favor is in calling up for delivery, which this editor's brother always made him do. When you come up with a solution, go to Encounter 4: **You Can't Get There From Here.**

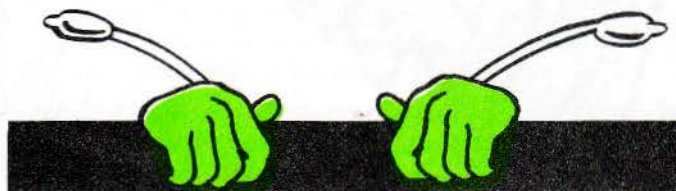
TROUBLESHOOTING

If you can't reach an agreement, compromise.

If you can't compromise, grow up.

If you can't grow up, call a doctor, quick.

When you come up with a solution, go to Encounter 4.



Crypt of Comics II: the Sequel

SETUP

The Characters have to get out of Encounter 4 before they are able to do anything else. When they do (by leaving the game and re-entering), they re-enter here, once again at the Crypt of Comics.

PLAYER INFORMATION

Meanwhile, back at the Crypt of Comics, the Phantom Stranger waits for your return.

"So your actual name is 'the Phantom Stranger,'" says Deadboy, trying to make conversation.

"Yes," sighs the Phantom Stranger.

"Is your first name 'the' or 'Phantom?' That is, is 'the' a title or is 'Phantom' your middle name?"

"What?"

"I just want to know what people call you. If your first name is 'the,' there's not much you can do with it. But 'Phantom' can have a lot of nicknames: 'Phan,' 'Tom,' 'Tommy,' 'Han' (that's my personal favorite... you got a spaceship?), or 'Ant'."



The Stranger sighs. "Men call me 'the Phantom Stranger.'"

"Oh, yeah? What do women call you?" asks Kid Spectre. "Often... I know..."

As you enter the store, the Stranger turns his attention to you. "It seems as though your trip to Encounter 4 had the wrong effect. The only course of action now open to you is for you yourselves to go back in Time to the moment that Ambush Bug got his powers and stop him from getting them. You must obtain a Time Machine.

"Unfortunately, I don't know where you can get one, save building your own. And for that, you must brave (dramatic pause)... **The House of Gadgetry!**"

Dah - dah! (Music like when Perry Mason reveals who the murderer is.)

"Gasp," Kid Spectre and Deadboy gasp in unison (do this deadpan, of course, which is what they cook their morning eggs in).

"Do you have any better suggestions?" the Stranger asks them.

Another patch-work quilt of silence descends.

"Well?" asks the Stranger.

"We can't tell you," says Deadboy.

"Why not?" asks the Phantom Stranger.

"Our mommies told us never to talk to Strangers," says Kid Spectre.

Kid Spectre and Deadboy laugh themselves silly.

GM INFORMATION

The Player Characters must, in some way, come up with a Time Machine. If some sharp-eyed Player spots the ad on the back of *Fanmag Magazine*, they will see that they can get a Time Machine by selling four million copies of OAT, the family newspaper. This is a lot easier than trying to build one.

If a Player/Character spots the ad, Kid Spectre says, "Yeah, sell OAT."

"Somebody has to," says Deadboy who proceeds to laugh himself silly.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the Players/Characters decide to build a Time Machine, go to Encounter 14: **The House of Gadgetry.**

If the heroes decide to sell OAT, go to Encounter 15: **Hay is for Horses, but OAT...**

If the Players give you any trouble, shoot them with the water-gun.

The House of Gadgetry

SETUP

If the Players decide to build a Time Machine, they have to come here — to The House of Gadgetry. The Characters can take a stab at building their own Time Machine by themselves but it would probably be easier if they just began another Universe.

PLAYER INFORMATION

A heavy mist covers the ground leading up to The House of Gadgetry. The House itself feels wrong: the angles are off — not square like a regular building or slanted, but off. Not right. Unfriendly.

The front door opens. A man who resembles a brunette Santa Claus speaks in a booming, sinister voice:

"Do you dare enter - the House of Gadgetry?"

GM INFORMATION

If the Player Characters decide to change their minds or if they get frustrated at any time below, they can still pack up and sell OAT in Encounter 15.

If the Characters ask who's in charge, the sinister figure answers: "I am."

If the Characters ask who he is, the sinister figure answers:

"Men call me 'Bob.' Women call me 'Bobbers' or 'Poop-sie' Little kids call me 'Mr. Bob.'"

If the Characters ask if he can help them build a Time Machine, Bob says, "What kind of Time Machine? A clock is a Time Machine and so is a metronome."

If the Characters explain that they need a machine with which they can travel through time, Bob will think for a moment, then say,

"There are two types of time-travel machines. The first is the DC Heroes machine. This can take you into the future easily enough but when you go into the past you are only phantoms — unable to alter the events or communicate with anyone in that time-frame.

"The other type is the Time-Out™ Machine which will allow you to alter the course of Time, change History, go into the future, come back with the Lottery results and make ten-million dollars."

If the Characters ask to build the machine, Bob will smile.

"Okay (speak in a staccato, rapid-fire manner).

"Base cost of a DC Time-Travel machine is 175 Hero Points. Base cost for a Time-Out™ Machine is 250 Hero Points. There's gotta be enough Uses so all of you can go back one at a time which will cost two Hero Points each,

unless you want to beef up the Acting Value so the machine can do a Multi-Attack and send more or all of you. This means you're going to have to beef up the Effect Value by either putting Hero Points into your Gadgetry Skills or boosting the normal value of your skill or getting a Character with at least a 20 AP Scientist Skill.

"Okay now, you have to have enough Charges to send however many of you are going there and bring you back. So that's two charges per person. Personally, I'd get three or four charges per person just in case, but that's gonna hike up the Opposing and Resistance Values like you wouldn't believe.

"Then, after all that, you have to roll your dice and if you choke, that's a lot of Hero Points down the drain. And if you need a Time-Out™ Machine this badly, you're probably going to need those Hero Points when you start fighting.

"Then, of course (speak at a normal speed) there's my fee: ten million dollars for parts and use of The House of Gadgetry. This price includes a service contract and a warrantee.

"Oh yeah. One last thing: if you get a Time-Out™ Machine, it can only be used in this game and not in any other adventure or comic book nor can it be used in the Real World."

If the Players still want to build a Time-Out™ Machine (which is the type they'll need) give them a copy of the Gamemaster's Manual, open it to page 25 and (along with the information that Bob gives them) let them figure out what they have to do.

This can take anywhere from ten minutes to eight months, so be patient. Grab something to eat. See a movie. Write a book. Raise a family. It's gonna take time.

If the Players can roll one up (and pay Bob's fee), then yippee! (Remember, the longer they take to figure out the Gadgetry Rules, the further back in time they'll have to go, so they'll need a higher Acting Value for the Way-Back power and have to spend more Hero Points on building the machine.)

If the Characters give up in the House of Gadgetry, they can still sell OAT in Encounter 15. If the Player Characters actually build a Time-Out™ machine, go to Encounter 16: **Onward to the Past.**

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the heroes try to build a Time-Out™ machine and choke or try and then get confused or just get confused, Bob will shake his head and say:

"You look like a good bunch of heroes, so let me tell you — it's not worth it. Sell OAT. It's a fine American Publication that's put out by a bunch of fine Americans.

"Besides, selling four million of them is one heck of a lot easier than building one of these turkeys.

"Take my advice. Go to Encounter 15."

Hay is for Horses, but OAT...

SETUP

The Characters need a Time Machine, specifically a Time-Out™ Machine. The only sensible way for them to get one is to sell four million copies of OAT, America's family newspaper.

PLAYER INFORMATION

"So, like all true Americans, you want to sell OAT, eh?"

You had to travel to Cleveland, Ohio to find the heavily-shielded concrete bunkers which encompass the corporate headquarters of OAT.

Inside, you quickly found the office of the sales manager and after a quick frisk and a few experiments with skin, hair, and blood samples, you were admitted into the office of blond-haired blue-eyed, square-jawed, cleft-chinned, non-flouridated teetted, water-drinking sales manager Steve Buck, a man sharply dressed in combat fatigues.

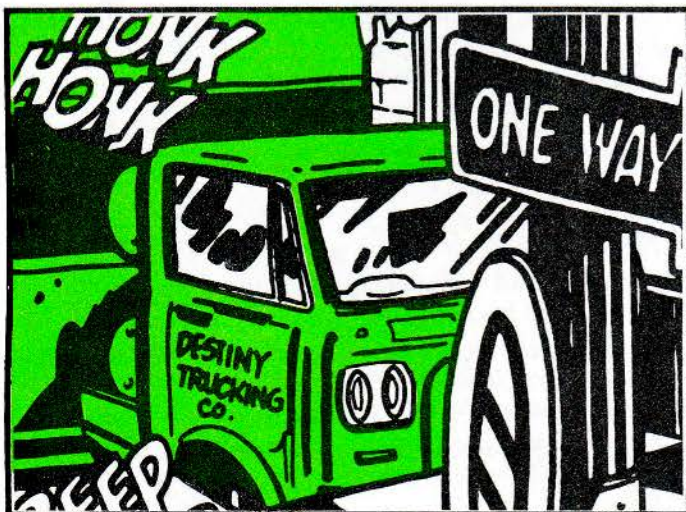
He looks at you suspiciously (not being accustomed to seeing brown people in red, white, and blue jammies) and says,

"Yeah?"

GM INFORMATION

To get the Time-Out™ Machine, the Characters have to sell four million copies of OAT at a dollar a copy. They can't buy a Time-Out™ Machine, they can't buy the company, they can't take the machine by force (they're not kept in the bunker).

If they try to Intimidate Steve Buck into giving them a machine or telling them where there is one, they'll have a problem.



You see, Steve Buck is the sales manager for OAT. OAT is a family newspaper and therefore, an American Institution. Americans don't take kindly to anyone who threatens an American Institution: these people stand behind American Institutions. So anyone who tries to intimidate Steve Buck is trying to intimidate the United States of America!

Buck's OV/RVs to Intimidation are 3, plus a 28 Column Shift bonus from the support of the American people. Any successful RAPs set off a nuclear war. Everybody dies but just for a little while since it's only Bashing Combat.

Afterwards, any Persuasion Attempts have 8 Column Shifts added to the NPC's OV (don't add this to the 28 Column Shifts as before. It's only 8 Column Shifts now, since the American people have all been bashed). This disadvantage can be cleared up if the Characters help rebuild the OAT plant. This doesn't take much as the people at the OAT plant were prepared for such an event (of course).

All the Characters have to do is clear away the three tons (7 APs) of fallout from the roof. Each ton acts as an attack of **Poison Touch** at 15 APs. The fallout has to be shoved into twelve lead-lined plastic garbage bags, each of which holds 500 lbs. of fallout. Unfortunately, the twist ties are somewhere in the bottom of the box and a successful Perception Check (OV/RV: 3 APs with any RAPs) has to be made to find them.

Recommendation:

The Characters should sell OAT.

When they hit the streets with their four million copies, the Ambush Bug Squadron (the duplicate heroes in their green Ambush Bug-like costumes) will attack the Characters to stop them from selling papers. For the Ambush Bug Squadron's Battle Tactics, see the sidebar entitled "The Ambush Bug Squadron's Battle Tactics."

Ambush Bug Squadron's Battle Tactics

Each duplicate hero will attack his/her corresponding Character and will battle as similarly as the Player Character as possible. Each duplicate hero will battle until he/she has defeated the Player Character, until the duplicate hero's BODY is below twenty-five percent of its original full value, or until the duplicate hero gets down to ten percent of his/her original Hero Points. The duplicate hero will then vanish.

After the battle, if the Player Characters win, they can sell their papers. This is not as difficult as it sounds. Four million newspapers is 22 APs of newspapers. All the Characters have to do is use their Charisma against normal people (OV/RV: 2) and get 22 cumulative RAPs.

This is no problem whatsoever for, say, the Batman.

The Characters cannot sell all the papers to one person, unless that person happens to have four million dollars to spare.

Once the papers are sold, the Characters can send the receipt to OAT. They will receive a Time-Out™ Machine as long as they allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

As this is a game, the GM can simply say,

"Six to eight weeks later, Parcel Post delivers you a large box (thirty feet square) filled with styrofoam peanuts and a shiny new Time-Out™ Machine."

NOTE: The Time-Out™ Machine is not considered to be a Special Gadget—it's a Plot Device. Therefore it can take the Characters back and forth in Time as many times as

they want but with the limitation that the farthest back it can take the Characters is one minute before Ambush Bug gets the power.

Go to Encounter 16.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the Player Characters lose to the duplicate heroes, the duplicate heroes will take the four million copies of OAT, sell them to get bicycles, and establish an Olympic racing team.

The Characters will have to go back to Cleveland, get some more papers and start this encounter over again.

Encounter 16

Onward to the Past

SETUP

The Characters can now go back in Time to get things back to normal.

The events covered in this encounter are the same as those events covered in Encounter 3 except for one major difference: unless every single member of the Ambush Bug Squadron has been defeated, all of them and Ambush Bug will be there, battling Luthor's Groids when the Player Characters arrive.

Read the following to the Players when their Characters arrive at the warehouse. If the Ambush Bug Squadron is present, read Paragraphs A and B. If the Ambush Bug Squadron is not present, read Paragraphs A and C.

PLAYER INFORMATION

Paragraph A

The scene is familiar; you have lived it before. Thousands of on-lookers excitedly mill around Luthor's gleaming red and green ship as it hovers over the warehouse.

Paragraph B

This time, however, the betting has already started: the crowd is already involved in the fight. As you enter the warehouse, you see a group of obviously-powerful green-costumed people battling Luthor's Groids while Ambush Bug pops from place to place, shouting orders.

Paragraph C

As you approach the warehouse, the crowd goes wild; money is passed from hand to hand, the odds on the betting boards shift to the side of good (but not too far) and the sales increase on T-Shirts that say "I Survived Luthor's Time War."

GM INFORMATION

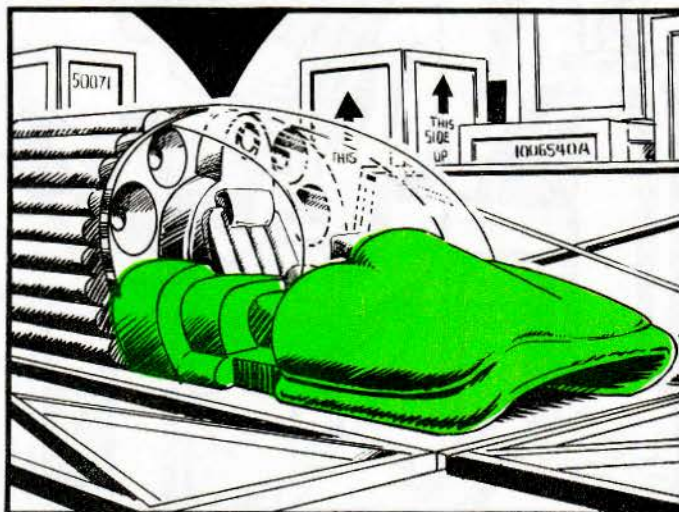
The Characters have three options. They could:

- 1.) Gang up on Luthor's Groids or Luthor himself.
- 2.) Gang up on the Duplicate Heroes (if present).
- 3.) Gang up on Ambush Bug.

If the Player Characters go for Luthor's Groids, Luthor himself, or the duplicate heroes, Ambush Bug is free to take the power. If he does it this time, he gets to keep the power.

If the Characters go for either option 1 or 2 above, they still may defeat Luthor and the Duplicates but Ambush Bug will again gain the power to control Time, Space, and History and the world of this campaign will be even stranger than it is now. An effectively-functionless campaign is the GM's problem.

If the Player Characters grab Ambush Bug and use some sort of power to hold him or control him, they can take him back to the future and let the duplicate heroes take care of Luthor and the Groids.



The duplicate heroes are perfectly capable of doing this before they vanish into the Time stream. Thus, Luthor would be foiled in his attempt to become master of Time, Space, and History and the world's time lines would be saved!

What would happen is this: Luthor will be defeated and the duplicate heroes will find their way to the future to retrieve Ambush Bug. The duplicate heroes will reach a point in the future exactly one phase after the Characters arrive back in the future and will demand the release of Ambush Bug. When the duplicate heroes try to enforce their threat, they will vanish into the time stream as the force of History reasserts itself.

If the Characters find some way to control Ambush Bug, battle the duplicates, and ignore Luthor, Luthor will wonder why they are doing this. After all, isn't he the world's most dangerous villain who now will have the

power to do whatever he wants? But if that's so, the Characters should be trying to stop him. But they are ignoring him.

Luthor will begin to think that maybe he's not the world's most dangerous villain. Maybe he's not a villain after all but just a normal guy feeling a bit out of sorts. Maybe somehow the Characters know that he won't destroy them all once he gets the power.

So then he thinks, "*Why get the power? Why not just go out into the world and be a good guy, just to see what it's like.*" So he will toss off his battlesuit, wander outside into the crowd, buy an "*I Survived Luthor's Time War*" T-Shirt and baseball cap, and walk out into the world, enjoying the warmth of the afternoon sun.

Yeah, that's the ticket.

Endgame



The Standard Award

Congratulations!

It was no simple feat. The terrain was difficult, the odds insurmountable, and the GM cheated, too! Still, you made it all the way through this wacked-out adventure and, boy, do you deserve a reward. Unfortunately, we've already given out all of our Statue of Liberty gold-plated commemorative coat racks as well as our year's supply of super-galactic sports-guy bubblegum cards, so you'll have to settle for these stupid Hero Points.

Standard Awards should be distributed as follows:

Level of Opposition:

Equal 20

Critical Points:

Miscellaneous

(Building/obtaining Time-Out™ Machine) 5

Area of Consequence: *

Galactic 25

Severity:

Permanent Non-Fatal 10

TOTAL STANDARD AWARD 60

* The Area of Consequence points should only be awarded if Ambush Bug is prevented from getting the power in Encounter 16.

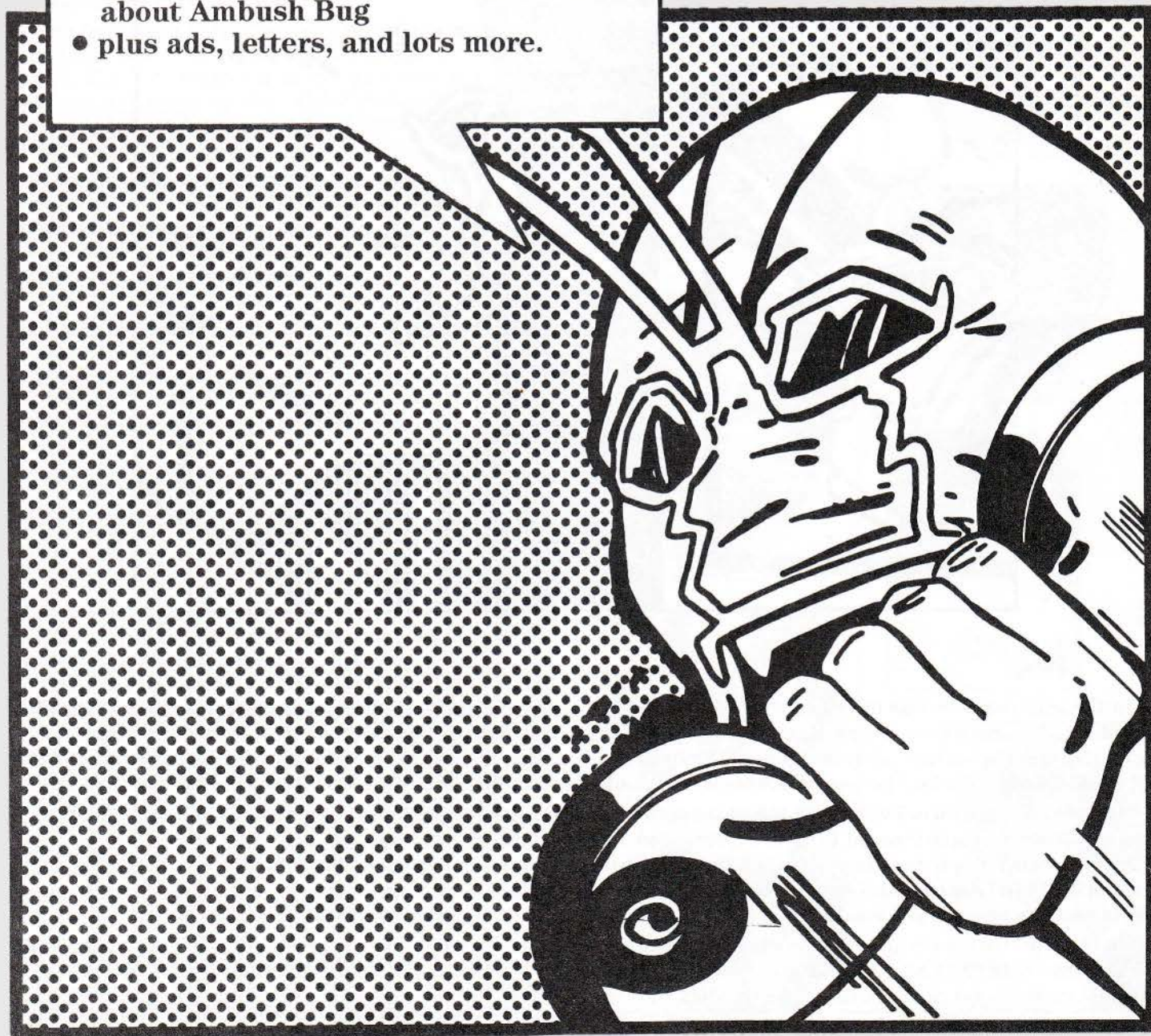
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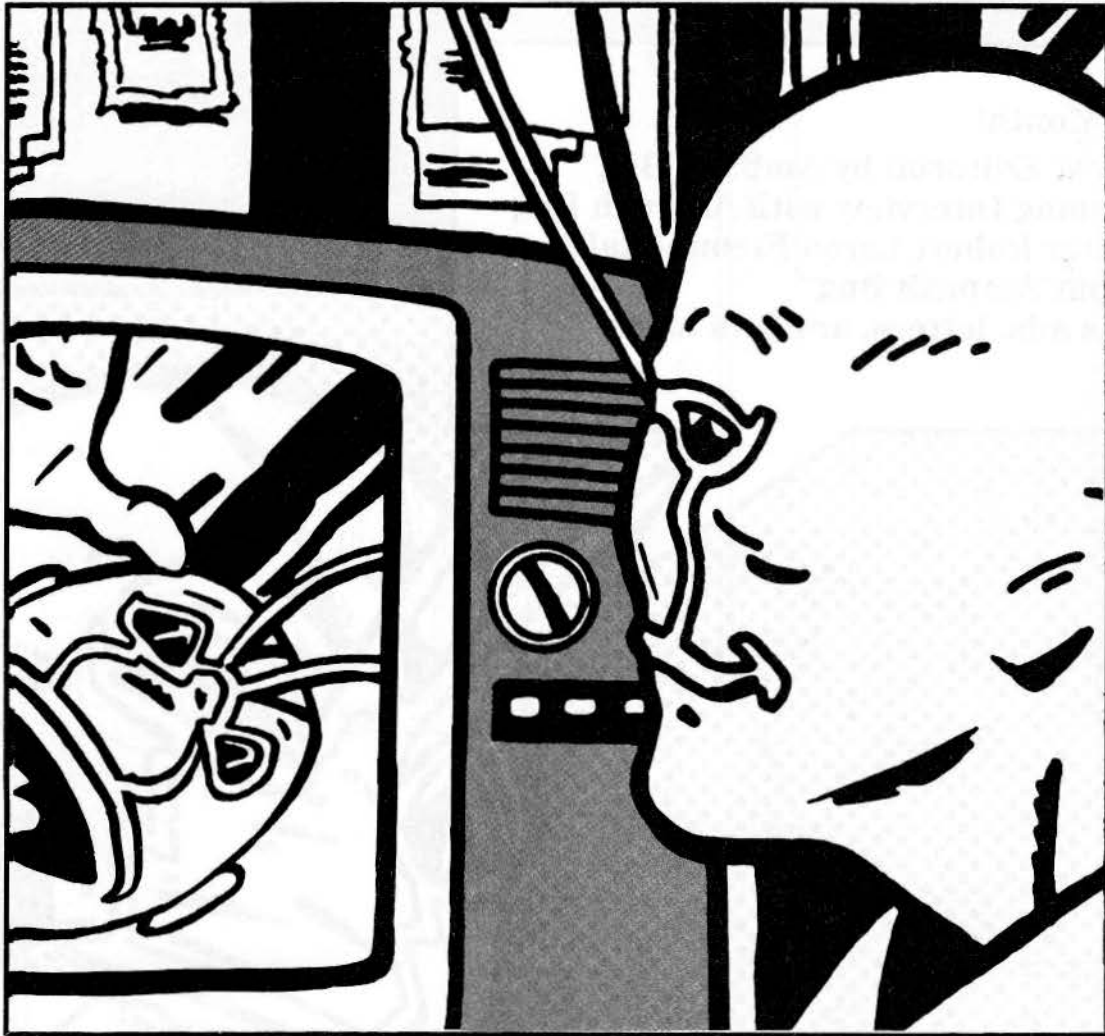
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This Month!

- Guest Editorial by Ambush Bug
- Fanmag Interview with Ambush Bug
- Writer Robert Loren Fleming talks about Ambush Bug
- plus ads, letters, and lots more.



What Sort of Man Reads Fanmag?



In the lean years he was forced to watch television through the display windows of department stores. When he decided to become a hero, people thought it would be best to lock him up. But this year, after reaching second on the Schwab's Best Heroes List (after Superman), Ambush Bug is well on the way to becoming a major part of the legend. "If I'd made it first on the list," he says, "someone would think that I'd influenced the judges." And his magazine is FANMAG.

"I used to watch a lot of TV," he says. "I had the entire run of The Brady Bunch shows memorized and could quote any line on demand. People thought I was brain damaged. I had to memorize those shows. They didn't have VCRs in those days, so I wasn't able to turn back to watch the good parts over and over again. I had to relive the best moments in my memories. Then I discovered comic books. They're great. You can read them at any speed, you can go back over the good parts as many times as you want to, and they're a lot easier to stuff under a mattress than a TV set is.

"In this world of heroes and villains, you never quite know who's who, who's going to be who, or who's not really dead. That's why I read FANMAG. FANMAG gives me the kind of information I need to keep up with what really matters. If you read it carefully, you can even find ways to crack the Comics Code. And the centerfolds ain't bad either."

Ambush Bug, a hero who knows how to read. The sort of man who reads FANMAG.

Ambush Bug Squadron to Get Own Book

World's Most Popular Heroes Sign with DC

The **Ambush Bug Squadron** has just signed an agreement letting DC begin production on a series based on the green-costumed Squadron's lives, loves, and battles.

"It was a real battle getting this deal," said the Vice-President of DC Comics. *"Everyone wanted the rights. And Ambush Bug, one of the most brilliant contract negotiators I've ever met, pushed a hard bargain."*

The comic will be published as a 48-page, square-bound, Baxter weekly. The creative teams involved are also impressive: **Norman Meiler**, **William Goldberg**, and **Harlan Elliot** will co-write, and the art will be handled by **Frank Meuller**, **Dave Stephens**, and, in a surprising move, **Pablo Picasso**.

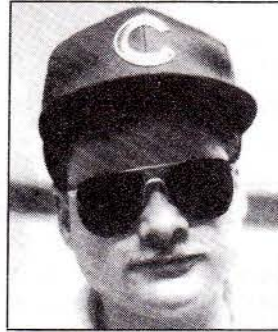
"I've been dead for a few years now," said Picasso at a Chicago Mini-Con. *"It's been a really creative experience. But I've mastered death and now it's time I move on to something else. There are some new techniques I want to try out and I feel comic books are the place for me."*

"There has been some really good work in the field over the past few years and I'd like to try my hand. I originally wanted to work for the Undergrounds or the alternates but Ambush Bug cut a really good deal to get me for DC. I couldn't refuse."

When asked about the direction that the book will take, writer Harlan Elliot said, *"Hell, I think the book will last. We have a lot of really good stories for this collection and they will be published in such a wonderful format that they can't help but do well. Each book will be a collector's item. Especially since I'm involved with it."*

The book will chronicle the true-to-life stories of the Squadron as well as stories of the dark and dangerous world they inhabit to keep America, Earth, and the Universe all good places to raise children.

Is it ethical to charge good money for game modules? That's the question the creative team at Mayfair Games tackled with this month's release of **Don't Ask!** Editor **Tom Cook** completely changed the adventure around from the way it was submitted as artist extraordinaire **Jennifer Underwood** laid-out the whole mess under the watchful eye of art department head honcho **Loretta Wilson Kost**. Mayfair's own, Managing Editor **Jeff "Duck" Leason**, didn't have much to say about it, as usual, but no one could silence the publicity-laden **Vicky Jones** and **Bob Garcia**. While VP **Sam Lewis** battled to keep the project on-budget ("No!" he was often heard to say), yet another striking cover sneaked out under the designs of **David Bromley**. Another magazine's writer, **Kevin Cook**, is in here just for fun, but the lightning-fast digits of **Claudette Aho** whisked manuscripts through their varied stages while captain-of-the-ship **Jon Coke** delivered once more. It's a tough job. Don't expect us ever to do it again.



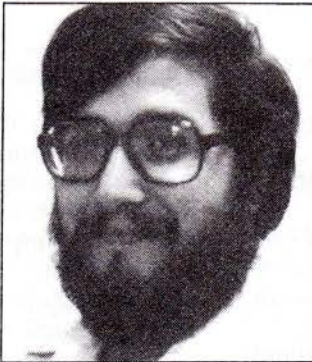
COOK



WILSON KOST



JONES



GARCIA



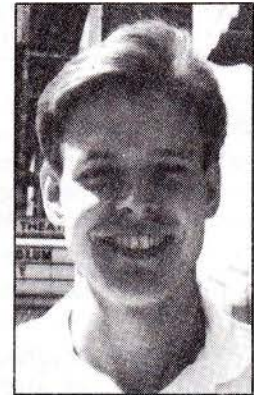
COOK



AHO



UNDERWOOD



LEASON



LEWIS



BROMLEY



COKE

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NILES, ILLINOIS 60648



GAME FAME?

Is it true that you'll be appearing in a game? Is it a role-playing game? How come you're doing it for Mayfair?

E.G.G.
Lake Geneva, WI

1) Yes. 2) Yes. 3) They offered me a good deal: Money. Lots and lots of money. Scads of Moolah. Besides, Mayfair let me sign a contract that says I can leave the game whenever I want.

STAR SPANGLED BANTER

I am pleased to see that you are finally receiving the recognition you deserve. I feel that role-playing is a very special institution in our fine country. I did it and look where it got me. Heh heh.

Seriously, I think that you are one of the finest examples of Heroic Americanism that our people can look up to today.

I'm sorry. I've just been informed that this was supposed to be a letter to Superman.

Never Mind.

Ronald Reagan
Washington, DC

Hey, Ronbo, at least the thought was there. A lot of people have been getting me and Supes confused lately. I figure the only way to stop this problem is to have everyone wear the same costume. That way it won't matter.

LUPUS FAMILIARUS?

What is Lon Chaney, Jr. like?

Jerry O'Malley
Dolton, Illinois

Much hairier.

SEW WHAT?!

Okay, I'll buy the fact that Ma and Pa Kent convinced baby Kal-El to use his Heat Vision on the blanket that he was wrapped in as he rocketed from Krypton to make his Super Suit, but what did he use for thread?

"T.M. Maple"
Address withheld
by request

Hey, T.M., nice to see you could make it in the game, although it isn't really you. Still, a good point. Any answers from the readers?

BACK IN TIME

The myriad things you can do in your little cosmos of a game are far beyond the scope of human understanding. You perpetrate actions in your game impossible to do in the comic books.

A second point: If you actually could go back in time and change events around, no matter what you did, there would be no changes — otherwise the circumstances of your going back would be changed and most likely you wouldn't have been able to go back.

It seems to be a grandiose inconvenience to no avail. Please alleviate my quandary or you may become the recipient of billions and billions of retaliatory letters from the scientific community at large.

Carl Sage
Boston, Massachusetts

Hey Carl, lighten up! A lot of people do a lot of things for nothing. The trick is to have fun while you're doing it.

DOUBLE VISION?

Ever wonder how come you never see Clark Kent and Superman together?

Jerry O'Malley
Dolton, Illinois

You never see Lois Lane and Jonni DC together either. Makes you think, don't it?

GOOD EVENING

Two questions:

1. How come you never see Jimmy Olsen and Alfred Hitchcock together?
2. How do the Gadgetry rules work?

Jerry O'Malley
Dolton, Illinois

Jer, yer gettin' to be a real pain. Anyway:

- 1.) *You've got it, they're the same person.*
- 2.) *Randomly.*

TALES FROM DARKSEID

I know that you're basically infallible and I feel like a low-down slug's navel for asking but on those rare occasions when something comes up that you can't handle, what do you do?

Please don't hit me for asking.

Darkseid
Apokolips

Hey, relax! I'm here so I can answer your questions. I wouldn't hit you unless I really felt like it.

Anyway, on those rare occasions when I find something I can't handle, I go to my old buddy, Clark Kent at the Daily Planet. He's such a swell, mild-mannered guy that he can't help but be a help, if you know what I mean.

TH-TH-THAT'S ALL, FOLKS!

You have made light of me too often, both in your mini-series and in the letter above.

It will not be pleasant when I catch up with you.

Menacingly,

Darkseid
Apokolips
(and getting closer)

Oops! Well, that's all the time we have today! Gotta go!

a candid conversation with the charismatic hero about "what it takes" and, for the first time anywhere, the true details of his dramatic secret origin

His public life is a matter of record. Years ago, back when comic books only cost twelve cents, Irwin Schwab decided to become a "bad guy" for the fun of it, proving the theory that if you give an idiot a costume and a gimmick, he's going to make himself a pain to the world at large. Ambush Bug was born.

His first act as a villain was the murder of then-Metropolis District Attorney Syms but it was done in fun and nobody ever checked to see if he was really dead. After a battle with Superman and the New Doom Patrol, Schwab was captured and put into Metropolis State Prison.

After a few weeks in prison, Schwab got bored. He escaped.

He saw, teleported to, and landed on Superman just as Superman was about to pierce the time barrier for a mission into the 30th Century. Superman, realizing that he couldn't watch the Bug and take care of his mission, decided to drop him off in the 30th Century where he could be held by the Legion of Super-Heroes.

Unfortunately, the Legion was out at the moment. Instead of piercing the time barrier again to take the Bug to a point in time when the Legion would be at home, Superman entrusted Ambush Bug to the Legion of Substitute-Heroes, decidedly a bad move.

Ambush Bug escaped (of course) and romped through the 30th Century until he was recaptured by Superman and taken back to 20th-Century Metropolis. The Bug was placed back into Metropolis State Prison where he caused so much trouble he was transferred to Joliet State Penitentiary.

He escaped in transit and wound up in Chicago, where he turned over a new leaf: he wanted to be a hero. This way, he could "get to do the same neat stuff as before, only now it's legal!"

He beat up a litterbug and tied up a man for smoking a cigar in an elevator that was clearly marked "No Smoking."

Supergirl, in one of her more daring adventures, recaptured Ambush Bug who was then sent to Arkham Asylum in Gotham. Note that after mistaking Supergirl for Superman (a neat trick in itself), Ambush Bug needed a lot of convincing to accept that they were two different people. However, after once dealing with Supergirl and then meeting Linda Danvers, Ambush Bug saw right away that they were one and the same person.

At Arkham, under the care of noted psychiatrist Dr. Derwood Denton, Ambush Bug caused more problems than any other patient there. He had the entire ward join in on slave chants. He made legal requests for more shock therapy. He

arrested the Joker (who was on the verge of being cured) seventeen times.

He told the patients that they were okay and that the staff was nuts and he almost had some of the staff members convinced. The straw that broke the camel's back was what he did to Dr. Denton with the fire hose.

At his review, the board of directors unanimously voted for Ambush Bug's release, against the wishes of Dr. Denton. Denton resigned and became the host of "Mental Health Minutes."

Ambush Bug returned to Metropolis where he opened a store-front hero for hire/detective organization.

Assigned to interview him by the Daily Planet, Clark Kent visited Ambush Bug and was revealed by the Bug as being Superman within a few minutes of their meeting. Bug told his origin for the first time but it didn't make too much sense, so it has largely been ignored.

While trying to fix one of his bugs used as a teleportation receiving device, Ambush Bug short-circuited the device which exploded, fusing all the power into the Ambush Bug suit.

The suit turned black for a while, then regained its normal green color.

Ambush Bug told his origin a second time to Superman but it still didn't make



"So Supes and I, we go after Luthor and Brainiac right out. Kid gloves off. It was rough; I pulled his fat outta the fire more than once. It turned out okay in the end. We're gonna team up again sometime."



"Being a real-life person in the comics isn't as easy as it seems. Your money's no good and the people are just so two-dimensional. It's not all fun and games. Kids, don't try this at home."



"The most important thing for any hero to remember is what he or she represents. For a very close friend of mine, it's Truth, Justice, and the American Way. For me it's anchovy pizzas and a Yoo Hoo."

too much sense. It, too, has been largely been ignored.

Ambush Bug somehow got the idea that he could make money in the comic book industry. He approached a number of heroes with an idea about creating a book, irritating a number of heroes and being refused by all of them.

To make up for angering Superman, Ambush Bug took a rare, glowing gem that he had found and had it polished and set into a necklace which he gave to Superman.

Unfortunately, the rare, glowing gem was Red Kryptonite. Ambush Bug and Superman switched bodies for the next forty-eight hours, leaving Superman held prisoner by his robot guards in his Fortress of Solitude and allowing Ambush Bug to negotiate Superman's contract with DC Comics' Executive Vice-President and later battling Kobra.

Ambush Bug is still running his hero for hire and detective operation but most of his energies are going towards trying to get DC to give him his own regular series.

Always looking out for a good story, Fanmag sent golden-pen interviewer William F. Buckwheat to corner Ambush Bug for a week of intense conversation.

Buckwheat returned, enthusiastically commenting on his usual brilliance in interviewing. Around the office there were whispers of the Nobel Prize for Literature or at the very least a Pulitzer.

"Ambush Bug was good, too," he said.

FANMAG: You have, on a number of occasions, spoken to those members of herodum such as the editors at DC Comics, Captain Charisma, and, of course, Superman, about your secret origin. However, none of these tales has been believable in the slightest.

BUG: Well, yeah, Bill. I figure that if you're gonna call it a secret origin, you should keep it a secret. I mean, look at what happened to Superman — he tells everyone that he comes from Krypton and every cheap hood on Earth gets a hunk of Kryptonite to nail him. That's why I've kept my origin a secret.

FANMAG: Until now.

BUG: Right. The good people at Fanmag are paying me mucho dinero for this, so I'm gonna make it worth their while. If you sit up straight, I'll tell you. Okay, it all started on a dark and lonely night when I saw this flash (continued on page 45)

THE REAL STORY

by Robert Loren Fleming

We learned Robert Loren Fleming, scripter of the Ambush Bug comic book, would sell the true story of Ambush Bug's origin for about one-third of what Ambush Bug wanted. So we stopped payment on Ambush Bug's check and went with Fleming's information as follows.

Ambush Bug

He was born Irwin Schwab. Abandoned by his parents as a tiny tot, he was raised by an Admiral solid-state television set. It taught him to relax. In other cultures, this is known as brain-death but for Irwin, it was only the beginning.

It really began on a distant planet in a distant solar system. The planet Schwab was a world rich in natural resources and soda fountains. The people of Schwab were very advanced culturally and held awards ceremonies much like Earth's Oscars or Emmys on an almost daily basis. Brum-El was for three-years-running the recipient of the Ir-Win Award as Schwab's Best-Dressed Man.

One fateful day, Brum-El received a galactic chain letter. Thinking it to be fan mail from some flounder, Brum-El discarded it. Bad move! He lived to regret his mistake.

The headlines were brutal: "Brum-El Breaks Chain, Dooms Planet!" and "Brum-El to Blame, Cosmic Jerk!" Brum-El realized too late that he should have heeded the example of the last man who broke the chain — Dr. Jor-El of Krypton.

Brum-El retired to his laboratory and quickly constructed a rocketship. It was a one-seater and it would serve to carry a select member of Brum-El's beloved family to safety. But who would he choose? His wife Larda? Or maybe his son, Mon-Grel? Brum-El decided to save his prized wardrobe instead.

Soon the ensembles were spinning to safety. Brum-El, naked but happy, breathed a sigh of relief. If only he had known! Deep in far-out outer space, his little capsule was even then being bitten by a gigantic, radioactive space spider!

The frightened young rocketship limped pitifully into the gravitational

pull of the planet Earth. There it sputtered through the atmosphere and into the skies over a city called Metropolis, searching for a home for its cargo of suits and slacks.

At last, the tiny ship spotted what it took to be a familiar object... a wire hanger! Not as good as a wooden hanger, of course, but it would have to do! The resultant crash-landing destroyed the rocketship itself, as well as the television aerial that it had mistaken for a clothes hanger.

Several floors below, the screen of the Admiral solid-state television set went blank for the first time in Irwin Schwab's twenty-one years. He became an orphan.

Unable to think of anything better to do, Irwin climbed to the roof to investigate. There he found the rocketship and all of its contents destroyed, except for one article of clothing... a very special green suit. Irwin was basically suitless but he had always wanted one. So he decided to adopt the little uniform as though it were his own.

Since his TV was broken anyway, Irwin made up his mind to brave the written word. No longer dependent on television news shows for his information, he became truly informed for the first time in his life.

What Irwin discovered crushed him: riots, murder, drugs, nuclear war, and teenage hitchhikers. Real life, Irwin realized, was very much like the ABC Movie of the Week. If only he could have turned back the clock, but it was too late. Irwin had become politically aware. It was very scary and there was no place to hide.

Then one day, in a drugstore, Irwin spotted his first rack of comic books. His life was about to change forever! He sifted through the comic books, but it didn't take him long to find one that featured his favorite television hero, Superman.

Irwin looked no further. Grabbing up the issue, he paid for it at the check out counter and ran home to read his new-found source of knowledge: *Lois Lane* #48.

This classic issue took Lois back in time to impersonate three of her

favorite heroines of the past: Helen of Troy, Cinderella, and Florence Nightingale. Irwin read the comic seven or eight times. He put it down on the floor and rolled on it. He ran the newsprint over his face. He threw the book up and caught it, read it aloud to his goldfish, and took it to Phoenix on vacation. He still has it (although it's now in liquid form).

That seemingly-simple comic book changed Irwin Schwab's life forever! If Lois Lane could become Cinderella, then why couldn't he become Superman? He put on his special green suit and wished with all his might to be in a comic book.

Suddenly, with a noise just like a cork exploding from a champagne bottle, Irwin's incredible wish came true! He wasn't Superman but he was the first real, live person ever to enter a comic book! From that moment on, Irwin became a knight-errant.

He dedicated himself to the never-ending battle for truth, justice, and the almighty buck. No longer was he the puny, apathetic Irwin Schwab but instead, live from the real world, he was... **Ambush Bug!**

— Fleming

OH, HO?

Guest Editorial by Irwin Schwab

I'm working with this new word processor, so if anything weird happens, bear with mn p i ur edoo nxxx xna qwerty lskdjncp noebiskn oBA:bcpbbc;ah wwncoabao11

Warning:

You have just entered the mainframe sequence to activate NORAD's **Doomsday Weapon**. Bits of this planet will explode in three minutes.

Have a Nice Day.

Oops.

Anyway, I've been getting a lot of flack lately and I don't like it. So what if I'm a real person who found a way into a comic book? I bet any of you would do it if you could. And if you wouldn't, you wouldn't see me complaining that you were a prisonguard, a raw-sewage recycler, or a lawyer.

Okay, so I would complain if you were a game designer but that's different. Like, take now for instance. I just got word on the news Socorro, New Mexico just got vaporized. I bet in two seconds... yep, there's the doorbell. Hold on for a minute...

Just as I thought. Three review copies of three different games based on one little city being vaporized.

I tell you, if it wasn't for the money, I'd complain.

AMBUSH BUG▷ *a real hero's hero*

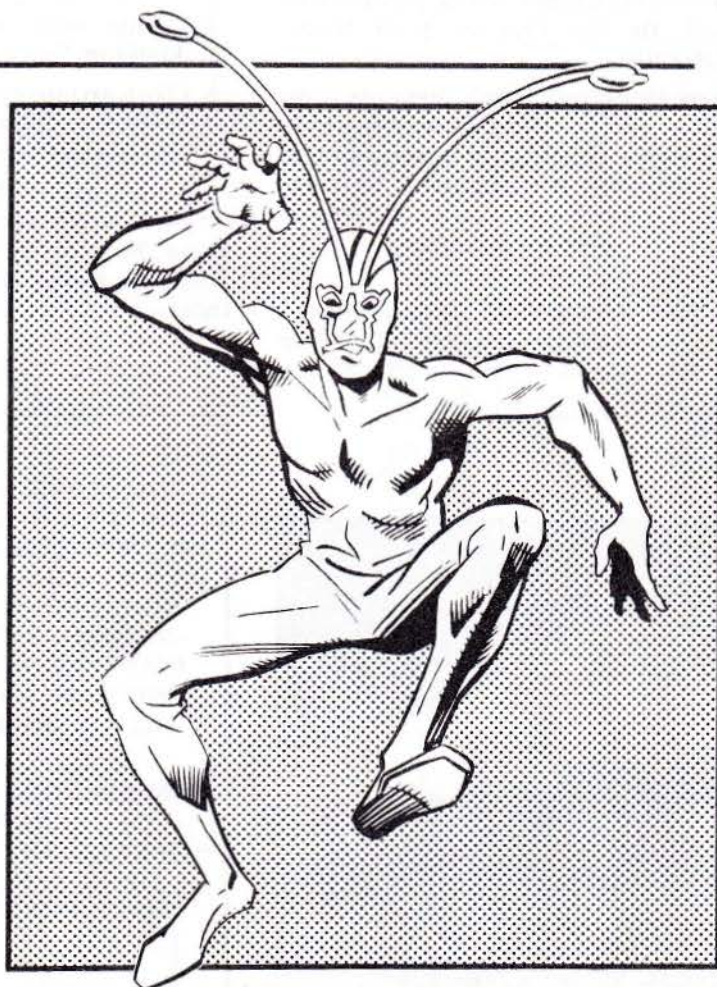
Ambush Bug is 5'11", weighs 138 lbs., and was born on April 19, 1962 in Hoboken, New Jersey. His favorite food is pizza. His favorite drink is Yah Hah but if he drinks more than one, he turns into a raving maniac. He has been known to slap together a nasty-good goulash.

Ambush Bug's power is the ability to teleport anywhere at will. This power is contained within his suit, which he never takes off (the zipper is stuck). He utters a distinctive battle cry — "Whoop! Whoop!" — but only on the days after he has made his goulash.

Ambush Bug is fearless, mainly because he knows that nothing bad can happen to him because he is only a comic book character. He is also inquisitive, friendly, kindhearted, and extremely proud. Contrary to popular belief, he is not crazy.

In fact, Ambush Bug has a theory that people who think him crazy are actually insane themselves. Do you believe that he's crazy?

Think about it.



Hey Kids!

Show everyone on the block how amazingly American you can be! Sell **OAT!** The American family newspaper for all True American Families.

- **Win Prizes!**
- **Make Money!**
- **Find New Friends!**

That's right! You can do that and more if you sell **OAT!** And just take a gander at these swell Prizes!

Bicycles! Race with your friends! Deliver more papers! Sell 100,000 papers and it's yours!

Greeting Cards! Sure, they already have signatures in them, but what the hey! Maybe one of them has a famous person's autograph! Never know. Just 25,000 papers for a set of ten.

Model Airplanes! Spend four hours putting these together and the rest of your life trying to find a place to keep them! Made out of real plastic! 1,000,000 papers will get you this item.

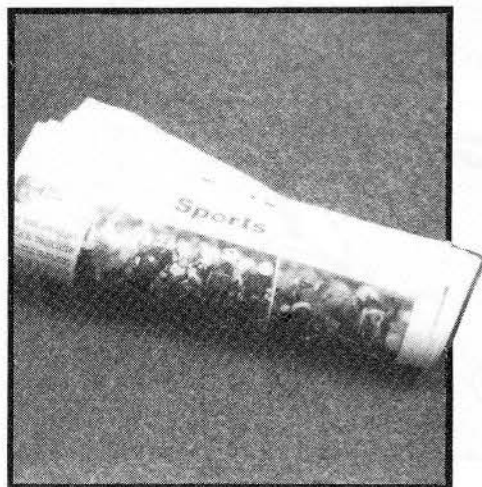
Time Machine! Change the course of human history! Impress girls! Only 4,000,000 papers are all you have to sell. Be the first on your block. Literally!

Sea Monkeys! Watch them eat each other and die of indigestion! Discover the true meaning of power as you drop pretty colored rocks on their little colonies and destroy millions! Only 50 papers per monkey.

Just send your name and address to us and we'll send you your first four million copies of **OAT!** Act now!

Offer not available in certain Communist countries

Hurry!



How to Really Use This Book

This book can be used in so many ways, it boggles the mind.

Sure, you can use it to play a really fun game, and sure, I can use it as a source of added income, but what else can be done with it?

Here are a few ideas:

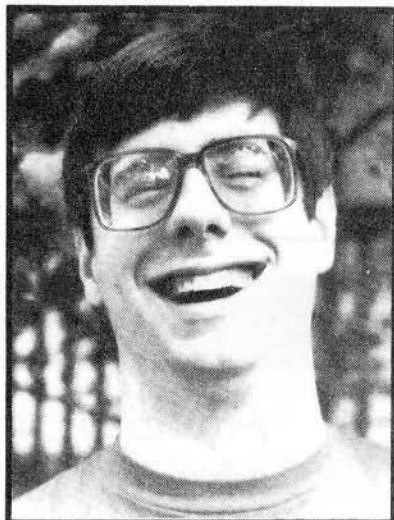
- 1.) After removing the staples, this book can be used to make ten paper airplanes.
- 2.) Rolled up, this book can be used to swat the noses of naughty animals. In the case of small insects, this may be fatal. However, on larger animals (dogs, cats, etc.) this proves to be an excellent training device, prolonging the life of your carpet and furniture, and avoiding nasty odors around the house. Swatting animals larger than yourself with this book is not recommended.
- 3.) In liquid form, this book makes dandy papier-mache sculptures.
- 4.) This book makes excellent kindling. Prove it to your folks!
- 5.) Torn up into itty-bitty pieces, this book can be used as confetti at parties and parades.

Excited about all these ideas, but afraid to wreck a perfectly wonderful game? No problem! Run back to your comic or hobby shop and buy two, three, or four more copies!

NEXT MONTH



TALK TO ME



GORDEN

"TALK TO ME" — SUPERMAN AND THE OTHER BIG GUYS GIVE THEIR IMPRESSIONS OF AMBUSH BUG AND SOME STARTLING REVELATIONS ON HERO-LIFE IN GENERAL. A SUPERBLY PULSE-POUNDING ARTICLE, BUT THIS ONE SURE WASN'T WRITTEN BY **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

"20 QUESTIONS: GREG GORDEN" — THE LANKY GAME DESIGNER SPEAKS OUT ON CREATIVITY, LAZER PLAY, AND THOSE GHASTLY GADGETRY RULES

"EDITORS OF MAYFAIR" — COMBINE ENGLISH SKILLS AND GOOD LOOKS AND WHAT DO YOU GET? NOT THESE GUYS! A GREAT ONE TO MISS

TERRIBLY STUPID RULES — A DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE PROS ABOUT WHAT'S RIGHT AND WHAT'S WRONG IN TODAY'S ROLE—PLAYING GAME MARKET

PLUS: LOTS OF STUFF ABOUT WHICH WE SIMPLY DON'T HAVE THE SPACE TO PRINT OR THE INCLINATION TO WRITE

How to Use This Book

This book is divided into four sections: GM's Introduction, Characters, Encounters, and Places. In any of these sections, text in *italics* is to be read to the players.

Gamemaster's Introduction

The Gamemaster's Introduction provides the Gamemaster with the background needed to run the adventure.

Characters

This section contains information about the major characters, both Player and Non-Player, involved in the adventure. Heroes and villains which appear in the Gamemaster's Manual only give Hero Points and information; the basic abilities are the same as given in the Gamemaster's Manual. In addition, the information which can be obtained from each Non-Player character appears here.

Encounters

The DC Heroes Role Playing system is based on encounters. That is, the players go from situation to situation instead of location to location, as in other Role Playing games. Each encounter is broken up into at least three sections: Setup, Players Information, and GM Information. When necessary there will also be Troubleshooting, Rules sections, and/or Sidebars to help the GM run the game.

Places

Descriptions and maps pertaining to the encounters are in this section. Brief descriptions including game statistics are provided.

A Note on the Module Difficulty Rating System

Each module which Mayfair will publish will have a estimate on the power of characters. This estimate will be in form stating **For 5-7 Characters Generated using 1000-2000 Hero Points.**

To determine whether your characters will be powerful enough to use the module, add up the number of Hero Points needed to generate the Attributes, Powers, and Skills of the character, including those Powers and Attributes in special equipment that are unable to be pur-

chased. The Batman Option and Link Costs are ignored. Add the banked Hero Points and the amount of Hero Points spent for equipment and labs.

Compare the Hero Point levels to the bracket amounts given. If the average character in your team falls within the bracket, the module will likely be a good challenge for them. Having several characters one or even two brackets below the stated bracket will be all right if there are a couple characters above the bracket.

Brackets	Typical Groups or Characters
250-500	Beginning Level Characters
500-1000	The New Teen Titans without Raven and Kid Flash
1000-2000	The New Teen Titans with Raven and Kid Flash
2000-4000	Justice League without Superman
4000-8000	Justice League with Superman
8000-16000	Wonder Woman
16000+	Superman

ABBREVIATIONS

AP	Attribute Point
AURA	Aura Attribute
AV	Acting Value
BODY	Body Attribute
DEX	Dexterity Attribute
EV	Effect Value
GM	Gamemaster
INFL	Influence Attribute
INT	Intelligence Attribute
MIND	Mind Attribute
NA	Not Applicable
NPC	Non-Player Character
OV	Opposing Value
RAP	Result Attribute Point
RV	Resistance Value
SPIRIT	Spirit Attribute
STR	Strength Attribute
WILL	Willpower Attribute

Warning!! Gamemasters: This is not a normal module! Expect bizarre silliness.



Look Here

Attach Antenna Here

Attach Antenna Here

Cut Out Here

Use Tape Here

Cut Out Here

Use Tape Here

Cut Out Here

0986-218MFG7.00



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Cut Out Eyes (If You Really Want To)

Special Section by
Robert Loren Fleming®

Look Here



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