

The Daily Standard

INTRODUCTION

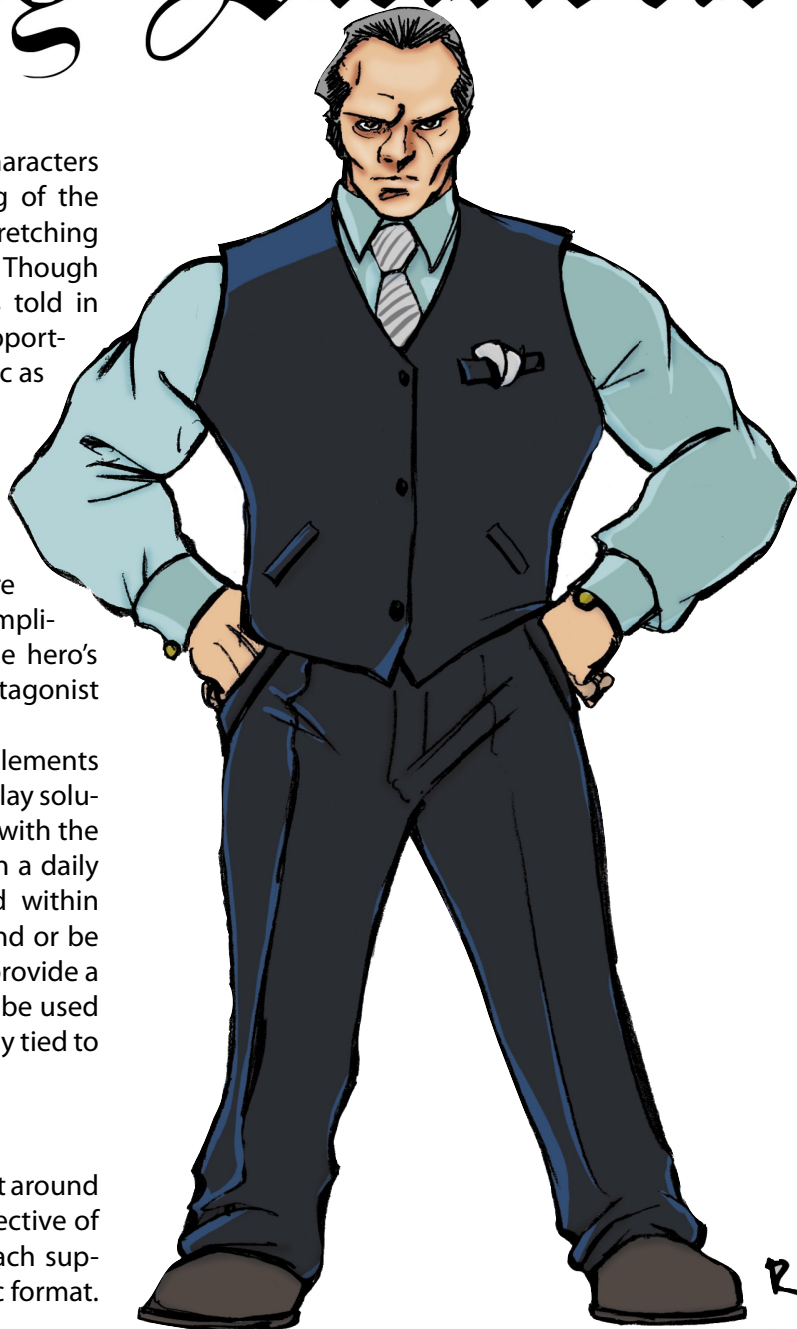
As with any roleplaying game, the players' characters are the center of attention. It is a trapping of the genres that roleplaying games emulate, stretching back to the most basic myths and legends. Though the heroes remain the focus of the stories told in comic books, the ancillary characters, the supporting cast, are often just as important and iconic as the heroes themselves.

Whether it is a hero's trusted butler, love interest, or professional rival, these supporting characters serve as an important part of the hero's mythology. They become part of the fabric of the hero's life and the dual nature of any costumed crimefighter serves to complicate those relationships. An employer in the hero's civilian life might also serve as a powerful antagonist to that same hero's costumed identity.

The Supporting Cast series of short supplements from Big Finger Games provides a plug-and-play solution to a hero's need for dramatic resonance with the incidental characters he or she deals with on a daily basis. The supporting characters contained within can be plugged into a new hero's background or be introduced into an existing campaign. They provide a useful story base and infrastructure and can be used to flesh out a setting even if they aren't directly tied to any of the heroes.

FORMAT

Each Supporting Cast supplement will be built around a company, organization, or some other collective of individuals with a similar goal or agenda. Each supplement in this line will follow the same basic format.



SUPPORTING CAST

YOUR CAMPAIGN



References to the location of the Daily Standard are kept intentionally generic to allow you to place the paper in a location suitable to your home campaign. It is assumed the Daily Standard would be located in a major metropolitan area that has a long history.

If you want to “scale down” the size of the Standard, simply make it a newer paper that was only recently established by a large news conglomerate. The staff and facilities are small to keep overhead low, with the paper’s internet division being handled by the parent corporation. In this scenario the paper would probably be more like a tabloid or be focused even more on arts and entertainment, as well as being aggressive in establishing a unique editorial focus and voice in an already competitive market. This may lead the staff to play a little “fast and loose” with the facts and to take more risks than an established paper.

In Big Finger Games’ Infinite Universe setting the Daily Standard would be located in Hyperion City. The paper would have been founded in some other major West Coast city, like San Francisco, or Los Angeles, but would have moved to Hyperion City in the 1950s, shortly after the city was founded, by the paper’s second owner Matthew Black.

They will provide a brief overview of the organization, a breakdown of the supporting characters involved, and a list of adventure hooks.

Each supporting character entry will also follow a basic format. The entry will begin with a brief character history, which will be followed by a section entitled “Supporting”, that will provide details on using the character in a supporting role, and will end with a section entitled “Opposing”, which will offer suggestions for using the character as an antagonizing force in the hero’s civilian or costumed life.

These two roles, Supporting and Opposing, can be mixed and matched as you see fit. For example, a character might be a doting mentor to the hero’s civilian identity but also be dedicated to outlawing masked crimefighters and have a personal vendetta against the hero’s masked identity. Alternately, a character may be an ardent admirer always ready to help the hero in his superhuman endeavors, but consider the hero in his civilian disguise to be a professional rival only worthy of scorn.

THE NEWSPAPER IN COMICS



The newspaper may provide one of the oldest supporting casts in the history of comic books. Two key examples come to mind; one a certain arachnid-themed hero and the other rocketed to earth as an infant. You can’t think about these heroes without the newspaper as a backdrop. The newspaper serves as a strong addition to any hero’s mythos; it provides complications for a hero’s life and also provides a great narrative device for leading the character into new adventures. If explored fully it can become woven so fully into the hero’s background and persona that you may come to think of the hero in her civilian guise as nothing other than an intrepid reporter.

THE DAILY STANDARD

The Daily Standard, a daily newspaper, serves the City but is also distributed throughout most of its home state. Its circulation ranks it within the top twenty newspapers nationally.

The Standard was founded in 1899 as the American Daily Standard by brother and sister Andrew and Sarah Newhall. The pair used part of their family’s fortune to start the paper and their keen interest in politics and finance informed the Standard’s focus in those early days.

The Newhall family owned and operated the paper until 1932 when it was sold to industrialist Mathew Black, a polymath who was a contemporary of many of the adventurers and crimefighters of the era. It was Black who shortened the name of the paper to simply the Daily Standard and whose interests in art and science also informed the paper’s specialties.

Black devoted himself full time to the Standard during World War II, and he dispatched several reporters abroad to witness the war firsthand. It was during this period that the Standard gained national notoriety for its coverage of the war, with its reports and photos being reprinted in papers across the country. Black developed a special “instant paper” formula during this time that helped the Standard maintain its morning and evening editions throughout the war despite paper shortages. It was during this period that the Standard’s then star reporter, Denny Duke was captured by the Japanese while reporting from Asia. He was held as a prisoner of war, accused of espionage and tortured. He was released at the end of the war.

Following Mathew Black’s retirement in 1965, the Standard was sold to Conrad Simes, a controversial

financier who was responsible for adopting a color, tabloid format for the Standard and reducing it to a single morning edition. It was during this period that the Standard began to adopt the identity it still has today. The editorials became polarizing and politically-charged, fueled by Simes' own radical sensibilities. The paper began devoting equal time to politics, art, cinema, finance, lifestyle and national and global news.

Throughout the 1970s, 80s, and 90s the paper took on several popular columnists that it has retained to this day. They include popular film critic Robert Sisko, advice columnist Edwina "Ask Annie" Moore, political commentator Patrick Owen, music critic Ryan Bryant, and Pulitzer prize winning political and pop culture humorist Jeri Garrett.

Simes continued as publisher and editor of the Standard until 2001 when, after his retirement, his son, Simon H. Simes took over as the paper's Publisher. Assistant Editor Victoria Marquardt was promoted to Editor-In-Chief.

Under the guidance of its current editorial staff the Standard has become well respected for its balanced reporting in a time when many news outlets are accused of leaning a little too left or right. Regardless, the paper has maintained its "voice" and its mass appeal with colorful commentary from its columnists and its challenging editorials and political cartoons.

Since the popularization of the internet, the Daily Standard has seen a precipitous and ongoing drop in its circulation and advertising revenue. The current editor-in-chief, Victoria Marquardt, has constructed a large web development department that created a popular web presence for the paper and expanded the paper's potential readership, making up much of its lost advertising revenue. The Standard's website currently offers access to the paper's archives, dating back to 1930, for a modest membership fee.

LOCATION

The Standard occupies the majority of the Newhall building in downtown. The paper's reporting and editorial staff occupies the top three floors. Two floors are dedicated to the paper's administrative and accounting departments. And two more floors, nicknamed the "science department", house the layout, web development, and IT departments. The paper's printing facilities are located in the building's lower floors and basements.

The building is surrounded by Standard Plaza, which contains bronze statues of Andrew and Sarah Newhall, the philanthropist brother and sister who

founded the paper. It also contains a series of interactive video monitors set into a huge curved marble wall that displays images and articles of historical importance from the Standard's archives. This serves as a sort of "museum kiosk" for the Standard and is often crowded around by tourists or groups of field-tripping children.

ROBERT SISCO

Robert is the Standard's movie review columnist. He is a nationally known film critic due to his syndicated movie review program, *At The Box Office*, which he left after several successful seasons to reduce his workload and spend more time with this family. He wrote a nationally syndicated column for a few years afterward, in which he reviewed lesser known arthouse and foreign films.

Robert spent time at several major newspapers before being lured to the Standard by its wily Editor-In-Chief. Beyond his weekly column, Robert also appears on the Standard's internet video podcast, *The Daily Standard Update*, where he provides sound bite versions of the review from his column. He also appears occasionally on a local newscast, particularly in connection with summer "tent pole" movies, and controversial arthouse films.

The most important thing in Robert's life, the only thing to surpass his passion for film, is his family. Robert shares a spacious condo in the heart of the city with his partner, Joe Grigsby, an amateur filmmaker Robert met at Cannes. Their adopted daughter, Sky, completes the couple's personal ideal of domestic bliss. The family can often be found together on

ROBERT SISCO, PL 3

Str 10 (+0), Dex 10 (+0), Con 10 (+0), Int 16 (+3), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 16 (+3)

Skills: Craft (writing) 4 (+7), Diplomacy 8 (+11), Gather Information 4 (+7), Knowledge (art) 8 (+11), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+7), Knowledge (popular culture) 10 (+13), Language (French) 1, Notice 5 (+7), Profession (film critic) 8 (+10), Sense Motive 4 (+6)

Feats: Benefit (wealth), Contacts

Combat: Attack +2, Grapple +2, Damage +0 (unarmed), Defense +2, Knockback -0, Initiative +0

Saves: Toughness +0, Fortitude +2, Reflex +2, Will +2

Totals: Abilities 16 + Skills 14 (56 ranks) + Feats 2 + Powers 0 + Combat 8 + Saves 4 = 44 PP

RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES



Truth is indeed stranger than fiction and the best place for ideas to fuel subplots or provide intrepid reporters with assignments is your own local paper, or the newspaper from a major metropolitan area. You can use this to provide color if your summing what the hero's work week was like, or specific ideas for plots or subplots can be lifted and adapted to your game.

the weekend, taking in one of the city's many live performances, or even movies, provided it agrees with Sky's precocious five-year-old tastes.

SUPPORTING

The following sections will give you some ideas concerning using this character in a supporting role for the both the hero's civilian and masked identities.

Civilian: Robert is thankful for all the breaks, all the mentors, and all the experiences he had during his time as a fledgling reporter and eventual film critic. Despite his demanding schedule and the ease of telecommuting in this day and age, Robert insists on coming in to the office any weekday that he's in town. His needs are simple and he maintains a small office with only a computer, television with DVD player, and a fake plant. He welcomes any visitors and has even been known to pitch in with the Standard's usual staff of reporters in times of looming deadlines and breaking stories.

Robert can serve as a sort of mentor to the hero, a sounding board for the hero's problems when butting heads with an editor or having trouble with a story or assignment. Robert will always take the time to help the hero and, even though his forte is film criticism, he is a trained observer and has spent enough time in newsrooms to develop an understanding of what goes into a good news story and what makes a good reporter. His eye for detail could also help the hero with some overlooked detail during an investigation.

Super: He sees superheroes as an embodiment of modern myth. Due to the details of Robert's own personal life, and occasions in the past when he found himself championing controversial but important films, he empathizes with the complications that society forces upon the superhuman.

Robert has watched as "what is acceptable" in film has changed over the years and film has incited discussions about controversial topics or "hot button"

issues. He sees film as a powerful force that can bring previously taboo subjects to light and can have a real and lasting effect on society's constantly changing cultural identity.

He sees superhumans as a similar force for societal change. As he sees it, superhumans stand as the ultimate "role model", though they may operate on a different scale than a normal person, he believes that their true power lies in their ability to inspire modern man in ways that mythic figures, or even religious figures, fail to do so. It is the hero's ability to have a real and tangible effect on society, and their protection from trifling legalities, that places them in a position to look at things with a clear and unburdened sense of morality. It is in this way that superhuman may serve as the greatest inspiration for a normal person.

While Robert's support for superheroes is largely generalized and philosophical, he is not beyond taking an active role in supporting a hero. If given the opportunity Robert would be willing to serve as a contact in the entertainment industry to a hero. Or he could even use his celebrity to speak up on the hero's behalf if there is some controversy surrounding the hero.

OPPOSING

The following sections will give you some ideas concerning using this character in an opposing role for the both the hero's civilian and masked identities.

Civilian: Robert is a perfectionist above all else and is highly protective of his image as one of the nation's top film critics. There may be times when the hero is called on to help Robert cover a film festival or film premiere, or to interview an actor in conjunction with a film Robert is reviewing. It is during these times that Robert will treat the hero as his own personal slave and complaints to the editorial staff will only be met with "just humor him".

When dealing with Robert, the hero will discover that he refuses to come into the office and does all of his work in his high-rise condo in the city's center. The hero will have to go to him and will find Robert can direct his powers of critical perception at anything or anyone, including the hero. Robert will insist the hero remove his "filthy shoes" when coming into his home, he'll make snide remarks about the hero's wardrobe and less than flattering observations about the hero's journalism or photography, all in a carefully-worded way that makes the remarks fall just short of a personal attack.

Super: Even though his own immediate family might differ from the conservative “norm”, Robert firmly embraces the ideal of a sanitized media landscape that is put forth by many extreme conservatives. Since the adoption of his daughter, his personal aesthetic has polarized in the direction of family films, and he has since taken to championing family friendly movies and denouncing anything he considers too violent, sexualized or irresponsible.

He considers costumed crimefighters to be an example of the sort of “wrong message” that is being sent to children and teenagers. With their bright primary colors, evocative names, and enviable abilities, heroes essentially “market” themselves to children.

Robert could focus on one of the heroes in particular, singling out that character’s assumed name, costume, or behavior as being a “bad influence” on the young people who look up to the hero. He could use his celebrity as an opportunity to publicly denounce the hero and bring the glaring media spotlight to bear on the hero’s activities. Under that kind of scrutiny any misstep on the hero’s part or even a seemingly related tragedy (just as video games are scapegoated for school shootings), could cause the hero to be tried and convicted in the court of public opinion.

Additionally, if your campaign includes the possibility of superhuman registration, legislation to limit the activities of superhumans, or anything similar, Robert could be one of many celebrities willing to champion that cause and impose limits on the freedoms of superhumans.

SAM MUNROE

Sam is a bit of an anachronism. He’s part of a lost breed of newsman, a pugnacious, no-nonsense journalist who only knows how to ask the “hard questions”. He would probably still have a press tag tucked into a frayed fedora if it wouldn’t get him laughed out of the newsroom. Nonetheless he wears a wrinkled raincoat, takes notes on a steno pad in a strange form of coded shorthand (his own invention) and has a cigarette tucked behind his left ear and a number two pencil behind his right.

Sam often finds himself at odds with his editors, but his eccentricities and quixotic crusades are tolerated because everyone at the paper knows that there is a certain type and tenor of story that only Sam can get.

Fueled by a steady string of coffee and cigarettes, Sam lives only for reporting. He has left in his wake a steady stream of ex-wives, all products of some

self-deluding phase in which Sam’s happiness was going to come first and his career second. Sam’s failed marriages have left him paying overwhelming amounts of alimony, and instilled in him a misogynistic attitude that will undoubtedly insure he dies alone as well as penniless.

Ultimately this matters little to Sam. Life is just the boring downtime between each Big Story.

SUPPORTING

The following sections will give you some ideas concerning using this character in a supporting role for the both the hero’s civilian and masked identities.

Civilian: Sam doesn’t have a lot of real friends in the news game. In a world where blogging has taking center stage and most news outlets have abolished their fact checking departments, Sam stands tall as an example of a dying breed of hard-hitting journalist. His no-nonsense, no-compromise attitude chafes his colleagues and they usually give Sam a wide birth lest they be pulled into one of his crusades. For this reason Sam is always checking out the latest reporters and photographers who join the paper’s staff. Hoping to find some kindred spirit, or a young person with enough naiveté or idealism to subscribe to the same journalistic ethics he does.

In this way Sam can serve as a mentor for the hero, providing advice and putting the hero in face-to-face contact with some of the City’s notable figures, while

SAM MUNROE, PL 3

Str 12 (+1), Dex 10 (+0), Con 12 (+1), Int 14 (+2), Wis 16 (+3), Cha 12 (+1)

Skills: Bluff 8 (+9), Craft (writing) 6 (+8), Diplomacy 4 (+5), Gather Information 10 (+11), Intimidate 6 (+7), Investigate 6 (+8), Knowledge (current events) 8 (+10), Knowledge (streetwise) 8 (+10), Notice 8 (+10), Profession (reporter) 8 (+11), Search 6 (+9), Sense Motive 6 (+9)

Feats: Benefit (press pass), Contacts, Defensive Roll 2, Distract (intimidate), Fearless, Well-Informed

Powers: Super-Senses 1 (danger sense)

Combat: Attack +2, Grapple +3, Damage +1 (unarmed), Defense +3, Knockback –1, Initiative +0

Saves: Toughness +3 (+1 flat-footed), Fortitude +3, Reflex +1, Will +4

Totals: Abilities 16 + Skills 21 (84 ranks) + Feats 7 + Powers 1 + Combat 10 + Saves 4 = 59 PP

other reporters do their investigating from behind their phone and computer. Also, Sam serves as a great contact; he follows stories and covers news that most reporters shy away from – stories that are too messy or aren't sensational enough.

Super: Sam is a fearless reporter. He'll walk into the den of organized crime figures or shove a tape recorder into the face of a supervillain. He'll do whatever it takes to get the story. For that reason he won't back down from pursuing a hero either. However, if a hero does right by Sam he'll have an invaluable contact for life.

Sam does expect some give and take. While he's all for helping a hero in the course of his duties, he needs to get his story as well. If there's news, news that people need to hear, he'll pursue the story as far as he can, even if the hero might feel its something the public might be happier not knowing about.

OPPOSING

The following sections will give you some ideas concerning using this character in an opposing role for the both the hero's civilian and masked identities.

Civilian: Sam is the lone man on the watchtower. He feels like he is the only person at the paper who cares about telling the real story, fact checking, and delivering the news that's truly important. He has little respect for his colleagues and is constantly butting heads with his editors.

Sam will see the hero as just another wannabe journalist probably destined to be a talking head on some local news broadcast. Sam will make his opinion of the hero's work obvious and go so far as to try and invalidate some of the hero's stories or claim he doctored photos. If the hero is using his own crimefighting experiences in his stories, Sam will begin to question his sources and if the hero identifies his own costumed identity as a "deep throat" then that will only deepen Sam's suspicions.

Super: Sam believes nobody has the right to hide behind anonymity. Not informants, not whistleblowers, and certainly not superheroes. He's put his byline on every expose, every piece of investigative journalism he's ever written. You can find him in his office at the Standard, or look him up in the book. He's begrudgingly agreed to protect the identities of informants in the past, but he's always let them know up front he thinks they're cowards.

He's been roughed up in the past, knocked around

by bodyguards and mafia errand boys, he was nearly poisoned by the cronies of a revenge-minded politician, but none of that has ever stopped Sam. The truth must be told and he's never once backed down from his calling.

Sam is part of cabal of like-minded reporters from papers and television stations all over the country. Their goal is to strip superhumans of the one thing that makes them unaccountable to the authorities, to society, their detractors, to anyone, the one thing that makes them a cowardly lot – their anonymity.

These reporters compare notes, pool resources, all in an effort to unmask any and all superhumans who wield their powers in the pursuit of justice or villainy. Their hope is that when all the blurry photos, eyewitness statements, and rumors are compiled a larger picture will form, a picture that will allow them to uncover the real identity of the man or woman behind the mask.

And when he outs his first superhuman, hero or villain, Sam's byline will be right next to the story, in big, sans serif capitals.

What this means for any given hero in your campaign is that they could be a target for unmasking. If Sam gets the barest hint of a trail, he'll be all over the hero. He'll check out every mention of the hero in the press, start sniffing around the neighborhoods where the hero has been sighted, and badger anyone who's known to have encountered the hero.

Sam will only drop his pursuit if the trail goes cold (the hero lays low for a while) or is somehow confounded or put off the scent.

VICTORIA MARQUARDT

Victoria is a forward thinking woman with an analytical mind, two traits that have been instrumental in getting her where she is today. Conrad Simes hired her because he knew the newspaper business was changing and the Standard was going to need people like Victoria if it was going to adapt and survive.

Victoria is a very private woman who focuses all her energies and talents on her career. She occasionally lies, telling herself one day she'll slow down, meet someone, start a family, but she doesn't really have any intention of doing so. Her life hasn't been without romance, but these flings are usually short-lived office affairs that rise out of working in close proximity to people. She's gossiped about secretly as being a bit of a heartbreaker around the offices, but in reality she's only had a couple of discrete affairs in her time at the Standard.

In reality, Victoria is all business. She occasionally

gets a little giddy when a particularly powerful story crosses her desk, but she typically keeps full control of herself bringing her full faculties to bear on the smooth running of the Standard and its continued rise to prominence in an age when major American papers are hemorrhaging readers.

SUPPORTING

The following sections will give you some ideas concerning using this character in an opposing role for the both the hero's civilian and masked identities.

Civilian: Since Victoria took over as Editor-In-Chief she's seen it as the start of a new era for the Standard; a time in which the paper will rediscover its place and voice in the digital age. For this reason she is very interested in finding and recruiting new talent that will help the paper adapt to the changing market.

Victoria will seek to nurture new talent, often instructing her editors to give plum assignments to some of the newer reporters and photographers. She will take special notice of the hero, giving him a few choice assignments personally with a guarantee that if he proves himself he'll be pushed to the forefront as one of the new faces of the Standard's reporting across both their print and web efforts.

Super: Superheroes are a relatively new force in the world, having only appeared since the dawn of the last century. She recognizes them to be a powerful force for change in the world, and can even imagine a world where superhumans could be more common than not. Victoria will seek to cultivate unprecedented relationships with superheroes, her thinking being that they should be treated and approached no differently than any other newsmaker, like a politician or celebrity.

She will seek to establish strong lines of communication with heroes. The benefit to the heroes being that they can have some say in how they're portrayed in the press, since their own anonymity often prevents them from defending themselves against slander or libel. And the benefit to the Standard being that they can quote the heroes directly and present the story from a perspective other than that of any shocked bystanders.

OPPOSING

The following sections will give you some ideas concerning using this character in an opposing role for the both the hero's civilian and masked identities.

Civilian: Victoria is the wunderkind of the Standard and she'd like to keep it that way. She is used to dealing with stuffy old men who think of the internet as a "series of tubes", not young hotshot reporters who blog on the side. She is desperate to maintain her position as the one "in the know" amongst the aging staff at the Standard.

Victoria uses her power as Editor-In-Chief to make sure that new breed of reporters that the hero represents don't get any plum assignment and thus miss their chance to shine. She'll task one of the paper's old guard, like Sam Munroe, with covering a breaking story about cybercrime, while she'll make sure the hero is tasked with some fluffy human interest piece about an old woman with a hundred cats.

If confronted with this inequity, Victoria will tell it like it is behind closed doors. Her personal cadre of sycophants gets the plum assignments, but there's only one person who's going to decide the course of the new Standard and that's her.

Super: Victoria realizes superhumans are here to stay, but it doesn't mean society and civilization has to change because of it. Victoria is used to being head and shoulders above the rest, and frankly she resents superhumans. They stand as icons, personifications of an ideology, and that makes them dangerous and ultimately unaccountable.

VICTORIA MARQUARDT, PL 3

Str 10 (+0), Dex 12 (+1), Con 12 (+1), Int 17 (+3), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 15 (+2)

Skills: Bluff 6 (+8), Computers 4 (+7), Craft (writing) 6 (+9), Diplomacy 6 (+8), Gather Information 6 (+8), Intimidate 2 (+4), Investigate 6 (+9), Knowledge (current events) 8 (+11), Knowledge (popular culture) 4 (+7), Notice 6 (+8), Perform (oratory) 4 (+6), Profession (editor) 6 (+8), Profession (reporter) 6 (+8), Search 4 (+6), Sense Motive 6 (+8)

Feats: Attractive, Benefit (press pass), Contacts, Defensive Roll 1, Distract (bluff), Fascinate (oratory), Master Plan, Taunt, Well-Informed

Powers: Quickness 1 (mental tasks only)

Combat: Attack +2, Grapple +2, Damage +0 (unarmed), Defense +3, Knockback -1, Initiative +1

Saves: Toughness +2, Fortitude +3, Reflex +3, Will +5

Totals: Abilities 20 + Skills 20 (80 ranks) + Feats 9 + Powers 1 + Combat 10 + Saves 2 = 62 PP

Victoria will use her power to mitigate the effects and deeds of the superheroes in the city. She'll offer alternative explanations for villains being defeated, giving credit to first responders, or the city's law enforcement officers tasked with dealing with metahumans. She'll discredit the accounts of traumatized bystanders and do whatever she can to downplay the deeds of superheroes. She'll avoid giving credit to a particular hero, leaving the hero truly anonymous in the story, noting no one came forward to claim responsibility.

Victoria will use a hero's anonymity against him. No anonymous crimefighter can sue for libel or effectively demand a retraction.

OTHER STAFF

Other members of the Standard's staff can be developed as needed. Below are some brief descriptions of the other Standard regulars who have been mentioned above.

Edwina "Ask Annie" Moore: There's a big reason that Edwina is ideally suited to writing the paper's "Ask Annie" column – she's an inveterate busybody. She has always insinuated herself into the problems or her family and friends and is very quick to dispense advice from the moral high ground she's staked claim to. This attitude doesn't stop at friends and family of course; she'll butt in to anyone's problems and won't hesitate to tell them how to live their lives.

It is in this capacity that Edwina might be a foil for the hero around the office. Though she may look busy at her desk carefully typing out her latest column or clucking her tongue at the scandalous content of the letters she receives, she'll still be peering over the rim of her bejeweled reading glasses, keeping tabs on just about everyone in the office. Any misstep by the hero could lead to some water cooler talk, as Edwina is not above gossiping either. Of course, this goes both ways, and Edwina is a great source of office scuttlebutt if the hero is willing to do some kissing up.

Patrick Owen: Pat, the paper's political commentator, lives and breathes politics; it is his one passion in life. He pours over papers from all over the world, is constantly on the phone to his various political and lobbyist contacts, and decries this new age of the blogosphere but reads them all anyway. Pat considers it a moral imperative to be politically informed and God help you if you don't vote or are apolitical. He doesn't care which side of the political fence you

fall on as long as you care enough to have decided, in fact he prefers encountering people he can differ with, there's just nothing like debating the issues of the day for Pat.

Pat is great as a source of information on local, national and global politics. He is very well informed and also keeps up with politics and legislation as it applies to superheroes. Pat is fairly ambivalent about superhumans, provided they stay out of politics; he would rather see the governing and legislating left to the "normal people".

Ryan Bryant: Ryan is the paper's resident music critic and you would probably know just by looking at him. He looks like an aging rock star, bedecked in a vintage concert t-shirt, leather jacket, carefully distressed tight black jeans, pointy boots, and his graying hair is nearly calcified under a heavy layer of mousse and hairspray. What differentiates Ryan from actual rock stars his age is he still has all his mental faculties. Sure he experimented with psychoactives during his formative years in the early 1970s, but that was a different culture and he's been clean ever since.

In her civilian identity, the hero could be assigned to assist Ryan on a story, or take photos during a concert or interview. The hero will quickly find that Ryan doesn't break pace for anyone and he knows just about everybody, from roadies, to rock stars, to management and record execs. Ryan prides himself on his sharp mind, he has an excellent memory and can recall the nuances of most of the legendary concerts he's attended and seldom needs to take notes at the shows he attends now; he can recall notable moments and can recite the set list with ease. It is perhaps in this capacity that Ryan could be a good contact for hero. If some crime occurs in the music industry or some villain starts moonlighting as a rock star, Ryan would make for a perfect witness and source of information.

Jeri Garrett: Writer of "Jeri's World", a popular humor column, Jeri relates the ups and downs of raising three kids as it applies to the ever-changing world of pop culture. It's the kind of gentle humor that brings a smile to the reader's face and leaves him with a nicely summated moral at the end.

Besides how the latest pop stars, internet phenomenon, or video games affects her kids, Jeri is also very aware of the effect superheroes have on kids. The jury is still out on that one; she thinks heroes could be a good influence, but aren't always, and the idea of hero worship seems a dangerous one to

her. The hero may find herself the subject of one of Jeri's columns if she does, or even wears, something controversial.

Simon H. Simes: Mr. Simes knows little about the newspaper business and is only in the position he's in because of his father. While he'll occasionally go to his father for advice, he usually just relies on the very capable Victoria Marquardt. He is primarily just a figurehead, a representative of the Simes fortune and its interest in the paper.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Having a hero work for a newspaper can make your job much easier when you're pressed for a way to involve the heroes in an adventure. The hero can be dispatched in his capacity as reporter or photographer to cover just about any story or event, just in time for the villains to strike. Below are more specific ideas for using the Standard and its staff as a jumping off point for adventures:

Dish: The paper takes on a new columnist, a former blogger who specializes in superhero gossip. This columnist, one Castro Carlton, fancies himself a bit of a rock star; silk shirts, gold lame pants, fingers covered in rings, and gaudy designer sunglasses, oh, and he carries a meticulously-coiffed Chihuahua wherever he goes (in fact the hero's first encounter with Castro may come after the little dog piddles under the hero's desk). Castro begins his new column with a bang by outing one of the city's resident heroes as an alien, and revealing a reforming supervillain was spotted going into rehab. As the column goes on, the stories will be more and more in depth and start hitting closer and closer to home for the hero. No one knows where Castro's information comes from and if left unchecked he could start causing some serious problems for the superhero community at large, a community whose greatest defense hitherto had been their anonymity. The question is how to put and stop to this, and just where is Castro getting his information?

Embedded: In a move that self-consciously harkens back to the Standard's reporting during WWII, the paper wants to embed the hero with a military unit in some far-flung conflict. This could seriously impinge on the hero's crimefighting duties but could also lead to some interesting adventures as the hero sees the horror of war firsthand. Alternatively, one of the paper's other reporters could go missing while

embedded and the hero could set out to rescue him.

I Cover The Waterfront: The hero is assigned the "hero beat". This could even include covering his activities as a superhero. While the hero could use his unique perspective as an actual costumed crimefighter to score a variety of great scoops, it could lead also to endangering his own anonymity. Whatever the case, it can cause conflicts as the hero is called upon to cover a story in his civilian identity, as his first instinct is to don his mask and rush into the fight.

I, Paparazzi: Desmond, a brilliant member of the paper's IT department notes how badly the paparazzi hounds celebrities, whether it be tragically as in the case of Princess Diana, or humorously as in the case of Britney Spears. And while there have been attempts made by helicopter-flying paparazzi to pursue superheroes and even villains, it usually ends with the flying superhuman taking off at a speed they can't follow. Des begins to tinker with an idea. Using plans hacked from an Advent Lab database and materials stolen from the local college's science department, he constructs a small spherical antigravity device equipped with a camera. Des controls this device remotely and, after a few test runs, sends it after a passing superhero. What happens next is up to the hero. He can try and outrun the speedy little device, or can destroy it, which will only make Des redouble his efforts. Whatever the case this may be the start of a growing problem for the city's heroes.

Missing: Sam Munroe has gone missing. The only clues to his disappearance are in the notebooks left in his apartment. The hero will have to decipher Sam's unusual shorthand and then follow the steps of Sam's investigation in an effort to find him. Sam was investigating a rash of disappearances among inner city youth. A story not covered by mainstream media who are all obsessed with the latest missing pretty, white female college student. The children are being abducted and taken below the city where they are being used to bolster the ranks of a subterranean society that is dying off from inbreeding and disease. When Sam got too close to the truth, the hooded subterraneans who have been haunting the city's subways abducted Sam too.

Retract or Die: The paper printed a very unflattering story about one of the city's supervillains (perhaps he was gossiped about in Castro Carlton's column),

HEROIC REPORTER, TEMPLATE



You can use this template to make your hero a reporter or photographer at the Daily Standard. This can be applied to a new hero who has the Standard as an established part of her background or you can purchase this as a package when your character starts a new career at the paper (provided it doesn't exceed caps on skills already possessed).

Skills: Computers 4, Craft (artistic) 8, Diplomacy 4, Gather Information 8, Investigate 8, Knowledge (current events) 8, Knowledge (popular culture or streetwise) 8, Profession (reporter) 8, Search 4, Sense Motive 8

Feats: Benefit (press pass), Contacts, Equipment 1, Well-Informed

Equipment: Camera, Cell Phone, Desktop Computer, Laptop Computer, PDA

Cost: 21 PP

and the villain is completely enraged. He flies into Newhall building and takes the editorial staff hostage, demanding a retraction be printed on the front page or he'll starting throwing hostages out the window.

The Ride-Along: The hero, in her capacity as a reporter or photographer, is assigned to ride along with Hyperion City's GSWAT (Gadgets, Special Weapons and Tactics) unit on a series of drug busts. Beyond the usual paramilitary hardware, GSWAT makes use of a variety of impounded and confiscated super gadgets taken from supervillains after they're arrested. These gadgets are "retasked" for use in law enforcement and members of GSWAT are trained in their use. On one of these busts GSWAT unwittingly stumbles into the hideout of one of the supervillains whose gadgets they're making use of. The villain is able to assume control of his old gadgets, via a "genetic fingerprint" he used to make sure they couldn't be turned against him, and turns the table on the GSWAT team. How will the hero contend with this? She risks exposing her identity by acting in front of GSWAT and the villain but she may be able to make use of some of the other gadgets (now laying at her feet) that didn't belong to the newly empowered villain.

Tea With Nemesis: The hero, in her capacity as a reporter, has been tapped to conduct the interview of the decade; he is to enter New Macedonia where he'll meet with the region's infamous leader, Nemesis Rex

(see BFG's *Lords of Lightning*, pg. 35). Is Nemesis Rex simply trying to "soften his image" with the American people or could he possibly know more about this young reporter than he's letting on? Or were hero and Nemesis Rex been maneuvered into this position? Perhaps a government agency is privy to the hero's secret identity and has manipulated events so they can have a deniable agent on the ground in New Macedonia.

SUPPORTING CAST: THE DAILY STANDARD

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