

FOR USE WITH

CHAMPIONS
THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME

HEROIC ADVENTURES™

VOLUME 1



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HEROIC ADVENTURES™ Volume 1

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THROWING STARS AND BARS

By Jim Crocker

Illustrations by Storn Cook

Introduction

Throwing Stars and Bars is an adventure for *Champions*, intended for 6 to 8 characters, built on 250-275 points each. It can be used as a *Dark Champions* adventure as well. Suggestions for modifying this adventure for use with *Dark Champions* are included. Obviously, the scenario can also be altered for fewer players or different point levels. Some suggestions have been included, but most of that fine-tuning will be up to individual GMs. GM tips are printed in gray boxes.

A Note From The Author

The Civil War is a subject of great interest to many, especially gamers. The people and places referred to in this scenario do not have anything more than a coincidental place in history.

The Civil War is used here not as a historical reference, but as a plot device. If the historians in the group promise to suspend their disbelief, then I promise to show them a fun time. Actually, the same goes for Japan, as well. Thanks, and have fun.



PART 1: THE KINGS AND I

Background

The game takes place in and around Memphis, Tennessee. The players find themselves there because the insane supervillain Yo-Yo (see the back of this adventure for his stats) has taken over Graceland, the home of Elvis Presley. He has taken several hostages and has threatened to bring Graceland down on their heads if the heroes don't show up to battle him. Somehow, at least one of the PCs will see or hear the following special news bulletin. It may be broadcast on television or radio, interrupting the regular programming, or over the PCs' team vehicle or headquarters monitor, and so on:

"We interrupt this program for a World Cable News Special Report. The supervillain known as Yo-Yo has taken over Graceland, former home of Elvis Presley. Authorities report he has taken several hostages and has threatened to blow up the estate unless a group of superheroes* come to Graceland and battle him on national TV. Here's a shot of Yo-Yo taken by our crew on the scene."

The camera cuts to Graceland, where Yo-Yo stands on the wall surrounding the estate, a flurry of yo-yos twirling around his body. The camera zooms in to a close up of his armored helmet. An electronically amplified voice booms out, sounding reminiscent of a professional wrestler

"That's right, I'm gonna destroy this whole place unless [Hero Team] shows up to get their butts kicked by me, Yo-Yo! It's about time I got some respect in the metahuman community, and today I'm gonna earn it. You've got four hours before I start breaking windows!"

With that, he flings a yo-yo directly at the camera. It looms large for a moment, then the signal is lost in a burst of snow. The announcer returns.

"Over three thousand loyal Elvis fans are holding a candlelight vigil outside the former superstar's besieged home. The only question on their minds, 'Will [Hero Group] show up in time?' We'll bring you the rest of the story as it breaks. Now back to our regularly scheduled programming."

* NOTE: If the players' team has received any prominent media attention already, Yo-Yo will ask for them by name

When the heroes eventually arrive on the scene, Yo-Yo will be standing on the wall surrounding Graceland. He will be generally posturing for the

cameras, doing all sorts of tricks with his yo-yos. The hostages are located inside the building, being detained by Yo-Yo's Presleybots. There will be one Presleybot for every two heroes present (up to a maximum of four Presleybots). As soon as the heroes are visible to the crowd, a wild cheer will go up and the crowd will surge forward, but the police will hold them back. Yo-Yo will issue a bombastic challenge to the heroes.

"I officially declare today to be '[Hero Group]-gets-trashed Day.' Let the festivities commence immediately! I, Yo-Yo, will preside over the ceremony!"

With that, he launches an attack at the heroes and the battle begins in earnest.

As soon as Yo-Yo is actually struck by an attack, the Presleybots will emerge from inside Graceland and join in the fight, leaving their hostages tied up inside. Any actions taken by Yo-Yo will always be with an eye toward the cameras. If he is knocked into an area where he can't be seen by the cameras, Yo-Yo will maneuver to where they can before launching another attack.

Any damage to *any* part of Graceland, including the outer wall, will illicit gasps and shrieks from the gathered crowd. If the GM is going for comic relief, he should be sure to contrive massive property damage, which will reduce many in the crowd to blubbering wrecks.

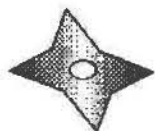
Eventually, the heroes should defeat Yo-Yo and his Presleybots. If fine-tuning this scenario, make sure this battle is relatively easy for the PCs, as it is intended as a lead-in to the main plot.

If used in a *Dark Champions* campaign, Yo-Yo is quite insane. All he cares about is killing heroes on national television. He will act essentially the same, except that he will not hesitate to use his razor-bladed Killing Attack yo-yos on anyone.

The Presleybots will each be rigged to explode 12 seconds (1 Turn) after reaching zero BODY or below, detonating in a 3d6K Explosion. They are relatively straightforward bombs (standard Demolitions roll to deactivate, or Electronics at -2), and can also be deactivated by immersing them in water. PCs who make a PER Roll will hear the 'beep' of the electronic activation signal when the robots go down, tipping them off to the bomb's existence.

Once Yo-yo is defeated, reporters will surge forward, trying to interview the heroes. The police will keep the reporters at bay, if asked. They don't get too many heroes in this neck of the woods, so the PCs should be treated a bit like celebrities. Yo-Yo will be arrested and hauled off for questioning by the police.

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and Bars



PART 2: LEGWORK

Conspiracy Guy

While all the cleanup and autograph-signing and such is happening, one of the members of the group (most likely the leader, if a particular member is recognized as such) will be approached by Conspiracy Guy. Conspiracy Guy presents himself as a member of some unnamed government organization. He is really just a conspiracy buff who is attending a local college. The problem is that he gathers so much information that he actually *does* manage to find real patterns in some of it.

Conspiracy guy is 6' 2" tall, thin and wiry with thinning blonde hair. He wears a black suit, dark glasses, and an ear-plug of some with a wire that leads into his suit. He will flash a badge to get past any cops and make his way to the heroes.

His Story

There have been a series of strange disappearances in the greater Memphis area of late. At first glance, there doesn't seem to be a pattern, until the victims' roots are researched. The victims, it turns out, are all descendants of Confederate generals and other high-ranking government officials from the Civil War era. When he searched police databases in other parts of the country, Conspiracy Guy found a pattern of missing persons reports and disappearances that followed a general chronological and geographic path from the West Coast over a year ago to here in Memphis, with stops along the way in every region of the country.

If allowed to go on, he will start to talk about elaborate government plots to find a fortune in Confederate treasure, and a bizarre plan the Confederate leaders had to contact extraterrestrials to help them win the war. The descendants may have genetic memories encoded in their brains, so a different government organization than the one Conspiracy Guy works for (the Men in BLACK) have taken them to probe their brains.

The more he talks, the more obvious it is that he's making up some of the story as he goes along just to hold the heroes' attention. He will rant more and more wildly until the heroes tire of him or somehow shut him up. The GM is encouraged to ham it up here and insert his favorite conspiracy theories into the mix.



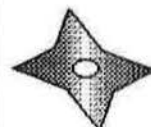
The Evidence

The Conspiracy Guy has with him several computer disks that contain his "research" on this subject, which he will give to whichever hero he has been speaking to. Back in his college dormitory room are his project materials. He will not voluntarily take the PCs back to his room, but they can easily follow him back to it after he leaves Graceland.

In his dorm room is a large, *very* powerful computer with several modem hookups, all his research materials, numerous stacks of various newspapers and magazines, census reports, letters, and lots of junk, piled to the ceiling in the once spacious (as dorms go) room. Anyone searching his room will have literally years worth of collected information to plow through.

If running a *Dark Champions* campaign, GMs may find Conspiracy Guy an interesting character to reuse. He is a very eccentric young man with an interesting talent. He can discern patterns in large amounts of raw data that would normally go undetected. This talent amounts to a limited form of Clairvoyance. He may be useful to a hero group as a Contact, especially in a campaign where intricate schemes and large-scale conspiracies may be common ("Here, Conspiracy Guy, take a look at all these newspaper clippings for a few days. Call

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me if you notice anything unusual about them." If used properly (and sparingly), Conspiracy Guy can provide an interesting springboard for many adventures.

The Clues

The following clues can be found by any players utilizing appropriate skills, such as Bureaucracy, Knowledge Skills, Computer Programming, and so on. Any reasonably applicable skill combined with the necessary resources should turn up one or more of the following clues.

The Disappearances

The disappearances really *have* been occurring. There have been seven in the surrounding area over the last month. People have been vanishing from their homes. There are no signs of struggle, and the disappearances always occur at night. There have been 18 that Conspiracy Guy has been able to link together.

The Abductees

The abductees are, in fact, all direct descendants of major players in the Confederacy during the Civil War. Further research will reveal that all of these figures were in the higher ranks of the Confederacy. They all gathered together only once during the war, for a secret meeting of some sort. The full details of this meeting have never been discovered, despite exhaustive research, although it is known that the meeting was held in Memphis. Rumors indicate it may have involved disciplinary action against one of their own. The whole thing was kept very hush-hush.

Possible Targets

The only people fitting the profile of the missing persons which that are *not* yet listed as missing are Linda Lee, a reporter for UPI who is currently home on vacation while her college roommate gets married, and Joshua Jackson, a descendent of the famous Confederate General, "Stonewall" Jackson.

Linda Lee: Linda is one of several reporters for UPI (or whatever world reporting organization exists in the GM's campaign; the only distinction is that it be *print* media) stationed in Japan, covering international crime stories and the exploits of Japanese paranormals (or vigilantes, in a *Dark Champions* game) that battle the Yakuza there.

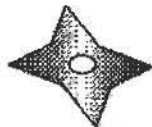
Joshua Jackson: Joshua is in a local Veteran's Hospital, where he is recovering from wounds received while on a U.N. peacekeeping mission, in whatever world hotspot (real or fictitious) is appropriate for your campaign. He is a member of the U.S. Marine Corps, who's platoon was caught in a crossfire between the two warring factions.

The Government

The Government has no idea what Conspiracy Guy is talking about. No agency has any record of an agent working on such a case, and no credible evidence can be found to support the more wild presumptions that Smith makes. Any agency with access to such information can confirm the disappearances if given some time, and even verify the pattern. The heroes will be encouraged to investigate and "get back to us if you dig up anything..." if on good terms with the government, or "encouraged" to keep away if not. The GM should use whichever means he feels will motivate the PCs to investigate further.

The Disappearance Sites

Investigation of any of the other disappearance sights yields little evidence. All of the victims were taken at night, from their homes — in some cases from their beds — without disturbing anyone, including others in the same room in two cases. In several cases, they weren't discovered missing for



several days. Nothing was ever stolen from the homes and police are treating the majority of the victims as runaways/missing persons in lieu of any evidence of kidnapping, except for an elderly woman who was bedridden and abducted from a nursing home. Because she was not ambulatory, hers is the only case being treated as an actual kidnapping, although she has no living relatives to contact for information.

The GM is encouraged to come up with stories for the other 6 victims in the immediate area if players press the issue; any 6 random people with random occupations will do fine. Players will discover nothing about the disappearances from any of the sites, especially since none of these six disappearances is very recent.

SEVEN DOWN, TWO TO GO

This is about all the Info players can gather. Eventually (or maybe immediately), they will seek out the two unkidnaped descendants.

Joshua Jackson

Joshua is no longer in any real pain, but he will be in traction for quite a while while his shattered legs heal. He passes the time by watching reruns of *MacGyver*, his favorite TV show, on the VCR the hospital has provided for him. He'll be catching up on episodes he's only seen once when the heroes arrive to talk to him (Feel free to insert whichever episode is your favorite when heroes arrive).

He is a classic Marine: 6'3" tall, with a "high and tight" haircut, thickly muscled, with a noticeable Southern drawl. He will be a little punchy from prescription pain killers; coherent enough to communicate with PCs as needed, but obviously medicated and in no shape to go anywhere (which his doctors will strictly forbid if the heroes get it into their heads to take him into "protective custody").

He knows nothing about any of the disappearances, nor does he seem overly concerned. "It ain't like they could inconvenience me any further." Additionally, security at the hospital seems adequate.

If asked, he can think of no reason why anyone would want to kidnap him. If Joshua is told about the ancestor connection, he will readily admit that his great, great grandfather was a "thoroughly mean sonofabitch." In Joshua's words, his ancestor was a "good soldier, but I wouldn't want him runnin' my guv'ment, nosirree. Some of his ideas was downright weird." If pressed about his distant

relative, Joshua will tell the PCs about a journal has been passed down from Jackson to Jackson, each upon their entrance into military service. The journal has been meticulously preserved. If convinced of the seriousness of the affair by the heroes, he will allow them to examine the journal, which he keeps in his footlocker under his bed.

The Journal

The journal is full of bombastic prose that was obviously written with an eye towards publication; Jackson often addresses the "reader" when he writes. Most entries are day-to-day accounts of his life and deeds, and the book makes him look like hero, statesman, and warrior rolled up into one extremely handsome, humble, package.

Towards the end of the tome, he tells a story of a young Corporal named Zacharia Collins, whose brilliant battle tactics were slowly, almost single-handedly, turning the tide of the war. Content to let others take credit for his ideas, the Corporal quickly becomes the man the leaders of the Confederacy start looking to for advice. This infuriates Jackson, and he sets out to dig up dirt on the man, for surely there had to be some.

General Jackson finds the greatest dirt he could have hoped for: the Corporal is not a gentleman at all, but the half-breed son of a Southern merchant who was visiting Japan while looking into the Silk trade. His mother was a Japanese geisha, who married the American businessman and was kept at a small house many miles from a plantation owned by the man.

The boy was educated and raised in secret. When he was old enough, he entered the West Point Military Academy as the gentleman's "nephew," the son of a long-lost brother from the frontier. He was later "adopted" by the gentlemen and made a member of the family.

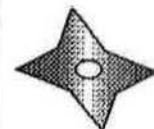
Jackson revealed this information, *and* the fact that the boy was using an ancient Asian military text as inspiration which would surely eventually lead to disaster. Disgraced, the Corporal was court-martialled. He fled West, but not before he swore revenge on all those present at his court-martial. It was said that he and his now-disgraced father eventually moved back to Japan, where they were never heard from again.

Joshua knows this part of the story, but never thought much of it. He assumed it was just some colorful story that was added by his great, great grandfather.

Digging Deeper

If the heroes manage to access some particularly obscure source of Civil War info, (professors, time travelers, etc.) they will hear rumors of this story, which is typically dismissed

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as propaganda from the "Northern revisionists who don't want to give the Generals credit for their brilliance" or as "Pure hogwash", or "Possible, given the course of events, but hardly probable, or even plausible for that matter," depending on the disposition of the person they're talking to.

Records will turn up of the court-martial of a Corporal Zacharia Collins, for falsifying personal records. The court-martial seems to have occurred the same time as the secret meeting that brought the prominent officials together. No record can be found of his whereabouts after that. If the PCs determine a plausible way of tracing him further (such as accessing Japanese records of some kind, using Retrocognition, and so on), evidence of tampering with the records where he *should* show up will become evident, turning all possible leads into dead ends.

Linda Lee

The heroes shouldn't have too much trouble finding Linda's residence. If they contact UPI, they'll be told she's on vacation. They will be reluctant to give out her address unless given a compelling reason to do so. Linda is listed in the local phone book, however, so it shouldn't be hard to find her. Any phone calls to her house will get an answering machine, with a very professional message instructing the caller to leave the date and time of the call, along with a message.

Whenever the Heroes arrive at Linda Lee's House, they will find a scene they didn't expect: No Linda, and signs of a struggle — a recent struggle. The kidnapping will have occurred the previous night, around 3 o'clock in the morning, however many hours ago that may have been.

Linda's House

Linda's house is really a condominium in an upscale part of town. Linda's condo is a small two-story unit, with two bedrooms upstairs, and a bathroom. Her bedroom opens onto a small porch in back of the house. The downstairs has a kitchen, living room, a small study, and a half bathroom. There is no basement. Her car is in the driveway when heroes arrive at the house.

The Neighbors

Because most of this area is owned by out-of-towners, they are often unoccupied. None of her neighbors within three houses on either side of Linda's condo were home last night. The neighbors on one side are on vacation in Hawaii, and the other side is being rented by vacationing college students who were having a huge, loud party the previous night (the PCs may encounter the remnants of it if they arrive relatively early in the morning).

Questioning the Party-goers

Most of the party-goers were too intoxicated to have seen anything (or remember it, for that matter), except for the "Keymaster," a sober young man carrying a sack of keys with him. He thought he heard something that could have been gunshots sometime early in the morning, but there was a thunderstorm with lots of lightning, so he chalked it up to that. No one else saw much of anything at all, let alone anything "unusual," due largely to the weather and the high fence surrounding the entire backyard of the house.

Inside the House

Linda's house itself looks like a riot happened in the bedroom. The back porch glass doors are ajar, and the bedroom is a mess. The bedsheets are pulled off, the nightstand is overturned, and the large mirror over the bureau is smashed. The lamp on the nightstand has also overturned onto the floor and the lightbulb is pressing against the shade, causing it to smolder slightly.

The Clues

The Mirror

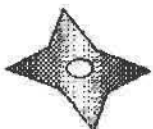
The mirror has been shattered by a bullet. It can be dug out of the wall by anyone who cares to. The round is a high-caliber (.45 ACP), hollow-point round.

The Ceiling

There are ten projectiles stitched into the ceiling. If removed, they will be revealed to be flechettes, sharp, small pieces of metal designed to shred flesh on impact, and they appear to have been fired from a submachine-gun sized flechette rifle. This is highly advanced technology. Only governments should have access to it, and even they only have prototypes. Their appearance is *highly* unusual.

If the PCs investigate further (such as calling on any government Contacts), they will learn that the flechettes do not fit any known prototypes. These were apparently fired at random, perhaps as reaction by someone carrying the weapon and was somehow struck or surprised.

Obviously, tech levels will vary from game to game, so if this type of item is readily available, substitute something else (laser rifles, etc.) that conveys the same sense that the heroes are up against someone with access to expensive, cutting-edge technology. The goal is to have the players realize that this may be even more involved than they may have initially realized.



The Lamp

When the lamp is lifted or moved, there will be a small puddle of pink, bubbling matter on the ground. The pile is directly under where a standing person who fired the flechette gun would have been. As it cools, it will start to dissolve, slowly disappearing. Several methods can be used to collect it: Exposing it to heat above 96 degrees Fahrenheit will cause it to stabilize; at 98.6 it is totally stable; at higher temperatures, it starts to expand slowly, growing larger almost imperceptibly.

The initial mass is only large enough to fill a shot glass. It doubles in size once every six hours, if the heroes choose to wait that long. Above 105 degrees, it starts to 'boil' away, bubbling and popping, and smelling rather gross, like rotting meat. Keeping any of it sealed in an airtight container will cause it to react accordingly, but it will not dissipate into the atmosphere at lower temperatures, just shrink slowly in size. Freezing it will cause it to crystallize, and rethawing it will leave a pile of smelly, black goo, inert to future manipulations. Flash freezing it to extremely low temperatures and flash rethawing will preserve it in its current state.

Analyzing the Goo

Analysis will show that the substance is a highly advanced organic compound. It is very similar to undifferentiated human cells, but *highly* unstable. It would take relatively little shock to cause the stuff to destabilize. Trace amounts of the substance can be found dispersed in the air of the room, from several parts per million to only a few parts per billion depending on when the heroes arrive.

The goop is what remains of one of Yatsomoto's Techno-Ninjas after they are killed. Linda managed to shoot one of them before having her gun knocked away. The falling lamp has preserved some of the stuff by keeping it warm. She was fighting fairly well until Raiden interceded and knocked her out with a lightning bolt, as players will discover.

The Cassette Recorder

Further investigation will discover a hand-held microcassette recorder under the bed. It was apparently dropped there during the struggle.

The tape contains Linda's voice, dictating notes about the Yakuza, and their inroads into American organized crime. GMs can use this as

a way to introduce the Yakuza to their campaign if they have not already. If you are using San Angelo as a campaign setting, include clues about Yakuza activity in that city which the players can follow up on later (See *Dark Champions*, page 114, for background on the Yakuza).

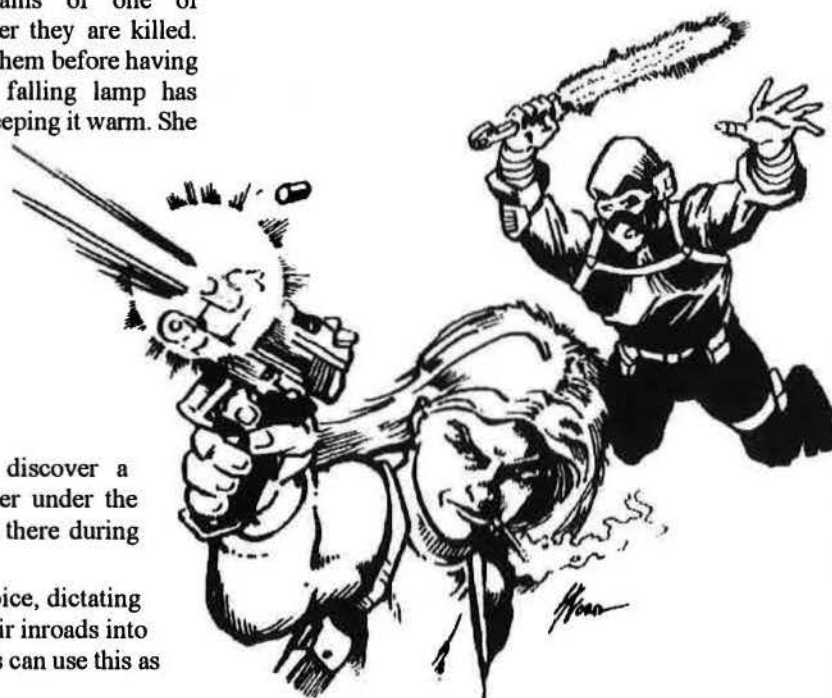
Characters listening to the tape will then hear the patter of rain against the windows outside her bedroom, as well as muffled thunderclaps. Anyone who bothers to check will find out that weather was pleasant most everywhere else, but a strange summer storm occurred for about an hour last night in this area (the storm was Raiden's doing).

Linda pauses to check her notes when she suddenly drops the recorder. There is a thump as it hits the floor. We hear a 'click' as she chambers a round in her pistol. "Who the hell are you?" she says. The response comes in Japanese: "Take her!"

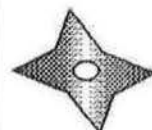
There is a gunshot, immediately followed by another. The second gunshot is followed by a scream, the whine of the flechette gun and the cracks of the flechettes hitting the ceiling. The third gunshot shatters the mirror, as the gun is knocked out of her hand. There is the sound of the nightstand crashing over and the sound of hand-to-hand fighting. Several blows are exchanged, and Linda seems to be holding her own until a loud "CRACKLE," sounding very much like a lightning bolt, ends the fight.

A commanding voice shouts in Japanese: "FOOLS! Hope her worth to the Master is enough to stay his wrath at your lack of subtlety! You have grown careless! Let us find what we came for and begone. You! Take his equipment. He won't need it anymore."

There are several minutes of scurrying sounds as the assailants gather up objects from the house. The door slides closed and all is silent.



Throwing Stars and Bars



The Clues

1) The voice on the tape is Ronin's. He always leads Ninjas on their clandestine kidnappings.

2) The (flechette) weapon in the background fires at the equivalent of 10-round Autofire.

3) Linda is probably familiar with the weapon she used and proficient, as well, to have drawn and used it so quickly. She is also very observant: no trace of the assailants entering can be heard on the tape.

4) The noise heard matches almost exactly the sonic resonance of natural lightning strikes, if anyone bothers to check such a thing.

5) This house has been ransacked; a file cabinet has been emptied, a computer removed from the den downstairs, and her purse dumped on the floor and hastily searched in the kitchen. Expensive jewelry and credit cards were left behind. These thieves were after Information.

6) The substance should be eventually revealed to be a skin substitute to be used in the newly-developed Bionic Grafting Process. Yatsomoto Corp has a patent on the substance, which is definitely *not* approved for use on human patients.

Investigating Yatsomoto Corp

Yatsomoto is at the forefront of "invasive" bionic/cybernetic technology. They burst onto the scene 15 years ago with an amazing alloy, which no one has since been able to duplicate. Their problem is in practical application. Their cybertech parts are currently only temporary replacements for transplant patients. The alloy interferes with the body's magnetic field, so that it begins to break down if used for too long, driving the user into fits of near-psychotic violent behavior eventually.

They have been the subject of numerous lawsuits, but are so rich from sales of their technology that they have never been defeated. No one has ever met their mysterious chairman, who supposedly is over 100 years old, and an American who became a naturalized Japanese citizen at a young age. It is rumored the company has ties to the Yakuza, but so do many other corporations in Japan, and nothing has ever been proven.

Yatsomoto Corp has a plant outside Memphis where they manufacture prototypes of bionic replacement limbs and organs for testing in the VA hospital.

The plant has been closed for retrofitting for the last six weeks, about the time the local abductions began. Any neighbors of the plant, however, will describe a plant busy with activity, especially at night, with trucks and vans coming and going, as well as helicopters from the private pad.

THE RAID ON THE HOSPITAL

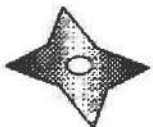
This should be about as much as the heroes can figure out before news comes in from the hospital security staff that the hospital is being attacked. Reports indicate that several paranormal villains and their agents are attempting to abduct Jackson.

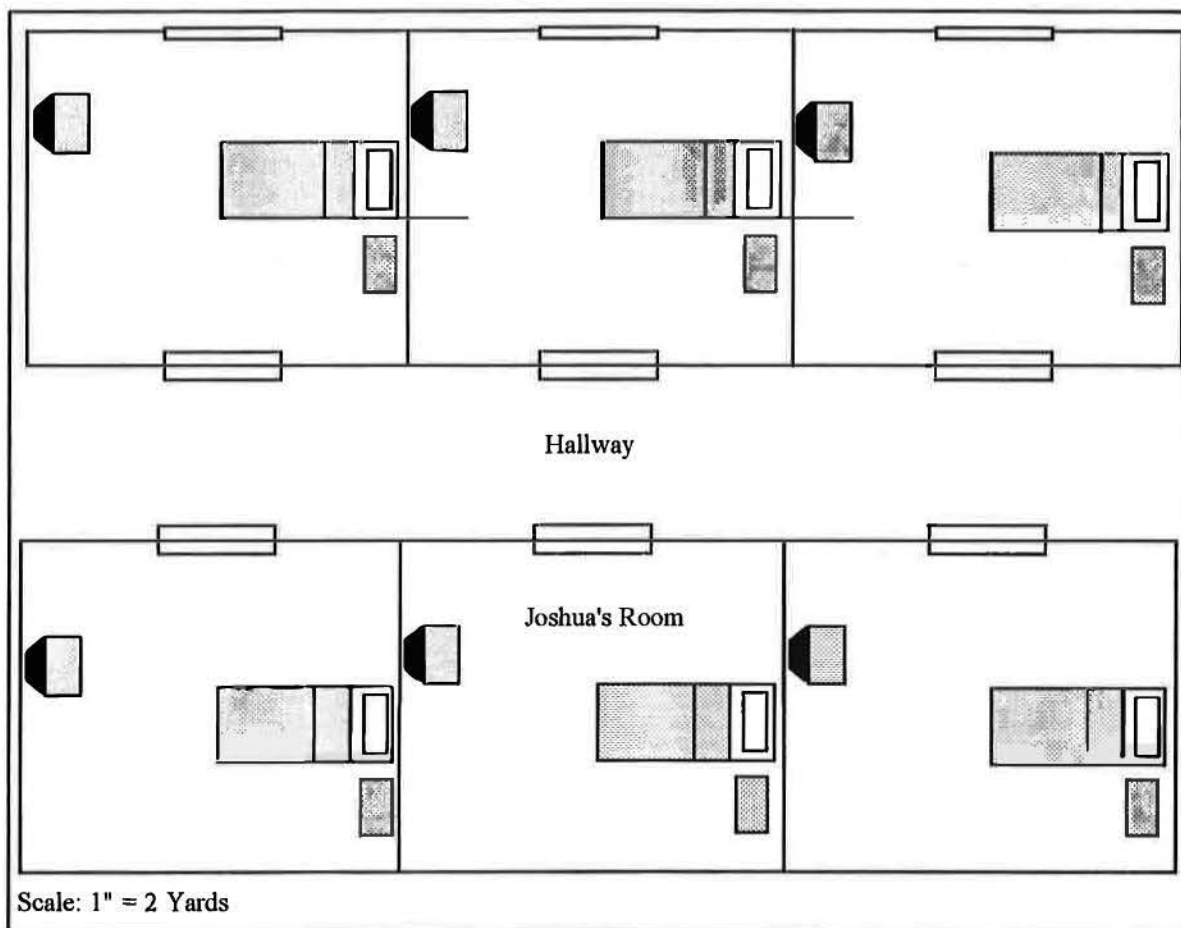
The Storm

The raid itself is precipitated by a ferocious thunderstorm that builds up over the course of several minutes. It starts with clouds rolling in unnaturally fast. Eventually it starts to rain, then it starts to thunder and lightning. The storm seems centered around the hospital, and is, in fact, being caused by Raiden. Any characters who go looking for him should have difficulty tracking him down due to adverse weather conditions and low visibility (-2 to Tracking and PER Rolls); they will come upon him just as he sends out a bolt that shorts out the power in the hospital.



Throwing Stars
and Bars





Enter the Ninja

As the storm builds, the Ninjas will come up through the sewers under the Hospital. They will quickly assemble Ronin's armor, then call an elevator to the basement, blocking its doors open so that it remains on this level. Tsunami will remain here as well, to ambush any characters that may try to reach the basement by alternate routes or try to follow the Ninjas once they've grabbed their target. They will open up the roof hatch and climb the cables to Jackson's floor. As soon as they see the lights go out, they will throw open the doors and storm Jackson's room, hoping to catch him and be gone in the confusion.

They *do* expect resistance; that's why Tsunami is waiting in the basement as backup if they are followed. Once Jackson is grabbed, the Ninjas can slide back down the cables, reaching the top of the elevator car in a single action phase. They will not hesitate to send the elevator back up to make life hard on any heroes climbing down after them.

Joshua's Room

If the PCs Are Present

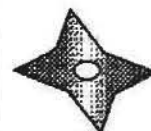
If the heroes leave one or more of their own behind to guard Joshua, they will meet the Techno-

Ninjas when they attack the room. There will be one Ninja for each PC already present. The supervillains are along for back-up, but would rather let the Ninjas handle the dirty work. Ronin is actually with the Ninjas, but Raiden will remain outside, floating in the storm high over the hospital. Any hero present in Jackson's room will see the lights go out, plunging the room into momentary darkness. When the emergency generator kicks in, the room will be full of Ninjas, led by Ronin. GMs are encouraged to use variants of this dramatic "appearance" for wherever the heroes encounter the Ninjas in the hospital.

If Joshua is Unguarded

If no heroes are present, hospital security guard Samuel Jenkins, who patrols Jackson's floor, will try to stop them, and actually slow them down for a second or two. He's the one who puts in the call (on his walkie-talkie) that the hospital is under attack, and Heroes will arrive just in time to see him go crashing through a third story window and start to fall to the sidewalk below (the window at the end of Jackson's hall). If he does hit, he will be at 0 BODY, bleeding to death unless helped. If caught, he will be unconscious, but otherwise all right. He can be revived with an appropriate Aid, and will tell the heroes how many Ninjas are present (1 per hero) as well as the fact that "some crazy guy in a suit of armor is inside trying to capture Jackson."

Throwing Stars
and Bars



The Bad Guys

The following NPCs are participating in the assault on the hospital: Ronin, Raiden, Tsunami, and 1 Techno-Ninja for each PC.

Ronin is with the Ninjas and will engage in HTH combat with any characters who seem threatening. He will make a beeline for any other martial artists and challenge them to combat first. The Ninjas will simply leap screaming at whichever hero is nearest them and try to take them apart. Raiden will appear in the sky over the Hospital and bombastically challenge the heroes to personal combat in the sky. Tsunami will lie in wait in the basement, biding her time until either one of the heroes heads down for some reason, or things start going very badly for the Villains, when she will simply flee back through the sewers and escape. Hopefully the Heroes win the battle.

The Aftermath

If The Heroes Get Creamed (Or Just Don't Show)

The villains will leave them battered and defeated lying where they fell, content to escape with merely humiliating them (loss of face is worse to them than death, really). They will take Jackson and quickly gather the bionic components of any fallen Techno-Ninjas. The lot will be brought to Yatsomoto Corp, where the 'ritual' to reincarnate Yatsomoto's enemies will begin soon.

If The Heroes Are Partially Successful

This is the most likely scenario; they prevent the abduction of Jackson, but some or all of the villains get away.

The Villains' first priority will be kidnapping Jackson. Defeating the heroes in combat is *not* a high priority, although if it looks like they are winning, they will take the heroes down however possible.

Who or whatever they capture will be brought back with them, and they won't worry about any captured Ninjas, as Yatsomoto will simply detonate the 'genetic bombs' built into their bionics.

Any captured supervillains, however, are another story.

If Ronin is captured, he'll simply 'open up his armor,' detaching himself from the automaton that he animates, and escape by flowing into an area where he can't easily be followed.

If Raiden is captured, he will refuse to answer any questions at all, but will spout a lot of nonsense about being a God, and how the mortals who profane him shall pay in bones, and so on.

If Tsunami is captured, she will simply escape into any body of water as soon as one is available. Barring that, she will simply remain completely silent, with a knowing smirk on her face. She will simply wait patiently for her master to free her.

In any event, a very slick and highly-paid lawyer will show up and begin negotiations for the release of the villains. They will be released on several million dollars bond within 24 hours; if heroes get to Yatsomoto's lair before that, any captured villains will not be present for the final battle.

If The Heroes Mop The Floor With Them

Total failure on the bad guys' part will mean that the ritual will go ahead without Jackson, and Yatsomoto will have to hope that the ritual can be successfully completed without him (it can be...). Any captured villains will only be at Yatsomoto if the heroes take longer than 24 hours to get there.

Things To Remember

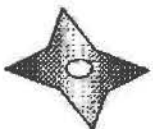
None of the supervillains speak *any* English (though the Ninjas do). They will yell openly to each other about the battle, unless a hero is recognized as Japanese, or is obvious about understanding them.

The Techno-Ninjas have no regard for their own lives; they will foolishly wade into attacks they know will destroy them, if it will buy their masters time; they are essentially living robots!

They also are obviously bionic, looking like black belt borgs under their ninja garb. They are expressionless and speak very little, only when necessary. To kill themselves, they typically simply bite their own tongues off and spit them out, letting their freakishly out-of-whack cloned metabolisms do the rest.

If they successfully grab Jackson, they will quickly leave, allowing the Ninjas to cover their path, which they will do, as above, with utter disregard for their own existence. They are not stupid, however, and will know if they are being followed. If so, they will go to a secluded location, then turn suddenly and fight, rather than lead the PCs to their base.

Throwing Stars
and Bars



Mopping Up

Once the fight is over, the heroes may want to research their foes before crashing the gate at Yatsomoto. With use of appropriate resources and Skills, they can determine the following.

Ronin

Ronin has been rumored to be in the employ of the Yakuza since before World War II, and may even have had some hand in the conflict. He rarely operates in the public eye, so very little is known about him. He has never had a run-in with any paranormal that heroes can find records of. He has no known vulnerabilities. Legends of him (or someone like him) go back for centuries in Japan, and any hero with appropriate Knowledge skills (or access to proper research materials) will be able to give a 'Legendary' account of his origin (included in his write-up below). Any appropriate KS:Magic or KS:Supernatural World roll should allow a hero to determine that his 'smoke' form may be vulnerable to magic.

Tsunami

Tsunami is a known Yakuza paranormal agent, one of several operating outside Japan. Heroes with access to such information can learn of her origin as a "government-created" hero (included in her write-up, below). It will also be possible for heroes to determine her Vulnerability to cold, as it has been witnessed in a previous battle against Team Super Monster Fighter's elementalists, Furious Blizzard Boy. Her hatred of all governments is well-documented, and will be one of the first things mentioned in any information heroes discover about her.

Raiden

Raiden has received press in Japan for the small cult he has accrued since his appearance. Not much is known about him, because he keeps everyone but worshippers away from his island. Any heroes with a knowledge access to mythological information can get a general idea of his powers, as well as legends of his defeat brought about by exploiting his vulnerabilities. He has previously had no known association with the Yakuza, so little is known of his motivations.

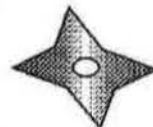


Techno-Ninjas

If the heroes manage to capture one of the Techno-Ninjas intact and can access FBI fingerprint files (or similar data), they will find that the fingerprints of the Ninjas match those on file for Yatsomoto (he was fingerprinted years ago when he applied for a Visa to visit the US), and if they capture more than one Techno-Ninja, they will discover that the fingerprints are, in fact, identical.

The cybertechnology used by the Ninjas is highly advanced, but basically useless to anyone who isn't suicidal, due to its effects on a normal human body. If the flechette guns are analyzed, they will be revealed to be highly advanced and extremely expensive; to produce such a prototype would cost any government tens of millions of dollars. Heroes who specialize in high-tech gadgets or weapons will find the weapons a marvel of design; they are small, light, and powerful. Any government officials to whom the heroes show these weapons will be very eager to acquire one, so they may take it apart and study it. Analysis of the artificial flesh (with a successful roll using SC: Bioengineering or other appropriate skill) that spawned the Ninjas will reveal their Vulnerability to electricity. Heroes may also determine the means required to keep one of the bodies stable long enough to capture one alive (See *Techno-Ninja* write-up for details).

Throwing Stars
and Bars



A VERY UN-CIVIL WAR

There are three main ways the PCs can go at Yatsomoto; the rest are just variations of the main three. They are:

Sneak In: Variants include dropping quietly from the sky, sneaking in over/under the gate, disguising themselves as Yatsomoto employees, etc.

Blast In: Variants include dropping noisily from the sky, crashing through the gate, beating up Yatsomoto employees, etc.

Waltz In: Simply walk right up and ask (or bluff) their way in.

Of course, combinations of these are possible as well.

Things To Remember

The "legitimate" employees don't know exactly what's going on in the "factory." They have been instructed that Mr. Yatsomoto is *not* to be disturbed under *any* circumstances, as he is personally overseeing to the installation of the new supercomputer there. As far as the employees

know, the "new" security guards (i.e., the Ninja) are "corporate bodyguards" hired to protect Mr. Yatsomoto from the Yakuza, as well as from other companies.

The plant is busy with comings and goings at all hours. Getting inside the gate shouldn't be difficult; getting near the factory building where the heroes want to go *will* be, as it has its own fence around it. Trucks go in or out every 15 minutes, on average.

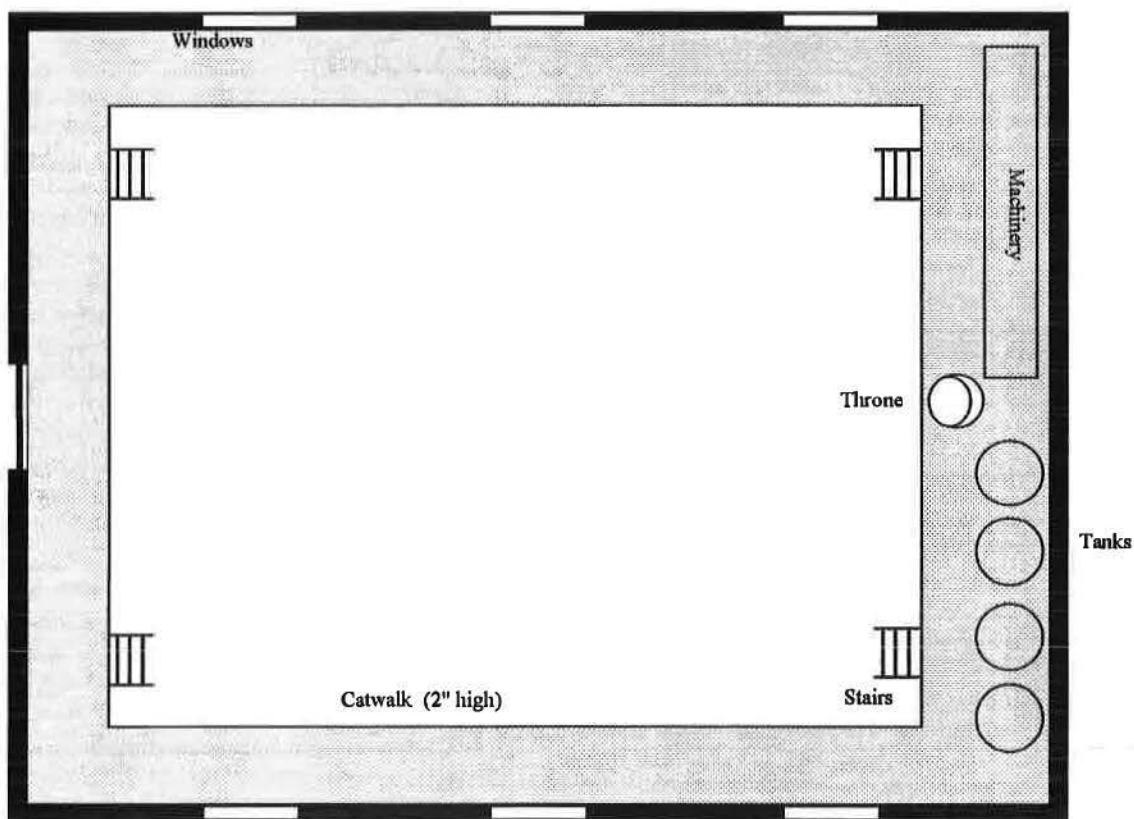
The Ritual

Whenever one or more of the heroes arrives, they will see that the interior of the warehouse has been converted into a scientific chamber of horrors.

If The Heroes Sneak In

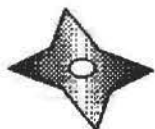
If they sneak in, they will see Yatsomoto seated at a throne above the proceedings. Some incredibly complex machinery is at work here...

Yatsomoto looks for all the world like a Southern gentleman in a Japanese samurai-style kimono. He speaks English in a perfectly cultivated Old South accent. He appears to be about 35 years old, but his features are strangely flat and his skin



½ Inch = 2 meters

Throwing Stars
and Bars





texture not quite right — there is something cosmetic looking about him. He speaks, launching into the obligatory supervillain soliloquy:

"So, I see that we're all gathered. So glad y'all could join me in the moment of mah greatest triumph. All of you're directly descended from the men who foolishly made me their greatest enemy.

"My name, in case any of you don't know it yet, is Zacharia Collins Yatsomoto. My father was one of the richest men in Memphis before the Civil War. My mother was a Japanese princess that my father fell in love with while in Japan. [This is Yatsomoto's version: his mother was, in fact, a geisha] Theirs was a romance destined for tragedy however, as my father's narrow-minded contemporaries could never have accepted mother as the wife of a gentleman. Nonetheless, when I was born, my father raised me as the true son of a Southern gentleman.

"When the war broke out, I was a Lieutenant. Using ideas learned from Sun Tzu's classic *The Art of War*, I was able to succeed in many battles, even with the odds stacked against me.

"I soon had made enough of a name for myself that the Generals began to fear me. They discovered my true heritage and stripped me of my commission. The revelations destroyed my father's business, and he fled with me and mother to Japan, hoping that we could find a home there. But I knew I'd someday return, to pay back in kind those who had destroyed my father.

"After only a few months in Japan, my father learned of the legends of an ancient city that

magically appeared for but one day, once every four years, always in a different location on the Islands. Through careful research and much luck, he was there when the portal opened and took us in; took us to the Mystic City! There we were accepted. The outside world had no more hold on us.

"My father learned how to forge metal, something he had always wanted to do. I became his apprentice, and together we slowly learned the art of crafting weapons. Within a few years, father was producing swords the likes of which the city had never seen. Then he began his masterpiece. A matched set of samurai swords — the dai-sho: katana and wakizashi. They'd be the finest the realm had ever seen, and when he completed them, they'd be mine!

"He worked day and night to forge them, even developing a new alloy to make them indestructible. The priests blessed them, and the swords became powerful indeed. They were completed exactly ten years after my father began them. On the day he finished them, he smiled. 'My work is done, son,' he said. 'Use these to restore our family honor.'

Then he closed his eyes and died.

"The next time the portal back to this world opened, I stole out into the darkness, intent on returning to avenge myself and my father. When I emerged, however, I discovered that time moved differently in that other, Mystic place. The year was 1965, my enemies were long dead, and the Japan I returned to was very different from the one I left. I went to work forging weapons for the Yakuza, using the knowledge I had gathered in the Mystic City. With their influence, I slowly built the empire I now control. Which is where all of you come in.

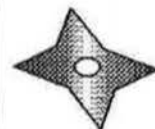
"Now that my research has provided a strong, new body to destroy my foes with, I must have them back."

At this point, Yatsomoto stands and begins to remove his kimono, revealing the gleaming, metallic body that has replaced most of his old, withered frame. He continues with the bulk of his speech as he does so.

"The device you are all so comfortably encased in will dissolve all of you into your component parts, and then resequence your DNA. The long and short of it is, we will use the bits of my old enemies left in you to reform them, memories and all, so that I may destroy them personally at my leisure. Of course, the process will leave all of you as little more than puddles of protoplasm, but, who was it who said... 'you can't make an omelet without breaking some eggs?' I thank you for indulging an old man and his ego. You have been a most appreciative audience."

He then snaps his fingers, and the scientists begin scurrying like ants, starting the decomposition process.

Throwing Stars
and Bars



If The PCs Burst In

If heroes burst in on the scene, he will say to them. "Alas, too late! My revenge takes shape NOW! Kill them!"

The remaining Ninjas and supervillains will leap into the fray. The sequence of events for the victims held in the tubes is given below.

Turn One

In Turn One, the tubes will start to fill with the green liquid used to keep the subjects in suspended animation. Anyone forcibly removed from the stuff will wail in agony, and suffer from what appears to be light burns over the areas where the stuff is removed from them. They will take 1 Body per Turn until the stuff is washed off, up to a maximum of one Body per Segment that they spent exposed to the stuff.

Turn Two

The tubes will be full by Segment 1 of Turn 2, with the heads of the hostages completely covered. Anyone forcibly removed now will scream and writhe, and smoke will seem to rise from their skin as the enzyme really starts to work. They will take 2 Body per Turn as above. Characters making a SC:Chemistry, SC:Biology, or Paramedic skill roll will be able to figure out proper treatment procedures for the victims.

Turn Four

After 1 full Turn of soaking in this goo, if the hostages are still there, they will start to visibly dissolve, (on Segment 1 of Turn 4) at a rate equivalent to 2 Body per Phase until they are completely gone at the end of round 10. At this time, their DNA will be sloshing around in the vat overhead. If the stuff is spilled at this time, the hostages will simply be dead.

Turn Five

In Segment 1 of Turn 5 (If it gets that far), pink liquid will start to fill the 5 cases around the outside of the device. It will take 1 full Turn for the cases to fill.

Turn Six

In Segment 1 of Turn 6, the bodies will start to form. They will initially be too small to be seen, but after only two rounds, they



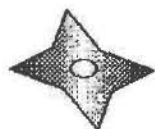
will be a large, human-looking embryo. Their growth will accelerate through the turn, until at the end of Segment 12 there are fully-formed, middle-aged men floating in the tanks.

The tanks will take one more Turn to drain out, and the startled and befuddled Confederate Generals will then be standing there, naked and dripping.

The Combat

Though the heroes face many of the same foes that they did earlier, the roles of the combatants are now reversed: the heroes are the strike team, and the Ninjas and villains are fighting a delaying action and trying to prevent the heroes from halting the experiment. Heroes who prepared by researching their foes will do much better in this battle than in the previous one. The GM should try to play this aspect up to the players; the more philosophical Ronin may even comment on it if battling a hero whom he has fought previously. The tactics of the enemies should also change accordingly.

Throwing Stars
and Bars



The Device

The machinery's controls are being operated by Yatsomoto's personal technicians. They are all fanatically loyal to him, and will continue with the experiment no matter what else happens. They will absolutely refuse to help the heroes to reverse the experiment in any way.

The upside is that all the controls are in English, because it's what most of the programmers speak. If the heroes make 3 (three) successful rolls in related areas to the experiment (Computer Programming, Paramedic, Systems Operation, and so on) they will figure out how the thing works and be able to reverse it, if it isn't yet destroyed. Characters will also learn that they cannot reverse the process if the device is destroyed.

The Bad Guys

The bad guys will try to move the fight outside the area. The Ninjas will stay on the platforms and catwalks, shooting at the heroes with flechette guns, as they know that they can't hurt the apparatus with them. They will not hesitate to leap into the path of blasts that are headed that way.

Ronin will engage in HTH combat anyone foolish enough to try to tamper with the apparatus. There is one spare suit of armor on each platform that he can use. Heroes who see them may realize what they are and attempt to destroy them before he can possess them. If all his suits of armor are destroyed, he will retreat to his body in the crypt to wait out the battle.

Raiden will blast a hole in the roof and then attempt to lure heroes out into the sky where he has an advantage. He will work together with Tsunami to do this.

Tsunami will work in concert with Raiden to blow heroes out of the area and back outside, where the storm god can get a bead on them. She will use her Increased Knockback Energy Blast almost exclusively to blow heroes out the doors and away from the apparatus.

Reb, Yatsomoto's genetically mutated, cyber-enhanced, mutant crocodile/former dog, bodyguard /pet will stand loyally in front of Yatsomoto until heroes actually try to attack him. Reb is basically a killing machine, and simply waits for Yatsomoto to sic it on someone (or something), attacking until the target is no longer moving. See its description for details as to its nature.

Yatsomoto will watch the proceedings from his throne, impassive until the end. If anyone is foolish enough to try to get close, he will sic his bodyguards on them. He will have his father's swords laying across his lap. He will wait for his henchmen to prevail or fall, as fate would have it. If the heroes manage to put a halt to his plans before the experiment is completed, he will order his lackeys to stop fighting, making a speech about

destroying his new blood enemies personally. He is totally confident in his ability to handle this last battle on his own, and his henchmen will cease battling heroes if the chance presents itself. Any battle going on outside will probably continue, as the villains have no real means of communicating with each other.

If challenged to personal combat by a hero, Yatsomoto will accept. He will remove his robes to reveal his robotic body, and begin the battle in earnest. He will call off his henchmen from the hero who challenged him, but they will continue to battle other heroes to prevent them from wrecking the experiment.

If forced into HTH combat by a hero who gets past his Force Field and defeats his reptilian bodyguard, Yatsomoto will stand and fight as well, but will not call off his henchmen.

Wrapping Up

If The Heroes Lose

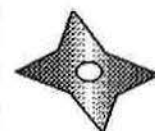
They will be stripped of any Foci, bound with steel wire (DEF 12, 8 BODY) and placed in the vats for "boiling down." GMs have several ways to handle this outcome. The best way is to let the heroes find some way to escape the test tubes, preferably by using teamwork.

The technicians are not aware that their process does not work on anyone who has an Immunity to disease, and this factor may help the heroes to escape. Yatsomoto will have escaped by then, however, with or without his Generals, depending on whether the heroes have halted the experiment or not. Ronin will have been left behind to supervise the operation, but the other villains will have escaped with Yatsomoto.

If heroes succeeded in halting the experiment, they will have made a new enemy in Yatsomoto, who will certainly reappear someday to exact his revenge. The GM should be sure to have technicians or Ronin stress this to the heroes when they free themselves. If the GM has another prominent superteam which the players have a Rivalry with, then that team can come bursting in to rescue them; a humiliating experience for the heroes, but a small price to pay for their lives. If the heroes have reported their whereabouts to a government agency or other organization who may be able to help, this would be a logical time for them to appear as well.

Dark Champions GMs may wish to simply kill off the characters, if such a thing happens regularly in their campaign. The PCs' deaths will be agonizing and slow, and could be rendered in excruciating detail as motivations for the players to make up another batch of characters to go after Yatsomoto.

Throwing Stars
and Bars





The PCs Achieve Total Victory

Yatsomoto, if defeated in combat, will utter the Japanese phrase "Shigato Nagai.... Father, this is our fate..." and his cybernetic body will shut down, overtaxed by his efforts to defeat the heroes. He will die, the red glow of his eyes slowly fading to black over about ten seconds. No amount of heroic measures will be able to save him short of an immediate transplant of his brain into another body capable of supporting him. GMs who wish to use him again may allow him to have a viable clone stashed away somewhere into which he can have his memories downloaded, or some similar plot device which allows him to return.

Yatsomoto Corp will continue on in any event. They still hold several very lucrative patents and will be able to weather any legal storm that may come as the result of their underhanded schemes. The best the PCs can hope for is getting some of the employees deported out of the United States. Characters with a criminal justice background should be given a chance to go after Yatsomoto Corp in court, if the GM wishes. This might add an interesting element to the close of the adventure.

The PCs Win, But Yatsomoto Escapes

Once Yatsomoto leaves, the technicians will quickly surrender. Any remaining Ninjas will fight on until subdued; they have nothing to live for anyway. If heroes missed Yatsomoto's big speech earlier, then any of the kidnappees will be able to fill them in on it.

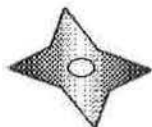
Linda Lee will ask the heroes for the story on how they tracked her down and rescued her. If they give it to her, they will gain her as a Contact in the press, and may call her with any questions on Japanese culture or current events.

If Yatsomoto has time, he will take the ancient texts from the Mystic City with him, so that heroes will not find them. Any of the supervillains that can escape will. If Ronin is still alive, he will order a Ninja to remove his body and try to get it somewhere safe if he has no armor left, but will not hesitate to carry his own body if it becomes necessary. GMs should resolve the scenario as appropriate depending on the heroes' relationship with the powers that be.

Epilogue

Heroes who stay to search Yatsomoto's chambers will find the scrolls he stole from the ancient city. They would be invaluable to any museum and coveted by any historian or archaeologist. They contain much forgotten lore on ancient Japanese weaponcraft, including the nature of the secret alloy Yatsomoto uses in their cyberotechnology. Gadgeteer characters and Martial Artists should be allowed to peruse the scrolls and use the knowledge contained in them to justify Experience Point expenditures in related areas. The exact content of these scrolls is left up to the GM.

Throwing Stars
and Bars



YO-YO

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	200 kg; 3d6 [1]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
20	CON	20	13-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
23	INT	13	14-	PER Roll 14-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 12-
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
10	PD	7		
10	ED	6		
5	SPD	16		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
7	REC	0		
40	END	0		
40	STUN	12		

Total Characteristics Cost: 136

Movement: Running: 6"

Swimming: 2"

Powers & Skills

Trick Yo-Yos: Multipower (75 Pts), OAF (37)

u - **Seeker Yo-Yo:** EB 10d6, No Range Mod, 6 Charges (3)

u - **Looping Yo-Yo:** EB 10d6 (PD), Indirect, any location, 6 Charges (3)

m - **Whirling Dirvish:** Darkness 5", Sight & Hearing Groups, 4 Charges (5)

Armored Costume: Armor (20/20), OIF (40)

Helmet: Flash Defense (5 Pts), Sight Group, OIF (3)

Spring Boots: Superleap +15" (18" Total), OIF [4] (10)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 101

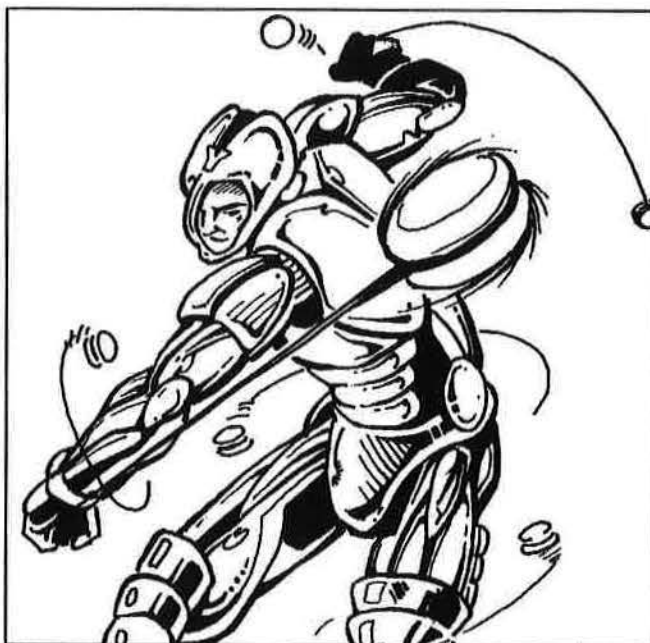
Total Character Cost: 237

Disadvantages: 100+

Villain's Bonus (137)

Total Disadvantage Points: 137

Background: Randall Duncan, otherwise known as Yo-Yo, is the world's foremost expert in two things: Yo-Yos and robots. He learned to use both from his father, a Hollywood special effects wizard in the 1960s. Randall grew up around movie and TV stars all his life, and always wanted to be one, but, unfortunately, he didn't get along well with other people. He was only happy in his father's lab, tinkering and coming up with new, improved robot designs. He liked the attention he got from winning the World Yo-Yo Championships, but all the people around made him uncomfortable, so he eventually stopped competing. When his father retired and left Randall his lab and parts, he decided he'd earn fame another way: by using his skills to make himself a force to be reckoned with — a force called Yo-Yo!



Personality/Motivation: Yo-yo is motivated entirely by publicity. He will always choose the most public sites he can for any battles, and will try to take advantage of any and all local media to get his name and face recognized. He often takes hostages, but will never harm them; he knows that hostage situations make for dramatic media coverage. The robots he utilizes in his schemes are highly advanced but not particularly great fighters. They are designed more to look and act like famous movie and TV stars than to battle effectively, and they are all programmed not to hurt anyone Yo-Yo doesn't directly order them to.

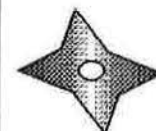
Yo-Yo would be a harmless loony if he didn't have access to such powerful devices and robots. He isn't deliberately malicious, just completely off his rocker...

Quote: (in his best John Wayne voice): Well, punk you may be asking yourself... Did he throw five Yo-Yo's at me, or six? Well, do yuh feel lucky pardner... Do ya'?"

Powers/Tactics: Yo-Yo will ignore tactics and try to take out the most popular, flashy heroes first in any fight. He issues bombastic challenges, and will pass up a tactical advantage if it means he can maneuver in front of a camera. He will not hesitate to use heavy force against heroes who have proven they can take it, but will always stop short of outright killing anyone.

Appearance: Yo-Yo's costume is a suit of space-age plastic battle armor with a full helmet. It is yellow with a red "Y" dominating the front. All curves on the armor are rounded, making him look a little pudgy underneath (though he's not). There is a belt containing his various yo-yo's slung around his waist. He will always have two yo-yos in his hands, with several "stringless" yo-yo's orbiting his body to intercept incoming missile attacks, or to pelt any hero who engages him in HTH combat.

Throwing Stars
and Bars



PRESLEYBOTS

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	400 kg; 4d6 [2]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
0	CON	-20	9-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
6	INT	-4	10-	PER Roll 10-
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack 4d6
16	COM	3	12-	
2/7	PD	18		
2/7	ED	21		
4	SPD	13		Phases: 3,6,9,12
0	REC	-8		
0	END	0		

Total Characteristics Cost: 64

Movement: Running: 12"
Swimming: 2"
Superleap: 12"

Powers & Skills

Martial Arts: Boxing (24)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
Tackle: Flying Tackle	+0	-1	STR+v/5
Chin Block: Mart Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Right Cross: Off Strike	-2	+1	10d6
Duck: Martial Dodge	--	+5	Dodge, Abort
Slippery Devil: Mart Esc	+0	+0	45 STR vs Grabs
Jab: Martial Strike	+0	+2	8d6, Strike

Damage Class +2DC (Already Added In)

Sunglasses, Hat Brim: Flash Defense, 5 Pts (5)

Soundtrack for songs: Images (-0 PER), Sounds only, x4 Increased Area [1] (15)

Radio Device: HR Radio (10)

Running +6" (12" Total) [1] (12)

Superleap +8" (12" total) [3] (8)

Talents/Skills:

Perfect Pitch (3)

Absolute Time Sense (3)

KS: Appropriate Elvis Era 12- (3)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 136

Total Character Cost: 200

Disadvantages: 100+

Distinctive Features:

ELVIS! (Concealable, Major (15))

Hunted by

Local Hero Group, More Powerful, Limited Area, Harsh, 8- (10)

Watched by

Elvis Hunters, As Powerful, NCI, Limited Area, Mild, Appear 11- (5)

Psychological Limitation:

Utterly Loyal to Yo-Yo, Very Com, Total (25)
Must always do most 'Elvis-Like' Action, Very Common, Total (25)

Reputation: Publicity Hogs, 8- (5)

Unluck: 3D6 (15)

Total Disadvantage Points: 100

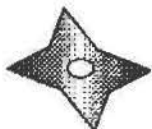
Background: The creation of the demented supervillain Yo-Yo, these robots exist only to serve their demented master, as well as to draw media attention to him... All of Yo-Yo's robots are based on famous movie and TV personalities. After perfecting his combat robot design with his fiendish StoozeBots, then adding several innovations with his next batch of BradyBots, Yo-Yo has designed these robots specifically for his raid on Graceland. There will be one robot present for every two heroes. They are fairly easy to defeat, as they are meant more to attract attention than to do any real damage.

Personality/Motivation: They are shameless hams, and intrepid GMs may even wish to break into song during the battle. At any rate, they should provide some innocent comic relief, and maybe help to explain some of those 'sightings' that seem so popular in the tabloid press...

Powers/Tactics: The 'bots all fight exclusively HTH, using a freewheeling brawling style, like Elvis did in many of his movies. The 'Bots should take lots of time to pause and pose for any cameras present.

Appearance: The robots are shaped in the various incarnations of Elvis throughout his career. In order, they are: the very young, handsome Elvis, dressed in jacket and thin tie; the older, "Las Vegas Elvis," overweight, wearing a sequined jumpsuit and oversize sunglasses with huge, bushy sideburns; the "Army Elvis," in uniform and crew cut; the "'68 Special Elvis," in leather jacket and pants, no sunglasses; and the "Hawaiian Elvis," in shorts and Hawaiian shirt with dark, fake tan. The GM is encouraged to check out an Elvis movie or two to get an idea of the King's accent and style.

Throwing Stars
and Bars



YATSOMOTO

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	15	14-	800 kg; 5d6 [2]
29	DEX	57	15-	OCV: 10/DCV: 10
25	CON	30	14-	
15	BODY		10	12-
23	INT	13	14-	PER Roll 14-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 13-
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	0		
6	ED	1		
7	SPD	31		Phases: 2,4,6,7,9,11,12
13	REC	6		
50	END	0		
60	STUN	19		

Total Characteristics Cost: 208

Movement: Running: 16"
Swimming: 2"
Superleap: 17"

Powers & Skills

Sword of the Mystic City: OAF, Unbreakable

Multipower 61 Pt Pool (30)

u - **HKA** 2D6, vs PD, Penetrating, 0 END (3)

u - **EB** 7d6, No Range, 2x Knockback [6] (2)

u - **Missile Deflection** (OCV: 10), All attacks,
Reflect at any target (2)

u - **Flash** 4d6, Sight Group [5] (2)

Martial Arts: Kenjutsu (21)

Maneuver OCV DCV Notes

Martial Block +2 +2 Block, Abort

Martial Dodge -- +5 Dodge, Abort

Martial Escape +0 +0 +15 STR v Grabs

Passing Strike +1 +0 STR+v/5;FMove

Weapon Bind +1 +0 Bind, 35 STR

Weapon Groups, Swords/Blades (0)

Cybernetic Body:

Armor (25 PD/25 ED), x1 Hardened (94)

Flash Defense, 6 Pts (6)

Knockback Resistance +6" (12)

Clinging, +0 STR (10)

Running +10" (16" Total) [2] (20)

Lack Of Weakness, 10 Pts (10)

Superleap +12" (17" Total) [3] (12)

Mystic City Training:

Linguist (3)

Language: Cantonese, Fluent w/accnt (2)

Language: French, Fluent w/accnt (2)

Language: German, Fluent w/accnt (2)

Language: Japanese, Fluent w/accnt (2)



Scientist (3)

SC: Biochemistry 16- (4)

SC: Genetics 14- (2)

SC: Metallurgy 18- (6)

SC: Aeronautics 11- (1)

Perk: Money: Filthy Rich (15)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 266

Total Character Cost: 474

Disadvantages: 100+

Enraged:

If revenge thwarted, 14-, Recover 8- (13)

Distinctive Features:

Cybernetic Body (Concealable, Major) (15)

Hunted by:

Mystic City guardians, less powerful, limited area, harsh, 11- (5)

Watched by:

Japanese Government, as powerful, NCI, limited area, mild, 14- (8)

Psych Lim:

Obsessed with revenge (Vry Com, Total) (25)

Demands total obedience or death (Very

Common, Strong) (20)

Code of honor (Uncommon, Moderate) (5)

Reputation:

Mysterious Owner of Yatsomoto Corp, 8- (5)

Ruthless Businessman, 8- (5)

Secret ID: Zachariah Collins (15)

Vulnerability:

1½ Stun from Electrical Attacks (10)

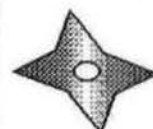
1½ Body from Electrical Attacks (10)

1½ Body from Mystic Weapons (5)

Unluck: 2D6 (10)

Total Disadvantage Points: 374

Throwing Stars
and Bars



Background: Zacharia Collins was the son of a Southern gentleman involved in the Silk trade in the Orient about 15 years before the start of the Civil War. His mother was a geisha, and he was half Japanese. When his secret was discovered, he was thrown out of the Army and his family fled to Japan. There they discovered a mystic city that only appeared in our dimension every few years. They entered and started to learn its secrets.

When he returned to our dimension, he discovered that time moved differently there: it was now the mid 20th century, and all of his enemies were long dead. So he set out to gain the power necessary to destroy them anyway. He joined the Yakuza, rose up through its ranks, and eventually became powerful enough to start a corporation that specialized in bio-technology and cybernetics. He has used these resources to replace his aging body with a new, strong cybernetic one, which he will use to personally crush his foes.

Yatsomoto is a mastermind-level villain. He is designed to take on a whole team of heroes, and GMs are encouraged to alter his power level to meet the needs of the campaign. The final battle against him should test PCs to the limits of their abilities.

Personality/Motivation: Yatsomoto will fight honorably but brutally. He will not strike a foe who is unaware of him; he prefers to look into their eyes as he defeats them.

He speaks in refined, cultured Southern English, and his Japanese is impeccable as well. He has devoted his entire life to the quest he now pursues, but will trust his servants to get the job done, as he expects (and receives) absolute loyalty to him. He will only personally enter the fray if challenged or if the heroes succeed in putting a halt to his experiment.

Powers/Tactics: Yatsomoto fights in "super samurai" fashion, making spectacular leaping attacks, flips, and running up the sides of walls. He will fight intelligently, flashing foes that are as fast as he, reflecting the ranged attacks of energy projectors at other opponents (or back at them).

He will use his Passing Strike on bricks, slashing them and then moving past to avoid retaliation. He will make use of any and all surfaces with his Clinging, leaping straight up to strike a flyer, then Clinging to the ceiling to end his move. Be creative! He laughs as he does so, reveling in the newfound power his metal body provides him.

Appearance: When dressed, he looks like a cross between Mark Twain and a Japanese Emperor. His juxtaposing of Civil War, ancient Japan, and cyberpunk high-tech might almost look silly if he were not so obviously a formidable opponent. When undressed, his body is entirely cybernetic, gleaming in the same high-gloss shine that his sword does, being made of the same metal.

REB

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
30	STR	20	15-	1600 kg; 6d6 [3]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
30	CON	40	15-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
4	INT	-6	10-	PER Roll 10-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
25	PRE	15	14-	PRE Attack 5d6
4	COM	-3	10-	
6	PD	0		
6	ED	0		
4	SPD	16		Phases: 3,6,9,12
15	REC	6		
60	END	0		
50	STUN	0		

Total Characteristics Cost: 120

Movement: Running: 12"

Swimming: 12"

Powers & Skills

Cybernetic Body:

Bite: HKA 2d6, vs PD [3] (30)

Tail Smash: HA 6d6 [2] (18)

Armor (20/20), Hardened (75)

Flash Defense (5 Pts) (5)

Knockback Resistance, 6" (12)

Lack Of Weakness (10 Pts) (10)

Discriminatory Smell (5)

Ultrasonic Hearing (3)

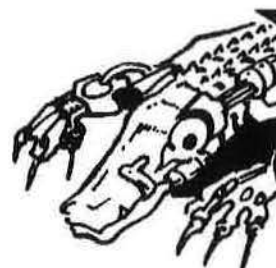
Running +6" (12" Total) [1] (12)

Swimming +10" (12" Total) [2] (10)

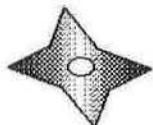
CS: 2 Levels w/ Bite, Grab and Tail Smash (Tight group) (6)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 186

Total Character Cost: 306



Throwing Stars
and Bars



Disadvantages: 100+**Dependence:**

Must have batteries charged, uncommon, per 5 hours, 3D6 (10)

Distinctive Features:

Huge, ugly, cyber-crocodile (Not Concealable, Extreme) (25)

Enraged:

If sicced on an opponent by Yatsomoto (Very common, 14-, Recover 8-) (18)

Physical Limitation:

No Fine Manipulation (25)

Psychological Limitation:

Dog Intellect; VERY loyal to Yatsomoto (Very common, Total) (25)

Vulnerability:

2x Stun from Chemical Attacks (10)

2x Body from Chemical Attacks (10)

Villain Bonus (88)

Total Disadvantage Points: 206

Background: Reb is Yatsomoto's former dog, who he has given a brand new, completely radical body. His experiments in cloning and brain transplanted led to the monstrosity he calls Reb. It is a genetically mutated, cybernetically enhanced, giant crocodile, with the brain of Yatsomoto's dog transplanted into it. As such, it is smarter than your typical crocodile, and absolutely obeys Yatsomoto's commands.

Personality/Motivation: Reb is capable of obeying any command a very well-trained attack dog would. In combat, he reacts, vocalizes, and moves like a dog trapped in a crocodile's body, leaping and running in a very unrepentant way. Characters who are well-versed in animal behavior should notice something odd and may even be able to determine the creature's true nature after a few rounds of observation.

The dog's delicate metabolism is particularly vulnerable to chemical attacks, but it is otherwise quite tough. Its greatest weakness is its single-mindedness. Once sicced on someone, it won't give up until either the person is subdued or completely leaves the area. It can be effectively taunted by anyone who can keep out of its reach, and led into following them around almost indefinitely. If Yatsomoto is killed, the creature will lie down and curl up next to him, not budging until its power supply drains away, effectively rendering it inert several hours later.

Appearance: It is about 12 feet long from nose to tip of tail, and has a gleaming array of cybernetic enhancements that increase its strength as well as give it some of the senses it had as a dog but lost when its brain was transplanted.

RAIDEN

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	100 kg; 2d6 [1]
21	DEX	33	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack 4d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
3	PD	1		
8	ED	5		
5	SPD	19		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
8	REC	6		
50	END	10		
35	STUN	12		

Total Characteristics Cost: 115

Movement: Running: 6"
Swimming: 2"
Flight: 15"

Powers & Skills**Storm God Powers:**

- Elemental Control, 30 Pt Pool (30)
- a - **Flight** 15", 0 END Persistent (30)
- b - **Lightning Bolt:** EB 10d6, Personal Immunity [6] (32)
- c - **Force Field** (15/20), 0 END (30)
- d - **Lightning Flash:** Flash 3d6, Sight & Hearing Groups, Pers Immunity [6] (32)
- e - **Alter Weather:** Change Environment, 2,000" Radius [6] (30)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 184

Total Character Cost: 299

Disadvantages: 100+**Enraged:**

If Godhood questioned (Com, 14-/11-) (13)

Distinctive Features:

Japanese monster/man hybrid (Concealable, Extreme) (20)

DNPC: Cult of Worshipers (Normal, 8-) (10)

Hunted by:

Japanese Govt, mor pow, NCI, mild, 8- (15)

Psychological Limitation:

Believes he is a God (Very Com, Total) (25)

Loyal to Yatsomoto (Common, Strong) (15)

Reputation: Deluded supervillain, 8- (5)

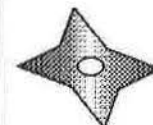
Vulnerability:

1½ Stun from Earth-Based Attacks (10)

1½ Body from Earth-Based Attacks (10)

Total Disadvantage Points: 199

Throwing Stars
and Bars



Background: Raiden is an incarnation of the Japanese storm god. Banished from the heavens for his foul temper, he must spend a century on Earth learning patience before he may return. He inhabits the body of a mortal archaeologist who wears a jade pendant containing Raiden's spirit. Because he is bound by mortal form, his powers are more limited from what they would be in his true, godlike form. Nonetheless, he has acquired a small cult of worshippers on a remote island north of the Japanese island of Honshu.

Powers/Tactics: In combat, Raiden will float high above the battle, hurling lightning bolts at whoever approaches him. He will flash heroes who seem to be faster than him or who can fly. Otherwise he will be content to observe, floating among the storm clouds he generates over the battlefield. His 0 END Persistent Flight allows him to float effortlessly in the air, even while unconscious. If incapacitated, he will simply float serenely, being carried wherever the wind may take him until he awakes. He does not appear to actively fly, but is instead carried along by gusting winds; the visual special effect is a wake of blowing sand and small objects flurrying about his path whenever he comes anywhere near the ground. GMs should give the impression that he seems to be truly one with the storm.

Personality/Motivation: He has respect for Yatsomoto as a mortal who has acquired the power to transcend the flesh, and has cast his lot with him because Yatsomoto has promised him a more powerful mortal form. He will serve loyally, but not hesitate to leave any comrades behind if the odds turn against him, as he views his underlings as cannon fodder.

Appearance: Raiden appears as a tall, muscular man possessed of monstrous features that make him appear as an ancient Japanese demon. He wears nothing but a long, dark cape that always flows around him as if in a strong breeze, even when he is unconscious or not flying. He has waist-length black hair that flows and swirls in a similar fashion.

RONIN

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	200 kg; 3d6 [1]
26	DEX	48	14-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
18	CON	16	13-	
12	BODY		4	11-
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
15	PD	12		
15	ED	11		
5	SPD	14		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
10	REC	6		
36	END	0		
39	STUN	10		

Total Characteristics Cost: 142

Movement: Flight: 10"

Powers & Skills

Smoke Form:

Desolidification (Vuln to magic weapons & air-based attacks), cannot pass through solids, leave body behind, 0 END Persistent (32)

Flight 10" [2] (20)

Physical Manipulation: +15 STR, Affects real world, Doesn't add to figured stats [7] (45)

Martial Arts: Kenjutsu (22):

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
Passing Strike	+1	+0	STR+v/5; FMove
Weapon Bind	+1	+0	Bind, 25 STR
Martial Dodge	--	+5	Dodge, Abort
Martial Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Sacrifice Disarm	+2	-2	Disarm, 25 STR
Weapon Groups: Usable Only w/Sword (0)			

Samurai Warrior Skills:

Acrobatics 14- (3)

Breakfall 14- (3)

Stealth 14- (3)

Language: Japanese (Native) (0)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 128

Total Character Cost: 270

Disadvantages: 100+

Berserk:

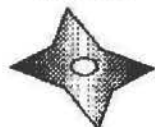
If body threatened (Uncommon, 14-, Recover 8-) (25)

Enraged:

If spirit form hurt (Uncommon, 14-, Recover 11-) (10)

Dependence:

Must return to body within 1 hour or die (Uncommon, per hour, 3D6) (15)



Distinctive Features:

Smokey ghost form in suit of Japanese
Armor, Concealable, Major (15)

Hunted by:

Japanese government, more powerful, non-
combat influence, harsh, 8- (20)

Watched by:

Yakuza, more powerful, non-combat
influence, mild, appear 11- (10)

Physical Limitation:

Body in coma; Can only can move when
desolid (All the time, Greatly) (20)
Smoke form "carried" by armor when
inhabited (Frequently, Slightly) (10)

Psychological Limitation:

Very Loyal to Yatsomoto (Very Common,
Strong) (20)
Suicidal Combatant (Common, Strong) (15)

Reputation:

Ruthless Killer, 8-, Extreme reputation (10)

Total Disadvantage Points: 170

RONIN'S ARMOR

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	200 kg; 3d6 [1]
23	DEX	39	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
0	CON	-20	9-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
0	INT	-10	9-	PER Roll: N/A
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
2/6	PD	15		
2/6	ED	18		
5	SPD	17		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
0	REC	-6		
50	END	25		

Total Characteristics Cost: 93

Movement: Running: 10"
Swimming: 2"
Superleap: 10"

Powers & Skills

Katana: HKA 2d6, vs PD, OAF [3] (15)

Samurai Armor: Damage Resistance (6/6) (18)

Martial Arts: Kenjutsu (22)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
Passing Strike	+1	+0	STR+v/5;FMove
Weapon Bind	+1	+0	Bind, 25 STR
Martial Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Abort
Martial Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Sacr Disarm	+2	-2	Disarm, 25 STR



Weapon Groups: usable only w/katana (0)

Karumijutsu: Superleap +7" (10" Total) [2] (7)

Hyagakejutsu: Running +4" (10" Total) [1] (8)

Kenjutsu Training:

Acrobatics 14-, Breakfall 14-, Stealth 14- (9)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 139

Total Character Cost: 232

Disadvantages: 0+**Physical Limitation:**

Immobile unless inhabited by Ronin (All the
time, Greatly) (20)

Vulnerability: 2x Body from "good magic" (20)

Reputation: "Shell" for Ronin, 11-, Extreme

Distinctive Features:

Ancient Japanese samurai armor; empty if
opened (Not concealable, Major) (20)

Hunted by:

Japanese government, more powerful, NCI,
harsh, appear 8- (20)

Psychological Limitation:

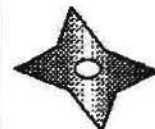
Merely shells for Ronin; No independent
thought (Very common, Total) (25)

Experience/Villain's Bonus (112)

Total Disadvantage Points: 132

Background: Ronin is an ancient Japanese warrior who made a pact with a demon in return for immortality. Ronin was granted the ability to leave his body and told that his body would never age, being suspended in time, but could still be slain. The demon taught him how to let his spirit enter and control a suit of armor. He has served a succession of masters over the centuries, causing chaos on Earth as the demon wished, finally ending with Yatsomoto, who has promised him a new, cybernetic body to replace his comatose one if he serves him well.

Throwing Stars
and Bars



Power/Tactics: Ronin will fight with utter disregard for the armor he inhabits, knowing it is but a shell. He will make a beeline for any heroes with magical or wind-based attacks. He will be swift and brutal with most foes, but will take the time to engage in showy swordsmanship against rival martial artists (especially samurai-type characters). He considers the Techno-Ninjas expendable, and will kill them himself if they get in his way on an important mission. He will go berserk if his actual body is threatened, not resting until the threat is utterly destroyed.

Appearance: In his ghost form, he appears in the smoky form of a young Japanese man dressed in traditional ronin garb. In battle, he wears a full suit of ancient Japanese armor, with the faceplate always closed. He wields a large, gleaming katana, and uses it two-handed. If his armor is breached or faceplate opened, no solid form is found within, but smoke flows eerily around the hole, some seeping out as he moves.

This particular villain bends the rules for Desolidification and Automaton to create an interesting game effect. Any attack capable of harming Ronin's spirit form *will* hurt him while he inhabits the armor; the armor itself will give no defense against the attack. The effect of this is that when the armor is struck, Ronin's true face will become visible for a moment and he will emit a howl of pain.

The characters should figure out that the armor is only a shell, and that it can be smashed to pieces without actually hurting the being that's animating it. If sufficient damage is done to the Automaton (i.e., the armor), it will simply fall apart, forcing Ronin to return to his true body to recover. Ronin's Strength (which affects the material world) can be used to pick up and carry objects with smoky hands, but should not be used as an attack (that's what the armor is for).

GMs are encouraged to play with this effect and modify, as necessary, for the power levels in their campaigns. GMs using the Spirit Rules from *Horror Hero* and *Hero System Almanac I* will find that Ronin works very well as a Spirit, and should consider modifying him to run as one.

TSUNAMI

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	100 kg; 2d6 [1]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
18	CON	16	13-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack 3d6
20	COM	5	13-	
5	PD	3		
7	ED	3		
5	SPD	16		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
8	REC	4		
50	END	7		
30	STUN	6		

Total Characteristics Cost: 109

Movement: Running: 20"

Swimming: 14"

Powers & Skills

Water Powers:

Elemental Control, 30 Pt Pool (30)

a - **Water Blast:** EB 8d6, vs PD, Double Knockback [7] (40)

b - **Watery Form:** Desolidification (vulnerable to sonics & cold), cannot pass through solids [4] (20)

c - **Trickling Form:** Shrinking, 6 Levels (32mm, 400mg, +12 DCV, +18 KB) [6] (30)

d - **Force Dispersion:** Armor (15/15) (30)

e - **Dehydration:** Drain 5d6 (Constitution), Only vs. beings with water in body (-1/4), 1/2 END [3] (26)

Water Strength: +10 STR, Affects real world, doesn't add to figured stats [3] (20)

Swimming +12" (14" Total) [2] (12)

Running +14" (20" Total) [3] (28)

Language: Japanese (Native) (0)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 236

Total Character Cost: 345

Disadvantages: 100+

Berserk:

If condition mocked (Uncommon, 14-, Recover 11-) (20)

Enraged:

When fighting government heroes, Uncommon, 14-, Recover 8- (13)

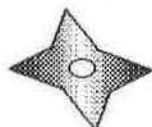
Distinctive Features:

Blue skinned, naked water woman (Not concealable, Major) (20)

Hunted by:

Japanese government, more powerful, non-

Throwing Stars
and Bars



combat influence, mild, 8- (15)

Watched by:

Yakuza, more powerful, non-combat influence, harsh, 11- (13)

Psychological Limitation:

Devoted to Yatsomoto (Common, Total) (20)

Hates all governments (Uncom, Total) (15)

Enjoys humiliating heroes (Com, Strong) (15)

Susceptability:

Temperatures below freezing, 2d6 END Drain, per Turn (15)

Unluck: 2D6 (10)

Vulnerability:

1½ Stun from sonics (10)

1½ Body from sonics (10)

Total Disadvantage Points: 245

Background: Tsunami is the descendant of a survivor of Hiroshima. Ever since she could remember, she has harbored great hatred for the atomic bomb and all it represents. This hatred, as well as the latent mutant powers in her genes (the legacy of Hiroshima) made her a perfect candidate for *Project: Super Monster Fighter!*, Japan's effort to create a team of metahumans to battle the radiation-spawned monsters that regularly ravaged the island nation. After their success in creating the Armored Amazing Blue Rhinoceros Man, the scientists were eager to dabble in mutagenetics. Unfortunately, the process that gave her her powers also twisted her mind. Her hatred of atomic weapons blossomed into hatred of all governments and the power they hold over people's lives. She destroyed the project and fled into the Japanese underworld, eventually falling in with Yatsomoto.

Powers/Tactics: Tsunami has the power to turn into water, as well as manipulate it in various ways. She will generally use her "firehose" Double Knockback attack against bricks, attempting to keep them off their feet and out of the fight. She will go out of her way to humiliate and try to kill any hero officially sanctioned by or associated with a government, even to the extent of jeopardizing whatever mission she may be on.

The Shrinking she has is only for the purpose of flowing through small areas like pipes; it conveys none of the normal combat advantages of Shrinking like DCV, Growth Momentum, etc., and is included as a plot device for GMs.

Appearance: She appears as an incredibly beautiful Japanese woman with blue/green skin. Her water form is obviously the green of seawater, and anyone hit by her attack will taste the saltiness of her form. She wears no clothes in her water form; her body generally appears as a semi-solid wave of brine and foam from her chest down...

TECHNO-NINJA

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	400 kg; 4d6 [2]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
11	BODY	2	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack 3d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
10	PD	6		
10	ED	7		
4	SPD	13		Phases: 3,6,9,12
8	REC	2		
30	END	0		
29	STUN	0		

Total Characteristics Cost: 75

Powers & Skills

Ninja Trick Bombs:

Multipower, 30 Pt pool, OAF (15)

u - **Smoke Bomb:** Darkness 3", 4 Continuing Charges (1 Turn) (1)

m - **Flash Bomb:** Flash 2d6, Sight, 4 Charges, Area Effect - 1 Hex (2)

u - **Net Bomb:** Entangle 3d6, 4 Charges (1)

Flechette Rifle:

RKA 2d6, vs PD, OAF, 32 Charges, No KB, x5 Autofire, Invisible to Hearing group (30)

Ninjato:

HKA 1d6, vs PD, OAF [1] (7)

Cybernetic Body:

Armor (8/8), Activation 14- (16)

Night Vision Sensors: IR Vision, OIF (3)
Radio Transmit/Receive, OIF (3)

Karumijutsu:

Clinging, only as "super climbing" (½ vertical movement, ¼ on ceilings) (-½) (7)

Techno-Ninja Training/Programming:

Acrobatics 12- (3)

Breakfall 12- (3)

CS: 4 Levels, only vs. AF penalties (-1) (10)

CS: 3 Levels w/ HKA, Block, Disarm (9)

Fast Draw 12- (3)

KS: Appropriate to mission needs 11- (2)

Language: Japanese (1)

Lockpicking 12- (3)

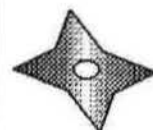
Security Systems 11- (3)

Stealth 12- (3)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 125

Total Cost: 200

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Disadvantages: 100+**Distinctive Features:**

Cyborgs (Concealable, Major) (15)

Hunted by:

Japanese government, more powerful, NCI,
limited area, harsh, 8- (15)

Watched by:

Yakuza, more powerful, non-combat
influence, harsh, 8- (10)

Psychological Limitation:

Completely loyal to Yatsomoto (Very
Common, Total) (25)

Suicidal combatants (Common, Strong) (15)

Susceptability:

1d6K per Turn after being knocked out (20)

Disadvantages Total: 100

Background: These are Yatsomoto's loyal servants, cloned from his own cells. They are educated by genetic encoding, then enhanced with a wide array of cybernetics to compensate for their twisted bodies. They speak in Southern-accented English and heavily accented Japanese, generally to convey combat information. They are capable of little independent action other than fighting, but are capable of answering questions and following orders.

Their major drawback is their lifespan, which is only about six months. The process used to create them also renders their bodies very unstable. If knocked unconscious, there is a chance they may lose cohesion and dissolve.

If killed, their bodies will dissolve slowly until only a pile of cybernetic parts remains. Each one has a remote-control enetic bomb built into their cybernetic parts, which allows Yatsomoto to trigger the decomposition process at will.

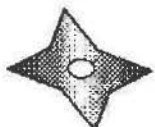
Powers/Tactics: They use the standard array of ninja weapons as well as high-tech rapid-fire flechette rifles.

Personality/Motivation: They are basically robots in human form with a measure of self-motivation — cannon fodder for Yatsomoto's nefarious schemes.

Appearance: They wear Confederate gray ninja garb with small Confederate Stars and Bars flags stitched on their shoulders. The flags can be covered by a velcro patch when stealth is required.



Throwing Stars
and Bars



BLOCK PARTY

By Chris Avellone

Illustrations by Greg Smith



A Word Of Warning

Block Party does not deal with mature themes in any way, shape, or form, and some GMs may find this childish action-intensive slugfest inappropriate for their otherwise tranquil *Champions* campaigns. GMs should be aware that some players may find the idea of superhero combat uncomfortable, and GMs should take this into consideration when running *Block Party*.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the head of *Day by Day Associates*, Diana, who was in charge of gathering the role-players for the FBI training exercises in Hogan's Alley, VA. This book is also dedicated to all the role-players who had the patience to work with me during the FBI training exercises over many summers, including my good friends Chris Wright and Jean Andre. Thanks, guys. It was a blast.

Thanks also go to Amy Crittenden, Arcangel Ortiz, Mark Arsenaault, and Steve Long for technical assistance that helped round out *Block Party*.

Introduction

FBI officials are at a loss. A few hours ago, a team of paranormals temps entered the FBI training facility called "the Block" to help train FBI Paranormal Apprehension Division (PAD) agents. Neither the paranormal team nor the trainees have returned. To make matters worse, the Block's security measures have been activated from within, preventing the FBI from entering the facility; a group of MPs who forced their way into the Block disappeared without a trace. Running out of options, the FBI have asked the PCs to enter the Block, find the agents, the MPs, and the paranormal team, and "correct" the problem.

Block Party is an action-intensive adventure for four to six heroes of any point total. Before running *Block Party*, the GM should make photocopies of the handouts and have a copy of the Block map on hand for their personal use.

What This Adventure Means To The GM

This section does not tell you how to use this adventure; it only provides suggestions for how this adventure can be dissected and used in your campaigns. As always, the reader will know the best way to use the material included herein.

This adventure provides the following:

1. A government-sponsored training ground where PCs can exercise their skills and powers in "law enforcement role-playing exercises." PCs with ties to a local or federal law enforcement body may be invited/ordered to the Block for training scenarios. Other PCs may be hired by *Day to Day Associates* (the paranormal temp agency) to help train the FBI and other government agents in "anti-paranormal" ops.

2. A selection of four paranormal characters that can serve as foes, rivals, allies, or colorful figures in the GM's campaign. The Bride and Janus, in particular, are useful as a pawn and an arch-enemy, respectively. The presence of both in the campaign can create a host of problems for the player characters.

3. The Paranormal Apprehension Division (PAD) and *Day to Day Associates* paranormal temp agency, two organizations that can be used as Hunteds, Contacts or allies for the PCs.

BACKGROUND

The Block

The "Block" is a simulation town located in Quantico, Virginia, near FBI Headquarters. It was designed as a training facility for FBI students, built to run "practicals" (crime scenarios). The Block has all the facsimiles of a small town, including a drug store, bank, hotel, bar, pool hall, warehouse, apartment complex, trailer park, and so on. It is equipped with computerized defense systems, remote control vehicles, and traps controlled by the Block's central computer, NESS.

The name "Block" is somewhat of a misnomer; while roughly square shaped, it actually occupies about three city blocks.

Although the Block is mentioned in the text as being located in Quantico, VA, this has been done to heighten its similarity to "Hogan's Alley," the simulation town where the FBI runs their training exercises in the real world. At Hogan's Alley, civilian role-players are hired to act as criminals (mug shots and fingerprints are obtained from each role-player), and an FBI Drill Instructor oversees

the exercise and debriefs the trainees afterwards on what they did wrong.

GMs should feel free to move the training facility anywhere they wish (e.g., their campaign city) to suit their needs. In the Gold Rush universe, the Block can be placed just outside San Angelo, just North of the airport.

Perceived Injustice

The Block has been seized by Janus, an itinerant spirit that has possessed one of the paranormal temps hired for the scenario. Janus, more of a psychic presence than a human being, has the paranormal power to switch minds with opponents. He has held a grudge against the FBI since their Paranormal Apprehension Division arrested his best cover identity several months ago, "spoiling" the identity for him (see Janus's background later on). Afraid that close scrutiny of the host body would reveal his presence and knowing that the body would not be able to avoid a lengthy prison term, Janus fled the body and began looking for a way to take revenge on the FBI.

Janus had several schemes in mind; everything from switching bodies with the FBI Director to seizing control of the FBI Records and blackmailing the agency crossed his mind. One morning while reading the newspaper in his new host body, however, he chanced upon an article describing the Block, the FBI's training facility for fledgling agents. Doing a little research, Janus decided sabotaging the Block would be the most public (and non-lethal) means to enact his revenge: it was a controlled environment, lightly guarded, and often visited by news crews, the presence of which would be serve to heighten the embarrassment. Better still, it was used by FBI Paranormal Apprehension Division agents who sparred with paranormal temps hired from *Day to Day Associates*. It was perfect.

Timeline

Janus plotted and schemed months in advance for how best to hold the Block hostage. Provided below is a timeline of what transpired before the PCs became involved.

Six Months Before Present: Janus's favorite host body (the one he planned to spend the next ten to twelve years in) is arrested by the FBI Paranormal Apprehension Division (See Janus's background for more information).

Once it became clear his host would be found guilty of embezzlement and quickly rendered destitute, Janus reluctantly leaves the body and begins bodyhopping until he finds a suitable host. Once Janus becomes "comfortable," he starts plotting revenge to soothe his wounded pride.

Block Party



Two Months Before Present: Janus reads about the Block in the newspaper. He makes a mental note of it as a possibility for revenge. Over the next few weeks, Janus begins to give "Plan B" more thought. Janus stakes out the *Day to Day Associates* office in Washington and checks the employee roster to make sure there are no telepaths in the organization that could ferret him out if he switched minds with one of their number.

The plan to assault the Block was only half-baked, however; Janus knew he would need the means to either control or fight all the people in the Block...without the means to do that, he could only cause minor disturbances throughout the facility, and he might not last more than an hour...not enough time to make a spectacle of the FBI.

Janus found the answer to this problem on the *Day to Day Associates* team itself. Wanda McIntyre, the Bride, had been hired by *Day to Day Associates* two months previously (four months before the present); according to the *Day to Day* records, Wanda had a form of pheromonal mind control that allowed her to "suggest" things to other human beings.

As the Bride's power was pheromonal in nature, Janus would have access to her powers if he switched minds with her. Janus began stalking the Bride, trying to learn more about her daily routine and her paranormal ability.

Both the Bride and *Day to Day Associates* really had no idea how powerful the Bride's pheromones are. (Janus was somewhat shocked to find the control he could exert over others once he assumed Wanda's identity.) Had the FBI been fully aware of the extent of the Bride's powers, they never would have let her into Quantico.

Two Weeks Before Present: Janus, arming himself with nose plugs and a heavy dose of cologne, follows the Bride to a Georgetown bar and hits on her. Buying her several drinks, Janus milks some interesting tidbits out of her, including the fact that a *CNN* news crew is coming to the Block in a few weeks to film some robberies and extortion scenarios to use as filler material for one of their nightly broadcasts. Janus decides the day the *CNN* film crew arrives at the Block is the best time to make his move.

Janus invites the Bride back to his place. Claiming that he enjoys being tied up during "encounters," he asks her to handcuff him to the bed. Once he is certain he is securely cuffed, he switches spirits with her. After the initial confusion, Janus removes the nose plugs from his old host body (which now belongs to the Bride) and waits for the cologne to fade away. He experiments with her powers for the rest of the night until the Bride, under the influence of her own power, spills all she knows about the Block, her own life, and



her personal schedule. Janus asks for a run down on the *Day to Day Associates*' roster, and more importantly, discovers that the Bride has already enslaved "Raging" Bill (see *Bill's* character sheet).

One Week Before Present: In an unrelated event, the Block's computer system (NESS) is reconfigured with a new operating system and new hardware; although the system had manifested some minor technical problems in previous scenarios, it runs fine after the upgrade. The computer was given more memory and a state of the art audio system that would allow technicians and instructors to guide NESS's programs with voice activation commands.

This recent reconfiguration is a red herring that may make characters suspect that NESS (obviously a rogue A.I.!) is responsible for seizing the Block. The characters may suspect that the computer has gone rogue, misinterpreting its programming and sabotaging the Block to "test" the FBI agents.

Day Before Present: Janus still needed the right selection of teammates to help him. One of the things he learned from the Bride was that she was not normally one of the temps who worked training exercises at the Block...because she was a new employee, she was a substitute only when one or more of the other temps couldn't make it.

As a result, Janus had to find a way to disable two members of the current team to make certain

Block Party



the Bride was called in to work at the Block.

On the day before his planned siege, Janus withdrew the Bride's meager savings from her bank, then drove to Absence's house (see *Other Paranormal Temps* in the Appendix, later on) and waited until Abner left his home. Janus then followed Abner in his car while the older man went shopping. As Abner was coming out of a grocery store, Janus possessed the mind of a local driver driving through the parking lot and had the driver run into Abner's car just as the older man was pulling out. Janus intended only to put Abner's car out of commission, but the force of the blow gave Absence a mild concussion and put him in the hospital. (Janus is a little sorry about giving the elderly man a concussion, but he doesn't dwell on it.) Within a minute, Janus had slipped back in the Bride's body and walked from the scene.

To make matters worse, Janus may simply use the Bride's power on Abner, enlisting his aid in the hostage scenario. The presence of an exo-teleporter can make this adventure much more difficult for the PCs (see *Appendix One*).

Night Before Present: To disable Devil (see Appendix One), Janus — still in the Bride's body — drove to Shelly's apartment and knocked on her door. When she answered, Janus used his pheromones to get Shelley to invite him in. Once inside, he convinced her that they should share some drinks and have a nice chat...

During their conversation, Janus spikes one of Shelley's drinks with several tranquilizers (can't be too careful with someone with such an odd metabolism). Once Shelley was unconscious and snoring on the floor of her apartment, Janus ripped her alarm clock and phone out of the wall, then left.

Janus could have disabled Shelley more subtly, but he needed to make sure that the Bride would be taking the blame for what was about to happen at the Block; as a result, he decided to visit Shelley personally.

Again, if the PCs are exceptionally tough, Janus may simply enslave Shelly and enlist her aid in the hostage scenario (see *Appendix One*).

The Morning After: Early the next morning, Dana Whitehall (the *Day to Day Associates* temps manager) finds herself short-handed. With Absence in the hospital and unable to reach Devil on the phone, Dana has no choice but to call in two paranormal substitutes, the Bride and Lester Poole (Cesspool).

The substitute roster was met with dissatisfaction by the FBI; never having worked with Cesspool and the Bride before and having

problems with Raging Bill's conduct in the block, they would have canceled the scheduled activity had the *CNN* crew not already been on its way. The FBI instructors decide to coach the substitutes as best they can, and change the exercise they had planned (a kidnapping and full scale assault) to a low-scale robbery scenario for the FBI trainees to solve.

When Did It All Go Wrong?

As the characters are going to be briefed on the events that occurred the morning the Block was seized, the morning's events are described in detail to help the GM and the players deduce what has happened.

0730-0830 Hrs: Dana discovers she cannot reach Shelley (the Devil) by phone but keeps trying, not knowing what else to do. Dana has already called Cesspool in to act as a substitute for Abner while he is in the hospital.

0800 Hrs: The *CNN* crew arrives in the Block area in two camera trucks. They stake out the area, looking for the best camera angles for filming. They oooh and aaaah over the simulated town.

0803 Hrs: Bill arrives early in his dusty Ford Bronco. He smiles and jokes around, saying he isn't going to be late ever again (he has been tardy frequently, mostly due to hangovers). FBI Instructors notice Bill's joking seemed nervous and uncomfortable, but they didn't pay too much attention to it (in actuality, Bill was nervous about the possibility of losing his job).

0823 Hrs: Cesspool arrives in his full environment suit. To his irritation (but not to his surprise), he is ushered to an isolated location until the exercise is scheduled to begin.

0840 Hrs: (Raging) Bill suggests that Dana could call the Bride as a substitute since Shelly can't be reached. (Janus, still in the Bride's body, had called Bill the night before and told him to suggest this to Dana.)

0845 Hrs: Dana, in desperation, calls Janus/the Bride and asks if she can come to the Block as a substitute. Janus/the Bride (feigning slight reluctance) agrees, and the Bride asks if Bill can be sent to pick her up. (Bill agrees to do so eagerly.)

0903 Hrs: When Bill arrives, Janus leaves with him. In the back bedroom, the Bride's enslaved body remains handcuffed to the bed. Janus is unaware that the Bride's pheromone power is slowing wearing off on the Bride's new body.

0905 Hrs: As they are driving to the Block, Janus makes sure that the Bride's pheromones are working on Bill.



0919 Hrs: Raging Bill and the Bride arrive at the Block in Bill's Bronco. The instructors recall that Grimhaus (who does not have a high opinion of Bill) warned Bill once again about using excessive force before entering the Block.

0925 Hrs: The Briefing begins. The *Day to Day Associates* paranormal team reports to the "role-players" room in the Command Center (21c), where they sign in on the time sheet and take their seats, talking amongst themselves. Dana is also there, and later on, can recall that the Bride and Raging Bill were doing most of the talking. (If asked, Director Grimhaus and Dana will recall that the Bride seemed to take an inordinate amount of interest in where the agents and the rest of the temps team would be placed within the Block.) Minutes later, the FBI Instructors entered, including the Day Instructor and Grimhaus. Assignments were given and actor role sheets were handed out.

The set-up: Because Devil and Absence were absent, the training exercise had to be restructured (if PCs ask, tell them that NESS had to be reprogrammed with the new information as well — this may further deceive the players into thinking the computer is somehow involved in the hostage attempt).

The gist of the exercise was this: Cesspool and Raging Bill were criminal paranormals who were going to rob the bank located in the Block (see the map). Cesspool would fumigate the bank, while Raging Bill would "rip the vault door off its hinges" and take the cash (nothing more than sacks and

strong boxes of *Monopoly* play money). Raging Bill, with half of the cash from the robbery, would then return to the Block's trailer park where his "girlfriend," Wanda McIntyre lived; Cesspool would return to his hotel room with the other half of the cash.

The training drill would involve the trainees tracking down the two paranormal suspects based on clues at the Bank (i.e., fingerprints, descriptions of the paranormals, observations of their powers). The only catch in the scenario was that both Cesspool and Raging Bill were acting as the Bride's slaves; if the trainees investigated closely, they would find that Wanda was a psychic who was responsible for mind controlling Bill and Cesspool into committing crimes. In the final showdown for the training exercise, the trainees were to track down Bill and Cesspool to their hideouts and figure out a way to stop the two paranormals; the final test would be to make sure that they were careful enough to investigate the Bride's involvement (i.e., checking to see if she is a paranormal rather than seeing if she is "just" Bill's normal human girlfriend).

This deserves some explanation. PAD agents have been instructed not to assume that anyone at a crime scene is a "normal"... a number of paranormals have no Distinctive Features. Part of this exercise will be to see if the agents think to check the Bride for paranormal powers (or at the least suspect her involvement) while they are arresting Bill.

All the *Day to Day Associates* team was given radios and ID cards relating to their "identities" (these are fake IDs that match the identities they have been given). Bill is given a handgun loaded with blanks, a sawed-off shotgun and a plastic Bowie knife.

0945 Hrs: The *Day to Day Associates* team leaves the Briefing Room.

0952 Hrs: Raging Bill and Cesspool arrive at their assigned locations at the Hotel (12) and get some last minute details from Grimhaus via radio (Bill and Cesspool are both supposed to wait in the Hotel (12) until they storm the bank). The *CNN* crew gets in position, one camera going to the Block Command Center (21A) and the other going to the Bank (11).

0954 Hrs: The Bride reports in shortly after Cesspool and Raging Bill, claiming that she is in her assigned location (she is actually just outside the Block Command Center, 21A).

Immediately after switching off her radio, the Bride walks into the control room and floods the room with her pheromones, enslaving both technicians, the Day



Block Party



Instructor, and members of the *CNN* crew stationed in the command center. She then orders the technicians and the Day Instructor to reprogram the computers so that they cannot be shut down from outside the Block. Then "the Bride" tells the Day Instructor to call Bill and Cesspool to the command center for "further instructions."

0955 Hrs: The Bride informs the compliant *CNN* crew that they will be witnessing a premeditated hostage attempt. She orders the cameraman to film her and everything that goes on. (Janus will find a way to get a copy of the film footage later.)

The technicians began to seal off the Block's security programs from outside interference.

0957 Hrs: When her two teammates arrive, the Bride orders Bill to grab Cesspool and take off his hood... after a brief struggle that leaves Bill nauseous and Cesspool stunned, the Bride's pheromones worm their way through Cesspool's wasted nasal passages and take hold. The Bride, with help from the Day Instructor, begins to instruct Cesspool to create gas pockets in several areas in the Block for added defense.

The Block technicians continue isolating the NESS mainframe, stalling the FBI and the trainees who are waiting impatiently outside the Block with a steady "standby" signal.

1015 Hrs: After almost twenty minutes of a continuous "standby" signal from NESS, the enslaved Block engineers call Grimhaus and inform him that the NESS computer will need to be given autonomy within the Block (i.e., essentially put on "automatic") in order to free up memory space. Grimhaus, irritated and under pressure to look good from the news crews, agrees. ("I thought we *had* more memory — all right do it, but make it quick.")

Any PC who makes a Computer Programming roll will be able to determine that this is total bunk (giving the NESS computer autonomy within the Block would undoubtedly have consumed more memory space than it saved... Grimhaus, not knowing the first thing about computer programming, was unaware of this).

1023 Hrs: As per the Bride's instructions, NESS's command functions are transferred to an auxiliary computer located elsewhere in the Block (the Globe Theater Basement, B5); the technicians transfer all override functions to the Bride.

1025 Hrs: NESS sends the FBI trainees the "Ready" signal.

1035 Hrs: The PAD Trainees are let in, and the Block is sealed off (standard operating procedure). One minute later, however, the FBI Directors outside the Block detect an unauthorized command from NESS that erects full Block defenses.

Radio communications are cut off by a jamming signal from NESS, and the trainees, the Day Instructor and the *Day to Day Associates* team can no longer be raised on the radio.

10:45 AM: Grimhaus and a number of FBI agents at the scene attempt to enter and are forced back by gunfire (Raging Bill, who shoots Grimhaus's FBI cap off his head with a rifle) and the NESS defenses.

1055 Hrs: Grimhaus, between bursts of profanity, calls the Quantico MPs and orders them to storm the Block and "terminate" the exercise.

1105 Hrs: Within ten minutes, a squad of MPs arrives. They are given armament and gas masks and briefed on the situation.

1110 Hrs: MPs make it within the Block without resistance (for some unknown reason, the NESS computer lets them in), but as soon as they enter, the Block's defenses jump back up to maximum. Explosions and sporadic gunfire are heard.

1115 Hrs: Within the Block, Cesspool gasses the MPs, and the FBI trainees subdue the remaining MPs with their stun guns and Raging Bill's brute strength. The NESS cameras allows the *Day to Day Associates* team to track down all remaining MPs and capture them. They are then enslaved, and told to set up a defensive perimeter around the edge of the Block. FBI hears no more word from MPs (radio communications were cut off as soon as they entered the Block).

1130 Hrs: The FBI, realizing the MPs have failed, calls the PCs.

1145 Hrs: The PCs arrive.

Visiting Privileges

Shortly before noon the players are called to the Block. They will be given directions to reach Quantico; once there, they are instructed to wait at the guardpost for an escort to take them in. Once they arrive, a clean-shaven FBI agent in a suit (and with a bulletproof vest) will lead the characters into the facility. He will deflect their questions with a request for the players to follow him to the main building.

The GM may have to twist fate to allow fledgling (i.e., unproven) characters or vigilantes enter the picture (the FBI may offer vigilante characters a deal). While the FBI will be reluctant to send unknowns into the Block, they are running out of options and must settle for whoever is available. Characters will have to put up with overemphasized plans and lectures on combat restraint the FBI officials will give them before entering the Block (role-play this). PCs with criminal pasts may simply be in the area and choose to intervene in the hostage scenario, if only to make the FBI look worse.



Once there, the PCs will be escorted to a busy office just outside the Block, where a number of Directors are pouring over maps and diagrams of the facility, cursing and drinking coffee. There are three FBI directors and a security officer who will meet with the characters; one of the officials is Director Grimhaus, the instructor in charge of the Block. Dana Whitehall, the *Day to Day* director, is somewhere in the building, trying to summon other *Day to Day Associates* temps to respond to the problem (she may have been the one who called the characters). Once the characters enter, Director Grimhaus will wave at them to sit down.

"All right," the sour-faced man begins, "I'm Al Grimhaus; I'm the Director in charge of the Block. As of three hours ago, we lost all computer functions and radio communication from the facility, and we got twelve trainees, twelve Marines, five training officials, four members of a CNN news crew, and three *Day to Day Associates* paranormals in there."

The number of hostages, trainees and Marines should be modified so that they present a challenge to the PCs. Unless the PCs are incredibly powerful, try not to have more than three trainees and two Marines for each hero.

Grimhaus frowns as he mentions *Day to Day Associates* and rubs his forehead. "It's starting to look like there's no way to pry them out." Grimhaus glares at you. "Unfortunately, most of the Block is run on automatic — its routine functions are handled by the NESS Computer, a FBI mainframe that oversees the Block and monitors everything going on inside its perimeter. Problem we have now is that someone in there, someone with some serious computer know-how, has figured out how to screw with the programming and turn it to their advantage. Whoever it was, they knew the NESS system and all the friggin' passwords. Now it looks like NESS has been programmed to keep everybody out," Grimhaus's brow furrows as he looks at the map of the Block.

"We can't shut off power and take out the computer; their emergency power can kick back in almost no time at all." Grimhaus stretches his back. "Not that cutting off their power would solve anything. As it stands, we've obviously got at least one turncoat inside the Block, and it's gonna take a full scale attack by Marines to bust the terrorists out of there...and as I said before, they're wedged in tight. And then there's the hostages." Grimhaus's frown deepens.

"Short of it is, we're in it up to our necks. If we send more MPs in to retake the Block, chances are we'll lose them just like the last team, who weren't pantywaists to begin with, were heavily armed, and knew what they were dealing with. Not to mention we believe that the team from *Day to Day Associates* are in this somehow, and dislodging

them is going to be tough enough. So we called you. We need help to take back the Block and make sure no one is hurt."

Grimhaus sighs angrily. "We don't know why the Block was taken. That's about the most maddening thing that's happened so far; we've had no demands, no bomb threats, nothing... either whoever's seized the Block doesn't know the leverage they have, or they're just stupid. All we get from the NESS computer is the 'Ready' signal. In any event, I want whoever the saboteurs are out of the Block before they gather their wits and decide to do something dangerous."

The characters will want to know who and what they will be going up against. Information that can be gained on the specific paranormals is listed below; unfortunately, most of it is sketchy; the GM should decide how much more the characters uncover depending on how and where they research. It will become clear after an examination of each of the files within that each *Day to Day Associates* employee has had work problems (either with the FBI or at other companies) in the past — not necessarily a clear motive for taking the Block hostage, but suspicious nonetheless.

The information that can be gained on each character is divided into three sections: what can be gained by questioned specific instructors and *Day to Day Associates* personnel, what can be gained from the *Day to Day Associates* file (including information on their paranormal powers) and any personal knowledge the characters may be able to bring to the scenario.

Raging Bill Info

FBI Instructors

If FBI instructors are questioned about Raging Bill, one of them will say Bill appeared worried when he was about to enter the Block (he was nervous because he had been told to lay off the violence against agents in the past and felt he was danger of losing his *Day to Day Associates* job if he wasn't on his best behavior today). The instructor also says (keeping his eyes averted from Dana if she is present) that Bill has had "problems" in the past while working in the Block. If asked to elaborate, the instructors will say that Bill used excessive force against a trainee (this is downplaying what really happened — if the trainee is asked, he will say that Bill went berserk and almost tried to kill him) during a kidnapping scenario. Grimhaus warned Bill that if he ever tried a stunt like that again, he was going to be shipped out. To compound this, Grimhaus has told Dana that if Bill comes in late again, or ever disobeys the instructions given by an FBI instructor, Bill will never work at the Block (or anywhere else) again.

Block Party



Dana Whitehall

Dana knows there is a rumor going around *Day to Day Associates* that the Bride and Bill have been seeing one another; she will claim that she saw them driving together to work occasionally these past few weeks. She doesn't know if it's true or not. If asked if it is possible that the Bride has enslaved Bill, Dana will frown and shake her head dubiously. She doesn't believe the Bride's power is potent enough to "enslave" anyone.

Day to Day Associates Files

Examination of his paychecks will show that Bill has been getting paid less and less (he's been getting the lowest amount of hours than any other paranormal employed at the Block). The temps paraphysiology files show that Bill has most of the characteristics of a "brick," with above-average reflexes and the ability to benchpress about 20 tons. The FBI (and *Day to Day Associates*) is unaware of his "temper trigger." If characters carefully analyze his medical file, however, they will notice the abnormalities detected in his nervous system and from his EKG (see *Bill's Powers/Tactics*); the *Day to Day Associates* doctors cannot comment on it ("it's just an anomaly"). The files will also show that Bill was recommended to *Day to Day Associates* by the Confederate, a well-known (and well-regarded) southern superhero who has had good relations with the FBI in the past.

Personal Information

Some characters may have read *Flying High: Tales of the Confederate*, a biography of the Confederate published a few years back; in it, there is mention of someone named "Bill Baker," who was reported to be strong, perhaps superhumanly so. This Bill Baker had the misfortune to get into a fight with the Confederate (see *Raging Bill's* character sheet). It may or may not be the same person. If it is true and the characters ask to check FBI Records, then they will discover that Bill is guilty of Assault and Battery as well as Vandalism and Destruction of Property in Kentucky, yet there are no such charges listed in the *Day to Day Associates* files. How these charges were missed is unknown.

If any player has a Knowledge Skill of United States paranormals, they (GM's discretion) may be able to draw a connection between Bill's physical description (and physiology) and the small time supervillain brick known as "Blacksnake" that the Confederate fought in Montgomery, Alabama. If so, then Bill's criminal record is more extensive than his Assault and Battery charges in Kentucky.

Bride Info

The FBI Instructors

The FBI has no records of the Bride's past performance in the Block. The Bride was a substitute for today; her replacement, Devil, was ill (see *Background* and *Other Temps* in the Appendix).

Dana Whitehall: If asked, Dana will repeat the rumor that Bill and the Bride were seeing each other (see *Raging Bill Information*, above).

Day to Day Associates Files

If the *Day to Day Associates* file is examined, and her references examined, characters will notice that she was fired from her job at the *Quickie Mart* for "disturbing" customers before she was hired by *Day to Day Associates*.

According to the temp agency's paraphysiological reports, the Bride can exude pheromones that make others susceptible to suggestion. Her power is sufficiently weak that she can only suggest courses of action that others wouldn't mind doing in the first place.

This is untrue. It's unclear how the paraphysicians missed the extent of the Bride's power (maybe she "suggested" they downplay it with her power?), but a glance at her character sheet will show how dangerous she can be. It is possible that the Bride never knew how powerful she was or had some sort of physical or psychosomatic block that prevented her from using her powers to their full extent. Whatever the reason, now that Janus has slipped inside her body, the kid gloves are off.

"Cesspool" Info

FBI Instructors

No particular description. Like with the Bride, above, Cesspool is something of an unknown quality. He has no criminal record (but see his running feud with Texxon in his background). Players may discover that Cesspool has Top Secret clearance (he obtained this clearance by producing and packaging his toxic smell for the military; again, see his background).

Day to Day Associates

Dana will say that Cesspool is not happy at *Day to Day Associates* and is taking it until he can find some other job. Today, he was a substitute for Absence (see *Partners in Crime*, above). It is known to both the FBI and *Day to Day Associates*



that Cesspool has a running feud with Texxon for firing him because of his paranormal power (see *Cesspool's* background).

Lester's paranormal power is pretty obvious and does not merit a lengthy description in his paraphysiological files. Simply put, Cesspool smells bad. Really bad. He wears an environmental suit that helps contain the smell, but it doesn't work to well.

Paranormal Apprehension Division (PAD) Info

Chances are that the player characters have already heard of the FBI's Paranormal Apprehension Division. It was established by the FBI at whatever point in the campaign's past the GM feels paranormal crime became high enough to warrant a separate division within the FBI. The earliest PAD team was composed of skilled normals and a few paranormal agents, trained to track down and apprehend paranormal suspects. The number of paranormals in the division never rose above three during any given year, and none of the trainees in this adventure possess paranormal powers.

The GM should feel free to replace PAD with whatever government agency they wish; in the *Champions Universe*, PAD could be replaced with SAT, PRIMUS, and so on.

The FBI recently signed a contract with *Day to Day Associates* to hire paranormal temps to help train their PAD agents; there is a focus on constructing sparring groups composed of paranormal temps from all "four groups" — one with unusual movement abilities (i.e., teleport, running), a blaster, a brick, and a stealth character to allow basic scenarios of arrest and capture. A glance at the current temp roster, however, will show that this "four team" training structure has not been firmly adhered to.

If Grimhaus or any of the FBI staff is asked for information on PAD, the GM should subtly work into the conversation some of PAD's recent successes (i.e., to be fair to the adventure, there should be the briefest mention of Janus's "capture" several months ago to allow players a chance to figure out what is going on). At some point after the initial briefing, Grimhaus may mention his dissatisfaction with *Day to Day Associates*... he has always had doubts about employing superhuman temps for training PAD agents as there are so many paranormals out in the world with powers that could never be predicted or defended against; in the past year, for example, the Paranormal Apprehension Division was called in to deal with



a pair of telepathic bricks who happened to be joined at the head (the Brothers Grim) in Washington D.C. and a psionic bodyhopper who was embezzling from a business firm in Arlington, Virginia (Janus).

Grimhaus has often expressed some doubt about employing superhuman temps at the Block because he feels that it only trains the PAD agents to deal with the specific powers of the paranormal temps hired for the exercises, not paranormals in general. Other Directors argue that the training sessions are structured so that the agent's response to the powers (i.e., following proper procedure) is the deciding factor, not the powers themselves.

Hopefully when players enter the Block and see what is happening they will draw a connection between the "psionic bodyhopper" the PAD arrested and what is transpiring in the Block. If not, the truth should eventually come out (see *The Ugly Truth*, later on).

Block Party



Equipment

As part of the initial briefing, Grimhaus will also give a run down on what each member of the team (including the trainees, the Marines, and the paranormals) was carrying when they entered the Block. Although no member of the initial team was carrying lethal weapons (the trainees were armed with stun guns), Grimhaus suspects that the saboteurs may have gotten a hold of the small arsenal beneath the Block, especially if they have seized control of the NESS computers; if this is the case, they have access to a full complement of handguns, shotguns and even tear gas grenades. To make matters worse, the MPs that stormed the Block an hour or two ago had live ammunition loaded in their weapons, which included assault rifles. If they have been captured, then the saboteurs should be assumed to have access to all the weapons that the Marines were carrying. The paranormal team was carrying the following:

Raging Bill: A handgun with blanks, a fake shotgun and a plastic Bowie Knife. The FBI will state Bill bragged frequently about being a marksman; Grimhaus has seen him hurl a knife into a target at thirty meters. If Bill is armed, he could be quite dangerous.

The Bride: The Bride had a .38 revolver hidden on her person, for use in case the trainees did not thoroughly search her. It was loaded with blanks.

Cesspool: No weapons. There was really no point.

PAD Trainees: Each trainee had a gas mask, a bulletproof vest, and a stun pistol. All had handcuffs, and two carried fake "pacifiers" (a form of paranormal restraint; see the description of pacifiers in the Marines entry) for use on Raging Bill should he be apprehended.

MPs: Grimhaus frowns when he comes to the Marines; he grumbles and says if the saboteurs didn't have weapons before, they have them now. The Marines were using M-16A2s, handguns, shock-batons and were carrying four tear gas and fragmentation grenades each when they entered the Block. In addition, they had kevlar armor and four "pacifiers" for dealing with threats the paranormals may have posed.

Victory Conditions

Grimhaus will make the following conditions very clear to the characters before sending them into the Block:

1. No hostages, especially the CNN news crew, are to be harmed. If innocents are hurt because of a PC's negligence, the character will be in deep trouble.

2. Shutdown (this does not mean destroy) NESS and find out the reason for its malfunction. Shutting down or retaking control of NESS is essential to retaking the Block.

3. Avoid as much damage to the Block, NESS, and computer equipment as possible. The stuff is expensive. If the PCs want only destroy everything they come across, the FBI will force them to pay for damages (indentured servitude is not out of the question). When possible, the PCs are to use minimum force.

Theories

The FBI have only theories about what has happened in the Block:

1. The NESS system has either suffered a malfunction or been contaminated with a computer virus and has taken over the Block. Characters who ask can discover that NESS was recently refitted to work within the Block, and its hardware and memory was upgraded (see above).

2. Another theory (which Grimhaus refuses to discount, despite Dana's claim that the accusation is unfounded) is that one or all of the *Day to Day Associates* team has turned traitor and reprogrammed the NESS computer. *Day to Day Associates* has denied this; while there have been personnel problems, there is no reason for the temps to attack FBI agents or seize the Block. Dana's persistent claims that the temps' are innocent seems sincere; her honesty may persuade characters that the *Day to Day Associates* team is not to blame for the problems within the Block. Any character looking at the bios of the temps team can determine that not one of them has any computer programming experience, at least not enough to engineer the electronic siege currently taking place within the Block.

The Plan of Attack

The FBI know exactly what they want the PCs to do. As soon as the PCs are ready to go, the FBI are going to shut down power to the Block to try and disorient the saboteurs; the PCs are to storm



the Block when the FBI cuts the power, proceed directly to the NESS Command Center, and shut down the system. Shutting down the system requires that the PCs enter a nine digit sequence (which the FBI will give them); entering the sequence into the terminal in the command center will cause the NESS computer to "reboot," which should cancel all of its current subroutines and allow the FBI to retake the Block without (computer) interference.

As mentioned in the initial briefing, cutting the power to the Block won't stop NESS; it will only give characters a fifteen second window before the emergency power kicks in. The PCs should enter the Block as quickly as possible and reestablish control. Assuming the PCs can reach the NESS Command Center in fifteen seconds and shut down the system, retaking the Block should proceed smoothly.

Problems

Of course, retaking the Block may present a bigger problem than expected for the following reasons:

1. The FBI has misdiagnosed the nature of the sabotage. They do not know who they are dealing with nor how to stop him. The more troops they send in to the Block will simply reinforce Janus's position and make the FBI look worse.

2. Retaking the Block command center will stop NESS. Unknown to the characters and the FBI, Janus "asked" the NESS technicians to transfer NESS's functions to an auxiliary command center in one of the basements in the Block (the Globe Theater, B5), and characters will need to search for it and shut it down. Janus will continue to move the NESS command functions to different locations to disorient and confuse attackers.

3. The FBI did not give the PCs the basement map of the Block... unless the PCs realize that the Block has a basement area, they will not be able to track down where Janus has moved the NESS command center.

4. The reason the FBI didn't give the PCs the basement map is that they are secretly using the PCs as a diversion. They don't know if the PCs can retake the Block, but they're not willing to find out. They are secretly sending in a USMC Special Ops team in tandem with the PCs; they hope that the terrorists will be distracted by the PCs' attack that they will not notice the USMC Special Ops team, which will enter the Block from a service tunnel (B7) and try and work its way upwards to the command center. To make matters worse, Janus will spot this USMC Special Ops team minutes after they enter the complex and enslave them for his own purposes.



5. The nine digit code the FBI gave the PCs no longer works (Janus had one of the technicians change it). The NESS system must either be hacked into or destroyed in order to shut down all the computer functions in the Block.

PC Equipment

The FBI will be willing to provide the following equipment to characters:

Vehicles

Any conventional motorcycle, car, van or armored car will be provided to the characters with the understanding they will do their best not to destroy it. At the GM's discretion, the vehicles described in the *Champions*, *Dark Champions* or *Eye for an Eye* could be used, especially if the characters (or players) would have fun using them. Simple items such as mini hang-gliders and line guns (*Dark Champions*, p.98) could also be provided. The FBI will not provide character with any vehicles that possess Killing Attacks.

Weapons

Any non-lethal weapons, such as stun guns, tasers, pacifiers, gas or concussion grenades, will be provided. Unless the PCs are government-

Block Party



approved and sanctioned (i.e., a government task force), the FBI will not give them any lethal weapons.

Protection

Kevlar body armor can be provided to the characters. To fight the Bride and Cesspool, the FBI will give them gas masks and warn them never to take them off while in the Block.

Note: If the characters wear their gas masks, have them breath heavily and talk with their nose pinched. Force them to communicate like this until they take off the masks; embarrassment may cause some of the characters to take off the masks and leave themselves open to a surprise attack from Cesspool).

Radios

The PCs will be provided with radios to allow them to communicate with each other and with the FBI, but the FBI will explain to the characters that unless the NESS jamming signal can be shut down, radio communication between someone inside and someone outside the Block will be near impossible. PCs will be able to communicate among themselves within the Block, as will their opponents, but they will not be able to radio anyone outside the Block due to selective interference by NESS.

Note: Once the characters enter the Block, Janus will have NESS scan for extra radio frequencies; this will take 10-15 minutes. If the signals are detected, Janus will order NESS to lock onto the radio's point of origin and track the characters as they move throughout the Block. The characters may avoid this by dropping their radios. It should be easy for the characters to pick up the radio frequency their opponents are using — the radios that their opponents have have only two channels. If Janus sees that the characters are eavesdropping, he will try to maintain radio silence as much as possible.

Maps

PCs will be given a map of the exterior of the Block as well as the interiors of all the buildings within the Block, with the exception of the basement levels (see *Problems*, above). PCs should be allowed to choose their own means of reaching the Central Command Center.

BRAWLING IN THE BLOCK

Janus's Goals and Tactics

Janus's primary goal is to publicly humiliate the FBI. He wants to show the world that the FBI can't control their own training facility, then leave town after making sure that the FBI will need to do some heavy explaining to the media about what transpired in the Block. To this end, Janus will hold the Block hostage as many hours as necessary to ensure a media crisis for the FBI.

Janus really does not want to seriously hurt the characters; as far as he is concerned, they are nothing more than an inconvenience, and he will deploy his forces to subdue them, hold them up, frighten them, gas them, and so on. If any character is seriously injured or unconscious (or fakes it really well), Janus orders his enslaved troops to lay off the character until they have a chance to recover.

Janus will send the FBI trainees against the characters first, then the MPs (he wants the characters to destroy as much FBI equipment and hurt as many FBI agents and Marines as possible). Once these forces are "exhausted," Janus will send the *Day to Day Associates* team against the characters and if this fails, he will use the characters against themselves, using his Switch Spirit Power (see below).

Using Switch Spirit

Although Janus did not intend to leave the Bride's body until he was ready to leave the Block, he may choose to switch minds with one of the PCs when they enter the Block (he will make sure he stashes the Bride's body in a safe place so that he can return to it if he switches back). If/when Janus switches minds with a member of a group of PCs, he becomes silent and listens to what they are doing. After a minute or two, he will proceed to ask questions about them as discretely as possible, trying to find out the PCs' powers (and especially to see if any mentalists are present), their reasons for being here and their plan of attack.

Once he has as much information as he needs, Janus will suggest the PCs split up to cover more ground. If this fails, he will either storm off on his own as if insulted, going to one of the cells beneath the Block and lock himself in (then switch out) or else get the drop on the weakest PC to disable them (note the attack bonus associated with surprising a target out of combat; *Champions Rulebook*, p.151).



Under any circumstances, as soon as he has suffered half STUN, Janus starts looking for someone else to possess. Once he has a new host body in his sights, he will place his current host body in a dangerous situation (in front of a speeding car, tottering on a building ledge, running into a group of trigger-happy Marines, walking into a haymaker, and so on) and then switch out just before the character suffers damage, hopefully taking out the character's body and rendering the incoming mind unconscious from the pain. Once in his new body, he will continue the same attacks.

Body Schematics

Although the spirit switching process can become complicated and is not intended to be used extensively during the adventure, it is entirely possible that the GM may wish to have Janus perform a "Chinese fire drill" in the minds of everyone in the Block, hopping from PC to PC to NPC and perhaps back again. If this is the case, it is recommended that the GM make a "body chart" for every character, PC or not, in the Block to keep track of who is in who's body.

Assigning every character a number and using it as their body and mind designation (i.e., one of the trainees could be designated as "six," a PC could be designated as a "12"... if Janus somehow switched their minds, the PC would become a "12" inside "six's" body, and vice versa). Unless the GM intends for Janus to be captured (or surrender) at the end of the adventure, the GM may want to make minor behavior tags for each character in the Block to add some flavor when the bodyhopping process occurs.

Again, there are penalties for trying to control the coordination of a new host body. All characters may be forced to deal with these penalties if they find themselves in a new body (see *Janus's Powers/Tactics* section)

Stopping NESS

NESS is assumed to be a standard computer, with an INT 20 (sufficient to run any programs needed on the Block during this adventure), DEX 24, and a SPD of 6.

Now, technical geniuses and those familiar with computers will undoubtedly have a list of inventive ideas for disrupting NESS. Some common tactics include:

1. Cutting off its power. This cannot be done (permanently) from outside the Block, as NESS has its own emergency power supply, this will kick in within seconds after the power is cut. The power to NESS can only be shut down from the command center (wherever Janus has moved it within the Block).

2. Flooding the Block with an EM pulse or similar disruptive energy. Assume NESS is shielded against power surges and pulses, though powerful pulses and energy fields may disrupt its operations for a minute or two. Since the NESS command center is located below ground, PCs may not know where to direct a pulse or disruptive field to shut down the NESS computer.

3. Interfacing with a computer terminal other than the one designated "Central command" and attempting to override its functions. NESS's command functions cannot be overridden from any terminal other than the one the technicians have designated as the "central controller." Characters will be unable to input any information into the database from any other terminal other than the one that has been designated as the central controller.

Essentially, the PCs should find it near impossible to stop NESS unless they reach the command center (the equivalent of reaching the "finish line" of this adventure). This is intended as a plot device only.

OTHER THREATS IN THE BLOCK

Note: GMs do not have to use any of the items in this section. They are included as suggestions for packing more action into the adventure.

Remote-Control Vehicles

Although Block vehicles usually have real drivers and pilots, NESS has the ability to guide the path of vehicles via remote control throughout the Block (this was a new feature added when the upgrade to the NESS system was performed... see the Timeline, above).

The remote control vehicles (except for the helicopter) can be stopped in one of two ways: one is to snap off the vehicle antennas (the vehicle will lose control if this happens and may crash if it is moving fast enough when the antenna is destroyed). The second way is to use one of the override keys for these vehicles stored in the Block garage... if any of these override keys are inserted in the ignition of the remote control vehicles, the vehicle will revert to manual control. All of these remote control vehicles can be operated from within the Block control room by the technicians. The following vehicles are currently at the Block:

- 2 Police Cars in a roving patrol pattern. Their radios crackle with rehearsed police reports and going-ons.

- 3 Civilian Cars, two of which are on the street and one which is parked in the Block Garage as a spare.

Block Party



1 (armored) Unmarked Van (assume 10 DEF and 18 BODY).

1 Helicopter at the helicopter pad (optional).

1 "Black Maria" parked in the barn.

2 Golf Carts (treat as motor cycles for purposes of DEF and BODY).

1 Forklift.

Use the stats on p.195 of the *Hero System Rulebook* for the stats for these vehicles; if the GM has access to *Dark Champions* or *An Eye for an Eye*, they should feel free to use any of the vehicle templates (as well as the vehicle combat rules) contained in those two books. All the vehicles above are equipped with radios that allow the operators/passengers to communicate with the Block command center (wherever it is located at the moment).

The vehicles can be used as battering rams on any player character unfortunate enough to be caught on the street, and the fact that the vehicles are under remote control allows Marines and trainees to ride shotgun and fire on PCs without having to worry about keeping control of the vehicle.

Each vehicle operating by remote is assumed to have a SPD of 6. The golf carts and forklift only have a SPD of 3.

Robots

As an option, if the GM has access to *Classic Enemies*, they may use any of the robot templates described in the back of that text; the FBI may have purchased some discarded combat robots to serve as targeting dummies for trainees and for paranormals engaged in on-site training. Some robots may be dressed in civilian clothes, police uniforms, thug costumes, and so on.

These are not Stronghold robots unless the GM wants them to be; Stronghold is assumed not to exist in the San Angelo universe.

Armor

If the GM wants to raise the threat level, give the Marines and/or the trainees high-tech battle armor, similar to the Turtle armor described in the *Champions Rulebook*.

Pheromonal Strength

If the GM doesn't want to resort to high tech to make the Block forces tougher, it is possible that one side effect of the Bride's power is that it gives Damage Reduction and/or added STUN to her victims... they shrug off damage easier as long as they are fighting for the object of their affections.

Day To Day Associates Inc

Medical Division, Dept. of Paraphysiology

Report No.: 523-948

Date: July 24, 1994

Patient Name: William Baker

Alias: Raging Bill

Sex: Male

Height: 6'1"

DOB: 03-17-57

Time: 3:20 p.m.
Employee ID: 2301

Race: Caucasian
Weight: 240 lbs.

Initial Findings / Preemployment Examination

An initial examination was performed by Dr. Roy Milton, PhD, using standard DTDA criteria and protocols. Patient Baker exhibits cardio-pulmonary activity within accepted human norms. Reflex response above human norms. EKG monitoring indicates neurological anomalies; synaptic functions are at 2.7 on the DTDA scale, with unusual levels of synaptic and alpha wave activity when the patient becomes excited or irritated.

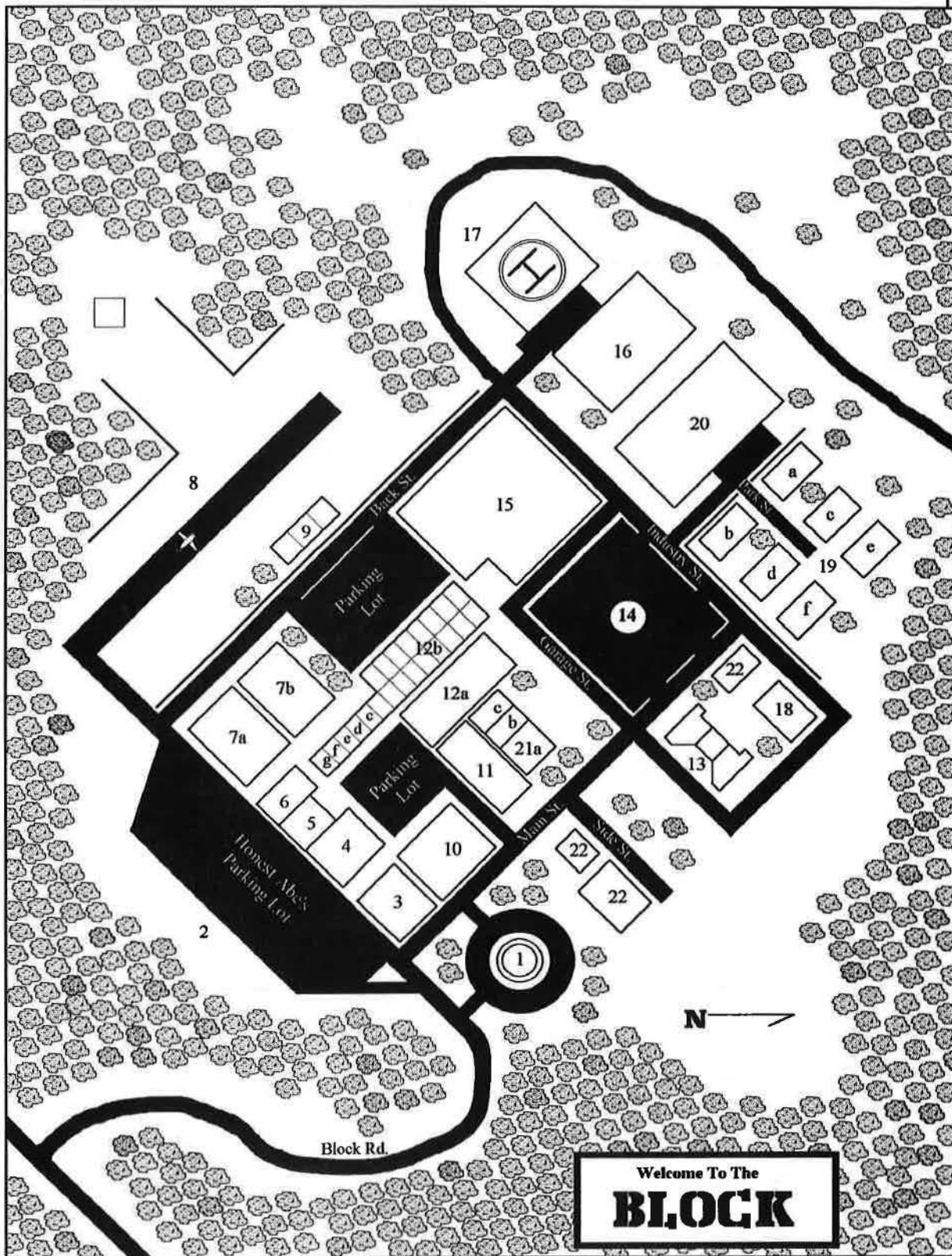
Patient's endurance rated at 5.0 on the DTDA scale. Patient excelled at the strength test, rating lift capability exceeds 23 tons in a lift and 30 tons in a reclined bench press position.

Dermatological examination reveals patient has extremely resistant skin, rating 1.5 on the Kinetic Dispersion scale. Attempts at penetrating the outer skin with a needle proved fruitless, so no blood sample was taken. DNA testing to be conducted from discarded epidermal cells and hair samples provided by patient.



Block Party





□ = 10 x 10 Meters

Block Party



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THE KEY TO THE BLOCK

General Notes

The Block is a strange mix of high technology and substandard buildings and furnishings. Nothing in the Block is quite finished; most rooms in the Block are still under construction (and have been for almost a year). Dirt and mangy furnishing fill most of the rooms in the Block; most of the items that fill the Block have been seized from drug busts and other crime scenes across the country. As a result, the pieces of furniture do not compliment each other and the mish-mash effect in the buildings is really quite garish. It was the FBI's opinion that only a "veneer of realism" was needed in order to construct exercises within the Block.

As a result, buildings in the Block resemble their function only superficially... for example, the drug store has only a few empty medication boxes and pill bottles lining the shelves, with a plastic cash register at the counter. In short, no one could seriously mistake any of the buildings in the Block for what they are supposed to be; other than the signs outside the stores and superficial touches within the buildings, they are mostly dirty, empty buildings.

If the GM wishes, however, they can make the Block a fully functioning role-playing environment, including real (or robotic) store owners and actual furnishings.

Block Furnishings

Furnishings in the Block are relatively weak; they were not meant to survive the passage of time. In general, GMs should use the chart listed in p.177 of the *Hero System Rulebook* but reduce the DEF of all objects in the Block, including interior walls, exterior walls, doors and so on, by 1. Characters can usually find flimsy chairs and desks almost anywhere in the Block that they can use as clubs, breakaway weapon props, and so on... there should always be something for the characters to break or smash somewhere nearby.

GM Aid Sheets

It is recommended that before running *Block Party*, GMs run off copies of the Block map (one for the PCs, one for the GM in order to keep track of all the agents and paranormals) and keep a copy of the Object List handy for any objects the PCs may encounter in the Block (see *Breaking Things* in the "Environment" section of the *Champions Rulebook*, as well as in *Corporations*).

The GM should also refer to the "Body Schematics" in Janus's Tactics section, above, for constructing a Spirit Switch chart for keeping track of minds and bodies in the Block.

Block Schematics

P.A. System

The Block has a paging system mounted in various sections of the facility for paging trainees and instructors. Janus has access to this system and may use it to issue orders to the trainees and Marines during the Block Party. If things get desperate, he may use it to threaten characters who have invaded the Block.

Cameras

Video cameras (wired to the Block's central command) cover almost every square inch of the Block, mounted inside walls (with peepholes that allow a view of the room where they are placed), mounted in the remote-control cars, mounted on lampposts, on overhangs and ledges and so on. Janus will attempt to protect these sites, as he needs them to help keep tabs on characters as they invade the Block. Destroying these cameras will create several blindspots in Janus's vision that the players can use to take breathers or plan strategies hidden from prying eyes once inside the Block.

No bathroom or administrative office has a security camera installed in it; player characters can retreat into these areas to make secret plans or take a breather from NESS's watchful eyes.

Ventilation

None of the ventilation shafts that honeycomb the Block are big enough for a character to crawl through, unless they have Shrinking. If the characters are small enough to move through the shafts, there should be a way to use the shafts to travel just about anywhere in the Block. If Janus discovers someone in the shaft, he will order his troops to don gas masks, then ask Cesspool to gas the ventilation system. (Unless the character can shrink a gas mask down to their size, they will be smoked out.) Meanwhile, Cesspool's vapor will pour through every inch of the block through grates and vents. NESS has complete control over all fans, ventilation pathways and temperature controls within the Block; Janus can order NESS to close certain ventilation shafts and turn on various fans and blowers to allow Cesspool to "bomb" any building interior in the Block with one of his reeking gas clouds.

Plumbing

Characters with Life Support and Shrinking could conceivably float through the plumbing and

Block Party



come out within the Block, either in a sink, a washroom or up through a toilet. There is a sink in every washroom and bathroom and kitchen in the Block, and the bathrooms are marked on the Block map.

Sprinklers

Sprinklers cover all of the interior areas of the Block. NESS can activate any of them by remote and Janus may use the sprinkler system against heroes with flame or electricity powers.

Fire Alarms

All of the buildings and underground corridors have fire alarms... NESS can activate (or deactivate) any of them by remote and turn up their volume to deafening levels. This will not cause any damage, but it will prevent characters from communicating verbally with their teammates while they are within a three hexes of a screeching fire alarm.

Fire alarms can be set off by placing a flame next to the sensor or by dropping a smoke or gas grenade in a room (Cesspool's gas will set off fire alarms). Note that a fire alarm can be used in a PC's favor... Janus cannot issue direct commands to any Marines, trainees or any member of his paranormal team while they are standing next to a fire alarm.

Specific Locales

The following is a list of specific locations within the Block:

1. **The Euclid Traffic Circle** A hissing fountain lies in the center of the traffic circle, its nozzles spraying water into the air (the nozzles are usually turned off, but the FBI Directors decided to turn them on for the benefit of the CNN news crew to make the Block look more "showy"). On one side of the fountain is a park bench and a trash can (this trash can is used as a drop off point for sacks of fake cash in the Block "extortion" and "kidnapping" scenarios).
2. **Honest Abe's Parking Lot:** This is where the role-players and janitorial staff park when they come to the Block. A large billboard proclaims "Honest Abe's used cars — so honest it's criminal." The vehicles of the *Day to Day Associates* temps are parked here. Bill's Bronco (already dirt-stained from off-road driving) has a gun rack, but it's empty (the FBI will say that Bill was carrying no rifles into the block). Cesspool's windows are all up and his car smells bad, but despite the smell, it is meticulously clean. An evergreen deodorant tree patch hangs from the rear-view mirror, wilted in defeat.

3. **The Corner House:** The Corner House is a three story building that resembles a town house. It is one of the tallest buildings in the Block and provides an excellent view of the Euclid Traffic Circle, Honest Abe's Parking Lot, the parking lot by the Hotel, Block Road, and Main Street.

First Level: This level is spartan; a glass door opens onto Block Road and there is a back door that opens into the alley behind the Corner House. Both doors lead into a small lobby area where there is a large wooden desk with a telephone, a closet and a set of stairs leading up. During some scenarios a "hotel clerk" sits at the desk, reading Harlequin romances.

Second Level: The "Poker Room." The stairs from the first floor lead up onto this cramped one-room level. In the room is a grungy mattress, a broken chair and a poker table with four chairs arranged around it. A box filled with playing cards and plastic chips sits on the table, and there is an old radio on a window sill. A ledge runs around the outside of this level and can be accessed by any of the windows in the southeast corner of this level. A set of narrow stairs goes upward even further.

Third Level: On this level is a real FBI office. Since this is the highest level in the Block, and there is access to the roof, it is likely an MP will be here. The window allows a view of the Euclid Traffic Circle and the surrounding side streets.

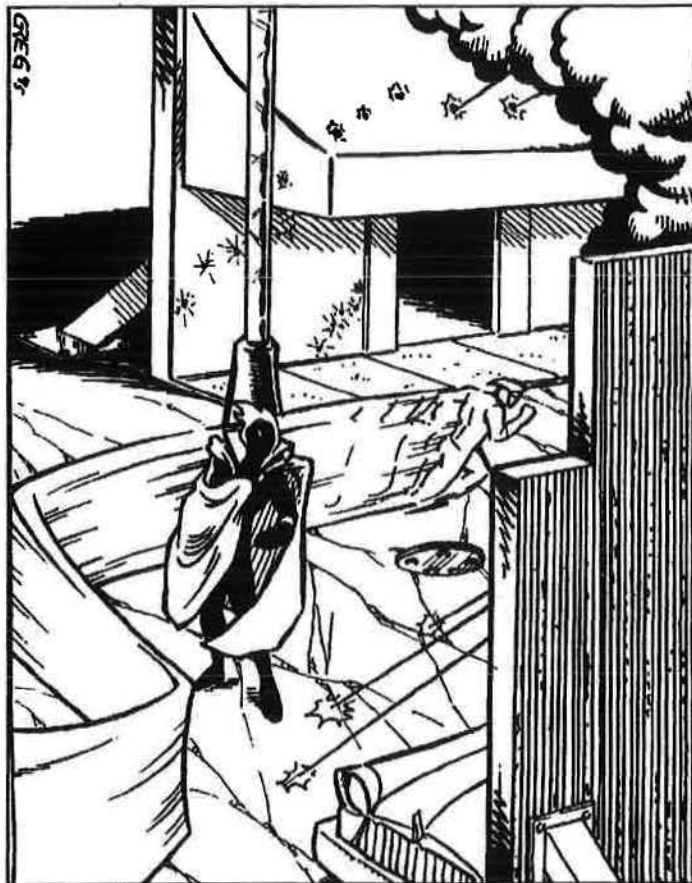
Doors: Unless the doors are destroyed, NESS can lock and unlock any of the doors in this building at will. If a character tries to force any of the doors and fails, a digitized voice will say mockingly "What's the password?"

Mechanical Sniper: On the roof of the corner house is a target dummy, laid flat on the roof in a sniping position. Next to the dummy is an assault rifle... both the dummy and the assault rifle are mounted on a swivel so that they can fire at any point in the Southeast corner of the Block. The assault rifle is usually loaded only with paint pellets, but its magazine may have been replaced with live ammo, at the GM's discretion (if using live ammo, treat the rifle as an M-16A2; see *Marines* below). The "dummy sniper" can be used as a distraction for PCs. NESS controls the Sniper's targeting and loading functions by remote.

4. **The Side Cafe:** The Cafe is an actual food shop and is usually in operation during meal times, making sandwiches and providing sodas and iced tea to any of the FBI staff, trainees or temps looking for a cheap lunch. Currently, the Cafe is empty; the cooks and cafeteria workers never made it into the Block before the Block was sealed it off. The ovens are down, and the interior dark. Chairs and tables lie outside the

Block Party





cafe for diners that want to enjoy the air and watch the action.

Barricade: Since the Block was taken, the chairs and tables in front of Cafe have been turned over and used as a makeshift barricade for any Marines or trainees on the cafe side of Block Road (DEF 2/BODY 2). Currently, the front door to the Cafe is locked, the windows have been shattered by gunfire, and any Marines or trainees firing out on Block Road or into Honest Abe's Used Car Lot can use the food counter as cover (DEF 3/BODY 3). The back door is unlocked and free of any obstructions. If Marines or trainees are pinned down in this building, NESS will try and use the mechanical sniper on top of the Corner House (3) to distract attackers.

5. Pool Hall: The front door to the pool hall is locked. This pool hall has a lobby, a main pool room and a backdoor. The main pool room holds two couches along the wall, a primitive stereo system, a few video games seized in casino raids, a pool table and rack for holding cues (three, any of which can be used as weapons). Girlie pictures and beer advertisements are taped to the wall. The backdoor is excellent for making a quick getaway.

Doors: NESS can lock and unlock any of the doors in this building at will.

Barricade: A Marine or trainee may be stationed in the lobby of the pool hall...

the large front window of the lobby provides an excellent view of Block Road and Honest Abe's Car Lot, and the space not covered by the windows can provide cover to snipers firing on characters (DEF3/BODY3).

Stereo: Once characters enter, a disco ball in the room will activate and a Bee Gees CD will begin to play in the stereo. The arcade games will hum to life, and in-between the stanzas of "Tragedy" and "Staying Alive" the arcade games will challenge the characters to mortal combat in thundering voices. Gunfire and the sound of flesh striking bone could round out the sound effects nicely.

6. Pawn Shop: This building is dingy, dark and locked. Hollowed out TV sets and stereos lie in the front window, but past the door and front shelves, the shop is nothing but a dirty husk.

Doors: NESS can lock and unlock any of the doors in this building at will.

Barricade: A Marine or trainee may be stationed by the front window of the pawn shop, which provides an excellent view of Block Road and Honest Abe's car lot. The space not covered by the windows can provide cover to snipers firing on characters (DEF3/BODY3).

7. Condominiums: These two poorly furnished condominiums are two stories high.

7a. Condominium One: The first level has a foyer, an (empty) closet and a living room with a couch and a TV that doesn't work. This first level is almost never used in scenarios; the suspects are always either sleeping on the second floor or else loading their weapons in the bathroom upstairs, waiting for the trainees to come up.

On the second level is a bathroom and a bedroom that looks out onto Block Road and Back Street. Next to the bed is a dresser and a nightstand; during most scenarios, guns are kept under the pillow or beneath the bed. If necessary, the bedroom door can be locked and the window opened so a suspect can crawl out along the ledge that runs outside the window. This room will be used by at least one MP and one trainee during the course of the adventure. The window has a perfect view of the southwest corner of the Block, and provides excellent cover.

7b. Condominium Two is dirty and poorly furnished. It can only be entered from the second level (a set of stairs leads up to the porch); there are several empty whitewashed rooms within; the only interesting feature of Condominium Two is that there is a secret door in one of the bedroom closets. For characters that make a Perception Roll, they can open the secret door by pulling on the closet hanger

Block Party



rack. A door then swings open to a small room where someone can hide. The trainees or MPs may use it to ambush characters if they are searching this level. In addition, none of the doors in Condominium Two can be locked firmly; while the chains can be drawn, all their locks are designed to fall away if the doors are kicked in.

The first level of Condominium Two is under construction. Other than the outside stairs, there is no other way to cross between levels.

Doors: NESS can lock and unlock any of the condominium doors and windows at will.

8. The Airstrip: This is an area where small planes and flying paranormals can land to deliver supplies to the town as well as provide another setting for drug smugglers and terrorist incidents involving both paranormal and normal criminals. Lying on the runway is a (non-functional) bi-plane filled with empty crates. There is plenty of cover to be had around the plane and the airstrip; trainees often have shootouts with "smugglers" along the airstrip.

Plane: Although the plane cannot fly, NESS can activate the plane's propellers by remote. It normally cannot do so if there is any moving object within five feet of the front of the plane, but Janus has overridden the safety controls so that PCs could conceivably be knocked into the propeller (4D6 HKA attack). Janus will not purposely try to knock a character into the propeller unless they look tough enough that they won't be killed by it.

9. The "Air Terminal": This small three room building has a lobby area with a front desk (for "booking" flights), two long benches, and two back rooms filled with empty crates.

Doors: NESS can lock and unlock any of the doors and windows in this building at will. The P.A. system in the terminal broadcasts static, interrupted occasionally by fake departure and arrival times.

Computers: Though it is not currently set up to do so, there is a computer in the back room of the terminal that can be used as an auxiliary command center for overseeing NESS within the Block.

10. The Drug Store: A huge window (it almost begs to be broken) looks into a poorly-stocked drugstore, with a single desk and shelves with empty boxes of drugs and medicine. When the front door is opened, it activates a brief electronic jingle, followed by a brief radio announcement ("Do you suffer from allergy and sinus symptoms?"), then static.

Doors/Counter: NESS can lock and unlock any of the doors and windows in this building at will. The front window provides an

excellent view of Main Street outside, and the drug store counter can be used as cover by snipers, as per the Cafe (4), above.

11. The Bank: Set up here is a camera, two wooden desks, a bank teller window and a bag of fake money lying in a drawer under the teller window. The bank is used to stage robberies. The bank vault is an actual large metal vault door... but behind it is nothing more than a closet space where three bags of money were kept (*Monopoly* play money). This is where the PAD division was supposed to begin their investigation for this morning's exercise, taking fingerprints (from the cardboard where Raging Bill "ripped the door off its hinges"), analyzing the smell left behind by Cesspool, and so on.

Doors: NESS can lock and unlock any of the doors in this building at will, including the bank vault door. The bank vault walls are made of reinforced concrete (DEF 8/BODY 5), and the vault door can be closed and locked on any characters who walk into the bank vault area, trapping them (characters will not suffocate, since there are vents inside the vault). The door is DEF 8/BODY 8.

If the opportunity arises, Janus will ask a trainee to play possum in the bank vault, hopefully convincing enough so that he causes a PC to step inside the vault, then have the vault door slam close behind the character. If this trap is successful, Janus will ask Cesspool to gas the vault through the vents and knock the PC (and the trainee) unconscious.

12. Hotel: The Hotel in the Block is a combination semi-hotel and FBI office space.

a. Hotel Lobby: There is a main desk, a few side chairs and some pamphlets. There are some plastic plants scattered about for ambiance.

b-c. Hotel Rooms: Each room has a bed, and nothing else. There are mirrors in the bathroom. Cesspool and Bill were supposed to be hanging out in one of these rooms; Cesspool's stench still lingers in room c., and the latest John Griscam book, *First Among Equals* (detailing a lawyer caught between two criminal paranormals), lies on the nightstand. Cesspool is unlikely to be in this room when the PCs storm the Block.

d-g. Offices: This is a series of offices held by Block officials.

13. The Globe Theater: Portrayed on the placard outside the theater is an advertisement for the *Enemies for Hire* movie. Inside, there is a small lobby with an (empty) candy counter. The four doors leading out of the lobby leads to a set of bathrooms and three office spaces for the FBI; the three offices are fully furnished (assume standard office furnishings). A stairwell near

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the bathrooms leads down into the basement of the Theater.

Computers: Though they are not currently set up to do so, any of the computers in the three offices in the Globe can be used as transfer stations for overseeing NESS within the Block.

14. **Parking Lot 2:** This gravel parking lot held most of the computer-controlled vehicles that were to be used in the scenarios and also served as parking spaces for all the temps and workers that came to the Block.

Vehicles: Spare remote control vehicles will be stored in the parking lot here. Janus may have them sit here quietly until a PC enters the area, then have all the vehicles chase the character around the lot and through the Block, honking their horns and gunning their engines (see remote control vehicles, above). The GM should feel free to run a demolition derby if they wish.

15. **The Garage:** Remote Control Vehicles are stored here. The Garage is huge, with a number of tools and parts lying in racks along the walls. Characters can find almost any tool that would be expected to be in a standard car repair shop, including locked cabinets containing sensitive computer equipment for calibrating and fixing the vehicles' on-board computers. The Garage has a basement level that leads into the underground section of the Block.

Doors: NESS can lock and unlock any of the doors and windows in this building at will.

Garage Equipment: Janus may order NESS to use automated arc welders, drills, hydraulic lifts and other car repair equipment on the PCs to prevent them from entering the basement level. These items generally do either 4 to 8D6 HA damage or (in desperate circumstances) 1 to 3D6 HKA. Janus will not use Killing Attacks on characters unless it looks like they can take it (though he will threaten characters with the equipment if they insist on entering the garage).

Override Keys: All the keys for the remote control vehicles on the Block are stored in a black cabinet in the garage. If these keys are inserted into the proper ignition of the remote control vehicle, the vehicle will revert to manual control and will no longer accept commands from the NESS central computer.

Computers: As per the computers in the Air Terminal and the Globe above, one of the diagnostic computers in the garage can be used as a command transfer terminal.

Vehicles: Remote control vehicles in a state of disrepair are stored here. Janus may have them ambush player characters who enter the garage, though the vehicles will have 1-2 points less BODY and DEF than normal and

move at only half their normal movement rate.

16. **Barn:** The barn is flimsy and a battle between bricks in this building could send it toppling down easily (reduce the BODY and DEF of the interior and exterior walls by 1 each). In addition to the ground floor with its makeshift stalls, there is a loft at the top of the barn where a sniper could take up a post. Various empty crates are scattered about, waiting patiently to be used as weapons.

Doors: NESS can lock and unlock any of the doors and windows in this building at will. The front door of the barn can swing open via remote.

Vehicles: A Black Maria is parked in the barn. It may run down any bricks entering the Barn through the main doors (treat it as a standard automobile as per the *Champions Rulebook*).

17. **Helicopter Landing Pad:** This landing pad is usually used for when real helicopters land at the Block, though it is occasionally used for training scenarios, too. If the GM wishes, the NESS computer may have a remote-control helicopter stored at the Block to provide air support for the ground troops stationed in the facility. If so, some Marines may have outfitted it with weapons, or may ride shotgun in it, doing strafing runs on the PCs with their M-16s or grenades.
18. **The Site under Construction:** This area is a wooden skeleton with planks and boards spanning its length like a discarded game of *Jenga*. There are plenty of spaces to fight in and around the wooden skeleton. The BODY and DEF of most of the structure and its supports are 1/1. Timbers can be ripped from the structure and used as clubs.
19. **Trailer Park:** A small selection of six trailers set up so that they resemble a small trailer park. One main road leads into the park, then branches off into small gravel driveways leading to each trailer.

a. Trailer One: Relatively well-furnished and capable of being locked, this trailer is larger than any other trailer in the lot (it is two trailers connected together). While it is comfortable, the furnishing really don't match. The bathrooms (three of them) work, however, and the kitchen is clean. There are numerous places to hide in this trailer and Marines can take up sniper positions from anywhere within the trailer.

b. Trailer Two: This trailer is actually used as "guest quarters" for visiting officials. There is no one there now, but this trailer is well-furnished and clean. It is in a much better condition than any other building in the Block. There is a small garden and a fence outside.



c. Trailer Three: Dingy, dirty and filled with dead flies, peeling linoleum and windows that won't open. It has a great deal of moldy furniture, several plush chairs, two sofas, coffee tables and a foul kitchen. There is a clothes rack outside with some foul-looking sheets swinging in the breeze.

d-f. Trailers Four through Six: These trailers are for administration; Trailer f. holds all the inventory records of everything that comes into the warehouse (20).

20. Warehouse: This area is used for drug dealing and arresting drug lords and their henchmen. There are bathrooms, a secretary's lobby, and an office in the back that is held by the "drug lord" and his henchman. The lobby holds a secretary's desk (with a phone), two waiting chairs and a coatrack. The lord's office holds a huge desk, a personal bathroom, and a couch for his henchmen to be lounging on when the trainees arrive. A forklift and small cars are sometimes parked in the warehouse for the Block Maintenance personnel to use.

21. NESS Computer System Main Area: This two-story building is located behind the hotel lobby. Vending machines are just outside the door.

A. Main Control Room: The windows to this area are tinted...any character who forces their way into this area by smashing through a window or kicking down the door will subject themselves to one of Cesspool's gas pockets which fills the room (use "Recking Stench" attack on Cesspool's character sheet).

B. Photography Section and Fingerprint Area: This area is used for taking mug shots of new recruits and villains, this area is set up to create "realistic criminal files" for the trainees to use. There is a camera here, some lights for shadows and a small placard saying "Boothe, Wilkes," and reading his serial number. There is also a Xerox machine here, but it needs paper.

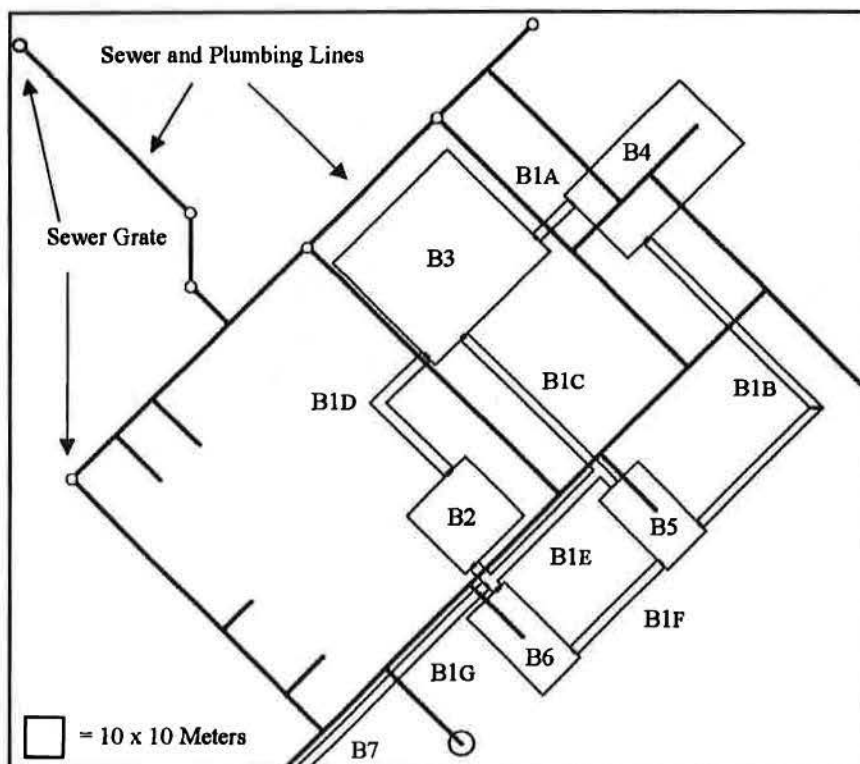
C. The Briefing Room: This area has six long tables arranged like pews in front of a podium and a screen, blackboard and pull-down maps on the front wall.

Note: 21d and 21e are located on the first floor of the Central Command Building, but they are not shown on the map. There is a locked stairwell that leads from the first floor into the basement of the Block.

D. Cells: On the first floor of this building is a simulated "jail" that has one large fenced in room ("the lockup"). The metal grates that make up the walls of the lockup is DEF 6/ BODY 6. Captured characters may be incarcerated here until Janus comes to enslave them.

E. The Armory: This area used to be the Block arsenal; it has been broken into and all of the weapons taken.

22. Empty Buildings: The GM may wish to leave these buildings empty or make more simulated locations for the PCs to romp around in. The pair of empty buildings on the east side of the Block hold a locked door that leads into the basement of the Block.



Permission granted to photocopy for personal use.

Block Party



The Bowels Of The Block

The Block basement poses a problem because it is difficult to maneuver in the narrow, cramped corridors. Every square foot of the basement is covered by a security camera, and NESS can control every door on this level (treat each door on this level as a security door with a DEF 6/BODY 6). When possible, Janus will have NESS trap PCs in corridors, then have Cesspool gas the area through the ventilation system or have one of the Marines toss a grenade into the enclosed area. Sprinklers and fire alarms are scattered throughout the basement area.

- B1, A-G. Access Corridors: Some of these corridors may already be sealed off and filled with one of Cesspool's stench clouds (which will billow out as soon as the PCs open the door).
- B2. Hotel/Command Center Basement: There are employee lockers here, along with a few storerooms. Security doors lead to access corridors that link other rooms on the basement level.
- B3. Garage Basement: PCs can take the stairs down to this level or ride one of the hydraulic lifts down to this level.
- B4. Warehouse Basement: Like the "empty basement" at 6, below, this area is primarily used for storage.
- B5. Globe Theater Basement: This is where Janus has transferred the NESS command functions. A computer terminal is set into the wall here, and several monitors keep tabs on what is transpiring within the Block.
- B6. Empty Basement: This area is located beneath the abandoned buildings (22) on the East side of the Block. It is used primarily for storage and contains a number of timbers, boards, excess furniture and tools.
- B7. Service Corridor: This is the entrance that the Special Ops team will use to enter the Block while the PCs are creating the "diversion" above; there are no security cameras along this corridor. Two marines and three FBI agents are stationed at the exit of this corridor (the corridor terminates several hundred yards to the southeast, emerging next to a jogging trail). If necessary, Janus will use this as an escape route; if he gets this far, he will play "wolf in sheep's clothing" with one of the bodies of the Marines or the trainees (or use one of the guards at the exit of the corridor) to escape the training facility.

And In This Corner...

The following lists the statistics of the troops in the Block, along with locations where they will be holed up once the characters arrive on the Block.

The following set-up is only a suggestion...the GM should tailor the location of Marines, trainees and paranormals to present the best settings for combat and cinematic violence in the Block.

Trainees

Statistics: Use the statistics for Skilled Normals in the *Hero System Rulebook*, p.134, plus add the following: WF: Small Arms, KS: Criminal Law and Procedure 8-, KS: Criminal Paranormals in the U.S. 8-, PS: Federal Agent 8-, Tactics 8-.

Equipment: The FBI trainees are equipped with riot vests, gas masks and stun weapons to bring down the paranormal criminals.

Riot Vests: Medium Hard Kevlar (6 PD/6 ED), OIF, Activation 14-, No effect vs. Knives or Falling Damage (-1/2).

Gas Masks: Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing, OIF.

Stun Pistols: 4D6 Energy Blast, NND (rED protects, +1), 4 clips of 8 charges, OAF

10+ Disadvantages: Watched by the FBI 8-

Notes: Trainees should be popping out at the characters left and right, and Janus will use them

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frequently as punching bags for the heroes. These trainees are right out of Grimhaus' class, and while they are heavily armed and armored, they are not experienced adversaries. They are scattered throughout the Block and have been ordered by the Bride to stop the characters, whatever the cost. Trainees will be used as cannon fodder and to flush the characters out of hiding.

The stun pistols the trainees are carrying are similar to a taser, except that they fire projectiles that deliver a mild electrical charge to the target, stunning them or knocking them unconscious. The pistol clips are reusable... once expended, they are placed inside a battery charger for a few hours until their charge is restored. Though the stun pistols have been extensively tested and are relatively safe, it is standard procedure to make sure that everyone on the Block is checked for any heart or neurological conditions that might cause a hit with a stun pistol to have unforeseen consequences.

Marines/Spec-Ops Team

Statistics: Use the statistics for Competent Normals in the *Hero System Rulebook*, p.134.

Skills: WF: Small Arms, Knives, KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-, KS: Marine Corps History & Customs 11-, PS: Marine 11-, +1 Combat Level with weapon of choice.

Equipment:

Armor: Medium Hard Kevlar (6 PD/6 ED), OIF, Activation 14-, No effect vs. Knives or Falling Damage (-1/2).

Helmet: Armor (5 PD/5 ED), OIF, Only Protects Locations 3-5 (-1 1/2), plus 5 points of Sight Flash Defense, OIF.

Tear Gas Grenades: Flash 3D6, Sight Group, NND (LS: Self-Contained Breathing Protects, +1), Area Effect: 4" Radius, 4 Charges lasting 1 Turn each, Range Based on STR (-1/4).

M-16A2s: RKA 2d6-1, +2 OCV, +1 Range Modifier, Autofire (5 Shots), 2 Clips of 30 Charges, OAF. (Thanks to CPRPatriot for the M-16 info)

Handgun: RKA 2D6, OAF, 4 Clips of 8 Charges each.

Fragmentation Grenades: RKA 2D6+1, Explosion, OAF, 1 Charge.

Shockbaton: HA +2D6, OAF, Linked to NND, plus 3D6 EB NND (Defense is resistant ED), No Range, 12 Charges.

Pacifiers: Drain 4D6 (STUN) plus Drain 1D6 (REC), 1 Continuing Charge (24 Hours), OAF, Extra Time: 1 Minute.

Pacifiers are flexible plastic bulbs filled with a powerful tranquilizer; the pacifiers are inserted into the mouth of a subject and the plunger in their tip pressed to activate them. When the plunger is depressed, the tranquilizer floods the subject's mouth, triggering a numbing sensation, localized loss of muscle control (the subject clamps down on the pacifier and cannot spit it out), and an involuntary sucking motion from the subject. The tranquilizer is then absorbed through the tongue and into the body, quickly rendering the subject unconscious and immobile (except for the continued suckling on the pacifier). The pacifier can be disabled by closing the subject's nose and prying out the plastic bulb when the subject tries to breath through their mouth... when this is followed by consuming a strong acid or base beverage (i.e., orange juice or milk), the character's will awake, a little nauseous but otherwise fine.

25+ Disadvantages:

Watched by Marine Corps 8-

Notes: There should be two Marines for every hero that enters the Block; the GM should adjust this number according to the strengths or weaknesses of the characters. The Marines, eager to please the Bride, have set up a defensive perimeter around the edge of the compound, taken cover, and have their weapons trained on the fence. Once they spot heroes going over it, they will wait until the heroes open themselves to as many guns as possible, then fire warning shots, they shout out that if the characters approach, the hostages will be harmed.

The stats above should also be used for the Special Ops team that the FBI will send into the Block via the underground service entrance (see Problems, above). The GM should decide how many soldiers are in the USMC Special Ops team and use them as reinforcements within the Block if the PCs are bulldozing through the other agents.

Block Workers

Powers and Skills: Use the statistics for Normal Humans, *Hero System Rulebook*, p.133. The workers will have an appropriate Professional Skill (i.e., Computer Programmer, Janitor, and so on).

0+ Disadvantages: None worth mentioning.

Notes: The "Block Workers" include the three members of the maintenance crew, one FBI director, and the two computer operators who oversee the operation of the Block. All have been brainwashed to accept orders from the Bride and have eagerly put their extensive knowledge of the Block at her disposal. The FBI Director is armed with a .45 Automatic that he will use to defend the Bride if need be.

Block Party



Gentlemen, Take Your Places

Trainees

The trainees can be placed at the following positions. Whenever possible, they will use cover to their advantage. It is assumed that they have all held their action until they see a target; if they are in a "sniping position," they have Set and Braced as well.

Trainees:	Location:
1 and 2	Sniping Position in Trailer (19A)
3 and 4	Sniping Position in top loft of the Barn (16)
5 and 6	Sniping Position in 2nd Floor of Condo One (7A)
7 and 8	Sniping Position behind Airport Terminal Counter (9)
9 and 10	Sniping Position in empty buildings on East Side (22)
11 and 12	Ambush Position in Command Center 1st Floor (21D and E)

Marines

The Marines can be placed at the following positions. Whenever possible, they will use cover and concealment to their advantage. It is assumed that they have all held their action until they see a target; if they are in a "sniping position," they have Set and Braced as well.

Marines:	Location:
1 and 2	Protecting the Bride (Globe Theater Basement, B5)
3 and 4	Hotel (12)
5 and 6	Sniping Position, Third Floor of Corner House (3)
7 and 8	Sniping Position, Cafe (4)
9 and 10	Sniping Position, Warehouse back room (20)
11 and 12	Sniping Position, Trailer (19F)

USMC Special Operations

The USMC Special Ops team (which enters the Block through the Service Corridor) can be placed anywhere in the Block as reinforcements once the attack begins.

Work Crew/Block Staff

The staff can be placed at the following locations.

Personnel	Location
<i>Maintenance</i>	
1 and 2	Protecting the Bride (Globe Theater Basement, B5)
3	Escorting Cesspool through the Basement (B1, A-G)
<i>FBI Director</i>	Protecting the Bride (Globe Theater Basement, B5)
<i>Computer Programmer</i>	
1 and 2	Globe Theater Basement (B5)

Cesspool

Lester, under orders from the Bride, has been busy in the past two hours. The Bride has ordered him via radio to set up "gas pockets" in selected places in the Block and in certain rooms beneath the Block to help prevent anyone from storming these areas. During the battle, Cesspool, guided by one of the Block maintenance staff, will be dispatched through the sewer system beneath heroes and fire a gas cloud upwards through grates and manhole covers to gas them into unconsciousness. Janus really does not care what happens to Cesspool — his top priorities are the Bride and Raging Bill — as a result, Cesspool will probably be the first one to be defeated by the characters.

Note that if the PCs are wearing obvious foci that are protecting them from Cesspool, Janus will order his forces to target the Foci and either take it away or destroy it. If the Life Support is removed, Janus will then order Cesspool to gas the PCs as quickly as possible.

Cesspool	Sewers beneath NESS Center (B1, A-G)
Gas Clouds	B1, Corridors D, C and F. Command Ctr. Control Rm (21A) Command Center Stairwell and Basement (B2 and 21)

Raging Bill

Bill is Janus' needed ally. (Without Bill, Janus never would have been able to keep the Marines and Cesspool busy while converting them with the Bride's power.) Bill's quick healing and resistance to damage makes him the perfect "buffer" for Janus when he needs breathing room or time to think up a new plan. It is likely that Bill will attack the characters several times during the course of the heroes' assault. If the Marines and the trainees are soundly defeated, Janus will order

Block Party



Bill to fall back to his position to protect the Bride's body.

Raging Bill Pool Hall (5)

The Bride (Janus)

The Bride starts in the auxiliary command center beneath the Globe Theater. She will keep a pair of Marines and at least one computer technician with her at all times. They will all fight to the death to protect her. Note that if the GM wishes to create additional complications, the Bride can add as many of the Special Ops team (the team the FBI secretly sent into the Block while the PCs were creating the "diversion") to her retinue as necessary.

Though managing a number of aroused males is annoying, Janus keeps a lot of people around him for a simple reason... security. The more people Janus surrounds himself with, the easier it is for him to jump ship when he is threatened or attacked.

The Bride Globe Theater Basement (B5)

The News Crew

The CNN reporter, his two cameramen and his Key Grip have been instructed to film as much FBI and hero humiliation on the Block... the PCs may encounter them in the strangest places, calmly filming as the heroes are punched, kicked, shot, burned, and so on. The reporters may even have the nerve to ask for "retakes" at various stages of the battle.

CNN Crew Globe Theater Basement (B5)

LOOSE ENDS

The Getaway

If Janus's plan is in danger of being blown, he "jumps ship" into the nearest (innocent) body and walks calmly away from the battle scene (he may use the Service Corridor described in the basement level of the Block). He will do nothing to attract attention; if his host body is stopped and questioned, he jumps to another body, and so on until he has escaped from the Block. If the characters do not realize what has happened, he has a good chance to escape.

It is important to note that while Janus realizes the Bride's body is extremely powerful, he has no



intention of staying in it. It is overweight, clumsy, has poor vision, and most of all, is a woman (Janus prefers residing in men's bodies). His dissatisfaction with the Bride comes more from his own need for convenience rather than any logic... if he stayed in the Bride's body a little longer and used her powers properly, he could set himself up for life, even make back what he lost when the FBI arrested his host body, yet he has no interest in doing so.

The Ugly Truth

As mentioned in the timeline at the beginning of this adventure, Janus left the Bride handcuffed back at her apartment, trapped in a male body that Janus had enslaved. When Janus left for the morning, however, he did not renew his pheromonal control on the Bride's male body. If the GM wishes, at some point during the adventure Wanda will regain her senses and squirm out of the cuffs. Once freed, she will call the police.

When this occurs should depend on the pacing of the adventure... it should take place at some point after the PCs have all the clues necessary to deduce what has happened in the Block. Wanda's escape should also be a means to explain events that have happened in the timeline that the PC's would have difficulty piecing together.

Block Party



In Conclusion

There are several possible endings to Block Party:

The characters are defeated, the FBI is humiliated: If this occurs, Janus's ego swells to biblical proportions. He orders the characters confined to the jail in the Block as additional hostages; if they recover quickly, they may be able to escape.

The FBI will send in another paranormal group (possibly rivals or enemies of the PCs, adding insult to injury), but this group will fail to stop Janus. (If the GM wishes, Janus may take this paranormal team with him once he leaves, keeping them around as a "puppet team" for his amusement.) If the characters fail to escape from their cells or are defeated again if they free themselves from their cells, Janus escapes the Block easily and sends his calling card to the FBI as soon as he is out of the country. He may be back to haunt the characters in a new body sometime in the future (see the *Adventure Seeds* in the Appendix).

The characters defeat Janus, but Janus escapes: Janus has won a partial victory. He has caused enough trouble for the FBI to settle his conscience... for the time being. It will take the FBI several days to piece together exactly what happened (FBI Technicians will run tests on NESS, the Bride will be arrested, and so on), and by that time, Janus will have made it out of the country in his new body. He will not forget the characters. If the *Day to Day Associates* team was badly beaten by the characters, they may bear a grudge.

The characters capture Janus: The characters should be rewarded for a job well done. The FBI will thank the characters, and the hostages will be grateful for their rescue. The FBI will ask the characters to keep silent (as much as possible) about the incident. The PCs will have gained friends in the FBI, a friendship they may use in the future should they need help in tracking down clues or suspects or becoming involved in more adventures that involve the FBI.

Damage In The Block

The Block doesn't pay for itself. If NESS has been crippled, the FBI will be angry (but what else were the heroes supposed to do?). If the PCs work for *Day to Day Associates*, then the organization will pay the costs... this time. The organization will be thankful enough that no one was hurt or killed



(hopefully). If not, the FBI will be irritated and send the characters on their way.

If they damage the Block too much, the FBI may shanghai the PCs into performing services to recompensate for the damages. The GM can use this as an adventure seed in the future ("We need your assistance in subduing Grond in the Nevada desert...").

Options

This adventure is intended for characters of any power level; as long as Janus can possess some of the characters, this should even the odds no matter what power level the characters are. If this is not the case, the GM should either consider changing Janus's powers to make him more effective (this is not recommended) or add more adversaries (use the Devil and Absence described in the appendix). If Janus is played intelligently, the *Day to Day Associates* team is not really needed; Janus can challenge all the heroes just by shifting minds with them.

If the characters are outmatched, reduce the number of enemy paranormals, or include NPC heroes as a last resort (other *Day to Day Associates* members or heroes from other books), leaving just the PAD Agents and the MPs. It is also likely that Cesspool was never affected by the Bride's power, and he may have been biding his time in the Block until he could figure out a way to overthrow the Bride's pheromonal tyranny without being riddled with bullets.



APPENDIX ONE

More Temps

This section describes two other paranormal temps from *Day to Day Associates* who are mentioned in *Block Party*...they can be used as reinforcements if the PCs are especially tough. The two other paranormal temps are Shelley "the Devil" Cunningham and Abner "Absence" Sense:

The Devil

Shelley "the Devil" Cunningham is a tiny young woman with a thin body and sharp features. She is at the Block for the summer and is almost ready to graduate from an all woman's college in New England. She wants to be a veterinarian and has no interest in being a superhero; work at the Block just pays the bills. Shelley's paranormal power is the following: when she "warms up" with aerobic activity for five minutes, her body's metabolism accelerates, giving her superspeed and a "shock touch" that stuns people she comes into contact with (the attack does no physical damage to the target). She can keep her metabolic rate at this level for up to an hour (and she must be constantly exercising during this time; thus, she usually wears a jogging outfit to work and uses a lot of deodorant) before she must rest. Too much caffeine can "set her off" prematurely, and she has orders from her doctor not to take any stimulants. Even when not charged up, however, Shelley is still somewhat hyperactive and talks a lot.

For Shelley's statistics, use the Competent Normal template on p.134 of the *Hero System Rulebook*. Her EB is a 5D6 blast, NND (Full Body Covering or Force Field Protects, +1), and when "charged," her statistics are DEX 24, SPD 6, REC 20, END 60, and STUN 50. Her Running increases to 12" per Phase.

Absence

Abner is an exoteleporter, an elderly black man who can displace objects up to a kilometer from their previous position, leaving an outline of the object in the air a few seconds after their "absence." His Teleportation ability, a form of spatial distortion, has no harmful side effects. Abner is instructed to use his power to surprise trainees by teleporting added reinforcements to a crime scene or suddenly teleporting weapons out of trainees hands. "Absence" is a phrase coined by the FBI at the Block — it refers both to Abner's power and his occasional tardiness and tendency to nod off when waiting for a training exercise to start. He has been known to accidentally teleport small items away from himself (like his car keys, wallet, and occasionally his glasses).

For Abner's statistics, use the Senior Citizen template on p.133 of the *Hero System Rulebook*. His Teleport is Usable Against Others, Ranged and can displace objects up to a kilometer from their original location. On the Block, he usually teleports objects and agents to cells beneath the Block. When possible, he exoteleports small objects only a short distance...too much mass too far tires him out quickly.

If he used in *Block Party*, the most dangerous attack Abner can use will be to teleport Foci from characters into the pawn shop within the Block...Janus will have Abner specifically teleport any gas masks or other Life Support apparatus the characters are carrying, leaving the characters defenseless against the Bride and Cesspool.

Temp Adventure Seeds

If the GM wants to continue to use any of the characters described in this adventure in the future, some adventure seeds are provided:

Raging Bill

Bill is in danger of getting kicked out of *Day to Day Associates* for negligence and breaking contract...he may return to being a villain (see his Background) in the near future, just for spite. He is not evil, he just lacks discipline and is quick to anger.

The Bride

Wanda's not a villain, but she's not an angel, either. If she finds one of the characters that "saved" her particularly appealing, she will hunt down the character and let her powers go to work. This may disrupt the character's social life (especially married characters).

Cesspool

Cesspool will continue to work in the *Day to Day Associates* Law Enforcement Division, but he is looking to find a less violent job; he hates being a "public protector." After the incident in the Block, he may pack it up and go into another line of work.

Day to Day Associates

After this fiasco, *Day to Day Associates* will need to hire new members as a PAD testing team; they may approach the characters and ask them to hire on as temporary replacements (temp temps?). The Block can serve as a minor adventure locale for PCs as well as giving them extra training and abilities.

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Janus

Janus is designed as an adversary for a group of heroes; through intelligent use of his Switch Spirit power, Janus can do tremendous damage to a group of heroes in minutes. He can turn allies against each other, and possess other villains and heroes to go after his enemies. He also has an arrogant streak, and characters that foil him in the Block (or inconvenience him too much) will become his next targets.

Janus will return to attack the characters again and again in new bodies (paranormals, loved ones, and so on). His intention will be to humiliate, not to hurt...and blackmail is not out of the question.

If Janus escapes, he may leave some PCs in different bodies. This could be the basis of an adventure where the characters are forced to track down Janus (or else go to a psychic organization) to get themselves back in the right bodies. The GM should consider the possibilities of role-playing an adventure (both humorous and dramatic) where the characters are all in different bodies, and they have to deal with their families, their jobs and try to become accustomed to their new powers (or lack of them). The GM should allow the characters to return to their rightful bodies somehow. For a little fun, the GM can hint that unless the characters are returned to their original bodies in a certain time limit, they will be stuck in their new bodies forever.

If Janus takes one of the PC's bodies when he escapes, he could create all sorts of trouble (streaking, breaking into banks, lecture elementary school students on the virtues of crime, and so on).

RAGING BILL

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
50	STR	40	19-	25 tons; 10D6
27	DEX	51	14-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
25	CON	30	14-	
25	BODY		30	14-
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
15	PRE	5	12-	3D6 PRE Attack
14	COM	2	12-	
15	PD	5		
15	ED	10		
6	SPD	23		Phases: 2,4,6,8,10,12
15	REC	0		
50	END	0		
65	STUN	2		

Total Characteristics Cost: 204

Movement: Running: 12"
Swimming: 8"

Powers and Skills

Brawling:

Martial Arts: Down and Dirty Infighting (UMA, p. 28) (40)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Taking it on the Chin	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, +10 STR
Eye Gouge	-1	-1	2D6 Sight Group Flash
Hoist n' Heave (Grab & Throw)	-2	-2	Grab Two Limbs, +20 STR to Throw
Kidney Blow	-2	+0	1/2D6 HKA
Knee to Groin	-1	+1	3D6 NND (1)
Backhand	+0	+2	12D6 Strike
Roundhouse	-2	+1	14D6 Strike
Tackle	+0	-1	STR+v/5 Strike; Bill Falls, Target Falls
Throw	+0	+1	STR+v/5; Target Falls

(1) Rigid, solid armor in Vitals and Lack of Weakness protects.

Use Knife and Clubs with Art (2)

Enhanced Physique: (15)

Damage Resistance 15 PD/15 ED (60)

Damage Reduction 50%, Physical and Energy, Resistant, Costs END [6] (15)

Running +6" (12" Total) [1/5"] (12)

Superleap +6" (16" Forw, 11" Up) [1/5"] (6)

Swimming +6" (8" Total) [1/5"] (6)

Life Support: Decreased Need for Sleep and Food (2)



Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing,
Costs END (-1/2), Must have taken a deep
breath first (i.e., he can not use it if surprised
by a gas attack, -1/2) (10)

Natural Physique (3)

Ambidexterity (3)

Double Jointed (3)

"Raging Bill" (Characteristic Transfer) [5] (5)

+5 STR, only when Enraged (-1/4), Loses 5
INT while "Raging" (-1), x5 END Cost [5] (5)

Combat Training:

+2 Range Skill Levels (Natural Marksman) (6)

CS: +2 with All Combat (16)

WF: Staff (Pool Cue) and Thrown Knives (2)

Fast Draw 15- (5)

Background Skills:

Acrobatics 14- (3)

Breakfall 14- (3)

Climbing 14- (3)

Combat Driving 14- (3)

Concealment 11- (3)

Mechanics 8- (1)

Riding 8- (1)

Seduction 8- (1)

Shadowing 11- (3)

Stealth 14- (3)

Survival 11- (3)

Tracking 11- (3)

Weaponsmith (Slugthrowers), 8- (1)

AK: Hazzard, Kentucky 11- (2)

KS: Football 11- (2)

KS: Guns, Guns, Guns 11- (2)

TF: Small Ground Vehicles, Large Ground
Vehicles, Boats (3)

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 233

Total Character Cost: 437

100+ Disadvantages:

Distinctive Features:

A 5 o'clock shadow as impervious to razors as
his body is to conventional firearms (Easily
Concealable, Noticed) (5)

Enraged if takes over half STUN (Common, 11-
/11-) (10)

Monitored by the Confederate (As Pow), 8- (5)

Physical Limitation:

-2 from Hearing PER Roll (the Confederate
flattened him with a sonic blast) (5)

Psychological Limitation:

Alcoholic (Com, Mod) (10)

Homophobic (Uncom, Mod) (5)

Impulsive and Belligerent (Com, Str) (15)

Secret ID: "Blacksnake Bill" (15)

Experience (267)

Total Disadvantage Points: 337



Background: Excerpt from *Flying High: Tales of The Confederate* — "...now it wouldn't be no stretch of the truth to say Baker's temper was more famous than he was. Hell, Bill was a great guy to pal around with, but there were some things one just didn't say to him. There was that one night back in July, I tell ya, when Bradford, the mine safety inspector, and some of his crew had a little too much in the bar and went off and started doing some speculating on who Bill's father might be. Bill turned this nasty shade of red, and I do mean a spit short of blood red, then he just went crazy. Now, I seen dogs fight, and what Bill did to Bradford and his boys was something a lot worse than a dogs tearing into each other. Bill damn near leveled the establishment with their bodies, he was tossin' em around like they was nothing but sacks of feed, sending several of Bradford's men (and eventually Bradford himself) through the front window. It took all of us to convince Bill that he didn't have to go out there and teach Bradford anymore — we all sat Bill down, and we told him he was right and all that, Bradford had been ribbing him a bit too hard an' all, and Bill hadn't done nothing. We were still sayin' it when the ambulances came to take Bradford and his crew away.

"It was a scorcher in late August when the Confederate rode into town; now, you got to understand, Bill's famous and all, but the Confederate is, well, the Confederate. Ever since he fought the Dixie Queen and her terrorists in

Block Party



Atlanta, and then whipped that villain Blacksnake in Montgomery, there's no doubt that the Confederate is a Southern hero, and one of the most gentlemanly men I've ever known. He looks smaller in person, and he sure as hell don't look like he can pack the punch he can with his powers and all, but the whole South knows him. So when the Bradfords (no doubt still sore from the whippin' they took from Bill), start going on about what a real hero the Confederate is; now, Bill, with his ol' fiery temper, wasn't gonna let that slide, nosiree. He'd already had a few beers boiling in his blood, Bill announced, loudly let me tell you, to give the 'lil' fairy a whippin'.' Now, let me set the record straight...the Confederate had no idea what the Bradfords had stirred up. Some of us were trying to calm Bill down, trying to get him to sit down and drink, but Bill threw off ol' Lucas who made the mistake of trying to grab his arm, and none of us thought about trying to argue with him after we saw Lucas fly like a bird. Bill said he was better than any pansy who was desecratin' the true flag just by wearing it. We all watched, real apprehensive, as Bill swaggered out to the parking lot, a lil' unsteady from the juice. The Confederate wasn't even facing the door to the place, he was using a payphone, talking to someone. So, anyway, Bill got within a few feet of the Confederate and just stood there, waiting for him to do something...the Confederate finally hung up the phone (must have been somethin' pretty damn important being' talked about), then the Confederate turns around and looks up at Bill, squinting, like he's trying to place him from somewhere. Half the guys in the bar winced when the Confederate turned to face Bill — the little fella didn't even make it up to Bill's shoulder. Ol' Bradford behind us was taking bets, and it wasn't looking good for the Confederate.

"The Confederate gave a friendly smile, and like some kinda shop owner talking to a customer, asked if there was anything he could do for Bill.

"Bill touched him. I mean, it looked like Bill was gonna shove him or what, but either Bill was drunk or the Confederate just moved casually, and Bill grazed his shoulder. Well, that smile ran off the Confederate's face like water off a duck's back, and he just looked at Bill.

"You looking to pick a fight, friend?' he asked, real slow-like. Bill said something unpleasant, somethin' that ain't fit to be printed, and the Confederate opened his mouth and did his 'Rebel Yell,' letting out the most godawful noise I ever heard...it was like a bellowing, nails being scratched across a blackboard, 'cept a thousand times worse. The rest of the boys were sitting there covering their ears, and Bill was on the ground, doin' the same, except he was in a helluva a lot

more pain. Then the Confederate (this wasn't pretty) proceeded to teach Bill a few lessons in Southern behavior...and I do mean teach. We all took off outta earshot as the Confederate was hollering, and no offense to the young 'un, but Bill was throwing punches wild, he wan't covering his back, and the Confederate was just dancing around him.

"Bill was practically dead and deaf when the Confederate blasted him into unconsciousness. We were all kinda surprised, seeing Bill laying there with his arm twisted and his nose skewed from where the Confederate had broken it. The Confederate looked a little sad, just sorta tipped his hat gentleman like then called an ambulance. Before he left, he told us to take care of Bill and make sure he stayed outta trouble.

The Truth: The account above is not the whole story; though the part Bill's drunkenness played in the affair can not be discounted, the real reason Bill attacked the Confederate was revenge. The "Blacksnake" the Confederate fought in Montgomery (mentioned briefly in the account above) was none other than Bill himself, and the Confederate had tracked him down to Hazzard after their battle in Alabama.

After their fight outside the bar, Bill woke up in jail, his wounds all patched up and with a terrible hangover. The next day, the Confederate came to see Bill in his cell and offered him a choice...go legit or go to prison. The Confederate told him that he could get Bill a decent job up north in Washington in a temp agency for paranormals as long as he never resumed his Blacksnake identity. Bill reluctantly (and resentfully) agreed.

Since coming to *Day to Day Associates*, Bill has done a passable job, mostly being hired for moving furniture, construction work and setting up for concerts in Washington. He complains about it constantly, but for the most part, it's easy labor and he enjoys the paycheck. The Confederate checks up on him ever once in a while to see how he's doing, which Bill resents...he secretly looks forward for a rematch with the southern hero.

Bill is the only Baker ever to have manifested paranormal powers.

Personality/Motivation: Bill's body is near invulnerable, but his ego is not. Bill has a lot of anger stemming from his humiliation by the Confederate, and he has never been able to forget the ease with which the southern hero beat him (both in Montgomery and in Hazzard in front of his friends, no less). Despite his outward behavior around others and his tendency to rant and rave when "talking" with his friends, he's strangely quiet when first meeting people.



Bill is driven mostly by emotion, and rarely thinks much beyond the moment. He has a bad tendency to complain about just everything, and he does so when he is around people who can't do a thing to help him, which tends to create a certain social awkwardness and uncomfortable silences in those he is ranting to. Bill tends to surround himself with friends less intelligent than himself, and they are usually too submissive to do anything but listen to Bill ramble about this and that. Since his employer's discovery of his alcoholism, Bill mopes continually about what he is going to do if he gets kicked out of *Day to Day Associates*.

Bill wouldn't mind being a hero, but he has too many personal problems to be much of an asset to others. His emotional instability, combined with his drunkenness has prevented him from holding many jobs at *Day to Day Associates*, and his Regional Manager had become increasingly upset with him. While he has been warned about his behavior, there were no immediate plans to fire him.

"Raging" Bill is a nickname that Director Grimhaus (in one of his rare moments) tacked on Bill, and has stuck ("Angry Drunk" may have been a better nickname for Bill, though it would never be used to his face). Bill does not seem to mind, and even uses it with a touch of pride.

Quote: "Sit yo' ass down, you sumabitch!" [Sound of flesh striking bone, followed by heavy thud as body hits the ground.] "Yeeeeee-haw!!!"

Powers: Bill's files at *Day to Day Associates* are brief — the parapsychicians, although they picked up some strange anomalies in Bill's nervous system and EKG, have written Bill off as a classic case of brickness: he is strong, tough, and has incredible reflexes and endurance. The anomalies and strange EKG readings, however, are hints of Bill's second parability, his inhuman temper. In a passive state, Bill is exceptionally strong and fast, but when he's angry, his strength doubles (in his passive state, he can lift 25 tons with difficulty; when angry, he can benchpress 50 tons and mangle cargo trucks with ease). The unfortunate side effect of this strength increase is Bill's intelligence drops like a stone, the decrease directly proportional to his strength gain.

Though Bill can be a tough opponent, characters should be allowed to trick or wear out Bill while he is enraged — when he loses his temper, he has the mentality of a barnyard animal. In addition, he becomes tired more

quickly (see END Cost for enhanced STR), and he forgets how to use his martial arts abilities to his advantage. Characters who anger Bill then dodge around him for a few Turns can wear him down until he is gasping for breath.

Bill's skin density is sufficient to deflect bullets with little else than a tiny sting and a grunt of annoyance. (When drunk, he doesn't even feel the sting.) He can take a great deal of punishment; when he's drunk, he has the durability of a tank. His skin density and toughness has been more of a nuisance than an adaptation — doctors have found it near impossible to cut Bill's skin, and as a result, his nose is still crooked from where he was attacked by the Confederate, and he can't get anything other than ink tattoos on his body.

Tactics: Bill jumps into the fray, swingin' and shootin' his opponents until they fall down. Bill does not pull punches; it's all or nothing when he gets really excited.

Appearance: Bill's face is cracked in a confident sneer, his mouth framed by a thick mustache and heavy stubble covering his chin and running up the sides of his face to meet his sideburns. His long, sandy blonde hair is tied back in a pony tail, with a sweat-soaked bandanna keeping the rest of his hair plastered on his forehead and out of his eyes. Bill's fiery eyes hint at his nasty disposition, which rises like a snake when he drinks. His nose looks a little skewed (it was broken and couldn't be reset after Bill was beaten by the Confederate).

Bill is heavily built, with tight jeans and a "Black Krowes" tank top that he wears constantly (he got someone else to buy the shirt for him — he couldn't afford to see them when they came around to his neck of the woods). He has a great deal of hair on his chest, arms, and back.



THE BRIDE

Val Char Cost Roll Notes

10	STR	0	11-	100 kg; 2D6
10	DEX	0	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
10	CON	0	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
9	INT	-1	11-	PER Roll 11-
9	EGO	-2	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	3D6 PRE Attack
8	COM	-1	11-	
3	PD	1		
3	ED	1		
3	SPD	10		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	2		
20	END	0		
20	STUN	0		

Total Characteristics Cost: 15

Movement: Running: 5"

Swimming: 1"

Powers and Skills

Pheromones:

Mind Control 12d6, NND (Pheromones are blocked by LS: Self-Contained Breathing or no sense of smell), Biological/Chemical Power Defense and Smell Flash Defense act as per Mental Defense (+1), Continuous, Uncontrolled, Telepathic Component (Limited, see Power Notes, below, +1/4), Explosion, Invisible Effects (Sight Group), 1/2 END, Personal Immunity, Extra Time: 1 Turn, Mental Powers Based on CON, No Range, Target cannot be made to forget actions while mind controlled (-1/4) (97)

Lightning Reflexes +10 (see *An Eye for an Eye*, p.7) with Mind Control (15)

Heightened Gossip Gathering Abilities:

+2 to Hearing PER Rolls (4)

Skills:

- Acting 8- (1)
- Conversation 8- (1)
- Persuasion 8- (1)
- Seduction 8- (1)
- AK: Georgetown 11- (2)
- CK: Washington D.C. 11- (2)
- KS: Cosmetics 11- (2)
- KS: Famous Personalities 11- (2)
- KS: Fashion 8- (1)
- KS: Harlequin Romances 11- (2)
- PS: Cook 8- (1)
- PS: Dancer (Country Line Dancing) 8- (1)
- PS: Grocer 11- (2)

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 135

Total Character Cost: 150



100+ Disadvantages:

Distinctive Features:

Overweight, too much make-up, and poor sense of fashion (Concealable, Major) (15)

Normal Characteristic Maximum (20)

Physical Limitation:

- Addiction to Kamel Lite Cigarettes (Infrequently, Slightly) (5)
- Nearsighted (Wears colored contacts, Infrequently, Slightly) (5)
- 1" Running/-1" Swimming (3)

Psychological Limitation:

- Code vs. Killing (Common, Strong) (15)
- Lecherous (Common, Strong) (15)
- Compulsive Gossip (Very Common, Moderate) (10)

Reputation:

- Promiscuous Gossip, 8- (FBI and Day to Day Temps Personnel only) (5)

Total Disadvantage Points: 93

Block Party



Background: "Paper or plastic, handsome?"

The gum clicked noisily in Wanda's mouth as she gazed suggestively at the man from across the conveyer belt; taken aback by her look, the man looked at Wanda guardedly, then shrugged, reaching into his coat for his check-book. "Whatever."

Frowning, Wanda tacked an extra dollar on to his receipt as she rung up the total. Reaching for the plastic bags, she ripped one open and shoved the man's groceries into it as they rolled along the conveyer belt. As she filled it, she checked the huge clock that hung over the lobby, her hunger for a cigarette eating at her. The mid-day rush was almost over, and Wanda looked for Marcie so she could have her take over for a few minutes.

When she turned back to the customer, he was holding out a check to her with a frown. "You gonna take it or what, Lady?" Wanda took the check, and the man, without a word, picked up his groceries and left. Wanda sneered at his retreating back.

"You have a nice day, too," she hissed and slammed the register closed. Men — who needed them? She was available.

"Marcie!" Wanda waved at a girl busy pushing carts into the store. "Could you roll the magazine rack in front of the aisle — I gotta take a constitutional."

"Wanda, are you supposed to leave th—"

"For cryin' out loud, it's just for a second, Marce! Look, I gotta have a cigarette — I'll be back in a minute. Be a dear, 'kay?" Marcie looked unconvinced, but she shrugged and proceeded to drag the rack in front of the aisle. Wanda flashed her a smile, slapped her gum beneath the register and grabbing her purse, made her way to the back of the store. Past the swinging doors, she entered the meat packing area where two workers were busy unloading heavy crates. Wanda hid behind one of the stacks and quickly tapped a cigarette out of her pack; she wasn't supposed to smoke in the building, but she didn't intend to be here long...

She lit up and sighed as she inhaled the smoke. Behind her, the workmen were loudly trading insults on each other's masculinity as they unloaded the crates. Wanda, cradling the cigarette between her lips, wondered if she should introduce herself to them, maybe flirt a little — the loaders were generally dumb as a stone, but they tended to be well muscled. Wanda leaned against the crates, savoring the image of having one of the loaders all to herself for the evening.

She had barely taken a drag from the cigarette when she heard the slow creak, coupled with a shout from one of the loaders. The last thing she remembered was the tower of crates she had been leaning against tipping alarmingly, the top crate balanced precariously in space...it tottered on the summit for a second, then fell, pulling the stack

down upon her.

There was a sharp blow to her head, then she blacked out.

* * *

Wanda awoke with a concussion, and a fleet of doctors clustered around her medical bed, taking notes and talking amongst themselves. One of them had the nerve to tell her she had been lucky. Luckier than she may have thought.

The doctors speculated she may have been a latent paranormal even before the first incident, and the blow to the head had just been a trigger. Noting strange behavior from the nurses and orderlies assigned to her room, the doctors had taken blood samples and her parability was soon discovered. The doctors informed Wanda of her "medical condition" in private, and Wanda, afraid of the doctors sudden interest in her, refused their offers of further tests, and, thinking that the parability she had was akin to some kind of social disease, asked that the "parawhatever" be kept secret. Wanda hadn't been sure what having a "parability" was; she all she knew is that when she was released from the hospital and went back to her old job, men no longer ignored her or fixed her with cautious glances. After Wanda had spent a half-hour convincing a persistent customer in the check-out line she could not get off work to have lunch with him, the manager had been called and had given her a lecture about coming on to customers, which infuriated her. It hadn't been her fault. Not really. She had just said hello to the schlep in line. And sort of suggested that they might want to get together sometime. And then he had developed an irrational interest in her.

It had been quite stimulating, really.

Similar incidents followed, and soon afterwards, Wanda was fired. Uncertain of what to do, she went back to the doctors and got the complete picture of what she was capable of. When she stated she was out of a job, they suggested that if she wanted to use her powers to improve her financial status, she could submit herself to researchers at NIH or take up with a paranormal temp agency. Wanda, who didn't much care for needles (or doctors for that matter), chose temp work.

When Wanda went to the *Day to Day Associates* building, she was intimidated by the busy office and the professional atmosphere. Feeling out of place in her leopard pants and shiny pink windbreaker, she filled out an application and went into an interview; after being called-back for a paranormal power evaluation, she was offered a job in the *Day to Day* Enforcement Division, the only requirement being that she would have to learn self-defense and how to use firearms. Wanda, a stranger to physical exertion, would have turned down the offer had she not seen some photos in the office lobby of some of the handsome male

Block Party



paranormals working for the agency. Deciding that she wanted not just a man, but a Metaman, for her very own, she accepted the offer. If the work was too strenuous, after all, she could always quit. And besides, it was better pay than she had ever gotten bagging groceries. When she was asked if she wanted a codename, however, she drew a blank until one night when she was watching an NBC TV *Monday Night Movie* based on one of Danielle Steele's novels, "The Bride," the story of an enterprising young woman searching for love and respect in the torrid avenues in the heart of the Midwest. Emulating the movie, she called herself the Bride.

Wanda is a reserve member of the *Day to Day* Enforcement Division and serves on the FBI Block Team. After her transfer to Washington DC, she has been making the most of the Georgetown scene, using her powers nightly to pick up attractive males. References to the Bride of Frankenstein have long since worn thin around the *Day to Day* Temps headquarters.

Personality: Meeting Wanda for the first time, many people are inclined to see her as a rather unattractive but polite, good-natured person who does her best to play the proper host. She may smoke a bit much, talk a little more than others, but she seems decent. Anyone who has known her for more than a week, however, will begin to see that her social aggressiveness and optimism conceals a egocentric and selfish personality. She is unscrupulous in getting what she wants, and characters who are not careful may fall victim to her tender ministrations. Wanda enjoys pretending she has no powers and deluding herself into thinking that men are attracted to her because of her sex appeal. She is offended if the role her power plays in seduction is brought up and will give the cold shoulder to anyone who made such an "insulting" comment.

Quote: "Why, helloooo handsome. Want to waste some time?"

Powers: Through concentration, Wanda can emit a powerful pheromone that makes other human beings uncontrollably attracted to her, so much so that they will do anything she asks in order to please her. The effect of her powers last for several hours after the target is separated from her, and Wanda can choose to increase the duration to several days by remaining in close proximity to the target while "emoting." Wanda has been known to unconsciously release her pheromones when she becomes sexually excited.

The Bride unconsciously uses her power at a much lower level than she is capable of; only when Janus captures her will he use her powers to their maximum potential.

Power Notes

STOP

The Bride's pheromones are a gross attack, with a disgusting Active Point cost and a decidedly unfair set of Power Advantages. This was done to give her ability the proper "feel" in the context of the *Hero System* game mechanics. She is intended as a plot device only, and GMs should feel free to modify her abilities to keep in line with their campaign.

The telepathic component of the Bride's power needs some explanation. Although Wanda must be able to speak to her targets in order to give them specific orders, victims of her pheromones will act of their own accord to win her affection if they are not issued specific orders (i.e., they will bring her gifts, defend her if she is attacked, or write poetry and recite it to her). The "Default" pheromone command is "you desire me," and the target will act accordingly.

Tactics: Pretending to be an innocent bystander, the Bride approaches one (handsome) male target, introduces herself and then uses her power, asking the target to surrender or attack their comrades. She will never enter a battle personally; she has few fighting skills and prefers to let her "grooms" do the fighting for her.

Appearance: Wanda's puffy, blush-stained cheeks are emphasized by her boiling magenta lipstick and a surgically-added mole above her lip. ("Best money I ever spent!") Her black hair has been dyed a dirty red, her brown eyes have become green through use of colored contacts and a Kamel Lite cigarette can usually be found wedged between her rosy lips. Her eclectic fashion sense compliments her appearance through an alligator skin purse and spandex leopard pants. She smiles most of the time and will greet any new males with a friendly handshake and a subtle use of her power.

Wanda has a disturbing habit of licking her lips every time she sees a handsome male target.



"CESSPOOL"

[Lester "Less" Poole]

Note: "Cesspool" is not Lester's codename. It is the nickname used by others when he is out of earshot.

Val	CHAR	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	100 kg; 2D6
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
20	CON	20	13-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll, 12-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
10	PRE	0	11-	2D6 PRE Attack
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	3		
5	ED	1		
4	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
5	REC	0		
40	END	0		
40	STUN	15		

Total Characteristics Cost: 76

Movement: Running: 6" (5" in Environment Suit)

Swimming: 2" (Not possible in Environment Suit)

Powers and Skills

Texxon Corp Environment Suit, OIF

Air Filtration and Recycling: LS: Self-Contained Breathing (10)

"Fan" Effect for Stench powers: Allows for Area Effect: 7" Cone for "Reeking Stench" ability, Half Normal Range (15"), AE: Cone, OIF (14)

Bulky Armor: Armor (15 PD/15 ED), Ablative (18)

Air Conditioning: Change Environment, only for user (-1/4) (3)

Battery: 100 END Battery, 1 Charge (4)

Environment Suit Visor: Personal Immunity to Darkness (so that Lester can see through his own stench cloud; +1/4 Advantage to Darkness, below), Fragile OIF (7)

Bulky: Physical Limitation: -1" Running, No Swimming Allowed, -3 to Stealth, Shadowing, and -1 to any Skills requiring fine manipulation (-7)

The Physical Limitation is worth less than normal due to the fact that it is tied to Cesspool's Focus; as a result, the OIF Power Limitation is treated as an Advantage.



Persistent Stench: EB 1D6, NND (Stench is blocked by LS: Self-Contained Breathing; Biological/Chemical Power Defense and Smell Flash Defense act as if they were Armor, +1), Continuous, Uncontrolled, Area Effect: One Hex, 0 END Persistent, Personal Immunity, Gradual Effect (5 Minutes, -1 1/2), Always On, No Range (7)

Reeking Stench: EB +4D6, NND (As per Persistent Stench, above, +1), Continuous, Uncontrolled, Explosion, 0 END Persistent, Personal Immunity, No Range (43)

plus cancels the Gradual Effect Limitation in the NND EB above (+5 Pts) (5)

plus 1D6 Drain, NND (As per Persistent Stench, Above, +1), Drains Physical Characteristics (STR, CON, DEX, +1), Continuous, Uncontrolled, 0 END Persistent, Personal Immunity, Victim must have taken at least one point of STUN from the EB for the Drain to take effect (-1/4), Linked to EB [3] (40)

As with the Bride, before, this power is gross in Active Points and in effects. It was designed to simulate the effects of Cesspool's stench in the Hero System; GMA may wish to change it to suit their own campaigns.

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Darkness 1" vs Normal Sight, Continuous,
Uncontrolled, 0 END Persistent, No Range,
Linked to EB (17)

The fact that the Drain only affects three Characteristics has reduced the Power Advantage to a +1 Advantage. If the GM wishes to make it a +2 Advantage to make more in line with the rules on Adjustment Powers (*Hero System Rulebook*, p.54), they may do so.

Background Skills:

Perk: Security Clearance (2)
Bureaucratics 11- (3)
Systems Operation 11- (3)
CK: Washington D.C. 11- (2)
PS: Accountant 11- (2)
PS: Trumpet 11- (2)
KS: Texxon Corporation 11- (2)
SC: Accounting 11- (2)

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 179

Total Character Cost: 255

100+ Disadvantages:

Distinctive Features:

Terrible Odor or Full Body Environment Suit
(Not Concealable, Disgust) (25)
Monitored by Texxon Corp (Mor Powerful,
NCI), 8- (10)

Normal Characteristic Maximum (20)

Psychological Limitation:

Sensitive about smell (Common, Strong) (15)
Lonely (Common, Strong) (15)

Villain's Bonus (70)

Total Disadvantage Points: 155

Background: Lester knew life was over the day the canary died in his office.

He hadn't even noticed it at first; it was only after he had finished sending some e-mail to the marketing department that he realized that the canary wasn't sitting on its perch...it was on the bottom of the cage, legs sticking up like toothpicks. He felt a brief second of surprise, accompanied by a slow, sinking feeling in his gut. He had half expected to find a suicide note tacked to the bird's body.

But that was stupid. He knew what had killed it. And he also knew that if his co-workers found out, he would never hear the end of it. He quickly smuggled the tiny body out to a bin behind the office building to dispose of it, looking over his shoulder the entire time. When he returned to his office, he promptly called the doctor and made an appointment for that afternoon.

* * *

When Lester ("Less") Poole graduated with a business degree from Grand Forks University, the ambitious and intelligent young man was hired by the Texxon Corporation. His resume and financial know-how seemed to herald a promising career in the company.

Lester had just been promoted to office manager when he began to smell.

At first, it was something that could be tolerated. It drew a few amused glances from his co-workers, some snide comments behind his back, and nicknames like "B.O. Poole" and "Cess Poole." After a while, however, people refused to ride in the elevator with Lester. Then there was the "office system management" meeting where staff members were moved to different sections of the floor to maximize productivity...and Lester's office happened to be moved to the corner of the building farthest from the reception area. Shortly after the move came an unspoken agreement that he was to keep his office door closed while the rest of the office was working.

Lester was mortified. Despite frequent showers, dozens of varieties of skin cream, aerosol sprays, and liberal applications of deodorant and cologne, nothing killed the smell. Dermatologists and doctors were mystified.

One day in late June, with the blistering heat was pouring in the windows and the office air conditioner on the fritz, Lester's skin started to itch. Just as it seemed to fade, to his horror, his smell increased ten-fold. Within fifteen minutes, his smell had permeated the floor, and his co-workers suggested he move his office into the bathroom or next to the septic tank in the basement. The next morning Lester came in to his office to find a cage holding a canary hanging from the ceiling. In defiance, he left it in there. Later that day while he was filling out inventory reports, the canary's chirping was suddenly cut short as it fell from its perch, dead. Lester smuggled it out of the office and went to see his doctor.

The doctor, after running a blood test, informed Lester that he had a "parability." Lester cringed.

The doctor, holding a handkerchief over his nose, told Lester his power could technically be considered an advantage. The doctor lectured at length about members of the animal kingdom that used smell as a defense against predators and as a way of marking their territory. Still, the doctor admitted Lester had one of the worst parabilities the doctor had ever heard of; only the "amazing balloon baby" girl in Oregon came close, and she wasn't a pariah. Lester went back to work, more depressed than ever.

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In all fairness, Texxon did their best to accommodate Lester's condition; he was given a top room in one of the offices to keep him away from the rest of the workers. Nevertheless, the effort was futile...despite closing off the ventilation and constant fumigations, Lester's smell slowly crept into every corner of the building. Texxon, finally reaching a decision, said that until Lester's medical condition was taken care of, he would not be permitted to work in the same building as other employees. As Texxon did not allow regional managers to work out of their homes, their decision was akin to firing Lester.

Lester, knowing full well that a cure for a parability was near impossible, argued with his superior about other possible work arrangements. When met with a long series of "nos," Lester became furious.

What happened next was something that has been debated to this day; the majority of paraphysicians believe it was Lester's emotional state acted which as a catalyst for his parability. The majority of Texxon employees, however, believe that Lester had been holding back the full extent of his stench abilities to prevent being fired...when it became clear that his firing was inevitable, he simply chose to retaliate as a form of petty revenge.

Whatever the reason, Lester was in the middle of threatening a lawsuit against Texxon when his skin began smoking and a noxious cloud emanated from his pores. Everyone on the same floor had to be rushed to the hospital, the eleven-story Texxon office building was evacuated, and the Fire Department was called in to hose down the building. The building was quarantined for several weeks (and his smell still lingered) and eventually had to be torn down, costing Texxon several hundred thousand dollars. The two squared off in court, Lester, still wanting to rise in the Texxon hierarchy, claiming "paranormal discrimination," fought with Texxon until a settlement was reached outside of court.

As a result, Texxon keeps Lester on as a contract employee and have supplied him with his own fax machine and computer at home. It is more of a token gesture than anything; Lester's workload has been steadily decreasing ever since the diagnosis of his condition.

To make matters worse, Lester has had considerable difficulty trying to find another job. He called *Day to Day Associates* (one of the only paranormal temp agencies) as a desperation maneuver, and after waiting a month for his application to be processed, Lester was hired by their Industrial Division to package his "paranormal-produced irritant" for the military (Lester has been instructed to keep the packaging secret — if questioned closely, he is to say that he helps soldiers train in chemical warfare). He goes

out to a chemical research institution in Dugway, Utah, one weekend a month to produce large amounts of the gas, but with military cutbacks, Lester has been forced to consider other jobs within *Day to Day Associates*. At Dana's request, he is considering working with a Law Enforcement Division somewhere in the United States, and his work at the Block is his way of testing the water to see if he would like the work or not...as it stands, he is not thrilled with the prospect.

Personality: Lester is bitter. His glorious rise through Texxon's ranks was chopped off at the knees, and he has been reduced to a smelly recluse. While his compensation checks from Texxon and the military keep him comfortable, his inability to interact with others have made him cynical...and hypersensitive. Something as innocent as someone scratching their nose or wrinkling their face is sufficient for Lester to release his gas in revenge for the "insult."

Lester has had no relationships since his parability emerged, and his girlfriend left him weeks after his power drove them apart. Lester's mother still calls him, however, and Lester has hired help that does the shopping for him and leaves the groceries at the edge of his driveway. He has been forced to learn how to cut his own hair (which he does badly) and he is not allowed in public places unless he is fully suited up. His three-story farmhouse (no livestock) secluded in the Northern Virginia countryside has its own recyclable water supply and recyclable sewage system. Whenever he leaves his property, Lester must wear his environmental suit.

Lester's neighbors are always looking for excuses to drive him away, and Lester is developing an adversarial relationship with them.

Quote: "The smell?" [Voice takes on a sarcastic edge.] "What sm—?" [Slaps his forehead melodramatically.] "Oh, that smell! Why, yes, it is coming from me. But hey, that's nothing...check out what happens when I open my pores."

Powers: Lester has the ability to squirt a foul-smelling musk from his pores. If characters come within a few feet of him, they will feel a tingling in their nasal passages (not unpleasant), a slight sour smell, then a wave of foul vapor will suddenly assail them, almost knocking them off their feet. In addition to being able to emanate the stench from his pores, Lester's body secretions also carry the same smell: saliva, urine and even his tears retain his scent days after they are expelled from his body.

The FBI is unaware how difficult it is to get rid of his smell once he contaminates an area, and Dana, desperate for backup, has downplayed this when talking with the FBI. *Day to Day Associates* has instructed Cesspool to keep his gas attacks to a minimum in the Block for fear of irritating the FBI.

Block Party



Power Notes

STOP

1. In Lester's "Persistent Stench" ability, above, there is a "Gradual Effect" Power Limitation. Gradual Effect is a Power Limitation that deals damage over a period of time (in Lester's case, five minutes). Whenever a character is in close proximity to Lester (i.e., in his same hex), the GM should roll the 1D6 EB, then divide the damage equally over a five minute period (i.e., if the GM rolls five points of STUN, the character takes a point of STUN at the end of every minute). As expected, Lester's persistent stench will do permanent damage only to victims with a low STUN and REC.

2. The Texxon Corp Environment Suit: The chemical warfare suit that Lester wears was developed jointly by Texxon and the US Army Toxicology labs. Lester bought this suit at a cheap price after creating a large amount of CP ("Cesspool") gas for the military. There is a unspoken agreement that he will continue to manufacture for the military if he wants maintenance on the suit or more filters for it. Lester doesn't mind. The environment suit is heavily armored, but it is so bulky that Lester's movement and many of his Skills are crippled (see *Physical Limitation*, above). The environment suit has a number of pockets and pouches for Lester to store items, but he rarely uses them for anything more than his wallet and a spare air filter (see below).

The suit consists of the following items:

Vacuum Cleaner attached to back. When necessary, Lester can use the vacuum cleaner to suck up the noxious clouds he creates. In game mechanics, this nullifies any Continuous, Uncontrolled attacks he has made in a hex, even though the smell still lingers. If the vacuum cleaner on the back is damaged, Cesspool will pull off the suit and let loose his gas throughout the area, possibly gassing the entire Block.

Replaceable Filters used to help with the air conditioning and for the vacuum cleaner (These are expensive: they cost almost \$100 for a week's worth and have to be replaced daily).

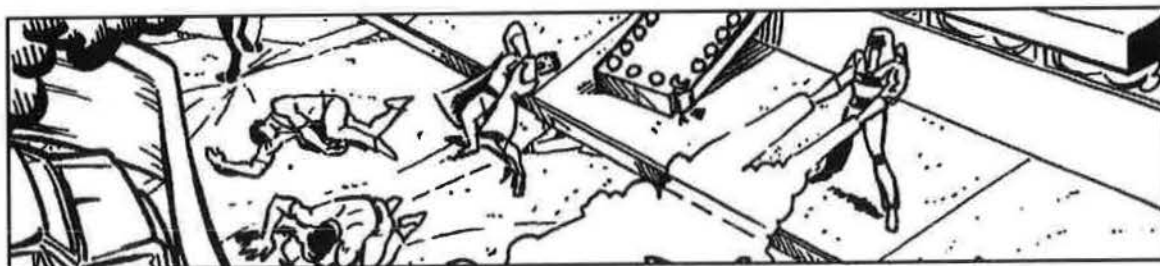
The forearms and the back unit of the suit have flaps that contain projecting fans (like blow dryers at triple power) that help to spread the gas. The flaps are velcro, can be ripped open, and the vacuum cleaner fan will spread the gas in a fan (cone) area effect.

Cesspool cannot see in his own gas under normal circumstances (though he is likely to be the only one who can breathe in it); as a result, he has a set of goggles installed in his environment suit that allow him to see; if the goggles are broken, Lester no longer has Personal Immunity to the effects of his Darkness.

Tactics: Cesspool always warns his opponents to surrender...especially during training exercises (he knows he may get into trouble if he really lets loose on an opponent); if they do not, he will use the fans in his environment suit to expel a reeking cloud of vapor at his opponents.

Lester's smell and the stinking cloud that surrounds him is his best defense - at full output, it renders him invisible and actively discourages anyone from getting too close to him. In close combat, Cesspool gases melee attackers first... especially bricks. Snipers can wait; if he is attacked by both, he will release a cloud of vapor around him, then move to prevent others from drawing a bead on him. If any character attacks him with lethal force, he will immediately release a huge cloud of gas that will cover the area (and hopefully cover his retreat).

Appearance: Lester ("Less") Poole is a nondescript black man who looks to be in his early twenties (he is actually in his early thirties). He barely crests 5'8", with a build is a trifle thinner than average, and the many wrinkles on his brow are the only distinguishing feature in an otherwise bland face. He dresses conservatively in button-up shirts and ties, even when going on about his daily duties. His self-inflicted haircuts have caused Les to develop a sudden preference for hats.



JANUS

Val	CHAR	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
10	PRE	0	11-	2D6 PRE Attack
6	SPD	25		Phases: 2,4,6,8,10,12

Total Characteristic Cost: 63

Movement: Running: 6"
Swimming: 2"

Powers and Skills:

Switch Spirits:

Switch Spirit: 5D6 (see *Hero Almanac* and *Horror Hero*), 0 END, Ranged (200)

Detect Sentient Minds (9)

Hidden Resources:

Vehicles and Bases (50 Points total) (10)

Background Talents:

Lightning Reflexes +10 (E4E, p.7) (15)

Lightsleep (3)

Simulate Death (3)

Background Skills:

Acting 11- (3)

Concealment 12- (3)

Conversation 11- (3)

Deduction 12- (3)

Forgery 11- (3)

KS: Architecture 11- (2)

KS: English Literature 11- (2)

Persuasion 11- (3)

Security Systems 8- (1)

Tactics 12- (3)

WF: Small Arms (2)

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 268

Total Character Cost: 331

Disadvantages: +100

Physical Limitation:

Janus's Spirit Form can be perceived by anyone with Mental Awareness (Infreq, Slightly) (5)

Leaves an obvious telepathic signature with every body he leaves (see the Ultimate Mentalist; Infreq, Slightly) (5)

Psychological Limitation:

Vengeful (Com, Str) (20)

Has no idea what his last name is or who his real parents were (Inconsequential, Moderate) (0)

Experience (131)

Total Disadvantage Points: 231



Background: James doesn't remember much about his past lives; he made his first jump way back in the thirties and has been boddy hopping ever since. The fragments of his "youth" usually involve memories of hopping into the boddies of people and walking around for a while, tripping over things and making an idiot of himself. His early hoppig left a trail of disoriented and confused host bodies in its wake, many of which were confined to mental institutions or reduced to non-persons via the displacement. James blindly continued his anatomical wanderings, exploring the world and bodies of others around him.

The GM should feel free to fill in Janus's history with their campaign history. He may have been a member of several different hero or villain teams, or witnessed many of the notable events of the twentieth century in the grand Forrest Gump tradition.

Decades passed, and the thrill of travelling faded; hopping frombody to body was tiring, and James longed to settle down somewhere for a while. He made arrangements for his "retirement" by cultivating a proper host body with sufficient funds and physique to last him through the nineties... the target he chose was an ambitious young company executive. After using his powers to make the young man president, Janus switched minds with him and promptly embezzled hundredsof thousands of dollars from "his" company, then retired to a sprawling colonial

Block Party



mansion along the Potomac River, eager to spend the next ten to twenty years enjoying *La Dolce Vita* in a lounge chair with a tall cold beer. He was napping in just such a chair when the FBI Paranormal Apprehension Division stormed his home and arrested him.

The special effect of Janus's mind switching on the staff of the company he was embezzling from made only a few members of the staff suspect that Janus's host body was a paranormal with some form of Mind Control; as a result the FBI Paranormal Apprehension Division was called in to arrest him. (In the majority of the mind switching cases that had occurred at the company, they incidents were passed off as strange "depersonalization" experiences, because Janus always returned the proper mind to the proper body.) In the end, Janus's lack of caution and his impatience caused him to pull off the embezzlement quickly and clumsily (though he did not see it as such).

Janus was furious at being "manhandled," and even more so when he found that the case against him was airtight... there was no way to prevent his host body from going to prison. Janus's spirit sank as he switched bodies and watched the host body he had spent years cultivating be dragged back to its cell with a new tenant.

It took the FBI several weeks to finally pin down what had happened and realize that the host body was a paranormal body snatcher. They believe, however, that the pacifier they slapped on Janus when they first arrested him prevented him from switching to a new body (incorrect). As of now, they have the "bodysnatcher" in custody and they believe that the special alpha wave interference generators in the bodysnatcher's cell prevent him from using his powers. They ignore the man's pleas that he is actually "somebody else" trapped in the body.

Most people could not begin to understand the difficulty of finding suitable bodies, but Janus was all too familiar with the process, and to have to start to rebuild an identity from scratch angered him greatly. There was always the matter of getting the host body's signature just right, getting the muscle movements down properly without tripping and falling over oneself, memorizing one's social security number, and of course, the hit-or-miss proposition of making sure that there were no relatives, significant others or neighbors that would stop by to see how the body was doing... it was all incredibly inconvenient. His old host body had been perfect! Why had the FBI chosen to pester him, of all people? They should have been out catching drug smugglers or serial killers or something.

Janus seethed for a while, then seethed some more. He eventually decided that he couldn't let the FBI get away with what they had done to him without giving them an equal amount of trouble in

return. As he saw it, the FBI owed him several hundred thousand dollars and ten to twenty years of early retirement. Paybacks were in order.

Personality: Janus isn't really a villain as much as a petty, vengeful little poltergeist. Under normal circumstances, his attitude would be inconsequential, but when his powerful paranormal ability is taken into account (not to mention his rather stupid contests of "one upmanship" with people who don't even realize that they are competing), he quickly graduates from an annoyance to a genuine pain in the neck.

The hostage situation at the Block is due solely to the fact that the FBI spoiled his early retirement on the Potomac and has taken it on himself to "return the insult with interest." True to form, if the PCs screw up his plans at the Block, James will direct his attention to them.

As mentioned in the text, Janus is not a killer... he only wants to embarrass the FBI. He has no desire to seriously hurt anyone.

Quote: "Pardon me...do you mind if I cut in?"

Powers: Janus has the paranormal power to switch minds with any target he can see. He does not gain any of the memories or Skills that his target possesses nor vice versa (essentially, when Janus switches minds with another character, he gains their physical and natural paranormal abilities, but he does not necessarily know how to use them).

Janus and his victims retain their own mental abilities, no matter what bodies they are in. It is not known why Janus's powers work so cleanly or quickly... there would seem to be many psyche problems inherent in the body hopping process, but they have never manifested themselves in the sixty plus years that Janus has been using his power. The only side effects seem to be the result of how Janus treats the host body — he has a tendency to overeat, smoke heavily, eat high cholesterol foods, and engage in high risk sexual and narcotic activities when running around in young male and female bodies.

Despite his psychic age (67), James is remarkably immature. It is possible that continued use of his power has retarded his maturity since he has rarely held himself accountable or responsible for anything he does.

Tactics: See *Block Party*. Janus is an "old dog" at deception and has an arsenal of cunning and dirty tricks at his disposal. His conniving little mind makes him a natural at humiliating and defeating opponents, super-powered or not.

Appearance: Janus has no physical form... his appearance varies according to whatever host body he is wearing at the moment. He does have a number of habits that he transfers from body to body, however; he has a tendency to wear dark sunglasses, dark clothes, and let his hair grow long (while he doesn't like facial hair, he remembers the



sixties and free love with a certain fondness, and wears his hair long for that reason). He occasionally goes several days without washing, which can be difficult for others around him to deal with.

Power Notes

GMs may not be familiar with the power listed in Janus's statistics. Switch Spirit is a new power, similar to the power "Shift Spirit" in the *Hero System Almanac 1* and *Horror Hero*. For GMs who do not possess either of these books, Janus's power works like so:

1. Switch Spirit allows Janus to switch minds with any human (or sentient) body that he can see. Unlike the normal Shift Spirit ability, the spirits are swapped between the two bodies, with no "waiting period" as the spirits are shifted to the spirit plane.

2. To switch minds with another human, Janus must use his Switch Spirit to drain the victim's EGO. First, he must make an ECV Roll, and if successful, he drains Characteristic Points from EGO equal to the amount in his Switch Spirit power (5D6); once he drains twice the victim's EGO, their spirit leaves their body and enters Janus's old host body, while Janus enters the victim's body and takes control (for example, Janus needed to reduce the Bride's EGO to -9 to switch minds with her). Note: the drained EGO returns at a rate of 5 Active Points per Turn... if Janus takes too long trying to switch minds with someone, they will recover the EGO he is draining. Janus cannot automatically "re-swap" with an old body. He must attack with his power every time he wishes to switch minds with a target; any target.

If Janus rolls an 18 on his ECV attack against any character, he has rolled a critical failure, and will never be able to switch minds with that person. If the ECV attack is successful and Janus drains twice the target's EGO, Janus gains the

victim's STR, CON, BODY, COM, PD, ED, REC, END and STUN, as well as the victim's physical advantages and disadvantages. He does not receive the person's INT, EGO, DEX, PRE, SPD, mental advantages and disadvantages, skills, or mental powers; he retains his own. Until Janus becomes used to the new body, all Skills based on the host's physical abilities are at -3 for the first hour; -2 for the rest of the day, and then peters out to -1 once a week has passed and he has become "acclimated."

3. Normally there is no defense against this type of spirit power unless characters purchase Power Defense with the Power Advantage "Affects Spirits" (+1/2). Due to the psionic nature of Janus's powers, however, Mental Defense acts as armor against his EGO Drain.

It's conceivable that Janus could switch minds with an animal, but he will never do this unless he is in danger of being killed.

4. Spirits can not normally be perceived by any conventional senses unless purchased with the "Affects Spirits" Advantage. Again, in Janus's case, the nature of his paranormal ability allows characters with Mental Awareness to see him entering or leaving a host body.

5. Switch Minds is permanent. The only way for the character to return to their body (and Janus to his) is to have Janus reverse the switch.

6. GMs may hate Switch Spirit. In this case, use the Major Transform Power to simulate the effect, as described in *The Ultimate Mentalist* (p.72). Essentially, it would be a 5D6 Major Transform (mind switch), Based on ECV (+1), Works vs. EGO, not BODY (+0), Usable on Others (+1), Ranged for Usable on Others (+1/2), x2 Targets (+1/4), Mentalist's Body Remains Awake and in Victim's Control (-1/2), One of the switched minds must be Janus's (-1/4). The author felt the Spirit Rules and Powers already in place in *Horror Hero* and *Hero System Almanac 1* simulated the effect more quickly and easily.



VIRTUAL ICE



By Bruce Tong

Illustrations by Storn Cook

INTRODUCTION

Using "Virtual Ice"

This scenario was designed to fit into a moderate level *Champions* campaign. It will accommodate 3-6 players, and characters with 50-60 active point attacks, 20-30 points of defenses, and speeds of 4-6. For games which are outside these bounds, the GM must make changes to the villains presented, or use villains of his own creation.

This scenario could also be used in a *Dark Champions* campaign with only a few modifications. The capabilities of virtual reality may be beyond the technology level of a GM's campaign, as they are certainly more than is feasible at the time this scenario was written. For most *Dark Champions* campaigns, this will not present a problem. GMs running *Dark Champions* campaigns which are close to current technological capabilities will have to make some changes.

Using this scenario for a *Cyber Hero* is also possible. There is a lot more work required by the GM, however. For best results, read the scenario for the details of the plot. Changes will have to be made in the way the virtual reality game works, as well as how it interacts with the network. No doubt, much of the setting will have to change as well.

Danger International campaigns can also use this scenario. If technology of the campaign will not support the virtual reality as described in the scenario, then changes will have to be made. Perhaps the game can be moved to a high tech company, where the appropriate equipment might be located. The villains would also have to be replaced.

Campaign Setting

The scenario is written for the fictional city of San Angelo. GMs should feel free to use their own campaign city, instead. Just relocate the sites listed in the scenario over to equivalent sites in the campaign city. For instance, an important site to this scenario is The San Angelo Municipal Museum. Simply rename the museum and adopt it into the campaign city, making changes as needed. If a museum already exists in your game, then by all means ignore the museum presented by the scenario in favor of your museum. If the campaign is based in Hudson City, then use The Hudson City Museum of Anthropology and Natural History, described on page 36 of *Justice, Not Law*.

Information about the virtual reality world of Metropolis City is presented later within this scenario. You will want to review this section after you become familiar with the plot of the adventure. Parts of this section will also help you add local color to Metropolis City and will serve to further describe this bizarre setting.

BACKGROUND

Robert Brown operates a computer bulletin board system, a BBS, in the San Angelo area. The BBS has 16 dial-up connections, plus two directly connected computers which are located in Robert Brown's basement, and a high speed network connection which can support several users. One of the doors of the BBS leads to a virtual reality area where Brown has implemented a virtual reality, multi-user game where players can be either superheroes or supervillains. Players wear goggles to receive the visual images and a variety of sensors translate the user's movements into game input.

The game is set in "Metropolis City," a fictional conglomeration of notable land marks stolen from many real cities, such as the White House, Windsor Castle, and the Eiffel Tower. A wide variety of local land marks have also been incorporated into Metropolis City, including the San Angelo Railroad Station, the San Angelo Municipal Museum, and a nearby federal prison.

Those who participate play characters which start as low-level superheroes or supervillains. As their characters pull off crimes or stop crimes, depending on their "alignment," they receive "notoriety points" which they can either save or spend on improving their powers. A collection of Metropolis City newspapers even report the

glamorous events. When a character reaches a high level of notoriety, the character's player may elect to become an on-line GM. These characters can build new areas of Metropolis City for others to explore.

Most of the sites are not implemented in any great detail because of the large amount of work required to provide such detail, and also because some of the real sites restrict access. But the on-line GMs have endeavored to make their areas at least look like the real thing. Scanned images from postcards and slides provide most of the visual features for the game. In some cases, where the on-line GM has been able to visit the area he's keyed out, personal snapshots or images captured from video tape are used.

Other than the high number of famous places, there are several striking differences between Metropolis City and a real city. An excessive number of low-class dives can be found in all areas of the city, and there are a disproportionate number of supervillains, street gangs, aliens, and monsters. A search of the character database, for instance, would show that super-beings outnumber the normal population ten to one.

Howard Warring has played the Metropolis City game for a long time and has reached a high enough level with his character to be an on-line GM. Howard also works at the San Angelo Municipal Museum as a security guard at night, and attends college as a Computer Science major during the day. When he should be studying, he's building, or playing in, Metropolis City. Because Howard knows the Museum's security system very well, he's reconstructing it in Metropolis City in exhausting detail. In particular, those systems protecting the Jamil Diamond. This is something Howard is certain his employer wouldn't want him to do, but he thinks there's no risk in getting caught. Howard believes those who hang out behind VR doors live a vicarious life, and they'd never seriously think of actually stealing the Jamil Diamond.

Plot Summary

Of course, Howard is wrong. The detail of Howard's work has come to the attention of a group of villains who intend to steal the real Jamil Diamond. Condottiere, leader of a villain group called "The Bandits," is fond of exploring the networks and has discovered Metropolis City game and realizes the detail of the museum security system is accurate. Metropolis City provides an excellent way for the villains to formulate and refine a plan to steal the Jamil Diamond.

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When the PCs enter the scenario, The Bandits will have established characters within the game which approximate their own abilities. The villains will have a basic plan for stealing the diamond in place, and they'll be working on improving the plan so it takes less time to execute. To keep the chance of being detected down, the villains will not be on the system every night. This also serves to give the PCs a chance to learn how to use the game so they can start working against the villains.

The PCs will be able to monitor the progress of the villains' preparations, and should be able to determine when the villains will attempt to steal the real diamond. The PCs may even work within the game to falsify capabilities of the security system so the villain's plan would be flawed. The climax of the adventure occurs when the PCs interfere with the villain's plan to steal the diamond. Since the PCs should know a great deal about the villains, the ensuing fight should be resolved in the PCs favor.

Cast Of NPCs

Robert Brown

STR 10 DEX 10 CON 10 BODY 10
INT 17 EGO 13 PRE 10 COM 10
PD 2 ED 2 SPD 2 REC 4
END 20 STUN 20

Skills: Computer Programming 8-, KS: BBS Management 12-, KS: Local BBS Systems 11-, AK: Metropolis City 14-.

Disadvantages: Psych: Would rather be "net surfing"

Background: As the owner of the BBS, Robert is interested in making sure those who use his service are having a good time. Robert doesn't want trouble with the law, and will work with PCs to find the villains. At the same time, Robert would like to avoid retribution from the villains should they discover his involvement.

Howard Warring

STR 10 DEX 10 CON 10 BODY 10
INT 17 EGO 13 PRE 10 COM 10
PD 2 ED 2 SPD 2 REC 4
END 20 STUN 20

Skills: AK: San Angelo Metropolitan Museum 13-, KS: Law 8-, PS: Security Guard 11-, PS: Student 11-

Disadvantages: Psych: Booksmart but naive.

Background: Howard is a college student who regularly plays the game, and has designed the

Metropolis City museum to match the San Angelo Municipal Museum. Because he works as a security guard at the San Angelo Municipal Museum, he has become intimately familiar with the security system surrounding the Jamil Diamond. Howard is unaware of the villains and doesn't know Robert Brown.

Dexter Finche

STR 10 DEX 10 CON 12 BODY 10
INT 13 EGO 11 PRE 10 COM 12
PD 2 ED 2 SPD 2 REC 4
END 24 STUN 21

Skills: Bureaucratics 12-, High Society 8-, AK: San Angelo Metropolitan Museum 13-, KS: Criminal Law 8-, PS: Security Chief 12-, Security Systems 12-

Disadvantages: Watched by employer 8-, Psych: Conscious of museum's reputation.

Background: As the Chief of Security at the San Angelo Municipal Museum, Dexter Finche is well aware of the valuable items under his protection. Dexter is a competent man, and would be very interested in knowing about any plots to steal the Jamil Diamond. He would be willing to cooperate with the PCs, even if they're vigilantes rather than respectable persons. If the PCs are vigilantes, then Dexter will be careful not to connect the museum to the PCs and will insist the PCs be discreet so as not to endanger his position.

Security Personnel

Daphnie Sterling, Geoff Smith, and Stephen Harding are all museum security guards. Their names have been provided in case they come up during play.

The Villains

NULL, Reiver, Radiance, Clarion, Possessor, and Profiteer are all described in more detail at the end of this scenario. If the scenario proceeds as planned, the heroes will be engaging the villains from a position of superiority. GMs are still encouraged to balance the villains as they see fit, but they should keep this in mind. Heroes can do a lot of damage when attacking suprised villains. GMs are also encouraged to replace the villains presented with this scenario with their own villains. By using existing villains, campaign continuity is enhanced. You can always save the villains from this scenario to use in other scenarios at a later date.

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PART ONE: THE NET JET SET

Purpose

The purpose of this part of the scenario is for the PCs to discover the BBS, find the museum, discover the accuracy of the museum's security system, identify the intent of the villains, and begin to collect related clues. If the PCs split up, it is possible the PCs may decide to conduct some of the investigation described in this scene at the same time they work within Scene Two. This should not present a problem.

Getting The PCs Involved

For any scenario, finding a way to involve the PCs is probably the Game Master's hardest task. Seamless introductions make for smooth transitions within a campaign. While no module can adequately provide each GM with a foolproof method for getting a scenario off the ground, here are a few ideas which may help:

Computer Experience

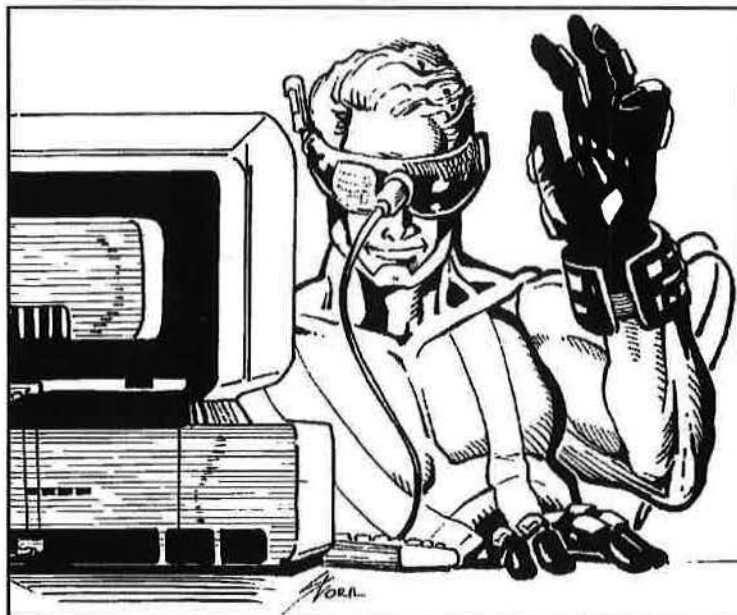
If one of the PCs has some involvement with computers as part of his area of expertise, background, or even as a hobby, he could possibly stumble across the BBS as he "surfs the net." Perhaps even an advertisement in a computer magazine or a conversation on an online "chat" could point the Player Character to the BBS.

Associates

A PC may have a friend or Dependent NPC who is into computers. In passing, the friend could mention a unique virtual reality BBS where he has been "fighting crime" a few hours each night. If the discussion of the BBS isn't enough to interest the PC, then the friend could invite the PC over for dinner, or something. Once the PC is at dinner, the friend could beg the PC to see the wonderful BBS on which he's been playing.

Using The Sysop

It's probably always best for the PCs to find the adventure, rather than for the adventure to find the PCs. But if the GM has little choice, then Robert Brown could approach the PCs. Harboring the suspicion that something strange is going on with the BBS, Robert could ask to PCs to become



involved. If the PCs are unapproachable or unknown to Robert, then one of the PCs could overhear Robert unsuccessfully trying to get help from somebody else, such as the police.

Streetwise

A streetwise character may stumble across a rumor about some villain trying to steal an experimental part from a well known research laboratory. Further investigation would reveal that this rumor stems from activities on a BBS, and the plot was completely fictional. At this point, the streetwise character may choose to investigate the BBS in order to be thorough. This approach may backfire if the PC decides the issue is resolved and the BBS doesn't need to be checked.

Discovering The Villains

Once the PCs begin to play around on the BBS, they will find the virtual reality game. At this time, within the virtual game, they can make characters. There's little point in going into any detail about their virtual reality characters at this point, as it would probably distract the players from the investigation. Let them poke around Metropolis City a little and discover the museum. It should become obvious to the players the museum is implemented in extremely great detail. One of the PCs could have visited the real museum and realize the accuracy of the detail. At this point, the characters should be wondering why the museum is so different from the rest of Metropolis City. If the PCs don't attempt to contact Robert either by sending him electronic mail or by trying to talk directly to the SysOp, then Robert will initiate a conversation with them by welcoming them to the

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game as he would any new player.

If the PCs aren't yet drawn into the investigation, then let them encounter the villains via the game. Place the PCs in a position to observe the villains. The encounter should be brief so the PCs continue to investigate. The villains might conduct one dry run on the museum, then leave after planning to return at a later date.

Interview With Robert Brown

Robert knows the detail in which the museum has been implemented, and he is concerned. He also knows from playing the game himself and from talking to others a group of players routinely attempts to rob the museum. It's not out of the ordinary for people to break into the museum, but it's rare for people to work in teams of more than two. Robert also knows all of the players of the team connect via the network, rather than through any of the local lines.

If the PCs wish to meet with Robert, he will agree. Robert is willing to help the PC in any way he can. It is impossible for Robert or the PCs to change the functionality of the BBS because Robert doesn't own the source code. So, it is not possible for the BBS software to be changed in a reasonable amount of time to monitor the villains. If the PCs want to watch the villains, they'll have to create characters and watch them from within the game.

Changing Metropolis City, however, is possible. Either Robert or Howard can change the museum. If the PCs want Robert to change the museum, Robert will point out that changing the museum will probably be noticed by Howard and the villains. Robert can set the PCs up with advanced characters if the GM doesn't want to include Part Two, or doesn't want to worry about character advancement within the game. If the PCs want to start with advanced characters, Robert will point out the other players may notice - it usually takes a while to become an advanced character.

Tracking The Connections

Tracing a connection to Howard is easy because he calls in through a local line, assuming the PCs have the appropriate skills and resources. Robert doesn't have anything which could help the PCs with this. The trace will lead to Howard's personal computer in his dorm room. Howard will cooperate if approached by the PCs. When trying to talk with Howard, keep in mind he works nights and attends classes off and on during the day, when he's not playing the game or sleeping.

Tracking the villain's connection is not possible, within the time span of this adventure, because they enter the BBS through the network. (As far as the adventure is concerned, it's impossible to track down the villains through the net.) What makes tracking people down through the net so difficult is it requires the help of a network administrator at each node along the network path. In many cases, even if you can find the network administrator for a specific site, they may not have the knowledge or the tools required.

Visiting The Museum

If the characters visit the "real" San Angelo Municipal Museum, they will most likely meet, or at least notice, Dexter Finche. If the PCs approach Dexter, he will be willing to cooperate with the PCs. If the PCs do decide to work with Dexter, and they inform him of Harold's involvement, Dexter will fire Harold and advise the museum management to bring a law suit against him for compromising museum security.

Dexter will decide to make certain changes to the security system. He would also like to increase his staff, but without knowing what night the robbery attempt was to take place, he doesn't think his department can afford it. Dexter would consider involving the police, but without any proof that an attempt will be made, he doesn't think they will help him.



PART TWO: "WELCOME STALWART CODE DOGS"

Purpose

This part of the scenario is optional. If the GM wants to introduce the Metropolis City game into the game for an extended play session, then he should insist the PCs must spend time developing their game characters. The NPCs, as well as the villains, who play the game might become suspicious of high-powered game characters who have no history in playing the game.

Encounter One — Newbies Vs. The Devastator

As newcomers to the game with inexperienced characters, the PC will encounter others who are more powerful. This "newbie" experience is a common theme within Metropolis City, and many long term players hapily recall these early struggles — it's almost a period of initiation. Those who pay their dues will eventually gather enough strength to influence events in Metropolis City. Typically, those who do not endure life as a newbie will eventually leave the game.

Actually, everyone with even a little bit of determination will survive life as a newbie. The life blood of Metropolis City is new players, as the game would wither because experienced players almost always lose interest in Metropolis City, and head for other virtual reality games seeking new challenges and different genres.

There are a few players who hold a different view of newbies. These people either believe Metropolis City is fine as it stands, and don't want to see it change. Or they feel it is too easy to progress through the newbie phase. They seek only the elite players, and want newbies to endure a more prolonged, "boot-camp" experience. And for the player of a character called "The Devastator," this is the case.

If the PCs have elected to play heroes within Metropolis City, then The Devastator should be a villain. Or if the PCs are playing villains, then The Devastator should be a hero. Basically, this encounter is straight forward. The Devastator has

decided it's time for the PCs to undergo some initiation into the "real world" of Metropolis City. Have The Devastator pick a fight with the PC's characters. The Devastator should be invulnerable. He should also act like a jerk such that the PCs might want to seek revenge at a later date (Encounter Five), after their characters have grown tougher.

Encounter Two — Elliptical Progression

The plot is not advanced by forcing the PCs to actually establish powerful characters within the game. The GM should take this opportunity to briefly describe how the PCs spend time exploring Metropolis City, how they had a few setbacks, and many triumphs, during their virtual adventures, and how they now have characters which can freely journey around Metropolis City aware of most of their surroundings. GMs may even choose to read some parts of the GM's Metropolis City description at the end of this scenario aloud for the PCs. From this point, the rest of the encounters serve to further establish the imagery of Metropolis City, as well as give the PCs a chance to discover some of the oddities of the game which may help them ultimately catch the real villains.

Encounter Three — Plank Man

One of the strangest criminals in Metropolis City is Plank Man. This character, played by a living being, rather than a virtual inhabitant, always works alone and has been able to escape from everyone. Plank Man is well known to frequently visit game players and is quite personable when approached inside neutral locales such as Big Earnie's Pawn Shop. He always seems to be carrying several wooden planks, and will gladly give one to anyone who asks. Planks have no value at Big Earnie's. If asked where he finds the planks, Plank Man will simply smile.

The secret to Plank Man's trademark, and his remarkable ability to escape, is a bug within the game's code. Apparently, any character, at any time, can reach down and rip up a floorboard; a hole is created in the floor of the area and a plank is placed into the character's "inventory." If the character's inventory is full, then nothing happens. When the character goes down through the hole he arrives in a dark room with a ladder going up. The hole is immediately closed in the previous area. As the ladder is the only way out of the dark room, characters will climb the ladder and find themselves in a wooden telegraph shack outside of

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town. This bug works in every area, including the dark room with the ladder. Even falling characters can rip up floorboards as they fall, and if they happen to fall into the hole then they'll land in the dark room.

Bringing Plank Man to justice can prove to be quite a challenge as the characters must figure out his secret. It is possible for the GM to introduce this encounter simply by having other game players mention Plank Man to the PCs as part of normal conversation. Another possibility is to give one of the PCs a quick glimpse of Plank Man's trick, but this would greatly shorten this encounter. Finally, if the PCs are having fun in the Metropolis City setting, then they might be enticed to hunt down Plank Man for a hefty game reward.

This encounter should start out with the PCs following Plank Man, watching him rob a few stores, and discovering his secret when he escapes from the police or game superheroes. Once the PCs figure out Plank Man's trick, it will be easy for them to ambush him in the dark room. Even if the PCs have decided to play villains in the game, they should still be curious about how Plank Man operates. Also, it's not uncommon for villains to prey on one another.

Encounter Four — El Loco

Eventually every character ends up at the El Loco, as drinking in Metropolis City is a way to speed the healing process, other than going to the hospital. Even if the PC's character aren't in need of healing, the El Loco is a great place to meet other game players and discuss life in Metropolis City. Questions about the scenario's villains will turn up the following information:

- 1) They operate as a group and their game characters are experienced, so they're too tough for most to take.
- 2) The group used to adventure all throughout Metropolis City, but has spent almost all of its time lately in the vicinity of the Museum.
- 3) They never socialize with others. Unlike other game players, they are never seen in the El Loco.

Encounter Five — Return Of The Devastator

If encounter One went as planned, the PC's will be looking for a rematch against the Devastator. This encounter should be just that straight forward. GMs could allow the PCs to hunt down The Devastator, simply make it a "random chance" encounter, or even send The Devastator back after the PCs attempting to repeat the lesson. Of course The Devastator will be unable to match the PC's now-powerful characters, and The Devastator will be humiliated.

PART THREE: "BIG BAD BUG HUNT"

Purpose

Now that the PCs are familiar with the BBS, it's time for them to intensify their investigation into what the villains are plotting. This part of the adventure should see the PCs observe the villains make multiple attempts at robbing the Metropolis City Museum. The goal of this stakeout should be to learn enough about the plans so the PCs can prevent the villains from robbing the real Museum in San Angelo.

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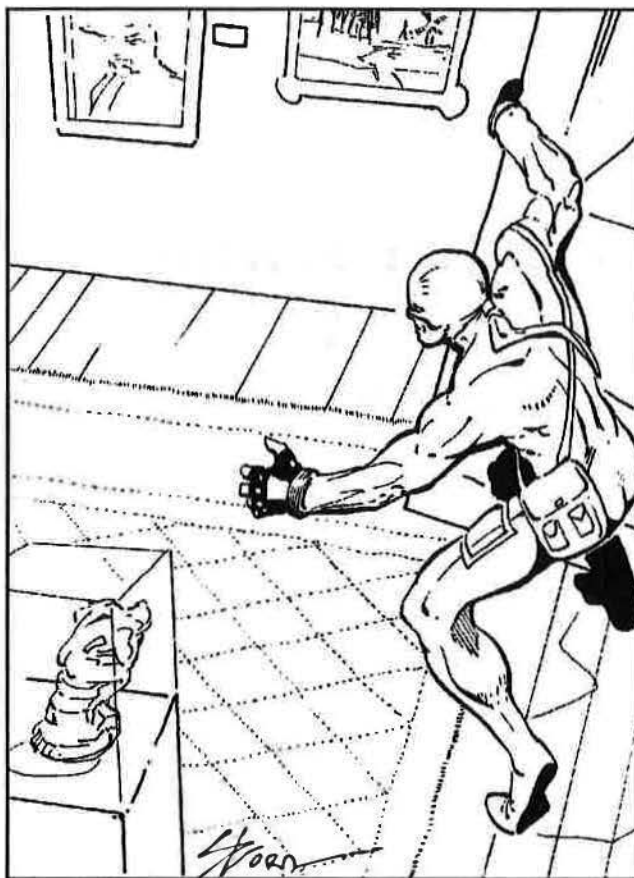
Stakeout Of The Virtual Museum

Observing the villains in action shouldn't be a problem for the PCs. The PC's characters can buy powers and skills such as invisibility, Stealth, and Shadowing to help them accomplish this goal. They can also use a few of the BBS's quirks and bugs, such as the Plank Man trick. As was mentioned before, it is not possible to modify the way the BBS works because Robert Brown doesn't own the source code. Although it's possible for a knowledgeable programmer to make changes without the source code, it would take more time than the scenario allows. Please note this is a different issue from changing the way Metropolis City is designed and built. The BBS program was designed to allow players with certain privileges to create areas, items, and characters. It's the underlying functionality of the BBS which cannot be changed within the scope of this adventure.

At some point the PCs may decide to have Robert Brown change the way the security systems work within the virtual museum. This is not a good idea for two reasons. First, the PCs probably can't prove Howard Warring isn't one of the villains. Second, the villains have been practicing in the museum for a long time, and they will almost certainly notice any changes. In a pinch, Robert Brown could point out these reasons. It would be better to change the actual security systems, which is discussed in the next part. If the PCs still insist on making changes, then the GM will have to evaluate the impact of those changes. Subtle changes will probably be fine, but something as overt as adding an extra lock to a door will make the villains suspicious.

The Villains' Plan

While the PCs observe the villains test versions of their plan, they will discover the gist of the plan: The villains want to steal the Jamil Diamond and need to spend some time working on the vault door to get into the main hall. Of course, this is impossible as long as the security systems are operational. But the villains know the system requires human intervention in the form of the key in the control center. With the aid of a few specially designed devices, the villains will enter the building and proceed to the control center where they will surprise the guards. Inside the control center, the villains will destroy any video (or other) systems which may be used to determine who performed the robbery. Possessor will make sure the guards do not remember the incident. When the control center is out of action, the security system will be useless, and the villains will be free to work on the vault.



All details of the villains' plan should be made available to the PCs, so they may best decide how to proceed in the next part of the adventure. If the PCs have a hard time positioning themselves where they can observe the plan in action, then they should be allowed to overhear the villains discussing the details of the plan. If the PCs have convinced Robert Brown to change the area, and the changes do not tip off the villains, then the villains will have to incorporate changes to their plan to deal with the new complications. Even if the changes would be obvious to the villains, the GM may choose to have the villains remain unsuspecting. After all, maybe the security systems of the museum are really changing, and Howard Warring is just keeping the information current. In light of such changes, the villains may seek to verify changes are actually taking place at the museum.

Conspiracy

While the process of refining their plan to rob the museum is almost certainly enough to charge the villains with "Conspiracy to Commit Burglary," ending the scenario in this way can be anticlimactic. This scenario is designed to keep the identities of the real villains a secret until the end, so this should not be a possible ending. Of course, inventive players may discover a way to track

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down the villains before they attempt to rob the museum. If this happens and the PCs are working with law enforcement, the District Attorney could try to persuade the PCs to wait and try to catch the villains in the act.

PART FOUR: "BUSTIN' CRIME, REAL TIME"

Purpose

This part of the scenario is the climax of the story. The villains have decided on a final version of their plans and are about to put it into effect, unaware the PCs are scrambling to prepare for a confrontation. If those preparations are made correctly, the PCs should surprise the villains and win the fight, protecting the Jamil Diamond.

Breaking Up The Actual Crime

The simplest preparation the PCs can make is probably the most effective. If the PCs arrange to hide within the museum so they can attack the villains from surprise, and they concentrate their firepower to take out one or two of the villains immediately, then they'll almost certainly win. If the PCs drag in extra help, such as the police, they will have an easier time, but they'll have to be extra careful not to tip off the villains about the trap.

Changing the security system will allow someone in the security control center to monitor the villain's progress through the building. The guards will be happy to act in that role, but most of the guards will seek to avoid a fight with supervillains. The museum will, most likely, prefer to involve the police, unless the PCs convince the museum management otherwise.

The villains will act as planned until the PCs spring their trap on the villains, or it becomes obvious the villains are in danger. The villains will want to stay and fight at first, until it becomes obvious they're about to lose. At that point, the few remaining villains will attempt to flee. The museum setting will confine the villains, leaving only a few possible exits. If the PCs have taken this into account, it should be easy for them to prevent the villains from escaping.

EPILOGUE: "MOSEY ON, DIGITAL DRIFTERS"

What Happens To The Villains

The fate of the villains depends on how the PCs operate and if they are successful in stopping the villains. Of course, if the PCs are victorious, then they'll determine what happens to the villains. If the PCs break up the robbery but one or more of the villains escape, then the free villains may attempt to rescue the rest of the team. If NULL is captured, but most of the others remain free, then they may try to break him out in hopes of getting paid at least part of what they're owed. Since Radiance and Reiver get along well, if one of the pair is captured, the other will attempt a rescue. Possessor is the odd one of the group. Possessor will not attempt to rescue anyone if she's by herself. Likewise, none of the others will attempt to rescue Possessor if she is the only one captured. Any rescue attempts will be straightforward, so if the PCs get involved the remainder of the villains should be captured.

Other Uses For Metropolis City

If the players enjoyed the Metropolis City setting, then the GM may wish to involve it in future scenarios. This virtual reality system may even provide a danger room-like capability to a poor team of heroes. PCs with computer-related backgrounds may even choose to explore Metropolis City or the virtual reality technology further, giving the GM a source of possible hooks for future adventures. Metropolis City could also be used for "holodeck"-like adventures, much as was done in several episodes of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

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METROPOLIS CITY

The Setting

While Metropolis City may resemble a real city, it is noticeably different. There isn't any unified theme to the setting, beyond providing vicarious adventure. Locations from the real world and fictional places from movies and books exist side beside in Metropolis City. The United Nations building might be across the street from an Egyptian pyramid, or the Statue of Liberty might be just off shore on an island inhabited by a sixty foot tall gorilla who is worshiped by a tribe of cannibals.

The automated characters within the game are equally diverse. Once again, reality and fiction meet. In Metropolis City, it is not uncommon to pass an alien on the street, encounter a gunfighter from the 1860's, or spot Elvis. All sorts of books, comics, and movies have been ripped off to create Metropolis City.

Important places within Metropolis City are provided to help the GM bring it to life. Keep in mind, Metropolis City is an ever-changing place. Online GMs create new areas to adventure within and old areas get removed or redesigned.

The El Loco

This virtual bar is based on the "real" El Loco in San Angelo. Of course, things have been taken to extremes. The real El Loco has a reputation for being a tough joint mostly because there are always a lot of motorcycles parked out front. Most people who talk about the El Loco have never been inside. The Metropolis City version of the El Loco is based on the rumors, only tougher. This El Loco is packed wall-to-wall with bikers, drug dealers, smugglers, bounty hunters, and mercenaries. Everyone in the El Loco is armed and has an attitude. In fact, the bar's automated characters make sure a fight breaks out every 15 minutes.

Big Earnie's Pawn Shop

At the center of Metropolis City is Big Earnie's Pawn Shop. This is where game players come to buy and sell equipment, listen for rumors, and occasionally try to defeat Big Earnie. Big Earnie is such a tough automated character that game players who knock him off not only shut down the shop for 15 minutes, but have earned major bragging rights. Oddly enough, there is no money or notoriety to be had if Big Earnie is defeated.

The Last National Bank

While game characters are free to invest their money in any of the banks in Metropolis City, this bank has turned out to be the most notable. Whenever a game bank is robbed, all the money stored within is taken, of course. Game characters with money in those banks lose that money. The Last National Bank has the best defenses of all of the banks, and since many game characters bank there, there's a steady flow of powerful customers, willing and ready to augment the bank's security.

Life In The Big City

New Metropolis City players begin with low powered characters, typically referred to as "newbies." Newbies are indoctrinated into the game by being forced to play in low-powered, more forgiving, areas of Metropolis City. These areas generally have a child-like theme. Players could end up fighting large teddy bears and toy soldiers. The newbie experience is also somewhat of an initiation period, some experienced players will give helpless Newbies a hard time. After a short while, characters become powerful enough to adventure freely.

When a game player's character is killed, a small portion of notoriety is lost and the character must sit out of the game for 15 minutes. Any money carried by the character will be lost as well. Death is never permanent for a character because the BBS wasn't designed to discourage the players. When a character gets injured, there are several ways to heal their wounds. Healing takes place slowly over time, so just standing around will eventually heal the character. For a small price, drinking in a bar speeds up the healing process. The BBS was designed this way to encourage interaction between the players. For a high price characters can get healed at the Hospital. Finally, characters who have purchased a base with healing devices can return there.

Items left laying around Metropolis City are cleaned up after a short period of time by an automated character known as "The Janitor." Only items programmed to be in certain areas are allowed to remain. The Janitor will happily dispose of any stray item, including corpses, regardless of size and weight. The Janitor cannot be hurt and can pass through any door. He is very fast, and has been programmed to say "Thank You" when he finds money laying on the ground.

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A Game Within A Game

There are several ways to handle the interaction of the player character's characters within Metropolis City. Those characters could be designed under the *Hero System* rules based on something like 100 points. Then, each encounter would be worth a large number of experience points. But this seems like a lot of work to go through if the GM isn't planning to spend a lot of time on Scene Two. A better alternative might be use the *Instant Hero* rules, which were designed to save time. Nothing says a GM has to have a formal system for moderating how the BBS works. Based on general descriptions of the characters the game players will make, the GM could "wing it" and allow roleplay to resolve encounters.

Breaking Laws (Of Physics)

One popular hobby common to game players is trying to find bugs within the system. Sometimes these oddities have been intentionally built into the game, in which case they're called "Easter Eggs" rather than bugs. Here are a few sample bugs GMs can sprinkle into the adventure as needed. This sort of information is useful when PCs converse with other game players.

- 1) Alligators in the Metropolis City sewer system never go below the surface of the water. (Bug)
- 2) Characters can stand on the clouds if they can get up that high. This doesn't prevent characters from intentionally travelling through the clouds, however. (Bug)
- 3) Automated characters only understand English, even if they speak a different language. (Bug)
- 4) Drinking from the toilet in the El Loco instantly heals all wounds. The virtual reality sights, smells, and tastes are horrible, but if you can withstand the sensation you're entitled to the reward. (Easter Egg)
- 5) When falling, if you land on a sponge you take no damage. The sponge must be placed in advance and must be moist. Sponges will only remain moist for 10 minutes before they dry out. (Easter Egg)

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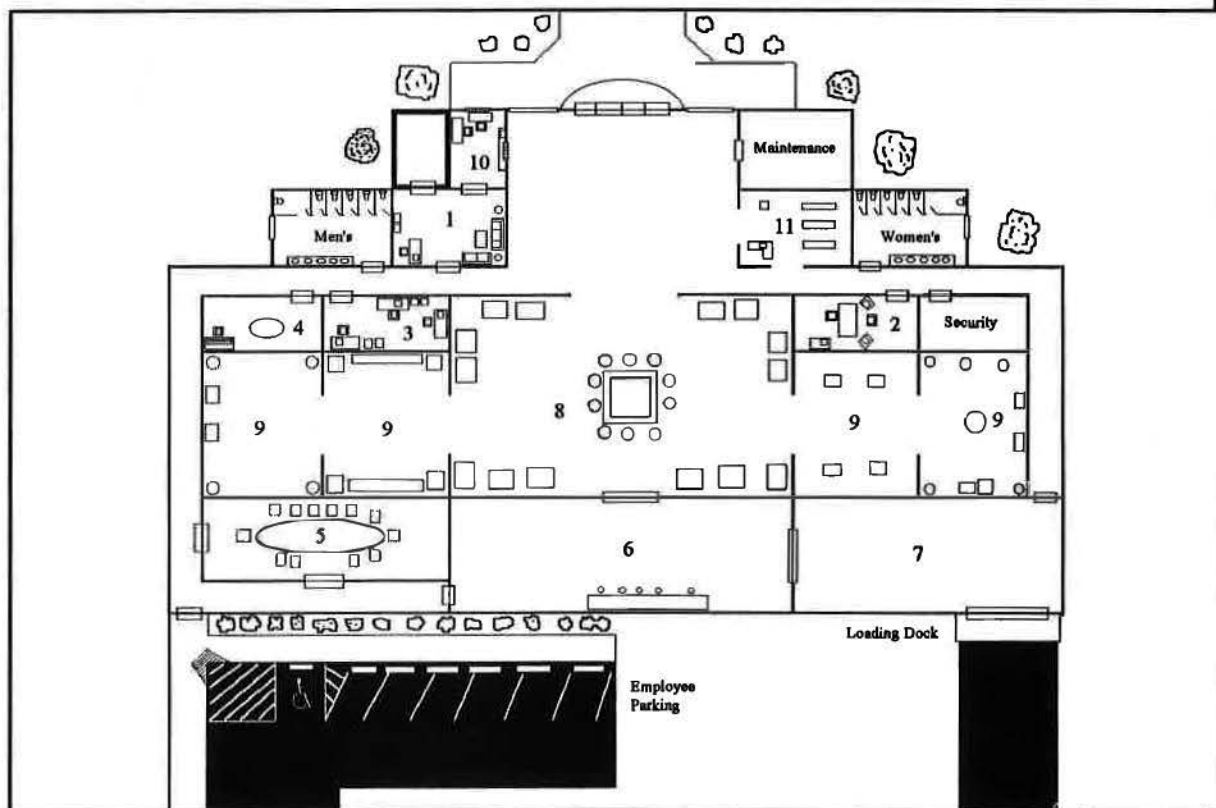
SAN ANGELO MUNICIPAL MUSEUM

The museum is actually a collection of buildings which have been built one-by-one as the museum has grown over the past seventy years. The main building houses the prominent exhibits as well as the administrative offices. The pride of the museum is the gem collection, which is permanently housed in an exhibit hall in the main building. The other buildings are dedicated to specific themes and their exhibits rarely change. For the purposes of this adventure, only the main building is described.

The Security System

While there are more advanced security systems available these days, the one in operation at The San Angelo Municipal Museum is quite

advanced. In addition to human surveillance in the form of security patrols and camera observation, the system involves a complicated web of motion detectors which work on a variety of detection schemes, such as infrared and ultrasonic. Infrared lasers also to monitor hallways and pathways between exhibits. Anyone walking between the laser and it's receptor will set off the alarm. Finally, the reinforced doors and windows are protected by strong locks and bars, and are monitored electronically by sensors mounted on the door frames. All alarms are silent, and they only signal to the control center, not to any outside agencies. The control center is responsible for initiating programs for calling the authorities whenever a problem occurs. This is a turn key operation. Alarms are not turned off when a guard makes a patrol. Instead, the control center monitors the progress of the guard. This also serves to verify the alarms are still functional. Patrols are rare, usually one every three to four hours. The Main Exhibit Hall has been built as a vault, and is locked every night. The vault doors are also on a time lock, and can only be opened one hour before the museum opens. Roving security guards do not enter this room, but it is still monitored by all of the other types of sensors.



Scale: 1/4 inch = 6 feet

San Angelo Metropolitan Museum

Map Key

1. Business Office

This office acts as a buffer for the museum management. Visitors who enter this room must deal with the receptionist. In general, the museum staff is rarely to busy to deal with visitors without appointments. Typical items found in this room are a desk, a computer, a pair of couches, a coffee table with several magazines, several potted plants, and a coffee maker.

2. Director's Office

The museum Director's office is very nicely furnished. A large, oak desk stands prominently in the center, accompanied by a high-backed, leather chair. Several other leather chairs form a semi-circle in front of the desk. A computer sits on a separate, less elaborate desk just to the right of the oak desk.

3. Assistant Curator's Office

Originally intended to be one person's office, three Assistant Curators now work out of this crowded room. Desks with computers and filing cabinets dominate this room, as do posters which picture many exotic locations around the world.

4. Curator's Office

The current Curator fancies himself as a great hunter. In addition to his antique roll-top desk nestled off in the corner of the room, there are a great number of stuffed beasts. A large table is situated in the center of the room and there's always a great deal of paper scattered across its top. Strangely, there are no chairs for the table, leaving the only seat at the Curator's desk.

5. Meeting Room

One large table and a dozen chairs almost fill this room. White-boards hang on each of the inner walls. Scribbles on these boards describe a schedule for future exhibits along with some random thoughts about how those exhibits might be decorated and lists of tasks to be accomplished.

6. Assembly Room

Sometimes pieces received by the museum require some assembly, or the displays for an exhibit need special construction. These chores are undertaken in this room. Tools, paints, and so forth can be found here, neatly organized around several sturdy work benches.

7. Receiving Bay

This large room is used to load and unload crates containing pieces for the wide variety of exhibits which pass through the museum each year. As this is the only receiving area for the entire museum complex, rather than for just this building, items from many different types of exhibit can be found in this room.

8. Main Exhibit Hall

While many exhibits at the museum reside there temporarily as they travel around the country, the Main Exhibit Hall is dedicated to the museum's own collection of rare gems. The center piece of the collection is the Jamil Diamond, which is far more valuable than any other single item. The exhibit is organized so the display cases for the other gems encircle the Jamil Diamond's case. The lighting in the room is kept dim with spot lighting focused on the collection. Because this room is in the center of the building, there are no windows. In fact, this room has been designed as a vault, so the large, steel door can be closed and locked at night.

Other Exhibit Halls

The four other exhibit halls can be filled with anything the GM desires. This might make a good way to involve a character's Secret Identity (he works as an anthropologist or expert on one of the new exhibits), a Susceptibility (takes damage from holy symbols or other items, which just happen to be in a nearby display), any Professional or Knowledge Skills, or even serve as an opening for a future adventure. Here are a few possible things on display: Egyptian relics; a survey of Inca history; an African tribal exhibit; a study of the origin of voodoo; or a recent dinosaur discovery.

10. Admissions / Ticket Office

The cashier is located in this room during business hours. A window lets her interact with visitors who have entered the museum. Typical items for this room include a pair of desks and a cash register. The register is emptied nightly just after closing. Admission to the museum is \$2.50.

11. Gift Shop

The sliding glass doors of the Gift Shop are rolled back into the walls when the museum is open. The cashier's station is located in the corner between the two doors where she can better keep track of store patrons. Like the Ticket Office, the register is emptied every night when the museum closes.

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THE CHARACTERS

NULL, a secretive man, who normally operates alone, has assembled a group of villains to exploit what he has discovered about the museum in Metropolis City. NULL needs cash to continue the search for his father, and has arranged an even split for those who help him steal the diamonds from the museum. He is really uninterested in the Jamil Diamond, but he thinks if he takes the diamond the authorities might read more into the crime and suspect somebody else.

Assembling the team was not difficult. Reiver and Radiance, for instance, were easily discovered through NULL's knowledge of the underworld. Profiteer's reputation was very well known, and although it took NULL some time to contact him, they were eventually able to come to an equitable arrangement. NULL sought out Possessor as well. NULL knew he would need the services of a mentalist, and through a great deal of research, eventually located Possessor. Clarion, on the other hand, was a local villain, and was easily recruited.

While the team is only a temporary commitment for the members, they are not taking their responsibilities lightly. NULL determines the group's goals, and provides most of the research, while Profiteer serves as team leader in tactical situations because his style of avoiding unnecessary fights best matches group goals. If a fight *does* develop, the team takes its cues from Reiver and Radiance, who have experience coordinating their attacks.

When the group breaks up, either after the robbery is complete, or if they're apprehended by the PCs, NULL, Possessor, and Profiteer will go their own ways. NULL will continue to search for his father, Profiteer will continue his solo career, and Possessor will return to her violent, difter-like life. Reiver and Radiance will also continue in their mercenary careers, possibly joined by Clarion who is clearly headed for a similar life.

NULL

Val	CHAR	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	100 kg; 2D6
26	DEX	48	14-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
10	CON	0	11-	
10	BOD	0	11-	
30	INT	20	15-	PER Roll 15-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	4D6 PRE Attack
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	3		
5	ED	3		
5	SPD	14		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
4	REC	0		
36	END	8		
40	STUN	20		

Total Characteristics Cost: 146

Movement: Running: 6"

Flight: 30"

Tunneling: 15"

Powers and Skills

Battlesuit, OIF:

Multipower, 75 Point Pool (50)

u **Laser:** EB 12d6, 1/2 END [3] (5)

u **Tunneling** 15", 15 DEF, [1/5"] (5)

u **Flight** +20" (30" Total), x8 NCM, 0 END (5)

Flight 10" [1/5"] (13)

Armor (20 PD/20 ED) (40)

Skills:

Streetwise 13- (3)

PS: Grifter 15- (3)

Computer Programming 15- (3)

Criminology 15- (3)

Cryptography 15- (3)

Mechanics 11- (3)

Security Systems 15- (3)

Systems Operation 15- (3)

SC: Computer Engineering 15- (3)

SC: Mathematics 15- (3)

SC: Physics 15- (3)

PS: Scientist 15- (3)

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 154

Total Character Cost: 300

100+ Disadvantages

Secret ID: Ian Anderson (15)

Hunted by:

Local Police (NCI, More Pow), 8- (20)

Distinguishing Feature: Pale (10)

Rivalry with other Scientists (5)

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Reputation: Grifter (5)

Psychological Limitation:

Searches for information about father (Com, Strong) (15)

Believes in elaborate government conspiracies and cover-ups (Uncom, Str) (10)

Paranoid (Com, Str) (20)

Experience: (100)

Total Disadvantage Points: 200

Background: Growing up was difficult. Ian Anderson travelled the country with his father, John, a long time grifter. Various cons and scams run by his father meant Ian would never spend more than a year or two in any one place. Life would be normal as his father established himself, but in the end, they always fled town immediately after "the sting." Ian never knew his mother, and recently he's begun to suspect John Anderson wasn't really his father.

When Ian was fourteen years old, his father's past caught up with them. The "con" didn't come off as planned, and John Anderson was discovered early in his ploy and was eventually trapped by his victims and the police. Background checks into Ian's school records had been the key to unwinding John Anderson's past. Ian's father scrambled to leave the city, but was forced into a standoff. Rather than throw down his weapon, John Anderson decided to resist. Death came quickly as he was shot down by a policeman.

Ian was left in a wake of questions and memories. Confused, alone, and betrayed Ian withdrew from society. The state placed him in several foster homes, but he always ran away, was caught and returned. School also became like a prison. Early on in high school, Ian was an outcast as he struggled to cope with his feelings of guilt over his father's death. Ian fell in with a bad crowd. The petty scams he had learned from his father, plus a few he picked up from a book by Abbie Hoffman, turned him into the leader the group needed. His reign ended when he graduated.

Despite his poor grades in high school, his social worker persuaded Ian to enter college. His education would be paid for by the government, and Ian was happy to be on the dole. College was perfect; every year there was a new crop of suckers. It was at this time Ian started to investigate his father's background. Ian began to suspect John Anderson wasn't really who he claimed to be.

A strange thing happened at this time. Ian discovered he liked investigating his father's past. He also found he could use his school work as a way to practice and perfect his investigative abilities. This lead him into computers and engineering, not so much because he was interested in those areas, but because of the similarity he could draw between solving technical problems and his own search for his father's real past. If only finding information about his father was as easy as debugging computer systems, Ian would really know his own past.

After eight years of college, Ian continued to live off the government. This time his money came from research grants, rather than from welfare. Ian unwisely spent the money on his search for his father and his grants were ended because Ian couldn't account for all of his funds. Ian took on

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many jobs as a consultant, which let his travel around the country and also allowed him to continue his search. Still, he needed money as many of the people who knew of his father demanded a high price to divulge what he needed. His father's web of deceit was very tangled — strange actions from a man who allowed himself to be caught so easily.

Ian turned to crime to raise the money. His first crimes were simple, yet exciting. He was reminded of his earlier days when he could watch his father's plots unfold. Ian knew it would be better to commit smaller crimes with a higher frequency, but this would interfere with his investigation. He took the money from his early crimes and acquired various technologies. Then, using his technical knowledge, he assembled a battlesuit. Adopting the name "NULL," a sweet and sour reference to his favorite computer programming language, Ian began a new phase in his life.

Personality: Ian is brilliant, but is too strongly focused on the pursuit of his father's past to ever benefit anyone but himself. He knows what it means to work for a living and the satisfaction it can bring, but is consumed by his obsession — an obsession which will bring about his downfall. As he discovers more and more about his father, he discovers himself. Even if Ian finds John Anderson was not his biological father, as Ian suspects, John's influence will continue; as time goes on, Ian will build an increasingly complex deception in order to preserve his twisted lifestyle.

Quote: "Complexity is but multiple simplicities."

Powers/Tactics: Ian views his powers as a means to an end. He does not seek opportunities to test his abilities. Rather, he has goals which must be realized, and if he must use his powers to achieve those goals, then so be it. Ian knows he cannot afford to stand toe-to-toe with most superheroes. Even though his laser can inflict great damage, Ian cannot withstand damage as others can. Ian believes in coordinated fire against his opponents, and he will team up with others to bring down his enemies. Although Ian will flee from a losing situation, he is not the sort of combatant who abandons his companions prematurely.

Appearance: Ian's battlesuit is black and uncharacteristically devoid of detail. The smooth, polished outer surface matches his own body's contour, except for the slightly enlarged right arm where the laser is housed. Likewise, the backplate is slightly larger for the small, yet powerful, jet engine which provides his flight capabilities. The helmet often misleads opponents, as the face mask is the same color as the rest of the helmet. Although this tinted visor provides a surface for a heads-up display and functions nicely as a set of sunglasses, it does not protect NULL from flash attacks.

REIVER

Val	CHAR	Cost	Roll	Notes
30	STR	20	15-	1600 kg; 6D6
26	DEX	48	14-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
30	CON	40	15-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	3D6 PRE Attack
12	COM	1	11-	
10	PD	4		
10	ED	4		
5	SPD	14		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
12	REC	0		
60	END	0		
50	STUN	5		

Total Characteristics Cost: 151

Movement: Running: 11"

Swimming: 2"

Powers and Skills

Brawling:

Hand Attack +4d6 (12)

CS: +1 w/Punch, Block, Grab (3)

Costume: Armor (15 PD/15 ED), IIF (36)

Running +5" (11" Total) [1/5"] (10)

Mask:

Flash Defense, 5 Pts, IAF (3)

IR Vision, IAF (3)

Skills:

+1 w/PRE Skills (5)

Acting 12- (3)

Climbing 14- (3)

Concealment 11- (3)

Disguise 11- (3)

High Society 12- (3)

Language: Spanish (3)

Oratory 12- (3)

Stealth 14- (3)

Streetwise 12- (3)

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 99

Total Character Cost: 250

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100+ Disadvantages

Psychological Limitation:

Irrational attraction to beautiful women (Com, Str) (15)

Dramatically romantic (Com, Str) (15)

Distinctive Features:

Rolls his Rs when talking (5)

Secret ID: Chavez Garcia Vasquez (15)

Susceptable to Steroids, Id6/Turn (10)

Vulnerability:

2x STUN from Chemical Attacks (20)

2x BODY from Chemical Attacks (20)

Experience (50)

Total Disadvantage Points: 150

Background: Chavez Garcia Vasquez came from a family with a strong Spanish lineage, rooted deeply in Spanish aristocracy. His family immigrated to the United States two generations ago when his grandfather broke with the rest of their clan in Spain over a matter of religion.

The Vasquez family enjoyed a prosperous life in its new country. Their home-grown chain of restaurants provided a strong flow of money, and the hard working family became very influential. Chavez was a proud son, driven to excel at whatever he did. In football, for instance, Chavez worked hard to be the best. But no matter how hard he tried, he just couldn't build up his strength like some of the others. Chavez secretly turned to steroids to gain the edge he needed. The results were incredible; the steroids had awoken his latent mutant abilities.

It wasn't until he reached full maturity that Chavez began to pay the price. He had continued his training and development as well as his use of steroids all throughout his post-college life, even though he had lost his interest in football. He simply liked his appearance. Chavez was plagued by headaches and muscle cramps. Through a short period of trial and error, Chavez systematically eliminated all the possible causes until he discovered it was his consumption of steroids. He stopped using steroids and found, not only didn't he suffer from the pain, but his physical development was unhindered.

Chavez chose to study acting in college, and did fairly well. Unfortunately, he wasn't good enough to get anything other than bit parts in Hollywood, so he accepted a role in Mexico as part of a soap opera. He was a natural in this role, and he enjoyed great popularity for several years. Then one day another man joined the show. Chavez's popularity shrunk behind the talent and charisma of the new man. Chavez was disgusted by how quickly his fans abandoned him in favor of a man who used to ride a motorcycle on American TV.

Chavez turned his back on the world and signed on as a mercenary in South America. He spent two years fighting before he had his fill. It wasn't the fighting which got to him so much as the lack of reason. Petty skirmishes in banana republics just wasn't his style. If anything, it was a lot of danger for little reward. If he wanted to be an outlaw, he would be better off working where the money was. Joined by Maria Alatorre (Radiance), a woman whom he had met in Mexico, and with whom he had enjoyed a brief affair, he returned to the United States, where his criminal career has blossomed.

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Personality: Chavez is a romantic man, but is also completely dedicated to his own freedom. He enjoys being dramatic, and feels it adds to his value as a mercenary. Life is to be enjoyed, after all. Only one thing can ruffle Chavez's feathers — reruns of a particular American TV show featuring the man who ruined his acting career. Otherwise, Chavez is an easy going individual. His self-driven youthfulness has been replaced by an older, wiser, more sophisticated, outlook on life. He knows now he cannot be the best at everything, and he doesn't have to know everything. He simply has to be free.

Quote: "Who dares to stand before the Reiver? Do you not know of my abilities? Then you have chosen your own downfall. So be it."

Powers/Tactics: Reiver is a brawler, despite all of the martial training he's had over the years. He will mix it up with almost any opponent, but prefers to take on flying characters early in hopes of preventing them from fighting from an unreachable position. Reiver has been known to haymaker prone opponents, particularly if they normally have a high DCV. If the fight is going well for Reiver, he will occasionally waste time with dramatics. Reiver tends to avoid fighting beautiful female opponents, choosing to flirt with them as the battle rages, instead. This doesn't mean he will not fight, but his soliloquies will be dedicated almost entirely to the woman.

Appearance: Reiver is a very tall, striking man with a Spanish appearance. He conceals his true identity with a bandana-like mask tied behind his head, covering only his eyes. His thick, black hair remains exposed, where it is free to be blown by the wind, or through which women may run their hands. Reiver's form-fitting costume is primarily dark blue with light grey trim along the arms and legs. His movements are always fluid and graceful, and suggest a quiet confidence in his own abilities. He's always well mannered and quick with social pleasantries, often praising people with flowery compliments. While Reiver is of Spanish descent, he grew up in America and learned English as his primary language. He speaks Spanish with an accent — better than his soap opera rival who doesn't speak any Spanish at all.

RADIANCE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	100 kg; 2D6
23	DEX	39	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
20	CON	20	13-	
15	BOD	10	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
10	PRE	0	11-	2D6 PRE Attack
12	COM	1	11-	
7	PD	5		
7	ED	3		
5	SPD	17		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
6	REC	0		
40	END	0		
40	STUN	10		

Total Characteristics Cost: 110

Movement: Running: 6"

Flight: 24"

Powers and Skills

Photokinetic Powers:

Elemental Control, 30 Pt Pool (30)

a - **Energy Blast** 12d6 EB [6] (30)

b - **Force Field** (15 ED/15 ED), 0 END
Persistent (30)

c - **Flight** 24", 1/2 END [1/10"] (30)

Combat Experience:

CS: +2 Levels w/EB (4)

+2 Range Skill Levels w/EB (3)

Skills:

Acting 8- (1)

Computer Programming 12- (3)

Cryptography 12- (3); Security Systems 12- (3)

Disguise 8- (1)

Language: English (Spanish is native) (2)

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 140

Total Character Cost: 250

100+ Disadvantages

Hunted by:

The SciLeague (As Pow, NCI, Mild) 11- (15)

Zeitgeber/"Time Giver" (As Pow) 8- (10)

Physical Limitation: Hay Fever (5)

Psychological Limitation:

Total fear of laboratories (15)

Incurable romantic (10)

Secret ID: Maria Alatorre (15)

Vulnerability:

2x Stun & Body from Light Powers (40)

Susceptability to Darkness Powers, 3d6/turn (20)

Villain's Bonus (20)

Total Disadvantage Points: 150

Virtual Ice





Background: Constantly being chased by some love-crazy German brute with time powers was bad enough, but when Maria Alatorre discovered the reason she could fly was because her father was using her as a test subject for some twisted experiment, she'd had enough. SciLeague, he had told her when she confronted him, was a collection of genetic scientists from around the world who were trying to make sure the human race evolved into something stronger. They believed only the smartest and strongest would survive in the world of the future, where unpolluted natural resources will be scarce and civilization would collapse in the name of greed.

Maybe she had been naïve, maybe she should have suspected her father sooner, but he seemed like such a nice man. It was Zeitgeber who brought her suspicions to light; her father actually insisted she marry the big Bohemian. When she entered her father's office to discuss the matter, and found his log book open to a report on the development of her powers, she knew she had to leave. She flew far from their South American home, up to Mexico, where she adopted a new identity as a computer programmer. Mathematics had always been her favorite subject, and the computer and cryptographic work she was hired for was right up her alley.

She met Chavez Garcia Vasquez (Reiver) about a year later. It was, or so she thought, a chance encounter. She was enjoying a cerveza in a noisy bar with a couple of friends after work, when Chavez ceremoniously stepped up, introduced himself while bowing formally, and asked her to Tango. Laughing, they strode onto the dance floor. The music was wrong, the floor was too crowded, and neither of them actually knew the

steps, but they carried on in mock seriousness until Maria finally broke up in hysteria. They've been friends, occasionally lovers, ever since.

It was Chavez who discovered her powers, confided his own abilities and background to her, and suggested they move to the United States and act as mercenaries. Zeitgeber had recently discovered Maria's secret life in Mexico, so Maria needed to abandon her identity in Mexico anyway, so she accepted. While life as a mercenary does give her some public exposure, it is still difficult for SciLeague to catch up to her. Combined with the zest for life she shares with her new companions, those reasons are enough for Maria to continue on with this lifestyle.

Personality: Maria hasn't been a villain very long, and even enjoys being the rookie of the team. Her father's betrayal of her trust affected her deeply. She finds it difficult to make personal commitments, which explains her attraction to Chavez (Reiver). She maintains a secret ID, not so much to hide from the SciLeague, who will eventually manage to find her no matter where she goes, but to allow her a regular life in the times between jobs. She relocates often, and prefers to live in rural places. She is a reliable member of any team, and is not one to panic when plans go awry. She likes to learn new things, and she's been studying acting from Chavez as time permits.

Quote: "Stop... err... I mean... Beware... a... superguy, or... or you'll taste, I mean... feel... my... my... photonic blast."

Powers/Tactics: Radiance prefers to keep a few hexes away from her opponents, so she can turn her accuracy (Range Skill Levels) into a form of defense. A little altitude can keep her away from ground bound opponents, but she knows there are times when it helps the team if she remains a target. Radiance will take on high DCV opponents, spreading a few dice of her energy blast to ensure a hit. Otherwise, she will work on opponents who appear to have strong defenses. Opponents using light or darkness powers are her highest priority because those powers represent a sizeable threat to her. While Radiance draws her power from light she slowly absorbs, light-based attacks are so powerful they overload and break down her mutant physiology; darkness powers deprive her of needed energy. This doesn't mean she is susceptible to being out at night time, but powers with darkness special effects do harm her.

Appearance: Radiance is a proud, Latino woman. Although the pattern of her tight costume is always the same, she has two different color schemes which she chooses between based on the mission. The red and yellow costume is primarily for day time appearances, or missions where she can afford to be obvious. The dark red and black costume is for covert roles. Radiance occasionally braids her hair, but most of time she lets it hang straight down her back.

Virtual Ice



CLARION

Val	CHAR	Cost	Roll	Notes
30	STR	20	15-	1600 kg; 6D6
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
25	CON	30	14-	
22	BODY	24	13-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	3D6 PRE Attack
10	COM	0	11-	
22	PD	16		
22	ED	17		
5	SPD	20		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
11	REC	0		
50	END	0		
50	STUN	0		

Total Characteristics Cost: 162

Movement: Running: 10"

Powers and Skills

Damage Resistance, 15 PD/15 ED (15)

Sonic Blast: EB 12d6 EB, 16 Charges, Not in a Vacuum (-1/4) [5] (48)

Running +4" (10" Total) [1/5"] (8)

Skills:

Acrobatics 13- (3)

Climbing 13- (3)

CS: +1 w/EB (2)

KS: Art History 13- (4)

Language: Sign Language (2)

Stealth 13- (3)

Total Power and Skills Cost: 88

Total Character Cost: 250

100+ Disadvantages

Distinctive Features:

Raspy Voice (5)

Body Builder (5)

Hunted by:

Local police (Mo Pow, NCI) 8- (20)

Physical Limitation:

Can't Speak for 1 hour for each Charge of Energy Blast used (10)

Psychological Limitation:

Shy (Com, Total) (20)

Tells all when captured (Unc, Strong) (10)

Always obeys orders of superiors (Vry Com, Mod) (15)

Secret ID: Alison Bjornberg (15)

Villain's Bonus (50)

Total Disadvantage Points: 150



Background: Alison Bjornberg's early life was rather uninteresting. Content to fit into traditional molds, Alison never strayed very far from the social norm. She was an average girl living a sheltered life, protected by her loving parents. It wasn't until after high school when things began to change.

A friend had talked Alison into attending college in Central Colorado, far from their homes in Virginia. Alison was alone for the first time in her life, separated from society by her lack of familiarity with her surroundings. Adding to her isolation, at the last minute Alison's friend decided not to attend college. Alison was paralyzed, unable to act because she was afraid she would somehow be an outcast — not realizing her lack of action would also condemn her to play that role.

Although she was unhappy being alone, she continually put off the decision to return home because life wasn't unbearable where she was. For the first time in her life, she was interested in school and spent more time studying than in high school. When she had free time, she would go to the stables and watch the rodeo team practice; she envied the comradery the team shared and loved the sight of the horses, but she never tried to become a part of it. The gym became her only focus outside of her school work. When working out, she can tune out everything and concentrate on herself. In the gym she can solve any problem. She can psyche herself up to do anything — anything except break out of her shell.

Virtual Ice



But her workouts had other effects. Unknown to her, Alison's mutant powers manifested themselves slowly, as her body grew stronger. Even looking at herself in the mirror, she never realized how fully she had developed.

One lazy winter weekend, she drove her beat-up Chevy up into the mountains for a mini-vacation. She rented some skis and slowly made her way cross-country into a quiet valley. It didn't take long to get away from the small town, and even though she was a terrible skier, she wasn't too far from help. She just wanted to be alone.

As she entered a stand of trees, and began carving out a place in the snow to sit down, a bear ambled into the area. The encounter was brief. At first, both she and the bear just stared at each other, suprised. Then, as the bear stood up on its hind legs, Alison screamed, fearing for her life. The bear was knocked over by the force of her blast, and ran off as soon as it got back to its feet. Alison simply stumbled around for a while, almost in shock. She was dazed, disoriented, and for some reason she had lost her voice. Later that evening, tired and hungry but able to speak, Alison returned the skis and checked into a hotel, still trying to figure out what had happened.

Personality: Alison is shy; it takes time for her to open up to others. Few people get the chance to really know Alison; she rarely gives them the opportunity. Because of the side effects of her sonic powers, Alison poses as a mute in her secret identity. She never wanted to be a criminal, but she's never found work in her chosen field of Art History. She treats crime as business, focusing on the goals, and this allows her to interact with the others. If she remains with a team for a while, she will eventually begin to open up.

Quote: "I get the impression from your neo-classical stance you're ready to fight?"

Powers/Tactics: Experience has taught Alison she can't afford to waste her Sonic Blast. She only has a few charges, and she has to make them count. Thus, she tends to pick on "targets of opportunity," such as stunned or prone opponents. When she has run out of Sonic Blasts, she will close to melee with a weak opponent and attempt to grapple.

Appearance: Clarion's extensive fitness regime has given her a lean body with strong, muscular definition. The sports top and tight athletic shorts of her costume are all medium blue in color. A pair of matching gloves cover her hands, while a domino mask hides her identity. Mid-height, cross-training shoes and a pair of white socks, folded neatly just over the ankle round out her costume. Her medium length, sandy blonde hair is almost always pulled back into a pony tail. Her tan complexion is almost too perfect, hinting she might frequent a tanning parlor rather than sun bathing. Clarion is unable to speak when her sonic powers are recharging, and will use sign language, when possible, to communicate.

POSSESSOR

Val	CHAR	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	100 kg; 2D6
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
20	CON	20	13-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
17	EGO	14	12-	ECV: 6
15	PRE	5	12-	3D6 PRE Attack
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	3		
5	ED	1		
5	SPD	23		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
6	REC	0		
40	END	0		
30	STUN	5		

Total Characteristics Cost: 100

Movement: Running: 6"

Powers and Skills

Multipower, 90 Pt Pool (90)

u - **Mind Control:** 12d6, Telepathic, 1/2
END [4] (9)

u - **Telepathy:** 18d6 [9] (9)

Hidden Flak Suit:

Armor (10 PD/10 ED), IIF (24)

Skills:

Bureaucratics 12- (3)

Conversation 12- (3)

KS: Occult 13- (3)

Paramedic 13- (3)

PS: Psychologist 13- (3)

Persuasion 12- (3)

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 150

Total Character Cost: 250

100+ Disadvantages:

Hunted by local cult (As Pow) 8- (10)

Normal Characteristic Maximum (20)

Psychological Limitation:

Forces some victims to kill or mutilate themselves (UnCom, Total) (15)

Rude, Cruel (Com, Strong) (15)

Secret ID: Caroline Harvey (15)

Unluck: 5D6 (25)

Villain's Bonus (50)

Total Disadvantage Points: 150

Virtual Ice



Background: Wilton and Francine Harvey wanted a family, but a childhood disease had left Wilton sterile. Adoption had always been a possibility, but they chose artificial insemination, instead. Nine months and ten days later, Fran and Wilt were the parents of a baby girl, Caroline.

Unknown to the Harvey's, an evil coven of witches had detected the presence of great magical potential in one of the laboratory's frozen donor sperm. Various pagan rituals were used to corrupt the spirit and foster magical ability within the gamete. Unknowingly, Fran carried the coven's progeny until birth. This would be undiscovered for years, as four months into the pregnancy, Wilt was promoted and transferred to a new job in a new city. The coven never regained contact with their protege.

Caroline proved to be too much for the Harvey's to handle. Completely rebellious, Caroline's disrespectful and dark personality drove her mother to valium and her father to drinking, ruining his career. Time after time the pattern repeated itself: Caroline would run away, chasing after some rock band, or even just wandering off searching for some arcane symbol she kept envisioning in nightmares. Wilton and Francine would search for Caroline, each time with less energy than the last. Spirit's broken, the Harvey's eventually quit trying to find her, and at age seventeen, she never came back.

Life away from home proved to be more difficult than Caroline expected. Even though she had run away before, it was always a matter of time before she was returned home to the "protection" of her parents. The cash taken from her father's wallet had run out, and she was far from home. Then she turned to crime.

Caroline had always had strange powers of control over others, this she had known since she was a child. Before, she had always used her powers in subtle ways, just to manipulate people. As time went by, she explored the depths of her power, and even sought to punish others who reminded her of her suffering. Most of the time she settled for some form of mutilation, such as having her victim saw off his own hand. But sometimes, when she was extremely frustrated, she would force her victim to take his own life.



Now that Caroline has fallen in with other villains, she feels more at ease. Her independence has faded somewhat, and she does enjoy the comfort of being a member of a team, even if it doesn't show. Just knowing there are others who face similar issues seems to make life more bearable. In fact, since joining the team, she has embraced the idea of her own death as an escape from the torments of this world. She does not pursue suicide and everytime she's found herself standing on the brink of ending her own life, she's managed to find the hope about which her mother always talked.

Personality: Caroline is a high-strung, dominating, independent woman, prone to vicious and violent mood swings. One moment she can be off by herself brooding, and another she can be searching through a person's thoughts looking for something to make them cower. She is cruel, and completely void of passion for anything or anyone she's not accepted into her tiny circle of friends. Sometimes, when she finds contempt for one of her victims, she'll have them kill, or even mutilate, themselves.

Virtual Ice



These days, she knows of the coven, and knows what they must have done to her. She does not seek a confrontation with them as she believes they are too powerful, but she despises them for depriving her of a normal life. Secretly, Caroline hopes she will find a way to deal with the coven. Perhaps then she could return to a normal life.

Quote: (Telepathic) "You look, but you can't see a reason to disobey me."

Powers/Tactics: Possessor's approach to combat is typical for a mentalist. She tries to stay away from the center of the fight, and tries to dominate an opponent with her mental powers. Her favorite targets are those who easily evade the attacks of her allies — targets with high Combat Values or high defenses, for instance. She will not attack opponents who spend a lot of time dodging or blocking, as they don't pose an immediate threat to her team. Possessor also knows she will become a high priority target if her attacks succeed. She will typically use her controlled opponents to protect herself.

Underneath her costume, Possessor wears a flak suit. She's found, from experience, other superbeings are capable of inflicting great damage. She will adopt other pieces of equipment if needed, but she would prefer not to have to carry around a lot of extra gear.

Appearance: Few people have actually seen the face of Possessor, even though she wears no mask. Her thick, voluminous, brown hair is always teased to conceal and cast shadow over her facial features. Her disguise is further enhanced by the use of theatrical makeup, which she uses to darken and blur. Possessor routinely wears a short, black leather coat, blue jeans fastened by a thin, silver belt, medium height boots with high heels, and a dark, fitted shirt.

PROFITEER

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	200 kg; 3D6
30	DEX	60	15-	OCV: 10/DCV: 10
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BOD	0	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
13	PRE	3	12-	3D6 PRE Attack
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	2		
5	ED	2		
5	SPD	10		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
40	STUN	14		

Total Characteristics Cost: 117

Movement: Running: 10"

Swinging: 20"

Powers and Skills

Multipower, 20 Points, OAF, -1 Variable
Limitation: Different Foci (-1/2) (13)

u - **Swing Line:** Swinging 20" (1)

u - **Smoke Bombs:** Darkness 2" Radius, 4 Charges (1)

u - **Flash Powder:** Flash 2d6, 4 Charges (1)

u - **Semi-Auto Pistol:** RKA 1d6+1, 7 Charges (1)

Martial Arts: (32)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Martial Strike	+0	+2	10d6 Strike
Martial Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Abort
Martial Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort

+5 Damage Classes, already added in

Costume: Armor (15 PD/15 ED), IIF (36)

Running: +4" (10" Total) [1/5"] (8)

Skills:

Acrobatics 15- (3)

Breakfall 15- (3)

Climbing 15- (3)

Combat Driving 15- (3)

Concealment 15- (9)

Lockpicking 15- (3)

KS: Appraising 12- (3)

Security Systems 15- (9)

Stealth 15- (3)

Streetwise 8- (1)

Total Power and Skills Cost: 133

Total Character Cost: 250



100+ Disadvantages:**Hunted by:**

- Condottiere (As Pow) 8- (10)
- Local police (Mo Pow, NCI) 8- (20)

Psychological Limitation:

- Distant (Com, Strong) (15)
- Competitive (Com, Strong) (15)
- Dislikes Combat (Com, Strong) (15)

Reputation: Thief, 11- (10)

Secret ID: Teshon Brown (15)

Experience (50)

Total Disadvantage Points: 150

Background: Teshon Brown wasn't able to choose his parents, or the environment he grew up in, but he was able to learn from the mistakes of others and work for a better life. His father, a gang member, was killed when Teshon was very young. His mother eventually left the gang lifestyle, struggled to make it on her own, but failed. Her drug addiction left little money with which to raise Teshon.

So, Teshon grew up a product of the streets. He managed to avoid the usual pitfalls, such as drugs and gangs, and carved out a niche as a small-time crook, breaking into cars. He generally avoided taking things of value because he didn't want to deal with a fence, so he stuck mainly to the change people saved for parking meters. It didn't seem like much, but a lot of little scores added up. Besides, Teshon didn't exactly have a lot of expenses; he was content to save his money for later. Also, if his mother discovered he was stealing, there would be hell to pay. She always held Teshon to a higher standard than she lived herself. She wanted Teshon to make something of himself, but failed to provide the stability and reliability needed. Her obvious double standard better served Teshon as an example of what not to do. Still, she was his mother. Teshon loved her, and would always pretend to be what his mother wanted him to be.

Years later, after his mother's death, Teshon was still a thief. He had tried to work, but found his idea of work didn't match that of his employers. His upbringing had never fostered the work ethic the rest of society took for granted. The only thing he knew was the street, and how to survive. This was when he met Condottiere. Condottiere, a semi-successful villain, noticed how nimble Teshon was, and how adeptly he defeated the security system on Condottiere's car. He recruited Teshon, trained him, and provided him with equipment.

Condottiere's gang was wild, and completely unpredictable. Condottiere ruled with an iron hand; his team did what he said — when he said — mostly to inflate Condottiere's reputation as a "Robin Hood"-like bandit, even though he clearly



wasn't like Robin Hood at all. This eventually drove Teshon from the group. In fact, Condottiere still holds Teshon responsible for a failed mission, even though Condottiere's show-boating was responsible.

Teshon returned to his old neighborhood, but it had been too long and his contacts were all gone. He was a stranger, years of working higher class jobs had changed him. The thought of living on the street again didn't appeal to Teshon, and almost immediately he went back to the better jobs. This time he competed against Condottiere — something which didn't go over very well, and remains an issue today.

Personality: Teshon is a world-class cat burglar, and he knows it. He also knows burglary is an occupation for the young, and he always saves a healthy portion of his payment for his retirement. He prefers to remain distant from his peers; he is afraid it will endanger his professionalism. He can't afford to let his feelings for others get in the way of his job. He has finally found the work ethic he needed years ago.

Quote: "Who for art thou, mutha...?"

Powers/Tactics: It all boils down to what Profiteer is trying to accomplish. When acting independently, Profiteer is typically just trying to steal something. When acting as part of a team, part of the job is supporting the other members.

Virtual Ice



Profiteer generally takes on higher DCV opponents, trying to knock them down so the rest of the team can finish off the opponent.

Profiteer also knows he cannot take the punishment some superpowered beings can deliver, so he'll act to preserve himself if it won't interfere with his attack routine. Profiteer will only use his pistol to threaten normals, and has never been known to actually fire the weapon at a living target. Profiteer avoids single combat whenever possible. Fighting as a member of a team is a different matter, however.

Appearance: Profiteer is a tall, African-American man. Even though his costume covers his head and face leaving only his mouth and jaw exposed, it's obvious his head has been shaved. The white eye pieces of his mask greatly exaggerate the size of his eyes. The rest of his black costume tightly conforms to the shape of his athletic body. The clasps and fittings of his dark leather bandolier, which he wears over his left shoulder, have been blued to reduce the chance of reflecting light. The bandolier is where Profiteer stores a small collection of gadgets. While the rest of the gadgets fit nicely into small, square containers, it's obvious one of the containers acts as a holster for a pistol.

NOTES ON TECHNOLOGY

At the risk of dating this scenario, obviously many of the technologies required to support this system either do not exist today, or are not yet widely available for cost, performance, or reliability reasons. A discussion along these lines could be sparked as this scenario unfolds. Although the discussion isn't a bad thing, GMs should be aware the timing of such a discussion can be bad, and can distract people from the adventure. Here's some advice for avoiding such a problem:

1. If you have players who are interested in the wonders of modern technology, or work in related fields, preface the adventure with a short disclaimer about the technologies found within. This is a game, not the real world. Many details are glossed over on behalf of the story. It is comic book science, after all.
2. Focus on the game setting and uses of the technology, rather on how technology meets these requirements.
3. If a discussion about the technical feasibility begins, suggest it take place at a later time, such as during a break, or after the game.



SAN ANGELO

History

In early 1850, Samuel Brackett packed up his family's belongings into the back of a single wagon and moved, lock, stock and barrel, to California. The Gold Rush was well under way, and Samuel was convinced that he would find his fortune in the rivers of Northern California. The Brackett family joined a wagon train and started the long, arduous journey to California.

Harsh weather, disease and Indian attacks took their toll on the party. The survivors, tired and eager to settle down, crossed into California in the winter of 1850. They set up camp at the junction of two rivers, in a central valley. The grass was green, there were plenty of trees, and the air clean. It was the perfect place to settle down, thought Brackett. There was gold here. He just knew it.

Brackett's hunch was correct; in time, several new gold veins were discovered, and the families staked their claims in the new region. A few short months after their arrival, the large camp and few family homesteads had grown to a town of more than 800 inhabitants. As word spread, the population grew tremendously, as

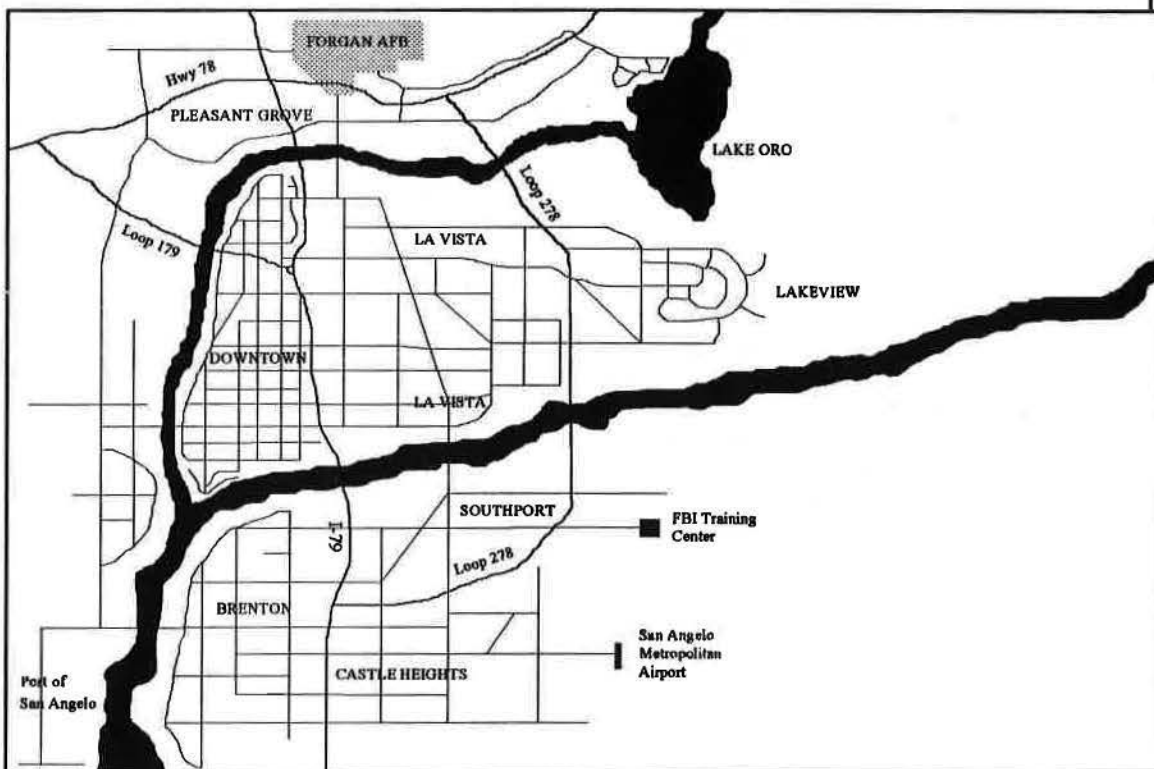
people from all walks of life and all regions of the country decended on San Angelo in the hopes of making it rich.

By the turn of the century the gold started running low, and much of San Angelo's transient population left. By this time, however, San Angelo was an established community and had since incorporated, becoming a true, legal city. A sheriff was hired, and roads were built linking San Angelo to major towns and cities in both the North and South.

San Angelo Today

San Angelo is a growing city, with a population approaching three million. Just over two million people live in the City of San Angelo proper, while the remainder live in the unincorporated County of San Angelo.

San Angelo is located on a major freeway corridor, resting amid two rivers. The rivers, fed by a nearby lake, provide easy access to the Pacific Ocean. San Angelo has prospered from both industrial developments, such as auto plants and high tech electronics manufacturers. The rich soil has promoted local agriculture, and agricultural exports make a significant contribution to the region's economy.



San Angelo

Climate

San Angelo's average temperatures range from the low 30s during the Winter, to the 100s during the height of the Summer. Spring temperatures average 70 degrees and fall sees temperatures in the 50s.

San Angelo and the surrounding area are subject to dry, hot Summers and rainy Winters. It does not snow in San Angelo. The rainy season is from November and March. Winter storms are not uncommon, and San Angelo suffers from occasional flooding in areas due to torrential rains overtaking the city's aging storm drain and aquaduct system.

Being situated in a valley, San Angelo does not have the benefit of winds moving its pollution away. Combined with the normally hot summers, the result is a growing smog problem. In fact, San Angelo's air is consistently among the top 20 US cities with the worst air quality.

Politics

The City of San Angelo is located within the County of San Angelo.

The County Board of Supervisors manages County of San Angelo, including the area consisting of City of San Angelo proper. Five County Supervisors sit on the Board, who make zoning and budgetary decisions, as well as enacting local laws (County Ordinances) affecting the unincorporated portions of the county.

The incorporated City of San Angelo is managed by a seven member City Council. The City Council parallels the function of the County Board of Supervisors, including establishing their own zoning, commercial growth development and local laws (City Codes) within the city.

Public Safety

All public services within the County are handled by County agencies. Law enforcement is handled by the San Angelo County Sheriff's Department, which staffs the jails, provides security for the San Angelo Municipal Courts, and patrols the county streets. Traffic enforcement, through a special agreement, is provided by the Highway Patrol.

Within the incorporated city, all law enforcement functions, including traffic enforcement, are handled by the San Angelo Police Department.

Fire protection services are provided by several independent fire districts. There are a total of six fire districts; three each in the county and city. These districts also provide rescue in addition to fire response.

The Justice System

The San Angelo County District Attorney's Office prosecutes all cases generated within the County and the City. The San Angelo Superior and Municipal Courts merged in 1992, and handles all criminal and civil cases, with the exception of Federal criminal cases.

Health Care

There are seven hospitals located throughout the county. Three are privately run, while the remaining four are operated by private HMOs. In addition, there are numerous clinics located throughout the county, including several Federally subsidized free clinics.

Entertainment

San Angelo has a big sports following, although it is home to only two professional sports franchises — the San Angelo Nuggets basketball team and the San Angelo Miners football team. There are two stadiums supporting these teams, including the San Angelo Sports Complex and the Texxon-owned Golden Dome.

There is the usual assortment of movie theaters, including two drive-ins, and the San Angelo Center for the Performing Arts, which sports an outdoor amphitheater and large indoor stage theater. Several community theater groups also operate small neighborhood play houses.

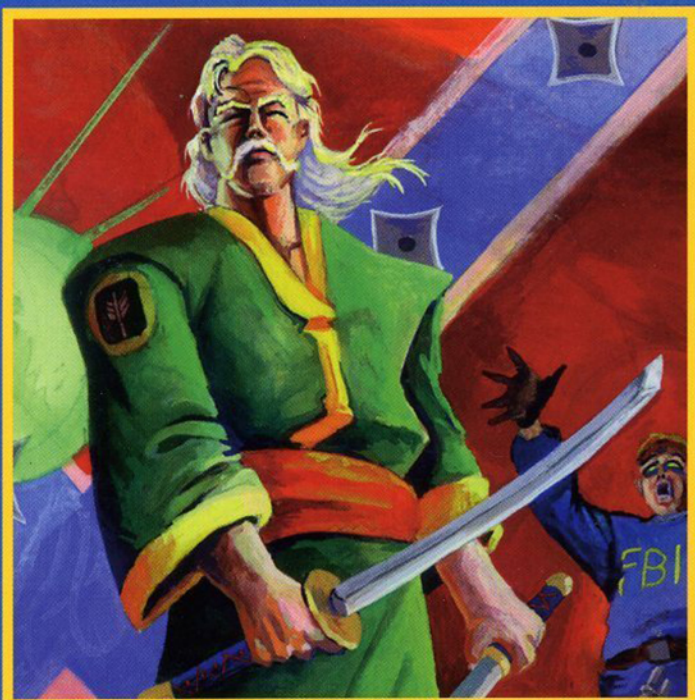
The San Angelo Metropolitan Museum houses a large collection of historical and natural artifacts, and includes an art exhibit, natural science exhibit, planetarium, as well as hosting special travelling exhibits, such as the Jamil Diamond.

A large recreation area is located at the lake, providing camp grounds, boating, fishing, and other outdoor activities. The rivers provide additional water recreation, and there is a growing commercial presence along the riverbank near downtown. There are also two public golf courses.

The San Angelo Zoo contains over 140 animal exhibits, and the San Angelo Aquatic Center contains a large aquarium and has hourly dolphin and whale shows.

Education

Two State Universities are located in San Angelo, including the University of San Angelo and Del Oro State University. In addition, there are four community colleges, and several private instructional schools.



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