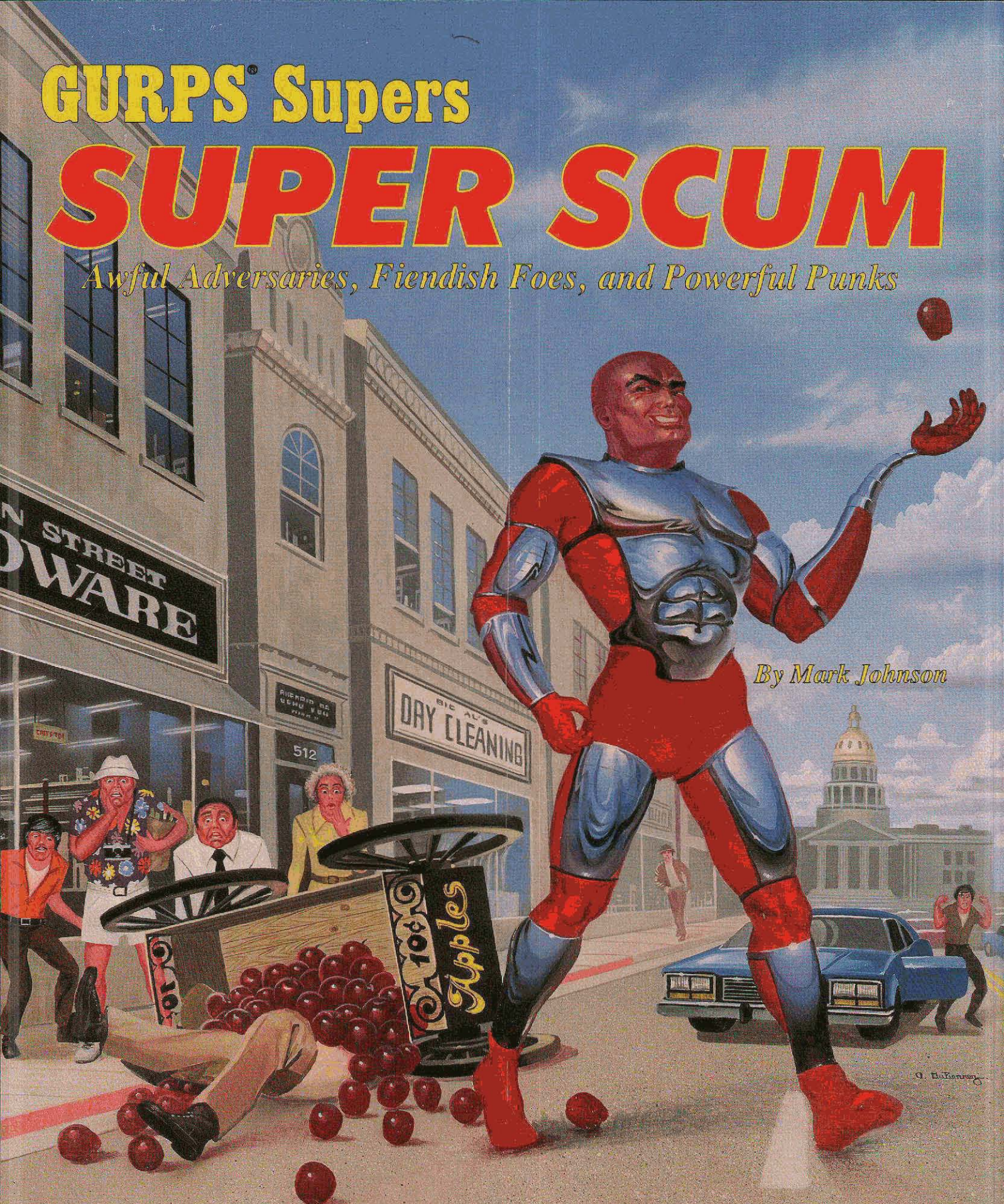


GURPS® Supers

SUPER SCUM

Awful Adversaries, Fiendish Foes, and Powerful Punks

By Mark Johnson



STEVE JACKSON GAMES

GURPS® Supers SUPER SCUM

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Additional Material by Ron Bailey, Jr. and Sean T. DeLap

Edited by Loyd Blankenship and Steve Jackson

Cover by Alan Gutierrez

Interior Art by Doug Shuler

GURPS System Design by Steve Jackson

Loyd Blankenship, Managing Editor; Charlie Wiedman, Art Director

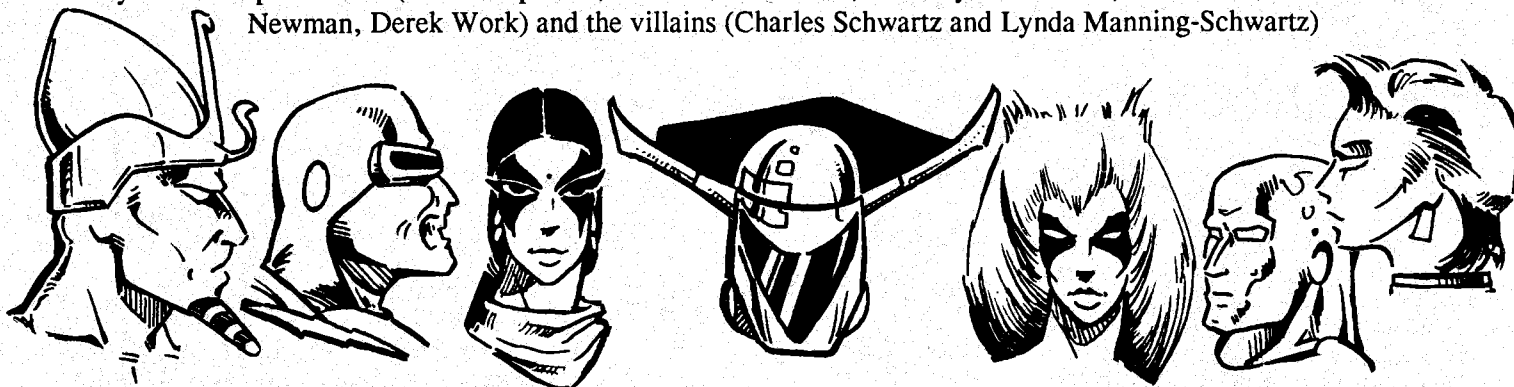
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Production by Carl Manz and Charlie Wiedman

Proofreading by Ingrid Kunze

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Playtesters: Super NOVA (Glenn Copeland, Thomas Kassebaum, Timothy Kassebaum, Rick Klaw, Chad Knox, Dave Newman, Derek Work) and the villains (Charles Schwartz and Lynda Manning-Schwartz)



INTRODUCTION	2
Character Writeups	2
It's Your Game	3
Running a Super Combat	3
Thugs	3

CHARACTERS	4
Black Moon Society	4
Howard Vinewood (500 points)	4
Blaze (500 points)	6
Cascade (500 points)	8
Corsair (500 points)	10
Deadly Dozen (n/a)	12
Doctor Radiation (1000 points)	14
Dominator (750 points)	16
Domino (500 points)	18
Electra (500 points)	20
Erik Bloodaxe (500 points)	22
High Assassins of the Nimba Cult (150 points)	24
Hydra (500 points)	26

Mastabah (750 points)	28
Mirage (500 points)	30
Predator (750 points)	32
Professor Possessor (500 points)	34
Red Tempest (750 points)	36
Rictus (500 points)	38
Soul Ripper (500 points)	40
Sponge (500 points)	42
Talon (500 points)	44
Tele-Fist (500 points)	46
Thunderbolt (500 points)	48
T.R.A.D.E. (150 points)	50
Ventura (500 points)	52
Voltmaster (750 points)	54
Warmonger (500 points)	56
The Pride	58
Citrakaya (500 points)	58
Snow Leopard (500 points)	58
Tigress (500 points)	59
Pride Mansion	62
The Exchange	64

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

INTRODUCTION

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

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BBS. For those of you who have home computers, SJ Games operates a BBS with discussion areas for several games, including *GURPS*. Much of the playtest feedback for new products comes from the BBS. It's up 24 hours per day at 512-447-4449, at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud. Give us a call!

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* — e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any reference that begins with a SU refers to *GURPS Supers*.

About the Author

Mark Johnson is a graduate student in Aerospace Engineering at the University of Texas, Austin. He is one of the original playtesters for *GURPS Supers*, and runs his Super NOVA campaign at the University Gaming Society. This is Mark's first published work — but he's already working on a book of heroic supers as a companion to *Super Scum*.

Comic books change villains more casually than most people change socks — every month there's a new bad guy. But working up new villains for *GURPS Supers* isn't just a matter of picking the color for his long johns! A good foe should be carefully thought out and written up, taking time for even the most experienced players. Creating an interesting antagonist is a labor of love. But what if the GM needs another foe *quickly*?

The answer is here! *Super Scum* presents 27 adversaries, four organizations, sample thugs, plot devices to bring different foes together in a logical fashion, and a separate write-up of a powerful villain group.

The Character Descriptions

Skills: Modifiers due to advantages and disadvantages have not been included in the skill levels; the GM decides when a particular modifier actually applies. TL of skills is assumed to be 7 unless noted otherwise.

Disadvantages: Many characters have an Enemy disadvantage that refers to a group of supers. Assigning a PC group as this disadvantage provides a good rivalry as well as a start for many adventures. Otherwise it can be represented by an NPC group, possibly an International Super Team (see p. SU99).

Most villains are known by the general public to be lawbreakers, which earns them a bad Reputation. If the villain has a secret identity, the effects of the Reputation do not carry over into the "normal" persona unless he or she is a known criminal, too. Even though the Reputation only applies to a portion of the character's life, its value is not reduced.

Super-Abilities: Single-skill powers are indicated by an asterisk to the left of the entry; the cost for the power is computed at the single-skill rate for that skill.

Campaign Role: This section presents a few ideas about how to interweave the lives of supers on either side of the law. In most cases this involves the enemy's non-super identity, a side that is sometimes overlooked. Whether the opponents are as nasty without their costumes as on the battlefield depends on the individual and the GM.

Power Variations: Most of the characters presented in this book are built using 500 points — that's what most heroes in a four-color game begin with, too. Each description gives brief notes how to downgrade or upgrade the villains. Low-value supers are more often used for a "realistic" *Supers* game, but the higher totals aren't restricted to high-power games. In fact, it may be a good idea to pit 750-point villains against 500-point heroes on a regular basis. Why? Because heroes sometimes outnumber the villains, and even if they don't, the GM is at a tactical disadvantage trying to intelligently run six different opponents while maintaining the flow of the adventure.

If an attribute level is changed, assume that all related skills change as well unless otherwise noted. In all cases it may be assumed that if a villain does not possess any Damage Resistance he or she will wear standard Kevlar armor, probably a concealable vest, while in costume.

It's Your Game

As the GM, you may change the enemies' character sheets or backgrounds in any way you like. With some modifications (to the disadvantages, at least) you can even turn some into heroes! Some backgrounds specify a city where the foe usually conducts his or her activities but these can be changed to bring favorite opponents within your PC's territory. Or leave things the way they are and draw

the heroes to the villains. A group of supers may have special vehicles, use standard forms of transportation, or use their own abilities to reach a new locale.

Then there's the element of surprise. Ideally, the players will have never seen more than these two pages of *Super Scum*. Encounters are much more exciting when the players don't know exactly what powers their opponents have, especially defenses, because an energy blast that would stun a brick may kill a psi. Until they determine the villains' limits, true heroes must exercise restraint.

If the players have seen the adversary's character sheet (maybe they bought their own copy of *Super Scum*), it's not a bad idea to throw them a curve. The simplest adjustment is to alter the power level of the foe. Adding a few different enhanced or limited super-skills under an existing power can greatly change the way a villain is played. Or just switch appearances with another villain!

Running a Super Combat

GURPS Supers gives you a choice of two types of reality. There's the one in which most of us live, where if someone can lift a tank, his punch will kill. Then there's comic book reality, where that same punch will hurt and knock the recipient back but won't do mortal injury. Straight *GURPS* rules from the *Basic Set* describe the former type and the optional rules listed on pp. SU86-87 give the latter. It is suggested that *Stun Damage* or *Damage Reduction* be used when playing the four-color sort of campaign that best suits these opponents.

When using these optional rules, don't let the players forget that the blows still hurt. Just because they can't accidentally kill the villains doesn't mean the heroes have carte blanche to blast away.

Run Away! Run Away!

Not every villains will fight until he drops — far from it. When the tide turns against them, most are smart enough to attempt an escape. At this point the GM must be clever and authoritative, especially if the plot of the adventure doesn't call for that foe to be captured just yet!

First, of course, many villains will have made contingency plans for getting away. They will have arranged a distraction (possibly involving huge amounts of property damage), or an unusual means of escape, or unexpected (perhaps super) reinforcements! This is the "fairest" way for a GM to make sure a foe escapes, because it is pre-planned.

But improvising can be fun, for the villain and for the GM. A fiendish foe can get away, even if his pursuers are faster. Ruthlessness can make up for a lack of speed — tossing a bus toward a crowd of bystanders will occupy the heroes!

Or the heroes may not be able to pursue their opponents for other reasons — perhaps a fire started during the battle and they must help put it out or save lives.

But sometimes the supers will be clever or lucky enough to overcome all obstacles . . . and your metavillain is up against the wall. When you, as the GM, definitely need the villain to escape but the PCs just aren't cooperating, you have two choices. You can always simply let the villain be captured and change your adventure accordingly.

Or, if that won't work, you may improvise one further distraction or gimmick to aid the getaway, and simply tell the players "He got away." If it's made clear to the players *beforehand* that this phrase is used sparingly for dramatic reasons they shouldn't cause trouble. However, when you award character points, be generous. Reward them for performing well enough that they *should* have caught the foe if Fate hadn't intervened, and for being good sports about it.

And don't forget that the players expect to put some bad guys behind bars from time to time. Let them. It's a good cap for an adventure, and it doesn't have to be permanent; remember that villains tend to break out (or to be freed) from their super prison. Then it will be time to call for the heroes once again!

Cannon Fodder

Any low-powered underling, regardless of his social status, may be called a "thug." These poor souls are hopelessly outmatched versus a super opponent, much less several of them. Never expect a "normal" to be more than a nuisance. If it happens, great, but the primary job of a thug is to occupy the heroes' time and energy while the real villains prepare for battle or make their escape.)

However, normal opponents can make a better showing if they play it smart. First of all, they should gang up on the supers. Many heroes are designed with a Super Block or Parry as their principal defense. Once those are used up in a turn, the hero must fall back on his Dodge, which may be lower. If a thug's punch could actually hurt his opponent, try some All-Out Attacks!

Utilize cover if launching a ranged attack, or the Retreating rules (p. B109) if in hand-to-hand combat. Remember that thugs can use the same dirty tricks that villains do, like endangering bystanders. Finally, entering Close Combat with a super might be suicide, but it will often prevent the super from doing much else.

Sample Thugs

ST 11 (10 points)	IQ 10 (0 points)
DX 12 (20 points)	HT 11 (10 points)
Speed: 5.75	Move: 7

Advantages:

- Combat Reflexes
- High Pain Threshold
- Toughness DR +1

Disadvantage:

- Duty: To employer on 12 or less

Skills: see below

Street Thug

Blackjack-14; Brawling-14; Guns (.45)-15; Running-10; Shadowing-10; Stealth-13; Streetwise-10

Damage: Blackjack 1d-1; Punch 1d-2; Kick 1d; Pistol 2d

Military Thug

Brawling-14; First Aid-11; Guns (.45)-15; Guns (M-16)-15; Running-10

Damage: Punch 1d-2; Kick 1d; Pistol 2d; Rifle 5d

Martial Arts Thug

Acrobatics-12; Karate-12; Running-10; Stealth-13; Bow-12 or Judo-12 or Staff-12

Damage: Karate 1d-1 punch, 1d+1 kick; Bow 1d+2 imp; Staff 1d+3

For a more powerful "normal" martial artist, see the 200-point version of the Nimba Assassin, p. 24.

BLACK MOON SOCIETY

Howard Vinewood

ST 11 (10 points) IQ 15 (60 points)

DX 13 (30 points) HT 11 (10 points)

Speed: 6.00 Move: 6

Damage: Flame Jet 6d+1; Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+1

Appearance: Male, white, age 43, 5' 0", 185 lbs., brown hair, blue eyes.

Advantages:

Charisma +1 (5 points)

Status 1 (0 points, due to wealth)

Wealthy (20 points)

Disadvantages:

Bully (-10 points)

Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)

Fanaticism (-15 points)

Megalomania (-10 points)

Secret: Identity (-10 points)

Secret: Involvement with Black Moon Society (-10 points)

Power and Super-Skills:

Magic Power 10 (200 points)

Confuse-15 (12 points)

Drain Attribute (IQ)-17 (20 points)

Flame Jet-15 (20 points)

Illusion-15 (12 points)

Mind Shield-15 (12 points)

Whirlwind-13 (12 points)

Super Equipment:

Cloak:

(Breakable: DR 1, HT 10 -15%; Can Be Hit: -6 -10%; Can Be Stolen: Contest of ST -30%; total 149 points)

Darkness Power 8

Animate Shadow-16

Blind-16

Create Darkness-16

* Teleport Power 10

Autoteleport-16

Gauntlets:

(Breakable: DR 6, HT 30 -15%; Can Be Hit at -6 -10%; Can Be Stolen: Contest of ST -30%; total 149 points)

Enhanced ST 140

* Vibration Power 1

Buzzsaw-16 (No Concentration)

Headpiece:

(Breakable: DR 6, HT 15 -15%; Can Be Hit at -6 -10%; Can Be Stolen: Contest of DX -15%; total 150 points)

Telepathy Power 9

Mental Blow-20

Mind Shield-16

Telecontrol-20

Telereceive-20

Ring:

(Breakable: DR 2, HT 5 -15%, Can Be Hit at -6 -10%, 150 points)

DR +10

PD +6



Wand:

(Breakable: DR 4, HT 20 -15%; Can Be Hit at -6 -10%; Can Be Stolen: Contest of DX -15%; total 149 points)

* Psychokinesis Power 20

Telekinesis-19 (No Concentration)

Skills:

Accounting-15 (4 points); Administration-15 (2 points); Computer Operations-15 (1 point); Leadership-15 (2 points); Research-16 (4 points); Sport (Golf)-14 (4 points); Strategy-14 (2 points)

Quirks:

Prefers trendy, imported beer

Avid golfer

Has his eye on his rival to the immediate north

Disgusted by fantasy fiction

Does not watch television

History

In 1934 Randall Banks was searching his attic for something — anything — that he could sell. Like many others during the Great Depression, he was out of work and needed the money. At the bottom of the trunk he found a curious old book with a tooled leather cover bearing a strange design. Intrigued, he opened it but found that the pages were blank. No one would buy an empty book; Banks set it aside.

A few years later, Banks (still unemployed) read in the newspaper that a solar eclipse would take place next month. When the day came, he and several equally unemployed friends watched the scene through smoked glass. Suddenly, Banks dropped the glass, shouted and rushed upstairs. In the solar eclipse, he had recognized the design on the cover of the old book. He brought it down to show it to his friends. But now the pages were completely filled!

Now the book was interesting, written in English in an awkward but legible script. Called "The Tome of the Black Moon," it claimed to be "a guide to power, wealth and influence." The book was nothing less than a collection of magic spells and instructions for the making of enchanted items.

Banks' friends demanded a share in the book's powers, and when they threatened to reveal the secret, he had no choice. They agreed to divide the book evenly, tearing out pages until everyone had the same number. Each then went his own way, anxious to study his pages. That very night one of the mages paid some thugs to accompany him on a raid of another mage's house for more pages. This led to wars between the mages, each one employing dozens of hoods for protection.

But before long the writing on the pages began to fade, losing half its darkness each day after the eclipse. Each of the new magicians worked frantically to copy them. In their haste many spells were incorrectly recorded while others faded away before they could be transcribed. This only intensified the battles for the remaining pages, and then for the copies. Three of the new mages died in the first two weeks.

To save himself, Banks fled to California, a thousand miles away. The others saw the wisdom in this; they eventually divided the country into seven territories with ill-defined boundaries. The original mages spent their remaining years trying to increase their power, cooperating as often as they warred in the organization which came to be called the Black Moon Society.

Several mages became interested in the construction of magical items. These procedures required a number of gemstones, so the assistants were now used for robberies. Membership had grown enough for the need for definite structure in the Society — the original magicians became Master Mages, wielding complete authority. Those that they trained to follow in their footsteps were Apprentices, and the remaining members were simply called Guardians of the Black Moon.

The rise of metahuman activity was noted by the Master Mages as something to be studied but avoided — their powers were at best equal to those of many supers. But when some metahumans began to exhibit abilities that indicated magical origins, they began to imagine what could be accomplished if that mystical power could be harnessed. The northeast faction of the Black Moon Society has on several occasions captured magical supers in order to drain their enchanted energies. In most cases friends or teammates have managed to rescue the kidnapped super, but not before the power was used to create many of the most powerful amulets, cloaks and rings in the world. Three magical villains have never been seen again — there is equal speculation that they were drained to death or still lead tortured existences as the vampiric mages siphon their essences, allowing them to recover so that the process can be repeated.

Campaign Role

Any super with obviously magical powers will be of great interest to the Society. Initially he or she will be engaged in a variety of combat situations so that a Master Mage can best observe the hero's abilities. Later the Society will attempt to capture the hero in the hopes of draining away the magical power for their own purposes.

Player characters might raid a Black Moon coven in order to rescue fallen heroes, or even villains. If the rumors are true, no one deserves such a dreadful fate. Of course, it would be a good surprise for the heroes to find the villain had allied with the Black Moon, and possibly even given greater powers!

The pages of the original Tome of the Black Moon still retain their powers. They will first become barely readable a week before any solar eclipse, and will remain barely legible until a week afterwards. They will be easy to read in the period two days on either side of the eclipse. Most of those original pages still survive; they are the most precious possessions of the Mages. It is possible that the answer to some magical problem or quest might be found on one of those pages.

Personalities

Howard Vinewood is more conservative than most other Master Mages; his primary goals are to boost his own understanding of mystical lore while increasing both the quality and quantity of his Apprentices. He'd like to avoid all contact with supers if possible, but some confrontations are inevitable.

The nature of the other Master Mages and their followers is left for the GM to develop as he sees fit.

Abilities

At any moment there are seven Master Mages leading the seven covens of the Black Moon Society. The Magic Power of all Master Mages will be about the same as Howard's but access to different spells will give them different super-skills, and their professional backgrounds will inspire a different skill list.

Whether or not Howard uses all of his items depends on how strong the GM wishes him to be. Different Master Mages will almost certainly possess entirely different magical items. Note that many of the removable items will be useless to a thief as they require subvocalization of magical phrases.

Each coven uses underlings to perform dangerous missions and support the Masters in combat. Treat them as Military Thugs (see p. 3), with the same ring that a Master Mage wears. Most also wear Kevlar armor when fighting.

Battle Tactics

Despite a Master Mage's considerable power, members of the Society are quick to depart when super-opponents arrive at the scene of a crime. General troops will fight back with assault rifles and grenades while getaway transportation arrives. Howard's Flame Jet is his most offensive skill, but Confuse and Drain Attribute have proven to be effective against super foes.

Power Variations

The power of Black Moon Society members — Master Mages and the lesser ranks — is determined by the number of magical items they wield. For low-power campaigns the magical abilities of a Master Mage combined with well-armed Guardians (thugs) should present enough of a challenge. On the other hand, equipping Howard with all of his enchanted devices brings his total to almost 1,100 points. Even in this most powerful configuration, though, his powers are not designed for combat.

Blaze

ST 11 (10 points) IQ 10 (0 points)

DX 18 (125 points) HT 14 (45 points)

Speed: 8.00 Move: 19 (38 running)

Damage: Wall of Fire 7d+2; Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+1

Appearance: Male, black, age 21, 6', 170 lbs., brown hair, brown eyes, dark complexion, always smiling.

Advantages:

Appearance: Attractive (5 points)

Charisma +1 (5 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Disadvantages:

Code of Honor: Villain's (-10 points)

Duty: To the Deadly Dozen on 12 or less (-10 points)

Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)

Secret: Identity (-20 points)

Sense of Duty: To teammates (-5 points)

Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)

Social Stigma: Minority (-5 points)

Super Advantages:

Increased Speed +10 (Limited Use: 1 hour per day -4, 150 points)

Recovery (10 points)

Regeneration: Regular (25 points)

Super Running (20 points)

Super Disadvantage:

Dependency: Food, hourly (-20 points)

Power and Super-Skill:

* Heat/Fire Power 24 (120 points)

Wall of Fire-10 (Armor Piercing×2 +8, No Concentration +2; Only when Increased Speed is used -1; Touch Only -2; Only in his path -3; 1 point)

Super Equipment:

Damage Resistance +13 (65 points)

Skills:

Acrobatics-16 (1 point); Brawling-18 (1 point); Driving (Car)-17 (1 point); Gesture-11 (2 points); First Aid-10 (1 point); Hobby (Rap music)-11 (2 points); Judo-15 (½ point); Running-11 (½ point); Sport (Football)-17 (1 point); Streetwise-10 (2 points); Throwing-17 (2 points)

Quirks:

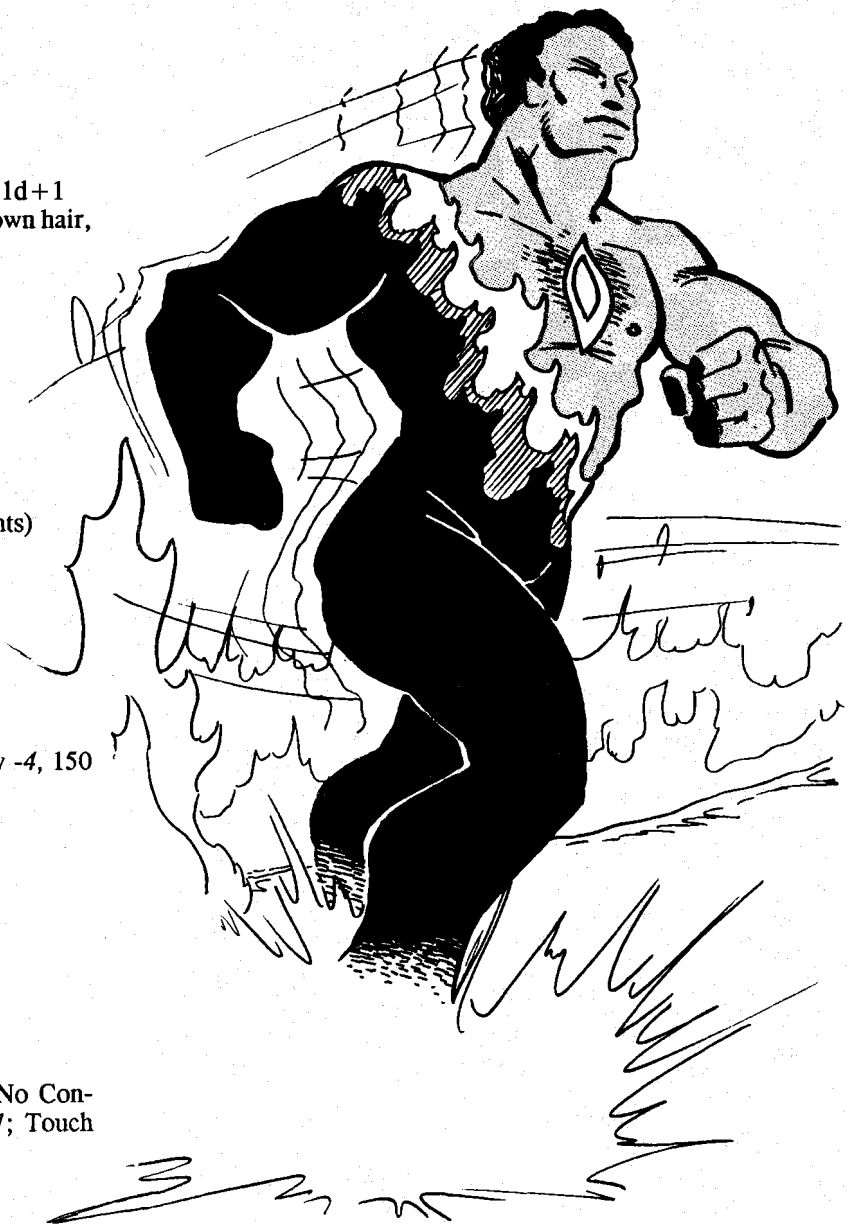
Knowledgeable, well-read sports fan who still roots for USC (boos UCLA)

Tries to impress Professor Possessor

Sends money to his mother every week (she doesn't know about Blaze)

Always wears a grin

Eats like a horse; prefers triple cheeseburger with two shakes



Story

Jack Cooper always knew he was a metahuman, even before he'd heard of the term. When playing any game or sport with the other kids on the block, he could literally run circles around them if he wanted to. But he didn't want to — it wouldn't be fun or fair. To move fast, Jack had to consciously "switch gears," so he always held back.

He didn't do very well in school but he was a great athlete, even without using his real speed. His metabolic rate was tremendously high, and by the time he was fourteen Jack had to eat all the time. His mom always sent him to school carrying a grocery bag full of sandwiches. He even had to get up to eat in the night, or pangs of hunger would keep him from sleeping.

In high school Jack was a star running back, taking his team to the Illinois State Championships three times. His academics still hadn't improved, but his football record guaranteed a shot at college. Jack chose to attend the University of Southern California, planing to be the next O.J. Simpson or Marcus Allen while enjoying the sunshine and beaches.

But his college dreams crashed to the ground when he reported to school during the summer and was asked to undergo a full physical, complete with a genetic examination for metapowers. Only normals were allowed to compete in NCAA and professional leagues, of course, but an exam was called for only when there was reason to suspect hidden abilities. Jack had been so careful — not once had he used his super abilities in competition or even practice.

Someone had ratted on him. Someone who didn't even know for sure that Jack Cooper was a super finked on the chance that they could ruin his life.

The test revealed Jack's metapowers. USC was unable to use him on the football team so revoked the scholarship. Now what could he do? All his hopes and plans had hinged on a football career.

Cooper stayed in Los Angeles and tried to get a job, but there weren't many to be had. Those that he did get rarely lasted more than a couple of months. Six months ago he was going to be a football star, but now he was preparing to register for welfare. It wasn't right! Maybe, he thought, it's time to use my power, use it to help myself. His life of crime started small, robbing convenience stores where his inhuman quickness made it child's play — he was so fast that no one could connect with a punch or gunshot. Stories of his crimes were greatly exaggerated (as such stories usually are), saying that the speedster could actually outrun bullets. Far from denying them, Cooper actually encouraged those rumors — as his reputation grew, few shop owners put up any resistance.

Becoming bolder, he robbed a bank. Police began to arrive before he got to the big money in the vault, so he only made off with what was in the teller's drawers. Not much, considering the risk, but it did give him exposure. With his confidence bolstered he registered with The Exchange, which brought him to the attention of Electra. The Deadly Dozen was undergoing a restructuring, and she had requested the assistance of The Exchange to locate suitable new members. A speedster was unusual enough to interest her — it would fill a hole in her line-up.

Jack was interested in steady work but uncertain about violence. An interview with Electra put his fears to rest. She gave him her word that she'd never force him to harm someone he didn't want to unless the fate of the entire team depended on it. That was good enough for Cooper. He didn't care for mindless violence — but he knew that a little head-bashing would come with the territory.

When he joined the Deadly Dozen, Electra gave him the name Speed Demon. But when Voltmaster tested his power, it was discovered that his skin exuded a volatile gas when running full tilt. Voltmaster rigged some simple igniters into Jack's costume, giving him the capability to leave a wall of intense flame behind him when he ran. This changed his combat role, so he underwent extensive retraining in the Dozen's facilities. To encompass both of his primary abilities, Electra renamed him Blaze. Now Blaze is a constant fixture at the Dozen's headquarters.

Campaign Role

Blaze hasn't seen his old playmates in years — one of them could have grown up to be a metahuman. Another interesting role for a PC is the anonymous tipper who told authorities of Cooper's suspected metahuman abilities. Maybe Jack was not as careful about his bursts of speed as he'd always thought. A football player on his or another team might have detected super capabilities and felt obligated to report them. Despite Blaze's calm composure he'd love to pound the face of whoever turned

him in; if he knew who it was, that person would acquire Blaze as an Enemy.

Personality

Blaze likes working with a team — it reminds him of his football days. He especially admires Professor Possessor and will try to impress him whenever possible. If it came right down to it, Blaze would follow Possessor's commands over Electra's, but the situation has never arisen.

He enjoys the challenge of combat versus supers so much that he'll be grinning from ear to ear up until someone knocks him out. Against normals he considers it unfair to use his abilities to harm them unless they've attacked first. Even then he'll limit himself to Stun attacks only.

Blaze remains an avid sports fan, never missing a televised football game. Whenever possible he will make it to the L.A. Coliseum on a weekend to watch USC or the Raiders. Blaze also enjoys basketball and baseball. Despite his great enthusiasm and offers to spot many points, none of the Dozen will agree to play one-on-one basketball in the gym, so he often heads down into the city to play in a pick-up game on city courts. He never uses his metapowers in these games — he wants to play a fair game.

Abilities

Blaze's metabolic rate gives him tremendous speed — in combat he gets three actions per turn (if this option is used, see p. SU79)! His only real attack is an indirect one — Blaze leaves a flaming wall behind him when he runs. With his incredible speed and Move he'll literally run circles around his enemies, surrounding them with multiple walls of fiery incandescence. The bursts of speed drain his energy stores rapidly, though. He must eat substantially every hour and may only use the Increased Speed for a total of one hour each day. In his 750-point version, Blaze can also spin small whirlwinds from his running path to trip up opponents. When he starts the Increased Speed a small sonic boom occurs, possibly deafening others.

Battle Tactics

If the Dozen is squaring off for an extended fight, Blaze will try to engulf all land-bound opponents in walls of fire. Mentalists are a favorite target since they represent the greatest threat to him, and their powers usually depend on line of sight which will be broken by the flaming wall.

When the Dozen has a mission objective that can be accomplished by someone on foot, usually Blaze will be chosen while the rest of the team stands guard or covers him.

In the 750-point version Blaze will not start speeding if his teammates would be affected by his sonic boom. The Whirlwind is used against low-ST, high-power opponents such as mentalists and martial artists, knocking them to the ground so that Blaze' teammates can finish them off.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower DX to 16; lower HT to 13; lower Increased Speed to +3; lower Heat/Fire Power to 18; drop Super Running; drop Damage Resistance; retain super-skill level; raise Running skill level to 14; retain all other skill levels.

750-point version: Raise Increased Speed to +21; add Air Power 3 (single-skill on Whirlwind), Whirlwind-10 (Extended Duration +4, No Concentration +2, Rapid Fire +3, Only when Increased Speed is used -1, Touch Only -2); add Sonic Power 6 (single-skill on Deafen), Deafen-18 (Area Effect +4, No Concentration +2, Only when starting the Increased Speed -4, Touch Only -2); raise Damage Resistance to +18; reduce Throwing skill level to 16.

Cascade

ST 10 (0 points) IQ 13 (30 points)
DX 15 (60 points) HT 13 (30 points)
Speed: 7.00 Move: 7 (56 swimming)

Damage: Water Cannon 7d+3; Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d

Appearance: Female, white, age 69, apparent age 32, 5' 7", 120 lbs., platinum blonde hair, white eyes, fair skin, lithe form, usually frowning.

Advantages:

Acute Taste & Smell +8 (16 points)
Combat Reflexes (15 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)
Strong Will +3 (12 points)

Disadvantages:

Alcoholism (-15 points)
Bad Temper (-10 points)
Enemy: U.S. Army on 6 or less (-15 points)
Fanaticism: Protection of the biosphere (-15 points)
No Sense of Humor (-10 points)
Poverty: Struggling (-10 points)
Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)
Vow: To avenge her death (-10 points)

Super Advantages:

Amphibious (20 points)
Body of Water (Switchable +1; Only in water -3; 32 points)
Costume (20 points)
Gills (20 points)
Invisibility (Switchable +1; Only in water -3; 32 points)
Pressure Support (20 points)
Super SwimmingX3 (45 points)

Powers and Super-Skills:

(All skills have the following limitations: Water only -1;
Requires water source -4)
Liquid Power 12 (108 points)
Control Liquid-14 (1 point)
Water Cannon-17 (2 points)
Water Jet-17 (2 points)
* Psychokinesis Power 9 (90 points)
Telekinesis-14 (1 point)

Super Equipment:

Damage Resistance +2 vs. Crushing (8 points)

Skills:

Acrobatics-14 (2 points); Boating-14 (1 point); Brawling-14 (1/2 point); Camouflage-13 (1 point); Dancing-14 (1 point); Ecology-14 (6 points); Fishing-13 (1 point); Mechanic (Gasoline engines)-11 (1/2 point); Navigation-13 (4 points); Nuclear Physics-10 (1 point); Research-13 (2 points); Running-10 (1/2 point); Scuba-14 (4 points); Stealth-14 (1 point); Survival (Island/Beach)-12 (1 point); Swimming-14 (1/2 point); Zoology-13 (4 points)



Quirks:

Studies nuclear technology to build a case against it
Remembers only bits and pieces of her former life
Bites her nails
Works out her frustration on smoggy cars
Can't seem to keep houseplants alive

Story

Born and raised in Sydney, Australia, Katherine (Katy) Andrews obtained a doctorate at Oxford in marine biology and ecology, returning to her native country to work at a government sponsored research facility. 20 years before it became fashionable, Dr. Katy Andrews was phoning members of Parliament to plead or demand that ecological issues be given greater attention and care. Her unyielding stance was directly responsible for legislature that protected many endangered species.

In 1950 she shifted her efforts to stopping marine testing of nuclear weapons. Despite her considerable clout in Australia, her voice was barely heard across the Pacific. When her network of ecological activists informed Dr. Andrews of the target of an upcoming test, though, she decided to up the ante. If legal channels could not stop this senseless destruction, she would resort to illegal ones.

Weeks before the scheduled test date, Katy took a leave of absence from her job. She and two fellow activists piloted a small yacht to Eniwetok. At night they arrived at the perimeter

guarded by U.S. Navy. When challenged over the radio the small crew feigned ignorance and stalled as long as possible. When the exasperated patrol prepared to stop them by force, they turned back. But not with Katy! She slipped over the side with scuba equipment. By dawn she had made it to the small island undetected.

There she stayed for a few weeks, living off the land and sea while hiding. On the day of the drop, though, she built a tremendous bonfire and lay in the open — a direct challenge to the American military. That same day sympathizers at home and in the U.S. told the entire story to newspapers. When the leading scientist personally flew to the island to remove her (see Doctor Radiation, p. 14), Katy had no difficulty hiding, forcing him to leave. This was actually going to work!

Then they dropped the bomb.

One instant she had been running through the sparse trees, giggling over her success. The next she was so many molecules, scattered through the atmosphere to settle on the land and sea.

But Katy Andrews was not gone, not entirely — her molecules retained some “identity” of their former body. Randomly, through Brownian motion and oceanic currents, these molecules began to find one another. After several years some groups had coalesced to form an entity large enough to be visible with an ordinary microscope. This entity began methodically searching the world’s oceans for other bits of Dr. Andrews, moving of its own accord as it sifted the waters for Katy’s original molecules. Some parts were found at depths unattainable by humans while others were found near the mouths of rivers, washed down from the land.

Finally, in 1986, enough of her original molecules had been found for Katy to become conscious. The vast majority of her “body” was still composed of water, though. After recovering from the shock of her situation, she was overcome by rage. How dare they! The bomb had been dropped on her as well as the rest of the life of Eniwetok Atoll. And the pollution! Years of sifting through endless quantities of water had left her acutely aware of the condition of the world’s oceans. The rivers were worse — the mouths of some were too vile to approach. People weren’t going to get away with this — she would make them pay.

What she did not realize was how much of her original body was still missing. A few hundred thousand missing from her finger might not make a difference, but even such subtle deficits have an effect on the brain. Most of her old feelings are accentuated, while some are downright changed.

To her delight Katy discovered she could change into pure sea water, a human form, or any combination. The human form appeared unchanged from that of 1952, down to the clothes she was wearing! More than that, she now had the ability to manipulate water any way she liked — a condensed blast, a shimmering sculpture, even a hand that picked up small objects!

Quickly her rage returned. Who to punish first? Those responsible for her “death,” of course. That scientist, Dr. Glasser, would be her first target — he would die. Before long she found him in Central America. The direct confrontation was brief, however — even fully trained she was no match for Doctor Radiation, and this was her first attack. He easily avoided or deflected her most fierce assaults. Then, just for fun, he decided to spare her. Glasser told her about his new life as a supervillain and the role of Harvey Banks in their mutual creation (see p. 34). Her interest was piqued; she let him suggest a name, and she had a costume made.

Then she set off to find Harvey Banks. Her first bungled raid tipped Banks off to her intentions, and he has had special protection for himself and family ever since. She still tries, however. In the meantime, Cascade leaves a trail of confusion

and destruction. Polluters, even “litterbugs,” are mercilessly bombarded by her water cannons.

Campaign Role

Cascade was and nominally still is a member of a loosely organized international network of environmental activists. Though some of their actions violate the law, the motivations are strictly scientific and humane. Thus, it’s entirely possible for a “good” character to be part of the same organization to which Cascade belongs. The dilemma of opposing someone that shared her beliefs would be sufficiently frustrating to Cascade to drive her away without a direct confrontation.

Harvey Banks’ children are now in their thirties, a good age for player characters. Such a PC would have Cascade as an Enemy and probably wouldn’t know the extent of his father’s involvement in the creation of her or Doctor Radiation (who would be amused, but harbors no ill will for Banks’ offspring).

Personality

Cascade is eternally bitter. Throwing a wrapper out of a car window is punishable by death if Cascade sees it. She doesn’t like working in a group, but realizes that her own powers aren’t enough to change the world. Her lack of adequate defenses, in particular, motivate her to cooperate with others long enough to destroy a filthy refinery or factory.

Abilities

Cascade possesses all of the qualities necessary for life at oceanic depths. She can transform all of the molecules in her body to water, making it effectively invisible in water.

Whether in human or water form, Cascade can command water to move in ways that oppose gravity or other forces. She cannot produce the liquid herself, though, and requires on-site water for her powers. Sprinkler systems, fire hydrants, and water mains are favorite sources if no open water is available.

Her telekinesis is still limited in power because she has difficulty supporting heavy objects with the liquid.

In combat, figure range modifiers from Cascade to her target as normal, even though the water source may be nearer or farther away.

Battle Tactics

Cascade is obviously much more powerful in water, where her Body of Water becomes a legitimate defense, and she is invisible. Pressure Support and Super Swimming usually offer her a sure getaway when in the ocean.

She’ll only enter combat on land if there is no other option. The Water Cannon is her most potent attack, so she will use it most of the time. If her foes are not being damaged by it, she’ll switch to the Water Jet for the increased knockback, especially to buy herself enough time to make an escape.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower DX to 13, lower HT to 11, lower Strong Will to +2, remove Costume, remove Invisibility, remove Super Swimming, remove Psychokinesis Power and super-skill, remove Damage Resistance.

750-point version: Remove the Requires water source limitation, add Create Liquid (Water)-14, add Destroy Liquid (Water)-14, raise Psychokinetic Power to 20, raise Telekinesis skill level to 20, add No Concentration enhancement to Telekinesis skill, and raise her Damage Resistance to +10 (versus everything.).

CORSAIR

ST 13 (30 points) IQ 13 (30 points)

DX 20 (175 points) HT 14 (45 points)

Speed: 8.50 Move: 8

Damage: Sword Blast 8d cut; Karate 1d+1 punch, 1d+3 kick; Saber 1d+2 imp, 2d cut

Appearance: Male, white, age 25, 6' 1", 220 lbs., black hair, hazel eyes, thin moustache.

Advantages:

Very Handsome (25 points)

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Luck (15 points)

Voice (10 points)

Very Wealthy (30 points)

Disadvantages:

Absent-Mindedness (-15 points)

Addiction: Tobacco (-5 points)

Compulsive Fighting (-15 points)

Enemy: The Fox on 6 or less (-10 points)

Impulsiveness (-10 points)

Kleptomania (-15 points)

Reputation -2 (-10 points)

Secret: Identity (-20 points)

Super Advantage:

Passive Defense +3 (75 points)

Power and Super-Skill:

Sword Blast (Generic Cutting Missile) Power 16 (96 points)

Sword Blast-22 (No Concentration +2; Stun Damage Only -2; 20 points)

Skills:

Acrobatics-20 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Pacific Coast)-13 (1 point); Breath Control-12 (4 points); Carousing-13 (1 point); Disguise-12 (1 point); Fast-Draw (Sword)-20 (1 point); Fencing-21 (4 points); Navigation-12 (2 points); Poetry-12 (1 point); Running-12 (1 point); Savoir-Faire-15 (1 point); Scuba-16 (2 points); Seamanship-14 (2 points); Sex Appeal-21 (1 point); Singing-12 (0 points); Swimming-20 (1 point); Throwing-18 (1 point)

Quirks:

Raids convenience stores for magazines and beer nuts

Likes to taunt and harass the Coast Guard

Keeps a video library of swashbuckler films on the yacht

Owns and enjoys *GURPS Swashbucklers* but has no one to play with

Calls The Fox (see p. SU66) a "scurvy dog"

Story

Neil Hodges always had the easy life. His family had owned and operated one of the largest lumber businesses in the Pacific Northwest for more than one hundred years. Spoiled terribly by his parents, Neil received everything he asked for and more. As a young boy he was never able to spend all of his weekly allowance, so the remains were deposited into an account that grew and grew. On his sixteenth birthday he bought himself a



car, unaware that his mother had purchased him one as well, while his father gave him a small yacht, the *Maid Marion*.

His collegiate record was mostly unexceptional, owing to the fact that while other students were studying hard to build a career for themselves, Neil was just killing time until he was granted a token seat on the executive board of the family business. During his third year Neil purchased a single state lottery ticket and won over fifty thousand dollars. Though the amount was respectable even to him, newspapers from all over the state ran headlines such as "Idle Rich Wins Lottery, Calls it a Drop in the Bucket," and "It'll Last One Weekend." This created unwanted attention at school as well as many threatening letters demanding he fork over the money to charity.

It was just too much. With his father's approval, Neil dropped out of school and sailed the *Maid Marion* down the Pacific coast. During the voyage he watched many nautical films on the ship's VCR, his favorites being the swashbuckling genre. He found himself identifying with the villains, especially Basil Rathbone. Even after he'd seen the film fifty times, Neil still wished Rathbone would run Errol Flynn through in *Captain Blood*.

In time he came to hear of a hero calling himself The Fox, sort of a modern Flynn. Oh, how he wanted to challenge this do-gooder! But even with the gymnastic and self-defense training Neil had, he knew there's be no contest. The Fox, though

not a metahuman, was probably the most skilled conventional fighter in the U.S. No, Neil would need some sort of gimmick.

As luck would have it, Neil was in San Francisco Bay when a super brawl erupted near the docks. In the scuffle, the energy-projecting staff of the villain Calamity was grabbed telekinetically and hurled into the bay, not far from the *Maid Marion*. That part of the bay was not exceptionally deep, so Neil donned scuba gear and dropped over the side, retrieving it easily.

Neil sailed back to Seattle to meet with a friend who owned a machine shop. The staff was carefully disassembled and the advanced, beam-producing mechanism was set into the hilt of a saber. After months of practice, Neil trained himself to fire accurate blasts with the sword as well as use it in the usual manner.

His next move was to produce a costume and alter ego. Of course, he styled himself after the great swashbucklers and pirates. Calling himself Corsair, Neil began to "pillage" the Pacific Coast. He stole jewels, art objects and high-tech toys. It was fun and exciting to watch peoples' reactions. When the police arrived Corsair would toy with them while their stray bullets caused more damage than he'd ever done. Knowing that his blasts hurt but don't injure, Corsair doesn't hold back. In fact, his kicks and sword swipes can be far more deadly than the powerful energy beam.

Three times now, just for fun, he has swum a great distance in the ocean at night to board a Coast Guard ship. After playing cat-and-mouse games with the crew, Corsair stuns them all, sails into a nearby harbor, and moons whoever is watching. With a splash he then jumps over the side, not to be seen again.

Corsair sailed to Los Angeles in order to challenge The Fox. The hero and villain have met twice. The first confrontation ended in a draw as they traded ineffective sword strikes for minutes before police and other reinforcements arrived. The Fox had promised to allow Corsair to flee (though the villain was wanted for various small thefts and embarrassments, he had performed no criminal act that day).

Their second meeting took place at a warehouse drug lab; bullets from drug dealers and police zinged by their ears while they again squared off against each other. This time, however, The Fox had not offered any promises. When the drug dealers had all surrendered or been dropped by gunfire the police began to assist The Fox. Self-preservation took precedence over honor, so Corsair used the Sword Blasts. He quickly scattered the police and knocked out his flamboyant opponent. Taking The Fox's hat as a souvenir, Corsair strode away.

Campaign Role

Anyone who works as a lumberjack or in a lumber mill may be employed by Corsair's father. Someone who went to a university in Oregon, Washington or British Columbia could have known Neil; they could even have maintained some correspondence in the years after he dropped out.

Corsair moves from port to port, but he stays in some longer than others. A worker at a marina would be familiar with the *Maid Marion*, if not its owner. Anyone with contacts in the Coast Guard could find out information about him also.

He'd like to challenge anyone else that wields a sword, but is acutely aware of the advantages metahumans have over a highly trained normal like himself. If there is a pattern to his challenges at all, it shows a preference for other super normals. Player characters that fit the bill will run across Corsair some day. The resulting "battle" should be dramatic and entertaining, but far from deadly.

Personality

Corsair is a prankster. His super "villainy" is mostly harmless and is fun for him so long as he's not seriously injured. So far he's been shot by a police revolver (which luckily passed through flesh only) and a shotgun (which was painful but healed). In each of these cases Corsair made a hasty retreat after delivering a double shot of his Sword Blast to the person who fired the gun.

He has yet to encounter a super in combat but will likely not hold back at all, figuring that the opponent can withstand his non-lethal blasts. If his verbal barbs cannot embarrass a foe, Corsair will try to make the opponent look silly somehow. The Three Stooges' famous pie-tossing scenes provide much of his inspiration.

In one respect Corsair is not much like the swashbucklers he styles himself after — he's afraid of women. For theatrical reasons he will "capture a lass" for a while, loudly discussing the things he plans to do to her before his opponents rescue the woman. Actually, Corsair always lets his captive go — he has no intention of following up on those boasts! Out of costume he is also shy around the opposite sex. An assertive female super (especially an attractive one) would disconcert him to the point that he would leave the scene quickly!

Abilities

Corsair is marvelously quick and agile but possesses no metahuman powers. Lacking any form of Damage Resistance, Corsair must avoid all attacks if he is to last long. Karate, Fencing and Sword Blast skills give him increased defenses that are supplemented by Passive Defense and Combat Reflexes. Acrobatics and Luck can also help.

Although several of his powers are built into his sabre, he hasn't taken any gadget point breaks for it. This represents the fact that the sword isn't breakable; he can get a new one at any time he needs one, and he usually carries a backup in his car or boat. The GM should make it difficult for someone to merely take his sword away, especially in a combat situation.

In the 750-point version Corsair can use his Super Luck to perform seemingly impossible feats of skill such as using a ricocheted Sword Blast to flip a light switch.

Battle Tactics

Corsair likes to taunt and tease his opponents more than rough them up. Since the Sword Blast cannot seriously injure his foes, Corsair never holds back — he always uses the full 8d. Since his survival depends on his ability to avoid being hit at all, Corsair utilizes Acrobatic Dodge, Retreating, or whatever option gives him the best defense roll. All-Out Defense is a common maneuver since it both keeps him alive and embarrasses the foe (who can't seem to hit). Luck is always reserved for defensive purposes. The only exception in Super Luck in the high-power version, which is usually used to perform incredible and mischievous stunts like cutting the straps of a woman's dress without even as scratching her.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower DX to 17; lower HT to 11; drop Passive Defense; lower Sword Blast Power to 6; lower Sword Blast skill level to 18; lower Seamanship skill level to 13.

750-point version: Raise DX to 22; add Alertness +1; replace Luck with Ridiculous Luck; raise Passive Defense to +5; add Super Luck.

DEADLY DOZEN

The Deadly Dozen is a name that first appeared in newspaper headlines at the end of the 1970s. As one of the first villain groups of considerable power, the Dozen made life miserable for many New Yorkers for nearly a year while the city's metahuman heroes struggled to stop them. As the name implies, the roster of the criminal team numbered twelve, including such well-known fiends as Red Ravager, Basher, Death Lash, and Fire Fist.

However, lacking in leadership, balance and training, the Deadly Dozen was easy pickings for most heroes; a member was captured almost every week! Initially there was no shortage of applicants to fill the ranks, yet before long the name Deadly Dozen became synonymous with humiliation and defeat. The group fell into obscurity in the 1980s, disappearing entirely by the middle of the decade.

Not long afterwards the villainess later known as Electra (see p. 20) relocated to Los Angeles. She had lofty goals and needed considerable help if she were to accomplish them. During her time as an Assistant District Attorney, Electra had read many reports about the Exchange. Though the idea of working through a middleman did not appeal to her, Electra realized that the Exchange knew more about metahumans on both sides of the law than she ever would.

So she contacted the organization, explaining that she wished to start her own criminal team and was looking for teammates with particular abilities. The Exchange was intrigued. Its usual business involved bringing together a metahuman and client for a one-time contract. On occasion these had developed into lasting careers but that was through no action on the Exchange's part.

Electra could not yet afford to pay for the Exchange's services, but she again surprised the organization by offering a payment plan plus bonuses — in effect, profit-sharing. After risking a quick telepathic scan of her mind, the Exchange was confident Electra meant to uphold her promise. Besides, she herself pointed out the wealth of options the organization had if she were to default on the payments.

So a verbal deal was struck and the Exchange began to comb its databases to find prospective members. Those who showed potential were referred to her for an interview. Electra placed more emphasis on personalities than powers, determined to avoid the infighting that plagued most other teams. After three months she had selected Tele-Fist, Crosshair, Doc Adrenaline, Soul Ripper, and Eclipse. Domino had been contacted numerous times, but he remained uninterested. At their first group meeting Electra surprised her new teammates by announcing that the group would be called the New Deadly Dozen.

After some expected chuckles the supers realized she was serious. She went on to explain that the name would lead law enforcement to underestimate the group at first. But once its power was firmly established, the general populace would begin to wonder if six more villains lay in hiding. *Finally*, she added to herself, *I want the nation to pay attention while I show them how a villain group is run.*

The New Deadly Dozen ran rampant over Southern California for months, much as had its New York predecessor in its early days. Other western super fiends were inspired by the professional villain group in their midst and came out of hiding or retirement. Before long some eastern heroes had relocated to California and joined with the "native" supers to oppose the



rise in criminal activity . . . which loosened things up on the east coast, too.

Electra and the rest of the Deadly Dozen were thrilled with the repercussions of their activities, but their celebrations were cut short by the death of Doc Adrenaline. Ironically, it wasn't a bullet or blast that spelled the end for the scientist-villain, but his heart. While in the group's modest training room he suffered a severe cardiac arrest. No one but the dying man knew even basic first aid, and he died before anyone could change to civilian clothes to take him to the hospital.

Crosshair and Eclipse, good friends from an early age, were badly shaken by the incident and decided to retire. Electra tried to change their minds but in her heart knew they would never be the same. The team had reached a crisis — not only was the team's roster cut in half, but Doc Adrenaline had also been necessary to repair any damage done to Tele-Fist's equipment.

Electra again turned to the Exchange for help. Their working relationship was spotless so it was no problem for the organization to again produce a list of potential candidates. After this series of interviews she selected Speed Demon, Red Tempest, and Voltmaster. Between the two of them they filled the late Captain's shoes and more. Later Speed Demon's flame powers were discovered and he was renamed Blaze.

But Red Tempest was the real find. His super identity added power to the team while his secret identity held the potential to affect the public perception of the Deadly Dozen and its enemies.

A year later Professor Possessor was referred to the group through the Exchange. After his probationary period, he was granted full membership. Soul Ripper didn't feel the team had room for two mentalists (Electra disagreed) and left to pursue a freelance career. In many ways the group that remains is the most cooperative there has ever been.

Campaign Role

If heroes or a hero group have encountered the Deadly Dozen in the past they haven't been too successful — none of its members have ever been captured. Wealthy heroes living in the same part of the country may own a house surprisingly close to the Dozen's headquarters!

Organization

Electra has made it clear that she is the sole leader of the group. In battle Tele-Fist functions as second-in-command, but even he does not have the authority to block any executive decision. Nonetheless, there have been no serious squabbles within the ranks. Electra is queen, but she's a good queen, and looks after the interests of the team.

New members are on probation for their first six months, after which Electra decides (with input from the group) whether or not to offer them full membership.

Facilities

Voltmaster has contributed more to the Dozen that Electra would ever have dreamed. Not only is he rich, he's more than willing to spend much of it on the team. Underneath his fabulous home in the Hollywood hills lies the Dozen's headquarters. There are several different laboratories for Voltmaster's research along with quarters for up to twelve members, a training room, pool, conference chamber, and computer center. Best of all, Voltmaster is a skilled physician and surgeon. The Dozen's infirmary can handle almost any injury. And though Voltmaster is the only one that can perform advanced medical procedures, he has taught the rest of the team basic first aid.

Battle Tactics

All members of the Deadly Dozen are required to undergo training to function as a unit. In particular, Electra demands that the supers learn a set of gestures that correspond to specific maneuvers. Use the Gesture skill when a Dozen member is making a gesture. The maneuvers associated with these gestures change weekly, but their training is such that only an IQ+4 roll is necessary to remember the current assignment. If a teammate is not in a line of sight with the gesturer, he'll yell out, "Tri-angle-square!" or whatever other symbol is intended.

The maneuvers used by the Dozen are: escape (scatter), escape (follow Electra), delay the heroes (usually by endangering bystanders), grab the gadget, protect your downed teammate, concentrate all attacks on this foe, reinforcements (police) are coming, a teammate has been Telecontrolled, and help is needed.

Robots

Doc Adrenaline was nearing completion of some robotic concepts when he passed away. Voltmaster picked up where his predecessor had left off, developing two forms of guard/attack

robots, Type I and II. Neither type is sophisticated enough to function autonomously, but given simple verbal orders they will perform assigned tasks to their best ability. Both types are used throughout the headquarters as guards.

Although Type IIs can fly, they are not strong enough to carry their Type I counterparts. Thus, if Type Is are encountered away from the base they'll probably have to be transported to the site. In the past this has been performed with a truck or a net carried by Red Tempest. In combat the robots must overwhelm the opposition with numbers to be effective. Type I robots literally climb all over their opponents, while all Type IIs concentrate fire on one target before switching to another.

Battle Robot Type I

ST 50 (166 points) IQ 7 (-20 points)
DX 12 (20 points) HT 10 (45 points)
Speed: 5.50 Move: 5
Damage: Punch 5d+1; Thrust 5d+2; Swing 8d-1

Advantage:

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Disadvantage:

Berserk (-15 points)

Super Advantage:

Damage Resistance +20 (100 points)

Power and Super-skill:

* Telepathy Power 10 (20 points)
Mind Shield-3 (1 point)

Skill:

Brawling-15 (8 points)

Battle Robot Type II

ST 9 (-10 points) IQ 7 (-20 points)
DX 14 (45 points) HT 10 (0 points)
Speed: 10.00 Move: 10 (40 flying)
Damage: Stun Blast 5d; Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d-1

Advantage:

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

Disadvantage:

Berserk (-15 points)

Super Advantages:

Flight (40 points)
Increased Speed +4 (100 points)
Super Flight (20 points)

Power and Super-Skill:

Generic Crushing Missile Power 8 (48 points)
Stun Blast-14 (Armor Piercing×2 +8; No Concentration +2; Stun Only -2; 44 points)
* Telepathy Power 10 (20 points)
Mind Shield-3 (1 point)

Skill:

Acrobatics-13 (2 points)

Doctor Radiation

ST 10 (0 points) IQ 17 (100 points)
 DX 13 (30 points) HT 13 (30 points)
 Speed: 6.50 Move: 6 (48 flying)
 Damage: Radiation Blast 8d imp; Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d
 Appearance: Male, white, age 86, apparent age 49, 5' 10", 190 lbs., blond hair (thinning), blue-grey eyes, stocky build.

Advantages:

Eidetic Memory (30 points)
 Intuition (15 points)
 Lightning Calculator (5 points)
 Mathematical Ability (10 points)
 Patron: South American dictatorship, on 9- (25 points)
 Status 2 (5 points)
 Wealth: Filthy Rich (50 points)

Disadvantages:

Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)
 Enemy: United Nations on 9 or less (-40 points)
 Fanaticism: Self (-15 points)
 Intolerance: Blacks, Jews and Soviets (-5 points)
 Megalomania (-10 points)
 Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)

Super Advantages:

Damage Resistance +40 (Switchable +1, 240 points)
 Flight (40 points)
 Invulnerability: Radiation (75 points)
 Regeneration: Fast (50 points)
 Super Flight×2 (40 points)
 Unaging (60 points)

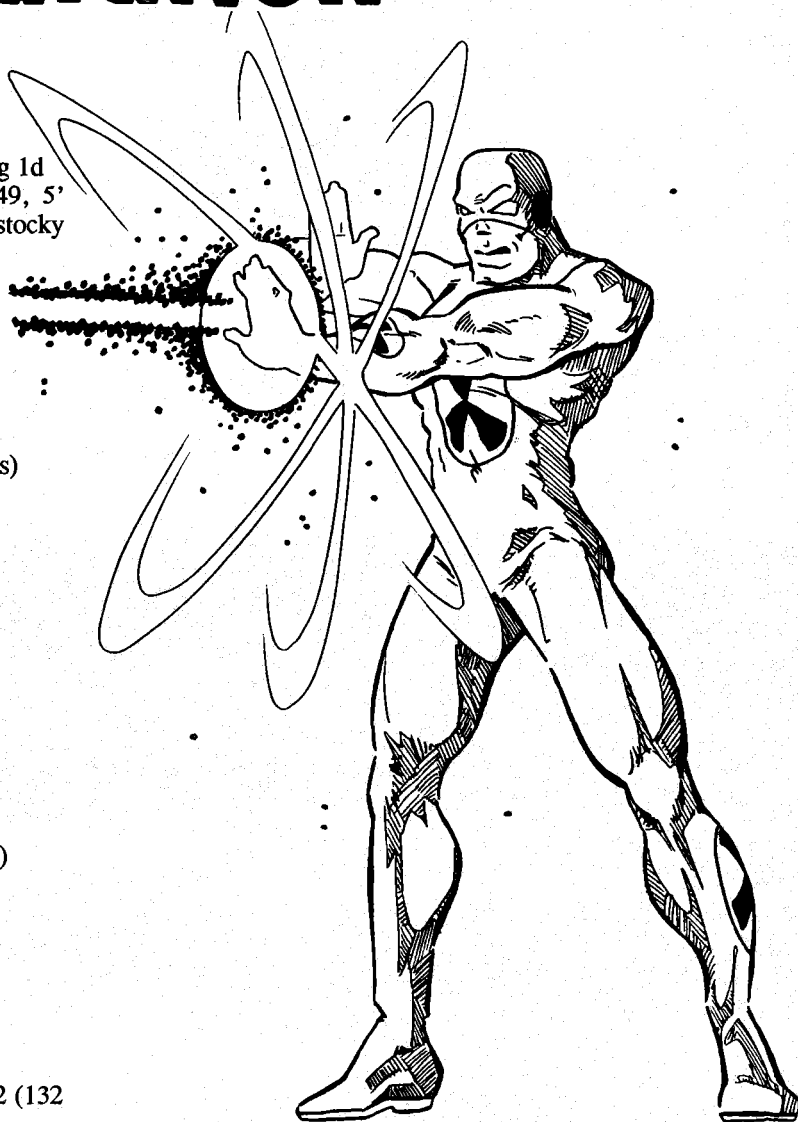
Powers and Super-skills:

Radiation Beam (Generic Impaling Missile) Power 22 (132 points)
 Radiation Beam-15 (Affects Insubstantial +2; Armor Piercing +4; 44 points)
 Radiation Beam-14 (Cone +3; 28 points)
 Radiation Field (Generic Impaling Missile) Power 4 (24 points)
 Radiation Field-16 (Always On +2, Area Effect +4, Link +1, Switchable +1; Touch Only -2; 32 points)
 * Telepathy Power 11 (22 points)
 Mind Shield-15 (4 points)

Skills:

Accounting-16 (1/2 point); Acrobatics-12 (2 points); Administration-18 (2 points); Armoury (Nuclear weapons)-17 (1 point); (Beam weapons)-17 (1 point); Biochemistry-16 (2 points); Chemistry-16 (1 point); Computer Programming-20 (2 points); Computer Operations-18 (1 point); Diplomacy-16 (1 point); Economics-16 (1 point); Engineering (Electrical)-21 (4 points); English-17 (1 point); French-16 (1/2 point); Genetics-15 (1 point); German-17 (0 points); Intelligence Analysis-16 (1 point); Leadership-18 (2 points); Literature-16 (1 point); Mathematics-22 (4 points); Nuclear Physics-25 (20 points); Physics-19 (4 points); Politics-18 (2 points); Spanish-16 (1/2 point); Strategy-16 (1 point); Streetwise-16 (1/2 point); Tactics-16 (1 point); Traps-17 (1 point)

Characters



Quirks:

Favors German food
 Celebrates Oktoberfest with lighthearted crimes
 Enjoys prolonged sunbathing
 Sends Harvey Banks an ominous Christmas card every year
 Hates being called "Doc Rad"

Story

Heinrich Glasser was one of Germany's top scientists during World War II. Radiation and nuclear physics were his specialties, and he worked frantically to develop a weapon that would win the war for the Fatherland. When on the verge of a major breakthrough, however, his research was scrapped and facilities closed down. Word was that some high-ranking military official didn't like dealing with "Jewish physics" (Glasser was following up some of Albert Einstein's theories).

He was transferred to the German rocket program where he worked halfheartedly until the end of the war. Glasser then went to the United States and continued his radiation research under the name of Henry Glass. He quickly became one of the top men in his field and was heavily involved with several test firings of nuclear weapons.

In the early fifties he worked with a younger colleague, Dr. Harvey Banks. Banks was a brilliant nuclear theorist, but few realized this since he had to work in the shadow of Glasser. Glasser was so self-absorbed that he failed to recognize the mounting frustration in his assistant. In 1952 Glasser and Banks had developed a device to be test-fired on the Eniwetok Atoll. Unbeknownst to anyone else, the two scientists had altered the bomb to produce a previously unencountered form of radiation.

On the morning of the firing, though, spotter planes found a woman camped out near ground zero. Katy Andrews was protesting the detonation of the bomb (see *Cascade*, p. 8). Infuriated, Glasser wanted to deal with this woman himself. The Navy provided a seaplane, and they flew to the island. Katy saw the plane coming and hid. On foot and with only one other person to help, Glasser had no chance to find her. Kicking himself for being so emotional, he had the pilot fly them back as he radioed to Banks that more men and planes were required.

But Banks told everyone that the woman was on the plane, then quickly calculated the maximum distance from ground zero where the radiation would be lethal. When the plane reached that mark, Banks gave the signal to drop the bomb. As expected, his orders were not questioned.

Seconds after the bomb detonated and bombarded them with radiation a shockwave tore apart the plane carrying Glasser and his pilot. Both parachuted into the ocean and were picked up by a Navy ship. The pilot died within an hour and Glasser dropped into a coma. Banks underwent a criminal investigation but was found innocent.

During his months in the coma Glasser underwent a change. His body's metahuman genes had been stimulated by the radiation and were now slowly repairing his body. Before he awoke, Dr. Glasser knew he had developed several metahuman abilities. He had experienced prolonged dreams of glowing with energy, as well as flight.

His scientific career demolished by Banks' testimony, Glasser was reduced to the physics department of a minor college. For five years he studied his new abilities while letting his responsibilities slide. When the dean confronted him with allegations of false research, Glasser casually obliterated him with an energy bolt. Donning a costume that was hidden in his office, Dr. Heinrich Glasser became Doctor Radiation and razed much of the campus for good measure.

He flew to Los Angeles and laid low for a while, formulating a plan. He had felt betrayed when the German high command halted his nuclear experiments. He believed that he would have developed the atomic bomb before the U.S., and that he would then have been responsible for Germany gaining control of the world. Cheated of global conquest in the past, Glasser decided it should be his goal for the future.

In the early sixties he helped a Latin American general assume control of his country. Since then, Glasser has made it his base of operations. He maintains a small army and a top-notch research facility with funds provided by the drug trade.

Personality

Glasser moves slowly, concocting plans that take years to come to fruition. He's not entirely sure what he'll do with the world once he conquers it, but he'll worry about that later. Right now he's concerned with increasing his own economic and power base while reducing those of the U.S. and USSR.

In the last four years, more heroes and media personnel have been calling him Doc Rad. Thinking that a diminutive of his name might diminish his reputation, he tends to lash out at anyone using it.

Campaign Role

The pilot of the plane that carried Glasser from the atoll may not have died. Instead, he could have gained metahuman abilities as well; perhaps the government concealed these. Such a hero would now be over sixty years old, so Longevity or Unaging would be a wise choice.

Someone in Latin America could have fought against the general that Glasser aided. If the PC was not already a metahuman, a freakish accident during the small war could have activated repressed power genes.

Abilities

Dr. Glasser was already a brilliant scientist when his accident gave him the ability to fly, project lethal doses of hard radiation, heal rapidly, and cease aging. But his most prominent power is his potent force field which provides total immunity to radiation damage as well as considerable protection from all other forms of damage.

The second Generic Impaling Missile is his damage field — he emits harmful radiation when his force field is raised. Since the skill functions without conscious effort the Always On enhancement is selected, but since it can be turned off Switchable is also chosen (the two enhancements are not exclusive).

The 750-point version of Doctor Radiation is simply scaled down from the default write-up, but the 1,500-point version adds some important new abilities. Insubstantiality, together with an offensive super-skill that affects substantial opponents as well, is a tremendous defensive capability. Increases in his force field and Mind Shield provide even more protection, while the increased levels of Super Flight enable Doctor Radiation to speed away at over Mach 16!

Battle Tactics

Doctor Radiation is not above working with other supers, but he usually operates alone or with some of his troops. These may be considered Military Thugs (see p. 3) with Uzis. In combat he will always fly, never lowering his force field for an instant. If an opponent has taken two doses of Stun damage and still stands, Doctor Radiation will start using lethal energies to affect HT. When up against high-Dodge, low-DR foes, the good Doctor will fly close to engulf them in his radiation field.

In the 1,500-point version, Doctor Radiation will devote more of his time to the Matter Control power. At his power level he cannot alter large objects, but he can and will attempt to distort smaller items such as rings, headpieces, gloves and other typical super gadgets. Once he has made the appropriate Analyze skill rolls, the Doctor will transmute the object into a moderately radioactive substance — one that will cause localized skin cancer if not removed soon.

Power Variations

750-point version: Lower Damage Resistance to +25; drop Invulnerability to radiation; lower Radiation Beam Power to 16; drop Radiation Field Power and super-skill; lower Literature skill level to 15.

1,500-point version: Raise Damage Resistance to +50; add Insubstantiality (Switchable); raise Super Flight to ×9; add Matter Control Power 10, Alter-16, Analyze-16, Bond-16, Disintegrate-16; add Affects Substantial enhancement to first Radiation Beam super-skill; raise second Radiation Beam super-skill to level 16; raise Telepathy Power (Single-skill on Mind Shield) to 20.

DOMINATOR

ST 10 (0 points) IQ 18 (125 points)
DX 14 (45 points) HT 12 (20 points)
Speed: 6.50 Move: 6 (24 flying)

Damage: Sonic Blast 9d; Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d

Appearance: Male, Hispanic, age 47, 6', 180 lbs., black hair, brown eyes, moustache, permanent 5 o'clock shadow.

Advantages:

Combat Reflexes (15 points)
Eidetic Memory (30 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)
Mathematical Ability (10 points)
Strong Will +2 (8 points)
Very Wealthy (30 points)

Disadvantages:

Bad Sight (Nearsighted) (-10 points)
Code of Honor: Villain's (-10 points)
Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)
Fanaticism: Devotion to technology (-15 points)
Hard of Hearing (-10 points)
Secret: Identity (-20 points)
Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)
Stubbornness (-5 points)

Super Advantage:

Gadgeteer (25 points)

Skills:

Acrobatics-14 (4 points); Administration-18 (1 point); Artist-16 (1/2 point); Battlesuit-18 (1 point); Brawling-15 (2 points); Computer Operations-19 (1 point); Computer Programming-21 (2 points); Electronics (Force Shields)-23 (7 points); (All other specialties — see p. B58)-21 (8 points); Engineer (Cybernetics)-23 (5 points); Metallurgy-19 (3 points); Sculpting-13 (0 points); Tactics-17 (1 point); Teaching-18 (1 point); Writing-17 (1/2 point)

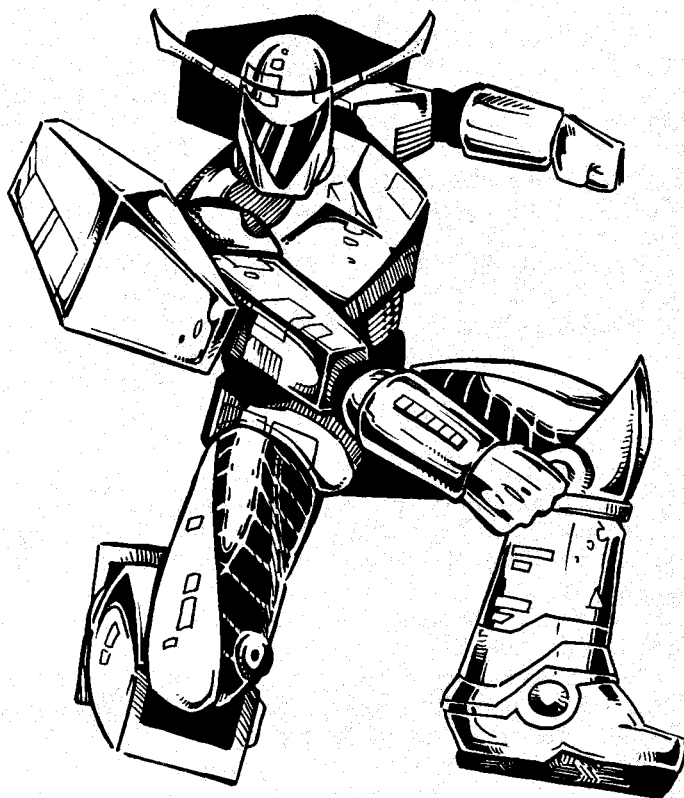
Quirks:

Keeps a calculator with him at all times
Always eats fast food
Rarely smiles
Never misses a major industry conference
Uninterested in romance or love

Battlesuit:

Costume (20 points)
Flight (40 points)
Increased Density (10 points)
Insubstantiality (Switchable +1; Limited Use: 1 hour per day -4; 53 points)
Passive Defense +3 (75 points)
Radio Hearing (15 points)
See Invisible (25 points)
Super Flight (20 points)
Vacuum Support (60 points)

* Anti-Psi Power 15 (30 points)
Force Field Power 20 (Generic Full Defense, 100 points)
Force Field-24 (No Concentration +2; 44 points)



* Sonic Power 14 (98 points)

Sonic Blast-17 (Affects Substantial +4; Continuing Damage +4; 64 points)

Sonic Blast-16 (Wall +3, 40 points)

Base Cost: 714 points

Breakable (Unrepairable): DR 20, HP 150 -20%, Can Be Hit: -2 -10%

Final Cost: 500 points

Story

George Sanchez is a prominent American engineer and cofounder of Quality Engineering Systems, an electronics firm. QES has suffered its ups and downs, but overall has always displayed steady if modest growth. However, there is far more to the company than what shows on a balance sheet. Fully 30% of QES personnel are not engaged in electronics engineering per se — the founders of QES and a considerable number of like-minded researchers have used the company as a front to finance their secret research supers' advanced equipment. Once understood, such technology is duplicated and sold to a variety of customers. This group goes by the acronym TRADE (see p. 50), and a few years ago Sanchez was at the heart of it, supervising others' research while making breakthroughs on his own.

Sanchez was particularly interested in battlesuits. A proposal delivered to TRADE's executive board for development of medium-power battlesuits was turned down on the theory that the world market for high-tech weaponry preferred cheaper items such as blasters. Sanchez was not interested in the potential sales of such an item nearly as much as the technical challenge it presented, so he was satisfied to build the prototype.

Some time later the executive board met again to discuss future directions of TRADE management. All but Sanchez had turned their emphasis toward marketing and sales rather than the technology itself. Feeling that his years with TRADE were now finished, he stepped down from his Director of Research position to follow his own interests. Several former TRADE technicians went with him.

Sanchez' interests still involved battlesuits, especially ways to improve existing designs. The ones used by most heroes and villains packed a large number of capabilities into a man-sized package, but all failed to capitalize on the great amount of standardized components used to construct the suit. Such battlesuits had the potential to be infinitely flexible in design.

Repeated efforts by TRADE to acquire powerful specimens of power armor had all met with failure, leading Sanchez to surmise that his substantially smaller number of personnel would fare no better. Instead, he cannibalized materials from a wealth of sources to construct his own suit from scratch, code-named the Dominator.

Some of his assistants feared Sanchez' plans would be scrapped when a laboratory accident left their leader completely deaf, but others knew better. Design of the suit continued while Sanchez turned his attention to sensory science, developing reliable surgical implants that partially restored his hearing.

The battlesuit's first working configuration lacked any offensive capability but possessed strong defenses, a high flight speed, and the ability to sustain the wearer in space. Sanchez donned the Dominator, then blasted into the sky for a test run. All systems checked out so he opened the throttle and headed for orbit. Computers matched his course with that of a spy satellite in a deteriorating orbit; he grabbed it and returned to Earth. Over the next few weeks Dominator (his name when in the suit) removed several more satellites from orbit to provide parts.

The crucial feature of the Dominator battlesuit was supposed to be its flexibility and ease of reconfiguration. As a test Sanchez optimized the suit for combat, flew into the heart of a city, and blasted buildings until some heroes arrived. Dominator defeated them handily while henchmen recorded the entire battle. Dominator still seeks combat regularly to test the newest configuration of his battlesuit. At other times he stages raids and assaults on facilities that have equipment he needs for his research, often with the assistance of his private troops. Every few months he'll redesign the suit for efficient space travel, then shuttle recently acquired equipment and supplies to a secret location on the moon where he plans to build a research facility.

Campaign Role

Anyone involved with the space program will be aware of Dominator's satellite thefts. Orbital data recorded during some of his missions suggest that he has been visiting the moon, but that has not been confirmed. Characters with sufficient influence may be able to convince superiors of the need to find out what Dominator is doing and head a new team with the purpose of tracking his activities. It might also occur to someone that it would be cheaper to pay Dominator to *launch* a satellite than to put it on a rocket, if the scientist-villain could be trusted.

Any hero with high-tech equipment of any kind, or anyone charged with protecting high-tech facilities, may find himself the target of one of Dominator's raids.

Any well-known combat team may find themselves attacked by Dominator just as a trial run. The cagey scientist will always have several escape plans, in case he finds himself overmatched.

Personality

Sanchez is motivated by science and technology alone. Though he prefers to avoid harm to innocent people, he considers the deaths and damage he causes to be a necessary price of Mankind's progress. In the past he tried to restrict his satellite robberies to those that were obsolete or no longer operational, but he has found that he needs the sophisticated components of the newest designs.

Not an unattractive man, he's never even noticed the attention a few women have paid him over the years. Romance, love and relationships always struck him as another distraction he should avoid.

It goes without saying that Sanchez will not allow someone else to use the Dominator suit while he's still alive. He is always concerned that his advanced technology will fall into the wrong hands (e.g., anybody but his), and won't be very trusting of anyone expressing too much interest in how his suit works. When in his secret identity, though, Sanchez will be glad to speculate on other supers' powered suits as long as anyone will listen to him (and sometimes a little bit longer!). He considers himself the world's greatest expert on powered armor.

Abilities

Dominator's capabilities are entirely defined by the current configuration of the battlesuit. Whenever he anticipates a confrontation with heroes the suit will be equipped as presented on the previous page. However, Sanchez makes much use of the Gadgeteer advantage, often altering the suit in small ways (about 50 points' worth). Over the course of a few years the design may have changed completely!

Though there is no restriction in game terms, Dominator will not use Gadgeteer on equipment other than the suit. The Unrepairable gadget limitation means that to "repair" the suit he must build another one entirely. This has happened several times in the past — he has a good supply of older, partly dismantled Dominator suits in his lab that technicians use for parts. It usually takes at least a month to build a new suit.

Battle Tactics

Dominator's general plan of attack is greatly affected by the suit's current configuration. He rarely bothers with landbound heroes, preferring to record battles with flying supers.

When his troops accompany him they will be equivalent to TRADE's strike team members (see p. 50) except that roughly half of them will use conventional assault rifles and Kevlar vests — many strike team weapons and armor suits were cannibalized to build Dominator and he hasn't gotten around to replacing them. The GM can adjust this as necessary to make them effective against the PCs, but care needs to be taken or the agents will mow down the supers in a blast of weapon fire!

In the 1,000-point version Dominator gains a new ability, that of controlling gravity waves. His most common use for the power is to drop flying heroes to the ground and fling landbound heroes to the sky. The latter, especially, are in a precarious state if Dominator is able to "hit" them with his gravity beam. Not only are their chances for an Active Defense cut substantially while rising, but Dominator will usually not give them another thought — when the gravity change expires 20 seconds later, the hero will be facing a drop from over a mile high!

Power Variations

500-point version: Lower IQ to 16; drop Combat Reflexes; lower Passive Defense to +1; drop See Invisible; drop Anti-Psi (Single-skill on Psionic Resistance); lower Force Field Power to 10; lower Force Field skill level to 14; lower Sonic Power to 10; drop the Wall-enhanced Sonic Blast.

1,000-point version: (all additions are to the battlesuit) Add 360-Degree Vision; raise Anti-Psi Power to 21; add Gravity Power 20, Anti-G-16 (Affects Substantial), Increase Gravity-16 (Affects Substantial); raise Force Field Power to 40.

DOMINO

ST 40 (146 point) IQ 14 (45 points)

DX 15 (60 points) HT 13 (30 points)

Speed: 7.00 Move: 7 (100 teleporting)

Damage: Karate 4d+2 punch, 5d kick; Thrust 4d+1; Swing 7d-1

Appearance: Male, white, age 28, 5' 11", 190 lbs., brown hair, green eyes.

Advantages:

Acute Hearing +1 (2 points)

Handsome (15 points)

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Luck (15 points)

Status 2 (10 points)

Strong Will +1 (4 points)

Comfortable wealth (10 points)

Disadvantages:

Addiction: Cocaine (-40 points)

Code of Honor: Will not harm civilians (-5 points)

Enemy: IST New York on 6 or less (-15 points)

Fanaticism: Demilitarization of Europe (-15 points)

Secret: Identity (-20 points)

Vow: Finish his father's work (-5 points)

Super Advantage:

Passive Defense +3 (Not if surprised -2; 60 points)

Power and Super-Skill:

* Teleport Power 10 (80 points)

Autoteleport-16 (No concentration +2; Retains original momentum -2; 20 points)

Super Equipment:

Damage Resistance +9 (45 points)

Skills:

Accounting-12 (1 point); Acrobatics-14 (2 points); Administration-13 (1 point); Area Knowledge (New York City)-14 (1 point); (West Germany)-13 (1/2 point); Bicycling-15 (1 point); Computer Operations-13 (1/2 point); Diplomacy-12 (1 point); Driving-14 (1 point); Economics-15 (6 points); English-13 (1 point); French-12 (1/2 point); German-14 (0 points); Greek-12 (1/2 point); Guns (.38)-17 (1 point); Italian-12 (1/2 point); Karate-16 (8 points); Merchant-13 (1 point); Running-10 (1/2 point); Savoir-Faire-16 (0 points); Sex Appeal-17 (2 points); Spanish-12 (1/2 point); Stealth-14 (1 point); Swedish-12 (1/2 point); Traps-13 (1 point)

Quirks:

Considers Dieter and Domino two separate personalities

Infatuated by gossip

Leaves a domino at the scene of his crimes

Mistrusts all Americans

Womanizer



Story

Dr. Otto Gross, Dieter's father, served as a military surgeon during World War II. Opposed to aggression of any kind and horrified by the Holocaust, he took pride in rebuilding his country, establishing a private practice in Munich with the aid of his wife, Ilsa, and three sons, the twins Paul and Franz and young Dieter. As the Cold War escalated, Dr. Gross, like many other Germans, became increasingly worried that Germany would again be the battlefield of a European war. He opposed the buildup of NATO troops and weapons in his country. When the United States became involved in the Vietnam War, his aggression was directed toward America alone. He moved his family to Bonn, where he lobbied against the American presence.

In 1970, Otto and his sons were crossing a street when a car veered into their path. Dr. Gross pushed his children out of harm's way, but was struck squarely by the auto, driven by a drunken American general. Otto was killed instantly before his sons' eyes. Having many friends and much political influence, the general was found innocent — blame was placed on the car's steering mechanism.

To three impressionable young boys this reeked of conspiracy. Their father wanted the Americans out, and the Americans killed their father. Swearing upon his grave, they vowed to finish Otto's work — to remove American troops and weapons from Germany. When the time came, Paul and Franz went to German colleges to study law and medicine, respectively. Dieter followed later, studying international banking at Columbia University in New York.

During his first year at school, however, Dieter's mutant abilities manifested. Sharing this information with his brothers only, Dieter took a leave of absence to train in the martial arts and develop his body. Ready to take on the world, he made his debut by infiltrating Three Mile Island. Wearing only street clothes and a homemade mask, he randomly pressed every button and pulled every lever that he could before the alarm was sounded.

Foolishly, Dieter hadn't anticipated that his sabotage would bring in a super-team. Before long the entire facility was occupied by supers and troops, cutting off both of his planned escape routes. Only by a risky teleport to a location seen through a surveillance camera did he escape. Subsequent investigations did not connect Dieter with the crime. Having learned a lesson, Dieter did not use his super-abilities for several years.

He returned to Columbia, graduated with honors in 1982, and accepted a position in the New York office of a German banking firm. Dieter spent the first two years of his career impressing his superiors and receiving promotions.

Once his position was firmly established, his interest shifted to more social activities. He began to attend all of New York's finer parties, establishing contacts and acquaintances, especially with women. Wives of political figures became a favorite target. With a fantastic memory for gossip, he stored every scrap of information in a database kept locked in a wall safe.

By 1985, Dieter was ready to exhibit his powers again, this time more cautiously. He adopted the name Domino as an ironic joke — he was disgusted by America's "Domino Theory." Between a new costume and the six-year hiatus, no one has publicly made a connection between Domino and the Three Mile Island teleporter.

Domino seeks to remove American troops and weapons from Europe, especially West Germany. Since direct measures would be futile and dangerous, he has opted for a covert approach. He will be involved with any scheme that diminishes the international influence of the U.S. His favorite plots embarrass America or reduce its tactical nuclear stockpiles.

Campaign Role

Dieter has many co-workers at the banking company, most of whom are American citizens. He could easily be met at one of the parties he regularly attends. Dieter will approach characters who wield power through office or wealth. Attractive women will also be approached. His advances are discreet but focussed — there will be no doubt about his intentions.

His cocaine addiction is his greatest weakness and could one day destroy all he's worked to build. Heroes who make drug busts may arrest Domino's usual dealer, but that would not lead back to the metavillain. On the other hand, a raid could be staged when Domino (more precisely, Dieter) is making a buy. Being arrested on a mere possession charge would not disrupt his life irreparably, so he's not likely to use his powers unless his life is threatened. In the interests of drama the GM could make *sure* that his life is threatened . . .

Personality

Dieter Gross and Domino are two personalities. Not split — the personalities are fully aware of each other, share the same skills, disadvantages and memories, and cooperate completely. When a civilian, Dieter Gross is in charge, an attractive, intelligent member of an international banking firm. But when an opportunity arises, he becomes Domino. Subconsciously, both personas are driven entirely by a desire to avenge their father's death.

Dieter is calm, smooth, and patient. He's always pursuing several plans at once, but is content to take his time. Many of his plots take years to mature, often developing into only minor victories. When Dieter encounters an opportunity that would be better resolved by quick and direct measures, he assumes the identity of Domino, who is more likely to take risks (though he is still very cautious by super standards). Domino performs the task, then reverts to Dieter.

Domino does not consider himself a criminal, but a German patriot with a mission of sabotage. He does not like to work with criminals, though at times he relents in order to more effectively assault the American infrastructure. Many are surprised to find he has never associated with the Exchange — they would be stunned to hear that he turned down the Exchange offer, on Electra's behalf, to join the Deadly Dozen.

Abilities

Domino possesses Enhanced ST and is quite proficient in Karate. He wears a padded suit that provides some Damage Resistance against all physical and energy attacks. His Teleportation power has a range of 100 yards, but may only be used to transport himself. When teleporting (he calls it "blinking"), his facing may change though his momentum is retained — he can't teleport himself out of a fall. His Passive Defense represents Domino's ability to "stutterblink" — rapidly changing his location within one hex to disrupt his opponent's aim. His Code of Honor is worth only five points since it does not apply to police or military personnel.

The different versions of the Domino write-up differ primarily in overall power level, especially strength. At 250 points his might does not exceed human norms; at 500 he is nearly a brick; at 750 his strength is quite formidable, and should be enough to make heroes think twice about their own defense.

Battle Tactics

Though Domino is strong, he's no match for a true brick. Knowing this, he stays away from the big goons, generally going after physically normal foes. He prefers wide open battlefields, where he can use his range to blink in and out of harm's way. If the terrain permits, he will blink up or down (e.g., fire escapes, the street below); many of his opponents fail to look in those directions. When the heroes get the upper hand, though, he'll use his power to retreat as fast as he can.

When blinking into combat range, Domino will appear directly behind his victim (where an Active Defense is usually impossible) unless arriving in an adversary's side hex would be safer. He rarely chooses All-Out Attack since his Karate skill alone allows two attacks per turn (see sidebar, p. SU83).

If a confrontation with a brick is unavoidable, Domino will rush his opponent, entering Close Combat. If he Grapples, his foe will probably spend his turns Breaking Free, giving Domino some time. If the opponent Grapples him, Domino will simply blink out of the grasp.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower ST to 13; lower DX to 13; lower IQ to 13; drop Combat Reflexes; drop High Pain Threshold; drop Strong Will; lower Teleport Power to 8; drop Damage Resistance; raise Accounting skill level to 12.

750-point version: Raise ST to 115; raise DX to 18; raise Strong Will to +2; drop Acute Hearing; raise Passive Defense to +6; raise Karate skill level to 20.

ELECTRA

ST 10 (0 points) IQ 15 (60 points)
DX 13 (30 points) HT 11 (10 points)
Speed: 6.00 Move: 6 (12 flying)
Damage: Lightning 6d; Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d
Appearance: Female, white, age 33, 5' 10", 135 lbs., long black hair, brown eyes, fair skin, deep red lipstick.

Advantages:

Attractive (5 points)
Charisma +1 (5 points)
Combat Reflexes (15 points)
Strong Will +1 (4 points)
Wealthy (20 points)

Disadvantages:

Bad Temper (-10 points)
Code of Honor: Won't steal from the poor or helpless; protects innocents from harm; won't break her word (-10 points)
Duty: To Deadly Dozen on 12 or less (-10 points)
Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)
Intolerance: Government employees and patriots (-5 points)
Secret: Identity (-20 points)
Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)
Vow: Destabilize the U.S. government (-15 points)

Super Advantages:

Flight (40 points)
Passive Defense +1 (25 points)

Powers and Super-Skills:

Electrical Power 12 (108 points)
Confuse-13 (No Obvious Effect +3; 16 points)
Dampen-12 (2 points)
Lightning-16 (Armor Piercing +4; 40 points)
Surge-12 (2 points)
Force Field Power 30 (Generic Full Defense, 150 points)
Force Field-14 (No Concentration +2; Wall×2 +6; 40 points)

Skills:

Accounting-12 (½ point); Acting-14 (1 point); Administration-14 (1 point); Bard-15 (2 points); Computer Operations-14 (½ point); Economics-12 (½ point); Guns (.38)-14 (½ point); Interrogation-14 (1 point); Judo-12 (2 points); Law-15 (4 points); Leadership-16 (4 points); Politics-14 (1 point); Riding (Horse)-12 (1 point); Savoir-Faire-15 (1 point); Streetwise-14 (1 point); Tactics-14 (2 points); Traps-15 (2 points)

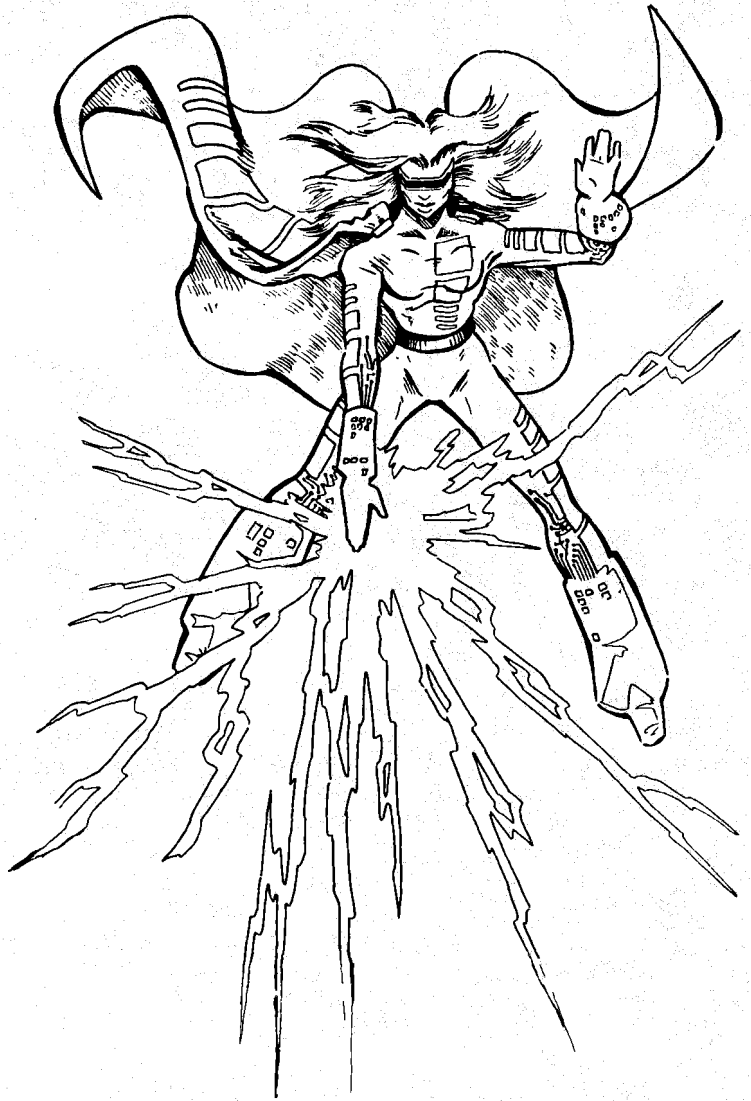
Quirks:

Reads four newspapers each day
Doesn't trust her parents
Disgusted by female supers in skimpy costumes
Forceful but fair
Keeps her word

Story

Christine Chalmers is the only child of Harlan and Felicia Chalmers, members of two wealthy Vermont families. Harlan was a member of the legislature and raised his daughter to follow suit. Christine kept to his program, going to the best schools and

Characters



associating with the best people. Upon graduating, she was ready to attend Harvard Law School when fate intervened.

Throughout her senior year at Princeton she had been involved in a stormy romance with the son of a U.S. senator. One night she attempted to break off the relationship, but he refused and became violent. Her latent electricity manipulation powers chose this moment to manifest, and she unintentionally electrocuted her former boyfriend. More surprised than horrified, Christine rearranged the body to make the death appear to be an accident.

After the funeral she stayed at an isolated cabin "to be alone to deal with her grief." She took the opportunity to explore her new powers, free from prying eyes. She quickly learned how to cast bolts of electricity at will. Later she discovered how to construct a force field and eventually found she could fly as well. After a month she put the exploration aside, returning to civilization and Harvard Law.

As graduation approached, Christine began to plan how to use her abilities to further her political career. She started carefully by taking the position of Assistant District Attorney in her home town of Montpelier. At the same time she adopted the costumed persona of the Electric Girl. As a super she did some crimefighting, but primarily she acted to help her cases as an attorney.

It wasn't long before a crime reporter deduced the connection between the Electric Girl and Asst. D.A. Christine Chalmers. He later learned of the death of the Senator's son, but kept all of this to himself.

After two years of stunning success as a prosecutor, Christine decided to run for the state legislature. The reporter approached her in the middle of the campaign and threatened to expose his research if she didn't agree to be an inside source for him. Christine acquiesced, but shortly thereafter killed him. To avoid any connection with the Electric Girl she didn't use her powers, opting instead for a more conventional method — she pushed him off a building.

But the newshound had left letters to be opened in case of his death. His allegations were front-page news the next morning. None of the charges could be proven, but the damage to her political career had already been done. Ms. Chalmers' refusal to be tested for metapowers or to undergo telepathic interrogation confirmed public suspicion, and she lost the election.

Enraged by this defeat, Christine decided to exact revenge on the U.S. political system. She quit her job, moved to Los Angeles, and adopted the new persona of Electra. In an attempt to avoid any chance of being connected to the Electric Girl, she made a new costume that resembled a power suit.

Electra began slowly, planning her moves carefully and striking locations isolated from super-teams. She contacted the Exchange and expressed an interest in working with other metahumans. She wanted to learn firsthand how others used their powers.

After two years Christine decided that the best way to further her goals would be to form her own team (see p. 12). She felt her assaults against the government needed to be oblique and disguised by more "typical" criminal activity. This way government agencies would not recognize her true goal until too late. And Christine Chalmers, aka Electra, will settle for nothing less than the complete destabilization of the United States of America.

While she *does* want to see the government overthrown, she does *not* want to start a world war (no matter what Voltmaster may believe to the contrary). She will pull in the reins on any of his *really* outrageous plans.

Campaign Role

Perhaps the crime reporter who exposed Electra did not die. He could have gone into hiding, to reappear later. Or he could have been a metahuman; possibly his powers were triggered by the fall that was supposed to kill him. Either way, he survived to run the story that destroyed Christine Chalmers. This is a good example of how a character's mundane identity can be more powerful than the one with a force field and energy blasts.

Personality

Electra has a shrewd, calculating mind. She knows what she wants and fully intends to get it. A natural leader, she is hesitant to entrust anyone with the full scope of her plans. Richard Brunner (Professor Possessor, p. 34) is the only one who knows everything, and she is prepared to kill him if forced to. Odd though it may sound, Electra does not see a conflict between her willingness to eliminate Possessor and her love for him. Part of her definition of love is a desire to adopt another's goals as your own — if Possessor were to disagree with Electra's objectives they would no longer be in love.

She does not enjoy wanton destruction, but will not chastise those members of her team who relish it. Indeed, as leader of the Deadly Dozen she knows how hard it is to demand cooperation from supers with criminal tendencies. But breaking one of the

Dozen's rules, especially insubordination, will elicit a harsh reprimand from Electra. She expects Possessor and the others to keep her in line as well. Her word is as good as gold, but she does not give it lightly . . .

There has been some legitimate discussion by law enforcement psychologists, and much drivel and nonsense by the tabloids, about the lack of women in the permanent ranks of the Deadly Dozen. The fact that the probationary member Thunderbolt was rejected from the team adds to the speculation that Electra is unable or unwilling to work with other female metahumans. There is some truth to this. Electra herself would not agree — but subconsciously she enjoys exerting authority over a group of men as powerful as the Deadly Dozen. On the surface her mind is much more concerned with the practical value of a potential teammate, regardless of sex.

Abilities

All of Electra's abilities come from her body, rather than the apparent power suit that she wears. With command over electricity she fires bolts of Armor Piercing Lightning and can mentally Confuse her foes. Her Dampen and Surge skills are at a lower level, not usually used in combat. Electra prefers to touch the device when using these abilities.

Her force field is of respectable strength and can be angled to deflect attacks by Super-Blocking. She can also form it into a wall of any shape.

In her high-power version Electra can send and receive tiny electrical pulses that provide her with an accurate radar-like map of her immediate surroundings (the range is rather limited). She can also rebound an electricity-based assault back at the attacker.

Battle Tactics

When possible, Electra will avoid the center of a fight, concentrating instead on coordinating the Dozen's assaults and providing sniper fire. In keeping with the deceptive intent of her costume, Electra is extremely careful about the use of her Confuse super-skill. She only uses it when none of the opponents or onlookers will suspect her as the origin. After Concentrating on that skill for one turn, she'll act as though she's changed her mind, then attempt the skill and move to another target.

Electra uses her force field for personal protection and Super-Blocks as long as her side has the upper hand. When times get rough, though, she'll set up a wall to protect her comrades while they make their escape.

In her low-power version Electra does not possess any special movement abilities. For fast deployments and getaways she will manipulate the Force Field wall into a simple bag that can contain her and other non-flyers while Red Tempest holds it while flying away. When extra speed is needed this technique is used even by the high-point-total versions.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower IQ to 14, drop Wealth, drop Flight, drop Passive Defense, lower Electrical Power to 8, lower Lightning skill level to 15, lower Force Field Power to 10, drop No Concentration enhancement from Force Field skill, drop Traps skill.

750-point version: Raise Strong Will to +2, add Radar Sense range 10, add Reflection: 7d vs. electricity, raise Electrical Power to 16, raise Dampen and Surge skill levels to 14, add the enhancements Armor Piercing (second one) and No Concentration to Lightning skill, raise Force Field Power to 40, raise Force Field skill level to 16.

Erik Bloodaxe

ST 15 (60 points) IQ 11 (10 points)

DX 13 (30 points) HT 12 (20 points)

Speed: 6.25 Move: 6 (18 in giant form)

Damage: Great Axe 3d/11d+3 cut; Thrust 1d+1/9d;
Swing 2d+1/11d

Appearance: Male, white, age 40, 6' 1", 200 lbs., black hair, brown eyes.

Advantages:

Acute Vision +3 (6 points)

Ambidexterity (10 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Disadvantages:

Addiction: Tobacco (-5 points)

Unattractive (-5 points)

Berserk (-15 points)

Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)

Greed (-15 points)

Odious Personal Habit: Clears his throat and spits on the ground (-10 points)

Secret: Identity (-20 points)

Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)

Super Advantage:

Costume (20 points)

Super Equipment and Gadgets:

Magic Axe (Can Be Stolen: Contest of ST -15%; Unique -25%; 308 points)

Damage Resistance +30 (150 points)

Enhanced ST 80 (Only when in giant form, 226 points)

Growth×3 (Always On +2; 54 points)

Transformation (30 points)

* Anti-Psi Power 11 (22 points)

Psionic resistance-16 (32 points)

Skills:

Carousing-12 (2 points); Computer Operations-11 (1 point); Dancing-13 (2 points); Driving (Car)-11 (½ point); Fast-Draw (Pistol)-14 (2 points); Guns (Pistol)-15 (2 points); Heraldry-14 (8 points); Hobby (Armchair quarterback)-11 (1 point); Holdout-13 (6 points); Italian-11 (2 points); Merchant-13 (6 points); Professional Skill (Customs Law)-12 (4 points); Running-9 (½ point); Singing-13 (2 points); Streetwise-13 (6 points); Two-Handed Axe/Mace-15 (8 points)

Quirks:

Recently started a collection of medieval weapons

Vacations in Florida every year

Doesn't trust accountants or chiropractors

Regularly splurges on NY Giants season tickets

Tries to fix his own car (with Mechanic-6!)

Story

A customs warehouse in New York City is a busy place. Lots of cargo has to go through inspection and processing before it can enter the United States. When someone wants their goods to undergo minimum processing and no inspection, they need some help. Tom Guarnacci is the sort of guy that sells that help.

Characters



He's been working as a night watchman at Stokes & Sons, Importers for over twenty years. Over that time he's picked up a number of effective techniques for slipping a crate or two past the watchful eyes of the law. As far as Tom is concerned, that's the easy part — the hard part is dealing with the "client," because these guys are always impatient and well-armed. That's why he'd always gone through a middleman, Mike Connel.

Last November one particular crate caught his eye. Its packing slip showed a flag he'd never seen before, and he thought he knew them all. Closer inspection showed the cargo to have been shipped from Estonia, which Tom always thought of as merely "Russia." Curiosity got the best of him, so he pried open the crate for a look.

Under many layers of protective packing he found an old axe. There was an inscription on the head, and someone had fitted it with a new shaft. Pretty boring, really, but Tom couldn't resist the urge to swing a few times, just to feel the weight. The instant his fingers touched it, he knew. Knew what? Tom wasn't sure himself, but if he had to put his feelings into words, he'd say it hummed with power. Using the underhanded skills he'd acquired over the years, Tom stole the axe.

Two days later he was contacted by Mike Connel to help slip a particular consignment from Estonia through customs. Inevitably, this was the cargo that had contained his axe, which

he was already certain that he could never part with. It was filled with such energy! If he could just tap into that somehow . . . Tom had been trying to research Estonian history and legend, hoping to find some passage about a magic axe, but it was going slowly. There was no way he'd discover its secrets before Connel's contacts would get suspicious.

Seeing no other way out, he killed Mike Connel. For business reasons Connel never told his clients who he worked with in the warehouse, so the chances were good that whoever wanted the axe wouldn't be able to trace it to Tom. Drawing attention to himself would have been the worst possible move, so Tom didn't change his job or apartment. After a few months with no incidents his study paid off, and Tom considered the danger passed.

The axe had originally belonged to the ruler of an Estonian castle. The nobleman looked like a Norse god, and by uttering the magic word that he took for his name, "slaegr," he could grow into a giant, able to lay waste to an entire legion of enemy troops. King Slaegr ruled his land for over 400 years before a thief made off with the magic weapon. The king abandoned his country to search for the axe but died before he could recover it.

Tom was fascinated, more so by the hint of immortality than the bit about becoming a giant. Four centuries! He'd never die as long as he held on to this enchanted axe. There was no time to lose. The next day he bought an electric guitar case that fit the axe. After dark, he took the case to a deserted lot on an unlit street and tried the magic word. To his surprise, he didn't become a giant — his body changed into that of King Slaegr. Red beard, blue eyes, even the clothing. He tried the word again. This time he grew into a giant.

The deserted lot was not in a good part of town, and a gang battle erupted a few blocks away. Feeling invincible, he walked into the fray with giant steps, intending to stop the violence. Bullets ricocheted off his skin as he roared his delight and chased the hoodlums away. Out of the corner of his eye he spotted two that hadn't retreated yet. They each had one of those Russian guns, AK something. He turned to face them as they both opened fire. Bullets ripped into his flesh. In a blind fury he crushed one beneath his boot and chopped the other in half.

He limped back to the dark lot and said the magic word twice. That changed him back to normal, but the wounds remained. After struggling to put the axe in the guitar case he hailed a cab. The cabbie took one look at blood-soaked Tom and drove him to the nearest hospital, where he claimed to have been hit by stray bullets.

As he lay in the hospital bed, Tom couldn't believe what had happened. He had almost died from blood loss. That didn't sound like immortality to him. Well, he learned his lesson. You have to look out for number one, even when you're fifty feet tall. He took to calling himself Erik Bloodaxe, after a Viking warrior he'd read about — King Slaegr, while authentic, just didn't have much of a ring to it.

Campaign Role

Investigative heroes will probably arrive at a customs warehouse at some time, where transfer of international must take place. Night watchmen — like Tom — are logical people to question in any investigation.

A player character could be interested in the murder of Mike Connel, perhaps an investigator or a friend/relative of the deceased. For a particularly bizarre twist — but perfectly acceptable for the genre — a PC could actually be Mike Connel. For whatever reason he avoided or transcended death; he now has a score to settle with Tom Guarnacci, not to mention a few loose ends with his clients.

Personality

Tom Guarnacci doesn't have any vile qualities, but he has no concern for anyone but himself, which leads him to take jobs that classify him as a villain. He's actually still willing to work for "good" causes, but no one is about to hire Bloodaxe now that he's destroyed property and killed deliberately. Most of his jobs now come via his registration with the Exchange.

Unless he's paid to do so, Bloodaxe would rather not hurt innocent people. But if his own well-being is threatened, he won't hesitate. Tossing a car onto onlookers has more than once given him time to escape. If his axe is taken he'll pursue it with reckless abandon until he retrieves it or dies trying.

Abilities

All of Erik Bloodaxe's abilities come from the axe. With it he can grow to three times his normal height, raising his ST to 45 and his HP to 36. Once he has grown, however, the axe raises his ST to 80. The growth takes 30 seconds. Transformation also requires the axe, but the Costume advantage becomes part of whoever uses it. This advantage is also required for the axe to grow to fit the giant. Note that at any height he must spend a turn readying the weapon after each swing.

If his axe is stolen, Erik will immediately lose his defensive advantages and begin to shrink back to normal size (as will the axe). His appearance does not change, though, and he will be unable to transform back into his other identity until he regains the axe! Needless to say, a player character that manages to get his hands on the axe will be tirelessly pursued by Erik — there's nothing in the world that matters to him quite as much!

No one else may use the axe until they learn the magic word. This will require three consecutive successful Research rolls, each one requiring a week of work.

Erik believes that the axe makes him Unaging, but this is not true. The King Slaegr legend was created by many generations of kings, but all of them used the same name and remained in the Norse form, making their subjects think they had an immortal king.

At the highest point level, the Can Be Stolen limitation is removed; the axe is magically blessed so that it will never leave its owner's hand in battle. Thus, a potential thief must rely on trickery to steal away with the enchanted weapon. On the other hand, the blessing does nothing to restrict the theft of the axe when it is lying still, at the normal size.

Battle Tactics

Erik Bloodaxe is not too sophisticated in combat — he swings his axe. If he's supposed to kill someone, he'll chop them in half. If a capture is his mission, he'll strike with the flat of the head, doing Stun damage. Most enemy heroes get hit with the flat, too. Sometimes he'll chop into a building like a lumberjack — the ensuing chaos gives him and any teammates time to finish the mission or escape.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower ST to 11; lower DX to 12; lower IQ to 10; drop Ambidexterity; lower Damage Resistance to +10; lower Growth to $\times 2$; drop the Anti-Psi (Psionic Resistance).

750-point version: Raise ST to 17; drop Can Be Stolen limitation; raise Growth to $\times 4$; lower Fast-Draw (Pistol) skill level to 13.

High Assassins of the Nimba Cult

ST 11 (10 points) IQ 11 (10 points)

DX 15 (60 points) HT 11 (10 points)

Speed: 6.50 Move: 6

Damage: Karate 1d/2d+1 punch, 1d+2/2d+3 kick;
Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+1

Advantages:

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

Toughness DR +1 (10 points)

Trained by a Master (40 points)

Plus 15 points in any combination of:

Alertness

Ambidexterity

Danger Sense

High Pain Threshold

Night Vision

Peripheral Vision

Disadvantages:

Compulsive Behavior: Fighting (-10 points)

Duty: To the Nimba Cult on 15 or less (-15 points)

Enemy: Various martial arts groups on 9 or less (-30 points)

Fanaticism (-15 points)

Overconfidence (-10 points)

Vow: Will not use modern weaponry (-10 points)

Skills:

Acrobatics-14 (2 points); Breaking Blow-13 (8 points);
Climbing-15 (2 points); English-10 (1 point); Escape-14 (2
points); First Aid-12 (2 points); Gesture-10 (1/2 point); Judo-15
(4 points); Jumping-15 (1 point); Karate-16 (8 points); Knife-15
(1 point); Native Language-11 (0 points); Parry Missile-15 (4
points); Power Blow-12 (6 points); Pressure Points-13 (8
points); Running-8 (1/2 point); Sanskrit-11 (2 points); Stealth-15
(2 points); Tactics-12 (6 points); Theology (Nimba Cult)-10 (2
points)

8 points are available for other combat skills.

History

The Nimba Cult, a radical Buddhist sect, was founded during the Sui dynasty near the beginning of the seventh century. The Cult de-emphasized the pacifistic elements of Buddhism in favor of the perfection of martial arts. The study of personal combat was originally seen as a path to enlightenment, but over time the martial arts became more and more an end in themselves. They developed a tiered organization of Masters, High Assassins (or Veterans) and Acolytes. Masters dictate the Cult's activities completely but have always been few in number, so the activities of the Cult tended to vary over time, dependent on the goals and experiences of the current rulers.

By 1000 A.D. the Nimba Cult was devoted almost exclusively to combat, having developed a theology of conflict. They needed to constantly test their skills under real conditions. Tournaments were useful in their view, but ultimately unsatisfying. Random violence was never tolerated. So the Cult began to freely offer their "services" to hunting brigands and the like.

Characters



After a few decades they also accepted propositions to participate in open conflicts between small armies, sending their members to all points in Asia.

As time went on the open battles became too much of a drain on their members, resulting in a shift toward service as assassins, bodyguards and scouts. Demand for their talents became so great that the Nimba Cult was forced to charge for them in order to reduce the number of requests. Later these funds were used to finance the organization.

No longer tempered with ideals of justice and right, Nimba Cultists became more bloodthirsty. Only money determined their loyalty, eroding the moral base on which the Cult was built. Though they were never consciously evil, their activity began to shift in that direction. Nearly all schools of martial arts rejected the Cult, which led to a shadow war in 1360 that left the Cult seemingly broken. Far from it; the Nimba Cult had moved underground. The wealth that had been amassed over time now funded a transfer of Cult power to a remote section of Manchuria.

The Nimba Cult remained hidden for centuries, once again dedicated to the pursuit of skill, no longer hiring themselves out, and no longer concerned with the activities of any governments. Word leaked out that the Cult still existed, and prospective disciples traveled throughout Asia to find it. This was a difficult task, so those who succeeded were almost always accepted, regardless of race or background. For hundreds of years very

little changed — the Cult taught the purest and highest forms of martial arts, but exerted little control over its membership.

By the 19th century new versions of old ideas had been instituted by the Masters. The Cult kept track of its former Acolytes and discouraged the particularly talented from leaving. Once again they began to hire themselves out to find challenging combat, this time accepting assignments from around the globe. Quick, silent, deadly and discreet, the services of the Cult were again much in demand. But this time the Cult did not merely sell itself to the highest bidder — rather they accepted those jobs which presented the greatest test of strength and skill.

The spread of martial arts around the world in the beginning of the 20th century alarmed the Masters, who saw it as a threat to the Cult's existence. So they sought the world's greatest masters and offered them a choice: join the Nimba Cult, teach no longer, or die. Once again a shadow war erupted, one that is still being fought today.

The sharp rise in the number of metahumans has affected the Cult in two ways. It now eagerly accepts metahumans into their ranks (sometimes even seeking them), but only if their powers make them formidable in traditional ways. Dextrous bricks and speedsters are welcomed; blasters, psis, et cetera need not apply.

And metahumans outside of the Cult now provide its greatest challenge. If a super is deemed to be a potentially worthy adversary, the High Assassins of the Nimba Cult will seek out a conflict. If a foe is secretive, the Nimba may assist the metahuman's known enemies. This is not done out of malice, but to insure a confrontation! If a metahuman is known to welcome fair fights, the Cult will issue a straightforward challenge, and will scrupulously honor whatever terms may be agreed on, as long as the foe does the same.

Currently the Cult is guided by ten Masters. Their main base, a small, inconspicuous temple, remains in Manchuria, but they have a handful of training facilities in other nations. Most of their contracts are with criminal organizations, but they also deal with governments, corporations and occasionally individuals. The amount and level of combat determines which proposals they accept.

The Masters are both intrigued by and wary of the Exchange. The activities of the two organizations do not precisely overlap, but their members or clients come into frequent contact. The Exchange has been solicited more than once to secure personnel for a raid against the Nimba Cult, but thus far it has not accepted such work; it has no scruples about such a proposal, but its files contain alarmingly little basic information about the centuries-old Cult. One of the Exchange's principal operations during the late '80s and early '90s is the acquisition of this data through undercover operatives.

Meanwhile, the Cult is preparing to launch an assault on the Exchange. The existence of a seemingly omnipresent organization that has its fingers in many metavillain endeavors is viewed as a threat (and challenge) that must be addressed. Actually, this assault has been ready for a number of years but the Cultists don't know who, where or what to strike! Unlike many criminal organizations, the Nimba Cult has never devoted considerable resources to investigation. Virtually all of its activities in its long history have been comparatively straightforward.

Thus, these two powerful organizations are like duellists circling in the dark, ears pricked, looking for an opportunity to strike . . .

Campaign Role

Martial artists may be invited to join the Cult. Civilian masters who instruct others will be approached, as will supers

who exhibit only a minor interest in the letter of the law (i.e., vigilantes).

If a PC is inducted into the Cult, he or she will undergo the intense training of an Acolyte along with several tests. Refusal to complete an assigned mission will earn the enmity of the Nimba Cultists, and the character will have an Enemy for the rest of his life. See Predator (p. 32) for an example of the commandments given to an Acolyte and the repercussions of disobeying them.

Abilities

The GM may design his own metahuman High Assassins, but the vast majority of Nimba Cultists have no metahuman abilities whatsoever, relying on their intense training instead. Even metahumans will be highly trained, or undergoing such training, and no one reaches the rank of High Assassin without superlative skill.

Masters will never be encountered by player characters unless they raid the ancient temple in Manchuria. Their statistics can be extrapolated from those of the High Assassins by adding 50 character points plus those gained from the Age disadvantage, if taken.

High Assassins have completed years of training and now engage in the most hazardous duty — meeting metahumans and master martial artists in personal combat.

At differing point levels the description of a High Assassin does not change substantially. The higher total raises some exotic martial arts skills to higher levels (especially Pressure Points) and adds the mysterious Hand of Death skill. If a target is important enough, the sacrifice of several High Assassins for the delivery of a single Hand of Death is acceptable to the Cult.

The lower point total can be used as an interesting variant of the Martial Arts Thug; it is more powerful than the hireling presented on the sidebar on p. 3, both in attributes and skill as well as the retention of the Cinematic Martial Arts abilities.

Battle Tactics

Throughout its history the Nimba Cult has maintained one constant — a disdain for modern weaponry. Firearms and explosives are viewed as unworthy of a true scholar of combat. Modern technology that is not directly related to combat is studied, however. The single exception is modern armor, often worn by High Assassins. They justify it because it increases their ability to compete with metahumans without demanding a change in training or tactics.

When faced with a superior martial artist or metahuman opponent, the Cult will study him or her in action, preferably employing Acolytes to film the adversary in action, in order to plan an effective strategy.

Many opponents the High Assassins encounter have armor or other protection that renders them immune from a karate strike, even when enhanced by Power Blow. In these cases the Pressure Points skill is most useful. Remember that a High Assassin does not need to knock his opponent unconscious — simply immobilizing him would be considered a victory.

Power Variations

100-point version: Lower DX to 13; drop Toughness; drop Escape skill; drop First Aid skill; drop Tactics skill.

300-point version: Raise ST to 15; raise HT to 13; raise Acrobatics skill level to 15; raise Breaking Blow skill level to 20; add Hand of Death-16; raise Karate skill level to 18; raise Power Blow skill level to 20; raise Pressure Points skill level to 25.

HYDRA

ST 25 (116 points) IQ 9 (-10 points)

DX 14 (45 points) HT 14 (45 points)

Speed: 7.00 Move: 7

Damage: Thrust 3d+1 imp; Swing 5d+2 cut

Appearance: Male, white, age 22, 5' 11", 200 lbs., brown hair, brown eyes, darkened, hard skin.

Advantages:

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Patron: Mr. Blieman on 9 or less (10 points)

Disadvantages:

Appearance: Ugly (-10 points)

Bad Temper (-10 points)

Duty: To Mr. Bleiman on 12 or less (-10 points)

Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)

Greed (-15 points)

Phobia: Demophobia (-30 points)

Stubbornness (-5 points)

Super Advantages:

Costume (20 points)

Damage Resistance +10 vs. Crushing (40 points)

Duplication×3 (Must be hit to split -2; Must touch to recombine -2; 135 points)

Passive Defense +3 (75 points)

Super Equipment:

Claws (Can Be Stolen: Contest of ST -30%, 28 points)

Damage Resistance +9 (45 points)

* Telepathy Power 5 (Mind Shield, 10 points)

Mind Shield-16 (Functions as skill-8, 1 point)

Skills:

Acrobatics-12 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Dallas underground)-12 (6 points); Karate-15 (8 points); Camouflage-13 (8 points); Driving (Car)-14 (2 points); English-9 (0 points); Lasso-12 (1/2 point); Riding (Horse)-12 (1/2 point); Scrounging-10 (2 points); Stealth-14 (2 points)

Quirks:

Overconfident against psis

Obnoxious laugh

Pronounced Texas drawl

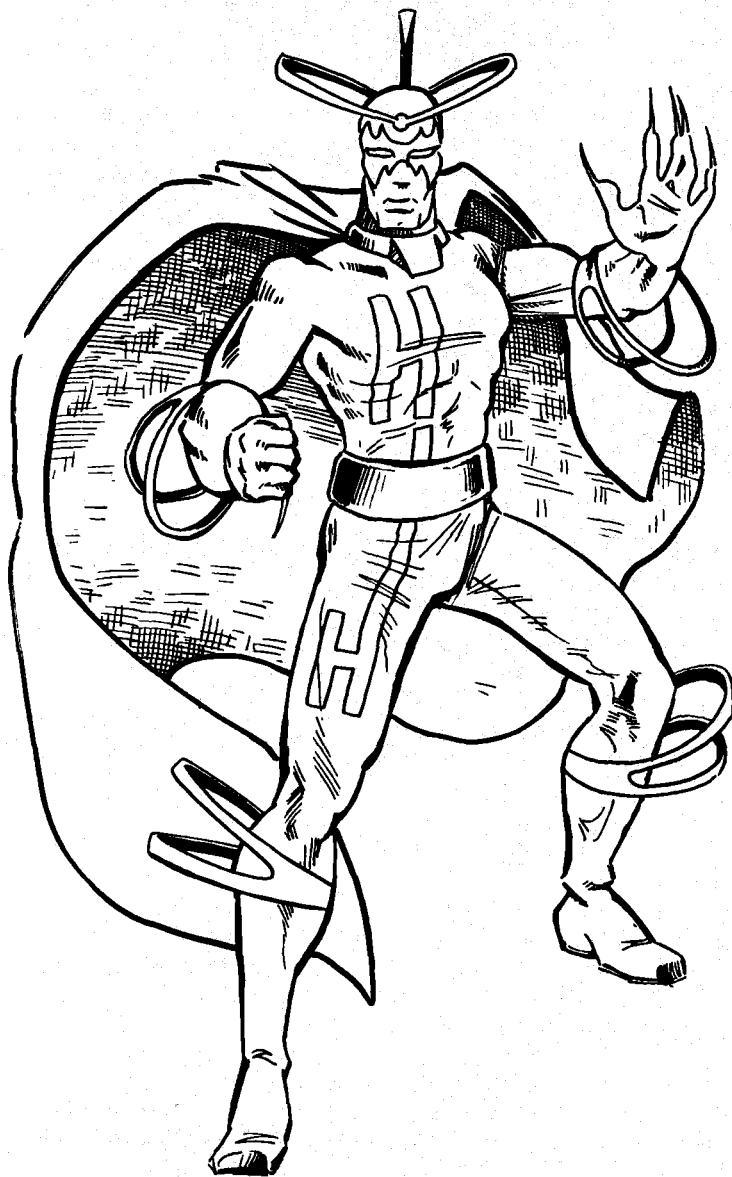
Shows off his strength to normals

Boorish

Story

Ever since he was a little boy, all Joshua Astin wanted was to be left alone. His parents abandoned him, so he was told, and after being transferred between several orphanages he ended up at the El Paso State Facility for Boys.

Josh was bigger and stronger than the other kids of his age and was teased relentlessly because of it. When he was fourteen a group of younger boys was giving him a hard time. He lost control, and in an uncontrolled fit of mixed frustration and embarrassment he lashed out at them. As the boys scattered he tripped over one of them. The smaller boy's spine snapped, and



he died immediately. Fearing retribution, Josh ran away, never to return to any orphanage.

Alone in the city, he had no idea what to do. Josh spent a week begging for food and running from people that offered to take him somewhere. As if his situation weren't bad enough, his body was changing, becoming stronger and developing a tough hide. His wandering through the city eventually led him to an enormous junkyard. The proprietors virtually never bothered to check the stacks farthest from the road. Cars, refrigerators and other decades-old litter baked in the sun unwatched, so Josh made this part of the junkyard his home.

His body continued to change, leading Josh to feel it would be best if he just stayed out of normal peoples' way for good. After dark he made his rounds about the local residences, finding sufficient (if not delectable) food plus enough clothes and other supplies to survive. Josh lived like this for several years.

Only rarely did he venture into the city itself. There were fewer places to hide and the length of his stay was restricted by the time it took to walk in and out before sunrise. But during the winter he could wear a coat and hat and walk the streets. Just being close to other humans (who didn't notice his deformity) made him feel better.

During one of his excursions into El Paso he was accosted by a small group of thugs. His improved strength helped him to

fight them off without much trouble until one pulled a gun and fired two shots into Josh's stomach. To everyone's surprise the bullets ricocheted off — and now *three* Josh Astins stood opposite the hoods. His forces now tripled, Josh easily dispatched the assailants.

Some quick experimentation led to the discovery that Josh could recombine his forms only when touching them. After coming down from the rush of adrenaline, he slumped against a wall and sobbed — now he was even more of a freak than before! As he cursed his mother and father for his wretched existence a limousine turned into the alley. Leaving the headlights on it stopped, and an expensively dressed man emerged from a rear door.

"Do not be afraid, my good man," he said, not realizing how important the last three words were to Josh. He introduced himself as Bradley Bleiman, Esquire. Bleiman confessed that he had witnessed the altercation that Josh had been part of and now wanted to offer him a job. His business frequently required dealings with a criminal element, and he needed a capable bodyguard. Josh yelled back that there was no place for freaks like him in the world. Bleiman answered, "A freak? No, your strength, resilience and ability to replicate make you a super, not a freak."

Though not convinced, Josh decided to take the man up on his offer. Bleiman furnished him with pleasant accommodations as well as a personal trainer. In time he became Bleiman's favorite driver as well as bodyguard. Josh had grown up wanting to be a cowboy. Now he had his chance to ride a horse and work a rope at Bleiman's stables.

After three years Bleiman called Josh into his office and proposed a change in their working arrangement. Never one to mince words, Bleiman asked Josh if he had reservations about performing some criminal acts. Josh was stunned but searched his soul and found nothing stronger than his gratitude to Mr. Bleiman. He answered, "Whatever you say, sir." Bleiman smiled and poured Josh a drink. Over the next couple hours he explained what he'd heard about the Exchange and how he wanted Josh to register with it. They'd split the earnings evenly and Bleiman would see to it that the money was intelligently invested. Josh agreed.

Bleiman produced an appropriate costume, complete with clawed gloves, and a name, Hydra. The Exchange refused to go through Bleiman so Josh made the phone call (see the Exchange, p. 64). Since then Hydra has been involved in a number of small plots. Bleiman moved his operations to Dallas in hopes of securing more lucrative contracts for himself and Hydra.

That has indeed occurred; Hydra has been involved in many robberies, some bodyguard service, and even an assassination. One bungled theft led to capture and an appearance in court, though Bleiman's skillful defense saw him released with only a fine and some community service work.

Campaign Role

Josh was told he'd been an only child, but that is not necessarily so. Siblings placed in other institutions may have also developed metahuman abilities. These may be similar or identical to Hydra's, or they could be completely different.

Mr. Bleiman is a wealthy and well-known attorney who moonlights as a gang boss. Private lawyers and District Attorneys will encounter Bleiman in court from time to time. A Contest of Skill between a PC's Law skill and Bleiman's (Law skill-19) can be used to determine who wins if both sides are completely legal. But if Bleiman is up against an opponent with a very prestigious legal record, he may use Hydra to silence witnesses or plant evidence.

Personality

Joshua Astin used to be a nice, simple young man, but his years of torment and then solitude have detached him from the rest of humanity. In his mind, only Mr. Bleiman and some of his employees are to be trusted. He is utterly devoted to Bleiman and has no compunctions about violent missions. Bleiman favors those contracts that involve teamwork with other villains as well as conflict with other supers, so those are the ones Hydra accepts. Eventually Bleiman wants a villain group of his own.

His years of daydreaming lasted far longer than most boys' due to Josh's unusual childhood. Cowboys are still his idols, and he still harbors hopes of one day owning a cattle ranch of his own. As unlikely as that wish seems, Astin is unwilling to let go — he practices riding and working his lasso every day.

Abilities

Hydra is considerably stronger than normal men and has the ability to split into up to four exact duplicates. Curiously, the split cannot take place until he has been hit by some form of attack, though insensitivity to the nature of that attack (punch, bullet, laser, whatever) probably indicates this is a psychological block. No attempt has been made to remove this limitation. Recombination of his forms may only occur when they touch (through clothing is acceptable). Hydra usually stands himself in a circle and locks arms for dramatic effect.

His crusty skin provides protection against crushing attacks and provides a greater chance that blows will be deflected. Hydra's costume supplements the Damage Resistance and provides razor-sharp claws on gloves, though these may be pulled off by opponents in combat. He wears a device that blocks out psionic intrusions, but it is not duplicated with his other forms.

The most powerful version adds the ability to absorb energy from fists and bullets, using it to increase Hydra's own strength. If fully charged he can raise it 24 levels, losing one level every two seconds after that. When hit he splits into multiple forms a fraction of an instant before the blow's energy can raise his strength, but any forms that are released afterwards will have the higher attribute, reducing with time as normal.

Battle Tactics

Hydra's deadly claws and lack of concern for human life make him a dangerous foe. He prefers to fight martial artists, using their attacks to get his duplicates out as soon as possible. If working with familiar teammates, he may take some friendly hits to release the copies before encountering heroes.

Bricks are usually too well defended for even his claws to do substantial damage, but he'll readily go after them anyway. If the super is known to have lower DR (about 20), Hydra won't waste a second attacking the hero. Mentalists are the most dangerous since only one of his forms has some protection and the psi is not likely to inflict damage that releases the duplicates.

When two of his multiple forms are injured, or one is knocked out, Hydra will attempt to escape. He'd prefer to recombine before then, but that's not always possible.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower ST to 14, drop Combat Reflexes, lower all Damage Resistance to 1 point vs. all, lower Duplication to $\times 1$, drop Mind Shield.

750-point version: Raise ST to 50, add Absorption: 8d vs. crushing (Only to raise ST -2), raise Duplication to $\times 5$, raise Karate skill level to 16.

Mastabah

ST 150 (296 points) IQ 10 (0 points) Move: 9

DX 11 (10 points) HT 17 (100 points)

Speed: 7.00 Move: 7

Damage: Punch 16d-1; Thrust 16d; Swing 18d

Appearance: Male, white, age 42, apparent age 34, 6' 7", 390 lbs., black hair, grey eyes (no pupils), weathered, sun-browned skin.

Advantages:

Absolute Direction (5 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Patron: the undead mage Khufu on 6 or less (15 points)

Voice (10 points)

Disadvantages:

Unattractive (-5 points)

Bad Sight (nearsighted) (-10 points)

Berserk (-15 points)

Color Blind (-10 points)

Gigantism (-10 points)

Primitive (TL2) (-35 points)

Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)

Super Advantages:

Damage Resistance +35 (175 points)

Damage Resistance vs. Crushing +8 (32 points)

Extra Hit Points +4 (32 points)

Increased Density $\times 2$ (20 points)

Recovery (10 points)

Regeneration: Regular (25 points)

Temperature Tolerance (10 points)

Powers and Super-Skills:

* Anti-Psi Power 5 (10 points)

Psionic Resistance-6 (1 point)

* Matter Control Power 8 (56 points)

Disintegrate-12 (Touch Only -2; 12 points)

Skills:

Anthropology-10 (4 points); Arabic-9 (1 point); Archaeology-12 (8 points); Area Knowledge (Nile Valley)-10 (1 point); Brawling-14 (8 points); English-10 (0 points); Egyptian Hieroglyphics-10 (2 points); First Aid-10 (1 point); French-8 (1/2 point); Packing-9 (2 points); Research-11 (4 points); Riding (Camel)-10 (1 point), (Horse)-10 (1 point); Running-16 (2 points); Survival (Desert)-9 (1 point); Traps/TL2-10 (2 points); Writing-11 (4 points)

Quirks:

Handles Egyptian artifacts gingerly, destroys others

Consumes a bottle of aspirin with every meal

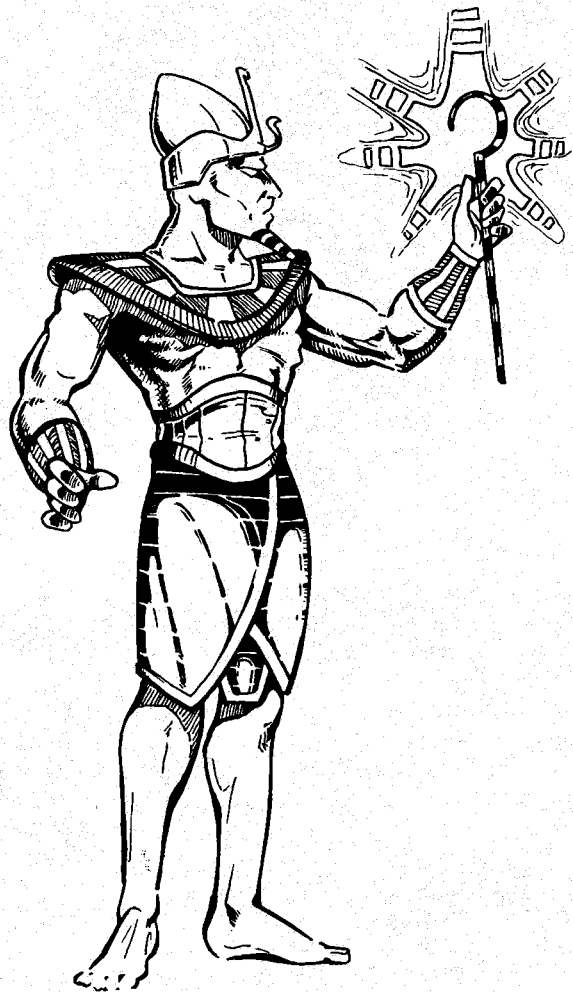
Shaves his head

Intimidated, almost frightened by very beautiful women

Thinks Harrison Ford is a real archaeologist

Story

Dr. Craig Belosh was born in Sacramento, California but moved to Paris for his education, later becoming a French citizen. His doctoral thesis explored the legend of Khufu, an oracular priest of Rameses III, who occasionally exhibited



powers that would later be called magic. After graduating he continued his research, ultimately deducing the location of Khufu's crypt. He spent four years securing funds for an expedition and dig.

After arriving in the vicinity of the tomb, excavations found the actual site within two months. Belosh gave the order to expose the hidden crypt, and digging resumed. Work was progressing at a moderate pace, so he returned to France to catch up on some bureaucratic responsibilities that accompanied the dig. While in Paris he received letters from numerous psychics foretelling great danger if he were to continue to tamper with the crypt of this potent mage. Also, several colleagues from a handful of countries telephoned to express their concern about this dig. Belosh was amused, but paid them no mind.

When the time for entry into the burial chambers approached he flew back to Egypt. Insisting that he lead the way into every major chamber, he found room upon room of artifacts in a greater concentration than had ever been discovered. Curiously, the items varied widely in social and religious importance. Also, skeletons of extremely large men were found lying in open sarcophagi, one per chamber. The last room before the tomb, or mastabah, of Khufu featured an empty sarcophagus.

Khufu's mastabah had already been breached by robbers. Belosh went in first, alone, carrying only a torch for added drama. As soon as he entered the personal crypt, an eerie howl swept through the entire tomb like a man's dying breath. His diggers panicked, scrambling out of the tomb.

Inside, Craig also panicked, but was no longer in control of his body, unable to move or scream. He stood, horrified as the mummified form of Khufu opened his sarcophagus from the inside, then stepped out to face the archaeologist. The mummy's hands performed a complex set of gestures, then he reached into

Characters

Craig's body with wrapped hands, one into his chest and one into his head. Still frozen, Craig watched in horror as the mummy withdrew his hands, then returned to the sarcophagus and replaced the top.

Craig's body was racked with pain as it stretched, grew and contorted. He was becoming larger, as large as the men whose skeletons he'd seen before. The pain was excruciating and unending — he blacked out.

In one respect, Craig Belosh woke up hours later, still standing in the crypt but now possessing a body of tremendous might and power and a mind that was superimposed with a single purpose. In another, Craig Belosh never recovered, his soul overrun by one of more intensity. Whatever the interpretation, Dr. Belosh had changed, and not for the better.

Using a new-found power of his hands to melt whatever they touched without heat, he carefully created an exit from the tomb. Breathing in the chill air of the night, he started walking west, across the desert. He knew he was searching for something — an Egyptian artifact of some kind — but he couldn't discern its form or function. Though he would know this object when he saw it, he was not drawn to it. It would only be found by combing the world. He must find it within his lifetime and return it to Khufu's tomb.

After some time he arrived in Casablanca. Calling himself Mastabah, he asked to register with the United Nations and serve on an IST team. In this way he secured passage to Europe, then America. Once in the New York he disappeared into the city. Weeks later he had started a rampage through universities and museums along the eastern seaboard.

As for Khufu, his sarcophagus was empty when the searchers reached the inner chamber . . .

Campaign Role

Anyone with an archaeological background may have heard of Dr. Belosh and his tragic transformation. Knowing that the man inside is not a villain, they may seek to remove the curse. GMs may decide whether this is possible, and how, but it should not be easy. The Tome of the Black Moon (see p. 00) may offer a clue.

The artifact Mastabah is seeking may be part of a hero's costume! Once Mastabah sees it he will never stop hunting the hero. Though this would work best for a hero with an Egyptian theme, the artifact may have been remade or disassembled long ago so that it no longer appears Egyptian.

Archeologists may also simply wish to study Mastabah, as dangerous as this sounds. There is no reason to suspect that the villain retains any special knowledge of his transformation, but there is no reason not to, either. A devoted scientist might deem it worth the risk to observe the villain at close range, maybe even talk to him. The ultimate chance for productive study would require his capture — combinations of sedatives and hypnosis should keep him under control while unlocking any secrets he may hold. These archeologists may be PCs, or the heroes may be employed by the scientists for the capture-and-detain mission.

Remember that, powerful as he is, Mastabah is but the servant of the undead Khufu, who might appear if the artifact seems within reach. Khufu is left for the GM to create; he has great powers, but probably has great vulnerabilities as well, which is why he requires servants to do his work for him.

Personality

Mastabah still possesses the mind of Craig Belosh, but it has been overridden by his mystical quest. From time to time the force driving him to pursue the artifact subsides enough for him to at least search for it rationally. At these times he solicits the

aid of other super-criminals, who are usually eager to make a raid for some priceless museum antiquities.

He is still in constant pain. Perversely, inflicting injury to others helps to reduce his own anguish. For this reason he usually bats normals about, occasionally killing them. This hasn't endeared him at all to the authorities, and he is one of the most wanted metavillains on the east coast.

Abilities

Mastabah is tremendously strong and resistant to damage. The ordeal reduced his intellect considerably but gave him protection from psionics. The ability to repair damage inflicted on his body has improved substantially, and he can disintegrate any substance with his palms, given enough time.

The takeover has caused problems for Mastabah in today's technological society. Only in fleeting instances when Dr. Belosh's mind is able to exert some influence does the creature have any inkling as to the function of the things around him: streetlights, cars, doorknobs, elevators, etc.

At his highest level of power Mastabah can lift three tons without breaking a sweat or over 75 tons if he puts his back into it. Needless to say, heroes would be wise to beware the power of his fists.

Battle Tactics

His Disintegration Power is too small for general use in combat, so Mastabah usually just swings away. He's faster than he looks but not clever enough to use this for surprise. When working with others, he's sometimes been picked up by flying teammates for a high-speed getaway. Too often, however, Mastabah will have gone berserk, and none of his partners come close to him then.

Merely distracting heroes for a length of time will be enough to let him escape. The presence of bystanders that the heroes strive to protect makes Mastabah's work even easier. Whether or not innocents will be hurt, heroes tend to catch important artifacts and monuments that Mastabah can casually toss or knock over.

He may also plunge his hands through whatever floor he's standing on, to grab wiring conduits or pipes and yank! If he happens to find both pipes and wiring, there is now sufficient confusion with a darkened room, live sparks, and pooling water to provide the distraction needed to make his rather slow-paced getaway. Fortunately, Mastabah doesn't understand enough to do this on purpose.

At the higher power level, however, Mastabah has an escape power of his own. His ability to bore a passage through virtually any material can let him avoid temporarily occupied heroes. From almost any location within a city he only needs to tunnel a handful of yards before he reaches the myriad underground passageways of a sewage and water drainage system. With any substantial head start it may assumed that he is almost untrackable (-8 to Tracking roll) once he has reached such tunnels.

Power Variations

500-point version: Lower ST to 95, lower HT to 12, lower Damage Resistance vs. all to +10, raise Extra Hit Points to +8, lower Matter Control Power (Disintegrate) to 5, lower Running skill level to 10.

1,000-point version: Raise ST to 250, add Doesn't Sleep, raise Extra Hit Points to +8, add Polarized Eyes, add Tunnel speed 3, raise Anti-Psi Power (Psionic Resistance) to 15, raise Arabic skill level to 10, raise Egyptian Hieroglyphics skill level to 11.

MIRAGE

ST 10 (0 points) IQ 14 (45 points)
DX 12 (20 points) HT 10 (0 points)
Speed: 5.50 Move: 5 (3,520 teleporting)

Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d

Appearance: Male, Oriental, age 33, 5' 6", 130 lbs., black hair, brown eyes, olive complexion.

Advantages:

Charisma +2 (10 points)
Status 2 (5 points)
Wealthy (20 points)

Disadvantages:

Unattractive (-5 points)
Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)
Enemy: Rival gangs on 9 or less (-30 points)
Greed (-15 points)
Sadism (-15 points)
Secret: Identity (-20 points)
Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)

Super Advantages:

Chameleon x 10 (100 points)
Costume (20 points)

Powers and Super-Skills:

* Telepathy Power 15 (90 points)
 Illusion-21 (Area Effect +4; Selective Effect +4; 72 points)
* Teleportation Power 15 (120 points)
 Autoteleport-16 (No Concentration +2; 28 points)

Super Equipment:

Damage Resistance +10 (50 points)

Skills:

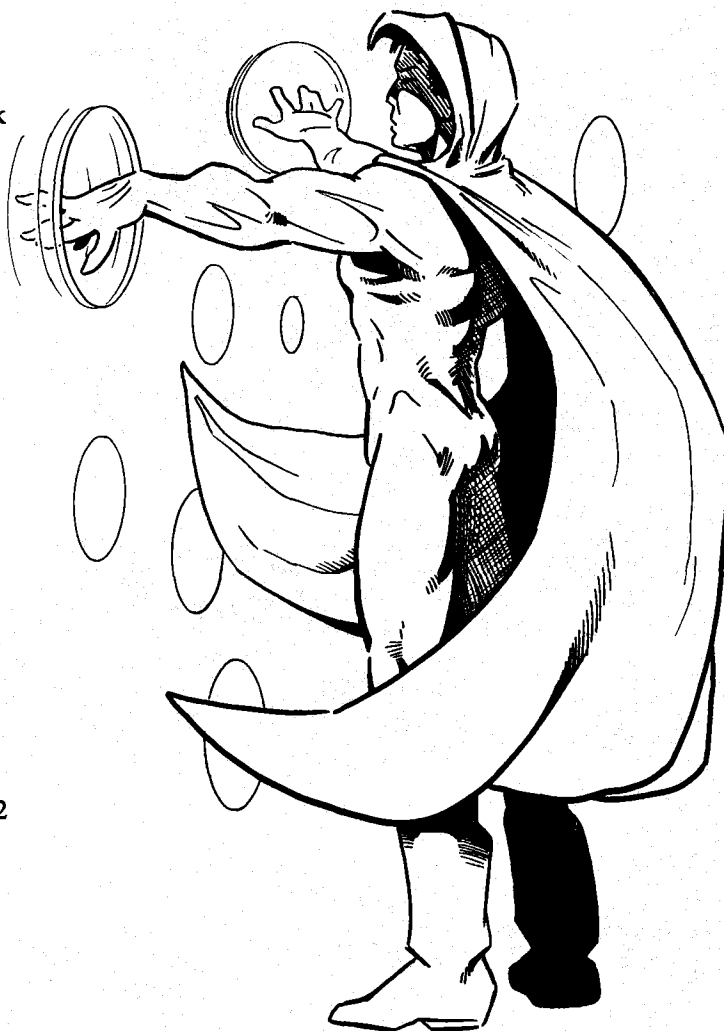
Administration-14 (2 points); Camouflage-14 (1 point); Chinese-12 (1/2 point); Diplomacy-12 (1 point); English-12 (1/2 point); Fast-Talk-14 (2 points); First Aid-13 (1/2 point); French-12 (1/2 point); Gambling-14 (2 points); Karate-12 (4 points); Leadership-17 (4 points); Lockpicking-13 (1 point); Merchant-14 (2 points); Stealth-12 (2 points); Streetwise-14 (2 points); Vietnamese-14 (0 points)

Quirks:

Distrusts all Americans
Wears a lucky pendant
Avid kite enthusiast
Makes frequent trips to Las Vegas
Wears an earring

Story

Lam Nguyen lived in a village that was destroyed during the Vietnam war. No bombs were dropped, no shots were fired, and no homes were burned, but a combination of defoliants and other exotic chemicals tainted the local water supply. Unaware of the danger, the village continued to use the water for drinking and cooking, leading to the death of the village.



All but one. The young boy Lam survived due to the activation of his power genes and was taken by North Vietnamese soldiers. The Viet Cong had spread rumors of super-soldiers fighting for the north, but until now those stories had been false. Here, however, was a boy that would bring more fear to the hearts of the Americans. Although only twelve years old, he was made an officer and deployed near the heaviest fighting.

During the night, and often during the day as well, Lam would teleport into the branches of a tree and immediately blend in with the surroundings. As American soldiers approached he made them see each other as Vietnamese enemies, causing them to shoot one another. Although Lam could not affect an entire platoon at once, the chaos started by automatic weapon fire at waist level accomplished much the same thing.

In this manner he enjoyed great success as a soldier until he encountered a super working for the Americans. The hero managed to detect Lam in the branches far above the jungle floor and fired blasts toward the tree. All of the shots missed Lam, but one struck the branch he was perched on, sending him plummeting to the ground. He was able to teleport out of the fall and away from the battle but the experience frightened him. This fear combined with a growing resentment of the way he'd been used by the Viet Cong, and Lam decided to desert.

Teleporting proved a fast form of travel, and in a matter of days he made his way to Hong Kong. In this strange city he observed closely the way the most successful gangs operated. By offering his services as an assassin, Lam was able to work his way into one of the organizations. After six years in Hong Kong he felt he was ready to lead his own group. The city already had too many gangs, so Lam gathered his associates and traveled to America. On the boat Lam's friends swore an oath never to reveal his powers (which he intended to keep secret).

In the U.S. Lam started the Jade Dragons, a Vietnamese street gang, and faced down every group of hoods in San Francisco. Losses were heavy, but morale was high and there was no shortage of recruits or money. Most of San Francisco's drugs came from suppliers down south, but the Jade Dragons established their own connections and soon commanded much of the city's distribution. When supers working with vice squads began to shake up his organization Lam decided it was time to use his powers again. Now wearing a special protective suit, Mirage began to lead the Jade Dragons in the fight against law enforcement.

Supers have begun to organize public education campaigns as well as better battlefield tactics to oppose the Jade Dragons, Mirage, and the increased drug business in their city. Lam, who continues to keep his secret about Mirage from all but his closest friends, has started to hire other super criminals to assist the Jade Dragons' battles against heroes and police squads. The pay is good, but he refuses to consult with the Exchange and has encountered problems contacting enough metahumans.

Mirage occasionally works for other interests to throw off those who may suspect a deep connection between this villain and the Jade Dragons, especially their leader. Now that their position in San Francisco's drug trade is established, the Jade Dragons have begun to exert their influence over the city's prostitution circles.

Campaign Role

Heroes in the Jade Dragons' city will probably be engaged in a war with this organization. Lam owns many legitimate businesses (restaurants, laundries, etc.) from which the drug business is conducted. He won't normally be seen in them, though, preferring to run the Jade Dragons from his expensive home.

A blaster-powered PC could have been the one that fought the young Lam Nguyen back in Vietnam. Or veterans of that conflict may have survived one of his "attacks." At the very least, anyone who spent time in Vietnam would have heard rumors about a mysterious VC super who drove men crazy enough to shoot their best friends.

Personality

Lam Nguyen is a ruthless ganglord that will stop at nothing to increase his own power and wealth. He does not adhere to any form of religion, eastern or otherwise, and demands that he and his employees be completely devoted to the survival of the Jade Dragons.

Neither is he tied down with what he feels to be archaic ideas about honor. Heroes that waste their time playing up to Mirage's sense of pride or courtesy will find he has none. Mercy is another quality that Mirage has abandoned.

He's not above using his power to trick innocent people into doing horrible things, such as leaping from buildings, nor will he hesitate to sacrifice a teammate to make good his own escape.

Lam is convinced of the usefulness of physical pain when exercising his authority — his punishments hurt the offender but do not reduce his ability to function in the gang. He does not break fingers or arms, but noses are acceptable. Likewise, a scar from a red-hot iron will not permit the recipient to forget his transgression. The truth is that Lam enjoys handing out these punishments and hearing the cries of pain.

He employs freelance villains for temporary work with the Jade Dragons because he relishes authority over such powerful companions. Many times he has considered abandoning the Jade Dragons in order to devote himself to the management of a villain team. For financial reasons he has refrained from such action thus far; it is well that he has, for despite Lam's considerable leadership skills his greed and ego would not sit well with any teammates.

Abilities

Mirage can blend into any pattern, rendering himself nearly invisible, even when moving. He can instantly teleport up to two miles away (for a Step of 880!). With no innate defenses, he uses a padded suit to absorb damage.

Mirage does not have a direct offensive capability, though. Instead, he can cause anyone within a selected area to experience an illusion of Mirage's choosing. He is usually accompanied by a number of Jade Dragons (use Martial Arts Thugs, sidebar p. 3), and often some additional villains.

The most powerful version of this metavillain adds telepathic skills that are especially useful to a leader of somewhat untrustworthy men. Emotion Sense is used to detect dissatisfaction or resentment of the leader, while Mindwipe can be used to erase potentially dangerous memories.

Battle Tactics

Mirage prefers to teleport to a location where he can observe the battle while remaining under cover, then blend into the background. Most foes will have a difficult time spotting Mirage since none of his powers has an obvious physical effect.

His original tactic still works well: trick the enemy into attacking itself. The Illusions are convincing enough to fool even those opponents that suspect or anticipate such deception. The best the heroes can do in that case is avoiding any attack, while they try to avoid enemy fire and locate Mirage.

In his 750-point version, Mirage can also rely on the Mental Blow super-skill for defense. Although it inflicts some minor damage, the primary benefit of the ability (to Mirage, anyway) is that of Stunning the opponent. Such a maneuver can buy precious seconds, enough time for the villain to move somewhere else and blend in with the background. The Shout is particularly useful against opponents without any mental abilities that might be used to pinpoint Mirage's location.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower Chameleon to $\times 5$, lower Telepathy Power to 7, drop Selective Effect enhancement from Illusion skill, lower Illusion skill level to 20, lower Teleport Power to 8, lower Teleport skill level to 12, add Emergencies Only limitation to Teleport skill, drop Damage Resistance.

750-point version: Convert Telepathy Power to non-single-skill, add Emotion Sense-14, add Mental Blow-18 (No Concentration +2), add Mind Shield-15, add Mindwipe-12, add Telesend-14 (Shout only -2), add Signature Sniffer-14, convert Teleport Power to non-single-skill, add Exoteleport-16 (No Concentration +2), raise Damage Resistance to +22.

PREDATOR

ST 37 (140 points) IQ 12 (20 points)

DX 20 (175 points) HT 13 (30 points)

Speed: 8.25 Move: 8

Damage: Karate 4d+2 punch, 5d kick; Thrust 4d; Swing 6d+2

Appearance: Male, white, age 91, apparent age 29, 6' 1", 210 lbs., blond hair, brown eyes, weathered face.

Advantages:

Attractive (5 points)

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

Danger Sense (15 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Reputation: +2 "tough" on 10 or less (5 points)

Toughness DR +1 (10 points)

Disadvantages:

Enemy: FBI on 9 or less (-30 points)

Enemy: Nimba Cult on 6 or less (-15 points)

Lecherousness (-15 points)

Odious Personal Habit: Boasting (-5 points)

Overconfidence (-10 points)

Pacifism: Cannot Harm Innocents (-10 points)

Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)

Super Advantages:

Clinging (30 points)

Damage Resistance +10 (Only when he's aware of the attack -2; 40 points)

Infravision (15 points)

Full Coordination/2 (50 points)

Regeneration: Fast (50 points)

Unaging (60 points)

Super Equipment:

Damage Resistance +8 vs. Crushing (32 points)

Passive Defense +1 (25 points)

Skills:

Acrobatics-20 (4 points); Carousing-14 (4 points); Driving (Car)-19 (1 point); English-12 (0 points); Fast-Draw (Knife)-19 (1/2 point); Interrogation-13 (4 points); Japanese-10 (1/2 point); Jeweler-11 (2 points); Judo-20 (4 points); Karate-24 (32 points); Motorcycle-20 (1 point); Seamanship-12 (1 point); Sex Appeal-14 (2 points); Shadowing-14 (6 points); Stealth-20 (2 points); Streetwise-12 (2 points); Survival (Jungle)-11 (1 point); Theology (Nimba Cult)-11 (2 points); Throwing-18 (1 point); Tracking-12 (2 points); Traps-13 (6 points)

Quirks:

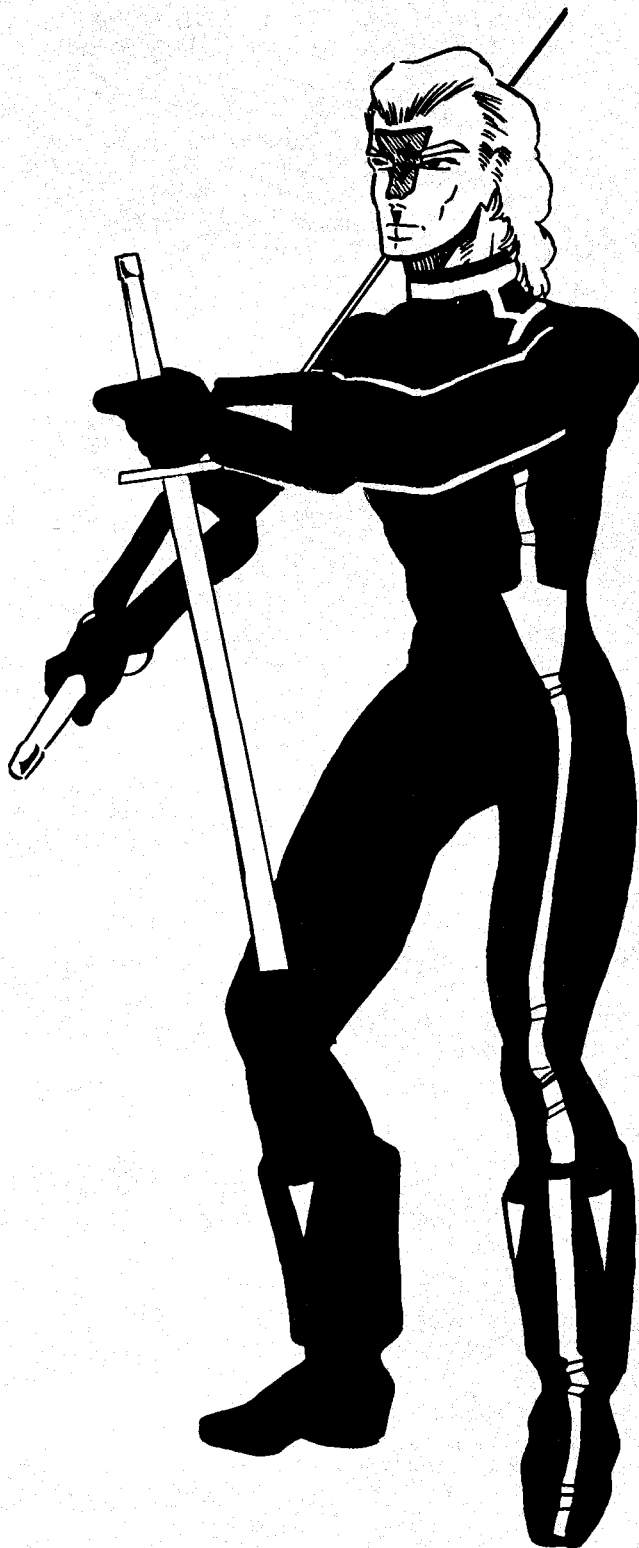
Unafraid of death, even seeks it

Arrogant

Keeps his word

Likes tattoos (has many himself)

Only smokes occasionally, but they're always Marlboro "reds" in a hard pack



Story

During the 1920s a band of mercenaries led by Archer Hayes terrorized the northern coast of Japan. Archer had been born to a merchant mariner and spent all of his life on ships, owing allegiance to no one but himself. On his last raid his men were ransacking a village when he noticed a small temple set back in the woods. He decided to investigate.

Inside the simple temple was an plain altar on which sat a most unusual stone. Years of banditry had given Archer an eye for gems, but this was like nothing he'd ever seen or heard

about. The size of a hen's egg, the stone swirled with color and flecks of light — it appeared to be an enormous golden opal, but the precious stone does not exist in such a hue. Before he could reach out for it the sound of footsteps reached his ears.

Twirling in an instant with a knife ready to throw, he saw that one of the temple's priests had arrived. "Do not touch the Tiger Opal," the priest said, "for it is cursed." "What kind of curse?" asked the mercenary. "The curse of everlasting life," came the answer. Hayes just laughed as he snatched up the gem.

The resulting explosion tore the temple apart. When Hayes' men rushed over to see what the commotion was they found Archer lying in the woods, apparently dead.

But Hayes wasn't dead — he lay unconscious for several days until his body had recuperated from the blast. After waking he found that he had been greatly changed by the mysterious Tiger Opal, which must have been destroyed in the blast. He was now stronger and more agile than he had ever dreamed.

Archer decided to head south in an attempt to find his old gang. When hunger became too great to ignore, Hayes turned his considerable talents to stealing. By the time he reached Tokyo he had made quite a name for himself.

In particular, the Nimba Cult (see p. 24) had heard of this man. Realizing his potential, they approached him with an offer of a job and schooling in the world's most dedicated martial arts cabal. Hayes agreed and soon embarked on an intense training regimen. He learned faster than the other Acolytes, becoming very proficient in karate and judo. When his instructors felt he was ready they sent him on his first mission: to kill the daughter of the British ambassador to Japan.

Late at night Hayes slipped into the young girl's room undetected, but when it came time to kill her, he found that he could not stomach such senseless death. Instead of killing her, Hayes left a note pinned to the sheets, telling the Ambassador that his daughter's life was in danger.

The Cult soon found out that not only had Hayes failed to complete the task but he had betrayed the honor of the Cult — which could only be restored by death. Hayes had anticipated their response and was already on a ship to Los Angeles.

When he arrived in California, Archer immediately started looking for a job. The motion picture business was still expanding in Hollywood, and Hayes soon landed a position as a stuntman. He worked there for quite some time, throughout the entire Depression, but eventually his past caught up with him. U.S. authorities had learned of his activities in Japan, making him once again a fugitive.

Traveling all over the country, Hayes worked odd jobs as he avoided the law. Several times he encountered High Assassins of the Nimba Cult, barely escaping with his life. Eventually his travels across the country became travels around the world. He ventured to exotic lands and saw everything there was to see. Now Archer finally understood the priest's words on the day he touched the Tiger Opal. His everlasting life had become boring and tedious — the unending future held no excitement.

But perhaps there was something left. Hayes saw the rise of metahumans as a new possibility for some excitement in his life, so he returned to Los Angeles, set himself up as a super mercenary called Predator, and hired out for only the most dangerous jobs. In time he registered with the Exchange to filter through the numerous offers he was receiving. Over the years he has worked on the sides of both good and evil, though the number of contracts for the "good" side diminishes every year. Recently he has acquired a new interest — taking the lead in efforts to stop the gang violence that cripples his beloved Los Angeles.

Campaign Role

Archer has not been employed as a professional stuntman for years but still has friends in the industry. His old buddies always knew there was something special about Hayes, so the fact that he still seems rather young won't surprise them too much. Sons and daughters of the stuntmen may have also gone into that business, a good one for super-normals.

Anyone involved with civic life in Los Angeles will probably work with Archer Hayes at one time or another. Predator sometimes makes raids on drug labs and gang hideouts, so heroes may actually work with him!

Personality

Predator is bored, plain and simple. He lives for excitement and will gladly accept any challenge if it has the possibility of being fatal. Archer finds women even more interesting than danger, though he can't understand why they don't all want to go out with someone as truly remarkable as himself.

His fetish with tattoos came from the first woman he loved, the one he nearly married. In honor of her, Predator wears a rose tattooed on his inner left forearm (his on-camera work as a stuntman necessitated that it be small). After she faded from his life and was replaced he had another one, this time a seahorse on his ankle. By now the pattern was established — over the years he acquired several more mementos of his not-so-lonesome past. Of course, the tattoos only add to the difficulty of maintaining his secret identity. A rip in his costume will usually result in a immediate withdrawal by Predator.

Abilities

Predator possesses Enhanced ST and a high DX. His years of combat training with the Nimba Cult earned him high skill in both Karate and Judo, while his years as a stuntman honed his Acrobatics. The exposure to ancient magics stored within the Tiger Opal stopped further aging, imparted a heightened healing factor, and gave him several feline abilities as well (e.g., Clinging, Infravision). When aware of an attack he can protect himself with a type of force field. This does not require any special action or maneuver but he is unable to keep it up continuously — surprise attacks will go through.

At the highest level the feline nature of his powers is enhanced with the addition Catfall and Perfect Balance. Predator also has "nine lives" in that his great fortune will likely prevent his death at times when it seems imminent.

Battle Tactics

Extremely confident in hand-to-hand combat, Predator always seeks out the most powerful earthbound opponent. He will not strike the first blow unless he is already familiar with the foe's combat style. Predator will attack any unarmored areas of his foe and use his lightning quickness to snatch any obvious gadgets. With the Super Step and Attack maneuver he is allowed six attacks and three parries per turn!

Power Variations

500-point version: Lower ST to 15; drop Danger Sense; drop Clinging; drop all Damage Resistance; drop Passive Defense; lower Regeneration: Fast to Regeneration: Regular; lower Judo skill level to 18.

1,000-point version: Raise ST to 65; add Extraordinary Luck; add Catfall; raise Damage Resistance vs. all to +20; add Perfect Balance; raise Damage Resistance vs. Crushing to +10; raise Passive Defense to +3; raise Karate skill level to 25; raise Throwing skill level to 20.

Professor Possessor

ST 12 (20 points) IQ 17 (100 points)

DX 12 (20 points) HT 13 (30 points)

Speed: 6.25 Move: 6

Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+2

Appearance: Male, black, age 35, 6' 2", 180 lbs., black hair, brown eyes.

Advantages:

Appearance: Handsome (15 points)

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

Eidetic Memory (30 points)

Strong Will +2 (8 points)

Wealth: Comfortable (10 points)

Disadvantages:

Addiction: Tobacco (-5 points)

Bad Sight: Nearsighted (-10 points)

Duty: To Deadly Dozen on 12 or less (-10 points)

Enemy: CIA on 6 or less (-15 points)

Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)

Fanaticism: Destruction of America's power base (-15 points)

Intolerance: Complacent Americans (-5 points)

Secret: Involvement in the Iran-Contra affair (-5 points)

Sense of Duty: To teammates (-5 points)

Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)

Powers and Super-Skills:

* ESP Power 10 (30 points)

Precognition-17 (12 points)

Telepathy Power 14 (140 points)

Emotion Sense-14 (2 points)

Erase Signature-13 (1 point)

Illusion-16 (No Concentration +2; 16 points)

Mind Shield-13 (1 point)

Mind Wipe-12 (1/2 point)

Signature Sniffer-13 (1 point)

Suggest-13 (1 point)

Sleep-20 (Area Effect +4; No Concentration +2; 48 points)

Telecontrol-22 (32 points)

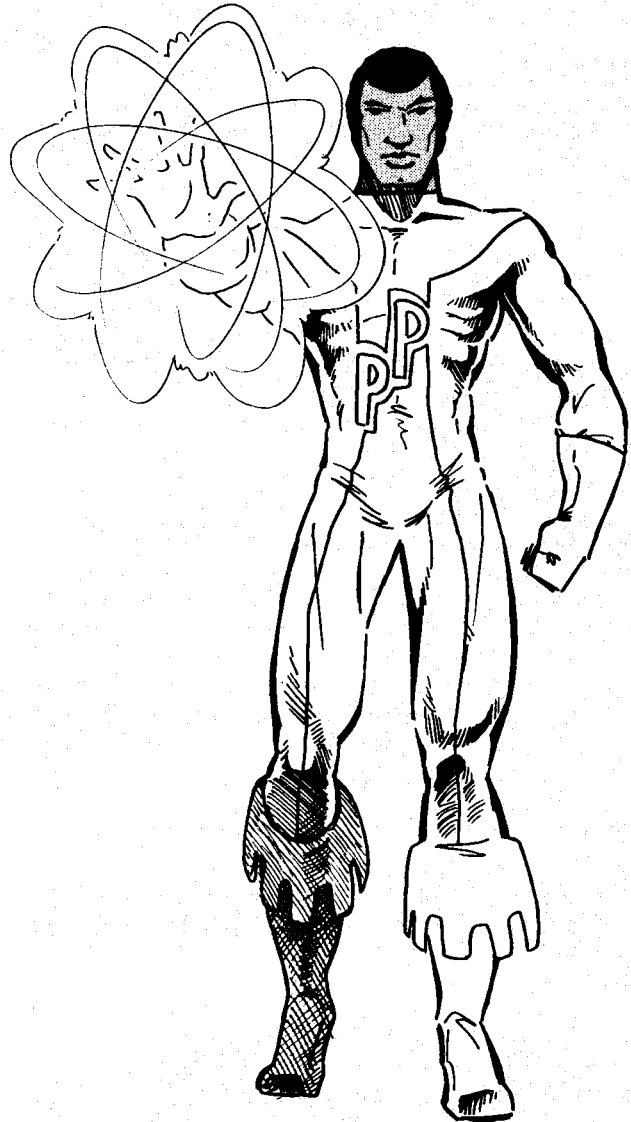
Telereceive-22 (No Concentration +2; 40 points)

Telescan-13 (1 point)

Telesend-14 (2 points)

Skills:

Armoury (Rifles and handguns)-16 (1/2 point); Demolition-16 (1/2 point); English-18 (2 points); Fast-Draw (Clip)-13 (1 point); Fast-Draw (Pistol)-13 (1 point); First Aid-17 (1/2 point); Gambling-18 (2 points); Gesture-17 (1/2 point); Guns (Pistol)-15 (2 points); Guns (Rifle)-17 (8 points); History (African)-15 (1/2 point); Hypnotism-15 (1/2 point); Intelligence Analysis-15 (1/2 point); Interrogation-16 (1/2 point); Judo-12 (4 points); Knife-12 (1 point); Law-15 (1/2 point); Leadership-16 (1/2 point); Lip Reading-16 (1/2 point); Russian-16 (1/2 point); Speed-Load (Rifle)-13 (2 points); Strategy-15 (1/2 point); Swahili-17 (0 points)



Quirks:

Doesn't want to leave America

In love with Electra, though still a trifle wary

Can't swim; nervous around water

Suffers from insomnia

Won't allow anyone to touch his guns

Story

Richard Brunner only remembers portions of his past. Among other things, he no longer recalls his original name. He was born in a village in central Africa, living in poverty like the other 99% of his countrymen. When he was almost 20, his country was plunged into a war, the totalitarian government on one side and Marxist guerrillas on the other. He didn't have to think long about which side to join — the government had fattened itself on the lifeblood of the people, so now he would contribute to its collapse.

Of course, the government possessed superior equipment, supplies and training. Far more important, western nations supported the cruel dictatorship, in the effort to oppose global communism. When some Russian-speaking scientists took blood

samples from his entire squad for some sort of test, he thought nothing of it. That is, until the scientists came back for him.

Brunner was flown under cover of night to a laboratory in eastern Europe. After weeks of further tests his "captors" used an interpreter to tell him what was in store. The guerrillas were losing battle upon battle, but Communist Bloc countries were not in a position to provide much additional material support. Instead, they intended to let the guerrillas help themselves. The entire force had been screened for metahuman genes, and traces were found in those samples from Brunner and a handful of others. None of them displayed any metahuman abilities, so they must be dormant. Advanced (and experimental) procedures developed in this lab might bring those powers forth, so that the tide of the uprising could be turned.

With little exposure to the world outside his home Brunner had difficulty following the scientists' plans. Nonetheless, he consented, suspecting he didn't have a choice anyway.

Bizarre combinations of drugs and treatments were applied to his body over a six-month period. There were tests every day. The process was gruelling, but Brunner endured it. Finally one morning excited scientists ran into the lab trailing a long computer printout, speaking too fast for the interpreter to follow. Brunner merely watched as other technicians read the data and cheered, congratulating each other. Well, thought Brunner, at least it's over.

Far from it. The data showed that Brunner's metahuman genes were no longer repressed — but his abilities still needed to be identified and trained, so he spent more long days trying to melt steel with a stare or fly in the air.

Finally the continued tests disclosed substantial psionic aptitude. By learning conventional skills such as hypnotism, interrogation and lip reading, Brunner was able to develop his ability to read and control other's minds. More tests and training developed other psionic abilities. A Soviet telepath was called in to wipe all memories of the laboratory. The telepath blundered, accidentally removing only some of the targeted memories while destroying others that were to be left intact.

Brunner already exhibited strong dislike of western nations, so the KGB was called in to apply indoctrination techniques. When ready, Brunner was given his identity and deployed within the U.S. His first assignment resulted in the Iran-Contra affair that plagued the last years of the Reagan administration. Since he was essentially free to disrupt the U.S. government in any way he chose, Brunner moved to Los Angeles to investigate the Deadly Dozen, which had made national news.

He decided that working with the Dozen would further his goals, so he contacted Electra through the Exchange. Electra wanted an additional mentalist in the group and approved of Brunner's attitude and style. She and Brunner together chose the name Professor Possessor, and Voltmaster produced a costume with a standard Kevlar vest underneath.

Despite their different backgrounds, Possessor and Electra have fallen in love. They've each confided to the other their ultimate goals and were delighted to find them compatible. Possessor told her about his African past, but not about his involvement with the USSR.

Campaign Role

Special investigators working for the FBI or private interests may have found clues that link the Iran-Contra affair to psionic activity. Definitive proof of such actions is not likely, nor will Possessor, so a PC may seek to probe Possessor's mind himself. Information found in this manner would not be admissible in court, but delivering the news to the hungry media

would profoundly affect public perceptions of those people involved in the scandal and worsen Possessor's reputation.

Personality

Though he has no ill will toward people in general, Professor Possessor is frustrated and angered by Americans, especially those that have no idea of their country's international activities. Though he won't shoot innocents deliberately, some have strayed into his field of fire occasionally. Merely endangering a bystander does not bother him — one of his tactics is to telecontrol a bystander to run out into the center of the fray. Such distractions always benefit the villains.

Possessor has grown quite accustomed to the material comforts of life in America. The thought of returning to Africa, or what little he saw of the Eastern Bloc, is not something he looks forward to. Currently he is under no pressure to do so, but if his KGB superiors order him to move at some future date he intends to defect — not transferring his loyalty to hated America, but simply becoming an independent super-crook.

Blaze has shown Possessor a strange mix of puppy-like admiration and brother-like comradeship, which he appreciates if not encourages. Blaze is able to loosen up Brunner even in his most serious mood. The younger metahuman has tried to interest the older in American sports, but so far Possessor's participation is limited to joining Blaze in watching a game on television.

Abilities

Professor Possessor started out as a guerilla soldier and still prefers to carry and use a gun in combat. His Precognition ability is powerful, but the images he gets are often difficult to interpret. His telepathic powers are substantially developed, especially Sleep, Telecontrol and Telereceive. Strangely, his Mind Shield is unsophisticated in comparison to his other skills.

His secret involvement in the Iran-Contra affair is only worth -5 points because its disclosure would only lead some to suspect and investigate Possessor for communist connections — he's already a criminal.

Battle Tactics

Possessor always carries a gun (usually an AK-47 assault rifle loaded with armor-piercing rounds) when entering a dangerous situation. The Area Effect enhancement makes the Sleep skill his best offensive ability. Telecontrol is often used, especially against hero teams. A hero is then instructed to attack his or her teammates. Occasionally Possessor will command his puppet to knock himself out (by blasting himself or flying full tilt into a wall). His Illusion is used defensively to confuse an opponent into attacking just to the right or left of Possessor. Often Electra sets up a force wall to protect Possessor.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower ST to 10; lower HT to 12; drop Eidetic Memory; drop ESP (Precognition); lower Telepathy Power to 6; drop No Concentration enhancement from Illusion skill; drop all enhancements from Sleep skill; lower Sleep skill to level 19; lower Telecontrol skill to level 20; drop No Concentration enhancement from Telereceive; lower Telereceive skill to level 18.

750-point version: Add Passive Defense +6 (Only if aware of the attack -2), convert ESP Power to non-single-skill; add Clairvoyance-16, Clairaudience-16, Psychometry-16; raise Illusion skill to level 20; add Selective Effect to Sleep skill; raise Sleep skill to level 24; raise Telecontrol skill to level 24.

Red Tempest

ST 13 (30 points) IQ 14 (45 points)
 DX 15 (60 points) HT 13 (30 points)
 Speed: 7.00 Move: 7 (224 flying)
 Damage: Karate 1d+1/7d punch, 1d+3/7d+2 kick; Laser
 12d-3 imp; Thrust 1d/7d-1; Swing 2d-1/9d
 Appearance: Male, white, age 38, 6' 11", 175 lbs., black
 hair (some early grey), brown eyes, award-winning smile.

Advantages:

Alertness +1 (5 points)
 Appearance: Handsome (15 points)
 Charisma +2 (10 points)
 Combat Reflexes (15 points)
 High Pain Threshold (10 points)
 Status 2 (5 points)
 Voice (10 points)
 Wealth: Wealthy (20 points)

Disadvantages:

Addiction: Stimulants (-10 points)
 Code of Honor: Villain's (-10 points)
 Delusion: Believes his journalistic integrity is flawless (-5
 points)
 Duty: To Deadly Dozen on 9 or less (-5 points)
 Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)
 Overconfidence (-10 points)
 Secret: Identity (-20 points)
 Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)
 Reputation: Egotistical jerk in mundane identity (-5 points)

Super Disadvantage:

Vulnerability: 2d from radiation (-10 points)

Super Equipment:

Damage Resistance +40 (200 points)
 Enhanced ST 60 (186 points)
 Flight (40 points)
 * Light Power 2 (8 points)
 Flash-16 (28 points)
 * Light Power 18 (168 points)
 Laser-16 (Armor Piercing +4; 44 points)
 Laser-16 (Area Effect +4; 44 points)
 Radio Hearing (15 points)
 Spectrum Vision (40 points)
 Super Flight×4 (80 points)
 * Telepathy Power 10 (20 points)
 Mind Shield-16 (Functions as skill-12 -4; 12 points)

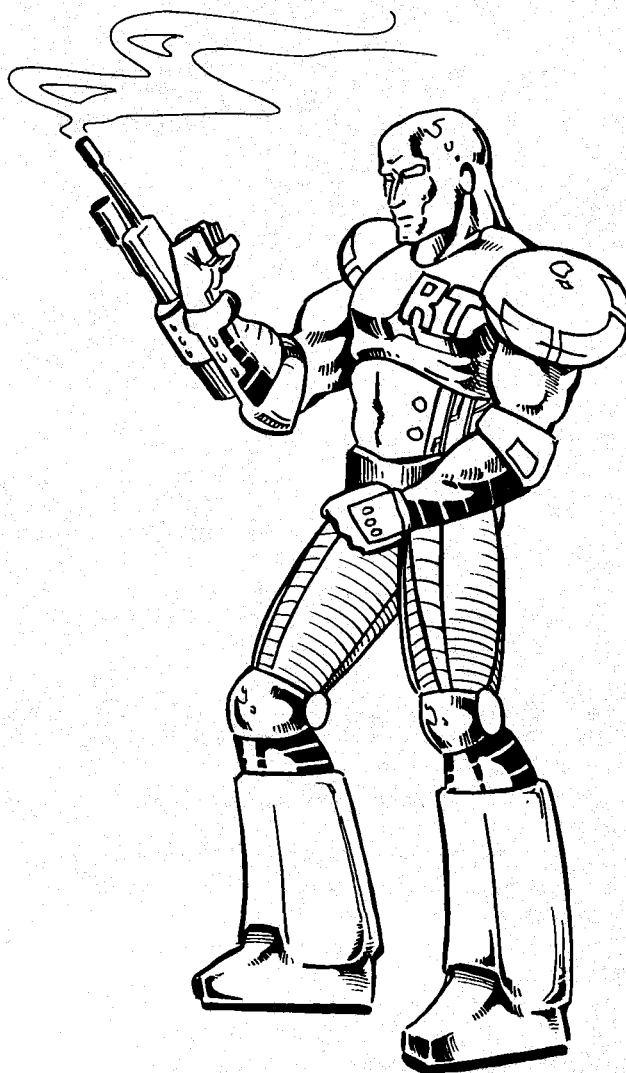
Base Cost: 885 points

Unique -25%

Final Cost: 664 points

Skills:

Acting-12 (1/2 point); Acrobatics-14 (2 points); Administra-
 tion-13 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Los Angeles)-13 (1/2 point);
 Bard-16 (2 points); Battlesuit-15 (4 point); Cooking-14 (1
 point); Carousing-12 (1 point); Computer Operations-13 (1/2
 point); Criminology-12 (1/2 point); Detect Lies-14 (4 points);
 Driving (Car)-14 (1 point); English-14 (0 points); Fast-Talk-14



(2 points); Gesture-13 (1/2 point); Guns (Pistol)-16 (1/2 point);
 Karate-16 (8 points); Performance-14 (1/2 point); Photography-
 12 (1/2 point); Professional Skill: Journalist-13 (1 point); Re-
 search-13 (1 point); Savoir-Faire-18 (0 points); Shadowing-13
 (1 point); Sex Appeal-17 (2 points); Stealth-14 (1 point); Street-
 wise-14 (2 points); Swimming-14 (1/2 point); Whip-16 (4
 points); Writing-12 (1/2 point)

Quirks:

Womanizer
 No longer concerned with his journalistic career
 Thinks soap operas should be banned
 Wants to visit foreign countries
 Intends to repay (or pay off) Deaton someday

Story

Russel Hardin has been a television journalist since he graduated from college. Originally an anchor for a small station in the Midwest, he moved to Southern California to become a special correspondent for KJJZ, one of the first stations to devote a full-time staffer to metahuman coverage. Hardin proved to be an insightful reporter and won several journalistic awards as well as the favor of his employers.

However, underneath it all Hardin was feeling challenged by and inferior to the metahumans he was covering. Driven by this need, he embarked on a rigorous physical training program.

In the privacy of his large home he built a room where he could train. Russel became very proficient with his bare hands and a whip. Calling himself Red Tempest, he made a "body stocking" costume that bathed him in red from tip to toe with a stylish "RT" on his chest.

Red Tempest began his career as a crimefighter, making some showy raids on drug buys and small robberies. Coincidentally, at this time the volume of metahuman news within Los Angeles had lessened. Hardin was under pressure to fill more and more time on camera, so he toyed with the idea of filming Red Tempest in action. But the only way this could be done would be to let his cameraman in on the secret or do the filming himself. Sacrificing a good relationship with his cameraman, Hardin obtained permission to keep a portable cam with him at all times.

Since crimefighting was generally more difficult and dangerous than crime-committing, he decided that Red Tempest would now be a criminal. His street experience and contacts came in handy when he began to work with other costumed criminals. Before every crime he set his camera up remotely to film everything. Hardin's career skyrocketed as he was able to provide footage, sometimes live, of super criminals in action. To avoid discovery he used his investigation skills to find and film many affairs that did not involve Red Tempest.

As Red Tempest, Hardin again began feeling inferior. His training had raised his capabilities far above those of most men, but still below those of metahumans. Years ago he had interviewed a scientist with some incredible ideas about the future of Roland Power Cell (RPC) technology and very few morals. It took some digging, but he was able to find Mr. Deaton (though he had accumulated enough credits to have doctorates from three schools, each had thrown him out due to ethics violations). Deaton was as mad and brilliant as ever. After an ordinary interview Hardin had a good feel for this man.

Hardin came right out with it. Would Deaton be able to produce a power suit for the criminal Red Tempest to use? Deaton heartily agreed, eager to accept the technical challenge. There was no longer a point in keeping anything secret, so Hardin spilled his guts about Red Tempest so that Deaton could design the armor best suited to Hardin's own abilities.

It took eight months for Deaton to finish the work, but when he did both he and Hardin were thrilled. The balance of offensive and defensive capabilities was excellent, and it even had the same old "RT" on the chest. Now truly powerful, Red Tempest sought conflict with supers rather than avoiding it. No longer did he need to awkwardly set up a camera to film his exploits. These days, when Red Tempest roars across the smoggy Los Angeles skyline, reporters from all over grab camera crews and run to the scene.

Years ago he had registered with the Exchange but regularly turned down their offers, unwilling to admit his lack of powers. Finally, one arose that he couldn't afford to let pass by — Electra invited him to join the Deadly Dozen. He accepted and has thus far followed all the group's rules, but he is not a team player at heart. Electra knows this, yet is reluctant to lose the power he brings to the team. Besides, recently he has begun to implement a scheme of hers. Subtly, without drawing suspicion to himself, Russel Hardin, now the weekday anchor for KJJZ, is downplaying the harm done by the Dozen and emphasizing the property damage done by many heroes. Over the course of time this may have a substantial effect on the reputations of California's prominent heroes.

Personality

Hardin would rather not see innocent people hurt by his activities or those of his teammates. He's never stopped to consider why he happens to be on the opposite side from the law. In fact, the sole reason he dons the suit and risks his life is the sheer thrill and challenge of it. As Red Tempest his head swims with the power at his beck and call.

This has led to a deterioration of his identity as Russel Hardin. If it were possible, he might abandon that persona entirely. Of late he has become disliked by most of his coworkers. His speeches about his "impeccable journalistic integrity" and his harassment of female employees have earned him an unsavory but deserved reputation at the station.

Campaign Role

Hardin encounters a variety of people through his job. Besides the directors, producers, and camera crew, he interviews many people in person or over the phone. A PC's civilian identity may be interviewed if he or she is an expert in a particular field or happens to be involved in the issue he is investigating.

KJJZ still asks their anchor to cover metahuman news, so spokesmen or leaders of hero groups will often be contacted by Hardin. Before too long, such a source will discover (with an IQ roll) that Hardin frequently quotes the hero out of context or misquotes him altogether.

Abilities

Though Hardin has physically trained to a high level, all of his primary abilities come from the power suit. It augments his strength, provides protection from injury, filters out psionics, packs a high intensity laser, enables him to fly over 450 mph, and gives him enhanced sensory capabilities.

The suit introduces a stimulant into Hardin's bloodstream so that his reaction time is sufficient to control it. Unfortunately, it also increases the damage he takes from radiation. After months of use Hardin has developed an addiction to this substance. Anyone who tries to use the suit must possess the Battlesuit skill.

Battle Tactics

Red Tempest follows a predictable pattern in combat. He always flies into the scene, assigning himself the most powerful opponent as soon as the foes are within view (Electra plans for this). If that opponent uses a ranged attack he will return fire with the deadly Laser; if the opponent is a brick, Red Tempest will alternate between the Laser and hand-to-hand combat, hovering within striking range of the foe. Especially agile targets are treated to the Area Effect Laser. He rarely uses the Flash except in Close Combat. Red Tempest never retreats of his own volition, but when the entire Dozen pulls out he complies. Because of his influence, Electra gives him a bit more slack than other team members.

Power Variations

500-point version: Lower DX to 13; drop Alertness; lower Damage Resistance to +15; drop Light Power (Flash); lower Light Power (Laser) to 16; lower Super Flight to ×3; drop Telepathy (Mind Shield); drop Shadowing skill.

1,000-point version: Raise Stealth skill level to 15; add (to suit) Psychokinesis Power 24 (Telekinesis), Telekinesis-30 (No Concentration).

RICTUS

ST 9 (-10 points) **IQ** 14 (45 points)

DX 13 (30 points) **HT** 12 (20 points)

Speed: 6.25 **Move:** 6 (48 flying)

Damage: Mental Blow 2d; Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d-1

Appearance: Female, white, age 16, 5' 4", 120 lbs., blond hair, blue eyes, flawless complexion.

Advantages:

Beautiful (15 points)
Empathy (15 points)
Peripheral Vision (15 points)
Comfortable wealth (10 points)

Disadvantages:

Berserk (-15 points)
Bully (-10 points)
Jealousy (-10 points)
Overconfidence (-10 points)
Sadism (-15 points)
Secret: Identity (-20 points)
Secret: Runaway (-5 points)
Youth (-4 points)

Super Advantages:

Flight (40 points)
Insubstantiality (Switchable +1; Can affect up to Light Encumbrance +2; 98 points)
Super Flight×2 (40 points)

Powers and Super-Skills:

* Telepathy Power 20 (100 points)
Mental Blow-21 (No Concentration +2; Reduced Fatigue Cost +4; Extra Painful +4; 80 points)
* Telepathy Power 15 (30 points)
Mind Shield-25 (86 points)

Skills:

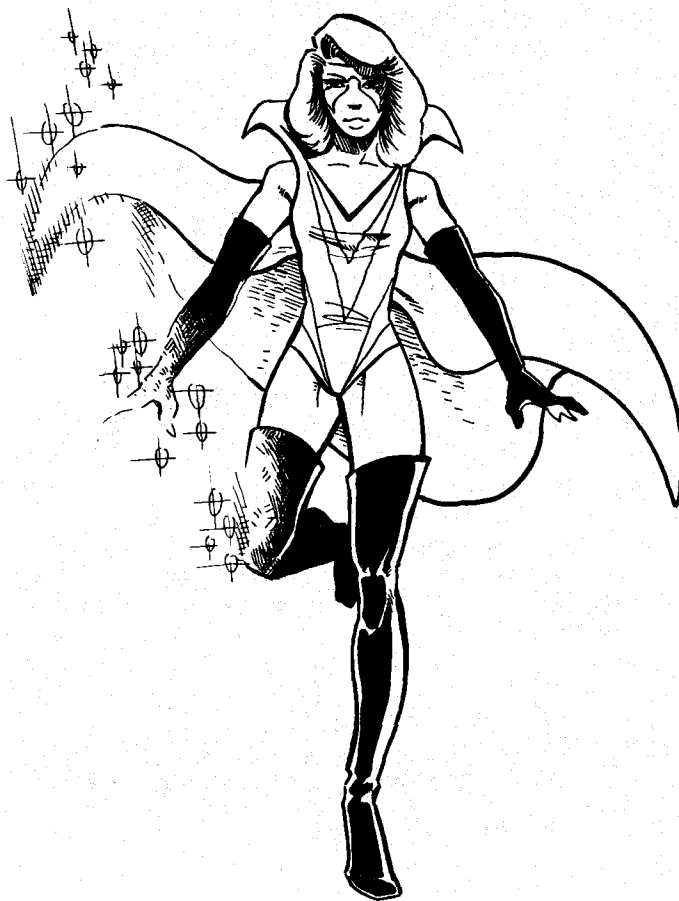
Computer Operations-14 (1 point); Dancing-13 (2 points); English-14 (0 points); Fast-Talk-14 (2 points); Sex Appeal-17 (4 points); Streetwise-13 (1 point)

Quirks:

Robs from wealthy homes only
Doesn't tolerate the name "Angie"
Plans to go to New York
Ashamed that she doesn't have a high school diploma
Keeps emeralds for herself

Story

Angela Borden is the only child of a wealthy Pennsylvania family. Her father is a vice president of sales with a large company, and her mother involves herself with numerous charity and civic functions. Neither one had the time or inclination to rear a young daughter, so the Bordens hired babysitters — lots of them. One babysitter would work from morning till early afternoon and another would take care of the child until after dark when the parents finally arrived home. The Bordens



thought they were being good parents, but their daughter grew up hating them for ignoring her.

Young Angela learned that she had fantastic abilities but kept the information to herself. The Bordens needed a lot of sitters because all of them would get sick after watching Angela for a few days. The spacious home was inspected for anything that might be causing the mild but frequent illnesses, but nothing was found. The illnesses were actually a manifestation of Angela's resentment of her parents that she inflicted involuntarily on the sitters.

By the time she entered high school Angela was fed up. Having a babysitter for a teen-aged child was ridiculous, but her parents still employed older women to take her to school, pick her up afterward, listen to what she had to say, and generally take over the job of parenting. Angela had realized by now that she herself was causing the sitters' pain, and though she could have stopped, she chose instead to increase the level of their discomfort. Her parents still paid her little or no attention, and she began to use her powers on them at night.

She succeeded in forcing both of them to stay home occasionally because of sickness. Angela was disappointed but hardly surprised to find that she and her parents had little to say to each other, having spent almost no time together. Disgusted, she gave up on them and turned her attention to high school.

A prom was approaching, and she set her sights on winning the attentions of one of the most popular seniors, Andrew Ridgeford. Provocative glances, a new hairstyle, notes in his locker . . . she tried everything she could think of to attract him, but he continued to ignore her. Finally she confronted Andrew in a crowded hall and asked if he would take her to the prom. He confessed that he had already asked Rebecca Martin. That was

the last straw. Rebecca couldn't hold a candle to Angela and everybody knew it. The double blow of being completely alienated from her parents and humiliated in front of her peers drove Angela over the edge.

Her parents kept jewelry and other valuables stored in the house, and Angela knew exactly where everything was. She made a costume for herself, determined to show the world how tough she was, and spent a day paging through the dictionary looking for a good name (ultimately choosing Rictus). The afternoon before the prom she packed some bare essentials and a great many of her parents' valuables in a bag and made her move.

When Andrew and Rebecca stepped from a limousine in a tuxedo and gown, she viciously skewered them with her painful mental assaults. She kept the pain on Rebecca until the girl fell to her knees and begged for mercy. Satisfied, Rictus relented and flew away, not stopping until she arrived in Philadelphia. This city had a few super-criminals but as yet no established hero team.

Despite having grown up in a posh environment, Rictus adapted well to life on the lam. She showed no mercy to those who wouldn't help her and quickly found a fence for her stolen goods. Rictus now supports herself by making high-yield robberies. Her super abilities make low-weight, high-value items such as gems and financial certificates the easiest to steal.

Between her upper-class childhood and apparent innocence she has had to be extremely careful when dealing with contacts in the underworld. Early in her criminal career she played up her naivete and let herself be picked up by a local with seedy intentions. At the last moment Rictus lashed out with her mind, nearly killing her would-be assailant. Two more such episodes were enough to spread the word that the petite girl was trouble with a capital "T."

She's heard about the Exchange, but so far does not exactly understand what the organization is. However, finding good locations for her robberies is becoming more and more difficult; she's been asking careful questions about how someone with her abilities could find more lucrative work. None of her normal contacts have suggested anything useful yet, so she's contemplating a move to New York or Boston.

Campaign Role

Young characters may have attended the high school where Rictus made her debut. Older ones could have been chaperones for the prom. Heroes in Philadelphia will be instructed to attempt to capture the girl without harm. Special care must be taken because she is a minor.

Rebecca Martin, the prom date who fell victim to Rictus' most devastating attacks, may have been transformed by the tremendous influx of psionic energy. In other words, the encounter with Rictus could have changed Rebecca into a super as well, probably another mentalist. This may be used as an origin story for a player character.

Personality

Angela cares nothing about the pain she inflicts upon others. In fact, it is more than an effective way of getting what she wants. She enjoys exerting her power, and she's not afraid to admit it. She behaves like the spoiled child that she is — if she sees something she wants, she takes it. If anyone tries to interfere, she won't hesitate to send bolts of mind-numbing pain flaring through her opponents body. She doesn't save this ability for important situations — she has no qualms about knocking out someone who "had the presumption" to take her regular seat at

a cafe, for instance, or a clerk that was too slow to make change.

She is fueled by continued anger and intolerance for everyone around her, and a deep-seated jealousy toward virtually everyone. For all her life, Angela wanted nothing more than to be accepted into some group, any group. Life on the street hardened her to those goals rather quickly, though — now Rictus will settle for respect. She doesn't know what true respect is, though — she has confused it with simple fear. If she can't belong to any group, she will make sure that others fear her power.

Abilities

Rictus is able to fly, become insubstantial, and cause intense pain to those who oppose her. She can also make other objects (up to 36 pounds) insubstantial when touching or carrying them. She cannot grab tangible objects while she is insubstantial.

The pain she inflicts is a Mental Blow with the special enhancement Extra Painful (+4 levels). Against targets without the High Pain Threshold advantage this attack inflicts double "shock effect" of the actual injury. For example, an attack that did 6 points of damage would cause a -12 modifier to the victim's DX and IQ skills, including super-skills, the next turn.

Against targets with High Pain Threshold normal modifiers are applied (i.e., ignore the effects of the advantage versus this attack). The effects of this enhancement and the disadvantage Low Pain Threshold are cumulative.

At the high point versions, Rictus also has power over her own body — she can will it to stop bleeding. She can also force her body or that of another to repair itself quickly, though the cost to her strength is significant.

The most useful of her powers is the ability to send forth a ghost form to scout ahead. As a thief she exercises considerable caution to find a spot to safely leave her tangible body while "ghosting" away.

The capability to read the minds of others also helps her life as a burglar; after ghosting into the home of a wealthy family she will peep into the memories of the head of the household in order to find the location of wall safes and other hidden valuables.

Battle Tactics

Rictus has no need to remain tangible (and vulnerable) when in combat, so she always activates that super advantage first. When safely insubstantial she will begin to inflict pain on her opponents. Unless there is a specific need she'll avoid flying, preferring to reserve that ability for an escape.

Rather than concentrate on one target until he's unconscious, Rictus would rather hurt as many people as possible. Thus, she will never attack the same target twice in succession unless she is facing only one foe.

Rictus is immune to most physical and energy attacks while using Astral Projection, but she is not restricted from using her psionic powers on opponents in the tangible or astral planes.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower HT to 10; drop Flight; drop Super Flight; lower Telepathy Power (Mental Blow) to 10; drop Telepathy (Mind Shield); lower Mental Blow skill level to 20.

750-point version: Add Body Control Power 14, Astral Projection-11, Damage Control-15, Healing-13; convert Telepathy Power to non-single-skill; drop separate Telepathy (Mind Shield) Power; add Sleep-16; Telereceive-16, Telesend-16.

SOUL RIPPER

ST 11 (10 points) IQ 14 (45 points)

DX 11 (10 points) HT 12 (20 points)

Speed: 5.75 Move: 5

Damage: Mental Blow 2d; Mental Stab 5; Thrust 1d-1;
Swing 1d+1

Appearance: Male, white, age 28, 5' 10", 160 lbs., brown hair, blue eyes, rarely shaven.

Advantages:

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Extraordinary Luck (30 points)

Strong Will +2 (8 points)

Toughness DR +1 (10 points)

Disadvantages:

Addiction: Cocaine (-40 points)

Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)

Sadism (-15 points)

Secret: Identity (-20 points)

Stuttering (-10 points)

Powers and Super-Skills:

Psychokinesis Power 2 (24 points)

Telekinesis-13 (8 points)

Telepathy Power 20 (200 points)

Mental Blow-25 (56 points)

Mental Stab-20 (No Concentration×2 +4; Reduced

Fatigue Cost×4 +16; 116 points)

Mind Shield-15 (16 points)

Telesend-14 (12 points)

Skills:

Brawling-14 (8 points); Disguise-19 (12 points); English 14 (0 points); First Aid-13 (1/2 point); Gesture-13 (1/2 point); Guns (Pistol)-14 (2 points); Scrounging-14 (1 point); Shadowing-13 (1 point); Stealth-11 (2 points); Streetwise-14 (2 points); Swimming-11 (1 point)

Quirks:

Considers himself and other metahumans superior

Enjoys reading the most ridiculous tabloids

Envies his half-sister

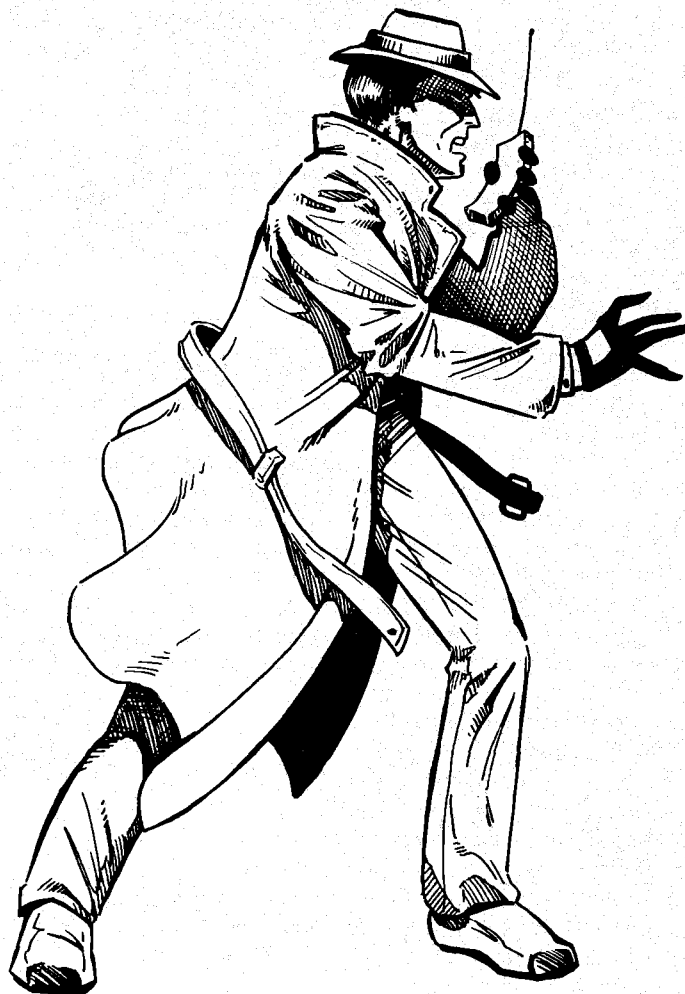
Worries about his high cholesterol level

Lives with five cats

Story

Dennis Swanson grew up knowing about his mild telekinetic ability, and always considered himself better than other people because of it. After all, he was a metahuman, chosen by fate to be superior to those around him (or so he reasoned). Kids in school didn't appreciate Dennis' attitude but were awed when he could lift coins into the air with a thought. After he graduated from high school Dennis refused to get a job, insisting that normals should support metahumans.

Dennis foretold his own future, at least to some degree. A research center in nearby Los Angeles was seeking new subjects for study. In exchange for room, board and a modest monthly stipend, the volunteer metahumans would have to undergo testing and observation, but no real discomfort.



This was what Dennis had been waiting for, so he signed up immediately. In completing the reams of entrance questionnaires he mentioned that his half-sister Linda also showed some psionic talent (see *Ventura*, p. 52).

The researchers were excited by the possibility of studying two siblings with similar power manifestations, so Dennis and Linda were immediately accepted. The scientists also sought their parents, but their mother was now dead, and their father had vanished years before.

Both siblings underwent a number of routine physicals as well as psychological profiles. The limits and subtlety of Dennis' telekinetic powers were carefully observed and recorded. After two months researchers began a new phase in their research. Eastern meditation techniques were combined with biofeedback in the hope of increasing active mental powers and releasing dormant ones. Unlike Linda, Dennis showed no improvement in his telekinetic talents. Though he was disappointed, the technicians were thrilled at the opportunity to study this disparity.

But Dennis' powers had improved — though his telekinesis was still limited to rolling marbles on a desktop, he was now gaining the ability to inflict pain or actual bodily harm on others through the use of his mind alone. Linda, too, was changing, and between them they discovered that they had the capacity to resist the effects of hostile psionics.

Dennis was excited by his new abilities. In his mind he called himself Ripper of Souls, or just Soul Ripper, and pretended to zap the orderlies with his thoughts. Then he realized that his fantasies could become real . . . Determined to stage an actual crime, he invited Linda to join him, and she agreed.

The institute did not restrict excursions into the city, so they caught a bus and made their way to a wealthy residential neighborhood. Wearing gloves and ski masks they broke into a house. As they hoped, the owner appeared to defend his property, allowing Dennis the chance to stun him with his abilities. After reducing him to unconsciousness Linda read the poor fellow's mind to find the location and combination of a safe where they found some cash and gems. That same night they burglarized two other homes.

Dennis had fun but wanted to do more. By frequenting seedy bars he found out that a super-criminal named Electra was starting a villain group in Los Angeles and was using the Exchange to find members. After contacting the Exchange, he was put in touch with her. One month later, after an interview, she asked him to join the Deadly Dozen. He wasn't disappointed in the slightest when the institute finished its study of him and Linda.

His career with the Dozen thrived until Professor Possessor showed up. Dennis had always had a crush on Electra and did not wish to compete with Possessor as a mentalist or suitor. He made a speech about pursuing a solo career, then moved to New York to look up Linda. They worked together as villains a few times but generally followed different paths.

Soul Ripper now works steadily as a freelance super. He never felt comfortable in a special costume and never wears one. Rather, he uses his talent for disguises to conceal his identity.

Campaign Role

PCs with a research background might have met the Swansons at the institute. Psionic heroes may also have spent time at the institute, learning the extent of their abilities.

Since two of their children exhibited similar metahuman traits, it's likely that both parents possessed power genes. Perhaps their father is still alive somewhere . . .

Personality

Soul Ripper believes metahumans are superior to normal humans, and that there is nothing "wrong" about exploiting them, any more than it is "wrong" for humans to shear sheep to make clothing.

His stuttering is a painful reminder that even metahumans are not perfect, and Soul Ripper is sensitive about the speech impediment.

He picked up the cocaine addiction after joining the Deadly Dozen; it now plagues his life. Many of his crimes are two-bit robberies to pay for the drug.

The years since his departure from the Deadly Dozen have not been kind to him. Though he's managed to get by, memories of the grand schemes he's no longer a part of, combined with the frustration of his sister's vast successes, have depressed him.

Soul Ripper has thought several times about offering to rejoin the Dozen but has not done so yet. Electra would be interested in the reunion — his powers and Professor Possessor's

do not overlap considerably — but the reactions of the other members are less certain. Most of the current membership does not know the villain very well, though Tele-Fist is likely to vote for him.

He has toyed with the idea of forming his own villain team — if he does so, it would be with a group of metahumans that can tolerate his ego and occasional childish temperment.

For the most part he avoids his sister — unless he's just pulled a big job of some sort that will give him the opportunity to brag a little bit.

Abilities

Soul Ripper was first brought to the attention of psionic specialists due to him telekinetic abilities. Of a very low power level, they have not improved since he was a young boy.

However, the treatment he received brought forth telepathic abilities of considerable strength. His Mental Blow and Mental Stab skills are at high levels, the latter enhanced to require only one turn of Concentration and one point of Fatigue.

Although he possesses only one super-skill under the Psychokinesis Power group, Soul Ripper has not purchased the power as a single-skill, thus leaving his options open to learn new abilities in the group.

The Mind Shield is left "up" continuously. Though the Telesend is of respectable power and skill, Soul Ripper rarely uses it other than for a Shout.

At the higher power level, Soul Ripper also has the ability to mimic any skill, including a super-skill, provided he can make the necessary contact (three seconds). When working with the Deadly Dozen he used to absorb an ability of one of his partners before entering combat. When he works alone or with "teammates" he doesn't trust, Soul Ripper will take the power he wants from a foe by grappling him. The only conscious opponents this is effective against are usually mentalists, so to get other powers he usually steals them from a fallen super.

Battle Tactics

Soul Ripper prefers to avoid any sort of open battle. If necessary, he'll attempt to prearrange the site of the battle, appearing later disguised as a bystander. A blast from a super could maim or kill him, so Soul Ripper must rely on his own offensive abilities to strike first.

Heroes who have worked in New York for some time will be aware of Soul Ripper's lack of defenses. Knowing this, "good" supers must use some restraint against him.

As discussed under Abilities, using the Alteration Power against a conscious opponent while in combat is especially difficult due to the three-second contact requirement. If the situation presents itself, Soul Ripper will pounce on a foe in a surprise attack. The confusion caused by such an unusual maneuver always buys him a second or two without flying fists, sometimes even a third. By that time he will be able to make the attempt to absorb a super-skill and use it against the foe.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower IQ to 12; convert Psychokinesis to Psychokinesis (Telekinesis); lower Telekinesis skill level to 8; lower Telepathy Power to 10; lower Mental Blow skill level to 20; drop all enhancements from Mental Stab; lower Mental Stab skill level to 12.

750-point version: Add Alteration Power 6 (Absorb Super-Skill), Absorb Super-Skill-25; raise Telekinesis skill level to 16; raise Telepathy Power to 30; add another No Concentration enhancement to Mental Stab; raise Mental Stab skill level to 25.

SPONGE

ST 12 (20 points) IQ 12 (20 points)

DX 13 (30 points) HT 15 (60 points)

Speed: 7.00 Move: 7

Damage: Vibratory Blast 3d imp. — 8d imp.; Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+2

Appearance: Male, black, age 26, 5' 9", 200 lbs., brown hair, brown eyes, noticeable belly.

Advantages:

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Luck (15 points)

Comfortable wealth (5 points)

Disadvantages:

Bad Temper (-10 points)

Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)

Greed (-15 points)

Intolerance: Do-gooders (-5 points)

Overweight (-5 points)

Secret: Identity (-20 points)

Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)

Social Stigma: Minority (-5 points)

Super Advantages:

Extra Hit Points +5 (40 points)

Absorption: 4d vs. generic Energy, 4d vs. Cutting/Impaling, 10d vs. Crushing (Only raises Vibration Power -2; 230 points)

Power and Super-Skills:

* Vibration Power 8 (56 points)

Vibratory Blast-16 (Armor Piercing +4; Cone +3;

Fickle: Activation 14 -1; 48 points)

Vibratory Blast-13 (Affects Insubstantial +2; Fickle:

Activation 14 -1; 16 points)

Vibratory Blast-17 (Explosive +3; Fickle: Activation 5 -7; 12 points)

Skills:

Area Knowledge (Queens)-13 (2 points); Brawling-15 (4 points); Carousing-14 (1 point); Driving (Car)-12 (1 point); English-12 (0 points); Fast-Draw (Pistol)-13 (1 point); Guns (Pistol)-15 (1 point); Holdout-13 (4 points); Merchant-16 (10 points); Running-16 (8 points); Streetwise-14 (6 points)

Quirks:

Collects baseball cards

Spends his "big scores" foolishly and quickly

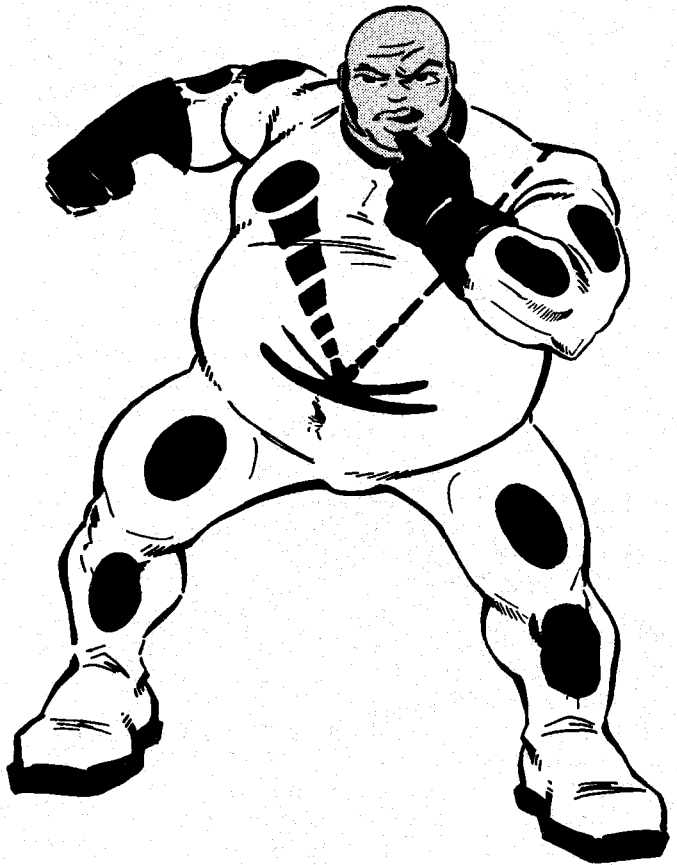
Thinks his customers are pathetic

Wants a Ferrari

Sloppy eater

Story

Lyle Brown grew up in a rough neighborhood. The ravages of poverty, crime and drugs made it a battleground where the best way to stay alive was to not draw attention to yourself. But Lyle found he had a special power. He could project a wave of



force from his hands that could shatter and kill. Though not in the league of the metahumans that duelled over Manhattan, the power was enough to give him an edge in life.

Lyle saw how drugs destroyed people — but he also saw how much the users paid for the stuff. He'd never use them himself, but had no misgivings about selling heroin and other substances to others. After all, Lyle had made a decision not to do drugs, so why couldn't they? Young children, pregnant mothers, people who bought his drugs instead of food . . . all of them could choose not to buy . . . Lyle never forced anyone.

Amid the despair and waste of the ghetto Lyle began making money. The job was sometimes dangerous, but his secret power got him out of more than one jam. After a while he was the top dealer in his part of the city, but his spending habits kept Lyle from the lifestyle he sought. He really wanted a Ferrari, and maybe a boat, but taking ladies out to dinner in his Coupe De Ville every night ate up his cash as fast as he made it.

One day a deal turned out to be a police sting operation. It was a clever trap; the rendezvous site was in a run-down, six-floor parking structure. When the cops showed badges and told him he was under arrest, he ran in panic . . . up toward the roof where there was no escape. When the officers caught up with him, he smashed one of them to jelly with the vibratory blast. The partner of the dead man screamed and charged. Lyle never knew if it was intentional or not, but the policeman pushed him off the top floor of the structure.

Lyle screamed all the way down — 75 feet to the hard, stained concrete. But he wasn't hurt — he didn't even bounce. He just stopped. In the next instant a backup police car rounded the corner, siren blaring and drove to where he lay. Still shocked by the fact that he was still alive, Lyle fired one of his beams at the car. He knew he didn't have the power to affect something that big and hard, but he might get lucky.

Lucky indeed. The blast shredded the entire vehicle — seconds later it burst into flame. Picking himself up, Lyle ran.

On the way back to a friend's house he experimented with the new power of his blast. However, it steadily weakened back to the level he'd always had. He told some of the more trusted members of his gang about what had happened. One of them wondered if Lyle hadn't sucked up the force of hitting the asphalt and used it to blast the cops. This led to some crude experimentation. Lyle blasted part of an old building; then his buddies threw some punches into his gut and he tried the blast again. Sure enough, he was absorbing the power of the blows and increasing his own ability. The punches didn't hurt, either.

Charged with confidence, he made a costume and prepared himself for a life of super-crime. He called himself the Fixxer and started making life miserable for his competitors. He usually brought some of his boys along in case no one attacked him. In that case his allies would pump a few pistol shots into him — enough to raise his power substantially. Word on the street was that he soaked up all damage, so his nickname became Sponge. On one raid he found out the hard way that after taking enough bullets to roughly double his power, the shots started to hurt.

The novelty of raiding the other dealers wore off, and Lyle had neglected his own business, so he stopped the assaults and returned to his former life. The trouble was, life now seemed dull. Asking around, he started to hear what professional metahuman criminals were making on their jobs. He heard about the Exchange, too, and promptly registered. After his first contract he moved to Manhattan, but was forced to continue drug trafficking to pay the rent. Now he waits for the phone to ring with another job.

Campaign Role

Heroes that grew up in the ghetto might have heard of the Sponge or even seen him in action. The incident involving the police sting could have been handled by undercover supers, so perhaps a hero was on hand when the Sponge discovered the extent of his power.

If any heroes suffer from a drug addiction, Lyle might be part of their chain of supply. After the move to Manhattan he hasn't associated the Sponge with his drug business, so the player character would not know he supports a super-criminal. Imagine the scene where the victorious hero removes the mask from his defeated villain and comes literally face to face with his own criminal actions!

Sponge might also be a supplier for addicted villains such as Domino (see pp. 18) and Soul Ripper (p. 40).

Personality

Sponge doesn't care about anyone but himself, or anything but money. He'll do almost anything for a price but remains aware of his own limitations. Though the street still calls him invulnerable, Sponge knows better. The capabilities of his power thrill him, and when charged by others' attacks he enjoys blasting inanimate objects.

Lyle has big goals — he wants to be a millionaire within a year. As a result he will accept jobs that have risks other metavillains might consider unacceptable. He just grins and takes the assignment, confident in his ability to get out of any really tight scrape with his powers. He understands the need to turn tail and run when he is outgunned, but is less inclined to do so than many other villains. This may prove to be the weakness that eventually detroys him (or at least leads to his retirement from the metavillain business).

Abilities

Sponge has a natural ability to issue waves of vibratory force from his hands. Usually he holds both arms straight out in front of his body to channel the blast, but this gesture is not necessary. At its lowest level the blast is more damaging to human flesh than most rifles. Metals and other crystalline substances are also damaged severely by the blast.

His power is increased greatly when Sponge is able to absorb the energy of attacks directed at him. He can consume energy from all physical and energy attacks, but reaches a limit after which the blows or beams begin to hurt. That limit is highest versus blunt impacts from fists, bullets, etc.

Regardless of the level of his power, Sponge can manipulate the beam in one of three ways. His most damaging one bypasses half of a target's armor and is directed from Sponge's body in a cone. None of his attacks is fully reliable, though; each technique sometimes fails. Though Sponge experiments constantly, he has never found out why some of his attacks don't work.

In the 750-point version Sponge can use other manifestations of vibratory power: Buzzsaw and Shockwave. His strength is also higher, and his impaling punches do a respectable amount of damage.

Battle Tactics

Sponge still encounters heroes who don't know about his power. Against them he simply trades blows and blasts until his power has become much more devastating. Better informed heroes must be tricked or goaded into attacking him. If all else fails he'll ask a teammate to blast him or drop him from a height. He's never without teammates — if none of them are metahumans his boys (Street Thugs) will be along to drill him with bullets if need be, and to provide backup if his power fails.

The Explosion blast is his best attack when fully charged, but it rarely works more than once per combat. Sponge doesn't use it until sufficiently vitalized with energy. The two levels of Armor Piercing make the Cone blast a potent attack at most power levels. If that skill fails an Activation roll, he'll use the Affects Insubstantial blast while making a getaway (remember, it affects substantial opponents, too).

If the enhanced abilities are available, Sponge will make use of them, especially Shockwave. The removal of the Fickle limitations makes his first two Vibratory Blasts more reliable, but the effect on the Explosive version is even greater. Now that Sponge is assured multiple uses of the powerful super-skill there is no reason for him to wait to deliver an explosion until the last second. The Area Effect nature of the skill is particularly useful if the target is small or fast. Sponge doesn't have to hit his opponent directly — a blast at a nearby building or other easy shot should affect the most troublesome foe.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower ST to 11; lower DX to 12; lower HT to 12; drop High Pain Threshold; drop Luck; lower Extra Hit points to +1; lower Absorption to 2d vs. generic energy, 2d vs. cutting/impaling, 5d vs. crushing (same limitation); drop the explosive-enhanced Vibratory Blast; lower Running skill level to 10.

750-point version: Raise ST to 37; convert Vibration Power to non-single-skill; add Buzzsaw-14, Shockwave-15; remove all Fickle limitations; raise Streetwise skill level to 16.

TALON

ST 60 (186 points) IQ 8 (-15 points)
DX 14 (45 points) HT 12 (20 points)
Speed: 12.50 Move: 12 (24 flying)
Damage: Tail strike 7d imp; Talons 7d; Thrust 7d-1; Swing

9d

Appearance: Before mutation: Female, oriental, age 24, 5' 6", 105 lbs., black hair, brown eyes.

After mutation: Female (?) reptile (?), 5' 10", 170 lbs., no hair, red eyes, skin covered with small, glossy green scales (like a lizard).

Advantages:

Alertness +3 (15 points)
Double-Jointed (5 points)
Combat Reflexes (15 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)
Night Vision (10 points)

Disadvantages:

Hideous appearance (-20 points)
Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)
Enemy: International scientific community on 6 or less (-15 points)
Mute (-25 points)
Paranoia (-10 points)
Social Stigma: Monster (-15 points)

Super Advantages:

Claws×2 (30 points)
Flight (40 points)
Increased Speed +6 (150 points)
Striker: Impaling (tail) (25 points)

Skills:

Acrobatics-15 (8 points); Biochemistry-9 (12 points); Brawling-17 (8 points); Chemistry-10 (8 points); Computer Operations-9 (2 points); Computer Programming-8 (4 points); English-8 (0 points); Escape-15 (1 point); Genetics-10 (16 points); Research-9 (4 points); Zoology-9 (6 points)

Quirks:

Eats pigeons and other wildlife
Attacks anyone holding a gun
Licks her spiked tail clean
Often perches on power cables
Sluggish in cold weather

Story

Jani Yamahito was a brilliant student of genetics studying under the famous Dr. Larry Thornton. While most geneticists continued to pursue the complex issues surrounding metahumans, Jani and Thornton worked to develop new techniques for replacement tissue growth. With immediate applications to transplants and amputations, this research could also lead to cloning.

Jani found that tissue samples from some species of reptiles exhibited marvelous growth in extra-body environments. In a nutrient solution, the tissues steadily grew back to their original configuration. She was able to clone arms, legs, and certain



internal organs. But the most magnificent discovery Jani made was that stimulation by differing forms of radiation could mutate the sample. Her first efforts simply made the replacement organ or limb much larger than the original. Further experimentation produced modified limbs with longer, sharper claws or tougher hide. For further data she began to grow large membranes and an enormous spiked tail.

The gifted student suspected there was more. The tissues were so resistant to transplant rejection that she supposed they might continue to grow in any body. Putting her money where her mouth was, Jani successfully grafted some reptilian webbing between her fingers. By now she had developed a miraculous topical agent that allowed this procedure to be performed without surgery. Though not visually appealing, the transplanted tissue as well as the host, her own body, survived.

Ecstatic with her success, Jani raced to Thornton's office to display her modified hand. Only for an instant did the professor let his horror be shown, but it was enough for Jani to notice. Thornton pretended to be excited by the discovery, and Jani pretended she didn't suspect anything was wrong. After leaving his office, though, she heard him dial 911 on the office phone.

Jani quickly grabbed everything she could from the laboratory and left. Whoever Thornton had called would check her apartment soon enough, so she checked in at a local hotel

under a false name. Without wasting a moment she grafted the membranes to her sides (much like a flying squirrel's "wings") and the magnificent tail to the base of her spine.

The next few days were spent eating ravenously due to the increased demands of her modified body. With a heavy tip she convinced the hotel manager to go grocery shopping for her and ask no questions. After a week the grafts were firmly established. Some of her original skin was becoming scaly and her strength had been increased, too. Jani really needed the facilities at the lab to study this adequately. Surely Thornton would agree what a magnificent discovery she'd made.

Then a new thought came to her. Suppose Thornton claimed to be an equal partner in her research. Worse yet, he might claim all of her studies! The best move would be to take it easy — just go to his office and talk things over. Jani brought her notes and computer files in a backpack, went to Thornton's room, and found he wasn't there.

When he arrived an hour later, he was with two policemen. Seeing Jani near his door, he shouted, "That's her!!" and both officers drew their guns. Instincts she hadn't been born with caused Jani to leap into the air while shredding her clothes to expose the membranes. A bullet passed through one of them and she swooped down with a shriek, skewering the policeman with her deadly tail. More shots were fired but none connected — on her next two passes she killed the other officer while Thornton fled down the hall to call for help.

Stray bullets had started a fire in the lab, and the professor was already out of sight, so Jani crashed through a window and flew away. In the outskirts of the city she stopped to consider her predicament. Her physical condition was deteriorating to a pure reptilian state, and that process was altering her brain. Each day it was harder to concentrate. Cursing herself, she remembered her notes were now engulfed in flame — she'd left the backpack behind.

Thornton was no help; she'd have to find another geneticist. There was a good one in Chicago . . . maybe she could help. Jani took off, intending to fly to Chicago, but as the days passed she forgot the way and later forgot the scientist's name. Soon after, her vocal cords deteriorated to the point where all she could produce was a sharp hiss. A combination of hunger, loneliness, rage and animalistic instincts have driven her to senselessly kill people. The newspapers have begun to call the creature Talon, unaware that a woman is trapped within.

Within the scientific community two schools of thought have emerged regarding this creature. The first understands that Talon is a laboratory accident, and research is underway to determine how to reverse her condition. Skepticism that such a procedure is possible, as well as a subconscious loathing of the vile creature, has led to little progress.

The second school of thought is championed by Dr. Allen Everett, a professor of genetics. He and others believe that such quick mutations are another manifestation of the evolutionary process. In that sense Talon and other similar cases are of paramount importance, for they are the first examples of new animal species. This faction publishes a good many professional papers to support its claims, but they really want to capture the creature for extensive tests. The well-being of the subject is a concern, insofar as a dead creature cannot be used for behavioral and other intelligence-based tests. Of course, much can be learned from dissection.

Campaign Role

Anyone who knows genetics and has access to advanced equipment may be able to help Talon. Its current actions don't indicate any desire to be transformed back into a human, but that

is due to the dramatic changes going on in its brain. As it stabilizes, Talon may regain its memories, and remember the names of genetic experts . . . but will it see them as potential help, or as enemies? Talon might become the scourge of the scientific community, hunting down and eating biologists.

Telepathic characters may uncover some of Jani's scared thoughts inside the creature, and it may be possible to establish a mental link with that small portion of Talon that is still human. This could greatly aid the retransformation, since Jani at one time knew more about this research than anyone else.

For Talon's sake it had better not be captured by the supporters of Dr. Everett, but the creature is, at the moment, neither intelligent enough nor strong enough to avoid being captured. PCs with a strong sense of morality may be forced to confront scientists that have done no actual criminal acts, demanding that Talon be treated for its condition or released.

Personality

There isn't much left of the original Jani Yamahito. The ambition and drive that characterized the human has served to enhance the survival instincts of the monster. The creature's violence is mostly unprovoked, though it's killed several trigger-happy shotgun owners.

Talon has learned to oppose any beings that confront it, and it recognizes guns as a threat to be dealt with. White laboratory coats also trigger a hostile reaction — no doubt some of Jani's memories are affecting the creature's behavior.

Abilities

Talon is extremely strong and quick. Its arms and legs can be lethal, but the spiked tail is the most deadly threat. It doesn't have any special defenses, relying on aerial acrobatics and sheer speed to dodge most attacks.

At one time much more intelligent, the creature's IQ has dropped to 8. Even so, this represents perception and resistance to Stun more than reasoning capacity (which is lower).

The higher point total version of Talon includes some more reptilian features, a wider field of vision and protective covering for the eyes, and a slight capability to alter skin color and appearance to approach that of Talon's immediate background. Though the latter will not render the creature effectively invisible it can cause its hiding spot to be overlooked.

Battle Tactics

Talon swoops down from the sky to rake flesh with its tail. If necessary, the claws on the creature's hands and feet can be used for more than ornamental purposes. The creature has no concept of holding back, so always does the full amount of damage and always attempts to kill.

If rambunctious heroes take this as an excuse to attack without mercy, remind them that this creature is a victim. There's a woman inside there that may someday be returned to humanity (any supers that pay attention to metahuman news will know of this creature's origin).

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower ST to 17; drop one set of Claws (from "hands"); drop Increased Speed; raise Escape skill level to 16.

750-point version: Raise Alertness to +4; add Peripheral Vision; add Chameleon×1; add Clinging; add Damage Resistance +20; add Nictating Membrane1; add Passive Defense +2; raise Brawling skill level to 20; raise Escape skill to 16.

TELE-FIST

ST 60 (186 points) IQ 10 (0 points)

DX 13 (30 points) HT 13 (30 points)

Speed: 6.50 Move: 6

Damage: Punch 7d; Thrust 7d-1; Swing 9d

Appearance: Male, white, age 30, 6' 2", 260 lbs., short brown hair, hazel eyes, flame-scarred face and metal hands.

Advantages:

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Disadvantages:

Ugly (-10 points)

Duty: Deadly Dozen on 12 or less (-10 points)

Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)

Impulsiveness (-10 points)

Overconfidence (-10 points)

Secret: Identity (-20 points)

Sense of Duty: To all handicapped people (-10 points)

Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)

Super Advantages:

Body of Metal $\times 3$ (Amorphous +3; 31 points)

Full Coordination/2 (50 points)

Increased Density $\times 1$ (10 points)

Power:

* Anti-Psi Power 18 (36 points)

Psionic Resistance-16 (12 points)

Super Equipment:

Damage Resistance +19 (95 points)

Stretching $\times 4$ (Arms only -20%; Breakable: DR 20, HT 30 -5%; -2 to hit -20%; 31 points)

Skills:

Brawling-14 (2 points); Carousing-13 (2 points); Cooking-12 (4 points); Driving (Car)-13 (2 points), (Racecar)-15 (8 points); English-10 (0 points); Mechanic (Gasoline engine)-11 (4 points); Musical Instrument (Electric guitar)-10 (4 points); Running-12 (2 points); Singing-13 (1 point); Sport (Football)-13 (2 points)

Quirks:

Always brings his guitar

Drives very fast

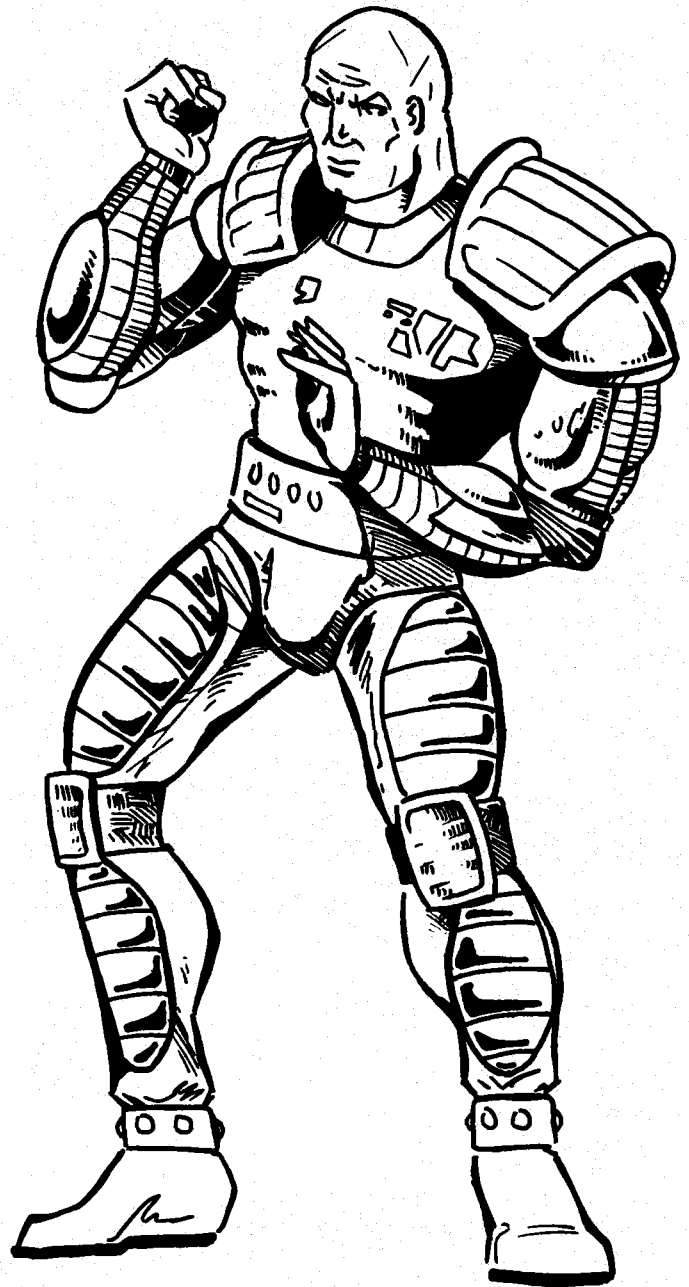
Enjoys a good brawl

Intense Van Halen fan

Reacts violently to comments about his, or others', appearance

Story

As a kid growing up in Oklahoma, Bert Larson enjoyed football, girls, drinking beer, and driving fast. His dreams of professional football ended with a knee injury, so he took up car racing. Before long he was a top local driver, destined for greatness. His team's big break came in a chance to compete against nationally known drivers in a race in San Diego, California.



But after the third lap Larson inexplicably lost control of his car, which rolled over and burst into flame. Trapped within an inferno, Larson used his arms to shield his face from the intense heat. When emergency crews removed him from the wreck he had burns over most of his body. He was transported to a hospital where surgeons had no choice but to amputate both arms above the elbows.

Larson was unconscious for three days. When he awoke he was devastated by his condition. From his point of view, he had no skills, no future at all — he didn't want to live.

The next day, he had an unusual visitor. Although he introduced himself as Dr. Perino, he was not from the hospital. Indeed, he wasn't associated with any medical institution. However, he whispered into a burned ear, he did have the ability to repair Larson. More than that, he could make Larson better than he was before. If Bert wanted this, all he had to do was agree to the contract Perino had brought.

Although Dr. Perino was clearly mad, there was a sparkle of genius in his eye. "Besides," thought Larson, "what have I

got to lose?" Without bothering to read it, he agreed to the contract, his nurses signing as witnesses.

That night Dr. Perino managed to get Larson into a wheelchair and sneak him out. They traveled in a van to a warehouse filled with mechanical, electronic and medical equipment unlike any Larson had ever seen. Larson was anesthetized, then woke up several weeks later with a completely rebuilt body!

Cybernetics reinforced and strengthened his entire frame. His arms were repaired and now had the ability to extend almost 50 feet by telescoping at the wrist. Alloy plates fit into seams on his limbs and torso to provide armor. His new name, Perino announced, was Tele-Fist.

Dr. Perino took a moment to marvel at his creation, then called Larson's attention to the first clause in the contract: payment of ten million dollars. Larson laughed at first, but quickly realized this was no joke. Dr. Perino did not require all of the funds immediately, though. In fact, he preferred that Larson take as long as he needed to amass the funds by theft.

Larson didn't like the idea — he had never stolen anything but a *Penthouse* from a liquor store. Nonetheless, how else could he get the money — and hadn't the world been cruel to him anyway? So he began robbing banks and armored cars. Slowly but surely he was chipping away at his debt, until one day when a blast from a metahuman hero severed his extended arm. Dr. Perino was able to build another within a week, but a clause in the contract added one million dollars for every rebuilt limb.

At this rate, he'd never work his way out of the hole. Without Perino's knowledge he registered with the Exchange. Months went by before he heard anything, but when it finally happened it was worth the wait. A woman named Electra wanted to start a real villain group up in Los Angeles. He accepted immediately, then told Dr. Perino he'd continue to send money. The scientist merely smiled and told him that such an arrangement was contractually disallowed. If Tele-Fist attempted to leave, Dr. Perino would activate a destruct mechanism built into the arms.

That was all Larson could take — this contract mumbo jumbo had gone on long enough and Perino was now completely mad. Coiling his right arm around Dr. Perino's neck, Tele-Fist yanked, pulling the head off in a shower of . . . sparks? Stunned, he released his hold, dropping the body. Trailing fiber optic cables and microcircuitry, the head rolled over, said "See ya later," winked, and fell silent.

Tele-Fist moved to the Deadly Dozen's headquarters, where Captain Adrenaline and later Voltmaster learned how to repair his arms. He was on probation for six months, becoming a full member, even battlefield second-in-command, afterwards. There's been no sign of Dr. Perino, but Tele-Fist is sure he'll turn up someday.

As things have turned out, Tele-Fist is the oldest member of the Deadly Dozen. This has earned him some seniority, general respect from his peers, and a permanent place on DMI's Most Wanted list.

Campaign Role

Tele-Fist spends a few hours each week at centers for the handicapped. Characters that work at these centers or receive therapy will probably recognize Big Bert, as he's come to be called. He never talks about his past or the scars on his face, but he's always willing to play a game or just talk for a while. Everyone assumes that his gloves cover other scars.

Fans of auto racing probably won't remember the name Bert Larson, except possibly as a driver involved in the bad crash back in 1982.

And who was Dr. Perino, anyway?

Personality

Tele-Fist isn't out to conquer the world or seek revenge on humanity, but he does enjoy bashing a few heads. Working with a team like the Deadly Dozen makes everything more fun.

Handicapped individuals have a place in his heart, though. Even though he was one for only a couple of weeks, he still remembers the despair he felt. This has gotten him into trouble with the Deadly Dozen's leader, Electra. During a battle, she ordered him to take out a wheelchair-bound mentalist, but he merely grappled the hero. After making their escape, Electra chewed him out, to which he replied, "I ain't gonna bash a guy that's in a friggin' wheelchair!" Electra remarked that the man had downed two of Tele-Fist's teammates with blasts of psionic energy, and that he'd follow orders or resign. He agreed . . . but the sincerity of his agreement hasn't been tested.

He likes to enhance his villain image by constantly swearing and scowling. Recently, bystanders have begun to boo and hiss when he arrives, something he savors tremendously. He also gets a good laugh out of crimes that are essentially harmless but very "villain-ish" — he delights in super-powered vandalism, but reserves his worst pranks for those who have irritated him or his friends in his mundane identity. He enjoys using his 50-foot reach to put rude graffiti on 4th-story walls and windows . . .

Abilities

Tele-Fist's cybernetically bolstered body gives him Enhanced ST and the ability to extend his arms up to 16 hexes for long-distance punches. Though not constructed entirely of metal, his altered physique gives him the effects of Increased Density and low level Body of Metal. His Damage Resistance comes from polished alloy plates that attach to hardpoints normally covered by synthetic skin. A Combat Processor chip is wired into his brain, giving him Full Coordination/2, the ability to strike twice in a turn. A scrambler that interferes with psionics is also implanted in his brain, but neither Tele-Fist nor any of his teammates knows about this.

In the more costly configuration Tele-Fist enjoys increased strength, armor, and running speed and also receives a useful assortment of enhanced senses. Each of these advantages is electromechanical in nature but cannot easily be hit or broken in combat, hence they are not purchased as gadgets.

Battle Tactics

Tele-Fist loves fighting. He'll attack whoever is closest, giving no regard as to what they might do to him. Often he'll combat two opponents simultaneously. He may Grapple an opponent up to 15 yards away with his extended reach. Though he's not often successful, that's a favorite tactic — he'll try it at least once per combat. Tele-Fist only backs off when Electra says so, both his arms are broken, or he's knocked out.

In his different configurations Tele-Fist engages in super combat essentially the same way. As the Deadly Dozen approaches a hero group Tele-Fist will use his telescopic vision to make a quick scan of the opposition.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower ST to 35; drop High Pain Threshold; drop Body of Metal; drop Full Coordination/2; lower Damage Resistance to +14; drop Anti-Psi (Psionic Resistance); raise Singing skill level to 14.

750-point version: Raise ST to 80; raise Damage Resistance to +31; add Microscopic Vision×5; add Nictating Membrane; add Radio Hearing; add Sensitive Touch; add Super Running×2; add Telescopic Vision×5.

THUNDERBOLT

ST 8 (-15 points) IQ 14 (45 points)

DX 14 (45 points) HT 11 (10 points)

Speed: 6.25 Move: 6 (24 flying)

Damage: Lightning 7d; Thrust 1d-3; Swing 1d-2

Appearance: Female, American Indian, age 21, 5' 9", 120 lbs., black hair, brown eyes, dark complexion.

Advantages:

Very Beautiful (25 points)

Disadvantages:

Bully (-10 points)

Code of Honor: Villain's (-10 points)

Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)

Impulsiveness (-10 points)

Jealousy (-10 points)

Secret: Identity (-20 points)

Secret: Used her powers to help the Los Angeles Dodgers win the 1988 National League Championship (-5 points)

Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)

Stubbornness (-5 points)

Super Advantages:

Flight (40 points)

Super Flight (20 points)

Powers and Super-Skills:

Energy Field Power 15 (Generic Limited Defense, 45 points)

Energy Field-18 (No Concentration +2; Physical Effect -1; 32 points)

* Light Power 6 (24 points)

Flash-13 (No Concentration +2; Link +1; 20 points)

* Vibration Power 6 (42 points)

Shockwave-13 (No Concentration +2; Link +1; 20 points)

Weather Power 14 (112 points)

Call Lightning-22 (Homing +4; 60 points)

Control Weather-14 (Extended Duration +4; 28 points)

Control Winds-13 (8 points)

Whirlwind-13 (8 points)

Super Equipment:

Damage Resistance +5 versus Crushing (20 points)

Skills:

Acrobatics-13 (2 points); Acting-14 (2 points); Apache-12 (1/2 point); Dancing-12 (1/2 point); English-14 (2 points); Fast-Talk-14 (2 points); Merchant-14 (2 points); Sex Appeal-20 (2 points); Stealth-13 (1 point); Weather Sense-15 (4 points)

Quirks:

Insatiable Dodger fan

Hates being corrected

Enjoys using men

Likes to make it rain on outdoor events

Vain; loves buying clothes and makeup



Story

Lisa Daviles grew up on an Apache Indian reservation in northern Arizona. One day, exploring some caves near her home, she was irresistibly drawn to one particular tunnel. Seeing a glow behind a wall of stones, she pulled them away until she could crawl through the opening. When she made it to the next chamber, Lisa found a curious box marked with symbols of her Apache ancestors. She opened the simple but strong latch and suddenly, unavoidably absorbed the ancient demon that had been trapped within it for centuries . . . or so she told her psychiatrist, anyway. In reality there was no demon, box or even cave. Lisa was born with exotic powers that developed when she was a young girl. Both of her parents were born and raised on the reservation, and they fully expected that Lisa do the same, eventually running their general store with an Indian husband. Lisa had plenty of other ideas. She talked with every customer that wasn't from the reservation, mostly state employees and university researchers. *Someday*, she promised herself, *I'll be out in the real world, not withering away here.*

Though she had the power to fly away, Lisa realized she wouldn't last long without money or a place to stay. She waited until her sixteenth birthday to try a plan she'd concocted years before. While researchers were present Lisa drummed up a thunderstorm, took to the air, and began zapping cars with bolts

of lightning — as she flailed her arms about and screamed cries for help. After the Sheriff and fire department arrived she plowed into the ground in a phony crash landing.

After Lisa was examined and treated for injuries, metahuman specialists from Phoenix were summoned. In the two days before they arrived, Lisa created three more incidents. Each time she bolted from the store before causing damage. Later she would explain that she could sense when the demon is taking command of her body.

When the specialists arrived Lisa told them everything she “knew” using elements of different legends she’d heard growing up. Just as she’d hoped, the scientists recommended that she be transported to their Phoenix Metahuman Institute for study and greater safety. Though she longed to go to Los Angeles, Phoenix was a good start. At the Institute she took tests, talked to researchers, and watched a lot of television, which her father had never allowed.

She was fascinated by the glamor of metahumans, even criminals, and longed more than ever to go to Los Angeles where they were more common. After two months no significant progress had been made understanding Lisa’s powers, so a telepathic examination was scheduled. That proved to be the push Lisa needed, as a mental probe would uncover the true source of her powers. Blasting out of the Institute, she took to the skies and headed west.

Two days later Lisa arrived in Los Angeles. She was hired as a salesperson in a shopping mall and rented a small apartment. Between her new hairstyle and trendy clothes, no one recognized her face as that of the missing Indian Demon Girl from the news reports. Before long the news programs had forgotten about the young metahuman from Arizona, and returned to reporting the Deadly Dozen’s latest misdeeds.

Lisa was captivated by the actions of this prominent villain group and their leader, Electra. She now had a new goal — to join the Deadly Dozen. She made a costume for herself and picked the name Thunderbolt. Knowing nothing about the Exchange, she had no idea how to contact the Dozen. So she simply took to the skies every night and looked around. Every night for months she found nothing and ended up watching games at Dodger Stadium.

Finally, she flew over a battle between the Dozen and a southern California hero team. The Dozen was holding its own, but a few well placed surprise lightning bolts turned the tide decidedly against the heroes. As the Dozen left the scene she flew alongside Electra and explained that she wanted to join.

Electra was grateful for the assistance in battle but uneasy. All of her other contacts had been through the Exchange, not just bumping into each other on the street. Still, she offered to meet later for an interview, which Lisa eagerly accepted. After that meeting Electra was still uncertain. Thunderbolt did not seem to know exactly what her goals were, but then, neither did Red Tempest. Relenting, she granted Thunderbolt a six-month probationary membership.

Thunderbolt never made past the third week. Many times when contacted Lisa said she was unable to make a meeting or raid. Behind her excuses of preserving her identity, Electra saw a woman that didn’t have her heart in the villain business. At a special meeting all members of the Dozen except Red Tempest voted to revoke Thunderbolt’s membership.

Lisa was crushed but really wasn’t too surprised — she had realized that she wasn’t cut out for the Deadly Dozen. Not wanting to hear news reports of the team that kicked her out, she moved to Chicago.

Campaign Role

Thunderbolt is again working in a shopping mall, so a character could be a co-worker. Also, heroes that encounter Thunderbolt may find something disturbingly familiar about the beautiful woman working at a clothing store in the mall. Or, a hero may be attracted by her appearance (like everyone else) and ask her out. She’d definitely accept if the invitation came from the heroic identity.

Personality

Thunderbolt is a very intelligent woman, but she still has some growing up to do. Once she sets her sights on a goal she’ll stop at nothing to accomplish it, but usually she is motivated by impulse only. Lisa is extremely attractive and knows it. Since her move to Los Angeles has she been using her looks for special treatment — she’s found that she’s a natural at it and enjoys manipulating men.

Knowing the limits of her powers, Thunderbolt prefers to work with a group. In fact, she won’t perform any super-villainy by herself. Essentially she enjoys using her powers, and it’s more fun to be a bad guy as long as innocent bystanders aren’t severely injured.

She knew that Red Tempest was attracted to her, but always suspected whoever was inside the armor was too old for her — she’s looking for someone under 25.

Abilities

All of Thunderbolt’s powers stem from her innate ability to control weather. She casts lightning bolts with deadly accuracy, flies, and can increase the severity of a storm. She collects static electricity into a crackling shield before her to deflect (Super-Block) all forms of attacks and absorb damage from energy assaults. The Flash and Shockwave are linked to perform her thunderclap. Her suit provides some amount of protection from crushing attacks. For her Homing attack, any time Thunderbolt’s effective skill is 14 or greater, no attack roll is necessary except to see if a critical success is made.

Battle Tactics

Before entering combat Thunderbolt will use her Control Weather skill to prepare the weather as she desires, usually a thunderstorm (so that she can use Call Lightning). She always flies as high as possible while still retaining automatic success with her lightning bolts. When confronted by flying opponents she uses Control Winds and Whirlwind to unsettle them. If she’s substantially injured when a male flier is nearby, Thunderbolt will attempt her favorite trick — letting out an innocently feminine gasp, she’ll plummet to the ground feigning unconsciousness. If someone comes to rescue her she’ll suddenly turn and zap her foe, often with an all-out attack. Such close range will afford her two assured hits.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower DX to 11; drop Super Flight; drop Light Power (Flash); drop Vibration Power (Shockwave); lower Energy Field Power to 14; lower Energy Field skill level to 14; drop Homing enhancement; lower Call Lightning skill level to 18; lower Control Weather skill level to 13; drop Damage Resistance; drop Acrobatics skill.

750-point version: Raise IQ to 15; add Alertness +1; add High Pain Threshold; add Passive Defense +6 (Only vs. energy attacks, -2); add Call Hail-15, Control Temperature-14; convert Damage Resistance to “vs. all” and raise to +20.

TRADE

(Technical Research And Development Enterprises)

TRADE Agent

ST 10 (0 points) IQ 11 (10 points)
DX 13 (30 points) HT 11 (10 points)
Speed: 6.00 Move: 6
Damage: Blast rifle 7d or Megabinder; Thrust 1d-2; Swing
1d

Advantage:

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Disadvantages:

Duty: To TRADE on 15 or less (-15 points)
Enemy: Miscellaneous heroes on 6 or less (-15 points)
Overconfidence (-10 points)
Reputation: Criminal/Terrorist (-15 points)

Super Equipment:

Damage Resistance +10 (50 points)

Blast Rifle: (Breakable: DR 15 HT 50 -15%, Can Be Hit: -4 -15%, Can Be Stolen: Contest of DX -30%, 66 points)
Blaster Power 14 (Generic Crushing Missile)
Blaster-16 (Armor Piercing×2 +8; No Concentration +2; Rapid Fire +3)

or

Megabinder: (as for Blast Rifle, 66 points)
Megabinder Power 21 (Generic Binding Attack)
Megabinder-16 (Area Effect +4; Rapid Fire×2 +6; Limited Use: 4 per day -2)

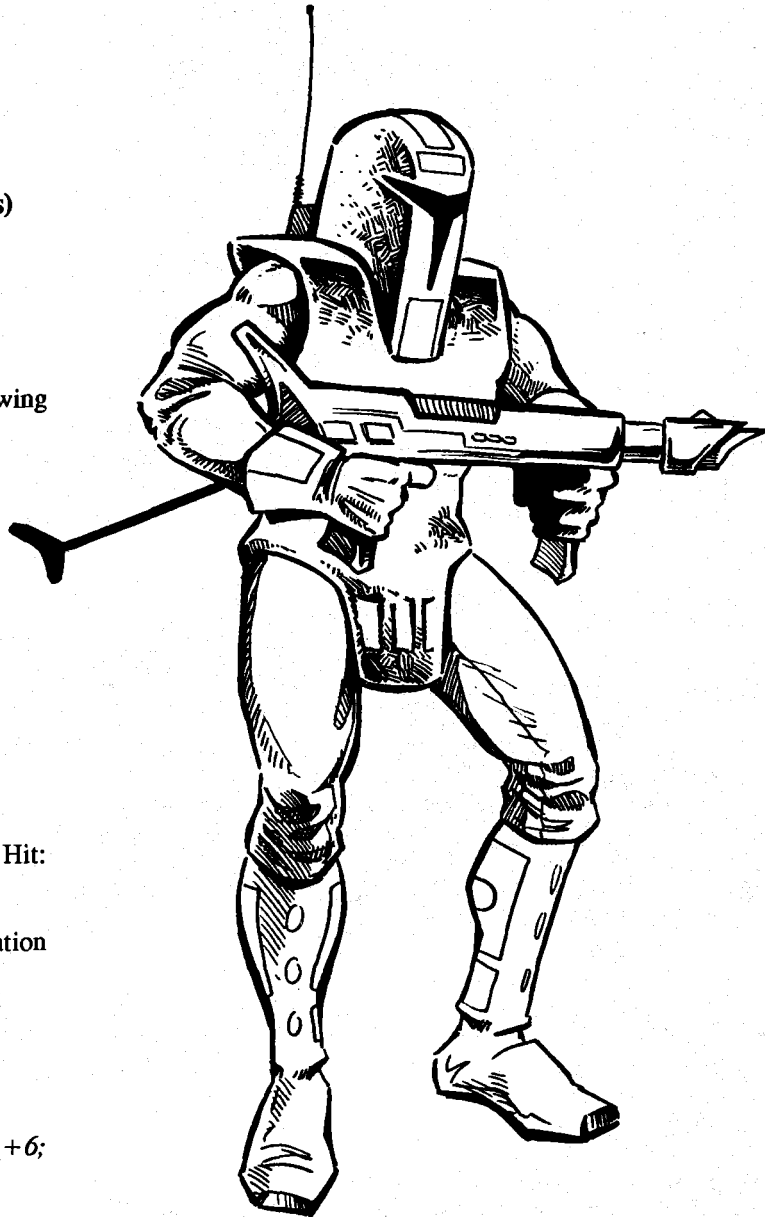
Skills:

Armoury (Blast Rifle or Megabinder)-12 (4 points); Computer Operations-10 (1/2 point); Driving (Car)-13 (2 points); English-11 (0 points); Judo-15 (16 points); Running-8 (1/2 point); Tactics-12 (6 points)

History

In the mid-60s a group of recent doctoral graduates led by R. George Sanchez (see *Dominator*, p. 16) incorporated as Quality Engineering Systems (QES). On the surface an unremarkable electronics firm, its founders had greater goals in mind. After hiring enough staff to maintain a modest output of good components, the founders and a number of other trusted scientists secretly researched the gadgets that metahumans around the globe were beginning to exhibit. Eyewitness accounts and film footage were rigorously examined to shed all available light on the underlying technology behind the gadgets.

But after two years they'd reached an impasse. Without being able to disassemble or even test the super equipment in question, little consequential data was being recorded. The founders of QES had anticipated this, though, and after considerable deliberation they made two landmark decisions. First, a special contingent of troops would be maintained, capable of engaging in combat with metahumans and stealing their special



devices. Second, those devices would be studied and their technology duplicated for sale sold to the highest bidder.

These new plans got off to a rocky start as the scientists underestimated the metahumans' abilities and attachment to their gadgets. In time, specialized equipment and better training turned their private soldiers into a precision team. After capturing and studying a few high-tech devices the group felt the need to expand. There would be no shortage of scientists interested in the research opportunities presented by the secretive side of QES, but it would be harder to find those that would not balk at the legal and ethical issues.

After a long and careful search, enough talent had been recruited to divide QES into five different facilities. It was then that the flip side of QES' legitimate business acquired its own name: Technical Research And Development Enterprises (TRADE).

With greatly expanded facilities and manpower TRADE began to pose a serious threat to gadget-laden metahumans. Security became more important, as supers who had lost equipment to TRADE worked to get it back. Captured agents remained tight-lipped and were eventually released on parole. An experimental telepathic computer was developed to erase agents' most damaging memories. Word eventually got around that the agents knew nothing of importance.

These measures cost a considerable amount of money, leading TRADE's board of directors to consider ways to improve sales. All but one of the directors agreed that contacts should be initiated with terrorists. In fact, by restricting their services and goods to only certain buyers they could disrupt the international balance of power. The sole disagreement came from Sanchez, the original leader of TRADE, who remarked that though he had no authority to veto this proposal, he could not be a part of it and would step down. This was simply a business decision; neither he nor TRADE harbor any grudge.

TRADE made the marketing adjustments and once again gained a huge influx of untaxed money. The capital was invested in other companies, in both hostile and friendly takeovers.

To increase the power of their strike forces, some TRADE facilities have begun to work with metahuman criminals. Any equipment they possess must be handed over for research, so all of these allies have thus far been supers with innate abilities.

In late 1987, a TRADE facility in Ohio was exposed and demolished. Fortunately for TRADE, there was no QES connection, but research was lost and talented personnel were imprisoned. There has been some discussion of using multiple strike teams and additional supers to stage a jailbreak, but these notions are still in the planning stage.

The organization has several times found itself in an awkward situation, when its capture of super-equipment also netted a super! Though TRADE has many resources available to remove and study the hero's (or villain's) devices, there is no standard provision for the captive himself. In the few instances when this has happened medical personnel kept the super heavily sedated until a telepath could be brought in to wipe the subject's memories of TRADE's location.

Campaign Role

Obviously, almost all heroes with super equipment may have TRADE as an Enemy. Gadgets that can be stolen are the easiest to acquire, but if an entire battlesuit is desired the strike teams will attempt to capture the hero himself.

Heroes who capture super-equipment will receive many expressions of interest from governments, corporations, souvenir hunters and would-be supers. One or more of the inquirers will be a TRADE front! A villain who acquires such equipment may receive an open offer . . . and supers who lose their gadgets in battle may find they have been sold to TRADE!

Probably without realizing it, many prominent gadgeteers have been evaluated for a possible invitation into TRADE. A colleague of a PC will ask questions that do not give away his involvement with the organization, but a perceptive engineer may see through them anyway. Alternately, a scientist may play along in an attempt to infiltrate the organization.

QES still maintains a large number of employees and a somewhat profitable electronics business that is entirely unassociated with TRADE. Characters with appropriate technical backgrounds might work directly above a TRADE research facility, but in an entirely different department. They could even car-pool with TRADE technicians and engineers!

Abilities

Technical and administrative personnel of TRADE will never be encountered on assignment in the field. Rather, these teams are composed of men and women who undergo essentially military training . . . but their guns and armor are advanced inventions of TRADE's scientists, the only two that have proved generally suitable for mass production. The armor is surprisingly lightweight, and the primary weapons are formidable. The Blast Rifle is light and maneuverable, and can fire twice per

second. The respectable potency of the blast bypasses fully half of the target's Damage Resistance.

The Megabinder is a weapon that launches a special bonding chemical over moderate distances to affect an entire area. Anything caught within a 7-hex radius of the target will be bound by the adhesive chemical. Up to three shots may be fired in a burst, and the Megabinder holds four glue cannisters.

All strike team agents undergo extensive training in Judo and one of the two weapons, which are generally upgraded when using the 300-point write-up. Even at the 50-point total these weapons are potentially dangerous to metahuman opponents.

Anyone familiar with the basic operation of firearms will be able to operate the Blast Rifle, though the Megabinder will be awkward for anyone who has never fired over-the-shoulder weapons (-4 modifier). TRADE strike teams try to account for all of their equipment, even taking those of downed teammates, but samples of the two guns have been captured by almost all hero teams they've met. Armoury or Engineering skills with appropriate specializations may be used to understand the principles of the weapon design, as well as improve or modify it.

However, TRADE combat teams often carry other devices for field-testing. Sometimes this means a nasty surprise for the heroes they face. Sometimes it is the TRADE team that gets the surprise. For instance, there are eight highly-trained mercenaries, all two inches high, who now occupy a special cell block in a Federal prison. They will be happy to discuss the shortcomings of experimental gear.

Battle Tactics

When a strike team is deployed it will have a specific goal. Usually that goal involves the acquisition of some piece of equipment, but other missions are planned, too. Customarily Blaster Rifle-equipped agents will outnumber their Megabinder-equipped teammates by two to one. The most effective tactic the strike teams employ is a two-pronged assault. Megabinder agents each fire three times, engulfing a large area with the bonding chemical. Especially strong opponents are treated to numerous applications of the chemical via overlapping areas. Blaster troops follow up by decimating the defenders, whose Dodge scores are now considerably reduced.

If an agent's weapon is spent, broken, or taken away but the call to retreat has not been given, he or she will engage an opponent in close combat in order to attempt a takedown. Even if the opponent is incredibly strong this is attempted, for if the super throws a blow at the agent he or she can parry it and follow through with a judo throw. When on the ground the super's active defenses are reduced by 3, giving the other agents increased opportunity to hit successfully. TRADE agents without a weapon of their own also may begin to collect those of teammates that have been knocked out. Some of these weapons may still be operational, though the primary purpose is to recover valuable equipment.

Power Variations

50-point version: Lower DX to 11; drop Damage Resistance; drop all enhancements but one level of Armor Piercing from Blast Rifle; lower Megabinder Power to 14; drop Judo.

300-point version: Raise DX to 15; raise HT to 13; raise Damage Resistance to +15; add Passive Defense +2; add two more Rapid Fire enhancements to the Blast Rifle; raise the Blast Rifle skill level to 17; add a second skill to the Blast Rifle: Blaster-16 (Armor Piercing×2 +8; Explosive Effect +3); raise Megabinder Power to 37; drop the Limited Use limitation from the Megabinder; add another Rapid Fire enhancement to the Megabinder skill.

Ventura

ST 10 (0 points) IQ 16 (80 points)

DX 12 (20 points) HT 12 (20 points)

Speed: 6.00 Move: 6

Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d

Appearance: Female, white, age 27, 5' 11", 140 lbs., blond hair (bleached; naturally brown), brown eyes.

Advantages:

Attractive (5 points)
Combat Reflexes (15 points)
Strong Will +2 (8 points)
Very Wealthy (30 points)

Disadvantages:

Code of Honor: Villain's (-10 points)
Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)
Greed (-15 points)
Lecherousness (-15 points)
Overconfidence (-10 points)
Secret: Identity (-20 points)
Social Stigma: Criminal (-15 points)

Power and Super-Skills:

ESP Power 1 (8 points)
Psychokinesis Power 18 (216 points)
Energy Shield-14 (4 points)
PK Shield-14 (4 points)
Telekinesis-20 (No Concentration +2; 36 points)
* Telepathy Power 7 (35 points)
Telereceive-30 (No Concentration +2; 76 points)
* Telepathy Power 12 (24 points)
Mind Shield-15 (8 points)

Skills:

Accounting-13 (1/2 point); Cooking-15 (1/2 point); Dancing-13 (4 points); Economics-15 (2 points); English-16 (0 points); Merchant-15 (1 point); Sex Appeal-15 (8 points)

Quirks:

Attracted to good tans
A fan of sushi bars
Still hasn't taken the time to see New York's sights
Tries to forget the past when she had little money
Coin and stamp collector

Background

Linda Swanson, like her half-brother Dennis (see *Soul Ripper*, p. 40), grew up exhibiting a small amount of telekinetic power. She was out of high school and working as a cocktail waitress when Dennis volunteered her for psionic study. He had enrolled in a special program himself, and the existence of a brother-sister pair that exhibited virtually identical powers greatly interested the researchers, regardless of the strength of those powers. Between the money she'd saved from her job and the stipend she would receive as a participant in the study, Linda could just afford to attend a nearby college to study fashion merchandising.

After studying her existing ability thoroughly, the researchers applied techniques to bring forth latent powers and



enhance current ones. Unlike her brother, Linda's telekinetic strength increased over 250,000 times! The inconsistency of the results between Linda and Dennis gave the scientists plenty to ponder, so their stay at the institute was renewed.

Actually, there was a similar reaction from both siblings: each gained enormous telepathic abilities. As well as the ability to shield her mind from intruders, Linda now was able to read the thoughts of others. Though her range was limited to that of a medium-sized room, Linda could probe someone's thoughts without the subject suspecting anything. Even against her mentally shielded brother she passed undetected and unresisted.

In school she used the new ability during tests to greatly improve her academic record. Dennis had a much bolder idea, though — super-crime. The danger worried Linda but the lure of great wealth proved to be stronger. Their first operations went

smoothly enough, but Dennis wanted more and contacted the Exchange. This time Linda begged off, finishing her education and stay at the institute without involvement in any overt crimes.

After graduation she was unable to find a job she wanted and was preparing to return to waitressing when a newscast caught her attention. Some prominent investors had been convicted of insider trading. Linda still had a sizable amount of money from her early robberies, and she realized that her ability to probe minds could give her a fabulous edge on the open market. But how could she associate with the kind of businessmen she needed to probe for information?

Suddenly the answer hit her. Professional escorts accompanied such men to important functions, where she would be in the presence of even more insightful minds! She interviewed at every such business in town and was hired by two. It took some time, but eventually she received many "appointments" per week and began to make some money on Wall Street. She even seduced some of the more attractive and informative clients, using the extra time to find out many more secrets.

Within a few years Linda had enough money to buy a partnership in one of New York's prestigious men's clothing stores. Working as an escort had been fun, but also a lot of work. She had studied fashion merchandising in college, and now she had her chance to fulfill those ambitions.

Strangely, Linda found she wasn't satisfied; it was all so easy. Every day she went to the store, and made sale after sale by already knowing what the customers wanted. Every day she gleaned tidbits of usable information, called her broker, and become richer. There was no more challenge, no more excitement.

About that time Dennis moved to New York. He prompted her to accompany him on some crimes, and to her surprise she found she really missed the thrill of challenging the world to catch her. She and Dennis now had little in common, but there were other people she could work with! After brushing him off she made a costume and came up with a super-name. She used her long-inactive telekinesis to cause some general destruction and get her name in the papers. She got the number of the Exchange from Dennis and registered. Within a week contracts came rolling in; she was the most powerful telekinetic villain in New York.

Ventura is involved in quite a few super-crimes under the Manhattan skyline. She'd like to work with a stable group of professional criminals, but the Exchange doesn't usually offer such an arrangement. Though the idea of leading a super-group herself has crossed her mind, Ventura feels she cannot spare the time from her civilian life.

She is aware of her brother's desire to form metavillain group, but hasn't decided whether or not she should have anything to do with it. On one hand, he *is* her brother — but on the other hand, he is also an inept leader! She also hasn't decided if she would invite Soul Ripper to join a group *she* formed — she guesses rightly that he would resent taking orders from her.

PC Involvement

Just as for Soul Ripper, characters may have worked at the institute where she was studied or may have been under study there themselves. Prominent businessmen may once have been her clients. New Yorkers may buy clothes at her store.

Any time Ventura has come into contact with a hero, it's possible that she learned of his secret identity, or vice versa. Though such a memory would probably not be too hard for her to find, GMs should be careful with this ability. Ventura could expose the identities of virtually all heroes (and villains). The comic genre does not usually reveal secret identities so easily.

Personality

Ventura enters super combat for the thrill of it (plus the large sums of money super-criminals make). Even though her business and investor's portfolio have made her wealthy, she still savors the excitement.

Her days as a single woman are far from over, and Linda Swanson likes to live every day to the fullest. Sometimes that means bringing a different man home every night. She's careful, though, to use her telepathy to determine if the man wants any sort of commitment (which she avoids). Often she'll know that answer better than the man himself!

She disdains the flamboyant costumes that most supers don, preferring to remain unmasked except when committing a large, flashy crime (in which case she dresses in a black ninja outfit).

Abilities

Ventura possesses two general types of psionic power. The first, telekinesis, is very powerful (she can lift a ton) and she handles it with a great amount of skill. For defensive purposes she can harden the air around her into a protective shield or use waves of psychokinetic energy to deflect attacks of all forms (Super-Block).

She also can probe deeply into someone's mind and prevent others from doing this to her. Though her range is limited to 15 yards, Ventura's incredible skill level allows her to slip into virtually any mind undetected. Even if her presence is noticed, very few supers have the necessary mental shielding to prevent her from finding any information she desires.

Her Code of Honor usually restricts Ventura from using Pyrokinesis (750-point version) on human opponents, though gadgets and equipment are fair game. She does not need to physically melt the object — if it is carried or otherwise contacted by a foe, the heat will probably force him to remove it. This skill is also effective against electrical components — raise the temperature of a computer's components and the computer simply dies.

Tactics

The No Concentration enhancement allows Ventura to probe the mind of her opponents, especially leaders, without hesitating during a combat. She can use this ability to determine the general status of the foe (i.e. HP remaining) as well as any special vulnerabilities or invulnerabilities.

Her high level of telekinetic skill permits Ventura to grab pesky martial artists and other weakly defended supers, raise them into the air, and drop them to the asphalt. Well-organized teams will use fliers to catch their vulnerable teammates, probably pulling them away from their current task.

Another effective trick is to grab a hero with a high Dodge score, then hold him in place while her teammates pummel the trapped super.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower DX to 10; lower IQ to 14; drop Combat Reflexes; drop Strong Will; lower Wealth to Wealthy; drop ESP Power; convert Psychokinesis Power to Psychokinesis (Telekinesis); drop Energy Shield and PK Shield super-skills; lower Telekinesis skill level to 16; lower Telereceive skill level to 17; drop Telepathy (Mind Shield).

750-point version: Raise Psychokinesis Power to 26; raise Energy Shield and PK Shield skill levels to 20; add No Concentration enhancement to Energy Shield and PK Shield; add Pyrokinesis-17, Cryokinesis-16; raise Telepathy Power (Mind Shield) to 15; Mind Shield skill level to 30.

VOLTMASTER

ST 11 (10 points) IQ 15 (60 points)

DX 15 (60 points) HT 13 (30 points)

Speed: 7.00 Move: 7

Damage: Lightning 7d; Karate 1d punch, 1d+2 kick; Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+1

Appearance: Male, white, age 2000 (approximately), apparent age 38, 5' 9", 182 lbs., blond hair, blue eyes, tanned complexion.

Advantages:

Alertness +1 (5 points)

Attractive (5 points)

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

Eidetic Memory (60 points)

Gadgeteer (25 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Mathematical Ability (10 points)

Rapid Healing (5 points)

Unusual Background: due to great longevity (10 points)

Filthy Rich (50 points)

Disadvantages:

Absent-Mindedness (-15 points)

Code of Honor: Villain's (-10 points)

Delusion: "War is good for humanity" (-5 points)

Duty: To Deadly Dozen on 12 or less (-10 points)

Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)

Secret: Identity (-20 points)

Secret: His long history (-5 points)

Sense of Duty: To teammates (-5 points)

Social Stigma: Criminal (-15 points)

Super Advantage:

Unaging (60 points)

Powers and Super-Skills:

* Electrical Power 14 (98 points)

Lightning-16 (No Concentration +2; Armor Piercing +4; Touch Only -2; 32 points)

Energy Field Power 1 (Generic Energy Defense, 3 points)

Energy Field-22 (No Concentration +2; 48 points)

Gadgets and Super Equipment:

Damage Resistance +10 (50 points)

Passive Defense +2 (50 points)

Glue Blaster: (Breakable: DR 10/HT 10 -15%; Can Be Hit at -4 -15%; Can Be Stolen: Contest of DX -30%; Unreliable: Activation 13 -5%; 29 points)

Generic Binding Attack Power 10

Generic Binding Attack-16 (No Concentration +2; Rapid Fire +3; Limited Use: 4 per day -2; Touch Only -2)

Goggles & Headset: (Breakable: DR 5/HT 5 -15%; Can Be Hit at -6 -10%; Can Be Stolen: Contest of DX -30%; 41 points)

Microscopic Vision×7 (Magnification 128×)

Radio Hearing

Spectrum Vision

Psionic Resistance +4



Skills:

Accounting-19 (1/2 point); Acrobatics-15 (4 points); Administration-15 (1/2 point); Area Knowledge (World)-17 (4 point), (Europe)-18 (6 points); Armoury (Body armor)-18 (2 points), (Rifles and handguns)-16 (1 point); Blacksmith/TL3-16 (1 point); Brawling-17 (4 points); Broadsword-14 (1 point); Carpentry-16 (1/2 point); Chemistry-17 (2 points); Computer Operations-16 (1/2 point); Computer Programming-18 (1 point); Diagnosis-21 (4 points); Driving (Car)-13 (1/2 point); Economics-14 (1/2 point); Electronics (Communications)-21 (1 point), (Computers)-21 (1 point), (Holographics)-21 (1 point), (Medical)-23 (4 points), (Security Systems)-21 (1 point), (Sensors)-23 (2 points), (Weapons)-21 (1 point); Engineer (Bombs & traps)-21 (3 points); English-15 (1/2 point); First Aid-17 (0 points); French-15 (1/2 point); Genetics-14 (1 point); German-15 (1/2 point); Gesture-16 (1/2 point); History-21 (4 points); Italian-15 (1/2 point); Jeweler/TL3-17 (2 points); Judo-15 (4 points); Karate-15 (4 points); Latin-15 (1/2 point); Mandarin-15 (1/2 point); Mathematics-17 (1/2 point); Mechanic (Small gadgets)-16 (1 point); Merchant-16 (1 point); Ancient Germanic-15 (0 points); Physician-21 (4 points); Physiology-18 (5 points); Piloting (Multi-engine jet)-15 (2 points); Portuguese-15 (1/2 point); Prospecting-16 (1 point); Research-18 (2 points); Savoir-Faire-16 (1/2 point); Scuba-15 (1/2 point); Seamanship-16 (1/2 point); Shield-16 (2 points); Spanish-15 (1/2 point); Surgery-21 (8 points); Swimming-14 (1/2 point); Traps-15 (1/2 point); Writing-15 (1/2 point)

Quirks:

- Video game fanatic
- Amateur science fiction writer
- Donates much money to charity regularly
- Wants desperately to travel to space
- Only watches PBS

Background

Born a Germanic tribesman during the first century B.C., the man currently known as Victor Schulmann was called Vercingetorix. When he was in his late thirties, the armies of Rome were once again putting the scattered tribes in their place. Powerless to stop the assault on his people, Vercingetorix prayed to his storm god in a sacred wood. Usually the replies of the gods were subtle and required interpretation, but this time things were different — he was struck by lightning.

After regaining consciousness he found that his hands crackled with lightning of their own. He returned to his village, demonstrated his new ability, and was quickly made chief of the Avernian forces. Unfortunately, his powers demanded that he touch his foes — he could not cast thunderbolts like the storm god. Even if he could have, though, one man could not stop the march of the Roman Army.

When his surviving friends and loved ones began to age and die, Vercingetorix became sure of another power the storm god had given him — he did not grow old. Patiently he visited all the sights the world offered him; Byzantium, Egypt, Rome, Athens, Persia. He took part in a caravan that traveled to China, where he stayed for almost 200 years, becoming a master of unarmed combat. Later he traveled through Africa, then back to Europe. In each place he learned new skills or sharpened old ones.

After the Dark Ages, Victor, as he now called himself, had amassed considerable wealth. He used this to study in Venice, living off his capital for many years while becoming completely engrossed in mathematics, sciences and medical arts. Flitting from one science to another, he never contributed greatly to the development of any single one, but he managed to be involved in each discipline as it came into its own.

Victor's cash supply was dwindling; he was lured to California in 1849 in the hopes of making a fortune. Unlike most, he had sufficient funds to stake out an extensive site, and struck a rich vein. He invested much of it in rifle manufacturing companies, and his net worth skyrocketed when the Civil War broke out. Years later, he watched in fascination as the western world entered the Great War.

After living 2,000 years, Victor had figured it out. During war mankind thrived. Peace was stagnation. Men died in battle, of course, but that cost was not too great for the incredible technological rewards. The development of the American and Soviet space programs from German rocketry science proved the point, at least in Victor's mind.

With the development of the transistor he was irresistibly drawn to electronics. His money had multiplied upon itself due to shrewd and balanced investing, so Victor went back to school, gaining doctorates in medicine and electrical engineering. During the seventies he helped to bring the two fields together with bionic and cybernetic research.

But by the middle 1980s he was frustrated. Without a major war in many years, technological development was slowing down. How could he start a global war, though? The newspaper on his desk was opened to a story about Los Angeles' newest villain group, the Deadly Dozen. Reading between the lines, Victor began to suspect that the leader, Electra, had some interesting plans of her own. Perhaps they could assist each other.

He found out about the Exchange and contacted Electra through it. Electra needed a technical member on her roster, but she was delighted to find a scientist who could hold his own in battle, too. Since that time Victor has acquired a costumed identity, that of Voltmaster. Electra has no intention of leading America into a global war but keeps this to herself; she tells Victor that her plans take time. Victor doesn't mind the wait — if there's one thing he's learned in his long life, it's patience.

PC Involvement

Voltmaster's home is in the Hollywood hills, a wealthy area where other characters may live. Victor Schulmann currently works as an engineering consultant, and may contact individuals that work in other technical firms. He's also active in professional societies and space groups, and is a regular at science fiction and wargame conventions. It's possible to have a pleasant conversation with him at one of these meetings, but within a few minutes his views about the merit of warfare will pop up.

Personality

Voltmaster is hardly a typical super-criminal. He's friendly, conversational and intelligent without being overbearing. He also firmly believes in the stimulating value of war for the development of humanity as a whole. He's even used the word "rejuvenating" to describe the trench warfare of World War I. This unnerves some people, especially when coupled with his otherwise sane personality.

Abilities

His indefinite lifespan and electrified hands are the only metahuman abilities Voltmaster has. Though they only provide limited Damage Resistance, his hands can deflect many attacks. Over the course of time he has learned much, becoming an accomplished engineer as well as theoretician. His suit, goggles, headset and belt-mounted glue blaster are all his own inventions. Though no longer a master, he retains enough knowledge of martial arts to take care of himself in combat.

Voltmaster's vast technical expertise keeps the facilities and equipment of the Deadly Dozen going, including Tele-Fist's arms. Red Tempest's suit has never suffered damage, and until it does Hardin will not allow Voltmaster to investigate it. His belt contains only one gadget, the glue blaster, while the other compartments are filled with conventional tools (e.g., screwdrivers, soldering iron, etc.).

Tactics

Voltmaster usually attacks any low-ST grounded foes, typically martial artists and psis. He'll attempt karate strikes while zapping with the Lightning skill. Though the blow itself may be parried, that brief contact is enough zap his opponent.

Though the suit does provide some Damage Resistance, Voltmaster uses the electrical field generated by his hands to defend himself with Super-Blocks.

Power Variations

500-point version: Lower DX to 14; lower Eidetic Memory to level one; drop Gadgeteer; drop Mathematical Ability; drop all Gadgets and Super Equipment.

1,000-point version: Convert Energy Field Power to Force Field Power 25 (Generic Full Defense); raise Force Field skill level to 26; raise Electrical Power (Lightning) to 30.

Should Voltmaster ever feel the need, he could build himself a formidable suit of power armor or other gadgets for personal enhancement. This could up his point value indefinitely!

WARMONGER

ST 13 (30 points) IQ 14 (45 points)

DX 20 (175 points) HT 18 (125 points)

Speed: 9.50 Move: 9

Damage: Thrust 1d; Swing 1d+3

Appearance: Male, white, age 41, 6' 3", 230 lbs., brown hair (receding); ice-blue eyes.

Advantages:

Absolute Direction (5 points)

Absolute Timing (5 points)

Alertness +4 (20 points)

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

Danger Sense (15 points)

Double-Jointed (5 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Luck: Ridiculous (60 points)

Military Rank 3: Lieutenant (15 points)

Patron: U.S. Army on 6 or less (15 points)

Toughness DR +1 (10 points)

Disadvantages:

Addiction: Tobacco (-5 points)

Bad Sight (Nearsighted) (-10 points)

Bad Temper (-10 points)

Bully (-10 points)

Delusion: He's saving the U.S. from monsters (-10 points)

Duty: U.S. Army on 12 or less (-10 points)

Fanaticism: Warped patriotism (-15 points)

Phobia (Mild): Magic (-10 points)

Reputation -2 (-10 points)

Vow: To remove all dangerous metahumans (-10 points)

Skills:

Acrobatics-18 (1 point); Area Knowledge (San Francisco)-14 (1 point); Armoury (Rifles and handguns)-14 (2 points); Bow-18 (1 point); Brawling-23 (8 points); Camouflage-14 (1 point); Climbing-22 (1 point); Computer Operations-14 (1 point); Demolition-13 (1 point); Driving (Car)-19 (1 point); (Tank)-18 (1/2 point); English-14 (0 points); Escape-20 (1/2 point); Falconry-13 (1 point); Fast-Draw (Arrow)-20 (1/2 point), (Knife)-20 (1/2 point), (Magazine)-20 (1/2 point), (Pistol)-20 (1/2 point), (Rifle)-20 (1/2 point); First Aid-14 (1 point); Guns (.45)-23 (2 points), (FN-FAL)-25 (8 points); History-12 (1 point); Intelligence Analysis-11 (1/2 point); Interrogation-12 (1/2 point); Judo-18 (1 point); Jumping-22 (4 points); Karate-18 (1 point); Knife-20 (1 point); Naturalist-12 (1 point); Parachuting-20 (1 point); Piloting (Small helicopter)-19 (1 point); Running-15 (1/2 point); Scuba-13 (1 point); Skiing-18 (1 point); Speed-Load (Automatic pistol)-19 (1/2 point), (Rifle)-19 (1/2 point); Stealth-19 (1 point); Strategy-11 (1/2 point); Survival (Jungle)-13 (1 point); Swimming-20 (1 point); Tactics-13 (2 points); Tracking-13 (1 point); Vietnamese-12 (1/2 point)

Quirks:

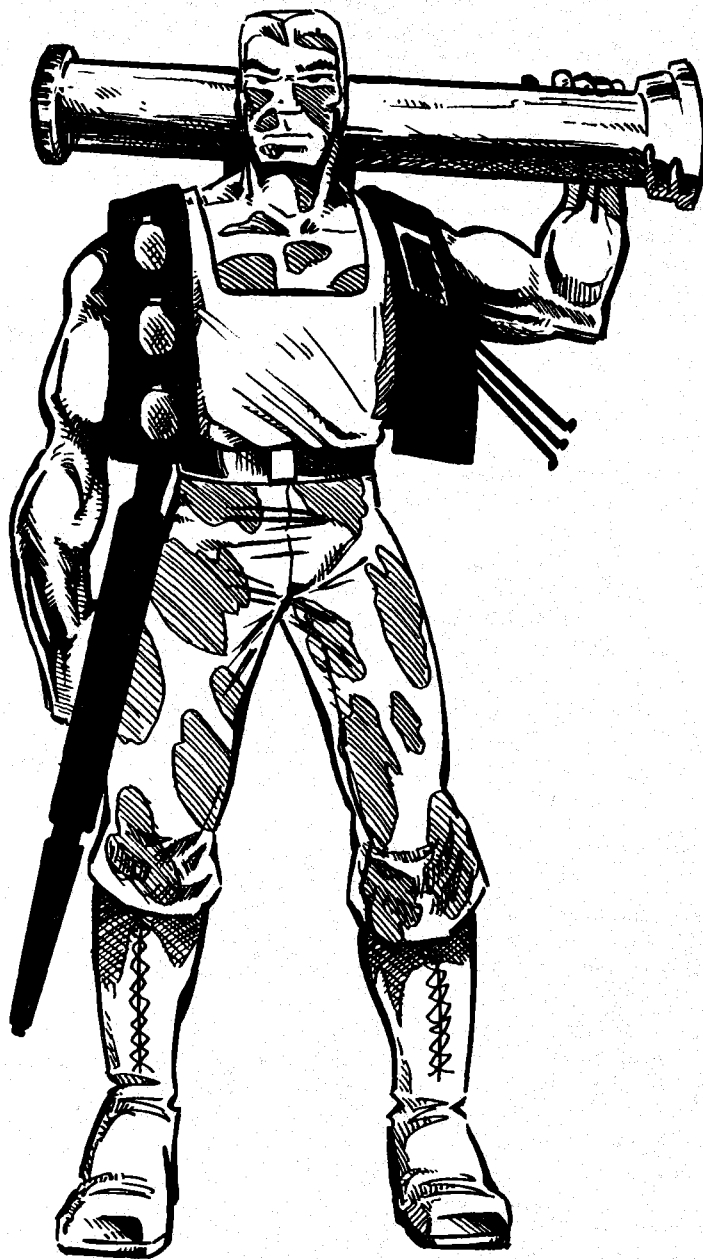
Smokes cigars

Buys only American-produced goods

Serves as a camp counselor every summer

Has no mercy for drug trafficking

Will never remarry



Background

Greg Mosby was an Army brat, moving from base to base as his father's assignment changed. He was an only child and never made many friends at school, so he spent many afternoons talking with soldiers. The stories they told of fierce battles and heroic men were often greatly exaggerated, but young Greg believed every word. His teachers always described him as "quiet and attentive" — they couldn't know that underneath his serene composure was a boy, later a man, who longed to enter battle and emerge victorious.

Greg went to West Point and graduated near the top of his class. Now his instructors were describing him as "able to meet any challenge." Tests, both intellectual and physical, were his forte; he obviously was fueled by a desire to be the best.

After school he went on to serve in the Vietnam conflict. It was here that Greg first encountered metahumans. The United States was known to be fielding some 20 metahumans by the end of the war. One of them, Behemoth, was often deployed in a region covered by Mosby's platoon. As a civilian under military jurisdiction, Behemoth followed orders but was generally exempt from other military procedures. His total lack of respect for authority and disregard for civilian lives incensed Mosby, but there was nothing he could do legally.

The only other course of action would be to take him aside and beat the monster until he begged for mercy. The trouble with this plan was the fact that Behemoth would stomp Mosby into the ground. So there wasn't really anything he could do.

Or was there? Behemoth avoided anything larger than small arms fire — he must not be totally invulnerable. A burst of armor piercing rounds from a powerful rifle would hurt him, and perhaps even kill him. Would killing Behemoth serve his country, do a greater good? Mosby spent an entire night awake, staring at the stars as he weighed all the factors. Two days later Behemoth was shot in the head by multiple bullets; he was taken away in a medevac helicopter. Word soon came back that he had died on the operating table. The bullets were fired from an American gun, but no other clues were found.

After returning from Asia, Mosby remained in the Army as a career soldier. He was married and soon had two daughters. Their lives were decidedly normal until one fateful afternoon. Mrs. Mosby and the girls were instantly killed when a massive super-criminal crashed into their car, knocked back from the punch of a hero.

Greg Mosby snapped. Not in any way visible to those around him, but inside Mosby now felt as he did the morning after he stared up into the Vietnamese night sky. Suddenly it was all so clear. Metahumans on either side of the law were destroying America. Wives, children, families . . . everything he and so many others had fought to protect was now being threatened by a small number of people. Or were they really people at all?

Mosby began to keep special records of those metahumans who had no regard for the safety of bystanders. When ready, he assembled a "costume" of fatigues and a mask. Mosby confronted the dangerous supers one by one, demanding that they surrender to him. None did, so he shot them. He killed three supers within two weeks and sent two others to the hospital.

Public reaction was swift and strong. A clever reporter noted the similar modus operandi between this vigilante and the murderer of Behemoth. The reporter titled him Warmonger, a name that stuck. Mosby was now especially relieved he had worn a costume — Warmonger was the most wanted man in California.

Regretting his violent and dangerous reputation, Mosby sent an anonymous letter to a newspaper to explain his crusade. He vowed to abandon his killing attacks. Using non-lethal rubber bullets, he would mark those supers who were too dangerous to remain active. He also explained that he should be called The Constable, not Warmonger. The paper ran the story, but it did little to change the public's perception of him.

Now Mosby still tries to mark those supers that represent a substantial danger to innocent lives. As he said he would, he tends to use rubber bullets which stun but do not kill. Stunned villains will be incarcerated; stunned heroes will, Mosby hopes, be reprimanded for their excessive violence.

But Mosby has never really abandoned his assault rifle. He has ambushed and attacked four more metavillains, and one vigilante hero, each of whom had caused several deaths. The villains died. The vigilante, both knees shattered by gunfire, retired.

Campaign Role

Anyone who shows little concern for damage done to property by his or her "heroics" could come to Warmonger's attention. A PC, or an NPC acquaintance, could even be the one who caused the death of Mosby's wife and daughters. Without a doubt, Warmonger would target that hero for retribution.

Heroes who served in Vietnam may have been in the same platoon as Mosby. Though they would remember the death of Behemoth, no one should know Mosby's involvement.

It is also possible that Behemoth's death was faked, freeing that violent but patriotic brick for other duties. Behemoth could reappear — Mosby would probably go after him again . . .

Personality

Greg Mosby is totally at ease with his actions, believing he serves the greater good. Ultimately, he would like to never have to kill again. By knocking out a super with his rubber bullets, he's saying "This person is dangerous — he must be removed from society." Though his methods are extreme, some people are beginning to understand the message. But his own murders have severely marred his reputation.

Mosby abhors the name Warmonger and still tries to promote The Constable. By now it is probably too late for a name change to be effective.

Warmonger certainly does not consider himself a criminal, but most others do. His continued reliance on killing as a course of action has distanced him from all public heroes.

Deep within his psyche, Mosby is infatuated by the challenge of combatting and defeating people who have power greater than any normal human.

The 750-point version of Warmonger is a decidedly different character. Most of his irrational disadvantages have been eliminated, and the public perceives him as vigilante with his heart in the right place — hardly a villain.

Abilities

Greg Mosby possesses no super-abilities other than a considerable amount of good fortune. His body has been fantastically developed and he has acquired an impressive list of skills from his years as a soldier. Nonetheless he is no match for a metahuman in personal combat (and he knows it). To be effective Warmonger relies on sniper tactics to perform his mission and then quickly retreats using a pre-arranged escape route with hiding places along the way and perhaps some booby traps. to discourage followers.

Tactics

The accidental damage caused by supers of all kinds can be determined using the table on p. SU80. Warmonger will seek out those supers who have accumulated large totals. If the table is not used in your campaign, use common sense and judgement in determining which supers he would go after.

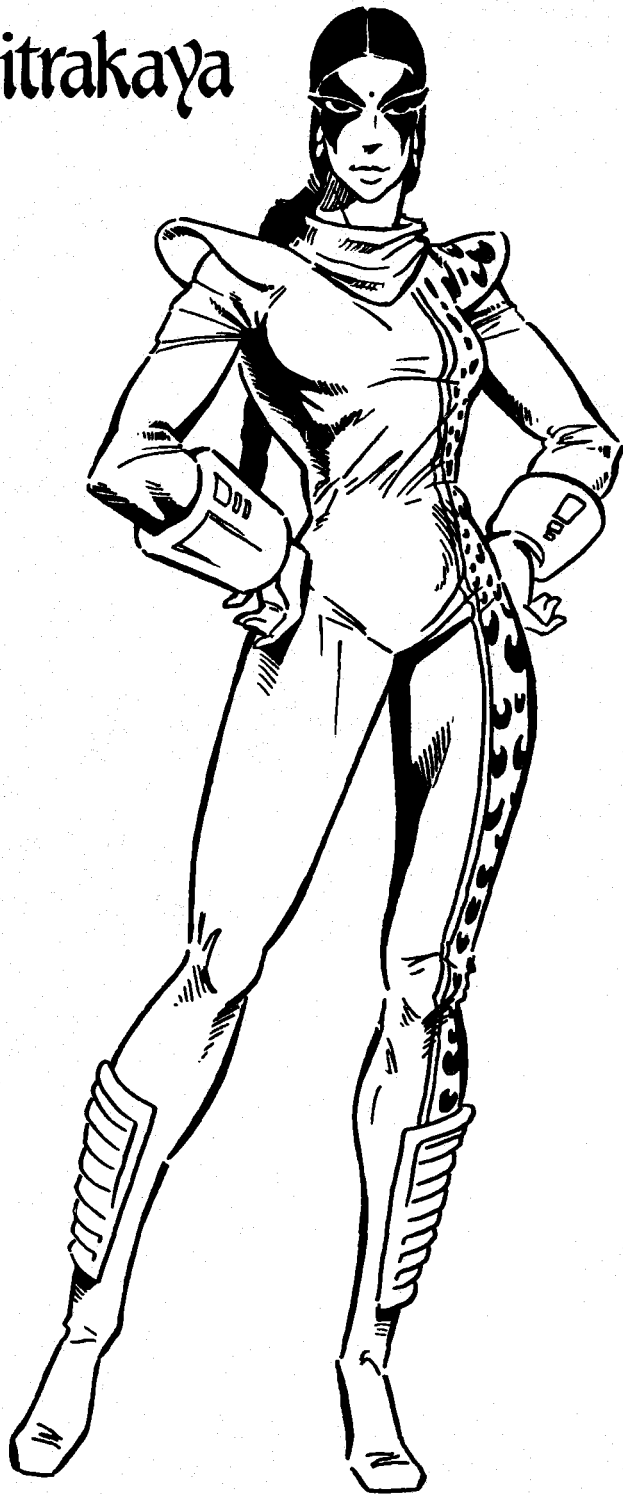
Warmonger always has a specific goal in mind when entering combat. Usually he will strike while his target is engaged in a super-battle. As a "third side" in the fray, he usually enjoys several seconds of disorientation on the part of his opponents.

Power Variations

250-point version: Lower DX to 15; lower HT to 13; lower Alertness to +2; lower Luck to Extraordinary.

750-point version: Raise HT to 20; raise Alertness to +5; raise Military Rank to 8 (General); raise Toughness to +2; drop Bully; drop Delusion; drop Fanaticism; drop Reputation; drop Vow; add Super Luck.

Citrakaya



Citrakaya (Mundi Guttalu)

ST 9 (-10 points) IQ 14 (45 points)
 DX 15 (60 points) HT 13 (30 points)
 Speed: 7.00 Move: 7 (39 flying)
 Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d-1

Appearance: Female, East Indian, age 22, 5' 9", 130 lbs., black hair, brown eyes, dark complexion. Usually wears traditional Indian dress when not in Citrakaya costume.

Advantages:

Acute Hearing +1 (2 points)
 Attractive (5 points)
 Combat Reflexes (15 points)
 Empathy (15 points)
 High Pain Threshold (10 points)
 Mathematical Ability (10 points)
 Strong Will +4 (16 points)

Disadvantages:

Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)
 Miserliness (-10 points)
 Overconfidence (-10 points)
 Phobia: Fire (-20 points)
 Secret: Identity (-20 points)
 Sense of Duty: To teammates (-5 points)
 Shyness (-5 points)
 Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)

Super Advantages:

Flight (Must remain within 6 feet of a level surface -3; 28 points)
 Increased Speed +11 (Only increases flying Move -2; 220 points)
 Passive Defense +2 (Only when flying -2; 40 points)

Power and Super-Skill:

Force Field Power 10 (Generic Full Defense, 50 points)
 Force Field-16 (No Concentration +2; 24 points))

Super Equipment:

Damage Resistance vs. Crushing +5 (20 points)

Skills:

Acrobatics-15 (4 points); Calligraphy-14 (1 point); Computer Operations-14 (1 point); Computer Programming-16 (2 points); Dancing-14 (1 point); Electronics (Computers)-14 (1 point); Ecology-13 (2 points); Judo-14 (2 points); Research-13 (1 point); Shadowing-14 (2 points); Stealth-14 (1 point); Teaching-13 (1 point); Zoology-14 (4 points); Hindi-14 (0 points); English-13 (1 point); French-13 (1 point)

Quirks:

Quiet
 Feels guilt about lying to her father
 Spends a great deal of time at the library
 Doesn't understand football
 Uncomfortable with her Hindu beliefs

Snow Leopard (Eric Riviere)

ST 10 (0 points) IQ 13 (30 points)
 DX 14 (45 points) HT 14 (45 points)
 Speed: 7.00 Move: 7 (12 Ice Surfing)
 Damage: Frost Jet 7d+2; Ice Spear 5d-2 imp; Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d

Appearance: Male, white, age 22, 6', 200 lbs., brown hair, blue eyes.

Advantages:

Handsome (15 points)
 Charisma +1 (5 points)

Combat Reflexes (15 points)
 High Pain Threshold (10 points)
 Luck (15 points)
 Night Vision (10 points)
 Toughness DR +1 (10 points)
 Comfortable wealth (10 points)

Disadvantages:

Addiction: Cocaine (-40 points)
 Bully (-10 points)
 Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)
 Secret: Identity (-20 points)
 Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)

Super Advantages:

Body of Ice×6 (No visible effect +2; Switchable +1; 31 points)
 Damage Resistance +10 (Only when Body of Ice is activated -1; 45 points)
 Ice Clinging (25 points)
 Passive Defense +2 (Only when Body of Ice is activated -1; 45 points)

Powers and Super-Skills:

Cold/Ice Power 12 (120 points)
 Chains of Ice-12 (Rapid Fire +3; 16 points)
 Frost Jet-22 (No Concentration +2; 52 points)
 Ice Spear-12 (4 points)
 Ice Surfing-12 (Affects Others +4; 20 points)
 Ice Wall-11 (2 points)
 Icy Surface-11 (2 points)

Skills:

Acrobatics-14 (4 points); Carousing-14 (2 points); Computer Operations-12 (1/2 point); Driving (Car)-12 (1/2 point); Ecology-10 (1 point); Gambling-14 (4 points); Guns (Rifle)-16 (1 point); History-10 (1 point); Karate-13 (2 points); Merchant-13 (2 points); Performance-13 (2 points); Riding (Horse)-14 (2 points); Sex Appeal-16 (2 points); Skiing-13 (2 points); Sport (Soccer)-13 (1 point); Streetwise-12 (1 point); Swimming-15 (2 points); Zoology-10 (1 point); French-13 (0 points); English-13 (2 points)

Quirks:

Vain
 Babies his Porsche
 Longs for his own American Express Gold card
 Womanizer
 Infatuated with Tigress

Tigress (Carole Kelly)

ST 100 (246 points) IQ 13 (30 points)
 DX 14 (45 points) HT 14 (45 points)
 Speed: 7.00 Move: 7
 Damage: Punch 11d; Thrust 11d; Swing 13d
 Appearance: Female, white, age 25, 6' 2", 170 lbs., long, red hair, green eyes, some freckles.

Advantages:

Alertness +2 (10 points)
 Animal Empathy (5 points)
 High Pain Threshold (10 points)
 Intuition (15 points)
 Very Beautiful (25 points)

Disadvantages:

Code of Honor: Villain's (-10 points)
 Enemy: Hero group on 6 or less (-15 points)
 Gullibility (-10 points)
 Secret: Identity (-20 points)
 Reputation: Criminal (-15 points)
 Weak Will -4 (-32 points)

Super Advantage:

Increased Density (10 points)



SNOW LEOPARD

Power and Super-Skill:

- * Telepathy Power 5 (10 points)
- Mind Shield-9 (1 point)

Super Equipment:

- Claws: Crushing (15 points)
- Damage Resistance +14 (70 points)

Skills:

- Animal Handling-16 (2 points); Biochemistry-12 (4 points); Botany-13 (4 points); Brawling-20 (32 points); Camouflage-13 (1 point); Ecology-14 (6 points); Falconry-12 (1 point); Genetics-11 (2 points); Photography-15 (6 points); Re-

- search-13 (2 points); Skiing-13 (2 points); Survival (Forest)-13 (2 points); Teaching-12 (1 point); Tracking-13 (2 points); Zoology-14 (6 points)

Quirks:

- Has lots of pets
- Wears flamboyant earrings
- Dislikes singles bars and men who "chase"

Dr. John Mathews

Appearance: Male human, tanned, age 48, 5' 9", 140 lbs., short blond hair going gray, gray-green eyes.

Dr. Mathews is the secretive leader of the Pride, but PCs are unlikely to encounter him unless they penetrate Pride Mansion. At that point, it is vital that his abilities be a *total* surprise to the players! For this reason his exact capabilities have not been outlined — they are up to the GM. His abilities include powerful mind-control talents, and perhaps others, developed in secret.

Background

Mundi Guttalu and Eric Riviere were drawn to Dr. John Mathews' field zoology course for different reasons; Mundi was fascinated with the study of life itself while Eric was infatuated with the research assistant, Carole Kelly. As it happens, they were the only two students in the class, and the four became well acquainted.

Mundi was born in Bombay and educated in London before enrolling at the University of Winnipeg to study electrical engineering. She had always excelled in her technical and science courses, even though she wasn't really interested — it was her father that selected her curriculum. During her second summer session she took an introductory biology course as an elective and became thoroughly engrossed in the subject. Her father would never understand, so she still registers for engineering courses, sends the papers home, then secretly drops the courses to add the ones she wants.

Eric came from a wealthy Quebec family. He takes a few odd courses each term, but as yet his major is still undecided. Drama was his most interesting subject, but his top educational priorities still involve fraternity life and women.

Carole Kelly had already received her Bachelor's degree in zoology and was now studying for her Master's. Birds of prey, raptors, were to be her thesis topic but only Mathews, a mammal specialist, had funds for an assistant.

Early in the term, before the Canadian winter had reached its full strength, the small class embarked on a field expedition to study the habits of the lynx. Mathews, an excellent tracker, quickly picked up the trail of an adult female. They arrived at her lair, a small cave, just in time to see her enter with a recently killed rabbit in her jaws. When the lynx left with her one adolescent kitten to hunt again, the group cautiously entered the empty lair and found two surprises. The small cave opened into a large, vented chamber and sitting on the floor was an old man preparing to cook the rabbit!

The appearance and dress of the man were that of a local Indian medicine man — or, rather, a medicine man of many years ago, before the tribes were absorbed into Canadian society or sequestered in reservations. The Indian spoke no English or French, and none of the startled biologists spoke his language. Nonetheless, he was not alarmed; he smiled as he offered the others a pipe.

Mathews was over his head at this point, but felt it important not to insult the Indian. Suggesting that the other three



TIGRESS

follow his lead, he graciously accepted the pipe and inhaled deeply. The others did likewise.

The rest of the meeting is a blur; clearly, something in the smoke affected their minds. Each of the biologists vaguely remembers passing the pipe around as the Indian began a complex incantation. Before each of them he scratched some sort of simple picture on the stone floor and touched them lightly on the top of the head.

They woke together, lying around a large tree. The trunk of the tree bled sap from recently carved symbols that they were never able to interpret, and a return trip to the lair found no evidence of anything but a lynx ever having been there.

Each of them sensed their bodies had been changed or enhanced, so that naturally became the topic of discussion on the way back to town. Mathews found that he knew what the others would say a fraction of a second before they did. Keeping this to himself, he maintained the conversation while he experimented with this ability. Very soon he found he could in fact read the minds of his three companions and even control them slightly. Neither Carole, Eric, nor Mundi had any idea of their powers or that Mathews was already using his. They agreed to keep their experience a secret while Mathews researched local Indian lore to find out what might have happened.

The next week, the professor called them together. While the students were absorbed with food and conversation, Mathews deeply probed their minds. As he suspected, the Indian had been making pictures of animals on the ground, then transferring the animal totems into his guests' bodies. Mathews had received the owl, Carole the bear, Eric the ermine, and Mundi the deer. Mathews had spent the last week in research — research made much easier by his enhanced abilities. He had learned that knowledge of a totem gave power to the holder of a totem . . . and that if a shaman could mislead someone about their totem, the shaman gained power over them.

Mathews, tired of his academic life and excited by the prospect of power, determined to be that shaman. He told them that he'd remembered and learned enough to deduce what had happened. The three had each been given a tremendous gift. Mathews himself had been given no such gift, possibly so that he could remember the meeting clearly enough. At any rate, Carole was given great strength, Mundi incredible quickness, and Eric control over snow and ice.

Somehow, the other three did not laugh. Mathews' news felt right somehow. In effect, Mathews continued, they were now metahumans. They needed metahuman names, then, and Mathews had already thought of some. Carole would be Tigress, Eric would be Snow Leopard, and Mundi would be Cheetah. Mundi asked if she could use the Sanskrit name for the cat, Citrakaya, and Mathews agreed. Now Mathews had some control over each of them. Over the next few days, between the power of the totem and Mathews' rapidly-developing mental powers, the professor tightened his control.

Calling the shots from that moment on, Mathews kept them in school under their secret identities. They became a villain team when he required, complete with costumes, never questioning his leadership or his commands. Initially Mathews was content with minor acts of senseless destruction, rejoicing in his office as the team flaunted its power. When the students graduated, though, all of them moved to Chicago. Mathews and Kelly accepted new jobs, Mundi enrolled in graduate school, playboy Eric simply "decided he needed a change."

In America the objectives of the team changed; to build the group into a lasting organization they needed a headquarters, and to get that they needed money. The raids for the next several

months were designed to spirit away great sums of easily negotiable wealth.

When their Swiss account was sufficiently fat, Mathews purchased a mansion in an older part of the city, and made some important modifications to it. Finally the group had a home!

But they still lacked a group name. Snow Leopard began to joke that by all rights Mathews should be called Lion and that should make them the Pride. The others in the group vetoed that name, but when Snow Leopard let it slip while in combat the media naturally picked it up! This has led to speculation of a mastermind behind the scenes, possibly named Lion (this is why Mathews doesn't use the name), but their leader is still very safe. He never accompanies or even associates with the Pride when they are in costume.

PC Involvement

Characters may attend the University of Winnipeg or teach there. Those strange symbols that were carved in the tree prompted Mathews to converse with expert anthropologists who study American Indians. If a PC is such an expert, Mathews would have contacted him or her. The character would have failed an Anthropology or Research roll, or perhaps correctly interpreted the runes but led Mathews astray for some reason.

Each of the students has had numerous roommates, especially Snow Leopard who has many fraternity brothers.

Personalities

Though Mathews assigns the group its objectives, he does not directly assist, thus creating the need for a field leader. Carole is currently in that position, more by virtue of her age than anything else (she is probably the poorest choice). Nonetheless, she does her best to follow Mathews' plans to the letter. Luckily, Mathews recognizes the importance of a timely retreat, and includes that option in every scheme.

Eric enjoys flaunting his abilities as long as he's not in serious danger. When that happens, he'll suggest to Tigress that they retreat, yelling it if he has to. If she resists, he'll whine for a while before finally breaking off by himself. So far it's never come to that. Out of battle, he's constantly irritating Carole through his attempts to attract her. She puts up with it as if he were a small child.

Mundi has thoughts and feelings of her own, but these remain hidden beneath her efforts to help the team. She defers to Mathews (and Tigress) completely. When not around either of them she is quiet and shy.

Abilities

Citrakaya moves extremely fast, but must remain within about a man's height from the ground. "Ground" can mean any horizontal surface, such as the fifth floor of a building, but not a wall. The extra Speed increases her Move only (i.e. it does not improve her Dodge). Her costume has padded sections which may or may not be at the location where she's hit (roll for Activation). High speed slams are her specialty, though they're much more effective against normals than supers. She uses her force field for Super-Blocking as well as Damage Resistance.

Snow Leopard looks like he's not concealing his identity at all, save for the sunglasses. However, both the hair and the moustache are false theatrical pieces. When he switches on the Body of Ice, his skin becomes very hard and cold, but doesn't change in appearance. After a few minutes, moisture in the air will condense on him as though he were a glass of ice water. He uses his Frost Jet for both offense and defense (Super-Parry), and the Chains of Ice for binding normals and low-ST supers.

The Ice Surfing is used to transport the entire group. Other super-skills are used less frequently.

Everyone realizes that physically Tigress is a powerhouse, but few know of her mental defenses. Her costume provides some extra offense and defense, while leaving little to the imagination.

In their 750-point versions, each member of the Pride can both sense and control the actions of animals within a certain distance of him or her. Their skill and power levels are not identical, though, so some care must be taken to use abilities most efficiently, especially when under time pressure.

Tactics

The members of the Pride are aware that as a super-group their power is limited. Usually they mop up against normals, making a hasty exit when heroes start arriving. Citrakaya uses her three actions per turn to disarm or knock out guards, while Snow Leopard immobilizes others in chunks of ice. That frees Tigress to search for the mission objective, which often means ripping open a vault door.

Against heroes, Citrakaya grabs for accessible gadgets or trips up mentalists. Snow Leopard tends to become too frightened to function smoothly, flinging Ice Spears at many targets that Dodge them routinely. Sometimes he gets lucky, though that sort of lethality can get the team in even more trouble. Tigress is heavy on offensive ability, and will go in swinging fists; she will also amuse herself by striking a provocative pose to distract male opponents!

When the number of super-foes reaches three (two if they're especially powerful), Tigress will call for a retreat. Should Tigress happen to go down early, the others will immediately retreat after one attempt to bring her unconscious form along.

Whatever happens, the team works together well — so well that some opponents are convinced that the group is telepathically linked.

Pride Goeth Before A Fall

A significant weakness of the Pride is the fact that its three "public" members are all Mathews' dupes. They do not realize that he has any powers at all, let alone that he is influencing their behavior. None of the three is the "criminal type" by nature, though Snow Leopard has a venal and lazy streak. If they found out about Mathews' powers, they would certainly suspect they had been controlled; they might turn against him, go straight, or both.

Were they to abandon the villain names and costumes Mathews gave them, his control over them would diminish, and the nature of their powers might even change somewhat as they found their true totems. Citrakaya, especially, would be inclined toward active public-service heroism if she were not under mental control. Tigress and Snow Leopard would be more likely to look for jobs in Hollywood . . .

Pride Mansion

The map on the facing page depicts the headquarters used by the Pride. It is not specifically designed to house a super-team; it is an old mansion that has undergone some unusual modifications. There is no security beyond that normal at TL 7. There are expensive and elaborate electronic locks, motion detectors, flood lights, etc., but no sentry robots or laser turrets! The most powerful defense of the entire facility is its inconspicuousness; it looks no different from others up and down the road. In a pinch this layout can be used for the headquarters of other super-teams, both heroic and criminal.

Lower Floor

1 — Foyer. Old, expensive double wooden doors open to the south to the front drive and lawn, and some valuable paintings adorn the walls. A wide staircase leads to the second floor, while on either side are passages to the main hall.

2 — Staircase. The main staircase is extra wide for the first portion, then reaches a landing and splits into two short flights of normal width. Underneath the staircase is a coat closet that can be accessed from the short passageways that connect the foyer and main hall.

3 — Genetics Laboratory. Well stocked and with direct access to a vast electronic library. Mathews makes some use of this facility almost every day. A handful of experiments — both physical and computer-modeled — will be under way at any given moment.

4 — Robotics Laboratory. None of the Pride has much knowledge about robotic systems, but Citrakaya is making a go of it. Specimens of robots encountered (and defeated, usually) are deposited here for future study.

5 — Weight Room. Features many sophisticated muscle building machines that are used frequently by Snow Leopard and Mathews, occasionally by Citrakaya, and never by Tigress (who relies on lots of free weights).

6 — Men's shower. Adjoins the weight room.

7 — Women's shower. Adjoins the weight room.

8 — Closets. Most are empty; the two nearest the weight room hold equipment that is not currently being used for physical training.

9 — Kitchen. A full and complete kitchen, decked from top to bottom in brushed stainless steel. There are plenty of knives, ovens, and food processors to cause bodily damage to normals.

10 — Staircase. Smaller and less frequently used than the main staircase (2).

11 — Pantry. A great number of shelves contain non-perishable goods, and a large freezer rests against the north wall.

12 — Laundry room. All the usual equipment, plus a chute from the hall directly above.

13 — Bathroom.

14 — Bathroom.

15 — Supplies Closet. Primarily household supplies.

16 — Training Center. This large room has reinforced walls to withstand impact from a speeding Citrakaya or a blast of freezing air from Snow Leopard. A full-strength swing by Tigress would probably cause some damage if not an actual hole. Pop-up and stationary targets and obstacles are used in different configurations to train the group to fight as a unit. Mathews desperately wants a more sophisticated training room.

17 — Monitor Booth. From this room the activities in the training center are filmed, and reaction times are recorded. Direct control may be used to manipulate the elements of the training center configuration.

18 — Electronics Laboratory. Occasionally used by Citrakaya. She keeps it immaculate.

19 — Mechanics/Cybernetics Laboratory. There is very little equipment, and the feed to the terminal room is plagued by something (line noise?) that makes the computer almost unusable. Currently this lab sees little use.

20 — Terminal Room. A cool and quiet room for research sessions involving a computer only. Anyone working in the Mechanics/Cybernetics lab shuttles back and forth between it and the terminal room in order to access a computer. Some manuals are available here; others are in the supply closet.

21 — Computer Room. Two minicomputers that are accessible throughout the mansion are here. Usually the room is entered only when a problem arises.

22 — Computer Supply Closet. Memory archives, printer supplies, and software/hardware manuals are stored here.

23 — Library. Only part of one wall is filled with leatherbound classic literature; the rest is filled with academic texts, reports, and theses of widely varying origins. Elegant and comfortable chairs are located in the center of the room.

24 — Biology Laboratory. This lab that currently sees the most use as Mathews and Tigress conduct research while Citrakaya hovers over their shoulders.

25 — Unused Laboratory. Possesses the appropriate connections for power, ventilation, and computer access but is currently empty.

26 — Cabana (Men's). Changing stalls, a small restroom, shower, and steam chamber; it opens into the hall and pool patio.

27 — Cabana (Women's). As above.

28 — Swimming Pool. Standard residential swimming pool.

29 — Garden. A delicate combination of plants from several continents is guarded from pool-goers by a wrought iron fence with gate.

30 — Dining Room. A spacious room that features a grand old table. Large picture windows on the west wall open to the garden.

Upper Floor

31 — Chandelier. Open ceiling above the lower level; a large and old but not particularly valuable chandelier hangs here. Were it to fall, it would do 3d crushing damage to anyone below.

32 — Staircase. As (2), above.

33 — Master Suite. Citrakaya's room is decorated sparsely with American and Canadian mementos — nothing from India. A bathroom is attached.

34 — Master Suite. Snow Leopard has adorned most of his walls with posters depicting women in bikinis, usually offering some sort of beer. He has a powerful stereo system that he plays quite loud at times.

35, 36 — Guest Suites. Unoccupied.

37 — Conference Room. With convenient presentation facilities; here Mathews outlines his plans with the Pride.

38 — Staircase. As (10), above.

39 — Storage Closet. Mostly empty.

40 -- Office. Mathews uses his private office to study newspapers and other information services for potentially profitable raids. In one of the desk

drawers (all are locked) he keeps a journal that describes what has happened to the four people and how Mathews has manipulated them into a villain group

41 — Training Center. The training center has a high ceiling so people in the hall can watch the commotion unless special shields have covered the hall windows.

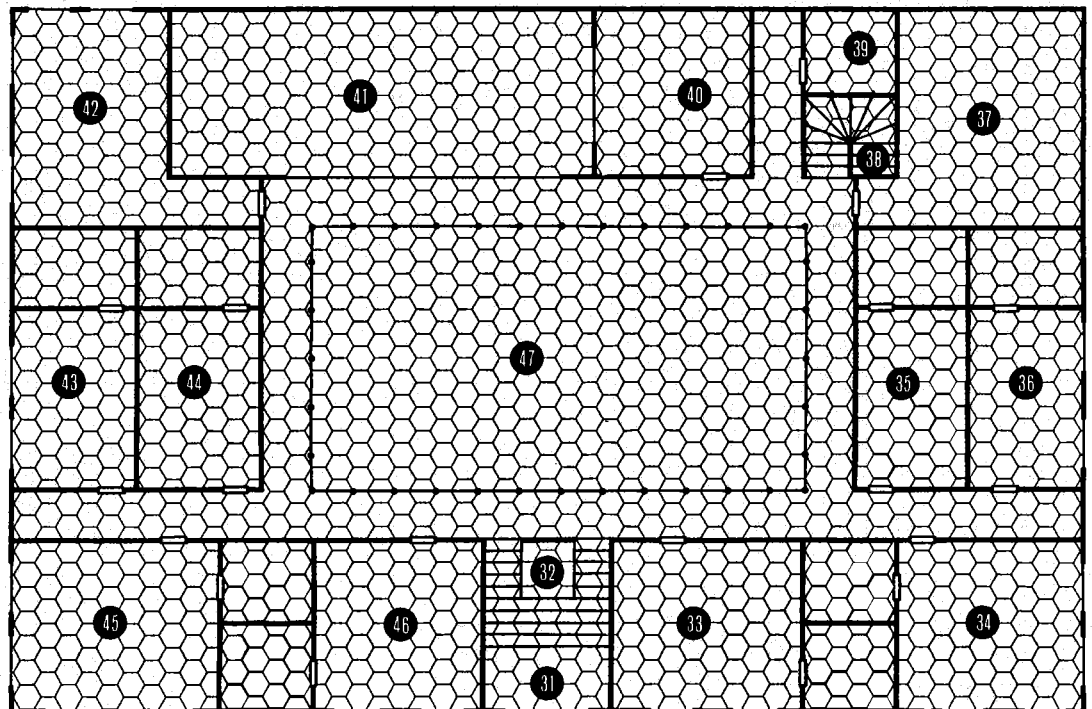
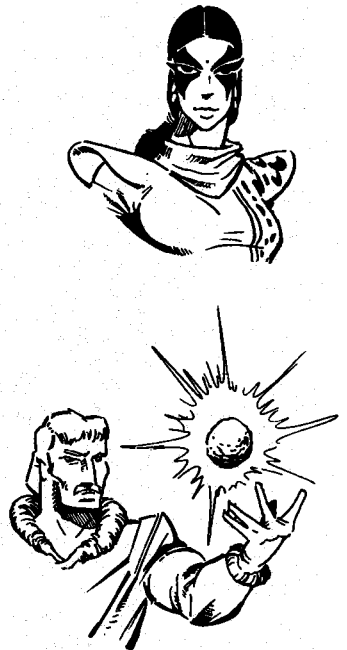
42 — Reading Room/Lounge. Most of the books that were originally intended for the library ended up here. A good number of paperbacks are also present. Tigress reads the most fiction; Citrakaya and Mathews more often work while Snow Leopard works out or cruises into the city.

43, 44 — Guest Suite. Unoccupied. Mathews needs domestic help, or at least a cook, very soon but is not sure how to hire one that won't squeal.

45 — Master Suite. Mathews' suite is decorated with style and taste. He is the only one to have a computer feed to a terminal in his room.

46 — Master Suite. Tigress is the least tidy of the four, usually leaving clothes, magazines, and leftover food about the room.

47 — Open air above the lower level pool and garden.



THE EXCHANGE

Background

As the number of metahumans increased in the 1970s, more and more crimes were performed by super-criminals working for hire. At first, criminal organizations relied on their own resources to locate metahumans, usually keeping some on retainer, but before long the need for a better structure between freelance supers and their potential employers became apparent.

The Exchange first appeared in 1974, and quickly surpassed all competition. By 1977 it was the principal national and international employment agency for criminally-inclined metahumans. The Exchange works with prospective clients to find suitable employees for any job. They do not limit themselves to criminal activities, though few law-abiding organizations will deal with them! Though few of the contracts they negotiate are for legal assignments, many are not destructive. Industrial espionage and harassment are frequent missions.

The nature of the personnel and facilities behind the Exchange are a well-guarded secret. Information processing is their main business, and some investigations have suggested that fantastic computer hackers, powerful computers, and access to private communications satellite channels are part of the organization. It is believed that a number of powerful telepaths are also involved. (The GM may wish to borrow elements from the cyberpunk genre when dealing with this aspect of the Exchange. Heroes with appropriate powers may wish to enter the computer networks directly to better search for the organization.)

When the Exchange is approached by clients that seek metahuman assistance, it uses a complex system of drop-off sites and untraceable phone calls to contact suitable candidates and arrange a meeting between the two parties. It takes 10% of the contractee's fee. Cash is acceptable, but electronic transfers are preferred — they're easily covered up.

The Exchange prides itself on its professionalism. Extensive databases are kept of all known organizations and metahumans. The records on its customers are especially extensive. The Exchange knows how far a metahuman is willing to go (will he or she kill without hesitation?), and how far an employer is likely to push.

It is fairly easy to contact the Exchange. Its toll-free number changes daily (sometimes quicker) but can be learned if you know the right people (or find them with a Streetwise roll). Many street characters seem always to know the current number without remembering where they heard it! Rumor has it that Telepathy, or even Mindwipe, is used at critical "nodes" in the system to hide the trail. Placing the phone call puts you in touch with the organization; you will be asked many questions that are used to enhance their records and find appropriate jobs. This is usually called "registering" with the Exchange.

Locating the Exchange itself is another matter entirely. Many who have done business with it for years have never seen anyone other than low-level goons assigned to pick up payment. An FBI volunteer telepath attempted to psionically infiltrate the organization by calling the toll-free phone number and mentally tracing the person who answered. He made contact . . . and suddenly strangled himself with the phone cord before startled FBI agents could intervene! However, the Exchange was apparently upset by the near-miss; soon afterwards they acquired a computer with voice recognition capability to answer the calls.

Use in the Campaign

It is not intended for heroes to directly confront this organization. Those who try should fail — and perhaps suffer considerably. But players will want to have some effect on this unseen force of evil. There are many possibilities. Individual Exchange minions might be captured, and perhaps local offices destroyed. Sufficiently skilled heroes may interfere with Exchange satellite communications or computer access. At the very least, heroes can reduce the volume of contracts the Exchange organizes by disrupting their communication and information channels. Truly subtle heroes will find a way to deprive the Exchange of its greatest asset . . . its reputation for reliability and infallibility.

The principal purpose of the Exchange, in game terms, is to provide a reason for different villains (from this book or the GM's imagination) to work together on various schemes. Metahumans who would *never* form a true "team" can be brought together by the Exchange for a particular job.

The Exchange as an Enemy

The GM may rule that the Exchange will not even concern itself with individuals, and cannot be taken as an Enemy. However, it would also make sense to assume that the Exchange will pay back those who irritate it, as it has in the past. It will do so by taking out a contract on its own behalf, sending a metavillain to attack the irritating hero. (Being practical, the Exchange will probably send either someone who will not fail, or someone it has no further use for!) If taken as an Enemy, the Exchange is the most powerful foe imaginable, with great wealth and access to a world of powers, and is worth a base -40 points.

The Exchange as a Patron

Characters who visit the shady side of the law may be registered as Exchange "resources." Those who are valuable to the Exchange can receive help and protection. The Exchange costs 40 points as a patron. Note that if law-enforcement agencies *know* that a metahuman is an Exchange resource, he should take an extra -1 reputation, and the charge of "conspiracy" will be added whenever he comes to trial!



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