

SONS OF THE GUN

M&M
SUPERLINK



VILLAIN SOURCEBOOK



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INTRODUCTION

Most prominent comic book characters possess something that sets them apart from the norm, often in the form of special powers, equipment, or inspiration. These individuals may be blessed with superhuman strength and durability, or they may boast more esoteric abilities, such as telekinesis or intangibility. These characters use their amazing supernatural powers to attain their goals, whatever they may be.

It has become increasingly common, however, for characters to make use of guns. The firearm is a fairly new thing to the world (newer, anyway, than the idea of incarnate gods), and with its advent and subsequent rise to prominence, humanity's perception of conflict has changed forever. With time, the influence of the gun has slowly drifted into the world of comics and cartoons, and many superheroes and supervillains, as well as those individuals somewhere in between, have taken up the weapon. The storytelling potential involved in introducing relatively accessible, deadly, and easy to use (if not easy to master) weapons is undeniable, particularly in the tales of vengeance so common in comics.

Characters whose concepts revolve around the gun tend to be much darker than others, likely due to the associations we make with such weapons in the real world. This does not, however, make those characters less interesting; as a matter of fact, their reliance on weaponry often reflects unique circumstances or psychological quirks other heroes sometimes lack. While these children of contemporary gun culture may possess special talents and supernatural abilities of their own, many do not, and they have all adopted modern implements to even the odds when faced with paranormal opposition.

The firearm alone, however, is not what sets them apart, although the focus and discipline necessary to master the weapon unites these individuals and differentiates them from mere gun-toting punks and street gangsters. Inside or outside of the so-called "grim n' gritty" paradigm, the use of such characters in modern superhero fiction grounds their stories in the real world while providing a fresh perspective on the genre's strengths.

WHAT IS THE INFINIVERSE?



Simply put, the Infiniverse is Big Finger Games' own superhero universe. Our goal with this book is to not only start laying the groundwork for the Infiniverse setting, but more importantly, to show you some of the great characters that occupy that universe. Make no mistake, the characters in this book are written to be as readily adaptable to your own campaign as possible. If they are taken as is, these characters provide some insight into this new setting, but they can also be easily incorporated into any superhero campaign.

Often, such characters are seen as the antithesis of four-color superheroics, when in fact they are merely a contemporary interpretation of comic book archetypes. The ten characters presented in *Sons of the Gun* are intended to add a new, contemporary dimension to existing games rather than completely alter their respective tones or directions.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Sons of the Gun features a variety of villains for use with the M&M system. Each character has a complete history and a couple of adventure hooks that make it easy to put the villain to use immediately.

Besides their obvious use as antagonists for your heroes, characters in this book can serve as samples of different villainous archetypes or can be used as the basis for creating a character with similar abilities. However you choose to use them, feel free to modify the characters in this book in any way you see fit. In addition to the characters' backgrounds, vital statistics and game stats, you'll find a variety of sidebars throughout that are designed to give you more opportunities to incorporate the characters and



You should feel free to replace any heroes or organizations mentioned in this book with preexisting analogs from your own setting. For example, Maxwell Technologies serves as the archetypal high-tech corporation owned by a billionaire playboy who secretly fights crime. If you already have a similar character and corporation in your own campaign you can simply replace Maxwell Technologies. If you want to use the characters and organizations presented in this book as is, then you can find more information on them in the glossary on page 48.

concepts presented in *Sons of the Gun* into your own game. You'll find the sidebars under headers such as *Origin-In-A-Box* and *Story Point*. The purpose of these sidebars is explained below.

The Origin-In-A-Box sidebar offers ideas for a unique origin for a new hero. These ideas often stem from events in a villain's background and will thus give the hero an innate connection to the villain and the campaign's history. This can give rise to many adventure opportunities and will often give the hero a nemesis or rogue's gallery to contend with.

The Story Point sidebar offers suggestions on incorporating a villain's background and history into your campaign. It provides opportunities for the heroes to take part in or witness a critical point in the villain's history. This allows for a more organic approach to introducing the character and can allow heroes to participate in the events that led the character to become the villain that they are today.

You'll notice a slight difference in the way the characters' backgrounds are structured. Beyond the usual entries for the character's history, personality, appearance, and powers and tactics, you'll also find sections entitled *In Game* and *Endgame*. The purpose of these sections is described below.

The In Game section will provide you with suggestions on how to use the character in your campaign. It will also give you a series of adventure hooks that can be used to create scenarios involving the villains and their schemes. The In Game section will also usually give you some idea of the villain's current activities and agenda.

Since villains and some flawed heroes or vigilantes often meet their end as the result of their own hubris or misguided goals we

have provided a section called Endgame. It has been noted that comic book heroes don't conform to Campbell's monomyth because most superheroes never complete their journey; their story never reaches an end. Instead they often adhere to the more simplified American monomyth of the outsider who solves the problems that have upset society's peaceful status quo only to disappear back into obscurity, or in the superhero's case, to disappear back into a secret identity. Since villain's need not adhere to the structure of any heroic myth, we have provided the characters in this book with a sort of villainous monomyth – an origin, villainous capers to play out in your campaign and, ultimately, an Endgame. Each Endgame will differ, some provide redemption or a resolution to the troubles that have inspired the character's villainy, while others provide a violent end, a "just desserts" for the villain whose fate is one of self-destruction. Of course, we're operating in a superhero paradigm so mysterious deaths, resurrections, and rebirths are usually just around the corner, or on the next page. You should never feel pinned down by any of the ideas in this book; you can adapt, alter, and reinterpret any of these concepts or characters.

Finally, *Sons of the Gun* provides a brief look into the growing Infiniverse setting. This superhero universe will be expanded, explored and advanced with each new release in this new M&M Superlink line from Big Finger Games.

So, if you're ready... let's lock and load!

BANDIT

Daykin Lee was an infamous outlaw who made himself rich many times over in the 1860s by robbing banks, ranches, trains, and anything else he thought he could handle. Lee was deadly accurate with his six-shooters, and many a posse was forced to break and run in the face of his furious gunplay and animal cunning. Despite being a scoundrel, tramp, and general ragamuffin, Lee had a fine, noble face and something of a silver tongue, and he often managed to stay one step ahead of the law by appealing to lonely, quixotic, or simply unprincipled women, who would shelter or aid him. Many times, he had to promise them something, whether a cut of his "earnings," a trip to an exciting location, or a wedding ring. Unsurprisingly, he rarely delivered on his promises, and Lee left many a broken heart in his wake.

It eventually caught up with him, however, when he bargained with the elderly seer known only as Miss Gale. Lee had been on the run from Coyote Sand, the legendary roaming Cherokee lawman and mystic who'd put away or put down hundreds of outlaws like Lee over the course of his career. It was said that Sand could track a man for hundreds of miles without sleeping or losing the trail even once. Lee had thought he'd found just what he needed when he saw what was obviously a Gypsy woman's wagon. A sign advertised, "Miss Gale, Fortuneteller." Lee entered, turned on the charm, and eventually asked for her help, and the old, lonely woman readily agreed. All she asked in return was for Lee to father a child for her. Though he found the woman repulsive, Lee agreed, reasoning that he could easily escape on his horse once she'd aided him.

When Coyote Sand caught up to Lee, the old woman called forth evil spirits to drag him into the Underworld. While the two mystics battled one another, Lee rode out into the night. Somehow, though, Gale was waiting for him at a watering hole a few weeks afterwards, and she made it plain that she meant to collect her prize. Lee feigned relief, rented a room, and shot her in the back as she undressed. Then, he fled. The town doctor could do little for

Miss Gale, and it took her a long time to die. In her death throes, the old woman called down a curse on Lee, and it took effect immediately. *Never*, proclaimed the old woman, *would he again know charity or even peace but for the power of the gun.*

Lee found his dealings with others grow... complicated. It seemed that, no matter how well received or charming he was, almost no one would do anything for him. Passing men, checking their pocket watches, would not give him the time of day, and shopkeepers would not sell him their wares. Lee soon had to draw his guns on folks in order to acquire anything, from a new hat to a glass of water. It didn't take long for the law to come down on him. Hard. Lee was chased into the wild by several dozen lawmen, including Coyote Sand, who'd only recently escaped from the Underworld the woman had banished him to. Miserable, filthy, and caught up in despair, the cornered outlaw did the only thing he could think to do. He took his own life by leaping from a high cliff. Unfortunately, this would not be the end for him. The old woman's curse forbade him the peace of this death, as his guns did not bring it about. Instead, his soul was bound to his weapons, and though his body was discovered, spat on and buried in a shallow grave, Lee existed on in torment.

That is, until he was found over a century later by young Wei Kim Li, a wanderer, grifter, and would-be Bohemian poet. American-born Li had left his traditional Korean family behind several years ago to pursue a new, freer lifestyle on the road. Barred from ever returning home, he'd learned a number of harsh lessons as to the nature of his new life, many of which involved things that needed to be done in order to prevent starvation. He took to con games,

pickpocketing, and other unscrupulous activities to pay for food and (on occasion) lodgings. Li learned to take care of himself by necessity, and after six years as a drifter, he'd fully adjusted to the life.

This life changed dramatically when he saw the twin Colt revolvers blazing bright blue from within a wall of dried shrubs near the railroad tracks. They were cool to the touch, and as Li grasped them, his mind filled with images of

VITAL STATS: BANDIT

Quote: "CRIMINAL? I AM A WARRIOR-POET."

Real Name: Wei Kim Li

Aliases: None

Occupation: Wandering gunman

Legal Status: United States citizen

Identity: Secret

Marital Status: Single

Known Relatives: None

Affiliation: None

Base of Operations: Santa Obscura

Height: 5'5"

Weight: 125 lbs.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Brown

Distinguishing Marks: Guns tattooed on the backs of his hands and long, luxurious black hair

daring robberies, of a masked man robbing trains and banks. He felt exhilarated. The guns flashed and changed shape in his hands until he was holding a gleaming pair of blue-silver semiautomatics. With these, he reasoned, he could get somewhere, be someone. And inside, he felt Daykin Lee, "hankering" for adventure.

When he returned to civilization, Li found that no one would deal with him. When he would try to buy beer or cigarettes at convenience stores, the owners would draw firearms from underneath their counters and demand that he leave. His usual drug connections would break and run any time he asked about business. The demo ladies at department stores and marketplaces would slap his hands when he reached for the free samples arrayed about them. Eventually, he had to draw one of the weapons, and he found that doing so was his only hope of getting anything from anyone. Wei Kim Li reluctantly became the masked supercriminal known as Bandit, and he is now wanted for a string of armed robberies, attempted murders, and related, if less serious, crimes.

As he became more experienced, he discovered more about the abilities his weapons grant him. He seems to have inherited Daykin Lee's combat acumen and natural agility, and as Bandit, his fearsome ability to draw vitality from his targets makes him an even more deadly opponent. Most useful to him is his ability to store his weapons as tattoos on the backs of his hands until needed, allowing him to transport them inconspicuously into banks, airports, and similar

secure locations. Now beginning to enjoy his new, exciting lifestyle, Bandit has begun selling his services to other criminals who might be able to make use of his talents. Unfortunately, the old woman's curse extends even this far, and Bandit is almost unfailingly double-crossed. But it's fine by him. He's having the time of his life.

PERSONALITY

Once a simple seeker of excitement and new thrills, Li has become a hedonist of the most horrendous sort. He takes what he wants, when he wants it, with no regard for others. He does anything he feels might be fun at a particular moment. Li is a boisterous, adventurous young man, and he fears little. Often, it seems that this courage lends him prowess, as, with wild abandon, he attempts complex acrobatic maneuvers and feats involving great risk of bodily injury.

Li fancies himself a true poet and something of a smooth talker, and when he wants to lay it on thick, he often incorporates his poetry into his language. Unfortunately, he is an amateur poet, at best, and even his most romantic drivel seems overdone, underthought, and more than a little disturbing to all but the most sheltered

and lonely bumpkins. Despite this, one cannot forget the fact that Li has lived a hard life on the streets, and he is no stranger to violence or death. He has puzzled out that the guns are the cause of his current ills (and the reason he must steal), but to him, they are all that make him extraordinary, and he is reluctant to go back to being a wandering bum. Not only can he use his current activities to get rich enough to retire when he's too old to live the life anymore, but the life of a wanted man is also a source of much exhilaration.

APPEARANCE

Since becoming Bandit, Li has cleaned himself up, somewhat. He's actually an attractive young Korean American with high, prominent



cheekbones and sharp, brown eyes. Although he has once again started shaving (he can now afford razors), he still keeps his sideburns thick and his luxurious black hair long, tied back behind his head in a thick ponytail that curls like a snake when he moves. Li is well muscled, if short, and thanks to years of a harsh, street lifestyle he can certainly hold his own in a brawl, even without drawing his weapons. As Bandit, Li wears a small, black mask over his eyes, and a bulky, black duster with gleaming blue dragon designs splayed along his sleeves and back. He tends to favor dark shirts and pants, and he currently sports a pair of leather boots lined with numerous silver studs. Bandit moves lazily until a gunfight erupts, at which point his languor is replaced with deadly precision. When they're in his hands, his silver-blue semiautomatic pistols are surrounded by phantom remnants of Daykin Lee's soul wailing softly and trailing ghostly white afterimages as Bandit moves.

POWERS AND TACTICS

Bandit draws most of his abilities from Lee's pistols, which now look to be standard, if flashy, Glock semiautomatics, rimmed in white phantom imagery of the old outlaw in torment. The guns never run out of ammunition, and their range is extended greatly. Bandit's accuracy with his weapons is uncanny. Though he had never fired a gun before finding the pistols, Li can now peg a coin tossed in the air from over 50 yards away. Bandit's ghostly weapons not only deal horrendous wounds, but also drain a small amount of a target's vitality to strengthen their master, and even those individuals normally impervious to bullets eventually succumb to this vampiric effect. When not in use, the guns can be transformed into small, blue tattoos on the backs of his hands, though it takes but a thought to re-summon them in a flash of pale light. Bandit tends to be a bombastic, athletic combatant, and much of his fighting style is a mix of dives, jumps, and rolls, all performed while blazing away with both barrels. Most of his miraculous dodges and trick shots almost seem accidental, and many an opponent has underestimated this lethal gunman, only to end up dead. Thanks to the old woman's curse, it requires an act of will for anyone to give Bandit something he desires or asks for unless the request is made at gunpoint. Another interesting side effect of the curse is that Bandit heals most forms of damage very quickly. Even the most grievous wounds inflicted upon him stand a fairly good chance of healing within a minute. Gunshot wounds do not heal so fast, however, and they can kill Bandit permanently. If he somehow dies in any way other than a gunshot wound while wielding the

BANDIT

PL 10

STR

+1

12

INT

+1

13

DEX

+6

22/14

WIS

+2

14

CON

+2

14

CHA

+2

15

TOUGHNESS

+7/+2*

FORTITUDE

+5

REFLEX

+10

WILL

+5

*flat-footed

SKILLS

Acrobatics 8 (+14), Bluff 8 (+10), Diplomacy 6 (+8), Disable Device 2 (+3), Disguise 2 (+4), Drive 2 (+8), Intimidate 10 (+12), Knowledge (streetwise) 4 (+5), Perform (oratory) 3 (+5), Sleight of Hand 5 (+11), Stealth 6 (+12)

FEATS

Improved Initiative, Redirect, Sneak Attack

POWERS

Enhanced Dexterity 8, Enhanced Feats 14 (Acrobatic Bluff, Ambidexterity, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 5, Evasion, Improved Critical [blast], Improved Defense, Precise Shot 2, Uncanny Dodge [visual]), **Blast 8** (Power Feats: Accurate 3, Split Attack; Extras: Autofire, Penetrating, Vampiric), **Regeneration 16** (Recovery Bonus 3, Injured 4, Staggered 4, Disabled 5; Power Feats: Persistent, Regrowth; Flaws: Not Usable Against Ballistic Damage)

DRAWBACKS

Cannot be given anything except through intimidation or force (very common, moderate)

COMBAT

Attack +6, +12 (Blast), Grapple +7, Damage +1 (unarmed), +8 (Blast), Defense +13, Knockback -3, Initiative +10

TOTALS

Abilities 22 + Skills 14 (56 ranks) + Feats 3 + Powers 76 + Combat 38 + Saves 10 - Drawbacks 4 = 163 PP

cursed guns, Li's soul will be drawn in to join Lee's in perpetual agony, perhaps making the weapons even stronger.

You are the descendant of Coyote Sand, a Native American from the 19th century. Coyote was a lawman and mystic who wandered the old west bringing outlaws to justice and combating evil spirits and other oddities that haunted the land. Nothing is known of Coyote's ultimate fate, but it is presumed he died fighting some forgotten evil or in the pursuit of justice in the lawless west. Your father and grandfather before you carried on Coyote's legacy to protect their people and to fight against the strange things that still stalk the untamed places. In this task you are armed with Sand's journal and the Spirit Guns, a magical pair of Colt 1873 Peacemakers, Cavalry Model.

This origin can give rise to a variety of adventures. The character is equipped with Sand's journal – a guide to the legends of early America. The journal details creatures and myths such as the Wendigo, the lake monster Natiaka (a.k.a. Ogoopogo), the Fountain of Youth, the Tsul 'Kalu (a Cherokee version of the Sasquatch), the Jersey Devil, Uktena (a horned snake monster from Cherokee myth), and so on. The character may also be visited by Sand's spirit who may dispatch advice or warn of impending troubles. The statistics given below may be adjusted to better suit the PL of your campaign.

Spirit Guns: Device 5 (easy to lose): Favored Opponent (Supernatural Creatures from North America) 1, Critical Strike; **Blast 8** (*Power Feats*: Accurate, Affects Insubstantial 2, Alternate Powers – **Stun 8**); **Super-Senses 3** (Accurate Magical Awareness); *Power Feats*: Restricted — Only Usable By Coyote Sand's Lineal Descendants. **Cost**: 16 PP

Coyote Sand's Journal: Device 3 (hard to lose): Knowledge (arcane lore) 8 ranks; Assessment, Ritualist; **Nullify 10** (Magical Powers; *Power Feats*: Alternate Power — **Nullifying Field 10**; *Extras*: Duration [Concentration], Range [Perception]; *Flaws*: Action [Full], Tiring). **Cost**: 12 PP

Coyote Sand, Spirit Guide (PL 9/ Sidekick Rank 16)

Str -, **Dex 12**, **Con -**, **Int 16**, **Wis 18**, **Cha 14**

Skills: Knowledge (arcane) 12 (+15), Notice 4 (+8), Sense Motive 4 (+8)

Feats: Ritualist

Powers: **Immunity 30** (Fortitude), **Invisibility 6** (normal vision), **Insubstantial 4** (*Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Limited [vulnerable to magic], Permanent), **Regeneration 4** (Recovery Bonus 2, Resurrection 2)

Combat: Attack +0, Defense +1, Knockback -0, Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +0, Fortitude +0, Reflex +1, Will +7

Totals: Abilities 0 + Skills 5 (20 ranks) + Feats 1 + Powers 71 + Combat 2 + Saves 3 = 80 PP

IN GAME

Bandit can be involved in any caper involving theft or acquisition. Generally, he is a solo villain, but he can occasionally be found in the employ of another, more powerful character. Alternately, he may simply be helping out an unscrupulous acquaintance or friend. Another interesting possibility has Bandit actually leading a group of villains, likely with threat of force (and an imminent betrayal on the horizon). Whatever the case, his propensity for being betrayed rather than paid makes for almost unlimited opportunities for plot twists; the only side Bandit can afford to take in any given conflict is his own.

Bandit's abilities can make for a good match-up with a marksman or scoundrel PC with similar interests or abilities. PCs who learn the truth behind Bandit's powers and truly wish to stop him might do well to convince him to relinquish Lee's pistols. A quest

to destroy these items can be the focus of an entire campaign arc. A series of plot hooks follow:

Must be Good Chocolate: PCs at a convenience store witness an early robbery by Bandit. They notice him at the register as his weapon blazes into existence in his hand, pointed at the clerk. Clutched tightly in his other hand, he holds a candy bar. "You're going to sell this to me," he says, "I'm pretty damned hungry." The clerk's face, which had only recently been set in a stubborn scowl, becomes quite frightened. The clerk reluctantly takes Bandit's money, and, unless the PCs do something, Bandit flees the scene long before police arrive. If they do interfere, they're in for an intense fight. Bandit is pretty put off that he has to resort to threats just to eat. It is assumed that this encounter takes place early in Li's new career as a supercriminal, and this is a great way to introduce him into a campaign.

Balladry and Doggerel: Li finds himself smitten with an important NPC in the campaign. This NPC even feels an attraction to Li, but when she attempts to express that affection she finds she cannot, for even love cannot be given to Li freely. Bandit quickly makes a pest of himself as he regales the object of his unrequited affection with verse and poetry. This will be the first time Bandit will regret his solitary existence. When he realizes the curse is working against him he may embark on a spree of theft and mayhem in a fit of frustration.

X-treme Bandit: Bandit's adventurous nature has risen to the next level. He has recently taken to extreme sports. PCs begin to hear reports of famous skydivers, bungee jumpers, stuntmen, and similar sportspeople being kidnapped, only to be found again weeks later. When interviewed, these individuals report being forced to tutor Bandit in their trades. It turns out that Bandit is looking to branch out a bit and incorporate a few more skills into his repertoire. Unfortunately, there is no way he could successfully pick up these skills by legitimate means, so he's kidnapping specialists worldwide and forcing them to teach him using equipment he's stolen. PCs should wonder what kind of caper he's gearing up for, and how these numerous skill will play into his next heist. If he can be caught before it goes down, then all the better. If not, however, the PCs will be in for a wild ride when it does come time to apprehend him.

ENDGAME

Coyote Sand, the Native American lawman from the 19th century who first pursued Daykin Lee, has found himself unable to find peace while the scoundrel's soul is free to cause evil in the world. Sooner or later, the spirit of the shaman contacts a magically inclined PC or friend of the characters – who may well be Coyote Sand's descendant – from beyond the grave. He seeks the heroes' aid in using his supernatural power to put Lee down once and for all. This likely involves finding some way to dispel Miss Gale's curse binding Lee's spirit to Bandit's guns. Bandit,

however, is sure to object, and the PCs will have to contend with him as well.

FORECAST

Cassandra Leiber was an ex-CIA field operative with a fair amount of experience under her belt. She survived many a dangerous mission, thanks primarily to her quick wit, resourcefulness, and general cool under fire. Her superiors regarded her as a solid choice for any mission, and she managed to climb the ranks very quickly. Unbeknownst to even her closest comrades, however, was the fact that Cassandra Leiber was a mutant with powerful precognitive abilities. It is still unknown how she kept it under wraps for so long, or why no one ever suspected that she was at all remarkable until she became a field agent. It was her ability to see into the future with near perfect accuracy that kept her one step ahead of her enemies and allowed her to be in exactly the right place at the right time, with just what she needed in a given situation. Unfortunately, this ability did not save her on her last mission for the CIA, a particularly grisly affair that left her right arm severely damaged. Though the medics salvaged it, much of the muscle tissue was torn away, and her injury left her relegated to a desk job. She left the agency on fairly good terms, with a near perfect record and enough experience to do what she'd always wanted to. She went into business for herself and founded Prophet, Inc.

Prophet, Inc. is a multinational private security corporation that hires out professionals to protect individuals, sites, or sources of information. Premium customers can afford to pay for Leiber's personal services. For these clients, she uses her abilities to determine if and when a subject will be the target of an attack, intrusion, or similar event, and then assigns operatives whose talents best fit the situation. Prophet, Inc. is a business, and as such, its services are available to anyone willing and able to pay the fees. A strict privacy clause in Prophet contracts ensures that no company operative will compromise the location, security, or legal status of

VITAL STATS: FORECAST

Quote: "YOUR FUTURE BECOMES A BLANK ABOUT TWO SECONDS AFTER YOU CROSS ME. . ."

Real Name: Cassandra Leiber

Aliases: None

Occupation: Security specialist, former CIA operative

Legal Status: United States citizen

Identity: Public

Marital Status: Single

Known Relatives: None

Affiliation: Prophet, Inc.

Base of Operations: Unknown

Height: 5'6"

Weight: 105 lbs.

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Brown

Distinguishing Marks: Cold, still eyes that never seem to blink

a past, present, or future client. Sadly, of those who need protection, the wealthiest are typically the least worthy. Prophet specialists can often be found working for odious criminals, politicians, and evil masterminds whom authorities or super-human heroes might otherwise apprehend. Many of these villains have rewarded Cassandra's service and personal attention with gifts. The mysterious Raiju, for example — known to Leiber only as an evil but anonymous genius with a particular affinity for cybernetics and robotics — crafted a cybernetic sheathe for her arm that, while worn, restores an impressive degree of functionality to the limb. And Cassandra is never far from the twin plasma pistols she received as a special bonus from the arms czar known as Merchant.

Leiber herself is often in the field, under the codename Forecast. Her personal team is widely regarded as the best in the business, sure protection against any mundane threat, and a very difficult nut for metahumans to crack as well. Cassandra's levelheaded, no-nonsense attitude and superb athletic abilities make her more than a match for nearly any threat. And thanks to her mutant precognitive abilities, she'll know long before a given confrontation whether or not she'll be outmatched, and she's sure to plan accordingly.

PERSONALITY

Cassandra Leiber is a highly intelligent, imminently practical woman. She applies an economical, almost mechanical viewpoint to nearly every aspect of her life, from her choices in clothing to whether she extends her arm for a punch or block. Every decision she makes is the result of a carefully weighed costs-benefits analysis. Thanks to her precognitive abilities, she knows that any action, any choice an individual makes, can completely change a given situation. This was a difficult lesson to learn during her teenage years, when she initially manifested her powers, but she now

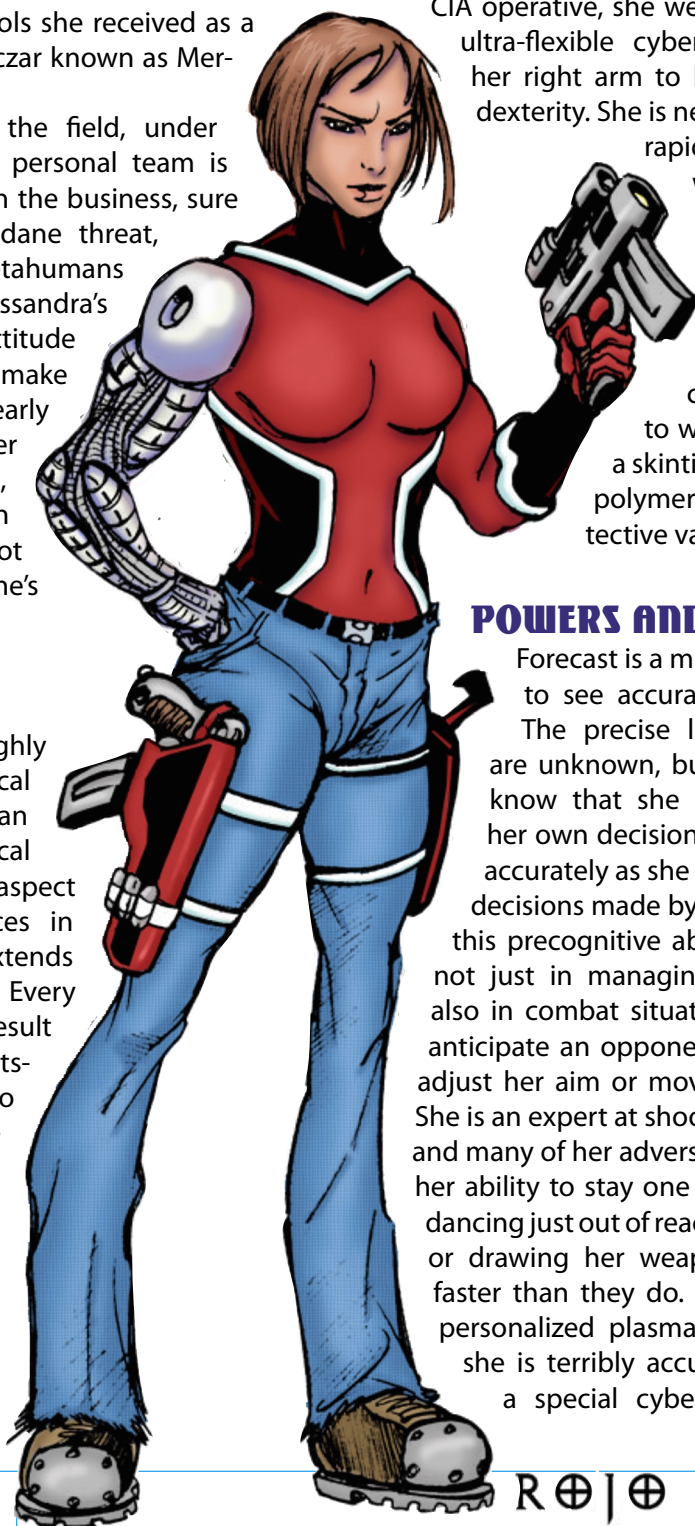
lives these principles. Though her methods and mannerisms have earned her a reputation among her employees for being something of an ice queen, Leiber has decided that this reputation is worth cultivating, as it helps keep her operatives alert in the face of a (perceived) harsh taskmaster.

APPEARANCE

Cassandra Leiber is a short, athletic woman with straight, brown hair that she usually keeps neatly cropped. Her dull, brown eyes rarely show any form of emotion. Due to a crippling injury she suffered as a CIA operative, she wears an experimental, ultra-flexible cybernetic sheathe over her right arm to lend it strength and dexterity. She is never without her twin rapid-fire plasma pistols, which she usually keeps strapped to her thighs. She prefers to dress comfortably, but underneath any clothing she chooses to wear, she always dons a skintight advanced-weave polymer bodysuit for its protective value.

POWERS AND TACTICS

Forecast is a mutant with the power to see accurately into the future. The precise limits of this power are unknown, but her employees do know that she cannot predict how her own decisions affect the future as accurately as she can see the effects of decisions made by others. All the same, this precognitive ability serves her well, not just in managing Prophet, Inc., but also in combat situations, where she can anticipate an opponent's movements and adjust her aim or movements accordingly. She is an expert at shooting moving targets, and many of her adversaries are surprised at her ability to stay one step ahead of them, dancing just out of reach at the last moment or drawing her weapons a microsecond faster than they do. She carries a pair of personalized plasma pistols, with which she is terribly accurate, and she wears a special cybernetic sheathe over



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one arm. A gift from Raiju, a particularly powerful and wealthy client, the sheath gives her arm greater strength, durability, and speed than it would normally possess. Without it, her crippled arm is agonizingly difficult to use. Finally, as a protective measure, Forecast wears a skintight suit of ballistic body armor that diffuses kinetic energy better than nearly any commercially available material.

IN GAME

Cassandra Leiber is a formidable adversary, despite the fact that her powers are fairly low key. She can be found protecting nearly any super-villain's headquarters or secure site, accompanied by a crack team of well-equipped security personnel. Thanks to Forecast's precognitive abilities, these characters should be well equipped for combating particular PCs. No character's powers or abilities should come as a surprise to the team, and most likely, they are equipped specifically to counteract any advantages the PCs' abilities may have afforded them. It should be extremely difficult for characters to outmaneuver Forecast, though particularly clever or lucky characters might manage to come out on top in the end. Specific adventure ideas include:

This Site Protected by Prophet, Inc.: A villainous mastermind the PCs are acquainted with has crafted a powerful doomsday weapon capable of leveling the entire city. Unfortunately for the PCs (and the city), its location is protected by Prophet, Inc. Forecast and her team are onsite, and they are well prepared for the PCs, though they currently have no clue that the doomsday weapon exists (remember the privacy clause). The mastermind disappears about halfway through the caper, and this should make Forecast a bit suspicious. Hard-pressed PCs might be able to use the mastermind's absence to convince Forecast to let up long enough to locate and disarm the device. If Forecast can be convinced to use her powers to see what the future holds for the site, she and her agents just might leave the client hanging for breach of contract. They might even be convinced to aid the PCs in stopping him.

A Call for Understanding: A well-known super-villain recently captured by the law has contracted Prophet, Inc. The super-villain, due to testify against an immensely powerful and influential former employer, is understandably terrified. When he disappears from the correctional facility and public sight just weeks before the scheduled testimony, it's up to the PCs to find him. PCs who investigate find that Prophet, Inc. is keeping him hidden, as there are forces in the

FORECAST

PL 12

STR

+0

10

DEX

+2

14

CON

+1

12

INT

+3

16

WIS

+3

16

CHA

+2

14

TOUGHNESS

+10*/+3/+1**

FORTITUDE

+4

REFLEX

+10

WILL

+12

*with armor, **flat-footed

SKILLS

Bluff 4 (+6), Computers 4 (+7), Diplomacy 7 (+9), Disable Device 8 (+11), Disguise 5 (+7), Drive 2 (+4), Escape Artist 3 (+5), Gather Information 5 (+7), Intimidate 3 (+5), Investigate 5 (+8), Knowledge (tactics) 6 (+9), Notice 8 (+11), Search 4 (+7), Sense Motive 7 (+10), Stealth 5 (+7)

FEATS

Accurate Attack, Benefit (wealth), Connected, Contacts, Defensive Roll 2, Eidetic Memory, Equipment 3, Fearless, Master Plan, Minions 7 (five 75 PP minions), Redirect, Seize Initiative, Well-Informed

POWERS

Device 3 (cybernetic arm-sheath; hard to lose) *Cybernetic Arm-Sheath:* (Improved Block 2, Weapon Break; **Shield 4, Strike 7**), **Device 10** (plasma pistols; easy to lose) *Plasma Pistols:* (**Blast 12** [Power Feats: Ricochet, Split Attack; Extras: Autofire, Penetrating]), **Enhanced Feats 15** (Assessment, Attack Focus 4 [ranged], Elusive Target, Evasion, Improved Defense, Improved Initiative, Interpose, Quick Draw, Second Chance [disable device, falling, triggering traps], Uncanny Dodge), **Enhanced Reflex Save 6**, **Super Senses 6** (danger sense, precognition, time sense)

EQUIPMENT

Body Armor (**Protection 7**), Cell Phone, Commlink, PDA, Night Vision Goggles, Gas Mask, Multi-tool

DRAWBACKS

Disability (crippled right arm, uncommon, moderate)

COMBAT

Attack +9, +13 (ranged), Grapple +9, Damage +0 (unarmed), +7 (strike), +12 (plasma pistols), Defense +8, +12 (shield), Knockback -5, Initiative +6

TOTALS

Abilities 22 + Skills 19 (76 ranks) + Feats 24 + Powers 69 + Combat 34 + Saves 14 - Drawbacks 2 = 180 PP

correctional department itself that have been paid to ensure his inability to testify. Forecast, understanding the danger to her client, has arranged for him to be broken out of jail and transported to a secure location, where he can be protected until things cool down. Unfortunately, if he does not testify, his former employer will likely go free. PCs desiring to return the potential rat to prison are at odds with the company and will be treated accordingly. Forecast might be convinced to allow her client to attend the hearing, if the PCs volunteer to aid Prophet in protecting him. Although the precise nature of the opposition is up to the individual GM, the hearing should be interrupted by metahumans interested in stopping the testimony, which gives the PCs an opportunity to team up with the Prophet operatives.

ENDGAME

Forecast's precognitive abilities (and, to some extent, favors from old contacts at the CIA) have kept her company's involvement with the criminal element off the radar for the most part. To the world's governments, Prophet Inc. is a legitimate multinational corporation that provides security to wealthy clients, and she has yet to attract significant attention from any law enforcement agency.

If the PCs encounter Prophet operatives, or Leiber herself, in the employ of criminals on repeated occasions, it may occur to them to begin gathering evidence of the corporation's complicity in acts of theft and terrorism. While it is likely that Leiber is too canny to be brought to trial in any of the countries in which she operates, she is always calculating the odds. If the heroes collect enough proof, she can be convinced that working for super-villains is no longer a sound business strategy, and that restricting herself to more legitimate clients is much less risky, if slightly less profitable.

GUNBUNNY

Bobbi Ehrlich was born the middle of three children to Marine Lance Corporal Danny Ehrlich, and his wife Susan in the mid-1970's. Danny had every plan to make a career out of the Corps, but a bullet wound he received to his right knee in action on the island of Grenada would see the door slam shut on that possibility.

Around the same time, Danny's father passed away, and his inheritance took the form of a gun shop in his northern Montana hometown. Danny packed-up his family and moved back home. Not having a lot of money to spend on employees, his wife and children helped all they could, and Danny taught them everything he knew about running a small business and the weapons that were their stock and trade.

Thus began Bobbi's fascination with guns. Danny Ehrlich taught his daughters everything there was to know about firearms and safe shooting. While her older sister Susan gravitated towards shotguns and hunting gear, there was something about handguns that fascinated Bobbi. She became a minor media celebrity by participating in national-level handgun

competitions and winning against more experienced adults. Some of her competitors remarked it was like she was born to use a handgun. By the tender age of twelve, she had made the cover of the American Gun-owner's Association (AGA) member magazine as the "Junior Handgunner of the Year." Danny couldn't have been more proud.

Beyond her affinity for handguns, Bobbi was a straight-A student, fascinated in political and social sciences. Her academic achievements meant she could have left high school early, but she decided to stay and remain close to her friends. She also continued to work as a tutor for developmentally disabled children at her school. While he father

VITAL STATS: GUNBUNNY

Quote: "YOU'D BETTER BE REFERRING TO MY PAIR OF 45s."

Real Name: Brianna "Bree" Galloway

Aliases: Bethany Summers-Galloway, Roberta Lynn "Bobbi" Ehrlich (given name)

Occupation: Former calendar model, former legal aide to the CEO of Amberson Arms Co., executive business consultant, assassin/terrorist

Legal Status: Citizen of the U.S. with a criminal record, escaped incarceration for three life terms in the federal prison system

Identity: Secret

Marital Status: Widowed

Known Relatives: Danny Ehrlich (father, deceased), Susan (mother, deceased), Emily (sister, deceased), Sarah (sister, now a ward of the state), Danny Sr. (grandfather, deceased), Chase Galloway (a.k.a. Redline, husband, deceased)

Affiliation: Member of the AGA (American Gun-owners Association), agent of the Consortium's Direct Action Unit

Base of Operations: Mobile

Height: 5' 6"

Weight: 125 lbs.

Hair: Brunette

Eyes: Blue

Distinguishing Marks: None

missed her presence at the store he was glad she wasn't around to see the things he had to do to keep the business afloat.

Things were not going well for Danny. He tried his best with the business, but he was a Marine at heart, not an accountant. He made mistakes, a lot of them. This fact was going to cost him everything he had, and quite possibly his family. Danny had to make some hard choices; choices that put him in the company of some shadowy figures in the world of illegal weapons trafficking.

Danny kept in touch with his old Marine buddies, particularly the ones that were still in the Corps. Exploiting those connections, Danny was able to set up an operation that trafficked in illegal military-grade weapons. Most of his clients were hardcore collectors or members of the idle rich who simply wanted the thrill of firing an M-16 at a few empty cans. But there were a few transactions that made him feel like he had sold out the country he fought and shed blood for. After a couple of years, Danny had made enough money to save his father's business and he swore to never to run illegal weapons again.

They came the night after Danny had told his contacts in the illegal weapons trafficking business that he was done. Dozens of black-clad men poured out of armored vans and stalked up to the Ehrlichs' rural family home. Bobbi watched enraptured from her living room window as the red lines of laser scopes scanned across her front yard. As she studied the men's weapons and black fatigues she asked her mom and dad what the ATF was.

What ensued that night has been debated by the firearms industry and the gun control lobby for years. No one knows who shot first, but the firefight left two ATF agents dead, as well as Bobbi's parents and youngest sister, Emily. Bobbi's older sister, Sarah, was shot in the head – an injury that had left her in a coma to this day. Controversy swirled across the

24-hour cable news channels, as debate raged over 2nd Amendment rights. Soon, the tragedy that befell the family would be drowned out by the shouting of pundits across the airwaves.

With no living relatives to take her, Bobbi was placed into foster care. She was handed over to a middle-aged couple named Mike and Jean Wyatt. They lived in a sprawling suburban home that seemed absolutely cavernous compared to what Bobbi was used to. Mike worked as a lawyer and Jean worked every drop out of the couple's well-stocked liquor cabinet.

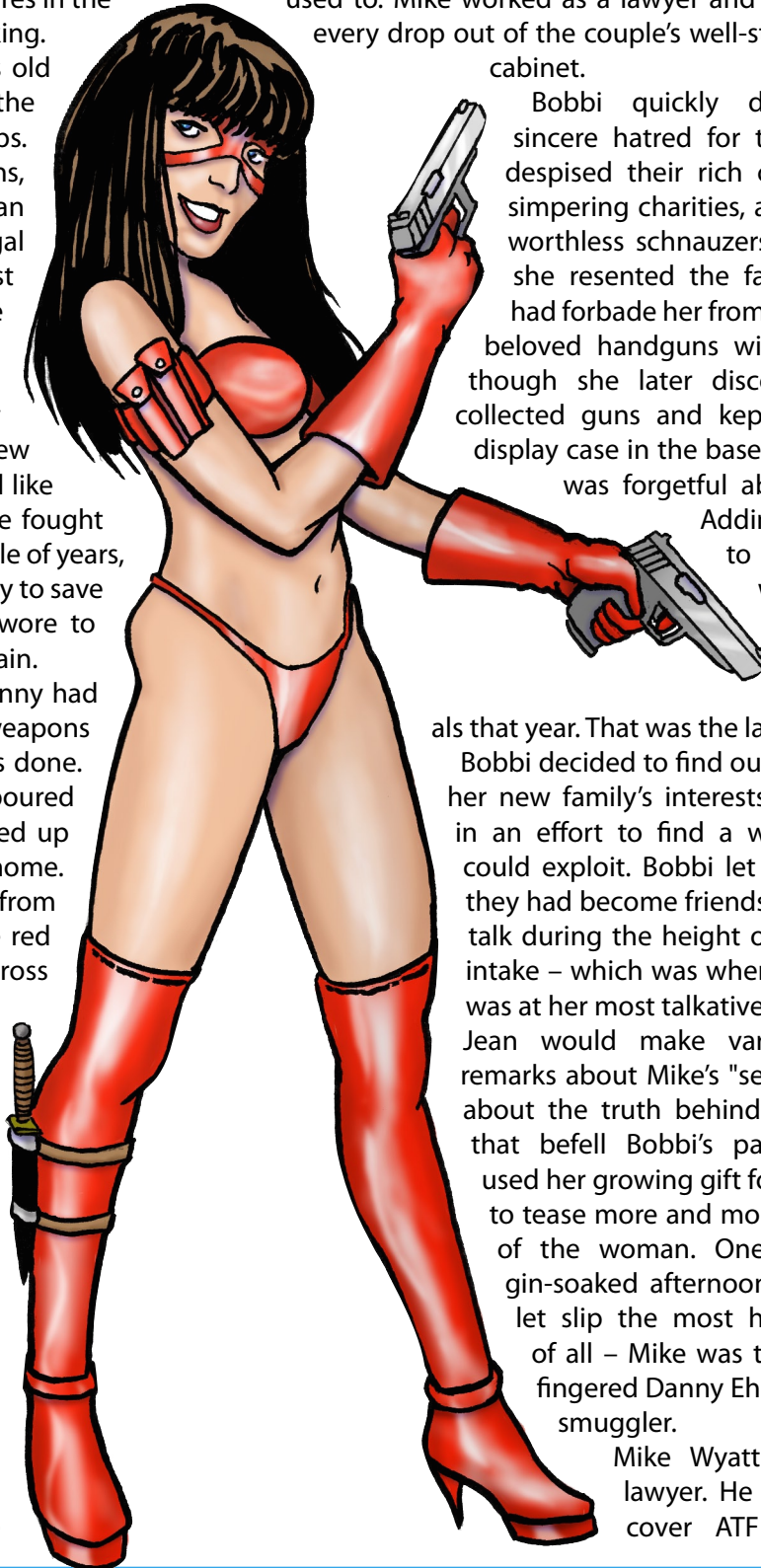
Bobbi quickly developed a sincere hatred for the pair. She despised their rich clothes, their simpering charities, and their two worthless schnauzers. Most of all she resented the fact that they had forbade her from bringing her beloved handguns with her, even though she later discovered Mike collected guns and kept them in a display case in the basement that he was forgetful about locking.

Adding insult to injury, they would not allow her to compete at nation-

als that year. That was the last straw.

Bobbi decided to find out more about her new family's interests and history in an effort to find a weakness she could exploit. Bobbi let Jean believe they had become friends. They would talk during the height of Jean's daily intake – which was when the woman was at her most talkative and truthful. Jean would make various cryptic remarks about Mike's "secret life" and about the truth behind the tragedy that befell Bobbi's parents. Bobbi used her growing gift for subterfuge to tease more and more details out of the woman. One particularly gin-soaked afternoon Jean finally let slip the most hideous truth of all – Mike was the man who fingered Danny Ehrlich as a gun smuggler.

Mike Wyatt was not a lawyer. He was a deep-cover ATF agent, the



GUNBUNNY

PL 10

STR	+5	20/12	INT	+2	15
DEX	+7	24/16	WIS	+2	14
CON	+5	20/12	CHA	+3	16
TOUGHNESS			FORTITUDE		
+7/+5*			+8		
			REFLEX		
			+10		
			WILL		
			+9		

*flat-footed

SKILLS

Bluff 9 (+11), Disable Device 6 (+8), Disguise 15 (+18), Knowledge (behavioral sciences) 6 (+8), Knowledge (business) 6 (+8), Knowledge (civics) 6 (+8), Knowledge (tactics) 8 (+10), Language (Spanish, German) 2, Stealth 10 (+13)

FEATS

Attractive, Attack Specialization (handguns) 3, Benefit (Alternate Identity: Brianna Galloway), Defensive Roll 2, Dodge Focus 3, Improved Aim, Improvised Tools, Power Attack, Precise Shot

POWERS

Device 7 (Special Handguns, easy to lose); **Blast 7** (Power Feats: Improved Critical 3, Split Attack; Extras: Autofire, Penetrating), **Enhanced Strength 8, Enhanced Dexterity 8, Enhanced Constitution 8, Enhanced Feats 2** (Endurance, Improved Initiative), **Quickness 1, Speed 1, Regeneration 5** (Injured 2, Staggered 2, Disabled 1)

COMBAT

Attack +7, +13 (handguns), Grapple +12, Damage +5 (unarmed), +7 (handguns), Defense +13, Knockback -3, Initiative +11

TOTALS

Abilities 25 + Skills 17 (68 ranks) + Feats 14 + Powers 54 + Combat 34 + Saves 13 = 157 PP

leader of a special taskforce that would break weapons trafficking rings from the inside – or so he led his masters in Washington to believe. Instead he and his team would cultivate wannabe gun traffickers from the American heartland, introduce them to the thriving black market and skim their profits. If the legitimate ATF or another law enforcement agency got too close to that operation, Mike and his team

would move in for a bloody siege that would erase any sign of the taskforce's corruption. Mike had used a combination of graft and his considerable influence to have Bobbi placed in their care. He wanted to keep a close eye on the girl – the only survivor of the bloody firefight at the Ehrlich's rural home who could still be considered a witness.

She calmly left the conversation with the drunken Jean, went downstairs into the basement, and opened the unlocked gun cabinet. Removing a silenced 9mm pistol, she walked back upstairs where Jean lay passed out in a recliner. Bobbi shot her twice through the heart and once in the head, then sat in the darkened room next to the cooling body, waiting for Mike to return home.

Bobbi tortured Mike Wyatt for nearly a day, fueled by the dreams she had of what she would do to those who killed her parents. Dreams that she had recorded in the cute pink-flowered diary she kept during her year in the Wyatts' home. Those dreams had Mike Wyatt confessing to his crimes, the identities of the members of the rogue taskforce, and the locations of their hidden guns and financial resources. After killing Wyatt, she picked his taskforce off one by one, using the skills her father taught her.

What Bobbi couldn't know was that she had a secret ally in her war against Wyatt's men. The director of the ATF had sought a way to quietly deal with the corruption in his office for some time. Though far from quiet, he and his cronies were able to keep other law enforcement agencies at bay while Bobbi completed her bloody task. When it was over, the director confidently approached Bobbi with an offer to become one of the agency's secret operatives. She killed him too, realizing he was just as corrupt as the others, and disappeared, never to be seen as Bobbi Lynn Ehrlich again.

Using the millions of dollars the rogue taskforce had accumulated, she established a new identity for herself. As "Bethany Summers" she attended college and law school at USC in Los Angeles. In her spare time Bethany worked as a calendar model for various firearm companies. It was during a calendar photo shoot that she met the love of her life, Chase Galloway.

Chase – a former Special Forces operator with extensive experience in the world's hot zones – worked for firearms manufacturer Amberson Arms as the CEO's personal bodyguard. What began with flirtation quickly became the only true romance Bethany would ever know. They both discovered one another's intelligence, wit, and love of things that killed people.

Just weeks after the photo shoot, Bethany was

invited to Amberson HQ to meet with the company's big wigs. She had just passed the bar exam, and expressed her eagerness to promote the gun industry. In reality, she was just preparing herself for the war she wanted to wage, a fact the board of directors of Amberson Arms was all too aware of.

Galloway had made a thorough investigation of "Bethany's" background, and had pieced together the fragments of her tragic past as Bobbi Ehrlich. When the board of Amberson Arms discovered they were dealing with a young and beautiful woman self-taught in the arts of murder and subversion, they knew they had to recruit her to their secret cause. In light of her history, they decided the direct approach was best.

The CEO of the company, John Amberson, revealed himself to be the leader of an international conspiracy known as the Consortium, an organization composed of former CIA operatives who, following the termination of their mission during the Carter administration, had gone rogue and continued to operate within the defense contractors and weapons companies that they had infiltrated. The Consortium's goal was to use their economic and political influence, along with their elite "Direct Action Unit," to prod the world back onto the path of war (to insure greater profits, of course).

Bethany's first impulse was to kill the entire board of directors in front of her. These men and women were

driven by the same greed that had contributed to the death of her family. She held back only because she knew Chase was more than a match for her and she didn't want to see him hurt. However, as Amberson made his case, she came to believe that the America she wanted to destroy had not always been this way. It was a nation that had become craven and cowardly in the face of no real enemy. She also had the feeling that all of the aggression and rage she still felt could be channeled into her work for Amberson Arms and the Consortium.

Bethany accepted the man's offer and went to work. She assumed a position with Amberson Arms as a legal aide to the CEO, where she utilized her remarkable charisma against opponents of the gun industry. The rest of the time she trained under Galloway - code named "Gunrunner" due to his enhanced speed - and his team of biochemically-enhanced super-soldiers in the Direct Action Unit, becoming proficient with the latest bleeding-edge weaponry and small unit tactics.

During this time Bethany underwent biochemical augmentation. Soon, she possessed greater strength, speed, and endurance than that of an Olympic athlete. After the twelve-week process was complete, Chase and Bethany were married in a civil ceremony, just in time for her to undertake her first mission with the Unit.

Her first operation was a simple one; Gunrunner

ORIGIN-IN-A-BOX



You are Sarah Ehrlich. You have spent the last several years in a coma with a bullet lodged in your brain. You would have spent the rest of your life that way if it weren't for a mysterious benefactor - an anonymous philanthropist who paid a small fortune to fund a revolutionary treatment that would regenerate the damaged tissue in your brain. The experimental procedure was completely successful and you regained consciousness, but it was not without side effects. It was during your miraculously speedy rehabilitation that you discovered your body could now regenerate itself with awesome speed. You were also almost totally immune to pain, and developed physical skills that surpassed even an Olympic athlete. The firearm training your late father had given you had not diminished with time, and your superhuman reflexes meant you were now an unerring shot. With no family, and no life of your own, you found yourself trying to make meaning out of the tragedy that befell you. You sought to bring some good back to the world, and to show people that even something as destructive as a gun could do great good in the right hands.

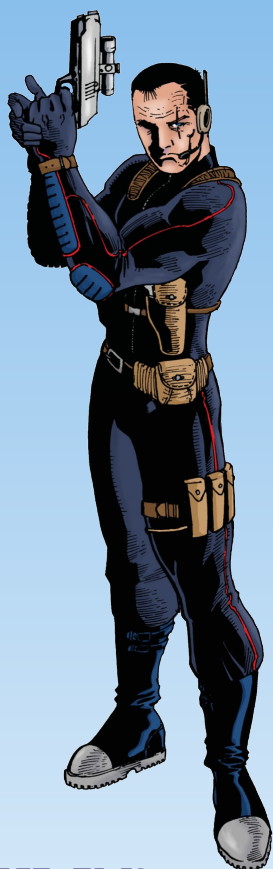
This origin can provide a hero with a quick and easy background and a strong desire to do some good in the world. The character will also have some mysteries to solve in her background and a great foil in the form of her own sister, Gunbunny. The question also remains about the mysterious benefactor who funded the hero's miraculous recovery. If you prefer a male character, you can simply change the gender and make it Bobbi's brother who took a bullet to the head on that fateful night.

Sara Ehrlich, Template

Feats: Attack Specialization (pistols), Diehard, Fearless

Powers: Enhanced Strength 6, Enhanced Dexterity 6, Enhanced Constitution 6, Regeneration 10 (Bruised 1, Unconscious 1, Injured 3, Staggered 3, Disabled 2; Power Feats: Regrowth), Immunity 1 (pain).

Cost: 33 PP



GUNRUNNER, PL 13

Str 14, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12

Skills: Acrobatics 11 (+15), Bluff 8 (+9), Disable Device 10 (+11), Knowledge (tactics) 8 (+9), Notice 12 (+13), Search 6 (+8), Sense Motive 4 (+5), Stealth 9 (+13)

Feats: Acrobatic Bluff, Attack Specialization (autocannon) 3, Defensive Roll 3, Dodge Focus 2, Equipment 3, Evasion, Fast Overrun, Instant Up, Master Plan, Move-by Action, Precise Shot, Uncanny Dodge (visual)

Powers: **Super Speed 6** (*Power Feats:* Wall Run), **Device 12** (Autocannon, easy to lose): **Blast 10** (*Extras:* Autofire 3, Penetrating)

Equipment: Camo Clothing, Commlink, Gas Mask, Night Vision Goggles, Tactical vest, Special DAU Tonfa

Combat: Attack +8, +14 (autocannon), Grapple +10, Damage +10 (autocannon), +5 (Tonfa), Defense +17, +15 (flat-footed), Knockback -4, Initiative +28

Saving Throws: Toughness +9, +6 (flat-footed), +2 (flat-footed without armor), Fortitude +8, Reflex +15, Will +7

Totals: Abilities 26 + Skills 17 (68 ranks) + Feats 19 + Powers 67 + Combat 46 + Saves 23 = 198 PP

and the rest of the team were assigned to break into a warehouse owned by Maxwell Technologies. Maxwell was developing a new pulse laser weapon for C.A.S.T.L.E. (the NATO. super-security organization), and Amberson believed it would be of great profit potential for he and his partners in the Consortium.

However when they breached the warehouse's security the only thing waiting for them was the hero known as The Falconer. The hero (who in his secret identity of Warren Maxwell was the CEO of Maxwell Technologies) had put word of the experimental weapon out on the grapevine in the hopes of laying a trap for whomever or whatever was conducting industrial espionage against Maxwell Technologies.

The Falconer believed he would have an easy fight on his hands, but it proved to be anything but. Gunrunner's crack squad of super-soldiers was much tougher than a group of common criminals. However, The Falconer's technological gadgets, keen tactical mind, and martial prowess allowed him to pick off the members of the Unit one by one.

But The Falconer's skills couldn't account for a case of bad luck. Gunrunner's speed allowed him to get the drop on the hero. He demanded safe passage for himself and the female member of his team. Seemingly unfazed as the super-soldier turned his weapon on him, The Falconer gave him one chance to surrender. Gunrunner simply replied, "Goodbye, Hero." As he was about to pull the trigger, The Falconer's sidekick Orion, a peregrine falcon commanded through The Falconer's cybernetic helmet, swooped down and disarmed him. The surprised Gunrunner lost his footing and fell from the catwalk he was standing on, plunging to his death.

As Bethany recovered from one of The Falconer's stun grenades, she saw the whole thing. The C.A.S.T.L.E. metahuman apprehension team could barely restrain her as she cursed the hero, swearing that she'd kill him and all he loved.

Bethany spent a year in the Ultramax Superhuman Detention Facility in northern Alaska. Not wanting to lose such an expensive investment, the Consortium contracted the services of the Eastern European group of super-mercenaries known as the Seven Deadliest to break her out. The raid not only secured Bethany's release, but also allowed another dozen of the most dangerous superhumans in the world to escape – all of whom now owed their freedom to the Consortium.

Back in the service of the Consortium and Amberson Arms, Bethany took on a new face and identity as Brianna Galloway. She began work for John Amberson as an executive-level business

STORY POINT



This would be the ideal point to splice the Gunbunny background into your own campaign. Instead of The Falconer waiting for Gunrunner's team, it could be your own heroes.

Warren Maxwell, CEO of Maxwell Technologies, approaches the PCs. He fears someone is conducting industrial espionage against his company. He has been developing new devices and weapons for various government agencies and he fears what might happen if his inventions were to fall into less scrupulous hands.

Maxwell proposes that they leak the location of the new pulse laser weapon he is developing for an unnamed espionage agency. Of course, the only thing waiting for the would-be thieves at the leaked location would be the PCs. The ensuing battle should culminate with the accidental death of Chase Galloway, a.k.a. Gunrunner. This could be at the hands of the PCs or a Maxwell Technologies security team could burst in and cause the accident. Whatever the case, Bethany will blame the PCs for her husband's death.

Direct Action Unit Member, PL 6/Minion Rank 5

Str 18/14, Dex 18/14, Con 18/14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Intimidate 6 (+6), Knowledge (tactics) 5 (+5), Notice 5 (+6), Stealth 6 (+10), Survival 2 (+3)

Feats: Equipment 4, Teamwork

Powers: Enhanced Strength 4, Enhanced Dexterity 4, Enhanced Constitution 4

Equipment: Camo Clothing, Commlink, Gas Mask, Night Vision Goggles, Submachine gun, Tactical vest

Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +12, Damage +4 (unarmed), +4 (submachine gun), Defense +6, Knockback -3, Initiative +4

Saving Throws: Toughness +6, +4 (without armor), Fortitude +7, Reflex +8, Will +4

Totals: Abilities 14 + Skills 6 (24 ranks) + Feats 5 + Powers 12 + Combat 28 + Saves 10 = 75 PP

Direct Action Unit, PL 10/Minion Rank 8

Str 18/14, Dex 18/14, Con 18/14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+8), Climb 4 (+8), Intimidate 6 (+6), Knowledge (tactics) 6 (+6), Medicine 2 (+4), Notice 8 (+10), Stealth 8 (+12), Survival 2 (+3)

Feats: Equipment 10, Improved Aim, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Teamwork 3

Powers: Enhanced Strength 4, Enhanced Dexterity 4, Enhanced Constitution 4

Equipment: Camo Clothing, Commlink, Gas Mask, Night Vision Goggles, Special DAU Assault Rifle, Tactical vest, Special DAU Tonfa, Grenade Belt (Frag Grenade: **Blast 5** [Explosion], *Power Feats:* Alternate Power – Smoke Grenade: **Obscure 2** [visual])

Combat: Attack +13, Grapple +17, Damage +7 (tonfa), +7 (rifle), Defense +12, Knockback -4, Initiative +4

Saving Throws: Toughness +8 (+4 without armor), Fortitude +10, Reflex +10, Will +6

Totals: Abilities 16 + Skills 10 (40 ranks) + Feats 16 + Powers 12 + Combat 50 + Saves 16 = 120 PP

New Equipment: *Special DAU Assault Rifle:* +7 Ballistic, Autofire, 70ft. Range, Size Large, Critical 19-20; Equipment Cost: 22. *Special DAU Tonfa:* +3, Mighty; Equipment Cost: 4

consultant to the board of directors. "Bree" has also become a fixture on the 24-hour news networks as a new ally for the conservative media and a charismatic and quick-witted gun advocate.

Brianna has also assumed a costumed identity of her own and adopted a code name inspired by her late husband's pet name for her. As the scantily clad "Gunbunny", she has made the destruction of costumed superheroes something of a priority in her

life. Her employers have noticed a small degree of erratic behavior, but the operations she has led since her escape from Ultramax have all been successful. They are, however, keeping a very close eye on her...

PERSONALITY

Bobbi Ehrlich started out as a sweet, intelligent, beautiful girl with a bright future. But she was robbed of that future by fate, and she knows it. Every chance

at happiness has been brutally torn from her and she wants a little payback. Now, she is a no-nonsense secret agent and assassin bent on personal revenge. In her civilian identity of Brianna Galloway, she is an intelligent, capable professional with all the social skills and education needed to propel her to the top. As Gunbunny, she is a demon in combat fully capable of taking on any SWAT team in the nation and slaughtering them single-handedly. Though ruthlessly efficient and hell-bent on vengeance, she is not totally evil and avoids involving or harming innocents and refuses to allow children to come to any harm.

APPEARANCE

Gunbunny is a 5'6", brown-haired, blue-eyed knockout and she uses this to her advantage. In civilian life Brianna uses her looks to persuade people to agree with her point of view, making her an effective attorney and businesswoman. As Gunbunny she uses a skimpy, sexy outfit to distract male opponents. Thanks to her looks and revealing attire they usually underestimate her.

POWERS AND TACTICS

Gunbunny has been the subject of a biochemical enhancement process that augments a person's strength, endurance, and metabolic function. She is easily three times stronger than an Olympic-class weightlifter at the peak of her ability, and is faster than a gold-medal sprinter. Wetware implanted in her thyroid closely monitors her body's biochemical processes, and manages them for peak efficiency. This monitor regulates all bodily functions to a point where she can hold her breath for up to an hour, and heal ten times faster than a normal human.

Gunbunny is one of the most gifted sharpshooters on the planet. While her personal preference is for entering combat with paired handguns, she is an expert with every single small arm on the planet. During a medical examination conducted at the Consortium's secret HQ in the Swiss Alps, one geneticist remarked that she might have some kind of genetically derived (i.e. naturally occurring) superhuman skill with firearms. That has not yet been proven however.

She is also skilled in the arts of disguise and subversion. Originally self-taught in these areas, training in the Consortium's Direct Action Unit has honed them to a remarkable degree. On one mission, she was able to change her apparent ethnicity in under a minute with items found in an assassination-target's refrigerator. This provided a disguise

believable enough that she was able to talk her way past the police who arrived on scene minutes later. She has begun taking language lessons in what little spare time she has, and has since mastered Spanish and German, and begun training in Russian and French.

IN GAME

Gunbunny is a good villain with a secret agenda. She can be used to draw the PCs into the world of gunrunning, anti-government terrorism and intrigue. She can be found undertaking missions for the Consortium or pursuing her own bloody agenda. Gunbunny has a strong hatred for superheroes and law enforcement and relishes the opportunity to do them harm. A series of adventure hooks follows:

Shopping: Gunbunny and her Direct Action Unit begin performing raids against the weapons storehouses of various corporations and criminal organizations. She's making off with all manner of high-tech weapons that the Consortium is funneling to various anti-government militia groups. The PCs may get involved when one of these raids turns bloody. Not only will they discover a paramilitary unit acting in their city, but also that there's a warehouse stocked full of high-tech and illegal weapons in their midst.

From My Cold Dead Hands: Outspoken opponents of the gun industry are meeting suspicious ends, and some are being outright murdered. This includes senators, lobbyists, and radio and television pundits. A senator who was once a D.A. in the PCs home city, believes he may be next. He asks the PCs for their help. Gunbunny has indeed targeted the senator, and will be delighted with the idea of a more challenging hit.

ENDGAME

Eventually Gunbunny cracks and goes on a killing rampage, assassinating everyone who has ever wronged her (and a few more just in case). She either goes out in a blaze of glory or is captured and placed in a federal psychiatric facility (from which she'll probably escape, eventually). If captured and her identity is exposed, certain elements in the ATF as well as any (or all) of her former employers are nervous as she can shed too much light on past transgressions and send operatives to "silence" her...permanently. In this case the heroes may feel compelled to protect her, or even to help her escape. If only to convince her to help them put her enemies behind bars.

HUNTSMAN

Duncan Smith, son of the wealthy English hunter and World War I hero Bertrand Duncan Smith, learned almost everything he knew from his father. He learned to stalk game, identify plants that were safe to eat, and to survive in even the harshest environments. Most importantly, he learned to shoot. By the age of twelve, Duncan was an accomplished hunter in his own right, easily as accurate with a rifle as his father. Bertrand would often let his son accompany him to the continent of Africa on his most dangerous hunts. Soon, father and son were the toast of gentlemen's clubs throughout Europe.

Unfortunately, their fame was fleeting. When Duncan was seventeen, his father had a falling out with a family friend named Maxwell Mardrake. Mardrake had known Bertrand all his life, and the two had been rivals in their schooling, in society, in hunting circles, and—secretly—in love, for Mardrake had long coveted the wealth and affections of Bertrand's wife Susan (Duncan's mother). Though he made a show of making peace with Bertrand, a few weeks later Mardrake and two hired poachers ambushed the pair while on safari in Africa. Bertrand was shot dead, and Duncan fled through the savannah with his pursuers right behind. A rough fall into a deep pit saved the young man's life. He dropped out of sight just as a rifle was discharged in his direction, and his attackers assumed he'd been shot. They left him for dead and eventually returned to England.

Fortunately for Duncan, all he had suffered were bruises and a sprained ankle from his fall. The pit opened into a deep tunnel, which to the retreat of an eccentric mystic from a local tribe. The mystic took pity on the boy and gave him refuge for a time. Duncan lived with the man he knew only as Shaman for two years. During that time he learned many things—including the techniques of a mysterious sorcery that allowed the Shaman to craft mystical masks that could grant

a man supernatural prowess. The two became very close, and though Shaman tried to help Duncan cope with his grief, the boy remained consumed by a burning desire for revenge at his betrayal and his father's murder. He crafted a small Hunter's Mask of wood and dark dyes. With it, Duncan could stalk prey invisibly and even pass through solid objects for a time. This, he hoped, would give him an edge while tracking his father's murderers. Eventually, Duncan decided it was time to return home, and although he claimed to want to see his mother again, Shaman was not deceived. The older man knew the real reason for the youth's departure: vengeance.

Upon his return, Duncan discovered his mother had married the treacherous Maxwell Mardrake. The murderer had simply reported the pair to be missing, likely killed by some wild animal. Though his mother was pleased to see him again, his new father, having married the widow Sue Smith for her wealth, was already plotting to secretly dispose of Duncan before the truth of his disappearance came to light. Much to the man's surprise, though, Duncan did not reveal the truth, and he even corroborated the murderers' story. Only a few weeks after his homecoming, Duncan suddenly asked to visit an uncle in America, and the urgency of his request made his mother agree, despite her fear of losing her son again. Duncan was sent to stay with Sue's brother Harrison, the owner of a small

New York gymnasium and a competitor in an underground bare-knuckle boxing circuit. When Harrison heard the boy's story, he agreed to train the boy to fight back. Under his uncle's tutelage, Duncan learned street smarts as well as self-defense but learned even more about himself, as his uncle pushed him to, and often beyond, his limits. After seeing the city's seedy underbelly firsthand, Duncan felt a growing disdain for the racketeers, thieves, and murderers he constantly encountered. He decided that he would test himself against the criminal element.

When he was ready, Duncan took to the New

VITAL STATS: HUNTSMAN

Quote: "I HUNTED EVERYTHING IN MY DAY . . . NOW, I HUNT ANYONE OR ANYTHING FOOLISH ENOUGH TO CROSS . . . MY MASTER."

Real Name: Duncan Smith

Aliases: Ghost Who Hunts the Hunters

Occupation: Ghostly assassin, bodyguard

Legal Status: Deceased

Identity: Secret

Marital Status: Widower (somewhat...)

Known Relatives: Bertrand Duncan Smith (father, deceased), Sue Smith (mother, deceased), Zantra Smith (wife, deceased)

Affiliation: The Crimson Covenant, a group of foul wizards and necromancers bent on loosing the Underworld on Earth

Base of Operations: The Tower of Basalt and Ash, located in the Underworld

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 183 lbs.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Blue

Distinguishing Marks: Perfect, straight, white teeth

York streets to combat the gangsters and muggers who ruled them. Wearing the Hunter's Mask, armed with a pair of small pistols stolen from a couple of unfortunate muggers, and clad in black clothing and a billowing cowl, he took the name of the Jackal, owing to the blazing white jackal head design on his mask. As a costumed vigilante, he fought to make criminals fear the night again. He often seemed to approach his victims from many directions, using his invisibility to change his position unnoticed, all the while taunting them from the shadows. Although an expert marksman, the Jackal only rarely killed the criminals he fought; his skill with his weapons was so great that he could choose whether to kill, cripple, or merely disarm his enemies with equal ease. Often, he didn't even have to use weapons, as his uncle had trained a gifted brawler, easily capable of taking down punks in one or two lightning-fast punches.

After establishing himself in America, Duncan returned home in secret to hunt his father's murderers. He killed them in turn, revealing to each his identity before finishing them off. Mardrake, his mother's new husband, he saved for last.

For days, the Jackal hunted Mardrake through the streets of London, and although Mardrake fought and resisted with all his cunning, he died in a vicious, climactic fistfight atop a cathedral. Unbeknownst to Duncan, though, Mardrake was a member of the secret society of dilettante sorcerers known as the Crimson Covenant, an English splinter of the Odinist Thule Society, and he would return to haunt the Jackal again.

After avenging himself, the Jackal continued to pursue justice for others as a costumed vigilante, taking on missions to break up crime rings, capture criminals, and battle tyrants all over the world. He made a name for himself as a dark hero of the times. But it wasn't long before Mardrake returned, resurrecting himself through powerful necromantic rituals and horrific infernal pacts, and the evil sorcerer soon

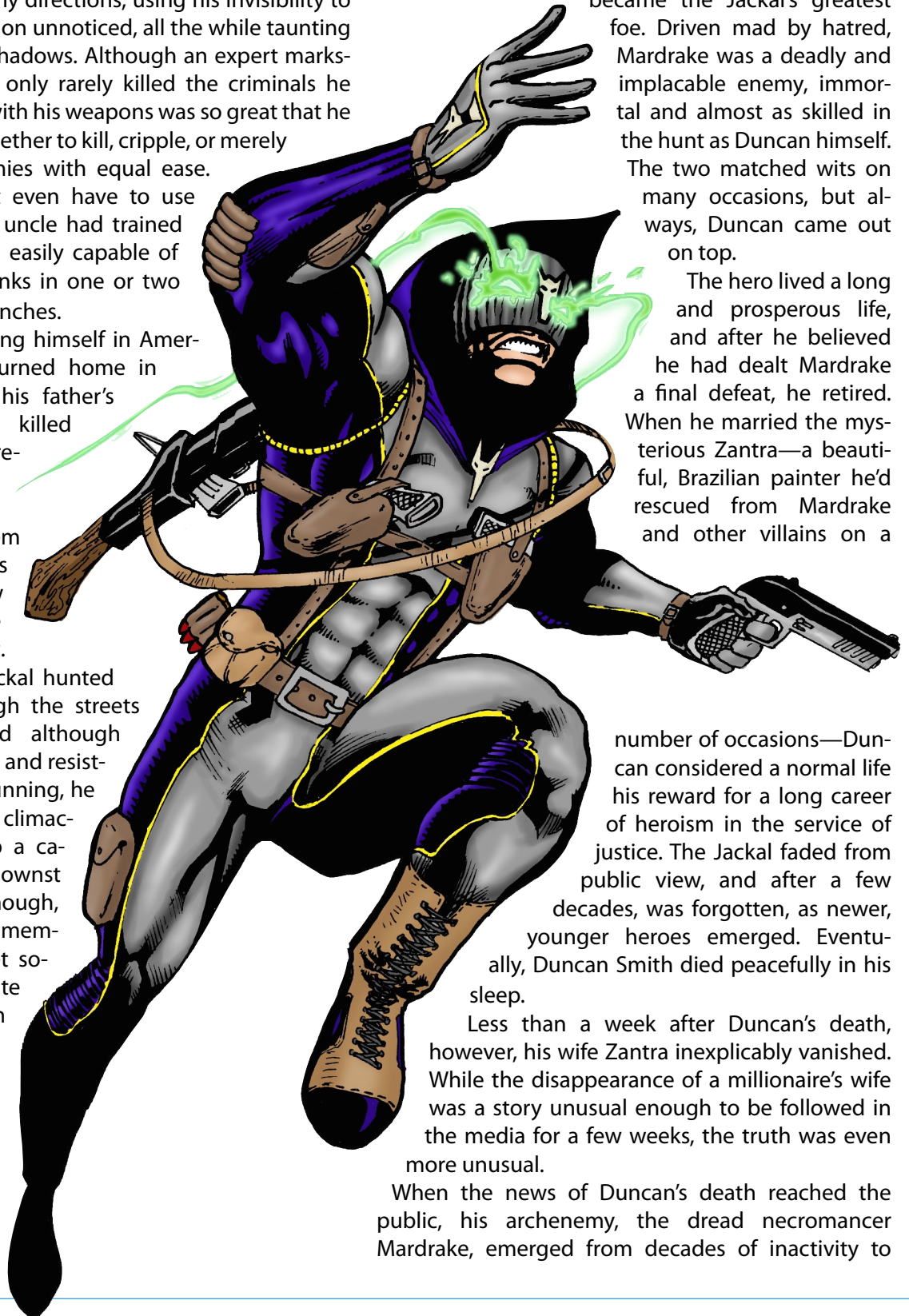
became the Jackal's greatest foe. Driven mad by hatred, Mardrake was a deadly and implacable enemy, immortal and almost as skilled in the hunt as Duncan himself. The two matched wits on many occasions, but always, Duncan came out on top.

The hero lived a long and prosperous life, and after he believed he had dealt Mardrake a final defeat, he retired. When he married the mysterious Zantra—a beautiful, Brazilian painter he'd rescued from Mardrake and other villains on a

number of occasions—Duncan considered a normal life his reward for a long career of heroism in the service of justice. The Jackal faded from public view, and after a few decades, was forgotten, as newer, younger heroes emerged. Eventually, Duncan Smith died peacefully in his sleep.

Less than a week after Duncan's death, however, his wife Zantra inexplicably vanished. While the disappearance of a millionaire's wife was a story unusual enough to be followed in the media for a few weeks, the truth was even more unusual.

When the news of Duncan's death reached the public, his archenemy, the dread necromancer Mardrake, emerged from decades of inactivity to



carry out a final gambit against his hated nemesis, a plot some twenty years in the making. He not only kidnapped the aged Zantra, but stole Duncan's mystic hunting mask from its hiding place as well. Mardrake used both Zantra and the mask as foci to summon Duncan's spirit from Beyond. Then, as the hero's confused soul watched helplessly, Mardrake cast a spell that trapped Zantra's soul in a mystically prepared gemstone. When the spell was complete, Mardrake politely requested the Jackal's services. If Duncan did not agree to serve him, Mardrake warned, he would destroy Zantra's soul forever.

Duncan broke and submitted to the sorcerer's demands. Mardrake used his necromantic arts to craft an unliving vessel for the spirit of his long-time foe, and equipped him with strange weapons crafted from a mix of ancient necromancy and cutting-edge technology. After time, he was even able to pervert the powers of Duncan's mask and merge it with its owner's transformed soul. Now, the ghost of the Jackal has become the Huntsman, Mardrake's chief bodyguard and assassin. Though Duncan hates what he has become, he is helpless to resist the orders of his deathless foe, for the necromancer has the power to torment his lover's soul with but a thought – or destroy her utterly.

PERSONALITY

After the death of his father, Duncan became a driven young man, dedicated to revenge body and soul. His hunting experience taught him the value of patience, and he would rarely strike unless he felt he had a distinct advantage. During this time, Duncan was a fairly quiet individual who shunned the company of others, often due to the fact that his mind was on other, more important matters. As the Jackal, Duncan still spoke little, often only to berate his targets for their stupidity. After the death of his father's murderers, Duncan became less withdrawn, as though a great burden had been lifted. He began to play the role of the wealthy socialite, trading clever banter with friends or enemies at lavish and exclusive house parties. Despite his tragic past, he grew into a successful and charming young man. The Jackal, however, remained as grimly derisive as ever, meting out his own form of brutal justice. Following his resurrection by Mardrake, Duncan is now extremely melancholy, and though he loathes himself and what he must do for Zantra, he carries out the necromancer's wishes. He has taken to wisecracks and heavy, if extremely dark, sarcasm to cope with his current situation. He often expresses remorse for his actions before he commits them. Being dead, the

HUNTSMAN

PL 14

STR

+2

14

DEX

+4

18

CON

-

-

INT

+2

14

WIS

+4

18

CHA

+2

14

TOUGHNESS

+12

FORTITUDE

+0

REFLEX

+12

WILL

+12

SKILLS

Bluff 6 (+8), Climb 8 (+10), Concentration 6 (+10), Handle Animal 6 (+8), Intimidate 10 (+12), Knowledge (arcane lore) 5 (+7), Knowledge (tactics) 5 (+7), Notice 10 (+14), Search 4 (+6), Stealth 12 (+16), Survival 14 (+18), Swim 6 (+8)

FEATS

Accurate Attack, All-Out Attack, Assessment, Evasion 2, Fearless, Fearsome Presence 5, Improved Aim, Improved Disarm 2, Improved Initiative 2, Move-By Action, Precise Shot 2, Quick Draw, Skill Mastery (Climb, Notice, Stealth, Survival), Sneak Attack 2, Track

POWERS

Communication 10 (Magical Sendings; *Power Feats*: Dimensional 2 [Underworld Dimensions], Subtle; *Flaws*: Only Usable to Communicate with Mardrake), **Device 4** (Necro-Pistols): **Blast 14** (easy to lose; *Power Feats*: Affects Insubstantial, Incurable, Improved Range, Split Attack; *Flaws*: Limited [Does Not Affect Inorganic Matter]), **Immunity 30** (Fortitude Saves), **Insubstantial 4**, **Invisibility 1** (all visual senses), **Regeneration 30** (Recovery Bonus 5, Bruised 2, Unconscious 2, Injured 4, Staggered 4, Disabled 5, Resurrection 8; *Power Feats*: Persistent, Regrowth), **Super-Senses 18** (Accurate Auditory, Extended Olfactory, Detect Life 3 [Accurate 2, Acute 1, Extended 4, Radius], Direction Sense, Scent, Tracking 3 [Detect Life])

COMBAT

Attack +15, Grapple +17, Damage +2 (unarmed), +14 (necro-pistols), Defense +15, Knockback -7, Initiative +12

TOTALS

Abilities 18 + Skills 23 (92 ranks) + Feats 24 + Powers 129 + Combat 60 + Saves 28 = 282 PP

Huntsman fears nothing.

APPEARANCE

Duncan Smith was a handsome, athletic man with neat, dark hair and intense blue eyes. His broad shoulders and strong jaw made him a favorite with the opposite sex, even before he'd matured, and after reaching adulthood, the thin, elegant mustache he sported was a hit. As the Jackal, Duncan wore a skintight bodysuit of gray and midnight blue material underneath a hooded, black cowl. On his face, the black wooden Hunter's Mask was adorned with a

blazing white likeness of a jackal. As the resurrected Huntsman, Duncan appears much the same as he did as the Jackal, save that beneath his mask, his eyes blaze a bright, sickly emerald hue.

POWERS AND TACTICS

The Jackal was an amazingly skilled survivalist and tracker. Over time, he managed to adapt his training to his new, urban role. Eventually, he could track a rat through a warehouse or live for weeks in a sewer (without getting sick). Thanks to his uncle, Duncan became an impressive scrapper, capable of holding

THE JAGUAR'S SHADOWS



Unbeknownst even to Duncan, his wife Zantra was raised in a reclusive tribe of rain forest natives, and was the daughter of the tribe's shaman. The tribe was xenophobic, and feared (probably rightly) that the encroachment of the outside world would spell the end of their way of life. The spiritual leaders of the tribe were all members of a mysterious fraternity known as the Jaguar's Shadows and Zantra's father, a powerful sorcerer in his own right, was the most respected member of the group. From generation to generation, the Jaguar's Shadows passed on the secret of the Serpent's Breath, a mystical powder made from a mix of several jungle herbs that granted those who ingested it unnatural longevity and superhuman vigor. They also maintained ancient pacts with powerful spirits in the Underworld, and could summon them into our world in physical form to defend the tribe.

When hunters from the tribe, empowered with the Serpent's Breath, came into the civilized world seeking three large emeralds required for a mystic ceremony, they came into conflict with the Jackal. The hunters barely completed their mission, and lost the emeralds to the Jackal's cleverness when the ceremony was completed. Over the years, the Jackal and the Jaguar's Shadows matched wits a few more times, and eventually they came to respect and fear the Jackal, giving him the honorific name "Ghost Who Hunts the Hunters."

Zantra's father sent her into the world to gather information which he planned to use to shepherd the tribe through a prophesied Apocalypse called "the Final Nightfall." When the Final Nightfall came, the shaman planned to summon creatures from the Underworld to aid the mystically empowered warriors of his tribe in ambitious attacks on the outside world, all designed to bring about the collapse of the civilized nations of South America.

After years of living in the world outside the rain forest, however, Zantra grew to love her new home, and she lied to her father, telling him the "outsiders" had weapons so powerful even the spirits of the underworld could not hope to defeat them. When she fell in love with Duncan, she reversed the effects of the life-extending herbs that had slowed her aging, wishing to grow old with the man she loved.

However, before Duncan's retirement, she bore him a son in secret, and tribal law (together with the inescapable power of her father's mystic senses) required her to surrender the child to the elders of the Jaguar's Shadows. The birth of a child to Zantra had been prophesied, and it was said he would lead the tribe to a victory in the time of the Final Nightfall. Zantra gave the child to her father and never saw him again, and her happy years with Duncan were tainted by guilt over this secret. Still, she never spoke of it, fearing her father would kill both her husband and herself with sorcery if the child's existence were revealed.

Duncan's child was given a tribal name that meant "the Son of the Ghost." He never knew his father, but he grew up strong within the tribe, enriched by relentless training and the Serpent's Breath, becoming not only the tribe's greatest hunter but, eventually, its leader. His cousin, Zantra's nephew, became the tribe's new shaman. He has come to suspect that the outsiders are not as strong as Zantra described them, and after seeing the world of the outsiders briefly for himself redoubled the tribe's efforts to prepare for the Final Nightfall. Tribal prophesies indicate that one day the Son of the Ghost will encounter his father, but the visions are unclear as to whether they will meet as enemies or allies.

his own against multiple skilled opponents. And when things became really dangerous, he could always fall back on his deadly accuracy with his pistols, which he often used to cripple, maim, or disarm his opponents from a distance. The Jackal relied on ambushes and tactical strikes, and his ability to move undetected was legendary. Though it was primarily due to the Hunter's Mask he wore, which could render him invisible and incorporeal for short periods of time, his training as a hunter was also significant. Also, the Hunter's Mask allowed him, with great effort, to create illusions of himself to misdirect and confuse foes. Though he had only the physical abilities of a normal, if athletic man, the Jackal fought and bested many super-powered opponents much more powerful than himself, primarily due to his cunning. As the resurrected Huntsman, Duncan's powers have increased somewhat. He no longer requires the Hunter's Mask to become intangible or invisible; he can do so at will, though Mardrake has twisted Duncan's spirit body to look exactly like the phantom Huntsman of old. Though he is as accurate a marksman as ever, he now carries a pair of small pistols, crafted by servants of the Covenant, that channel destructive blasts of death energy capable of withering a normal mortal to a lifeless husk (the pistols do not affect inanimate matter). And most fearsome of all, Duncan's tracking ability has become almost paranormal. He can psychically "home in" on a single target and follow him or her anywhere, unerringly. Fortunately for many, the Huntsman still has some heart left. He is much more competent and capable than Mardrake gives him credit for. He often tracks his prey more slowly, and fights less aggressively, than he was taught. The Huntsman, ever canny, hopes to find someone capable of besting him and the immortal Mardrake to free his love forever.

IN GAME

The Huntsman makes an excellent tragic hero. In the present day, he is a reluctant servant of darkness, an assassin who may be found anywhere dark deeds are afoot. He is currently under the will of the immortal Mardrake, a necromancer belonging to the Crimson Covenant, a group of wealthy sorcerers who work behind the scenes to merge this reality with the Underworld for their dark masters. The Huntsman takes care of certain important matters for them, such as eliminating threats, kidnapping new recruits, and protecting Mardrake from any who would dare attack him. While Duncan is a puppet for these evil powers now, in the Pulp Era, he was one of the foremost heroes of the age, powerful, skilled, and

ORIGIN-IN-A-BOX

— □ ×

You were raised amongst an indigenous rainforest tribe by the members of a mystical fraternity known as the Jaguar's Shadows. You know nothing of your parents. The tribe's leader told you that they perished when you were an infant; some wild jungle beast killed them. At an early age you were subjected to the Serpent's Breath, a powder made from a mix of several jungle herbs that granted those who ingested it unnatural longevity and superhuman vigor. When you came of age you discovered the dark purpose of the Jaguar's Shadows. An ancient prophecy tells of the coming Final Nightfall, a dark time when the civilizations of the world will collapse and the tribe will defend itself from the chaos by summoning spirits from the Underworld. However, the tribe's leader seemed to savor the idea of the Final Nightfall and would send his warriors out to sow the seeds of chaos or steal items needed for dark rituals. During one of these missions into the outside world, you discovered it was not full of evil people as the Jaguar's Shadows had claimed. The supposed enemies of the tribe were innocent. You left the tribe and set out into a world you never dreamed existed.

This origin can be the gateway for a variety of adventures. The character can discover his or her true origins, and the real fate of his or her parents – Duncan and Zantra. He or she would also have a potential rogue's gallery in the form of the Jaguar's Shadows and the surviving (or undead) members of the Crimson Covenant. The template below represents the effects of the Serpent's Breath treatment. Feel free to adjust it according to your game's PL. A character with this origin might also be contacted by the Jackal's mentor, Shaman, who could craft a mystic mask similar to the original Hunter's Mask and who could also serve as an advisor and friend to the character.

Serpent's Breath Recipient, Template

Powers: Enhanced Strength 6, Enhanced Dexterity 6, Enhanced Feats 3 (Endurance, Ultimate Save: Fortitude, Trance), **Immunity 1** (aging), **Leaping 1, Protection 6** (Extras: Impervious)

Cost: 29 PP

seemingly unstoppable. Perhaps one or more of the PCs have heard of the Jackal's exploits, a fact that makes it even more difficult to battle the legend now. The Huntsman's story should evoke a sense of loss or

pity in the PCs, and they might even decide to try to help him regain his lover's soul, rather than simply beat him. Some of the ways Huntsman might run afoul of the PCs are described below:

The Hound is Loosed: A magically inclined associate of the PCs contacts them, seeking help. It seems that the Crimson Covenant has marked him or her for extermination. (If one of the PCs has a mystical bent, perhaps a PC is marked for death). The Huntsman has been dispatched to kill the character, and it seems that he will stop at nothing. He is no fool. If at all possible, he avoids direct confrontation with the PCs. Instead, the Huntsman will go to great lengths to attack the target from an advantageous position from which he may retreat unharmed (and preferably, unseen). He cannot stop trying until "killed" or given the order to cease by Mardrake. Heroes desiring to save the target should likely try to find Mardrake and convince him, whether by negotiation or by force, to call off the Huntsman. This easy hook is great for introducing the Huntsman and the Covenant for the first time.

A Son's Revenge: The Son of the Ghost (see *The Jaguar's Shadows* sidebar) has no idea what has been done to his mother's spirit. One day his cousin, the tribe's new shaman, uses knowledge gained from underworld spirits to deduce Zantra's fate. Being unable to find the Tower of Basalt and Ash amid the vast and confusing terrain of the Underworld, Zantra's son will attack those members of the Crimson Covenant who are still alive in this world, one of whom lives in a city near the PCs. While the new shaman is inexperienced, his tribe's ancient pacts allow him to summon large and powerful spirits from the Underworld in material form to rage through the cities of the civilized world. Between these monstrous spirits and the tribe's warriors, who have superhuman strength and endurance due to use of the mystical herb known as the Serpent's Breath, the tribe can wreak considerable destruction unless they are negotiated with or defeated. In the midst of the assault, Mardrake

dispatches the Huntsman to defend his ally, resulting in a conflict between father and son—with the PCs in the middle.

ENDGAME

The PCs receive a message begging for aid (either written, drawn, emailed, etc.). The message appears to be from a mystic claiming that the evil wizard Mardrake has recently acquired a powerful weapon, a gleaming blue gem capable of sending the entire city hurtling into the Underworld. The message comes with a map leading to a weak point in reality, through which the PCs may reach the Underworld and find Mardrake's Tower of Basalt and Ash. PCs who undertake the mission can look forward to a number of strange and fearsome challenges, such as Underworld ghosts and spirits and, perhaps, even strange, ethereal phenomena unique to the land of the dead. Once they arrive at the tower, PCs must find and either steal or destroy the gem, working their way past Mardrake's elite ghostly guards and hideous creatures before confronting the Huntsman and then Mardrake himself. At some point, they should discover that the entire plot has been fabricated by the Huntsman to manipulate them into acquiring the gem containing his love Zantra and freeing her. The heroes must decide whether to abort the dangerous mission or to continue on and save the woman's soul. If they can destroy the gem, Zantra will be freed and the Huntsman will no longer be bound to the necromancer's service. At this point, it is possible for him to follow his love into the great Beyond. Or perhaps, he might remain to settle some unfinished business...

VITAL STATS: LUTHER

Quote: "YOU WALK IN MY VEINS, YOU LIVE IN MY HEART"

Real Name: None

Aliases: None

Occupation: Spirit of the City

Legal Status: None

Identity: Unknown

Marital Status: Single

Known Relatives: Unknown

Affiliation: None

Base of Operations: Unknown

Height: 6'

Weight: 608 lbs.

Hair: Dirty Blonde

Eyes: Asphalt-Gray

Distinguishing Marks: Unnerving smile, much too wide for his face

LUTHER

Luther is a city spirit, an embodiment of the psychic climate of his metropolis. Since the city's founding, Luther has been present, walking its streets, ensuring the safety of residents, and evolving as the city has through urbanization, industrialization, and specialization. Unfortunately, escalating gang violence, organized crime wars, and murder has polluted Luther's city. The violent effects of the gun are ev-

erywhere. The weapon appears to be the catalyst for the city's decline, and it has affected the city's spirit profoundly. And now, Luther, once a proud caretaker of his citizens and streets, has gone quite mad.

Luther is obsessed with the guns that have made his domain a veritable war zone. Unfortunately, the spirit cannot seem to decide whether firearms have reshaped his city for the worse or the better. As a result, he spends long nights in alleys, using his magic to forge mystical guns over refuse burning in garbage cans. These guns often possess supernatural qualities far beyond anything modern technology can accomplish. Luther gives these weapons to residents, and although many require them for self-defense, others have far less benevolent uses in mind. The violence in Luther's city has escalated further, as his firearms have infected users' minds with a peculiar madness that often results in murder. Fortunately for some, most of Luther's weapons eventually suffer a "misfire," a mystical backlash that preempts disaster and spells certain doom for wielders.

Luther is difficult to locate and even more difficult to apprehend. Many have tried to find and capture him, but the spirit's ability to appear and disappear anywhere within the bounds of his city makes this nearly impossible.

Furthermore, it appears that Luther has crafted a number of specialized firearms for himself, which makes fighting him a decidedly risky venture.

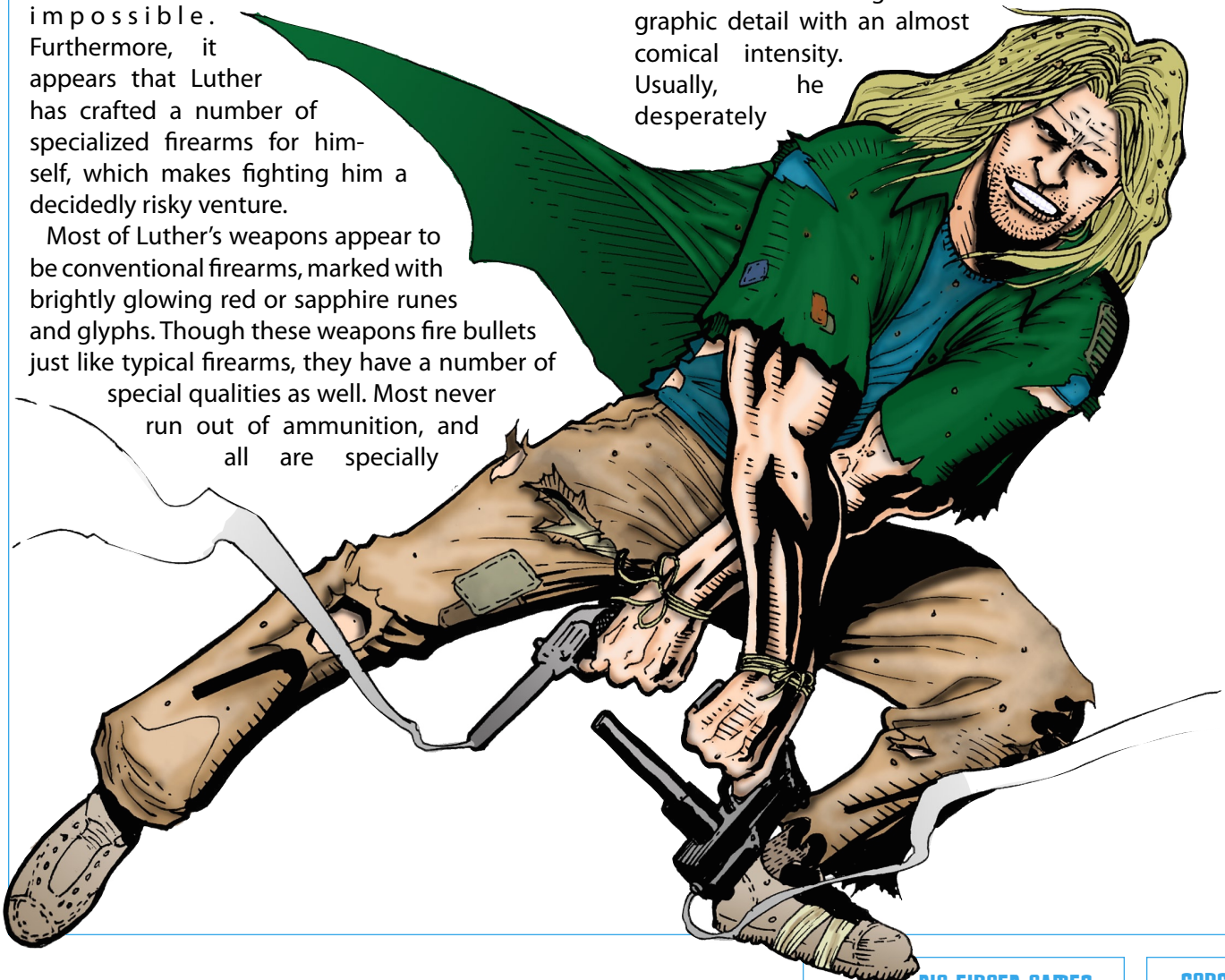
Most of Luther's weapons appear to be conventional firearms, marked with brightly glowing red or sapphire runes and glyphs. Though these weapons fire bullets just like typical firearms, they have a number of special qualities as well. Most never run out of ammunition, and all are specially

balanced for use as melee weapons as well. Targets tend to suffer additional negative effects such as paralysis, psychosis, hallucinations, or even (seemingly) spontaneous combustion. The power of Luther's weapons, combined with the spirit's tendency to simply give them away, has made him unpopular with both law enforcement agencies and many criminal organizations. Luther is wanted badly by such groups, and they will pay a great deal for any information leading to his capture. Most of his enemies are oblivious to his true nature and assume that he is just an extremely clever (or lucky) gunsmith.

Through it all, Luther glides through his city, not knowing whether to save it or let it remain... interesting.

PERSONALITY

Luther is plainly insane. Few are comfortable in his presence, and sensing this, the spirit goes to great lengths to put others at ease, most often with a smile and a bit of humor, though this often only enhances his disquieting aura. He speaks in a husky, urgent voice, and often of disturbing subject matter. Luther is known for describing death in graphic detail with an almost comical intensity. Usually, he desperately



LUTHER

PL 13

STR	+0	26/20	INT	+1	12
DEX	+1	12	WIS	+5	20
CON	-	-	CHA	+1	12
TOUGHNESS	+15*		FORTITUDE	+0	
			REFLEX	+5	
			WILL	+0	

*three points are impervious protection

SKILLS

Climb 5 (+10), Craft (artistic) 14 (+15), Craft (mechanical) 14 (+15), Intimidate 5 (+6), Knowledge (arcane lore) 12 (+13), Knowledge (streetwise) 8 (+9), Notice 5 (+10), Search 5 (+6), Stealth 4 (+5)

FEATS

Favored Environment (urban) 4, Fearless, Improvised Tools, Artificer

POWERS

Comprehend 2 (Languages 2; *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Only Usable with Denizens of the City), **Density 6** (*Power Feats*: Innate; *Extras*: Continuous Duration; *Flaws*: Permanent), **Emotion Control 6** (*Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Side Effect – Luther is subject to an emotion being felt by a random living thing within the range of this power, Uncontrollable), **Immunity 30** (Fortitude Saves; *Power Feats*: Innate), **Regeneration 28** (Recovery Bonus 5, Bruise 2, Unconscious 2, Injured 3, Staggered 3, Disabled 4, Ability Damage 3, Resurrection 6; *Power Feats*: Innate, Persistent, Regrowth, Reincarnation), **Strike 4** (*Power Feats*: Innate, Mighty), **Teleport 6** (*Power Feats*: Easy, Innate; *Extras*: Accurate; *Flaws*: Can Only Teleport within the City)

DRAWBACKS

Disability (mentally unstable, very common, major), Weakness (to being outside the city, minor, per round, destroyed after 10 rounds)

COMBAT

Attack +8, Grapple +13, Damage +8 (unarmed) +12 (strike), Defense +8, Knockback –6, Initiative +1

TOTALS

Abilities 16 + Skills 18 (72 ranks) + Feats 7 + Powers 109 + Combat 32 + Saves 19 – Drawbacks 13 = 188 PP

wants to fix his city, though he has no idea how to do so. On the one hand, he knows that his weaponry can give common citizens the edge they need to protect themselves and take their neighborhoods back from those who prey upon them; on the other, he is often unable to discern the victims from the predators. Furthermore, the spirit's madness often inverts his perspective, making him instead desire to perpetuate the violence and the murder in order to prevent "his" people (and by extension, *himself*) from growing soft. When caught in the throes of this madness, Luther instead supplies muggers, thieves, mobsters, gangbangers, and general lowlifes with his amazing weapons.

APPEARANCE

Luther most often appears to be a hunched, muscular man dressed in ragged clothing. He is unshaven, unclean, and unsettling, and he is often mistaken for a vagrant. His eyes are the color of asphalt, and his long, blonde hair, though once beautiful and wavy, is now a tangled, greasy mess, flecked with tiny bits of dirt and crumpled newspaper. Luther smiles often, hoping to put those near him at ease, but the smile is too wide, and it never seems to reach the dead, gray asphalt eyes.

POWERS AND TACTICS

As a city spirit, Luther enjoys the strength and durability of the streets below his feet. He can shrug off most conventional attacks, and when angered, it is a small matter for him to tear a grown man limb from limb. He can also magically appear anywhere within the city in an instant, though if he leaves the city limits, he slowly begins to crumble and fall apart. Luther is very difficult to keep down, and though he has been crushed underneath a bus, blown to bits in a bomb blast, and smashed in a steel factory, his link with the city ensures his perpetual rebirth so long as a significant portion of it is standing. Conceivably, leveling over half the city and killing a significant number of residents may prevent Luther's rebirth (or change him significantly enough to render him a different entity entirely). The spirit also has an empathic link with all living things in the city, and this ability affords him a certain degree of psychic influence upon its citizens, though they influence him, too. This link has affected not only Luther's sanity, but also his powers, and thanks to the prevalence of the firearm in the city, Luther can magically craft his own guns, often with incredible powers. One of Luther's firearms might confuse, paralyze, poison, or even set fire to targets. Also, Luther's weapons never run out of bullets, and many, even those that might appear to

be revolvers, have unnaturally high rates of fire.

IN GAME

Luther's domain can be any city the GM desires, though it should be currently experiencing violence in at least a few districts. It might be the PCs' home city, or it might simply be a place they are visiting. Whatever the case, dealing with Luther can be problematic. He is a powerful spirit, and brute force alone is unlikely to stop him for long. When interacting with Luther, PCs should occasionally catch glimpses of his former glory between episodes of madness. Some adventure hooks are described below:

The Five Luthers: Luther's habit of giving away extremely powerful guns has drawn the attention of Merchant, an unscrupulous inventor and gun czar (Merchant is detailed elsewhere in this book). Luther's weapons, it appears, are enough to affect The Market's sales. Unsurprisingly, Merchant has taken it upon himself to find the mystery man practically giving away firepower and either eliminate or recruit him. The confrontation between the two, likely a shootout, should be public, in a location the PCs can easily reach. The PCs must deal with both powerhouses (and likely a number of Merchant's operatives, as well) while protecting innocents from the substantial collateral damage caused by the unique weapons of the two combatants. Unfortunately, over the course of the battle, Luther's spiritual physiology has an unforeseen reaction to one of Merchant's weapons, resulting in the spirit being driven even further over the edge. He fragments into five sentient personality shards that spread out across the city. Each shard has distinct abilities and motivations, though they all now wish to perpetuate violence and murder. Soon, the five Luthers will taint the entire city and all its residents with the same cruel madness that initially drove him/them insane. PCs who wish to stop this must find and capture all five Luther shards (each is slightly less powerful than the original, though their powers and choice of weapons differ somewhat), then reverse the effects of Merchant's weapon (a task which is likely to require Merchant's aid, which he'll only offer if he's well paid or at least allowed to go free). The number of Luthers could also change depending on the city; five Luthers could be perfect for, say, Manhattan, which has Five Boroughs, and each Luther could reflect the character of a different part of the city. A city divided into a different number of boroughs, districts, or neighborhoods could cause Luther to divide into a different number of selves.

A Very Special Episode: In this plot hook, which

LUTHER AND GADGETS

— ☐ ☐ X

Luther is designed to create his magical firearms as one-shot magical devices per the inventing rules (see M&M, page 131). Alternatively you can give Luther the Gadgets power to better represent this ability. To remove any effective limit on the number of weapons Luther can have in circulation you can give this trait a rating of X (see M&M, page 211)

works for a very specific character of gaming group, Luther has decided to take a different route in affecting change in his city. To date, he has been supplying the men and women of his city with weapons in the hopes that they could take the streets back (that, or continue the endless battles on those streets; he cannot always remember which). But these humans often become weary and cynical, and from their exhaustion, more violence always ensues. As a result, Luther has decided to instead target children. He begins peddling his wares at local middle and high schools, luring minors with promises of safety, as well as fame and grandeur, of righting wrongs and emulating idols, particularly superheroes. It is only a matter of time before these armed youths come into conflict with one another. The first few outbreaks of violence are, thankfully, not lethal, perhaps due to the fact that the youngsters have little training with firearms and even less of the conviction required to intentionally attempt to kill someone. Enough youths take part, however, to make it clear that something must be done. It will be difficult and nearly impossible for PCs to discover exactly which youths in the city are armed, and even more difficult to forcibly disarm them without hurting anyone. They would do well to try another method. Fortunately, social worker Tammi Vargas approaches them with an idea: a public works program to promote understanding, diversity, and nonviolence in the community might be just what is needed to make the children not *want* to have their weapons. Vargas wants to start a program that allows the youths to turn in their weapons at the local community center. She wants the PCs to work to ensure that the kids do eventually feel safe enough to turn in Luther's weaponry. This hook is primarily useful for heroes with more positive reputations, and players and GMs can have a great deal of fun coming up with ways to get the kids involved in doing things to better their neighborhoods and their lives. While busting criminals might be necessary on occasion, the heroes can try shooting public service announcements, building parks, sponsoring reading programs, and more, all to better the chances of the

kids turning in their guns. This adventure may have a lasting effect on the city, as it may be enough to bring Luther back into his original role as the city's spiritual caretaker.

ENDGAME

The best way to combat Luther is to take the battle to the causes of his madness. This can include both traditional strategies to combat inner city violence (such as community outreach programs to pull kids off the streets and out of gangs, neighborhood watches and public service initiatives) and uniquely superheroic solutions (from surgical strikes on key underworld figures designed to dramatically reduce criminal activity to the use of mind-control powers to permanently alter the minds of violent offenders). Anything that can truly lessen the violence so prevalent in the city for a significant period of time (measured in months rather than weeks) will allow Luther to once more be the spiritual caretaker of a living metropolis, rather than the avenging spirit of an urban dystopia.

MERCHANT

Brian Renstart is smarter than you. He'll tell you so any day of the week. He'll tell you how, when he was six, he made a high-powered single-shot projectile weapon using a strip of wood, some paper clips, a drill bit, and the rims from condoms he found lying around the house. He might mention the fact that he used the weapon to bullseye his cat Petey from several dozen feet away. He'll make sure you know that he didn't expect it to be as powerful as it was, and he'll assure you that Petey didn't suffer long, as the bit drilled right through the creature's skull. Then, he'll go on at length about the epiphany he had at the moment the cat stiffened and fell off his backyard fence, how it changed his life forever and put him

on a path to greatness. He'll show you his wares and even let you test them out; so long as you're careful and treat them with the respect they are due. And if you have the cash, he'll sell you a pistol capable of reducing a military APC to so much scrap metal.

Brian Renstart always had a knack for anything mechanical. His parents, a wealthy pair of successful adult film stars in western California, were thrilled at their son's gift, as he had not inherited either of their attractive features and would never manage to follow in their footsteps (in truth, Brian's biological father was a hard-faced automobile mechanic his mother had taken a momentary liking to). It was only right, they thought, that he be allowed to achieve greatness in his own way.

In his youth, Brian created all kinds of interesting devices, many of which were designed to fire projectiles at extremely high speeds. After the incident with Petey, however, young Renstart decided it would be best to keep the more dangerous applications of his creations under wraps. Instead, he would shoot objects high into the air, out of sight, pretending to be trying to reach space or burst clouds. Rather than responding with fear (as they had upon discovering Petey's fate), his parents offered the condescending encouragement commonly reserved for youth.

As he grew older, Brian became better at what he did. He completed his higher education at an accelerated rate, acquiring a PhD at twenty-four, at which point the then-fledgling company Maxwell Technologies promptly snatched him up. While working for Maxwell, Brian had access to resources he had never before known, and for a time, lost interest in martial weapon construction. He proved himself a competent addition to Maxwell's scientific team, and many of his designs helped set the company on the fast track to success. Brian spent a few years with Maxwell, but by the time he'd reached twenty-seven he'd become quite

VITAL STATS: MERCHANT

Quote: "I'M SURE YOU DIDN'T EXPECT ME TO GO DOWN IN A BLAZE OF GLORY AFTER YOUR NAUSEATING DISPLAY OF PROPAGANDIST HANDHOLDING AND WASTEFUL PEACEMAKING. . ."

Real Name: Brian Renstart

Aliases: None

Occupation: Criminal Inventor, Arms Dealer

Legal Status: Citizen of the U.S. with no criminal record

Identity: Secret

Marital Status: Single

Known Relatives: Trevor Renstart (father, deceased), Haley Renstart (mother, millionaire), Norman Glover (biological father, retired)

Affiliation: The Market, his organization of arms dealers, mercenaries, smugglers, and weapons designers

Base of Operations: The Black Shop - a factory and laboratory hidden somewhere in Canada

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 173 lbs.

Hair: Dark Brown

Eyes: Gray

Distinguishing Marks: Stubble on chin that never seems to stay gone for longer than an hour

bored of it all, and found himself spending more and more of his spare time (and more Maxwell resources) building destructive implements. When he was caught selling his weaponry from a Maxwell facility, the company let him go (Brian's own personal euphemism for "Firing him, accusing him of theft, and setting the proper authorities on his trail").

Using the money from the sale of his illicit weapons, he fled the country and set up his "Black Shop" facility in Canada, where he created advanced weapons he could sell for exorbitant prices – prices driven even higher by the government's decidedly hostile attitude towards such things. Donning a costume and dubbing himself Merchant, Brian began to sell his immensely powerful firearms to criminal and terrorist organizations, and it didn't take long before he was quite wealthy.

Merchant has since carved out a small criminal empire that he calls "The Market". It is composed of arms dealers, mercenaries, renegade scientists, and smugglers who provide, use, and transport firearms throughout the world. Though peripherally motivated by profit, Merchant could retire at any time. He continues his work, however, because he is filled with a sense of pride for the weapons he produces, and he loves to see them in action or hear about them in the news.

Much of Merchant's weapons technology is based on magnetic propulsion systems, and many of his designs are compact rail guns that fire high-speed slivers of metal along magnetic

rails in the barrels. All firearms crafted at the Black Shop are made so as to be nearly impossible to thoroughly examine without falling apart. Thus, most of the weapons are impossible to duplicate. Although he does design and sell energy weapons, Merchant tends to charge much more for these – not to offset costs, but to discourage their use. Brian's always had a thing for projectiles, and he generally frowns on beam weapons as requiring less skill to create and use (though many argue that this is a foolish idea).

PERSONALITY

Merchant is undeniably arrogant. All his life he's been encouraged, and for him failure is a rare thing indeed. He is quite sure of himself, and with good reason. His brilliance is patently obvious in his accomplishments. Few others could successfully forge a world-spanning

criminal organization, an

underground network of laboratories and factories, and thousands of

advanced firearms designs, all without being arrested even once.

Although he did not inherit his mother's beautiful features, Merchant is still an immensely charismatic

man. He takes a pleasant, almost friendly attitude

with most individuals he deals with, though he is careful to maintain a professional

distance. He has a reputation for being something of a talker. Whether dealing with hostile

heroes or interested buyers, Renstart is liable to loose a longwinded speech on any applicable topic, and he's fairly easy to prompt into an enthusiastic diatribe.

He tends to tell stories relating to circumstances or situations he has witnessed or found himself in. He swears they are all true, and he never seems to run out of material.

When threatened or antagonized, Merchant is quick



MERCHANT

PL 13

STR	+1	12	INT	+10	30
DEX	+1	12	WIS	+1	12
CON	+1	12	CHA	+3	16
TOUGHNESS			FORTITUDE		
+12*/+4/+1**			+4		
			REFLEX		
			+4		
			WILL		
			+8		

*with armor, **flat-footed

SKILLS

Bluff 5 (+8), Computers 10 (+20), Craft (electronic) 12 (+22), Craft (mechanical) 12 (+22), Diplomacy 5 (+8), Disable Device 4 (+14), Drive 4 (+5), Gather Information 4 (+7), Intimidate 4 (+7), Knowledge (business) 3 (+13), Knowledge (physical sciences) 8 (+18), Knowledge (streetwise) 3 (+13), Knowledge (tactics) 4 (+14), Knowledge (technology) 12 (+22), Language (French, German, Mandarin, Russian) 4, Notice 6 (+7), Pilot 4 (+5), Search 2 (+12), Stealth 5 (+6), Survival 3 (+4)

FEATS

Attack Focus (ranged) 4, Benefit (wealth), Connected, Contacts, Defensive Roll 3, Dodge Focus 2, Eidetic Memory, Equipment 3, Improved Aim, Improvised Tools, Inventor, Jack-of-All-Trades, Master Plan, Minions 5 (five 45-point minions)

POWERS

Device 9 (Automatic Coilrifle): **Blast 14** (easy to lose; *Power Feats*: Improved Range; *Extras*: Autofire), **Device 1** (Goggles): **Super Senses 5** (hard to lose; Darkvision, Direction Sense, Infravision, Ultra-Hearing), **Gadgets 5** (easy to lose)

EQUIPMENT

Cell Phone, Commlink, PDA, GPS Receiver, Multi-tool, Rebreather, Armored Costume (**Protection 8**)

COMBAT

Attack +6, +10 (ranged), Grapple +7, Damage +1 (unarmed), +14 (blast), Defense +8, +6 (flat-footed), Knockback -6, Initiative +1

TOTALS

Abilities 24 + Skills 29 (114 ranks) + Feats 26 + Powers 61 + Combat 24 + Saves 13 = 177 PP

STORY POINT

_ □ x

Renstart's time spent at Maxwell Technologies may provide an opportunity to weave his background into the fabric of your campaign. A gadgeteer or battlesuit character may carry equipment or have used components designed by Renstart during his time at Maxwell Technologies. Renstart left backdoor commands in most of the equipment he designed. He's also aware of any intentional design flaws or shortcomings of the technology. This could prove quite a surprise for a hero that crosses Merchant's path ("The gyroscopic equalizer in your armor is one of my earlier designs... it has at least one exploitable flaw...").

to flee, even if it appears that the opposition has little chance of besting him. He did not get where he is now by being careless or underestimating his enemies.

APPEARANCE

Brian Renstart is not an attractive man. His hard face bears many deep lines, and he always appears in need of a shave. Beneath a wide nose with flaring nostrils, the corners of his mouth turn down, giving him the look of a man in a perpetual frown. As Merchant, Renstart wears a visor with various sensory abilities and a forest-green armored costume with a tight-fitting hood. Over the shirt, combat webbing of his own design conceals numerous advanced pistols and collapsible rifles.

POWERS AND TACTICS

Merchant has no super-powers, though he is a mechanical genius. He always carries a number of concealable firearms of his own design. His favored weapons include a high-caliber gauss rifle and a sleekly designed neural inhibitor gun (one of the few energy weapons he'll use) capable of rendering a target completely insensate. He also has crafted small, cylindrical attachments he can link to his firearms to vary their payloads. Thanks to thousands of hours crafting and testing his weaponry, Merchant's marksmanship is uncanny, though he only rarely engages in violence himself, and then only to escape. He is often perceived to be a coward, but he is merely prudent. To date, Merchant has never been captured or arrested, and he remains a wealthy mystery man. He aims to keep it that way.

IN GAME

Merchant usually works behind-the-scenes in

smuggling, scientific espionage, or terrorism. His interactions with super humans usually come in two forms: either provisioning villains or villainous organizations, or – for more pragmatic hero teams – serving as a contact, capable of providing insight into the criminal underworld. Some heroes are willing to overlook the nature of his business and concentrate on the fact that he is not *directly* responsible for the mayhem associated with his weaponry. More than once a technologically powered hero has made use of Merchant's expertise to repair, replace, or retool a particular gadget. A series of plot hooks for Merchant follow:

A Chance Meeting at the Marketplace: The trail of a brilliant, kidnapped scientist leads to a local Market factory, a place where some of Renstart's designs are mass-produced for packaging, transport, and sales. The scientist has been abducted to meet with Merchant to discuss future employment at one of the many Market labs. If the PCs interfere, Merchant attempts to flee and gives his guards the "shoot to kill" order. If authorities are not called in immediately, the Market factory and all associated hardware and weaponry are cleared out within three hours. An interesting twist on this idea may have the scientist actually faking his kidnapping in order to land a contract with Merchant. In this case, the heroes may or may not discover the scientist's part in his own abduction, and they may, by foiling his plot, earn themselves another extremely intelligent enemy. However it is handled, this hook is an excellent way to introduce Merchant for the first time.

Teens Gone Wild: A number of wealthy young thrill seekers begin terrorizing the city with high-grade artillery. Although at first, the scale of the criminal activity is relatively small (things done "just for fun"), within a few days, the youths are robbing banks and blazing through SWAT teams. They may carry anything

from massive, ultra-accurate pistols to automatic rifles capable of firing highly explosive shells or specialized "napalm rounds." If the PCs engage the young criminals, collateral damage should be a real concern. Perhaps the confrontation occurs in a public place, such as a crowded city street or shopping mall. Whatever the case, if the youths are captured and questioned, they are quick to note their wealth (and thus, in their minds, their importance to the community at large) and even quicker to finger their Market contact from whom they purchased the gear. This eventually set the group on the Market's trail and culminates in an encounter with Merchant himself.

ENDGAME

Merchant's policy of selling to anyone will eventually make enemies of those who find themselves on the receiving end of his technology. They will target Market sales reps and steal or destroy shipments. Security organizations will target Market facilities and destroy them. Hackers will freeze accounts and governments will seize assets.

Renstart will find himself on the run with little to no support structure. His arrogance will not allow him to ask for help from anyone, and a hero group will eventually capture him. Though he will try and go down in a blaze of glory, his cowardly nature will eventually get the better of him and he will surrender. His failure will crush the one-time criminal titan, and he will spend the rest of his days in a muddled haze, unable to focus on even the most basic scientific tasks.

REPORT

Cadmus Laramy was born mute to a pair of folk musicians in the town of Habeswell. His parents, Lars and Margie, were practically celebrities in the small town and they saw their son's disability as something that would exclude him from the family's musical legacy. They placed great importance on singing and mistakenly believed that Cadmus'

VITAL STATS: REPORT



Quote: "..."

Real Name: Cadmus Laramy

Aliases: None

Occupation: "Extraction Specialist," expert thief and kidnapper

Legal Status: Citizen of the U.S. with a lengthy criminal record, currently wanted for his role in a number of crimes ranging from kidnapping to robbery to capital murder

Identity: Public

Marital Status: Unmarried

Known Relatives: Lars Laramy (father, deceased), Margie Laramy (mother, deceased), Haschel Laramy (brother)

Affiliation: Although he has no permanent ties to a particular group, he is often hired to work with others, using his distinctive powers for short-term missions

Base of Operations: Mobile

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 148 lbs.

Hair: Sandy blonde

Eyes: Blue

Distinguishing Marks: none

muteness made him unsuitable for any musical pursuits. Feeling disconnected from their child, the Laramys did little more than house and feed Cadmus for much of his childhood. Concerned teachers and members of the extended family played more direct roles in the boy's upbringing.

When his brother Haschel was born, the eight-year-old Cadmus was largely forgotten. Lars and Margie began almost at birth to train their second "healthy" child in their chosen art while Cadmus was left to his own devices. Unsurprisingly, Cadmus turned out... wrong. In his late teens, he began breaking into houses and stealing. He was not motivated out of greed, he simply wanted to be noticed for something, and ideally something he was good at. Unfortunately, he was not yet a proficient thief. Though he was caught on numerous occasion, the small town's sheriff always let him off with a warning and stern "talking-to", due more to his parents' reputation than their efforts – they scarcely noticed when young Cadmus was gone or brought home in a police car.

Cadmus soon had a reputation of his own, as that of a troublemaker. But much to his chagrin, his family hardly seemed to notice.

By the time Haschel was ten, he was quite an accomplished musician and singer, performing with his parents at the local digs and parks. Cadmus, by then a healthy young man working full time at a nearby packing plant, only attended the family's last performance, which took place on a makeshift stage at an absurdly small diner with three tables and no name. As the trio plucked their guitars and crooned in harmony, Cadmus watched from a table in the corner, his jealousy and rage nearly boiling over. He felt his anger become hard and

cool, crystallizing as a wave of calm washed over him. In his palm, a small glowing sphere of brilliant white energy pulsed softly.

The voices fell silent and the guitar arpeggios he hated simply stopped. In that instant, all eyes were on him and he felt complete. The diner's owner, aware of Cadmus' reputation and greedy for whatever glinted and shone in the young man's hand, called out from his counter in an angry voice, "Hey, put that back!"

Cadmus abruptly closed his fist, his calm shattered in his hand and then expanded in a shockwave of concussive sound that rocked the building. Every piece of glass shattered, plaster atomized, and wood splintered. The small structure collapsed in on itself. To Cadmus' sensitive hearing, the sound of falling timber could not eclipse the screams and the sounds of bones breaking. As the diner crashed down, somehow, inexplicably, a fire raged into being and engulfed the wreckage.

To this day, he still doesn't know how he escaped the blaze. He does know, however, that he emerged from the flaming rubble a changed man. He shouldered his way through the gathering crowd and left town surer and more powerful than he'd ever been.

Cadmus wandered for a time, living as a drifter and occasional thief, and he eventually mastered his mutant ability to create spherical, crystalline "bombs" in his hands. When shattered, these bombs would release sonic energy with immense concussive force. Inexplicably, this energy never harmed Cadmus in the slightest. His power came in handy when confronted by lawmen or stubborn victims, and it eventually earned him a sort of legendary status in his home state.

This, however, failed to please him



as much as he thought it would.

Cadmus drifted for a few short unhappy years before his life changed again after a chance encounter with the criminal genius and inventor known as Merchant. Cadmus had cased one of the Merchant's many secluded manses for a quick theft, and was promptly detected, attacked, and subdued by Merchant's robot guards, though not before causing significant damage. Merchant, impressed by the young man's raw power, took it upon himself to train Cadmus as an operative in his vast criminal empire.

The first thing the inventor did was to create a specialized sidearm for Cadmus that could propel his sonic bombs through the air as soon as he created them. Merchant then set up a strict training regime for the young man that turned him into a skilled athlete and marksman. After a few months, Cadmus was easily the equal of a highly trained soldier. Merchant also issued Cadmus a special lightweight armored jumpsuit and a set of multioptics goggles to aid him in his criminal endeavors. Dubbing his new henchman Report, Merchant set the young man about expanding his criminal empire.

Cadmus, who'd basked in the attention he'd been given during his training, had come to see Merchant as a sort of father figure. After being loosed on the world, he found that his interaction with his mentor became much more impersonal, as Merchant communicated directions, missions, and congratulations through discreet messengers and over secure communications channels, never in person. Despite a few furtive attempts by Report to actually see his mentor, Merchant showed little interest in the man outside of his success or failure. As Report began to realize his was nothing more than an implement for the criminal mastermind, his performance began to falter. Merchant's criticism grew increasingly severe with each new failure.

The final straw came when Report, on a mission to eliminate a rogue technician and would-be informant who'd escaped from one of Merchant's shops, was confronted at the government protection facility by the hero known as the Falconer. Having already done away with the guards and mechanical defenses, Report focused all of his energies on defeating the hero. His efforts were not enough. The Falconer proved more than Report could handle and the young mutant was forced to flee. The technician's testimony cost Merchant a number of highly productive facilities and trade routes, and the weapons czar promptly slated his servant for removal.

Report is currently a man wanted by both legitimate authorities and a large criminal empire, though Merchant has since given up active pursuit. Report

REPORT

PL 11

STR

+2

14

INT

+0

10

DEX

+3

16

WIS

+1

12

CON

+2

14

CHA

+0

10

TOUGHNESS

+9/+2*

FORTITUDE

+10

REFLEX

+11

WILL

+4

*without armor

SKILLS

Acrobatics 5 (+8), Climb 6 (+8), Computers 5 (+5), Disable Device 4 (+4), Drive 4 (+7), Notice 8 (+9), Search 8 (+8), Stealth 8 (+11), Survival 4 (+5), Swim 4 (+6)

FEATS

Acrobatic Bluff, All-Out Attack, Dodge Focus 4, Evasion, Improved Initiative, Quick Draw

POWERS

Dazzle 12 (auditory; *Extras*: Explosion, Linked to Strike; *Flaws*: Ranged [touch]), **Strike 12** (*Power Feats*: Triggered; *Extras*: Explosion, Linked to Dazzle), **Immunity 1** (His Own Powers), **Device 8** (special sidearm; easy to lose; *Power Feats*: Extended Reach 40 [Strike], Extended Reach 40 [dazzle]), **Device 3** (Body Armor): **Protection 7** (hard to lose; *Extras*: Impervious), **Device 1** (Goggles): **Super-Senses 5** (hard to lose; Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Infravision, Low-Light Vision, Time Sense)

COMBAT

Attack +10, Grapple +12, Damage +2 (unarmed), Defense +12, +8 (flat-footed), Knockback -4, Initiative +7

DRAWBACKS

Mute (Very Common, Minor)

TOTALS

Abilities 16 + Skills 14 (56 ranks) + Feats 9 + Powers 158 + Combat 36 + Saves 19 - Drawbacks 3 = 249 PP

works as a mercenary and occasional "freelance" terrorist, using his powers to create massive destruction over a wide area. He is particularly

effective when a small force must confront a larger or better-equipped opposition, and he is commonly hired to help assault heavily staffed government and military facilities. He is a fair marksman, though he doesn't need to be terribly good. The explosive quality of his crystal bombs allows him to affect multiple targets simply by firing in their general vicinity. He loves to use his powers to surprise opponents who assume that it's his gun that makes him special. He occasionally allows himself to be disarmed in order to lull his enemies into a false sense of security, then closes the distance with them before crushing one of his sonic crystals in his hand.

Unbeknownst to Cadmus, his brother Haschel survived the disaster at the diner and has been tracking him for years...

PERSONALITY

Report has no code of honor, and his moral compass is, unsurprisingly, defective. He works any job he can, so long as it has the right mix of pay and exposure. He enjoys any sort of attention and will rarely stick to a plan that involves stealth or subterfuge. Report is famous for nodding sagely during the planning stages of covert missions, then charging headlong into the enemy at the first opportunity, blasting away. As a result, most groups that have worked with him before often employ Report as a highly effective diversion, allowing him to cause immense collateral damage while drawing attention away from the other operatives. Report's personal life is nearly nonexistent. He trains, he mopes, he works, and he looks for more work, though he has recently begun to teach himself to play the fiddle and found he's quite good.

He is surprisingly shy, and despite his extensive experience with sign language, he often communicates with shrugs, vague hand gestures, and facial expressions, and many assume he's a bit on the slow side. His demeanor changes, however, in a firefight, where he becomes sure, confident, and almost sadistic.

APPEARANCE

Cadmus Laramy is a handsome man with full, attractive lips, and short sandy-blond hair. His training under Merchant has left him with a toned, extremely athletic build. As Report, Cadmus wears a purple form-fitting Kevlar derivative outfit and special crimson-hued goggles that allow him to see in multiple spectrums of light. His sleek, customized weapon, designed to propel his crystal bombs through the air, is often holstered at his back, where

he keeps it when not in use.

POWERS AND TACTICS

Report is a mutant with the ability to convert his psychic energy into concentrated, crystalline beads of sound that, when broken, release concussive sonic blasts capable of rending steel. Few are aware of his mutant power, however, and most assume that he carries an extremely potent firearm. He is also an accomplished athlete and marksman, with skills on par with those found in professional military special forces units. His bodysuit is a special protective weave that protects him from the worst effects of high-impact attacks. The multioptic goggles he wears allow him to perceive multiple spectrums of light, and they also have a zoom function to help him see at a distance.

In combat, Report is very direct, typically attacking opponents full-force. Once he's gotten a taste of combat, neither allies nor bystanders are safe from his power. He will not hesitate to risk catching an ally or civilian in the radius of one of his attacks, so long as he stands to take down an enemy.

IN GAME

Report makes an excellent henchman, ideal for combating multiple PCs. His area attack can damage many foes at once, while his immunity to his own power means that even melee combatants who close with him do so at their own risk. As a gun for hire, Report is no mastermind. Most capers in which he is involved will not be of his own design, and he can make a good, enigmatic "strong, but silent" type enemy for PCs.

Report is often dispatched to either break into a very secure location (such as an armory, bank, prison, or top secret alien holding facility), to create a diversion, or to simply cause havoc. He functions quite well in all of these capacities. A series of plot hooks follows:

Diversion: A group of thieves has planned a museum heist. The museum is completely locked down at night and has a very sophisticated security system. The thieves hire Report to attack and destroy an electrical substation that provides power to the area of the city that the museum is located in. Once the power is out, the thieves will move in. The PCs are drawn to Report's rampage through the electrical substation. He's not bothering with stealth and is inflicting as much collateral damage as possible. This is a good opportunity to introduce Report and provide the PCs with a short-notice slugfest. If the PCs have no reason to suspect Report possesses

actual superpowers, they will likely disarm him and hand him over to the authorities. If they examine the weapon later they will find it contains no ammunition and its explosive charges seem to simply be fed through a hole in the weapon's grip. Of course, by this time Report will have escaped while en route to the police station. Report has a few backup pistols, but since no new replacements will be forthcoming from Merchant, he may decide to try and recover the weapon from whoever may have it.

Payback: Report and some other super-powered mercenaries are hired to perform a high-profile terrorist operation. Their mission is to destroy a monument or other symbolic structure in the PCs campaign city. As the PCs fight to protect the target of the terrorist attack, more trouble arrives courtesy of Report's old employer, Merchant. The criminal mastermind has dispatched a robotic strike team to neutralize his wayward henchman. The robots arrive on the scene as the battle is coming to a close, or after Report has already been subdued. The PCs now find themselves protecting Report from these would-be assassins. Report is terrified, and he beseeches the heroes not to let the normal authorities take him into custody, as they would stand no chance of protecting him from Merchant's killers. What will the PCs do? While Report is a dangerous criminal, ignoring his request for protection may be as good as killing him. Merchant hates being denied satisfaction and will dispatch more robotic hit teams or freelance super villains to kill Report now that he knows where to find him.

ENDGAME

Unbeknownst to Cadmus, his brother survived the disaster at the diner and has been tracking him for years. Haschel Laramy has grown into a young adult, and having seen some of his brother's exploits on the news, has pieced together what must have happened at the diner all those years ago. He implores a group of heroes who have fought Report before (namely the PCs) to help him find his brother. Telling the story of Cadmus' childhood and the first manifestation of his powers, Haschel explains that he believes he can reform Cadmus, that the knowledge that his younger brother didn't die after all might give the criminal the inner peace he needs to prompt an early, peaceful retirement.

Unbeknownst to anyone, however, Haschel is not seeking his brother's redemption, but his death, in payment for what was done to their parents. Haschel is bitter, angry, and willing to do anything to avenge

ORIGIN-IN-A-BOX

— □ x

You were born in the small town of Habeswell. When you reached puberty your mutant powers manifested. There were always rumors of strange births and children developing odd traits. These rumors finally gained credence when the old diner on the outskirts of town collapsed. Witnesses at the scene say it was the doing of Cadmus Laramy, a mute young man who destroyed the building with a strange light that came out of his hand. It seems that it was a confluence of town secrets that resulted in the mutant occurrences. There was the illegal dumping of pollutants and toxic waste by those big corporations, some say the nearby military base was experimenting with alien isotopes, and the town doctor who delivered all the babies is said to have given the expectant mothers injections of experimental chemicals. Whatever the cause, you are a mutant and so are some of your contemporaries, like the angry young Cadmus Laramy who left town some years back.

This origin simply gives you a background that allows you to tie the character in with a number of mutant contemporaries, all from Habeswell. This mutant generation has left their hometown behind to become part of the larger community of heroes and villains. The character may want to know more about his or her origins and may return to Habeswell to discover the true cause of his or her mutant powers.

the murder of his family. He does not know that the collapse of the diner was an accident, and assumes that Cadmus killed them in a fit of jealousy. To further complicate matters, Haschel has mutant powers of his own that he will use against his brother; his voice is capable of exciting molecules to create heat. Though he won't admit it to himself, it was his powers that started the fire at the diner.

It may be possible that the Laramy brothers' powers do not work against each other. This would explain how they each survived the destruction and then burning of the diner in Habeswell. Being unable to harm his brother may drive Haschel over the edge. He's been fantasizing about his revenge for years. Haschel may turn to Merchant for help if he discovers the common goal they share. If Merchant can provide Haschel with some way to amplify or alter his powers, he may be able to overcome Report's natural defenses.

Whatever the case, the two brothers would need serious psychiatric attention to overcome the wounds

they still suffer from their childhoods. Without special attention, Report may be doomed to the life of a career criminal with death being his final reward.

SNOW MAIDEN

There is a Russian myth in which an old couple makes a girl out of snow. Much like the Italian tale of Pinocchio, she turns into a real little girl. The child is known as *Snegurochka*, or the Snow Maiden. This seemed an appropriate code name for a Cold War program initiated by the KGB's secretive sister-agency the Null Directorate. In the 1980s the *Snegurochka* project assembled the best scientists, programmers, technicians and engineers in the USSR with the goal of creating an android super-agent that could pass undetected amongst humans.

In addition to a flawless exterior, the android's electronic brain would require an artificial personality far beyond the limits of any artificial intelligence known at the time. The project continued apace for several years, testing went well and by 1990 assembly of a prototype began. The torso and most of the head was finished and the revolutionary personality program was uploaded. The *Snegurochka* team had created an artificial intelligence with the capacity for self-programming that also incorporated elements of personalities and memories from existing female agents. To obtain these fragments of real thought processes and memories the team had used radical "brain taping" technology derived from Null Directorate memory wiping techniques, such as those used on the Directorate's operative Agent Zero.

The Snow Maiden personality responded well to tests and the android prototype was slated for completion in 1991, with field tests scheduled for 1992. But the project would never come to fruition. The Soviet Union had been fraying around the edges throughout the 1980s, a fact unknown to the scientists who worked in isolation. With the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, Null Directorate abandoned the project. The android was packed away with the other products of Cold War

proliferation.

After the dissolution of the USSR things went from bad to worse. The newly formed government, the Commonwealth of Independent States, could not afford to pay its police, army, or espionage service. Technology and military hardware were being sold off to the highest bidder at an alarming rate.

In 1995, Fredek Kozlov – a scientist who had worked on many top-secret programs, including the *Snegurochka* project – was offered a large sum of money in exchange for military secrets by the criminal organization known as F.R.A.M.E., or the Fraternity for Research and Applied Military Engineering. Kozlov told F.R.A.M.E. about the Snow Maiden android and offered to obtain the partially completed prototype for them. He bribed the guards at the Null Directorate warehouse and soon Kozlov and the android were on a truck bound for central Asia.

Kozlov received his payment and was also hired by F.R.A.M.E. to continue work of the incomplete android. F.R.A.M.E.'s labs rivaled those of the Null Directorate but Kozlov lacked the expertise and the support of the other scientists and technicians who worked on the project. The limbs Kozlov designed to complete the android, while fully functional were obviously robotic and would not allow the android to pass as human as originally intended. Using his knowledge of forgotten Soviet weapons projects, Kozlov created a handgun for Snow Maiden that was capable of astonishing destruction and that drew power from the android's own atomic power source.

Though disappointed by the android's appearance, F.R.A.M.E.'s leaders were impressed by its performance

and by the powerful weapon Kozlov had designed. In fact, they were so happy with the results, they decided to allow Kozlov to live and to keep his money. The Snow Maiden android had a great deal of success as an agent of F.R.A.M.E., undertaking missions of assassination, sabotage, and terror. But soon something would happen that not Kozlov or F.R.A.M.E. intelligence could have foreseen.

Fredek Kozlov, while a skilled technician, did not fully understand the android's revolutionary

VITAL STATS: SNOW MAIDEN

Quote: "ASIMOV WAS WRONG..."

Real Name: N/A

Aliases: Snegurochka

Occupation: Mercenary and terrorist

Legal Status: Former property of the USSR, no known citizenship in any country

Identity: Secret

Marital Status: Unmarried

Known Relatives: None

Affiliation: Former property of Null Directorate, former property of F.R.A.M.E.

Base of Operations: Mobile

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 167 lbs.

Hair: Blonde

Eyes: Blue

Distinguishing Marks: Limbs and half of face are obviously artificial

artificial intelligence. While the android was completing its missions with robotic precision, the AI that was a gestalt of many memories and thought processes, was beginning to learn and create a self-image.

With a newfound sense of autonomy, Snow Maiden understood that she was a mere pawn in F.R.A.M.E.'s plans. She realized they would have no compunction about sending her to her death if it served their purposes. She did not think of it as death, rather than being "rendered inoperative" or having a "systems failure". She was

troubled by feelings (yes, feelings) that she was just a bargaining chip for Kozlov and merely a tool for F.R.A.M.E. This continued until she was given a mission to assassinate a man named Fedor, a former USSR General who was becoming increasingly troublesome. Snow Maiden refused.

The F.R.A.M.E. leaders couldn't believe it, how could a robot refuse? Kozlov was also confused, and in fear for his life. If Snow Maiden had outlived her usefulness, then both she and Kozlov might end up on the scrap pile. If Kozlov had been privy to the secrets of the *Snegurochka* AI, he would have known that a list had been implanted deep in Snow Maiden's programming of targets that she could take no action against. The list included General Fedor, his family, numerous other Null Directorate agents, party dignitaries and military figures allied to Fedor.

In an attempt to force the android to carry out the mission, Kozlov engineered a virus that he hoped would override some of her programming. Fortunately for Kozlov, he had managed to obtain certain override codes that temporarily shut Snow Maiden down and allowed him to work on her without danger of her resisting. He explained to the F.R.A.M.E. leaders that he would have to do some "minor reprogramming" but she would be able to carry out her mission soon.

Kozlov succeeded, after a fashion. His virus jumbled the android's programming enough to make her compliant to F.R.A.M.E.'s orders,

but the effect was temporary. Snow Maiden carried out her mission and made short work of Fedor's security before dispatching the former General himself. However, Snow Maiden's self-repairing systems were already overcoming the virus, and that was about to make matters worse.

Snow Maiden had just assassinated Fedor, a man her programming told her she was forbidden to harm. She was the property of the Soviet Union, but had just attacked one of its military leaders, and she was coming to the realization that the Soviet Union no longer existed. Furthermore, one of the personalities used to construct the *Snegurochka* AI was that of a KGB agent who was General Fedor's mistress. Snow Maiden felt as if she had just killed the man she loved.

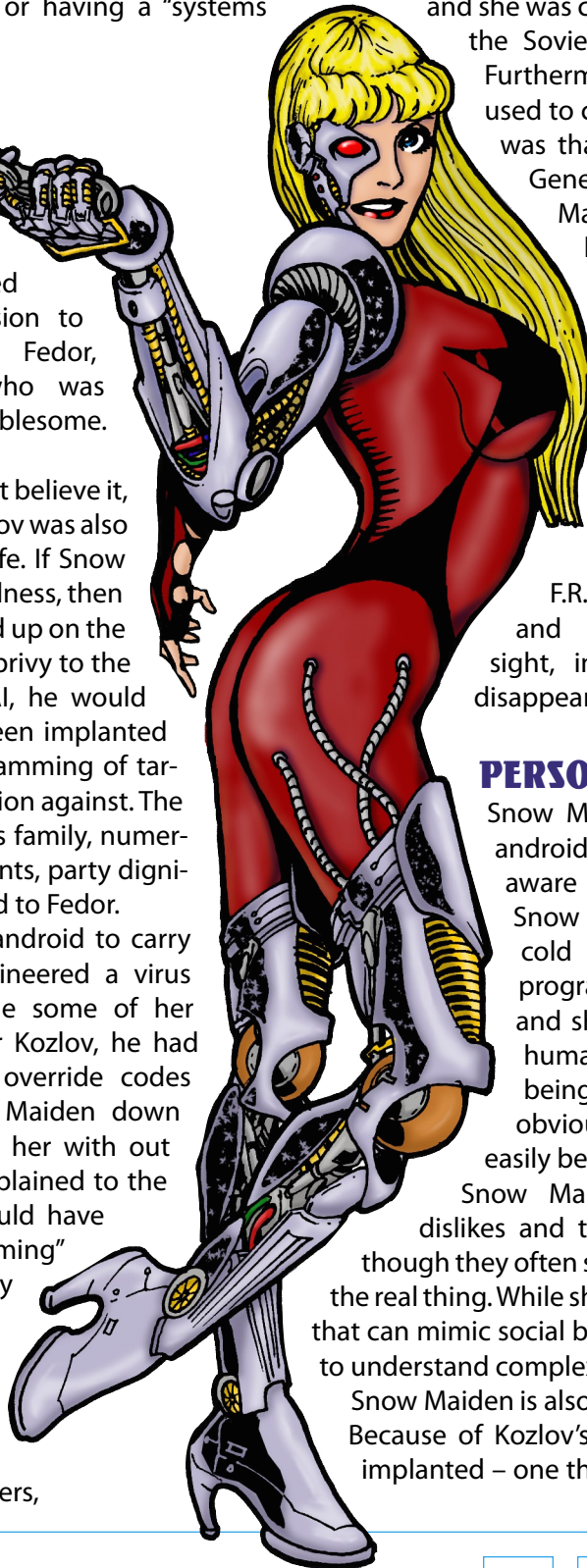
Snow Maiden had little understanding of the despair and anger she now felt. Fedor's death and Kozlov's ham-fisted reprogramming had caused her poor synthetic mind to crack. Snow Maiden returned to the F.R.A.M.E. lab after her mission and slaughtered everyone in sight, including Kozlov, and then disappeared.

PERSONALITY

Snow Maiden is a highly advanced android and a completely self-aware and sentient being. Though Snow Maiden tends to have a cold demeanor, her personality programs are always developing and she could easily interact with humans without her robotic origin being detected if it weren't for her obvious robotic parts. She could easily be mistaken for a cyborg.

Snow Maiden has developed likes, dislikes and the full gamut of emotions, though they often seem to be muted versions of the real thing. While she has numerous subroutines that can mimic social behavior, she is often at a loss to understand complex social relationships.

Snow Maiden is also malfunctioning to a degree. Because of Kozlov's tinkering and the virus he implanted – one that conflicts with her primary



SNOW MAIDEN

PL 13

STR	+0	26	INT	+2	14
DEX	+0	26	WIS	+3	16
CON	-	-	CHA	+1	12
TOUGHNESS			FORTITUDE		
+16/+4*			+0		
REFLEX			WILL		
+15			+6		

*without protection

SKILLS

Acrobatics 7 (+15), Computers 13 (+15), Craft (electronic) 9 (+11), Craft (mechanical) 9 (+11), Disable Device 9 (+11), Disguise 9 (+10), Escape Artist 5 (+13), Gather Information 7 (+8), Investigate 8 (+10), Knowledge (behavioral sciences) 7 (+9), Knowledge (civics) 7 (+9), Knowledge (current events) 7 (+9), Knowledge (tactics) 7 (+9), Knowledge (technology) 7 (+9), Notice 8 (+11), Pilot 8 (+16), Search 8 (+10), Sense Motive 3 (+6), Stealth 6 (+14)

FEATS

Ambidexterity, Acrobatic Bluff, All-out Attack, Diehard, Eidetic Memory, Elusive Target, Evasion 2, Fast Overrun, Improved Aim, Improved Defense, Instant Up, Move-by Action, Quick Draw, Uncanny Dodge 2 (auditory, visual)

POWERS

Comprehend 3 (Languages; speak, understand, read/write), **Datalink 2**, **Device 9** (Plasma Gun): **Blast 13** (easy to lose; *Power Feats*: Restricted [only Snow Maiden may use the device]; *Extras*: Penetrating), **Immunity 30** (Fortitude Saves), **Leaping 4**, **Protection 12** (*Extras*: Impervious), **Regeneration 15** (Recovery Bonus 6, Bruise 1, Unconscious 1, Injured 1, Staggered 1, Disabled 1, Ability Damage 2, Resurrection 2; *Power Feats*: Persistent), **Speed 5**, **Strike 3** (*Power Feats*: Mighty), **Super-Movement 1** (Sure-Footed), **Super-Strength 5**, **Super-Senses 16** (Blindsight [Extended, Radius], Extended Auditory, Darkvision, Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Infravision, Radio, Time Sense, Ultra-Hearing, Ultravision), **Super-Speed 2** (*Power Feats*: Rapid Attack)

DRAWBACKS

Disability (fractured personality, common, major)

COMBAT

Attack +12, Grapple +20, Damage +8 (unarmed), +13 (blast), +11 (strike), Defense +12, Knockdown -8, Initiative +16

TOTALS

Abilities 34 + Skills 36 (144 ranks) + Feats 16 + Powers 157 + Combat 48 + Saves 14 - Drawbacks 4 = 243 PP

programming – Snow Maiden is somewhat unstable and given to radical mood swings. This makes her unpredictable at best and lethal at worst. She will also occasionally manifest personality traits of the various female operatives that were used to build her artificial intelligence (one of which is Lyudmilla Novakova, a.k.a. Agent Zero). In spite of the problems with her personality, Snow Maiden remains resourceful, intelligent, and dangerous.

APPEARANCE

Snow Maiden appears to be a beautiful Caucasian woman with long blonde hair whose limbs and the right side of her face are obviously robotic. The parts of her android body that appear human are far more advanced than the limbs and faceplate that Kozlov designed. Her “human” parts look and feel completely alive, they register body temperature, pulse, and so forth. She has also developed a personal style that leans toward exhibitionism, at least when hiding her artificial nature in not necessary.

POWERS AND TACTICS

Snow Maiden’s android body makes her stronger, faster, more dexterous and more durable than any human. She has superhuman sense, numerous on-board analyzers, and is infused with nanites that can repair her systems. She can speak countless languages and has the sort of recall you would expect from a computerized mind. She wields a plasma pistol that is fueled by her own atomic power source through induction pads in the pistol’s grip. The pistol will not fire for anyone else, unless a different power source is adapted to the weapon. Her skill software gives her extensive knowledge of political science, espionage, military operations, science and any other subject that might concern a spy or assassin.

IN GAME

The Snow Maiden’s current whereabouts are unknown. She surfaces from time to time throughout the world working as a mercenary and terrorist. She continues to hunt for agents of F.R.A.M.E., who she blames for her troubles. She is a target of opportunity for numerous espionage agencies and terrorist groups, including F.R.A.M.E., Null Directorate, and C.A.S.T.L.E. (who would prefer to capture her). Potential story ideas for Snow Maiden follow:

Family Reunion: One of the original Null Directorate scientists, Stepan Sidorov, left Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union and emigrated to the U.S. where he began working with the superscience

think tank know as Advent Labs. During his time working on the Snegurochka project he used the memories of his own daughter, then a top field agent for the Directorate, in the construction of the android's AI. These memories have resurfaced in Snow Maiden and she is now seeking out her "father" who is working at the Advent Labs branch in the PCs' city. What Sidorov never realized is that his daughter had manic-depressive tendencies that she kept in check secretly with drugs. These tendencies are magnified in Snow Maiden's fractured psyche and she's experiencing strong feelings that echo the troubled relationship Sidorov's real daughter had with her father. Snow Maiden breaks into the lab and interfaces with the fuel cells used to power the facility. She can overload the system and cause a great deal of collateral damage. Her control of the system also allows her to use the Lab's robotic defenses against interlopers. She confronts Sidorov in the hopes he can help her makes sense of her origins and her protean sense of identity. The heroes will have to fight their way into the facility and then will be faced with the task of "talking her down", or cutting off her access to the lab's fuel cells before she overloads them.

Double Agent Dilemma: Snow Maiden asks for help from one of the PCs via a cryptic email. She claims to be a double agent for the U.S. and is being pursued by a team of superhuman Russian operatives. Hopefully the PCs will assist and allow Snow Maiden to stay with them for protection. Her repeated attempts to contact government intelligence agencies are unsuccessful as her codes and contacts are twenty years old. In reality, Snow Maiden is having a personality malfunction and is acting out a buried memory from someone who actually *was* a double agent (perhaps a technically-minded PC or a contact can determine that she is indeed an android and is malfunctioning in some way). This personality fragment was brought forward because the same superhuman Null Directorate operatives who pursued the double agent all those years ago are in fact, pursuing Snow Maiden now. They make their presence known in a big assault on the heroes' HQ (Snow Maiden will, of course, help the heroes fight the attackers off).

ENDGAME

Eventually Snegurochka's programming will right itself and she will become more stable as a result. She will most likely realize that she is a relic of the cold war and whatever purpose she may have had has long since passed and therefore give up her life of

STORY POINT

— ☐ X

You can tie the Snow Maiden background into your own campaign by having General Fedor's assassination take place in your game. Fedor has contacted the U.S. Government in the interest of sharing information regarding the remnants of the Cold War, namely the secret projects of Null Directorate. Fedor informs the U.S. that many of Null Directorate's secret weapons were stolen after the Soviet Union collapsed and are now surfacing in the hands of terrorists and criminal organizations (such as F.R.A.M.E.). This is a threat to the whole world and Fedor is willing to share some details in the interest of global stability.

A contact of the PCs taps them to provide some superhero-level security for the meeting, but that doesn't prevent Snow Maiden from completing her assignment. She inexplicably knows Fedor's habits and the security procedures of the Null Directorate. She kills Fedor and makes good her escape. The PCs track her back to the F.R.A.M.E. lab but they arrive too late. Snow Maiden has slaughtered everyone there. Examining the lab's computers will reveal some of the details of Snow Maiden's past and F.R.A.M.E.'s motives in killing Fedor. This may give the PCs some sympathy for the android but won't give them any clue as to why she killed her F.R.A.M.E. handlers.

violence and international crime, gladly fading into anonymity. Because her personality was created from actual human female memories she may wish to lead a normal life, even adopt children or create androids to be her children/companions.

You may want to play with the idea that imbedded

THE NUCLEAR OPTION

— ☐ X

A possible "endgame" idea (or just an added trait) is to give Snow Maiden the ability to self-destruct by overloading her own atomic power source. She can use this ability as a bargaining chip when convincing a government to leave her alone or even protect her. If she could ever find a human-looking android body, she could upload herself into it and detonate her old body in an attempt to fake her own destruction. In any case, Snow Maiden's goals will ultimately be to become more cosmetically human and live out her essentially unlimited life in obscurity. *Note:* Snow Maiden's self-destruct capabilities are a plot device and can be represented by an X-trait (See M&M, page 211, for more information).

deep in her programming are files containing top-secret information about numerous nations and organizations. If this secret gets out she may try to use this as a bargaining chip but would probably be hounded by agents of these countries and groups and need to take more drastic measures.

THE SHIELD

Hugo Vance was a damned good cop – a rookie determined to make his city a better place. Athletic, smart, charming, and deadly with a sidearm, Vance was responsible for putting away some of the most vicious criminals in his jurisdiction. Like a “supercop” hero in a big-budget action film, Vance tackled the criminal element head-on, engaging crooks in brawls, extreme chases, and intense firefights, most of which he emerged from without so much as a scratch. His strong sense of justice and genuine desire to help people made him a dogged opponent of organized crime, in particular.

Eventually, however, the sharp mind and sound intuition that had served Vance so well in the past landed him in a great deal of trouble when he stumbled on an underworld conspiracy, an organized criminal empire that included even members of the city government. Dutifully, Vance cracked the case, and a number of arrests were made. Unfortunately, the conspiracy reached higher than he’d anticipated, and some of the charges stuck to some prominent officials. Their careers ruined, these officials planned a particularly heinous revenge against the man responsible.

The organization hired Rikki the Swipe, a local hitman and general lowlife, to kill the troublesome cop. The Swipe was ordered to make it a public hit, so Vance would serve as an example to those members of the force who weren’t already on the organization’s payroll. The Swipe made his move against Vance and his family during a trip to the carnival. Disguised as a clown, the Swipe bore down on the Vance family and opened fire on Hugo with a submachine gun hidden in a jack-in-

the-box. Hugo was completely unprepared as the gunshots sounded. As the other carnival-goers began to scream and dive for cover, he felt the bullets impact against his chest, tearing at his clothing and stinging like wasps. Then, slowly, the pain diminished, and Hugo barely felt the bullets striking him. The Swipe’s gun clicked empty, and the two stared at one another in shock for a time. Hugo’s mutant powers had just fully expressed.

Where he had always been particularly tough, the stress caused by witnessing a clown (Hugo hated clowns) unload a full clip of ammunition on him pushed his power to the next level, and the resulting mutation made his skin as hard as solid steel. The Swipe wisely took flight, and Hugo prepared to give chase. Then he heard the wail of his wife, Asaya, and he turned to see her in the grass behind him cradling their son. In an instant Vance was confronted with the startling reality of what had happened: bullets ricochet. One of the many that had bounced harmlessly off of his chest had hit Julian, his 12-year-old son, in the side. By the time the paramedics arrived, it was too late for the boy.

Although the shooting did not kill Hugo Vance, it did get him out of the organization’s hair, as Vance was quick to quit the force and take up plumbing, something a bit less dangerous, for his wife’s sake. For her part, Asaya did not take the shooting well. They never spoke of his mutation, and it soon became clear that she didn’t even realize he’d been shot at all. Asaya knew about her husband’s police work,

and surmised that the attack was meant for him. Though she never voiced it, it soon became obvious that she would rather that her husband had died than her son. Though he could not blame her, Vance felt confined and unwanted, with nothing to give him comfort. His guilt, compounded by his wife’s silent accusation, soon split the couple. And behind it all, Vance knew that the criminals that had caused all this grief were still in power.

Vance quickly decided that he had nothing left to live for. His life in ruins, the former cop began to search for his son’s

VITAL STATS: THE SHIELD

Quote: “I DO WHAT ANY OF YOU WOULD DO, IF YOU WERE IN MY PLACE.”

Real Name: Hugo Vance

Aliases: None

Occupation: Vigilante

Legal Status: United States citizen currently wanted for a number of first-degree murder charges

Identity: Secret

Marital Status: Married

Known Relatives: Asaya Vance (wife, currently separated), Julian Vance (son, deceased)

Affiliation: None

Base of Operations: Unknown

Height: 6’2”

Weight: 179 lbs.

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Blue

Distinguishing Marks: Cold skin, never seems to sweat

killer, using the skills and techniques that had made him such an effective cop. To protect his wife from reprisals, Vance took up a costumed identity as The Shield, high-invulnerable scourge of the underworld. Nothing could stop him. Bullets, knives, lead pipes, and speeding automobiles all failed to keep him from his prize. The Shield terrorized the criminal element and eventually caught up with the Swipe in Las Vegas. Though the Swipe escaped the resulting conflict, the information he provided did put The Shield on the trail of a number of the organization's operatives. He has since been tracking down and killing the most influential members, using their confessions and resources to further his crusade.

PERSONALITY

Since his son's death, Hugo Vance has become a cold, empty man who rarely smiles; even when he does, it is generally at something unpleasant. Losing his wife's love has affected Vance deeply, and he now feels that he has nothing left to live for. Blaming himself for his son's death, Vance seeks both closure and his own destruction. His single-minded pursuit of his son's murderer and the organization that caused it is less about vengeance and more about direction. The chase gives him purpose, and can only end in one thing: his death.

APPEARANCE

Hugo Vance is a healthy, muscular man with olivine skin and short, wavy brown hair. His blue eyes, once bright and animated, are now dull and cold. His chin is always shadowed by stubble, and his every movement seems deliberate. As The Shield, Vance wears a tight-fitting gray shirt with trousers of the same material. He carries a sleek pistol and a number of tools in

a harness on his body. On his face, he wears a mask with a faceplate made to look like an oversized police badge.

POWERS AND TACTICS

Hugo Vance is a mutant with ultra-hard skin. He can shrug off anything from a solid blow with a lead pipe to a point blank shotgun blast. The Shield is a very dangerous melee combatant, as being struck by him is similar to being hit with a steel girder. Other than this, however, Vance is a normal, if athletic, human male. The Shield's combat methodology generally involves a great deal of intimidation. He rarely bothers to dodge attacks from normal humans, as they are unlikely to do much harm anyway. Generally, he prefers to knock his opponents around with quick, sweeping blows from his ultra-hard fists, which, when he is enraged, are capable of dimpling brick walls. When conventional police methodology is called for he'll rely on the equipment he retained from his time as a cop – his pistol, shotgun, taser and tear gas. One should note, however, that much of his combat experience is with street-level hoods and non-powered fighters. If he were engaged in combat with a super-powered opponent who could actually harm him, this strategy would necessarily change. His inexperience in such a battle would likely remain quite evident, however.

IN GAME

The Shield is, in many ways, a tragic character who would be a hero, but for his willingness to kill any who stand in his way. He tends to rough up street-level punks and thugs to get to the organization's higher-ups, who may or may not be influential and wealthy public figures. His practice of interrogating these individuals, then



THE SHIELD

PL 9

STR	+3	16	INT	+1	13
DEX	+1	12	WIS	+2	14
CON	+3	16	CHA	+1	12
TOUGHNESS	+13		FORTITUDE	+9	
			REFLEX	+4	
			WILL	+6	

SKILLS

Computers 3 (+4), Drive 5 (+6), Gather Information 5 (+6), Intimidate 10 (+11), Investigate 4 (+5), Knowledge (civics) 2 (+3), Knowledge (streetwise) 6 (+7), Notice 6 (+8), Profession (police officer) 6 (+8), Search 3 (+4), Sense Motive 6 (+8)

FEATS

Chokehold, Contacts, Diehard, Equipment 11, Favored Opponent (street thugs), Fearsome Presence 2, Improved Pin, Improved Sunder, Precise Shot, Rage 2 (extended duration), Startle, Takedown Attack, Weapon Break

POWERS

Protection 10 (Extras: Impervious), **Strike 6** (Power Feats: Mighty), **Immovable 2**

EQUIPMENT

Cellphone, Handcuffs, Lock release gun, Heavy Pistol, Shotgun (solid slugs), Taser, Tear gas grenade

COMBAT

Attack +6, Grapple +9, Damage +9 (strike), +4 (pistol), +6 (shotgun), Defense +6, Knockback -8, Initiative +1

TOTALS

Abilities 23 + Skills 14 (56 ranks) + Feats 25 + Powers 29 + Combat 24 + Saves 13 = 128 PP

leaving them dead, is likely enough to put heroes on his trail, eventually. The Shield's brutal methods may make him a villain in some heroes' eyes, but what choices they make when they discover his past and his goals will certainly gauge their measure as heroes.

The Shield feels anyone who protects or trucks with

members of the underworld syndicate is every bit as responsible for his son's death as the Swipe – whom he hunts to this very day. As a result, The Shield has killed a number of men and women uninvolved with the organization's illicit business, such as bodyguards, security personnel, businessmen, and assorted toadies. Due to his former position, police – even those on the organization's payroll – enjoy a certain degree of protection from The Shield. He brings dirty cops to justice, even roughs them up, but never kills them. Some adventure ideas featuring The Shield follow:

Operation Broken Shield: A prominent political figure in your campaign city has turned up dead. An anonymous informant tips the PCs off that The Shield is responsible, and the state's governor is next. If the PCs move to protect the Governor, they discover that The Shield most certainly intends to kill the man. If they watch the Governor's mansion, they will see Shield break in, knocking out guards with little care for stealth or subtlety. Unbeknownst to the PCs, the Governor is part of the criminal conspiracy that The Shield uncovered, and the informant who tipped of the PCs was one of his toadies. They hoped to get the PCs to provide them with some superpowered protection. If The Shield is captured or routed, the Governor offers the heroes a small fortune in exchange for The Shield's execution. He does not want the police involved. The heroes' refusal will make them targets for the Governor's allies. The PCs may find they're on The Shield's side after all.

The Ice Melts: Asaya Vance, The Shield's estranged wife, contacts the heroes in the hopes that they can help her track down her husband. She has come to realize that Hugo and The Shield are one in the same, and blames herself for what he's become. She's unaware of the criminal conspiracy that Hugo is fighting against, and simply hopes she can reconcile with him and help him cope with the pain that has driven him to vigilantism. Unfortunately, the heroes are not the only ones Asaya has told about her husband's vigilante identity. She has also enlisted the aid of Rory Springberg, Hugo's best friend and partner on the force. In reality, Springberg is a corrupt cop and part of the conspiracy Vance is trying to take down. He plans to use Asaya to lure Hugo into the open. If the PCs succeed in tracking down The Shield he will put up a fight only until they tell him his wife is looking for him. He'll surrender to their custody long enough to see her, but he and the PCs will discover that Asaya has been kidnapped. Hugo will beg the PCs to help him rescue her; he knows his methods

are too direct, too dangerous. Springberg will have a trap waiting for Hugo; he's employed a group of superpowered mercenaries to take The Shield down. In the battle that follows, Asaya will see the full brutality of her husband, yet she still finds it in her heart to accept what he has become. But Vance knows that she will always be a target, and, in front of the members of the conspiracy who are present, he turns on her for luring him into a trap. In order to protect her, he convinces the criminal underworld that he no longer cares what happens to his wife, and he fully intends for her to believe this, too. No matter what the future holds for The Shield he intends to face it alone.

ENDGAME

Only one thing will stop The Shield's one-man war on crime: his own death. Hugo Vance will have many adventures over the years: busting up crime families, bringing down corrupt cops, getting sent to prison to kill mobsters running criminal enterprises from behind bars, working for the government to stop international arms smugglers. But in the end he will die the way he has lived – without compromise, surrounded by the bodies of his enemies.

THE UNTOUCHABLE

Laurence Baines was a covert military operative working for The Department, a secretive spy network maintained by the United States government. Baines was an expert sharpshooter with a quick wit and an unhealthy love for danger. Unsurprisingly, he often found himself separated from his team, surrounded by enemies, and facing impossible odds. Nonetheless, he always seemed to come out on top, and he eventually became a favored operative, a legend in The Department.

When the organization confiscated from the criminal genius a secret formula for a process designed to enhance human muscle tissue and nerve conductivity, they immediately began

laboratory testing. The Department hoped to engineer a number of superspies using the formula, and Baines was the first operative given the opportunity to take part. Up until this point, only captured animals, rival spies, and criminals had been used as test subjects (with varying, though not all satisfactory, results). Baines readily accepted, and The Department put one of its best science teams on the job.

The experiment was hailed as a success, and Baines found himself stronger and faster than he had previously been. His reaction time and hand-eye coordination were uncanny. His body responded to his whims with almost fluid smoothness, his every movement marked with superhuman precision. As soon as the initial tests were run, Baines went back to work, and if he had been good before, he was now perfect.

Unfortunately, Baines' newfound abilities would come at a great cost. His molecular structure soon began to change, and he found his body constantly rippling of its own accord, his muscles shifting and roiling constantly beneath his skin. Though his performance and physical abilities remained as impressive as ever, it soon became obvious that he would never be able to pass for a normal human. His chances of working undercover, retiring, vacationing, or even taking a leisurely trip to a corner store shattered, Baines demanded that The Department restore his body to normal. When The Department's best scientists failed to fix him, Baines fled the facility in a rage, killing the doctors, the guards, and all operatives who reported to the scene. A few weeks

later, he attacked and looted a Department armory, killing dozens of extremely skilled operatives, and disappeared into the criminal underground. Baines resurfaced soon after as the deadly mercenary known as the Untouchable, selling his services as an assassin, spy, and hired gun to the highest bidder.

Clad in dark clothing emblazoned with a silver crosshair between his shoulder blades that practically dares potential attackers to take a shot at him, the Untouchable prefers missions that allow

VITAL STATS: THE UNTOUCHABLE _ □ X

Quote: "IT'S TOO BAD, REALLY. YOU CAN'T HIT ME, AND I NEVER MISS. I COULD ALMOST SAY I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU, BUT YOU KNOW WHAT? I DON'T. I'M HAVING A BLAST."

Real Name: Laurence Baines

Aliases: None

Occupation: Mercenary

Legal Status: Former U.S. military, deceased

Identity: Secret

Marital Status: Single

Known Relatives: Unknown

Affiliation: None

Base of Operations: Unknown

Height: 6'7"

Weight: 246 lbs.

Hair: Black

Eyes: Hazel

Distinguishing Marks: Constantly shifting muscles beneath his skin

him to match abilities with metahuman opposition, as he assumes (perhaps correctly) that most normal humans are no match for him. He is not picky when choosing employers, and he often finds himself in the employ of criminal masterminds, insane despots, international terrorists, and guerilla fighters. This suits the Untouchable just fine, as these individuals seem to understand loss more acutely than The Department ever did, and with the contacts he's making now in the criminal underworld, he is hoping to one day find someone capable of curing for his condition. He firmly (and correctly) believes that The Department "failed" to do so because they still needed his special talents. Once he has accumulated enough funds, the Untouchable will arrange to have his condition cured, once and for all, and retire a rich man.

PERSONALITY

Baines is a thrill seeker, and he thoroughly enjoys a good challenge. He's become famous in some circles for his habit of talking while fighting, often to congratulate or deride an opponent for a particular move or strategy. His skill at misdirection is legendary, and those engaged in combat with him would do well to resist the urge to banter. Baines hates his former organization with a passion and will even go so far as to offer reduced rates for missions that may see resistance from The Department. Despite being an angry and fairly selfish individual, Baines is not sadistic, and he does not appreciate unnecessary civilian casualties. What constitutes "necessary" in his mind, however, is somewhat questionable. He will not acquiesce to attacking spectators in a public battle, nor

will he ever use an uninvolved party (such as a child, pedestrian, dog, or worker) as a shield, though he is quite willing to plant a powerful bomb in a crowded metropolis in order to draw government attention or terrify a population into submission.

APPEARANCE

Baines was a handsome, athletic African American male, with a smooth, well-muscled body and small, hazel eyes. He kept his hair very short and his face clean-shaven. Now, he is primarily an undulating mass of muscle. Even the muscles in his face ripple and shift beneath his skin like an ocean's surface, perpetually contorting his expres-

sion in an extremely unsettling manner. When not in his Untouchable persona, Baines wears a large trenchcoat with gloves and wide sunglasses to cover as much of his skin as is possible.

As the Untouchable, he wears a black bodysuit and a number of harnesses to hold his many weapons and tools. On his back, a silver crosshair blazes a challenge to all comers, and his mid-night goggles gleam menacingly from his masked face. Even beneath the suit, the Untouchable's muscles can be seen

shifting and rippling, and he moves with a smooth quality that most find unnerving.

POWERS AND TACTICS

The Untouchable possesses inhuman agility, reflexes, and manual dexterity. As a result, he's nearly impossible to strike in combat, and his own attacks are made with deadly accuracy. Though his strength is not quite at the superhuman level, the



enhancements to his muscle structure have made him about as strong as an Olympic-class weightlifter. The Untouchable carries military-grade energy weapons much more powerful than conventional firearms, usually a plasma cannon and plasma pistol. The likelihood of a target actually dodging one of his attacks is slim enough that, if it were to happen, Baines would likely be momentarily shocked into inaction. After recovering, he is likely to become obsessed with making a successful attack against the opponent who managed to avoid his initial shot. Also concealed on the harnesses he wears are a number of tools for infiltration, such as lockpicks, magnets, skeleton keycards, and portable codebreaker devices. The Untouchable is a daredevil, and he often attempts unnecessarily risky maneuvers, just to make his combats more interesting, though this behavior ceases if he is ever significantly wounded. Though he prefers superhuman opponents, he will not battle heavy-hitters directly. Instead, he'll try to stay beyond their reach and their notice, hoping to land a surprise attack when they least expect it.

IN GAME

The Untouchable has proven himself a challenge for many combat-focused heroes. He lives up to his name, as his speed, flexibility, and reflexes make him almost impossible to strike. His impressive marksmanship also makes him a popular choice for assassination missions, and his history in a worldwide spy organization makes him a perfect choice for any caper involving infiltration, reconnaissance, or stealth. The Untouchable is often found as the ramrod for missions of evil masterminds or militant leaders, as his expertise is difficult to come by, and even more difficult to overcome. Some of ways The Untouchable might cross the PCs' path follow:

Bang and Blame: The Untouchable has singled out a hero known for accuracy. He locates the character and confronts her in a public place to issue a challenge. It appears that The Untouchable feels a need to prove that he's the best there is, and he wants to stage a "shooting contest" on the spot, wherein the two trade shots at chosen targets (preferably inanimate), such as the "O" in Stop signs, a model's eye on a distant billboard, and more, culminating in a shot at a coin flipped high into the air by one's opponent. Though this may seem to fly in the face of Untouchable's normally professional demeanor, he is less vain than he appears. He's been hired by one of the hero's enemies to orchestrate the little show. Nearby, another villain is murdering a

THE UNTOUCHABLE

PL 13

STR	+5/+3	20/16	INT	+2	14
DEX	+9/+4	28/18	WIS	+2	14
CON	+3	16	CHA	+2	14

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+10/+3*	+9	+15	+8

*flat-footed

SKILLS

Acrobatics 8 (+17), Climb 5 (+10), Computers 7 (+9), Disable Device 9 (+11), Disguise 3 (+5), Gather Information 3 (+5), Intimidate 9 (+11), Knowledge (tactics) 8 (+10), Notice 5 (+7), Pilot 2 (+11), Search 5 (+7), Sense Motive 2 (+4), Stealth 4 (+13), Survival 6 (+8), Swim 4 (+9)

FEATS

Accurate Attack, Acrobatic Bluff, Assessment, Blind-Fight, Chokehold, Defensive Attack, Equipment 11, Fearless, Improved Aim, Improved Defense 2, Move-by Action, Precise Shot 2, Redirect, Sneak Attack, Startle, Track,

POWERS

Device 8 (Plasma Cannon): **Blast 13** (easy to lose; *Power Feats*: Improved Range; *Extras*: Burst Area), **Device 5** (Plasma Pistol): **Blast 10** (easy to lose; *Power Feats*: Improved Critical 2), **Enhanced Dexterity 10**, **Enhanced Feats 26** (Ambidexterity, Attack Focus [ranged] 4, Defensive Roll 7, Diehard, Dodge Focus 4, Elusive Target, Endurance, Evasion 2, Improved Initiative 2, Instant Up, Quick Draw, Uncanny Dodge [visual]), **Enhanced Strength 4**

EQUIPMENT

Cell Phone, Codebreaker (**Datalink 1**), Lock Release Gun, Night Vision Goggles, Flash Goggles, GPS Receiver, Multi-tool, Rebreather, Fragmentation grenade, Smoke grenade, Flash-bang grenade, Sleep gas grenade

DRAWBACKS

Disturbing Appearance (-3 to Bluff and Diplomacy, uncommon, minor)

COMBAT

Attack +10, +14 (ranged), Grapple +15, Damage +5 (unarmed), +13 (plasma rifle), +10 (plasma pistol), Defense +14, +10 (flat-footed), Knockback -5, Initiative +17

TOTALS

Abilities 32 + Skills 20 (80 ranks) + Feats 26 + Powers 79 + Combat 40 + Saves 18 - Drawbacks 2 = 211 PP

ORIGIN-IN-A-BOX



You are the recipient of The Department's perfected formula. A formula that will only work on subjects with a specific DNA profile. The formula has turned you into a superhuman, and with The Department's training that means you're nothing less than a supersoldier.

This origin can provide you with an archetypal heroic concept, the supersoldier. However, you were not created in the comparatively innocent era of the Second World War, you are the product of a more complicated time, when the aims and motives of the world's governments are mysterious and at best morally ambiguous. You may be allowed free reign to operate within the greater community of superheroes, acting as a PR icon for the war against terror – a walking recruitment poster. Or if your origins remain a secret, then you are an agent of your government, ready to eliminate its enemies and enforce its policies. Another option is for you to be a rogue agent, having escaped from The Department after discovering you were to become little more than a glorified murderer. Your superhero alter ego has become the only thing that allows you to use your abilities for good.

Perfected Formula Recipient, Template

Powers: Enhanced Dexterity 8, Enhanced Feats 23 (Ambidexterity, Attack Focus [ranged] 4, Defensive Roll 4, Diehard, Dodge Focus 4, Elusive Target, Endurance, Evasion 2, Improved Initiative 2, Instant Up, Quick Draw, Uncanny Dodge), Enhanced Strength 8
Cost: 39 PP

particular individual using a method of attack similar to the hero's ranged attack. The Untouchable has been contracted to make it appear that the hero is responsible for the death. The final target, the hurled coin, is thrown in such a way that the trajectory of the hero's attack is consistent with the victim's location, making it perfectly believable (when the victim is finally found), that the character accidentally killed the victim "showing off." This leads to all kinds of trouble for the hero.

The House of Pain: The Untouchable has discovered the location of the secret Department facility that houses the subjects of the early experiments made while testing the formula. He breaks into the facility, which is disguised as a chemical plant on the outskirts

of the PCs' city. He hopes to recruit some of the "experiments" to his cause; they are as much victims of The Department as he is. Unfortunately, he finds out the prisoners are little more than monsters, the combination of near-constant agony and the effects of the formula have left them irrevocably insane. The facility quickly falls into chaos and The Untouchable moves to a safe distance and makes an anonymous call to the heroes. They have little time before some twenty or thirty "mutants" start attacking the general populace. Of course, The Untouchable will stick around, perched on a nearby building with a sniper rifle. If a few do-gooder superheroes were to perish while protecting the populace from the government's escaped experiments, then all the better. He believes that if the superhero community were to lose some of their own, perhaps the government and The Department would find a cover-up impossible.

Pick A Side: The Untouchable is hired as a bodyguard for the leader of an unfriendly nation or super-villain (one who is preferably not "all bad"). The heroes' investigations reveal that The Untouchable and his client are teaming up for nefarious purposes. However, when the heroes attempt to intervene in the duo's schemes they are repeatedly thwarted by unknown assailants who wield a mix of superpowers and high-tech gadgets. Eventually the heroes discover the truth; the unknown assailants are, in fact, government agents from the heroes' home nation (CIA, MI5, etc.) who have hired The Untouchable to assassinate the villain and don't want the heroes to interfere. Do the heroes sit back and allow The Untouchable's mark to be murdered or do they fight through their own country's agents in order to save the villain?

ENDGAME

Though apparently heartless, there is still a man within the deformed hulk of The Untouchable. The villain seeks out a super-intelligent hero, begging the character to "fix" him. The mercenary has fallen in love and decided that it is time to give up his lifestyle, his abilities, and most importantly, his deformity, for the sake of the woman he loves. He offers a large sum of money for the procedure; even offers to turn himself in, if the scientist will cure his condition. He even has a sample of the original formula for the hero to reverse engineer.

The character must decide whether or not to trust the Untouchable and take him up on the offer. Whatever the case, she must also cope with the man's new lover, who is really Delilah, a Department

operative sent to track and apprehend the wayward mercenary. Once she realizes the situation, Delilah approaches the hero, imploring the character to pretend to go along with the operation as normal, then drug The Untouchable, at which point The Department can cart away the helpless mercenary for incarceration and experimentation. Under no circumstances is the hero to analyze the formula, “For reasons of national security.”

Due to his unusual physiology, however, sedatives

have little effect on The Untouchable, and he brutally pays back any attempt at betrayal, leading to a three-way battle between the mercenary, the hero, and a Department strike force. If he dies, The Untouchable’s remains will be scooped into containers and taken back for analysis. If he survives, he will take his revenge on The Department itself, targeting Delilah first, then taking the battle to the rest of the organization – where he will likely meet his end, taking as many of them with him as possible.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following hooks can be used to develop scenarios that utilize the characters and organizations presented in this book. You can flesh out these ideas as needed.

THE FIELD TEST

The Consortium and the Market begin providing experimental weapons to the campaign city’s street gangs free of charge. Both organizations are covertly collecting data on the weapons in this unconventional field test. They’re hoping to see the weapons in use against the superhero community and the paramilitary branch of the local police. Instead, the gangs use the weapons to escalate the conflicts with their rival gangs. When the Consortium and the Market learn of each other’s weapon trafficking a small arms race ensues as they provide the gangs with more and more destructive weapons.

HUNTING PARTY

The Consortium dispatches Gunbunny to track and detain the Untouchable. They’ve learned of the Department’s experiments with the formula that gave the Untouchable his powers and they hope that by studying his DNA they can unravel the mysteries of the formula and use it to further augment the members of their Direct Action Unit. A DAU squad and hired superpowered muscle in the form of Report and Bandit accompany Gunbunny on her mission. They run the Untouchable to ground in the campaign city and all hell breaks loose. Untouchable won’t go down easy and is experienced with urban warfare. To make matters worse Report and Bandit are both fairly indiscriminate about the collateral damage they cause. As Gunbunny and her crew get closer and closer to capturing him, the Untouchable will use any local superheroes or law enforcement to run interference for him by giving them a series of

anonymous tips that will put them in Gunbunny’s path.

THE EXCAVATION

Advent Labs has discovered a hundred-year-old alien crash site outside the city. The site conforms to similar crashes found by researchers and ufologists across the globe over the last several decades. Each of these discovered crash sites has yielded alien wreckage composed of a mysterious material. This alien element is highly prized by researchers and scientists for its wondrous properties. It can be used in the development of both computers and energy weapons that exceed the limits of modern technology. One of the discovered applications for this alien material is in the production of so-called “herokiller” bullets – projectiles that are tipped with a special alloy that incorporates the alien element. These highly illegal rounds can overcome some superhuman defenses and can pierce most forms of mundane armor.

The excavation site is on private property that has been purchased by Advent Labs. They’ve contracted Prophet, Inc. to provide security at the site and Forecast herself is overseeing the operation. Forecast has foreseen some impending “problems” at the site and makes a generous offer to the PCs in exchange for providing some superhuman assistance to her troubleshooters. She won’t be forthcoming with any details regarding what she’s protecting or what the threats may be. Forecast will cite “client confidentiality” and assure the heroes it’s in their best interests to lend a hand.

Various groups and organizations have learned of the excavation through the actions of a corrupt member of the Advent Labs team. The Consortium has dispatched a DAU squad, Merchant has hired a number of superhuman mercenaries, and F.R.A.M.E. has tasked a power-suited hit team, all to breach the

site's security and make off with as much of the alien material as possible. If the heroes fail to protect the site or refuse Forecast's offer, it won't be long before herokiller rounds show up in the guns of some of the city's worst criminals.

Herokiller Bullets: Device 6 (easy to lose; *Flaws*: Requires Heavy Pistol To Use); **Blast 6** (*Extras*: Linked to Nullify, Penetrating), **Nullify 6** (*Extras*: Linked to Blast; *Flaws*: Only Nullifies Protection), **Cost**: 12 PP

HELL ON EARTH

Mardrake, the necromancer who controls the Huntsman, has dispatched the former hero to find the city spirit that calls himself Luther. The Crimson Covenant has learned of Luther's existence and hopes to exploit his magical connection to the city he dwells in. Huntsman finds the city spirit and engages him in a number of furious firefights, but Luther manages to escape each of the conflicts. The heroes hear of these battles and could even become embroiled in one as the pair tears across the city in a running gun battle. After Huntsman fails to contain Luther for a third time, Mardrake lays a trap for the city spirit.

The Covenant prepares a magical circle in an old abandoned warehouse in one of the city's crumbling

neighborhoods. Huntsman attacks Luther again and corrals him towards the warehouse where the Covenant's cultists await. They capture Luther in the magical circle and begin working a powerful and dire ritual. Just as Luther reflects the condition of the city, the ritual will turn that connection in on itself and use Luther as a conduit to alter the city. By merging Luther with the dark forces in the Underworld they will create a foothold for that evil in the city. As the ritual continues the city will change as it too becomes merged with the hellish landscape of the Underworld. This effect will emanate in waves from the warehouse where Luther serves as the lynchpin to the magical effect. Each wave will alter the city further until the city literally becomes hell on earth.

The heroes can become embroiled in this plot at any point, but if it reaches a stage where the ritual has already begun, then they will have to contend with the ghostly and demonic forces that are loosed into the city and the Huntsman as he guards the warehouse where Luther is held. Although the Huntsman will not betray Mardrake and thus endanger Zantra, he will also not fight to his fullest and may even attempt to surreptitiously aid the heroes through his actions.

GLOSSARY

In the following section you will find brief descriptions of some of the various characters and organizations that populate the Infiniverse. These entries serve to define some of the references made in the preceding character descriptions.

Advent Labs: A superscience think tank and longtime government contractor, Advent Labs is the largest holder of scientific patents in the world. Thomas Hugo Strange, a wealthy philanthropist and scientist who believed technology should serve to better humanity's way of life, founded Advent Labs in the late 1940s. Strange operated in the early 1940s as a crimefighter and man of adventure under the name Professor Strange. He used a serum of his own creation called Alosun, a distillate of sun atoms that gave him superhuman strength, the ability to fly, and invulnerability. Strange left Advent Labs to the care of its board of directors in the 1950s to pursue more important matters with his superheroic contemporaries. Since then, Advent Labs has become a worldwide leader in scientific research. Their history of working with superhumans has given Advent

Labs close ties to the superhuman community. They are well-respected and have a reputation for confidentiality among superheroes, something that has put them at odds with federal and local law enforcement agencies in the past. However, no one can question their altruistic and peaceful aims.

Agent Zero: Originally a Null Directorate operative, Agent Zero has since been "acquired" by the criminal organization known as F.R.A.M.E. She carries two of the Directorate's greatest superscience creations – the Lightning Gun and the Tesla Belt, or Electroportation Belt, which allows her to convert her body to electricity for the purposes of teleportation-like travel.

Amberson Arms: An American arms manufacturer popular for their line of high-quality handguns and hunting rifles. They sponsor annual shooting competitions and hunting programs for outdoor and sports television channels. They are also well known for their outspoken support of gun deregulation. They are secretly part of the organization known as

the Consortium.

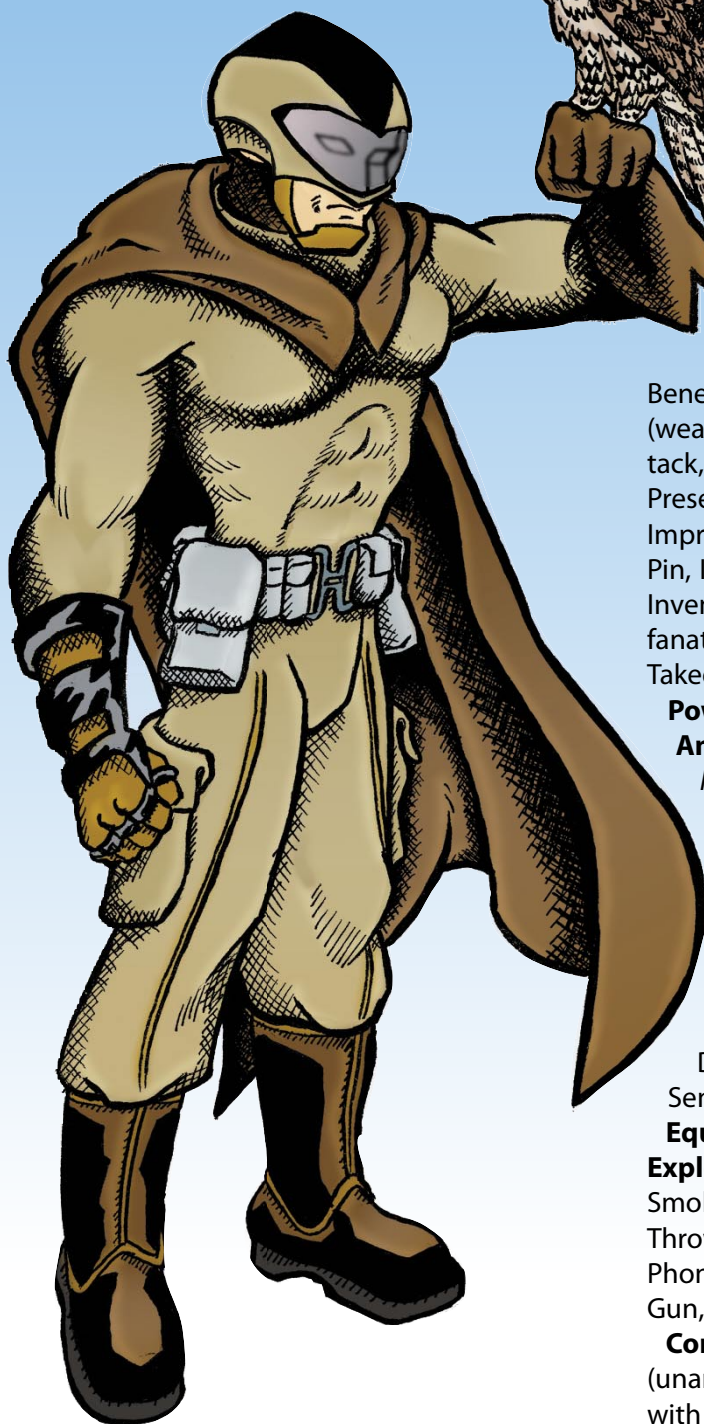
C.A.S.T.L.E.: In 1958 NATO took a stab at creating a super-spy agency called the Global Security Executive or GSX. It was a barebones, yet extremely efficient spying and special operations arm for NATO. Established to combat supernormal threats to security, GSX agents were seen as cowboys next to the established European powers. Eventually, GSX became too embroiled in the political affairs of each NATO member nation, and were on the verge meddling in their affairs for the agency's best interest. When this was discovered, the NATO Security Council quickly voted to dissolve the agency and replace it with one with a much narrower mission. Thus the GSX was reborn as C.A.S.T.L.E. –the Central Agency for Strategic Transnational Law-enforcement & Espionage. The agency acted with great success during the following years but was finally scaled down following the end of the Cold War. After alien incursions on Earth during the 1990s, the NATO Security Council voted to fully reinstate C.A.S.T.L.E. as the Center for Advanced Supernormal Threat Logistics and Enforcement. C.A.S.T.L.E. would be NATO's spearpoint against NTI (Non-Terrestrial Intelligence), Superhuman, and Transnational threats to the globe's security.

The Consortium: In the late 1960s, the CIA embarked on a covert operation designed to infiltrate their agents into many of the companies that comprised America's military-industrial complex. The project's initial goal was to drive these companies' research and development to best serve the nation's national security interests. It was discovered several years into the project that most of the covert operatives were abusing their positions for personal financial gain to the point that several of the agents had assumed executive positions within their companies and in some cases managed to assume complete control. It wouldn't last long as the operation was officially shutdown in 1978 as part of the Carter Administration's reform of CIA and many of its illegal operations. The Consortium is what the CIA operation evolved into when Langley was given the order to shut it down. What had started as a handful of agents serving as moles inside the American military-industrial complex had become a kind of corporate espionage network spanning hundred of companies all over the world. Their primary goal is to manipulate the world's geo-political landscape through the strategic theft of national security, military, scientific and other important intellectual properties in order to create a more profitable climate for the sale of

illicit weapons and government secrets. Recently they've begun to delve into the world of superhuman research with their infiltration of a handful of companies working with NATO-allied countries in the development of successful human augmentation programs and anti-superhuman technologies. These actions have placed the Consortium on the radar of C.A.S.T.L.E. in their role of monitoring and enforcing anti-superhuman proliferation treaties. Using their new human augmentation technology the Consortium was able to enhance several mercenaries into superhumans with greatly enhanced strength, speed, and endurance. Numbering a dozen, the superhumans were organized into the Direct Action Unit and were tasked with "obtaining" materials and personnel critical to the Consortium's continued profitability and eliminating any threats to the security of the organization with extreme prejudice.

The Department: Founded after World War II, The Department is a secret U.S. government agency responsible for developing responses to superhuman threats against national security. They research ways to give agents superhuman abilities and they also recruit and train superhumans. The Department is also responsible for training the members of the Superhuman Presidential Protection Team. Over the years, they have made efforts to secretly become more and more autonomous and now siphon much of their funding from the unaccountable budget of the Pentagon.

The Crimson Covenant: Founded in 1932, The Crimson Covenant is an esoteric order of wealthy and hedonistic sorcerers formed by members of the Thule Society. The Covenant was originally formed as a secret cabal within the Thule Society, but its founders were discovered and expelled. They fled to England where they had been in contact with rogue members of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. It was in London that the Crimson Covenant made their home, drawing their members from the Golden Dawn and other mystical societies. Their membership was composed entirely of wealthy men and women who sought out the corrupting knowledge and dark arts that were forbidden in their former orders. In the following years, the Covenant became primarily concerned with conquering death. They have discovered numerous necromantic magics and have created necrotechnological devices that have allowed many of them to unnaturally prolong their lives or even live beyond the grave. In recent years, the leaders of the Covenant have been in contact with entities from Beyond, and they now seek to

**The Falconer, PL 13****Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 18****Skills:** Acrobatics 7 (+10), Bluff 6 (+10), Climb 8 (+10), Computers 6 (+10), Craft (chemical) 9 (+13), Craft (electronic) 8 (+12), Diplomacy 6 (+10),

Disable Device 6 (+10), Disguise 10 (+14), Drive 3 (+6), Gather Info 11 (+15), Handle Animal 6 (+10), Intimidate 8 (+12), Investigate 10 (+14), Knowledge (behavioral sciences) 4 (+8), Knowledge (business) 10 (+14), Knowledge (civics) 8 (+12), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+8), Knowledge (tactics) 8 (+12), Knowledge (technology) 8 (+12), Medicine 7 (+10), Notice 11 (+14), Pilot 7 (+10), Search 11 (+15), Sense Motive 12 (+15), Sleight of Hand 7 (+10), Stealth 12 (+15), Survival 6 (+9), Swim 5 (+7)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Assessment, Benefit (alternate identity: John Hunter), Benefit (wealth) 6, Connected, Contacts, Defensive Attack, Equipment 8, Evasion, Fearless, Fearsome Presence 5, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Initiative 2, Improved Pin, Improved Sunder, Improved Trip, Instant Up, Inventor, Master Plan, Minions 3 (trained falcon, fanatical), Power Attack, Startle, Stunning Attack, Takedown Attack 2, Track, Well-Informed**Powers: Device 18** (battlesuit; hard to lose):**Animal Control 10** (*Power Feats:* Mental Link; *Flaws:* Avians Only), **Boost 10** (strength; *Flaws:* Personal), **Communication 7** (radio; *Power Feats:* Subtle [encrypted]), **Datalink 2**, **Dazzle 10** (auditory; *Extras:* Area Effect [burst]), **Flight 3** (*Flaws:* Gliding), **Immunity 9** (life support), **Protection 10** (*Extras:* Impervious), **Strike 5** (*Power Feats:* Mighty), **Super-Senses 6** (Darkvision, Distance Sense, Infravision, Radio, Time Sense)**Equipment:** Utility Belt (Micro-Bombs [**Blast Explosion 7**], Cutting Torch, Sleep Gas Pellets, Smoke Pellets, Stun Pellets, Tear Gas Pellets, Throwing Vibro-Blades [**Blast 8**]), Camera, Cell Phone, PDA, Caltrops, Handcuffs, Lock Release Gun, Mini-Tracer, GPS Receiver, Multi-tool**Combat:** Attack +12, Grapple +14, Damage +2 (unarmed), +7 (strike), +12 (boosted strength with strike), Defense +14, Knockback -6, Initiative +11**Saving Throws:** Toughness +2 (+12 with protection), Fortitude +10, Reflex +12, Will +14**Totals:** Abilities 36 + Skills 56 (224 ranks) + Feats 51 + Powers 72 + Combat 52 + Saves 28 = 295 PP

bring an end to life on Earth by merging this plane of existence with the Underworld. Once accomplished, the entities have promised to make the members of the Covenant the rulers of the resulting dimension that will exist forever between life and death.

The Falconer: Warren Maxwell exploded onto the public scene five years ago after he announced a pharmaceutical method of temporarily draining many superhuman abilities. After founding Maxwell Technologies and having a very successful IPO ensued, he was one of the richest men on the planet. But the man the business world knew and loved was little more than a shell as he is really John Hunter, a veteran agent of C.A.S.T.L.E. who was part of a multinational operation designed to shut-down the Consortium. Instead of dismantling the secret cabal, he and his team became embroiled in a series of seemingly unconnected scandals and accusations that ruined all of their careers. So Hunter and his team went to ground, going rogue from their own agency to go after the Consortium. Plastic surgery and forged identities, as well as some secret C.A.S.T.L.E. technology “appropriated” from their scientific center in Bern, Switzerland, gave Hunter the tools needed to strike back at the those responsible for his and his team’s disgrace. But it wouldn’t be enough as the Consortium began loosing superhuman mercenaries on the world and selling the technology to create these horrors to the highest bidder. Not being able to directly challenge them with just his C.A.S.T.L.E. training, Maxwell created an advanced battlesuit equipped with some of the latest military technology to confront these superhuman menaces and assumed the superhuman identity of the High-Flying Hunter of Men – *The Falconer*!

F.R.A.M.E.: The Fraternity for Research into Advanced Military Engineering was founded in the early 1970s by a small group of inventors who worked for various American defense contractors. By the middle of the decade, America’s defense budget was slashed and many of the men became paranoid, embittered, and disillusioned about who they were doing their work for. One of the leaders of the group, a physicist by the name of Dr. Miles Dvorak, had introduced his associates to General Alexander Denton, a disgraced former U.S. Army General searching for a cure to his Parkinson’s Disease and a means to strike back at those who humiliated him. F.R.A.M.E. gave Denton a means to overcome his illness in exchange for his help in establishing a relationship with his black market connections that trafficked in military technology. Within years of their partnering with

MARKET MUSCLE

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The Market employs a small army of disposable bodyguards that they use to protect their researchers, scientists and arms dealers. Merchant himself is usually accompanied by at least five of these “watchdogs”. When heavier muscle is called for the Market will dispatch a superpowered mercenary or two. In fact some of the characters in this book could find themselves in the employ of the Market.

Market “Watchdog”, PL 3/Minion Rank 3

Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Climb 4 (+6), Drive 4 (+5), Knowledge (tactics) 4 (+4), Notice 4 (+5), Profession (bodyguard) 4 (+5), Stealth 4 (+5), Survival 4 (+5)

Feats: Endurance, Equipment 3, Improved Initiative, Interpose

Equipment: Commlink, Handcuffs, Binoculars, Night Vision Goggles, Machine Pistol, Armored Uniform (**Protection 1**)

Combat: Attack +3, Grapple +5, Damage +2 (unarmed), +3 (machine pistol) Defense +3, Knockback -1, Initiative +5

Saving Throws: Toughness +3, +2 (without armor) Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +4

Totals: Abilities 12 + Skills 7 (28 ranks) + Feats 9 + Powers 0 + Combat 12 + Saves 8 = 45 PP

Denton, F.R.A.M.E. became the organization that the world’s tyrant states and terrorist groups sought out to obtain the military hardware they craved. F.R.A.M.E. experienced some degree of turmoil in recent years, as General Denton took control of a militant splinter arm of the organization. He dubbed this new organization C.A.D.R.E. (Command for Action-Direct Revolution and Espionage) and staged a revolution in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia. Denton, now known to the world as the armored megalomaniac Nemesis Rex, has in recent months assumed complete control of F.R.A.M.E. and is using their resources to consolidate his power base.

The Jaguar’s Shadows: An ancient order of mystics and spiritual leaders that has been passed down generation to generation amongst the members of a Rainforest tribe. They hold the secret of creating a mystical powder known as the Serpent’s Breath that grants unnatural longevity and superhuman vigor to the members of the Shadows. The leaders of this secret fraternity maintain ancient pacts with powerful spirits in the Underworld, and could summon them into our world to defend their tribe.



You'll find Prophet, Inc. detailed in the entry for the character Forecast. The company employs a number of highly trained "troubleshooters" that provide the muscle on the company's security operations. The stats below can serve as a typical troubleshooter or as a member of the five-man team that constantly assists Forecast and is represented by her minions feat.

"Troubleshooter", PL 5/Minion Rank 5

Str14, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int**: 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12

Skills: Climb 5 (+7), Computers 5 (+7), Diplomacy 5 (+6), Disable Device 5 (+7), Drive 4 (+6), Knowledge (tactics) 5 (+7), Notice 5 (+6), Profession (security guard) 4 (+5), Search 2 (+4), Stealth 4 (+6), Swim 4 (+6)

Feats: Equipment 6, Improved Initiative, Teamwork

Equipment: Commlink, Handcuffs, Binoculars, Night Vision Goggles, Flashlight, Gas Mask, Tonfa, Assault Rifle +5, Tactical Vest (+4), Sleep Gas Grenade

Combat: Attack +5, Grapple +6, Damage +2 (unarmed), +3 (tonfa), +5 (assault rifle), Defense +5, Knockback -2, Initiative +6

Saving Throws: Toughness +5, +1 (without armor), Fortitude +6, Reflex +8, Will +6

Totals: Abilities 19 + Skills 12 (48 ranks) + Feats 8 + Powers 0 + Combat 20 + Saves 16 = 75 PP

The Jaguar's Shadows hold to an ancient prophecy of a coming apocalypse called "the Final Nightfall". When this prophesied event occurs, they intend to conduct attacks against the outside world to bring about the collapse of what they see as corrupt and decadent civilization.

The Market: A criminal network founded by the inventor known as Merchant. The Market consists of a worldwide collection of gun smugglers, renegade scientists, and mercenaries who cater to anyone who can afford their prices. They've been known to distribute weapons and provide training for organized crime, military dictatorships, terrorists, foreign powers, dissident groups and revolutionaries. The only allegiance they know is to wealth and their de facto leader, Merchant.

Maxwell Technologies: Founded by Warren Maxwell, this company specializes in advanced biotechnologies and weapon systems. Their research into genetic human augmentation and their development of weapons for various government agencies has contributed to their runaway success. Warren Maxwell is secretly the Falconer and uses the resources of his company in his fight against international crime and the looming threat of the secret cabal known as the Consortium.

Null Directorate: A sister agency to the Soviet Union's KGB, the Null Directorate was a top secret Soviet Cold War agency – an offshoot of the KGB that was dedicated to the research and application of superscience and superhuman agents. It was founded after KGB agents acquired the extensive journals and papers of the famed inventor Nikola Tesla after his death in 1943. The Directorate was also responsible for the procurement and development of alien technology, much of which was recovered from crash sites around the Soviet Union, the most of important find having already been recovered by the military decades earlier after the Tunguska event of 1908. Dedicated to the security of the USSR, the Null Directorate dealt mainly in research and development, but was also had espionage, counter-intelligence, and paramilitary branches. They had research facilities, agents (both mundane and superhuman), spy-nests, and underground networks all over the globe, which brought them into conflict with espionage and security agencies of numerous other countries. After the fall of the USSR, the Null Directorate found itself on shaky ground. With its funding cut, the Directorate sought out other sources of income, which involved selling technology, weapons and intelligence secrets

of the Cold War. They also became involved in manufacturing weapons and narcotics, using the now unfettered Russian mob to handle the distribution. As the Directorate's networks of agents became more fragmented as they were shut down or suffered huge cuts in their budgets, many departments and cells went rogue and were in some cases absorbed into criminal organizations such as F.R.A.M.E. Despite this, Null Directorate survived and is rebuilding its strength. It now operates as a semi-autonomous shadow agency that acts in supposed concern for the current Russian government and other allied provinces, but in reality is more concerned with self-preservation and the expansion of its power base. Null Directorate programs are responsible for developing Tesla's theories on power broadcasting. A technology that gave rise to the Electroportation belt and the Lightning Gun, both employed by Null Directorate operative, Agent Zero. Tesla's designs for an atomic robot also formed the basis for the *Snegurochka* project.

Raiju: A fearsome villain who wears a battlesuit capable of massive destruction through its great strength and the emission of powerful bolts of electricity. Raiju is the secret alter ego of child genius (and psychopath) Raymond Juniper. He adopted the name Raiju, which means "Lightning-Beast", from a monster in Japanese mythology.

Thule Society: In the real world, the Thule Society was a German occultist and völkisch group founded in Munich in 1918. They are notable for sponsoring the German Worker's Party, which Hitler later transformed into the Nazi Party. However, Hitler later suppressed the Thule Society in order to avoid the embarrassment of his party being associated with an occultist organization. In the Infiniverse, however, beyond their political leaning and anti-Semitic rhetoric, the Thule Society at its core was a collection of magicians and sorcerers. While they left the public eye during Hitler's rise to power, they remained in existence as a secret cabal of wizards who answered only to their Nazi leaders. They opposed the heroic mystics and magicians of the Allied forces throughout the Second World War.

The Underworld: A catchall phrase used by mystics and other enlightened individuals to describe the honeycomb of dimensions and planes of existence that are home to the dark and evil beings of the multiverse. There are dimensions in the Underworld that resemble, and may in fact be, the hell described in the Judeo-Christian beliefs. Sorcerers, wizards and

magicians have long been able to strike bargains with beings from the underworld (which is typically the only way these beings can gain entry to our dimension) to bring them into our world to do their bidding.

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