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SUPERLINE DINOSAURS!



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INTRODUCTION

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

In this, the fifth issue of the *Superline* series, we bring you the following:

- A closer look at the Patriot Squad.
- Two more adventures, including one featuring the return of two supervillains.
- Steve Kenson gives us a preview of the *Mastermind's Manual*.
- Several dinosaurs, each complete with stats and ready for action in your next session.

While the adventures are designed in the spirit and at the pace of superhero comic books and cartoon episodes, the GM can easily expand each with a little work.

Each of the adventures is presented in the following general format:

Summary: A paragraph on what the adventure is about.

Set-Up: How the heroes can be introduced to the adventure.

Adventure: The actual adventure, including boxed text for such things as specific plot points, vehicle statistics, and villain tactics.

Follow-Up: Options for what might happen after the heroes complete the adventure and suggestions for rewarding (or punishing) the heroes.

Supporting Cast: Information and statistics on minions and other minor characters.

Main Villain(s): Detailed background, information, and statistics about the major bad guy(s) of the story.

ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURES' DIFFICULTY

One of the nice things about M&M is the ease with which the difficulty of adventures can be adjusted.

Since everything works on the power point system, all that is needed to create a more powerful supervillain is to add Power Levels (and the appropriate power points per Power Level) until the supervillain is a match for the heroes.

Conversely, if the supervillain is too powerful, simply drop the supervillain's Power Level (and the appropriate power points) until the heroes can handle the challenge.

The same can, of course, be done with minions.

About the Authors

Michael Hammes has been freelancing in the role-playing industry since 2001. Starting small, he has steadily built his repertoire, and reputation, by working for such companies as Ronin Arts, Alderac Entertainment Group, Dark Quest Games, and E.N. Publishing. He is currently trying to balance his writing schedule with his role as stay-at-home father. To catch the latest from Michael's Imagination, please visit www.michaelhammes.com.

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THE PATRIOT SQUAD

BY MICHAEL HAMMES

"In a world where superheroes run amok, where aliens are no longer science fiction, and where magic is a very real and potent force, what chance does the common man have of living a full life beyond that provided by his government?"

-Senator Albert L. Carr

The Patriot Squad was first introduced in the adventure "Cold Front" from **Superline #1** as the government's very own top-secret force of super-powered individuals. The adventure also mentioned that the Patriot Squad was responsible for investigating crimes involving super-humans, had a base named *Freedom's Eye* (with a suggestion that it also served as a prison), and had been involved with the federal super-human maximum-security prison of Watchgate.

The Patriot Squad appeared again in **Superline #2** where they arrive at the conclusion of the "Triple Threat" adventure to collect any weapons that the heroes acquired from the warring street gangs. The Patriot Squad is also involved at the conclusion of the adventure "Sore Loser" from that same issue when its field agents (called "Volunteers") take Superstar into custody for transfer to *Freedom's Eye* (and, unbeknownst to the heroes, to study the origin of her powers). It is in this adventure that some of the Patriot Squad's equipment as well as the Volunteers are described.

Although the Patriot Squad did not appear in **Superlines #3** or **#4**, I didn't forget about the promise made in **Superline #1** to present more details on the Patriot Squad in a later issue, and neither did the fans. Well, this is that issue. However, while more details about the Patriot Squad are revealed, this article is by no means the definitive dossier

on the Patriot Squad; while the article does give background and general details on the Patriot Squad and some of its key and rank-and-file members, there are still plenty of secrets waiting to be revealed in later **Superline** issues.

PATRIOT SQUAD FAQ

What Is The Patriot Squad?

The name "Patriot Squad" is actually a moniker. The Patriot Squad's proper name is the Federal Superpowers Enforcement Agency (FSEA). Its mission is "to protect and defend the United States against attacks and other hostile actions by alien, paranormal, and super-powered beings."

How Was The FSEA Created?

The Federal Superpowers Enforcement Agency has its origins in H.R. 3162, better known as the "Patriot Act". In that document, which was signed into law on October 23, 2001, there is a provision for the "... establishment of an agency to study and deal with the issue of terrorism threats from alien, paranormal, and super-powered beings, et. al."

Incidentally, Senator Carr, who is also responsible for inserting the provision into the bill, coined the term "Patriot Squad". Although members of the FSEA refer to the agency by its proper name, almost everyone else calls it the Patriot Squad.

Why Was The FSEA Created?

Prior to the creation of the Patriot Squad any number of government agencies and departments dealt with super-powered beings in the purview of their normal duties. For example, the FBI investigated super-powered beings that had committed federal crimes, the CIA dealt with the threat posed by foreign supers, the INS dealt with legal and illegal super-powered immigrants, and the military researched weapons and equipment to deal with super-powered threats. The FSEA is an attempt to consolidate all these functions under a single agency and thereby cut out much bureaucratic redundancy and conflict.

Who Heads The FSEA?

The FSEA is currently headed by Director Benjamin S. Chalmers, who is also the agency's first director.

How Did Public Law 107-296 Impact The FSEA?

Although the Patriot Act created the FSEA in theory, it took Public Law 107-296, better known as the Homeland Security Act of 2002, to actually bring it to life.

Prior to the passage of the Homeland Security Act, the FSEA was nothing more than a single office in the Department of Justice manned by Director Chalmers and his secretary.

During those early days Director Chalmers spent most of his time trying to negotiate other departments (i.e. the aforementioned FBI, CIA, et. al.) for access to information and resources. Of course, this was nothing more than an exercise in frustration since these agencies had no intention of ceding their authority and attendant resources to this upstart agency.

This situation changed abruptly with the Homeland Security Act. The Act established the FSEA as an official agency of the DHS and this along with the unflagging support of Senator Carr

and the current Administration allowed Director Chalmers to finally gather the necessary resources.

What Is The FSEA Like Today?

Thanks to the tireless leadership of Director Chalmers and the support of Senator Carr and the Administration, today the FSEA not only has complete and sole authority over all super-powered issues but also the resources to deal with them.

The FSEA no longer has to rely on outside resources (i.e. the FBI's crime lab, the military's R&D department) for its needs, being able to do all such work in house. In fact, the only thing that the department does not specifically deal with in-house is the prosecution of super-powered criminals. As with other federal agencies, such duties are handled by the Justice Department.

FSEA ORGANIZATION

The FSEA is headed by a Director who is supported by the agency's Deputy Director.

The agency is divided into four Offices, each of which is headed by an Executive Assistant Director who is supported by an Assistant Director. The four Offices are the Offices of Administration, Investigation and Enforcement, Research and Development, and Legal Counsel.

Each Office is divided into a number of Divisions, each managed by a Division Head who is supported by the Assistant Division Head.

Office of Administration

Administrative Services Division

— responsible for the recruiting, selecting, investigating, and hiring of all personnel necessary to support the mission of the agency.

Finance Division — responsible for the overall coordination and administration of the agency's budgetary and fiscal matters.

Law Division — responsible for researching, creating, and promulgating laws dealing with super-powered beings as well as to coordinate the defense of the agency against claims involving the agency, its personnel, and its records.

Records Division — responsible for maintaining the agency's records including personnel files and files and information on all known super-powered beings and related activities.

Security Division — provides internal security within the agency's various offices and bases including *Freedom's Eye* and Area 51.

Office of Investigation and Enforcement

Coordination Division — Responsible for coordinating agency efforts with local, state, federal, and international law enforcement agencies.

Enforcement Division — Tasked with investigating super-power-related crimes and criminals across the entire spectrum of criminal activity, from drugs and racketeering to robbery and kidnapping to murder and terrorism.

Investigation Division — The agency's crime laboratory, providing services for the solution and prosecution of super-power-related crimes.

Special Operations Division — The "combat" arm of the FSEA. Tasked with directly engaging and neutralizing super-powered beings.

Office of Research and Development

Operational Technology Division — Tasked with developing state-of-the-art technologies for use by the agency and its personnel and with analyzing technologies foreign to the agency.

Paranormal Research Division — Responsible for examining known mystic- and psionic-related beings, powers, and devices. Tasked with developing techniques to replicate and create psion-

ic and mystic powers and devices for use by the agency and its personnel.

Physical Enhancement Division — Responsible for developing advanced physical and mental training techniques for agency personnel. Also responsible for examining incidents of mutation and developing techniques for safely creating mutations.

KEY INDIVIDUALS

The following individuals are the key individuals responsible for the existence and direction of the FSEA. The heroes are not expected to meet these individuals except in unusual circumstances.

Senator Albert L. Carr

This senior senator is the FSEA's strongest proponent. A known and powerful archconservative, Senator Carr believes that super-powered beings are the single greatest danger facing the country today, both in their criminal and hero form.

It is Senator Carr that has been the source of most of the attempts at "anti-supers" legislation introduced to Congress in the last twenty years. He has attempted to introduce such failed measures as:

- Tougher sentences for crimes committed by those with superpowers.
- Making superheroes liable for any collateral damage they cause when apprehending criminals.
- Requiring superpowered beings to register their powers.
- Outlawing the wearing of identity-concealing costumes.

Publicly the senator has stated that such measures are necessary for the safety of the general public, but his true reasons for wanting to restrict superheroes (because, let's face it, supercriminals aren't likely to register themselves or care about costumes) are much more personal.

To put it bluntly, Senator Carr hates superheroes. Why? Because superheroes completely bypass the power structure that everyone else in the country is subject to. To Senator Carr's mind, superheroes are dangerous freethinkers, individuals unfettered by the same levers that move the average individual and as a result challenge the power that Senator Carr and people like him wield.

With over two decades in the Senate Senator Carr has enough influence and connections to get practically anything he wants accomplished. From pork-barrel projects for his district to favorable legislation for his contributors, Senator Carr knows the ins-and-outs of government like almost no one else; there aren't many individuals he cannot eventually manipulate, coerce, or maneuver to do what he wants in Washington and, by extension, throughout the country.

In a world without superheroes all this would make Senator Carr one of the most powerful individuals in the country. But what kind of levers can you apply to an individual that can fly, shoot laser beams from his eyes, and take a point-blank tank round to the chest without flinching? Precisely the kind that so far he has failed to get passed by Congress.

And it is these repeated failures that have made Senator Carr the FSEA's chief supporter; if he can't legislate superheroes into submission then he'll build an organization that is able to match superheroes on a power-for-power basis.

Senator Carr is a Caucasian male in his late 50's. He is 6'1" tall. A lifetime of little exercise has left him with an unathletic and overweight build; the senator does his best to conceal his physical appearance beneath custom-tailored suits. He has brown eyes and is always clean-shaven. He constantly has his thinning and graying black hair "touched up".

Senator Carr is a preening bully who prefers to accomplish things through "leverage" rather than negotiation; for him there is no such thing as a good compromise. He resents anyone that he cannot gain control over or otherwise influence. The senator is also an elitist who feels that the country should be run by the wealthy and powerful for the wealthy and powerful. Although technically not corrupt (he is always very careful to obey the letter, if not the spirit, of the law if), Senator Carr does not do anything for anyone unless it nets him something in return.

Publicly Senator Carr is the typical politician: all glad-handing, baby kissing, and sound bites. As long as the public eye is on him, the senator presents himself as a tough, traditional, family-minded individual who always has an open door and fights hard for his constituents. Privately he couldn't give two cents about his constituents beyond making sure that they continue to vote for him.

Power Level: 0 (46 points)

Abilities: Str -1 (8), Dex -1 (9), Con +0 (10), Int +3 (16), Wis +3 (16), Cha +4 (18)

Skills: Bluff 8 (+12), Diplomacy 4 (+8), Gather Information 4 (+8), Intimidate 12 (+16), Knowledge (business) 4 (+7), Knowledge (civics) 12 (+15), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 4 (+7), Profession (politician) 12 (+15), Sense Motive 8 (+11)

Feats: Benefit 5 (security clearance, status, wealth 3), Connected, Contacts

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

Saving Throws: Toughness +0, Fortitude +0, Reflex -1, Will +8

Totals: Abilities 17 + Skills 17 + Feats 7 + Combat 0 + Saves 5 = 46

Director Benjamin S. Chalmers

General Benjamin S. Chalmers (USA, Retired) is the first and current director of the FSEA. He was handpicked by Senator Carr for the job and, thanks to the senator's influence with the Administration, was quickly confirmed. The fact that the job was initially seen as nothing more than a dead-end figurehead position and the general's contacts in the Department of Defense also ensured that there were no other serious nominees.

Director Chalmers' goals for the FSEA mirror those of Senator Carr: he wants to build a self-contained government agency capable of matching up directly with super-powered individuals. Unlike Senator Carr, however, Director Chalmers' motive for doing so is not rooted in a hatred of superheroes. Rather, he sees the FSEA as a necessary counterbalance to the wildcard that super-powered beings, both heroes and villains, represent.

Having finally gotten the authority and support needed after the passage of the Homeland Security Act, Director Chalmers has moved quickly to build up the FSEA's resources and capabilities. One of his first acts was to use his contacts in the Department of Defense, and the strategy of offering key FSEA positions to the right people within the DOD, to wrest control of the military's super-power-related research (including control of Area 51) from the DOD.

He next built up the FSEA's investigative capabilities by using the agency's budget to create a new crime lab and by hiring away experts and agents from other federal agencies, inevitably by offering them a higher position within the FSEA than they held in their original agency.

His greatest accomplishment to date, however, has been the completion of the FSEA's headquarters. Dubbed *Freedom's Eye*, it is located deep in West Virginia's Appalachian Mountains and

is a veritable fortress that houses state-of-the-art research, training, and containment facilities.

Director Chalmers is an African-American male in his early 60's. He is 5'9" tall and, thanks to a lifetime of P.T., still in remarkably good shape. Director Chalmers has brown eyes and keeps both his face and head clean-shaven.

Director Chalmers is a man used to being in command; he has the unmistakable bearing of a life-long military man and exudes an aura of command and professionalism. He prefers to assess any situation based on all available information and take an appropriately logical action; he is a realist. A firm believer in planning, Director Chalmers almost never makes a rash decision, even when under great pressure.

More importantly, at least in Senator Carr's eyes, Director Chalmers is a true patriot, a man truly dedicated to safeguarding his country and to make the sacrifices that such a worthy goal requires.

Power Level: 5 (76 points)

Abilities: Str +0 (11), Dex +0 (11), Con +1 (12), Int +3 (16), Wis +4 (18), Cha +2 (14)

Skills: Climb 4 (+4), Diplomacy 8 (+10), Intimidate 6 (+8), Knowledge (civics) 4 (+7), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+7), Knowledge (streetwise) 4 (+7), Knowledge (tactics) 12 (+15), Notice 6 (+10), Profession (soldier) 12 (+16), Sense Motive 4 (+8)

Feats: Benefit 3 (security clearance, status, wealth), Connected, Contacts, Endurance, Master Plan, Well-Informed

Combat: Attack +5, Grapple +5, Damage +0 (unarmed), Defense +5, Knockback -0, Initiative +0

Saving Throws: Toughness +1, Fortitude +3, Reflex +3, Will +9

Totals: Abilities 22 + Skills 16 + Feats 8 + Combat 20 + Saves 10 = 76

RANK-AND-FILE

Volunteers

“Volunteers” are the FSEA’s field agents. They are assigned to the Enforcement Division of the agency’s Office of Investigation and Enforcement. Senator Carr himself suggested the title of “Volunteer” as a way to set the FSEA’s agents apart from other agencies’ field agents and to emphasize their loyalty to the country.

The first Volunteers were recruited from similar federal agencies (i.e. FBI, CIA, ATF, DEA, etc.) and most still are (a fact that does not sit well with the other agencies), although the FSEA has recently begun open recruitment for these positions much like those other agencies.

All Volunteers adhere to the standard federal dress code of dark suit and tie. Although essentially indistinguishable in appearance from other federal agents (i.e. FBI, Secret Service), Volunteers always wear an American flag lapel pin as part of their “uniform.”

In addition to the usual training all government field agents receive (i.e. basic firearms, personal combat, investigative techniques, etc.) Volunteers receive additional physical training, tactical planning instruction, and advanced hand-to-hand combat training.

Volunteers are never dispatched individually. Normal investigations (i.e. a low probability of super-powered opposition) are assigned to the standard two-Volunteer team while hazardous investi-

gations (i.e. a likelihood of encountering super-powered opposition) are assigned to nothing less than a four-Volunteer team.

Although they rank among the most highly trained of government agents and have access to advanced weaponry and even mission-specific devices, the fact is that a Volunteer is no match for a true super-powered individual. As a result, Volunteers are trained to avoid direct confrontations with super-powered beings unless absolutely necessary (what exactly this means is ultimately up to the team leader’s discretion).

When forced to engage in combat with super-powered beings Volunteer tactics emphasize teamwork and defensive and stalling maneuvers. The ultimate objective of any combat with super-powered individuals is to keep the super-powered individuals busy long enough for reinforcements (usually a Minuteman squad) to arrive on scene.

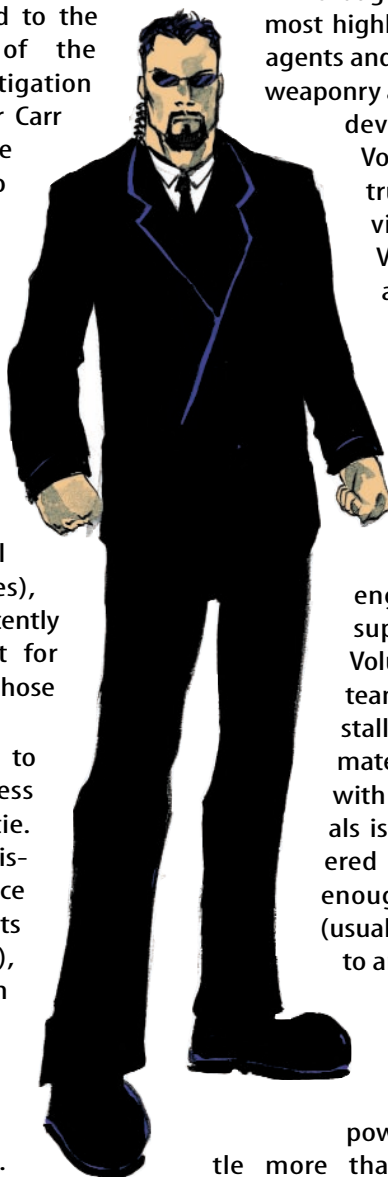
Volunteers are highly motivated and loyal to the FSEA and each other.

After all, taking on super-powered individuals with little more than ordinary equipment requires a certain panache and flawless teamwork, both on the part of the Volunteers and the FSEA as a whole.

Power Level: 6 (86 points)

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

Skills: Computers 2 (+4), Diplomacy 4 (+4), Drive 4 (+6), Gather Information



4 (+4), Intimidate 4 (+4), Investigate 6 (+8), Knowledge (behavior sciences) 4 (+6), Knowledge (civics) 2 (+4), Knowledge (current events) 2 (+4), Knowledge (streetwise) 2 (+4), Knowledge (tactics) 4 (+6), Notice 4 (+6), Profession (government agent) 4 (+6), Search 6 (+8), Sense Motive 4 (+6)

Feats: Benefit (security clearance), Chokehold, Contacts, Defensive Attack, Endurance, Equipment 6, Improved Initiative, Teamwork

Equipment: LP-1 (laser; **Blast 5**); Commlink; Taser (**Stun 5**, *Power Feats:* Extended Reach 5 [25 ft.]); Undercover Vest (**Protection 3**, *Power Feats:* Subtle)

Combat: Attack +7, Grapple +8, Damage +5 (LP-1), +1 (unarmed), Defense +7, Knockback -2, Initiative +6

Saving Throws: Toughness +5 (+2 without armor), Fortitude +6, Reflex +4, Will +7

Totals: Abilities 20 + Skills 14 + Feats 13 + Combat 28 + Saves 11 = 86

Minutemen

Drawing on the history of the Revolutionary minutemen ("ready to march or fight at a minute's notice"), Senator Carr coined this term for the FSEA's elite special operatives. Minutemen are part of the Special Operations Division of the agency's Office of Investigation and Enforcement.

Minutemen are invariably recruited from the military's and federal agencies' special forces (i.e. Green Berets, Delta Force, SEALs, etc.) as the FSEA currently lacks the facilities to provide such wide-ranging training. As with the recruitment of field agents, the military and other federal agencies take a dim view of this practice but can do nothing about it.

Minutemen perform much the same role for the FSEA that they did for their previous agency or branch (i.e. unconventional warfare and counter-terrorism) and, when properly prepared and equipped, a Minuteman team of four Minutemen is often capable of

dealing with low-threat super-powered individuals.

Minutemen always dress in mission-appropriate clothing and gear, which can be anything from the standard government agent dark suit and tie combo to full combat dress (which the statistics below represent).

Minutemen continue their special operations training (which, much to the annoyance of the military, is inevitably done using the DOD's training facilities). They also receive ongoing training in the Minuteman battlesuits (see **Equipment and Devices**) that form the mainstay of the FSEA's efforts to match up with super-powered individuals and spearhead any of the agency's combat operations.

For the same reasons as Volunteers, Minutemen are highly motivated and loyal to their team and the agency.

Power Level: 8 (114 points)

Abilities: Str +2 (15), Dex +2 (15), Con +2 (15), Int +2 (15), Wis +2 (15), Cha +0 (10)

Skills: Drive 4 (+6), Intimidate 6 (+6), Knowledge (streetwise) 4 (+6), Knowledge (tactics) 8 (+10), Notice 8 (+10), Profession (government agent) 6 (+8), Stealth 8 (+10)

Feats: Assessment, Benefit (security clearance), Chokehold, Contacts, Defensive Attack, Equipment 8, Improved Aim, Improved Block, Improved Critical (unarmed attack), Improved Defense, Improved Grab, Improved Initiative 2, Improved Pin, Improved Throw, Improved Trip, Stunning Attack, Teamwork 2

Equipment: LP-1 (laser; **Blast 5**); LR-2 (laser; **Blast 8**); Commlink; Knife (**Strike 1**, *Power Feats:* Improved Critical (19-20), Mighty, Thrown); Sap (**Strike 2**, *Power Feats:* Mighty); Tactical Armor (**Protection 5**)

Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +10, Damage +8 (LR-2), +5 (LP-1), +2 (unarmed), Defense +9, Knockback -3, Initiative +10

Saving Throws: Toughness +7 (+2 without armor), Fortitude +8, Reflex +8, Will +8

Totals: Abilities 25 + Skills 11 + Feats 26 + Combat 34 + Saves 18 = 114

DEVICES AND EQUIPMENT

The FSEA fields a number of high technology devices and equipment from nullifying shackles to laser rifles and battlesuits.

LP-1

The LP-1 (Laser Pistol Model 1) is the standard issue FSEA sidearm and is used by Volunteers, Minutemen, and members of the Security Division as well as other FSEA individuals on an as-needed basis.

Equipment: LP-1 (laser; **Blast 5**)

Cost: 10 EP

LR-2

The LR-2 (Laser Rifle Model 2) is an advanced version of a military prototype (LR-1) currently being field-tested for use by various special operations forces. The LR-2 is not a sidearm and is thus not issued to any FSEA personnel except for those involved in combat situations (i.e. Minutemen) or guard duty (Security Division).

Equipment: LR-2 (laser; **Blast 8**)

Cost: 16 EP

LR-3

Currently still in the development stage, the LR-3 improves on the LR-2 by adding autofire capabilities.

Equipment: LR- 3 (laser; **Blast 8** [Extras: Autofire])

Cost: 24 EP

TECH WARS

Although the FSEA's Office of Research and Development has officially taken over all super-power related weapons and equipment research from other federal agencies and departments, that does not mean that these other agencies and departments do not have access to such technology.

In fact, in order to obtain the research resources of the various federal agencies and departments the FSEA had to agree to share its developed technology with them, especially the military.

Naturally, much like those agencies and departments were reluctant to give up their research to the FSEA in the first place, the FSEA is reluctant to give its technology to those agencies. As a result there is a constant conflict between the FSEA and these other agencies and departments over the various technologies being developed.

The upshot of this situation is that the FSEA tries to maintain as much secrecy as possible about its various research and weapons programs and, much like with the LR-1/LR-2, usually gives only older technology to the other agencies and departments (i.e. technology it cannot deny it has).

Of course the other agencies and departments suspect that this is exactly what the FSEA is doing and do their best to ferret out the agency's secrets while badgering Congress to give them greater access. Furthermore, despite the fact that they are not authorized to, most, especially the military, continue to do some form of limited and secret research on technologies that interest them.

Minuteman Mark I Battlesuit

Based on an acquired military prototype, the Mark I series has been in service with the FSEA since 2002 and, despite the recent introduction of the Mark II series, still forms the bulk of the agency's fielded battlesuits.

Although noticeably below the offensive powers of many super-powered individuals, a Mark I series battlesuit nevertheless provides its Minuteman operator with significant protection and survivability.

While the lack of firepower is significant, the true drawback to the Mark I series is its lack of propulsion beyond its operator's movements. As a result, the battlesuits have to be deployed using conventional methods (i.e. land vehicles, helicopters, airplanes, etc.). This not only limits the agency's situational response time, but also the suits' usefulness against super-powered individuals that possess enhanced mobility powers.

While the agency has addressed the response time issue by stationing teams of Minuteman battlesuits and their transports in key areas of the country (i.e. large cities and known hot spots), this is only a partial solution and does nothing to improve the suits' abilities against super-mobile opponents.

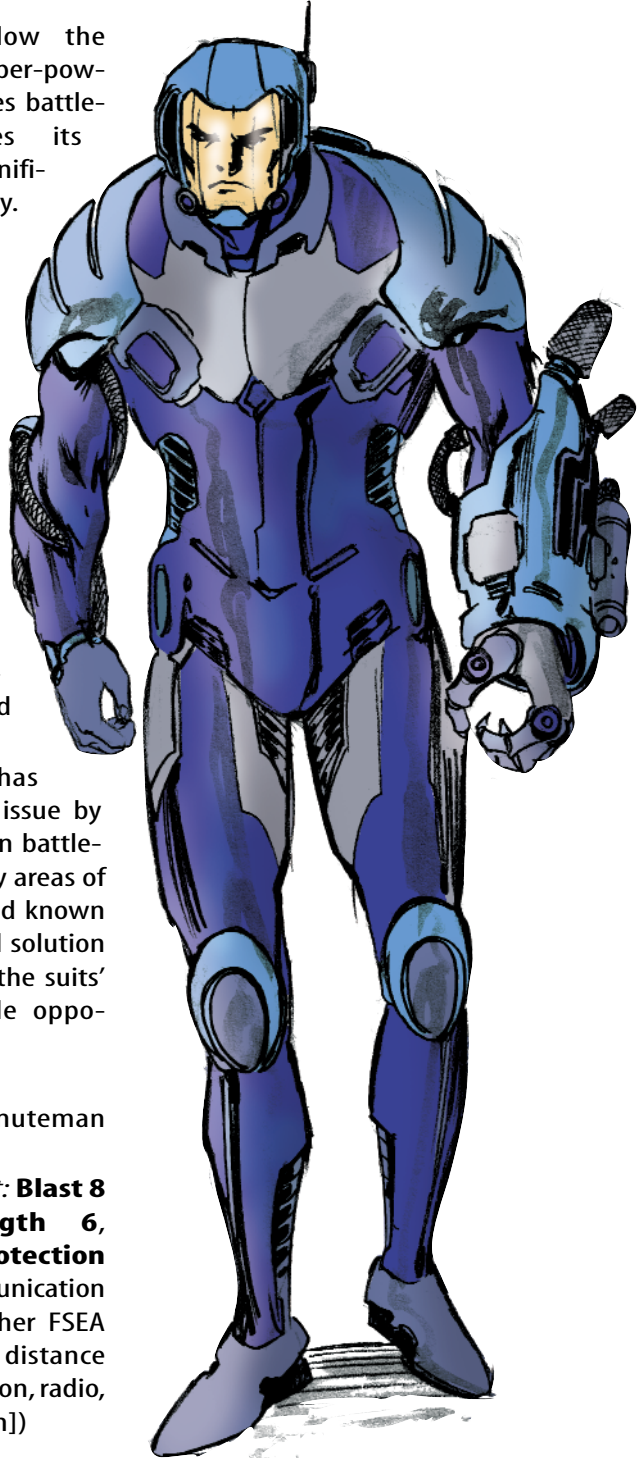
Powers: Device 10 (Minuteman Mark I Battlesuit; hard to lose)

Minuteman Mark I Battlesuit: **Blast 8** (laser), **Enhanced Strength 6**, **Immunity 9** (life support), **Protection 10**, **Super Senses 9** (communication link 2 [FSEA headquarters, other FSEA battlesuits], direction sense, distance sense, infravision, low-light vision, radio, time sense, tracking [infravision])

Cost: 40 PP

Minuteman Mark II Battlesuit

Representing a quantum leap over the Mark I series, the Mark II series has only recently left the prototype stage and been assigned to field deployment.



Although outwardly almost identical to the Mark I, the Mark II features a number of significant upgrades:

- Improved laser weaponry for superior firepower
- Advanced armor technology for greater protection
- Jump jets for increased mobility
- Next-generation servos for increased Strength

While the Mark II series' jump jets have gone some way toward addressing the mobility issues facing the Mark I series, like the earlier series, the Mark II series still relies on conventional transports for long-range deployments.

Currently the FSEA is deploys Mark II battlesuits on a 1-to-3 ratio with the Mark I series. It eventually plans to replace all Mark I models with the Mark II.

Powers: Device 15 (Minuteman Mark II Battlesuit; hard to lose)

*Minuteman Mark II Battlesuit: **Blast 10** (laser), **Enhanced Strength 12**, **Immunity 9** (life support), **Leaping 4** (jump jets; x25), **Protection 10** (Extras: Impervious), **Super Senses 9** (communication link 2 [FSEA headquarters, other FSEA battlesuits], direction sense, distance sense, infravision, low-light vision, radio, time sense, tracking [infravision])*

Cost: 60 PP

Minuteman Mark III Battlesuit

Currently still in development, FSEA scientists are promising that the Mark III will be as significant an improvement over the Mark II as that series was over the Mark I.

Although improvements in armament, protection, and servo-technology are to be expected, the chief upgrade will be making the Mark III's truly self-deployable by improving the suit's jump jets to allow powered flight. Whether

such "flight" will be true flight or simply the ability to leap significantly farther is unknown at this point.

Nullifying Shackles

Arguably the most vital piece of restraint technology the FSEA possesses, nullifying shackles are surprisingly light yet tough alloy (Toughness 15) that encase an individual's hands and forearms. Once in place, the shackles drain an individual's powers. Without the proper unlock sequence a Disable Device (DC 40) check is required to unlock the shackles.

Although the shackles are quite good, they are far from perfect. All FSEA personnel are aware that particularly motivated individuals may be able to counter the shackles' effects and take appropriate measures.

Powers: Device 10 (Nullifying Shackles; hard to lose)

*Nullifying Shackles: **Nullify 10** (all powers; Extras: Duration 3 [continuous]; Flaws: Range [touch])*

Cost: 40 PP

CONTINUING RESEARCH

Although the vast majority of the FSEA's current anti-supers capabilities are grounded in training, super-science, and alien technology (courtesy of Area 51), the agency engages in all manner of other super-power research.

FSEA scientists are particularly interested in increasing the agency's knowledge on mystical and mental/psionic powers as these powers hold the greatest payoff in the agency's risk/reward assessment. To this end the agency is actively seeking artifacts and devices associated with such powers as well as volunteers that possess such powers for testing.

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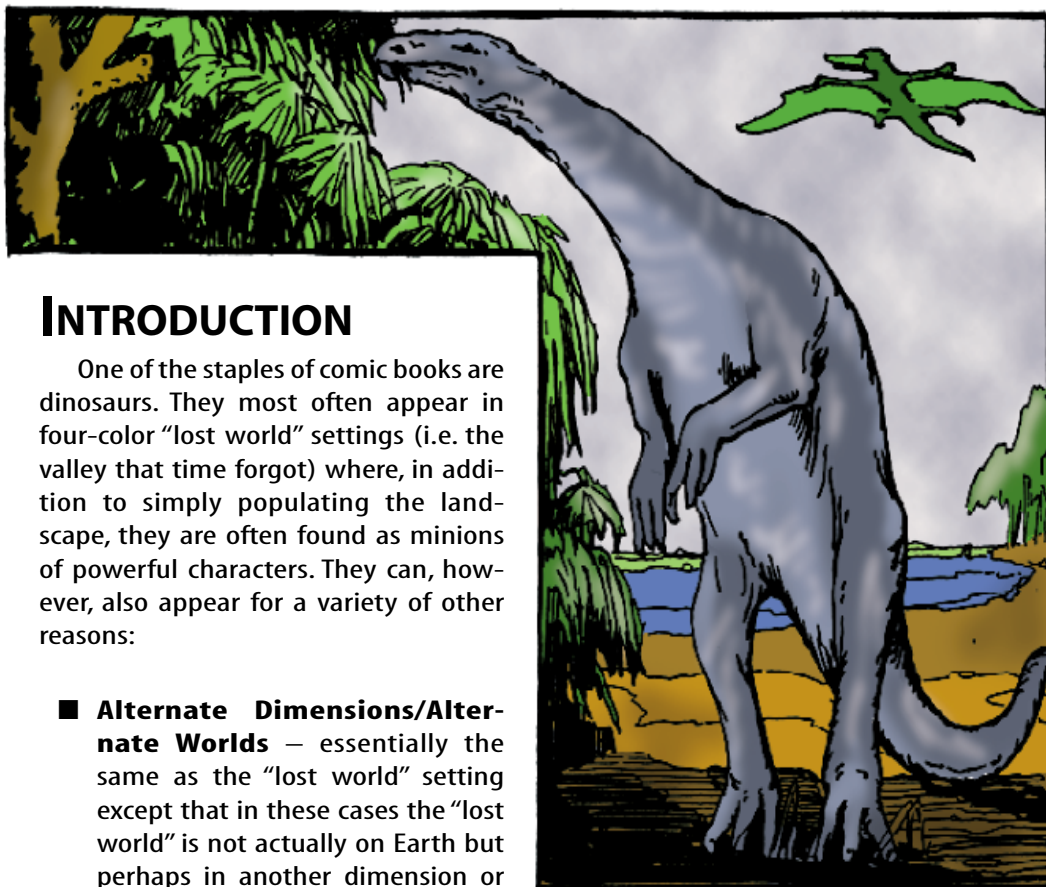
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DINOPEDIA

BY MICHAEL HAMMES



INTRODUCTION

One of the staples of comic books are dinosaurs. They most often appear in four-color “lost world” settings (i.e. the valley that time forgot) where, in addition to simply populating the landscape, they are often found as minions of powerful characters. They can, however, also appear for a variety of other reasons:

- **Alternate Dimensions/Alternate Worlds** – essentially the same as the “lost world” setting except that in these cases the “lost world” is not actually on Earth but perhaps in another dimension or on an alternate Earth where the dinosaurs never died.
 - **Powers** – a hero (or villain) with the Shapeshift power is able to transform into dinosaurs, another uses Animate Object on dinosaur skeletons at the museum (make them constructs), another can Summon them, another one makes robotic versions (constructs again); etc.
 - **Super Science** – a scientist recreates dinosaurs using the latest gene-splicing methods (we’ve probably all seen that movie).
 - **Time Travel** - the heroes travel back in time to the Mesozoic Era or a villain opens a portal in time that allows dinosaurs to come to the modern day.
 - **X-Trait** – a GM character with X-traits decides it would be fun to have the heroes fight dinosaurs.
- In any case, in this article we’ll be taking a look at some dinosaurs for your game. In addition to including the necessary stat blocks there is also some basic information included on dinosaurs to allow the GM to add a bit more “flavor” to a dinosaur encounter.

WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH

Dinosaurs lived during the Mesozoic Era (225 Million to 65 Million, give or take a few million, years ago). The Mesozoic Era is divided into three periods:

- Triassic (225 Million to 205 Million years ago)
- Jurassic (205 Million to 144 Million years ago)
- Cretaceous (144 Million to 65 Million ago)

These three periods are in turn often divided into two Lower (Early) and Upper (Late). This information is really only important if the GM wants to ensure some sort of historical continuity between the various dinosaurs (i.e. not mixing dinosaurs of the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods); it is really only appropriate for time travel adventures. By the way, most dinosaurs that we are familiar with lived in the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods.

DINOSAUR TRAITS

As animals, all dinosaurs have certain traits in common. These traits are based on the traits given to animals in the *M&M* rulebook; they have an

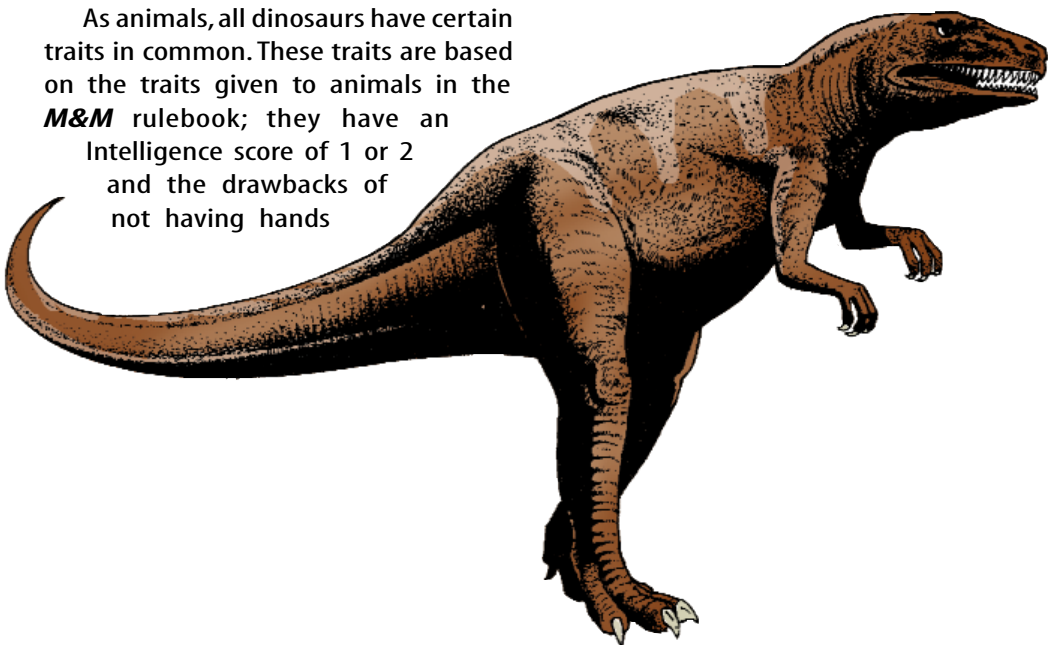
Intelligence score of 1 or 2 and the drawbacks of not having hands

and being mute. Furthermore, all of the dinosaurs' (and in fact animals') powers are both Innate and Permanent since they are natural traits of these creatures and not something that they have courtesy of mutation, super-science, psionic ability, etc.; you can't nullify or drain a tyrannosaurus rex's teeth for example.

DINOSAURS IN COMBAT

Dinosaurs are no tacticians. About the most advanced behavior one can attribute to them is that certain species (particularly the raptors) may have hunted in packs using tactics similar to modern-day pack animals (i.e. lions, wolves, etc.). Still, they are capable of more than simply attacking; the GM should consider the following actions as being appropriate for dinosaurs:

- **Aid** — appropriate for pack hunters (i.e. deinonychus, utahraptor, velociraptor) where individual animals may feint, flank, harry, and otherwise use numbers to their advantage.



- **Charge** — appropriate for the massive herbivores (i.e. ankylosaurus, brachiosaurus, stegosaurus, triceratops).
- **Move All Out** — that's right, many dinosaurs not only move faster than most people but they can also run.
- **Overrun** — same as a charge, but more defensive (i.e. when panicked).
- **Slam** — same as charge with more damage potential.

And don't forget that particularly large dinosaurs receive an area attack against most heroes. The standard for this is that the dinosaur must be at least three size categories larger than the target (at least gargantuan size against the standard medium-sized hero) and the resulting area attack fills the fighting space of an opponent three sizes smaller (a gargantuan dinosaur would have a 5 ft. area attack against medium opponents).

MORE ABOUT DINOSAURS

The information in this article covers what I consider to be the most familiar/popular dinosaur species (i.e. those most often seen in comic books, movies, etc.). Each dinosaur entry provides some basic "flavor" information on the dinosaur (i.e. size, weight, period, etc.) for the dinosaur. If you need additional information (i.e. additional dinosaur species, appearance and behavior details, etc.) you should consult one of the many excellent websites that cover the subject; you can use the dinosaurs in this article as a guide for creating others.

THE DINOSAURS

Again, the following list includes what I consider to be the most common and well-known dinosaurs. They

include, of course, the Tyrannosaurus Rex and Velociraptor, as well as several other familiar carnosaurs, since these are the dinosaurs most likely to attack heroes (and villains seem to prefer them). It also includes a number of familiar herbivores (or prey, if you will) such as Triceratops and Stegosaurus.

Allosaurus

Period: Late Jurassic

Description: Bipedal ("lizard-hipped") carnosaur with a bony red crest above each eye. It has a strong s-shaped neck, two sturdy legs, short arms, powerful tail, and a mouth filled with serrated (tearing) teeth from 2 to 4 inches in length.

Height: 17 feet

Length: 36 feet

Weight: 5,000 lbs.

Notes: Most common carnosaur found with more than 104 specimens discovered at two different sites in Wyoming/New Mexico and Utah alone.

Power Level: 10 (87 points)

Minion Level: 6

Abilities: Str +11 (32), Dex +2 (14), Con +6 (22), Int -4 (2), Wis +3 (16), Cha +0 (10)

Skills: Notice 8 (+11)

Feats: Improved Grab

Powers (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent): **Growth 8** (+10 ft. move); **Protection 6**; **Speed 1** (10 MPH); **Strike 1** (*Power Feats*: Mighty); **Super-Senses 4** (low-light vision, scent, track, ultra-hearing)

Combat: Attack +8 (size included), Grapple +27 (size included), Damage +12 (bite or claw), Defense +8 (size included), Knockback -6, Initiative +2

Saving Throws: Toughness +12, Fortitude +9, Reflex +8, Will +6

Drawbacks: Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

Totals: Abilities 12 + Skills 2 + Feats 1 + Powers 28 + Combat 40 + Saves 12 – Drawbacks 8 = 87

Brachiosaurus

Period: Late Jurassic

Description: Giant four-legged herbivorous dinosaur with a long neck and long tail.

Height: 50 feet (24 feet at the shoulder)

Length: 100 feet

Weight: 120,000 lbs.

Notes: One of the largest animals to ever walk on land, the Brachiosaurus had neck vertebra more than 3 feet long each. Although it was initially believed to have spent a large part of its life in water, recent studies have shown that Brachiosaurus could not have inhaled and inflated its lungs at depths of total submergence. It is believed that Brachiosaurus had no natural enemies due to its sheer size.

Power Level: 11 (81 points)

Minion Level: 6

Abilities: Str +17 (44), Dex -1 (8), Con +10 (30), Int -5 (1), Wis +2 (14), Cha +0 (10)

Skills: Notice 4 (+6)

Powers (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent): **Growth 14** (+15 ft. move); **Protection 8**; **Super-Senses 3** (low-light vision, scent, ultra-hearing)

Combat: Attack +5 (size included), Grapple +34 (size included), Damage +17 (unarmed), Defense +4 (size included), Knockback -9, Initiative -1

Saving Throws: Toughness +18, Fortitude +16, Reflex +2, Will +5

Drawbacks: Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

Totals: Abilities 5 + Skills 1 + Feats 0 + Powers 37 + Combat 34 + Saves 12 – Drawbacks 8 = 81

Deinonychus

Period: Early Cretaceous

Description: Larger relative of the Velociraptor with almost the same physical characteristics.

Height: 6 feet

Length: 10 feet

Weight: 175 lbs.

Notes: Although called Velociraptors in the most famous of recent dinosaur movies, the raptors in that movie are actually closer to Deinonychus. Since five individuals were found together it is theorized that Deinonychus was a pack hunter.

Power Level: 6 (68 points)

Minion Level: 5

Abilities: Str +3 (16), Dex +4 (18), Con +2 (14), Int -4 (2), Wis +3 (16), Cha +0 (10)

Skills: Notice 8 (+11), Stealth 4 (+8)

Feats: Improved Grab, Improved Initiative

Powers (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent): **Leaping 1** (x2); **Protection 2**; **Speed 1** (10 MPH); **Strike 1** (*Power Feats*: Mighty); **Super-Senses 4** (low-light vision, scent, track, ultra-hearing)

Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +11, Damage +4 (bite or claw), Defense +8, Knockback -2, Initiative +8

Saving Throws: Toughness +4, Fortitude +5, Reflex +10, Will +6

Drawbacks: Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

Totals: Abilities 16 + Skills 3 + Feats 2 + Powers 11 + Combat 32 + Saves 12 – Drawbacks 8 = 68

Stegosaurus

Period: Late Jurassic

Description: Quadrupedal herbivorous dinosaur whose most prominent features were two sets of bony plates that ran in parallel down the back and its spiked tail.

Height: 14 feet

Length: 28 feet

Weight: 12,000 lbs.

Notes: Only plated dinosaur ever found in western North America. Stegosaurus' plates are thought to have served in controlling its internal temperature and to deter predators by making the dinosaur look larger.

The following statistics also work for Ankylosaurus. Ankylosaurus lived in the Late Cretaceous and had a tough skin covered with bony plates along with a clubbed tail. Its dimensions are: Height - 11 feet, Length - 35 feet, Weight - 10,000 lbs.

Power Level: 9 (69 points)

Minion Level: 5

Abilities: Str +11 (32), Dex +0 (10), Con +7 (24), Int -5 (1), Wis +2 (14), Cha +0 (10)

Skills: Notice 12 (+14)

Powers (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent): **Growth 8** (+10 ft. move); **Protection 7**; **Strike 1** (*Power Feats*: Mighty); **Super-Senses 3** (low-light vision, scent, ultra-hearing)

Combat: Attack +6 (size included), Grapple +25 (size included), Damage +12 (tail), Defense +4 (size included), Knockback -7, Initiative +0

Saving Throws: Toughness +14, Fortitude +13, Reflex +3, Will +5

Drawbacks: Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

Totals: Abilities 7 + Skills 3 + Feats 0 + Powers 27 + Combat 28 + Saves 12 - Drawbacks 8 = 69

Triceratops

Period: Late Cretaceous

Description: Rhinoceros-like four-legged dinosaur. Its most notable features are a large bony plate that projects from the back of its skull, called a frill, and the three horns on its skull (one on

the nose the other two above its eyes).

Height: 10 feet

Length: 30 feet

Weight: 14,000 lbs.

Notes: Probably the most recognized dinosaur after Tyrannosaurus Rex, Triceratops is also thought to have been T. Rex's prey. As a healthy Triceratops would appear to be an even match for an adult T. Rex so T. Rex most likely hunted the young and old (like a modern predator does). It was an herbivore and most likely a herd animal.

Power Level: 10 (77 points)

Minion Level: 6

Abilities: Str +13 (36), Dex +0 (10), Con +9 (28), Int -5 (1), Wis +2 (14), Cha +0 (10)

Skills: Notice 12 (+14)

Powers (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent): **Growth 8** (+10 ft. move); **Protection 7**; **Strike 1** (*Power Feats*: Mighty); **Super-Senses 3** (low-light vision, scent, ultra-hearing)

Combat: Attack +6 (size included), Grapple +25 (size included), Damage +14 (gore), Defense +4 (size included), Knockback -8, Initiative +0

Saving Throws: Toughness +16, Fortitude +15, Reflex +3, Will +5

Drawbacks: Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

Totals: Abilities 15 + Skills 3 + Feats 0 + Powers 27 + Combat 28 + Saves 12 - Drawbacks 8 = 77

Tyrannosaurus Rex

Period: Late Cretaceous

Description: Bipedal ("lizard-hipped") carnosaur with a bony red crest above each eye. It has a massive neck, two sturdy legs, stumpy arms, powerful tail, and a mouth filled with puncturing teeth up to 7 inches in length.

Height: 23 feet

Length: 50 feet

Weight: 16,000 lbs.

Notes: The most famous of all the dinosaurs, Tyrannosaurus Rex has been featured in more movies than any other single dinosaur. Strangely enough, actual fossil finds are rare with only 30 specimens being found worldwide so far (compare that to Allosaurus). Scientists still argue over whether T. Rex was a predator or a scavenger and whether it could actually run. For purposes of superhero gaming, I believe the faster and more aggressive the better, so the statistics assume that T. Rex was a runner.

Power Level: 11 (93 points)

Minion Level: 7

Abilities: Str +13 (36), Dex +2 (14), Con +7 (24), Int -4 (2), Wis +3 (16), Cha +0 (10)

Skills: Notice 8 (+11)

Feats: Improved Grab, Improved Initiative

Powers (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent): **Growth 10** (+10 ft. move); **Protection 7**; **Speed 1** (10 MPH); **Strike 1** (*Power Feats*: Mighty); **Super-Senses 4** (low-light vision, scent, track, ultra-hearing)

Combat: Attack +8 (size included), Grapple +29 (size included), Damage +14 (bite or claw), Defense +8 (size included), Knockback -7, Initiative +6

Saving Throws: Toughness +14, Fortitude +10, Reflex +8, Will +6

Drawbacks: Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

Totals: Abilities 12 + Skills 2 + Feats 2 + Powers 33 + Combat 40 + Saves 12 – Drawbacks 8 = 93

Utahraptor

Period: Early Cretaceous

Description: Largest relative of the Velociraptor with essentially the same physical characteristics.

Height: 10 feet

Length: 20 feet

Weight: 1,500 lbs.

Notes: 15-inch claw; 'nuff said.

Power Level: 8 (80 points)

Minion Level: 6

Abilities: Str +7 (24), Dex +3 (16), Con +4 (18), Int -4 (2), Wis +3 (16), Cha +0 (10)

Skills: Notice 8 (+11), Stealth 4 (+3 size included)

Feats: Improved Grab, Improved Initiative

Powers (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent): **Growth 4** (+5 ft. move); **Leaping 1** (x2); **Protection 4**; **Speed 1** (10 MPH); **Strike 1** (*Power Feats*: Mighty); **Super-Senses 4** (low-light vision, scent, track, ultra-hearing)

Combat: Attack +8 (size included), Grapple +15 (size included), Damage +8 (bite or claw), Defense +8 (size included), Knockback -4, Initiative +7

Saving Throws: Toughness +8, Fortitude +7, Reflex +9, Will +6

Drawbacks: Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

Totals: Abilities 14 + Skills 3 + Feats 2 + Powers 21 + Combat 36 + Saves 12 – Drawbacks 8 = 80

Velociraptor

Period: Late Cretaceous

Description: Small, agile, and slender bipedal dinosaur with a long, stiff tail. It has a strong jaw with rows of bladed teeth and large claws on its forelimbs. Its most famous feature is a long, sickle-shaped talon on the second toe.

Height: 3 feet

Length: 6 feet

Weight: 45 lbs.

Notes: Current research suggests that Velociraptor used its claw either for precision killing or for hanging on to larger prey rather than disemboweling

(as a certain movie suggests). As an ancestor of birds, Velociraptor is thought to have been warm-blooded and had feathers. Whether it hunted in packs (as a popular notion goes) or not is still up for debate since, unlike Deinonychus, no groups of Velociraptors have yet been found. Since I believe that when facing heroes more Velociraptors is definitely better, I would make it a pack hunter.

Power Level: 4 (60 points)

Minion Level: 4

Abilities: Str +1 (12), Dex +5 (20), Con +1 (12), Int -4 (2), Wis +3 (16), Cha +0 (10)

Skills: Notice 12 (+15), Stealth 4 (+13 size included)

Feats: Improved Grab, Improved Initiative

Powers (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent): **Leaping 1** (x2); **Shrinking 4**; **Speed 1** (10 MPH); **Strike 1** (*Power Feats*: Mighty); **Super-Senses 5** (extended vision, low-light vision, scent, track, ultra-hearing)

Combat: Attack +6 (size included), Grapple +3 (size included), Damage +2 (bite or claw), Defense +7 (size included), Knockback -0, Initiative +9

Saving Throws: Toughness +1, Fortitude +4, Reflex +11, Will +6

Drawbacks: Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

Totals: Abilities 16 + Skills 4 + Feats 2 + Powers 12 + Combat 22 + Saves 12 – Drawbacks 8 = 60

THE PLESIOSAURS

Plesiosaurus is a genus of predatory marine reptiles (not dinosaurs) that are also familiar; the most famous representative of the species is supposed to be the Loch Ness monster. Plesiosaurs actually encompassed a number of species ranging in length from 10 to 60 feet.

Rather than listing each one separately, I've chosen to create a "basic" Plesiosaur of Huge size. To build one of larger or smaller size:

- Add/remove ranks of Growth to get the desired size.
- Reduce/increase Dexterity by 2 for every increase/reduction in size category.
- Add/Subtract 2 power levels for every increase/decrease in size category.
- Add/Subtract 2 points of Protection for every increase/decrease in size.

Elasmosaurus

Era: Late Cretaceous

Description: Marine reptile with a small, short head, a long snakelike neck, solid body, short tail, and four paddlelike legs.

Height: 15 feet

Length: 46 feet

Weight: 20,000 lbs.

Notes: To confuse the issue there is another kind of marine reptile sometimes called a Plesiosaur. These had a body like the Plesiosaur but instead of a long neck/small head they had massive heads and short necks; a good example of the kind is Kronosaurus, which lived in the Early Cretaceous. It was 30 feet long and had a head of 9 feet in length. The statistics below will suffice for either version. Both types had to breathe air like whales and were capable of moving on land much like a turtle (and probably at the same pace).

Power Level: 10 (86 points)

Minion Level: 6

Abilities: Str +11 (32), Dex +2 (14), Con +6 (22), Int -4 (2), Wis +3 (16), Cha +0 (10)

Skills: Notice 8 (+11)

Feats: Environmental Adaption (water)

Powers (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent): **Growth 8** (+10 ft. move); **Protection 4**; **Swimming 1** (2.5 MPH); **Strike 1** (*Power Feats*: Mighty); **Super-Senses 1** (low-light vision)

Combat: Attack +8 (size included), Grapple +27 (size included), Damage +12 (bite), Defense +8 (size included), Knockback -3, Initiative +6

Saving Throws: Toughness +10, Fortitude +12, Reflex +5, Will +6

Drawbacks: Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

Totals: Abilities 12 + Skills 3 + Feats 1 + Powers 26 + Combat 40 + Saves 12 – Drawbacks 8 = 86

THE PTEROSAURS

Although most people are familiar with the Pterodactyl, the truth is that “Pterodactyl” does not refer to a single type of dinosaur (in fact, Pterodactyls, although closely related, are not dinosaurs at all) but rather to an entire order, that of the Pterosaurs, which existed throughout the Mesozoic era.

Pterosaurs, of which there are at least 60 genera, ranged in size from that of a sparrow to Quetzalcoathus with a wingspan of more than 40 feet. They also include Pteranodon with its 25-foot wingspan. Rather than listing each one separately, I’ve chosen to create a “basic” Pterosaur of Medium size. To build one of larger or smaller size:

- Add ranks of Growth or Shrinking to get the desired size.
- Reduce/increase Dexterity by 2 for every increase/reduction in size category.
- Add/Subtract 2 power levels for every increase/decrease in size category.

One thing to keep in mind is that, although they can be quite large, Pterosaurs do not weigh much. In fact, it is believed that Pteranodon weighed only about 55 pounds.

Pteranodon

Period: Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous

Description: A large, leather-winged flying reptile with a very long beak and a crest on its head.

Height: 6 feet

Wingspan: 25 feet

Weight: 55 lbs.

Notes: Although it was thought at first that Pteranodons could only glide, it is generally agreed that they were able to fly (although how fast and maneuverable they actually were is still anyone’s guess). Pteranodons were fish eaters, hunting much like pelicans.

Power Level: 5 (59 points)

Minion Level: 4

Abilities: Str +2 (14), Dex +4 (18), Con +2 (14), Int -4 (2), Wis +3 (16), Cha +0 (10)

Skills: Notice 12 (+15)

Powers (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent): **Flight 2** (25 MPH); **Strike 1** (*Power Feats*: Mighty); **Super-Senses 3** (extended vision, low-light vision, ultra-hearing)

Combat: Attack +7, Grapple +9, Damage +3 (beak or claws), Defense +8, Knockback -1, Initiative +4

Saving Throws: Toughness +2, Fortitude +5, Reflex +10, Will +6

Drawbacks: Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

Totals: Abilities 14 + Skills 3 + Feats 0 + Powers 8 + Combat 30 + Saves 12 – Drawbacks 8 = 59

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ONE PERSON'S TRASH . . .

BY MICHAEL HAMMES

SUMMARY

It's always bad when supervillains team up, and this time is no exception. Two of the heroes' former foes have been put together on a mission. Fortunately for the heroes, that mission is not to eliminate them. Of course, if that were the mission then things would probably be a whole lot simpler . . .

Before You Begin

This adventure ties in elements from three previous **Superline** adventures: "Cold Front" from **Superline #1**, "Triple Threat" from **Superline #2**, and "Eye Robot" from **Superline #3**. It is very helpful for the overall atmosphere of this adventure if the GM has run all three of these adventures prior to running this one.

BACKGROUND

After the defeat of Doc Mechano's Eye Robot by the heroes, in accord with its jurisdiction the city took possession of the wreckage as usual. Not 24 hours after the city took possession of the wreckage and transported it to their impound yard the Patriot Squad challenged the city's jurisdiction. As basis for its challenge the FSEA cited extensive damage done to a federal building as proof that it had at least shared jurisdiction over the wreckage. Naturally the city, not wishing to cede complete jurisdiction, fought back. The FSEA in turn then demanded complete

jurisdiction based on Doc Mechano's previous criminal history as a supplier to various national and international syndicates. The case is currently in state court.

SET-UP

It is noon on a perfectly fine day and the heroes are doing whatever it is that they do when they have some time off. Suddenly the police band erupts with reports that a squad of armored goons shooting blasts of ice is tearing through the downtown banking district, robbing banks and destroying everything they can.

As the anxious voices of the policemen on the scene testify, the officers are completely overmatched. Although additional units including SWAT have been dispatched, the goons' rampage along with the fact that it is the lunch hour means that there is total gridlock in and out of the area; for the time being the officers on scene are effectively on their own.

Unless the GM has a specific reason not to, he or she should further emphasize the urgency of the situation by having a local news team or traffic helicopter broadcasting the chaos live from the area (the team/helicopter just happened to be in the area when things went pear-shaped).

Between the reports of ice-blasting armored goons and the live pictures of the armor (which looks awfully familiar) the heroes should have no trouble picking up on the fact that they've fought these guys (or at least these suits) before; Arctic Blast, or at least some of his suits, is obviously in town.

ADVENTURE

The adventure begins when the heroes arrive on the scene to deal with the armored goons. As the heroes arrive the armored goons have taken up positions inside a bank and are covering the street, which has been cordoned off by the police officers on the scene, with their cold beams.

Failure Is Built In

This adventure is designed for the heroes to **fail**. That is, Arctic Blast is in fact expected to complete his mission to further an ongoing storyline. While the adventure has been written so that the heroes should have almost no way of actually defeating Arctic Blast, the fact is that heroes have such wide capabilities and are capable of such surprising actions that they may actually be able to defeat him. The GM should not allow this, using GM fiat as necessary to ensure that Arctic Blast makes good his escape.

However, unlike in “Cold Front”, this time the individuals wearing Arctic Blast’s battlesuits aren’t a gang of petty criminals out for the battlesuit equivalent of a joy ride.

Instead, although the goons are making a show of robbing banks, that’s not their primary objective; their mission is to cause as much mayhem and destruction as possible in order to draw the heroes to the scene. Why? Because the goons are nothing more than a decoy for the real heist that will begin across town in the police impound yard the moment that the heroes become involved with the goons.

Even the destruction they are causing is only half-hearted. Instead of blasting away with abandon, as one might expect of a group of power-hungry thugs, the armored goons are keeping a careful watch out for the heroes, focus-

ing their blasts more on panicking people and keeping the police at bay than causing actual destruction (something that a clever hero may notice with a successful Intelligence or Knowledge (tactics) check (DC 15) if they observe the goons’ actions for a moment or two).

In fact, although the heroes are not likely to find this out until afterwards, the goons haven’t actually seriously hurt anyone; the most harmful thing they’ve done is partially freeze people in place (focusing on the lower bodies) and cause property damage.

Dealing With The Goons

Having drawn the heroes to the scene, the armored goons’ job is to keep the heroes occupied for as long as possible; if the heroes are expecting a fight they are in for a surprise. The moment the goons spot the heroes they pull a classic bank robber move: they grab hostages, threatening to turn them into icicles if the heroes attack. Of course this is merely a stalling tactic; the goons figure that this is the best way to buy time. The GM will have to play any hostage negotiations and attempts by the heroes to rescue the hostages by ear.

If asked their demands, the goons will demand \$10 million in gold bullion and safe passage in an armored truck; these demands are nonnegotiable. Any heroes following or involved in the negotiations can attempt an Intelligence or Knowledge (behavioral sciences) check (DC 15 or spend a hero point for inspiration) to realize that the goons aren’t seriously negotiating but rather stalling for some reason.

The goons really don’t want to hurt the hostages, for two reasons. The first is that they know they are likely to be caught and want to make their eventual prison sentences as light as possible. The second is that if they start hurting hostages, the heroes may decide to make a move rather than risk more hostages being hurt.

Although the goons are trying to avoid it, should it come to a fight against the heroes the goons continue to use stalling tactics. They focus on drawing the fight out, minimizing the actual damage they take, and getting away if possible. Even if they have a clear chance to “off” a hero the goons won’t take it. Again, they want their probable sentences to be as light as possible and they certainly don’t want vengeful heroes after them. Their tactics include:

■ **Using cover whenever possible.**

The thick bank walls (hardness 10) they are currently using for cover provide improved cover (+8 to Defense and Reflex saves) and there are plenty of other opportunities for cover or improved cover all around the area (i.e. desks, cars, mailboxes, other buildings, etc.).

■ **Use Total Defense.** When engaged in melee with the heroes (especially with paragon, powerhouse, bulk, or other powerful archetypes) the goons don’t even try to fight, but rather cover up to the best of their ability while trying to get away.

■ **Retreating.** The goons have no intention of holding any real estate. The moment that the heroes enter the bank, the goons try to get out and run for it, each one for himself. Since the heroes don’t know who is actually in the battlesuits, if they have the chance the goons will get out of them somewhere where they aren’t likely to be observed and blend into the crowd.

■ **Surrender.** While motivated and relatively confident as long as they aren’t taking too much damage, the goons are not interested in risking their lives. If things go too badly, the goons will gladly surrender. If nothing else, having to take them to jail will cost the heroes more time.

Should the heroes defeat and/or capture the goons, the goons will be tight-lipped; they know their rights (i.e. “I want my lawyer”) and won’t say anything. Of course, if the heroes press the issue the goons will talk rather than take a beating (or worse). They can reveal the following:

- Their mission was to keep the heroes occupied for as long as possible; they don’t know the reason why.
- Each of them has been paid a lot of money (\$500,000 or whatever else the GM thinks is appropriate) for the job and the jail time that would most likely come with it; half the money has already been paid with the other half to follow later today.
- They don’t know the identity of their employer.
- They don’t know who manufactured the armor, but if they can escape then the armor is theirs to keep.
- If the heroes ask the goons have heard of Arctic Blast only through news reports; they have never met him.
- They are all from different cities, were made the offer separately, and didn’t know each other before this mission.
- They were brought blindfolded to a location somewhere in the woods where they trained with the suits for a month.
- For their mission they were transported blindfolded in a truck until they suited up in the back of the truck just before the mission start.

Asking the goons anything else is a dead-end:

The Real Heist

While the battlesuits that the goons are wearing certainly suggests that Arctic Blast is involved in some way, the

supervillain is nowhere to be seen, a fact that should not escape the heroes. So, where is he?

At the time the armored goons are starting their assault on the downtown banking district Arctic Blast is in the back of a cargo van ready to make his move along with the rest of his heist team.

As soon as he gets the word that the heroes have arrived downtown (either from a minion with a cell phone he has stationed in the area or from monitoring the police and radio bands), Arctic Blast gives the go-ahead.

Three minion drivers in three identical vans pull up to the local police impound yard's office. The back and side doors open and rushing out from one van comes Arctic Blast and one Mr. Brown duplicate while two more Mr. Brown duplicates emerge from the other two vans.

As the three Mr. Brown duplicates use their mental blasts to knock out the policemen and people looking to get their vehicles released (to keep them from calling for help), Arctic Blast goes to secure the team's goal: the wreckage of Doc Mechano's Eye Robot.

Since its defeat by the heroes the wreckage has been kept in the secure storage warehouse of the impound yard. Arctic Blast has little trouble dealing with the warehouse and its guards, using his cold beam to disable the guards and to blast his way through the doors. Once he has located the Eye Robot he pulls out its burned-out CPU and rushes back to the van. He leaves the impound yard while the three Mr. Brown duplicates remain behind to deal with the heroes, which they expect to arrive very shortly.

As Arctic Blast's van heads up the street two more vans, identical to the one holding Arctic Blast, briefly fall in behind before all the three vans head in different directions. From beginning to end the entire operation has taken less than 10 minutes.

Another Emergency Calls!

At some point while the heroes are engaged with the armored goons downtown they'll get wind of the fact that there's an attack on the police impound yard. How? Despite his best efforts, someone is going to report Arctic Blast & company's assault on the yard. It could be an employee returning from lunch, a customer just arriving at the yard, an individual that was overlooked in the quick assault (i.e. was in the bathroom), or even someone driving by. In any case, the call is made to 911 and that, of course, is relayed through the police band.

Unfortunately, since most of the police's resources are already tied up with the downtown situation and the fact that there's just no traffic moving in or out of the area means that it is up to the heroes to investigate the situation.

The GM should not provide the heroes with any further details on what is going on at the impound yard beyond the fact that it is under assault by a supervillain using ice. It should be obvious to the heroes that this is Arctic Blast himself. But, unless they've already dealt with his armored goons and/or the hostage crisis in the bank, that leaves them in a quandary:

- Do they all go after Arctic Blast and leave the situation downtown unresolved?
- Do they split their forces, with some going after the supervillain and the others remaining to help the police?
- Do they ignore Arctic Blast and deal with the situation downtown first?

The choice should, of course, be entirely up to the heroes. However, the GM might want to remind the heroes that having them all leave the scene of an existing crisis will probably be quite unpopular with those on the scene (this sentiment can be voiced through the on-scene police commander).

The Impound Yard

It is entirely up to the GM as to when the heroes arrive vis-à-vis the progress of Arctic Blast's mission. They could arrive once Arctic Blast has already left the impound yard since that allows him to get a head start on his getaway (the message about the assault being sent

too late to prevent the heroes from arriving earlier). In such a case the heroes are unlikely to even encounter Arctic Blast, but they'll still get to battle it out with the Mr. Brown duplicates. Of course, if the GM wants to spice things up a bit, the heroes could arrive just as Arctic Blast is preparing to make his getaway.

VILLAIN TACTICS

The Mr. Brown duplicates have one job: to ensure that Arctic Blast gets away with the Eye Robot's CPU; once they've dealt with the police and customers at the yard, they get themselves ready to meet the inevitably arriving heroes.

Since the Mr. Browns are merely duplicates, they do not care about getting away themselves nor will they surrender; they'll fight to the death or unconsciousness at which point they'll disappear (Mr. Brown, who is of course far away from the heroes' city, cancels them).

The duplicates are likely to gain surprise on any arriving heroes. In the first instance because the heroes will be looking for Arctic Blast and in the second because the duplicates will be hiding.

The duplicates' tactics are simple: hide behind cover (both to stay hidden and to not have to split their psionic energy between their Force Field and Mental Blast) and bombard the heroes with their Mental Blast.

The GM should remember that the duplicates' can automatically hit any hero that they can perceive with their Mental Blast power and that only the target of the Mental Blast can get a sense of where the duplicates are (although heroes that are not targets may still make a Notice check to spot them).

As for Arctic Blast, his sole job is to get away with the CPU. Much like in the "Cold Front" adventure he has no interest in actually getting into a fight with the heroes; he'll use his Create Object and Snare alternate powers to hinder pursuing heroes long enough to complete his getaway; he does not attempt to finish off any heroes that he's immobilized. Some of his tactics include:

- Encasing a hero in ice (Snare) or, if the hero is hard to hit, entrapping them in a hollow sphere (Create Object).
- Blocking a road or tunnel with an ice wall to prevent pursuit by land vehicle (Create Object).
- Freezing the engines of a flying vehicle (Snare) to drop it from the sky.
- Creating a patch of ice on an open road (Create Object) to cause land vehicles and running heroes to slide and fall (and possibly crash).

Arctic Blast's ice objects have a Toughness of 12 and can occupy up to twelve 5-foot-cubes; Arctic Blast's objects remain until they melt away.

The GM should recall that the goal of the adventure is to allow Arctic Blast to make his getaway. As a result, if the GM does let the heroes do battle with Arctic Blast, the GM should make it as exciting as possible but allow the supervillain to escape the heroes with the CPU (using GM fiat if necessary).

The Shell Game

Once underway in the van Arctic Blast has a few more tricks up his sleeve. Not only does he have two “decoy” vans going in different directions, but the vans have been made to look like vans belonging to “Ace Electrical Services”, the city’s largest electrical contractor with a fleet of 27 identical-looking cargo vans roaming the city’s streets at all hours of the day.

As a result, once Arctic Blast has made his getaway from the impound yard, even if the heroes have a description of the van (perhaps from the same individual that called 911), locating him will be like trying to find a needle in a haystack. Of course, rather than ending the adventure at this point by stating that the villain gets away, the GM may want to let the search play out a bit and allow the heroes to stop a van or two (always the wrong one) before they realize that Arctic Blast is truly gone.

In addition the driver of Arctic Blast’s van will be switching the appearance of the van’s exterior the moment that he is out of sight. Pulling into a nearby abandoned garage the driver pulls off the signs for “Ace Electrical Services” and replaces them with signage for “Joe’s Plumbing”, the city’s largest plumbing contractor whose fleet of 24 identical vans also roam all over the city.

Should the heroes arrive before Arctic Blast has left the yard and somehow think of some way of keeping track of his van (i.e. tracer bug), the supervillain’s getaway plan simply includes switching vehicles (i.e. from the van to a moving truck) at some opportune moment so that when the heroes do finally catch up to the tracked van, Arctic Blast is nowhere to be seen.

If despite all these precautions the heroes nevertheless find the van with Arctic Blast then they can battle it out

with him but the supervillain will still get away with the CPU in some manner.

Follow-Up: What exactly the long-term result of Arctic Blast getting away with the CPU is will be addressed in an upcoming adventure. In the short term it should leave the heroes asking some questions:

- Why did Arctic Blast want a burnt-out CPU from a forty-year old robot?
- Why was Mr. Brown working with Arctic Blast?
- Who planned and financed this whole operation?

Naturally, there won’t be any answers forthcoming (at least not until later adventures). The armored goons and any other captured minions don’t know anything beyond their small part of the venture and the Mr. Brown duplicates can’t be captured.

While that’s pretty much the end of it, there may also be some negative repercussions if the heroes abandoned the hostages wholesale to go and chase after Arctic Blast. Such an action will not sit well with those on the scene (especially the hostages and the police) and will tarnish the heroes’ reputation.

Finally, a couple of days after the adventure, the Patriot Squad’s Coordination Division will offer the assistance of a squad of Volunteers to the city. The city refuses.

Rewards: Throughout the adventure the heroes should be awarded hero points according to the guidelines given in the main rulebook.

The heroes will be each awarded 1 power point for their participation in the adventure and 2 power points if the GM had to use GM fiat to allow Arctic Blast to escape.

SUPPORTING CAST

Armored Goons

These individuals are all hardened street criminals; they've all been in jail and aren't afraid to go back. They have taken this mission because the money is good even with the time they'll do; some even believe that the money will help them go straight.

Power Level: 6 (65 points)

Minion Rank: 5

Abilities: Str +1 (12), Dex +1 (13), Con +1 (12), Int +0 (10), Wis +0 (10), Cha +2 (15)

Skills: Bluff 4 (+6), Climb 4 (+5), Drive 2 (+3), Intimidate 4 (+6), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+4), Knowledge (streetwise) 6 (+6)

Powers: **Device 7** (battlesuit, hard to lose) *Battlesuit::* **Blast 8** (cold beam); **Immunity 9** (life support); **Protection 8**

Combat: Attack +4, Grapple +5, Damage +1 (unarmed), +8 (cold beam), Defense +3, Knockback -4, Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +9 (+1 out of armor), Fortitude +5, Reflex +4, Will +2

Drawbacks: Normal Identity (full round, -4 points)

Totals: Abilities 12 + Skills 6 + Feats 0 + Powers 28 + Combat 14 + Saves 9 - Drawbacks 4 = 65

Drivers (and other minions)

These individuals are your typical low-level tough-guys. They're fairly motivated to put up a fight as long as the supervillain(s) are present, but they really don't want anything to do with the heroes on their own.

Power Level: 2 (27 points)

Abilities: Str +2 (14), Dex +1 (12), Con +2 (15), Int +0 (10), Wis +0 (10), Cha -1 (8)

Skills: Craft (mechanical) 4 (+4), Drive 4 (+5), Intimidate 4 (+3), Knowledge (popular culture) 2 (+2), Knowledge (streetwise) 4 (+4), Profession 4 (+4), Swim 2 (+4)

Feats: Equipment 2

Equipment: Leather jacket (**Protection 1**), pistol (**Blast 3**), cell phone.

Combat: Attack +2, Grapple +4, Damage +2 (punch), +3 (pistol), Defense +2, Knockback -1, Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +2 (+1 without jacket), Fortitude +4, Reflex +1, Will +0

Totals: Abilities 9 + Skills 6 + Feats 2 + Powers 0 + Combat 8 + Saves 2 = 27

Mr. Brown Duplicates

The three Mr. Brown duplicates are heroic minions; they are not subject to the minion rules. As they are not "real" living beings, they have no problem making what-

WHAT'S THIS DO?

At the GM's option, as a plot device the armored goons' battlesuits have a self-destruct mechanism that Arctic Blast triggers shortly after beginning his getaway. This mechanism shorts out the suits' electronics, melting them into a useless mess and obscuring key elements of their technology; it does not harm the wearer or anyone examining the suit (although it will probably scare them).

ever sacrifice is necessary to accomplish the mission; they will always work toward the greater good, i.e. the original Mr. Brown's goals. As duplicates, the original can cancel them at any time. Thanks to his mental link with his duplicates, Mr. Brown always knows what they know.

Power Level: 9 (135 points)

Abilities: Str +0 (10), Dex +0 (10), Con +0 (10), Int +5 (20), Wis +9 (28), Cha +0 (10)

Skills: Computers 12 (+17), Craft (electronic) 8 (+13), Knowledge (technology) 8 (+13), Notice 8 (+17), Pilot 4 (+4), Sense Motive 4 (+13)

Feats: Assessment, Eidetic Memory, Improved Initiative 2, Master Plan, Second Chance (mind control)

Powers

Mental Blast 9 (dynamic)

Alternate Powers – mental blast

Force Field 9 (dynamic; *Extras:* Linked **Immunity 19** [life support, mental effects])

Super-Senses 8 (blindsight, mental awareness [accurate, extended, radius])

Combat: Attack +5, Grapple +5, Damage +0 (unarmed), +9 (mental blast), Defense +9, Knockback -4, Initiative +8

Saving Throws: Toughness +9 (+0 without force field), Fortitude +4, Reflex +6, Will +14

Totals: Abilities 28 + Skills 11 + Feats 6 + Powers 47 + Combat 28 + Saves 15 = 135

ARCTIC BLAST

Quote: "Chill, hero."

First Appearance: Superline #1.

Since the heroes battled Dr. Sidirem he has made a few upgrades to his battlesuit that he can't wait to try out:

- He has installed a biometric security system that ensures only he can use the battlesuit.
- He has replaced the original armor with an advanced alloy.
- He has added servomotors for increased strength.
- He has added a compound to the bottom of his suit's soles that prevent him from slipping on the ice he creates.

Power Level: 12 (205 points)

Abilities: Str +0 (10), Dex +3 (16), Con +1 (12), Int +10 (30), Wis +2 (14), Cha +1 (12)

Skills: Computers 12 (+22), Craft (electronic) 12 (+22), Craft 12 (mechanical) (+22), Drive 4 (+7), Disable Device 12 (+22), Knowledge (technology) 12 (+22), Knowledge (physical sciences) 12 (+22)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Assessment, Attack Focus (ranged), Inventor, Master Plan, Precise Shot

Powers:

Device 20 (battlesuit, hard to lose; *Power Feats*: Restricted – Dr. Siddirem only)

Battlesuit:

Blast 12 (cold beam; *Extras*: Autofire; *Power Feats*: Ricochet)

Alternate Powers – cold beam

Create Object 12 (ice shapes; *Extras*: Duration 1 [continuous], *Power Feats*: Innate)

Snare 12

Immovable 2

Immunity 9 (life support)

Protection 12 (*Extras*: Impervious)

Super-Senses 13 (blindsight [radio, extended, radius], darkvision, direction sense, distance sense, infravision, radio, time sense)

Super-Strength 5 (*Heavy Load*: 1.5 tons)

Super-Movement 2 (sure-footed; *Flaws*: Limited - icy surfaces only)

Combat: Attack +12 melee, +13 (ranged), Grapple +17, Damage +0 (unarmed), +12 (cold beam), Defense +12, Knockback –12, Initiative +3

Saving Throws: Toughness +13 (+1 out of armor), Fortitude +6, Reflex +8, Will +12

Drawbacks: Normal Identity (full round, –4 points)

Totals: Abilities 34 + Skills 19 + Feats 6 + Powers 82 + Combat 48 + Saves 20 – Drawbacks 4 = 205

MR. BROWN

Quote: “Brown. Mister Brown.”

First Appearance: Superline #2.

Since the last time the heroes encountered Mr. Brown (or at least his duplicates), the alien has also become more capable:

- His has found a way to keep his duplicates’ molecular structure fully stable in Earth’s environment.
- He can maintain his force field while firing his mental blasts and vice-versa rather than having to switch between them as before. However, when doing so he must divide his psionic energies between them and cannot use either to maximum effect.

Power Level: 12 (181 points)

Abilities: Str +0 (10), Dex +0 (10), Con +0 (10), Int +5 (20), Wis +9 (28), Cha +0 (10)

Skills: Computers 12 (+17), Craft (electronic) 8 (+13), Knowledge (technology) 8 (+13), Notice 8 (+17), Pilot 4 (+4), Sense Motive 4 (+13)

Feats: Assessment, Eidetic Memory, Improved Initiative 2, Master Plan, Second Chance (mind control)

Powers

Duplication 12 (*Power Feats*: Innate, Mental Link, Progression 3 [up to 5 duplicates]; *Extras*: Heroic; *Flaws*: Poor Copies*)

*see Superline #3

Mental Blast 12 (dynamic with force field)

Alternate Powers – mental blast

Force Field 12 (dynamic with mental blast; *Extras*: Linked **Immunity 19**
[life support, mental effects])

Super-Senses 8 (blindsight, mental awareness [accurate, extended, radius])

Combat: Attack +5, Grapple +5, Damage +0 (unarmed), +12 (mental blast),
Defense +10, Knockback -6, Initiative +8

Saving Throws: Toughness +12 (+0 without force field), Fortitude +4, Reflex
+6, Will +17

Totals: Abilities 28 + Skills 11 + Feats 6 + Powers 88 + Combat 30 + Saves 18 =
181



DINOSAUR ROUNDUP

BY MICHAEL HAMMES

SUMMARY

In this adventure the heroes get to go on an old-fashioned roundup. But the “dogies” they will be rounding up aren’t cattle that have escaped their pasture but dinosaurs that have been illegally created. Still, except for the teeth and claws, the principle should be the same ...

BACKGROUND

Dr. Alan Edwards is the head of the genomics department of a major (GM determined) university in or near the heroes’ city. As an acknowledged authority in the field of genomics, Dr. Edwards has and continues to receive a number of grants from both the government and corporations to support his research. What none of his grantors knew until recently was that Dr. Edwards has been funneling off money from his grants for several years to fund his own pet project: an attempt to clone dinosaurs.

Although Dr. Edwards has done his best to hide his activities, including keeping double books and performing all his dinosaur research at his countryside farmhouse, he is a scientist and not a professional criminal. As a result, when one of the grantors recently conducted a surprise audit, the auditors had little trouble noticing that a portion of funds was unaccounted for.

Upon receiving the audit report, rather than immediately calling for a more thorough investigation, the grantor decided not to notify Dr. Edwards or the university of the suspected activity and instead sent a pri-

vate investigator to quietly trace the money. To this end the grantor hired Michael Ciminto, a local private investigator well versed in asset location.

Mr. Ciminto soon discovered that Dr. Edwards was engaging in some interesting activities at his farmhouse; especially the large screened enclosure, from which emitted the most unusual hisses and squeaks, drew the investigator’s attention.

Waiting until Dr. Edwards left for the university, Mr. Ciminto made his way to the farmhouse and the adjoining enclosure where he quickly discovered that the enclosure held living dinosaurs!

Unfortunately for Mr. Ciminto, Dr. Edwards, having forgotten some materials for one of his classes, returned unexpectedly just at the moment that the detective was taking pictures.

Discovering the detective and thinking that this unknown man was out to steal his research, Dr. Edwards flew into a rage and attacked Mr. Ciminto. In the ensuing struggle the enclosure door was opened and the dinosaurs, Velociraptors to be precise, made their way out.

Quickly realizing the danger they were in, the two men raced to the doctor’s basement lab with several Velociraptors hot on their heels. Although Dr. Edwards managed to close the door before the raptors caught them, the two were now trapped and could only watch through the basement’s windows as the raptors at first explored the grounds and then began to head for the nearby countryside.

SET-UP

Once the Velociraptors escape and begin to explore the surrounding countryside it is only a matter of time before someone notices them and calls the local authorities. Once reported to the authorities the news of dinosaurs on the loose should eventually reach the heroes. The GM should handle the notification of the heroes as is usual in his or her game.

For example, if the local authorities regularly see odd and unusual things then reports by the locals of “giant lizards,” “dragons,” and “dinosaurs” will be taken at face value and immediately referred to the heroes. If on the other hand such occurrences are rare then the local authorities will initially investigate on their own, assuming that it’s just some overly excited locals mistaking an escaped pet alligator for something else; they might even send out the local critter catcher instead of a sheriff’s deputy. Of course, as the truth and scope of the situation become apparent the heroes will eventually be contacted.

ADVENTURE

The adventure begins once the heroes decide to investigate the dinosaur reports. By its very nature this adventure is a free-flowing one since the dinosaurs have spread out all over the countryside. However, the overall goal of the adventure is for the heroes to capture or otherwise neutralize the Velociraptors and find out where they came from.

Rounding Up The Dinosaurs

Dr. Edwards kept several generations of Velociraptors in his enclosure. Inevitably, the dinosaurs formed packs and often sparred amongst each other. Now, having gained their freedom, the dominant pack of raptors has taken over the farmhouse and enclosure and driven

off the other packs who are themselves looking to establish territories.

It is up to the GM to decide just how many packs are roaming the countryside and how big they are. For an initial encounter the GM might have the heroes encounter a pack of two Velociraptors per hero as a way to gauge the heroes’ chances and then either increase or decrease the challenge of subsequent packs from there.

Here are some possible encounters for the GM to use:

- **Steaks On The Hoof** — a pack of Velociraptors has hit the jackpot; a nearby herd of cattle represents a movable feast for the hungry dinosaurs. Inevitably the calls of the panicked cattle brings out the farmer and his two teenage sons who attempt to drive off the dinosaurs using a tractor as a mobile shotgun platform.
- **Recess Is Over** — Velociraptors have found a local elementary school. Thanks to quick thinking on the teachers’ part (they barricaded their classes in their classrooms) no students have been hurt. However everyone is stuck and very scared as the raptors roam the halls and explore the open areas (i.e. gym, cafeteria, etc.) while occasionally trying to break into a classroom.
- **The Most Dangerous Game** — a group of buddies out for a deer-hunting trip on private land suddenly find themselves face-to-face with a pack of Velociraptors. Although the hunters have guns, the beers they’ve got in them aren’t helping their aim or their courage. Panicked, the guys are desperately trying to get to their pickup truck and get out of there. Naturally the hunters are very nervous and likely to shoot at anything that moves (including the heroes or each other).

FROM HUMOROUS TO HORRIBLE:

It is entirely up to the GM to set the tone for this adventure; the adventure can be run as everything from a light-hearted change-of-pace focusing on catching dinosaurs to a full-fledged horror movie complete with half-eaten corpses and Velociraptors dripping blood from their teeth. All that needs to be changed is how the dinosaurs act.

Four-Color/Low Lethality

The encounter descriptions are written with this style in mind; the people that encounter the Velociraptors aren't actually hurt but only scared (although they may certainly have some intense moments and close calls) and the Velociraptors most likely aren't really vicious, only curious (they don't see people as legitimate prey).

Once the heroes arrive on the scene the raptors quickly see the heroes, especially flying heroes, as a more dominant animal and try to run from them; the majority of the adventure will focus on the heroes figuring out some way to capture the misunderstood raptors without harming them (if the heroes are out to purposefully kill or injure the raptors then the four-color style probably isn't for them and the GM should switch to the grim and gritty/high lethality style).

While chasing the Velociraptors the heroes aren't actually in much danger unless they foolishly corner or accidentally injure a Velociraptor and give it no choice but to fight. That's not to say that the raptors will be easy to catch. After all, the dinosaurs are quick and agile and there are plenty of places for them to hide or run through (i.e. the elementary school, the woods, etc.), not to mention plenty of panicked people to get in the way.

Grim and Gritty/High Lethality

In this style the raptors are cunningly aggressive killing machines that are attempting to establish themselves as the dominant predators in the area and will attack anything, including the heroes.

- They gang up (using the aid action) on lone or separated heroes, trying to use their pack numbers to advantage.
- They prefer to attack weaker heroes (i.e. those who are smaller, moving slower, or obviously injured) over stronger ones.
- When faced with a flying hero or one otherwise out of their reach (i.e. up on a ledge) they try to figure out a way to reach them or, if they can't, they leave the area, running if necessary. This is a calculated attempt to lead the hero into a situation where the raptors and the hero are more evenly matched (i.e. into a building, amongst the trees, or anywhere else that such a hero's mobility is more limited).
- Whenever possible, the Velociraptors try to gain surprise and ambush the heroes. The GM should remember that the dinosaurs have extended vision, low-light vision, scent, and ultra-hearing and are thus likely to notice the heroes before the heroes notice them. The elementary school and woods are great places for an ambush by the Velociraptors.
- Heroes that are hurt and forced to escape on foot will find themselves being tracked and hunted down.

Continued on next page . . .

Increasing Difficulty

Whether four-color/low lethality or grim and gritty/high lethality, the GM can increase the difficulty and/or danger of the Velociraptor encounters in a number of ways:

- **More Raptors** — instead of packs of one or two Velociraptors per hero, go to three or four.
- **Bigger Raptors** — instead of Velociraptors, use Deinonychus or even Utahraptors.
- **Night Time Is The Right Time** — have the adventure take place at night; given the raptors well-developed senses they would have a significant advantage against heroes not equally as adept.

- **Full-Service** — a pack has reached a local gas station/convenience store and is making a mess of the place while the panicked owners and an unfortunate woman trying to get gas are hiding upstairs. Too bad that in her panic the woman tried to ward off a Velociraptor with a gasoline hose which is still busy running out on the ground ...

Although the above encounters place the dinosaurs out in the countryside, nothing says that a pack or two can't reach the suburbs (raptors in a mall full of panicked people would make for a fun scene) or even the city itself (perhaps taking up residence in a junkyard).

The Farmhouse

Throughout their encounters with the Velociraptors the heroes should be asking where the dinosaurs came from. There are a number of ways for the heroes to discover the raptors' home:

- **Track Them** — if a hero is able to Track (via the feat or the Super-Sense) then he won't have much problem (DC 10) following the trail of a pack back to Dr. Edwards' farmhouse.
- **Infer It** — since the raptor packs headed out in various directions both away from the farmhouse and

from each other, the locations where the heroes encounter them form a rough circle about the ranch.

- **Ask The Locals** — they can point out the farmhouse of that "bearded, spectacled feller" (Dr. Alan Edwards) who always bought a bunch of live rabbits and chickens from local farms but wouldn't say what he was using them for. Those that live closer to the farm can also talk about the "dog kennels" and the strange noises that occasionally came from the farm.

Once the heroes arrive at Dr. Edwards' farm they'll find a simple two-story farmhouse and the large screened enclosure, its gate wide open. They'll also discover that there is still one Velociraptor pack to be captured, the one that drove out all the others. As the dominant pack, this group should be the most challenging of all.

After having dealt with this final pack of raptors the heroes are free to explore Dr. Edwards' house. It's an ordinary farmhouse except that the basement has been given over to a full-fledged genetics laboratory. This laboratory is filled with all manner of high-tech research and breeding equipment and Dr. Edwards' research.

The lab also contains Dr. Edwards and Mr. Cimino, the two of them having been stuck there the entire time for fear of running afoul of the Velociraptors roaming the grounds and unable to call for help because the lab has no phone (Dr. Edwards doesn't like being disturbed while doing his work) and the investigator's cell phone can't get a signal down there.

Follow-Up

Once the adventurers have rounded up all the dinosaurs the adventure is effectively over. There'll be some difficult questions for Dr. Edwards, both from the local authorities and the university, about what exactly was going on.

The upshot of all this will be that Dr. Edwards' misuse of funds will be revealed and, because it is illegal to keep exotic animals (and Velociraptors certainly count as exotic) the dinosaurs will be impounded. At a minimum Dr. Edwards will lose his position at the university and be forced to pay back the monies he took. He may even get jail time (if the Velociraptors killed anyone or there are laws against cloning in the GM's game then this is certain).

Perversely, although he is finished with the university, having demonstrated his skill in cloning, Dr. Edwards will have no problem finding another employer (it may even be with one of the grantors).

As for the dinosaurs, depending on what they did they may end up in a zoo, in private research facilities, or euthanized (all of these possibilities will no doubt bring out the animal rights people).

Mr. Cimino too will be questioned. However, since the only thing he could be guilty of is trespassing (and Dr. Edwards has no intention of pressing the charges since he's got enough problems of his own), he is soon released.

Rewards: Throughout the adventure the heroes should be awarded hero

points according to the guidelines in the main rulebook. Upon successful completion of the adventure the heroes should be awarded 1 power point; the Velociraptors do not present a significant enough danger to really warrant more than that.

SUPPORTING CAST

Dr. Alan Edwards

Dr. Edwards has had a fascination with dinosaurs since he was a young boy but instead of becoming a paleontologist and making due with unearthing the bones of the past, he was much more ambitious: Dr. Edwards wanted to bring dinosaurs back to life. Unfortunately, his grantors weren't interested in bringing dinosaurs back to life; they were much more interested in unlocking the keys to human genetics (and perhaps the keys to superpowers), but that didn't stop Dr. Edwards; what they wouldn't give freely he would simply take.

Dr. Edwards is not a bad guy, at least not in the sense that he is out to cause harm. Like many scientists, he's so involved in his life's work that he can't see the forest for the trees. Or, to be more precise, the good doctor can't envision the moral and ethical problems his research might cause.

Dr. Edwards comes across as the stereotypical scientist: so focused on his research that he is forgetful about everything else. His interactions with others are extremely curt to the point of rudeness; he doesn't have the time or patience to deal with anyone because every moment spent doing so is time lost to his research; when kept overlong from his research, he quickly becomes angry.

Dr. Edwards is a Caucasian male in his early 50's. His gray-black hair, both on his head and on his face, is always unkempt and in need of a good trim and his daily wear of shirt, tie, and slacks, is always

disheveled. Dr. Edwards wears a pair of round, gold-rimmed glasses. The GM should use the scientist statblock from the main rulebook for Dr. Edwards' stats.

Michael Cimino, Private Investigator

Michael Cimino began his professional life as a police officer. However, he chafed under the job's restrictions and quit after a few years. Since leaving the force he has worked as a bounty hunter, paparazzi, repo man, and private investigator (sometimes all four at once). Currently he is a relatively successful private investigator who works most often for a handful of corporate clients.

Cimino is part bulldog and part bloodhound; once he's on an assignment he doesn't give up until he succeeds. He has a no-nonsense, business first attitude and doesn't care who he rubs the wrong way as long as he gets the job done. While he won't do anything overtly illegal, he has no problem pushing the law to its limits.

Michael Cimino is a short, somewhat portly Sicilian male in his mid-40's. He wears his thinning hair in an obvious comb-over and always sports a five-o'clock shadow. His clothing of choice is a sweater or open-collar shirt with slacks; he always accessorizes with several gold chains, a gold watch, and some gold rings. He realizes that the image is stereotypical and cultivates it because it both gets him respect on the street and often causes those from more educated or affluent backgrounds to underestimate him.

Power Level: 3 (66 points)

Abilities: Str +1 (13), Dex +1 (13), Con +2 (14), Int +1 (12), Wis +2 (14), Cha +1 (12)

Skills: Bluff 6 (+7), Computers 2 (+3), Diplomacy 4 (+5), Disable Device 10 (+11), Drive 4 (+5), Gather Information 8 (+9), Intimidate 8 (+9), Investigate 4 (+5), Knowledge (civics) 6 (+7), Knowledge (streetwise) 12 (+13), Notice 8 (+10), Profession (private investigator) 6 (+8), Search 6 (+7), Sense Motive 8 (+10), Stealth 4 (+5)

Feats: Connected, Equipment 3

Equipment: binoculars, camera, cell phone, flashlight, light pistol (**Blast 3**), masterwork locksmith picks (+2 Disable Device locks only), multi-tool, PDA, undercover shirt (**Protection 2**, *Power Feats*: subtle)

Combat: Attack +3, Grapple +4, Damage +1 (unarmed) or +3 (pistol), Defense +2, Knockback -2, Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +4 (+2 without armor), Fortitude +6, Reflex +4, Will +5

Totals: Abilities 18 + Skills 24 + Feats 4 + Combat 10 + Saves 10 = 66

Velociraptors

The GM should use the Velociraptor statblock provided in the "**Dinosaurs**" article on page 15 of this issue.

BECAUSE YOU DEMANDED IT!

BY STEVE KENSON

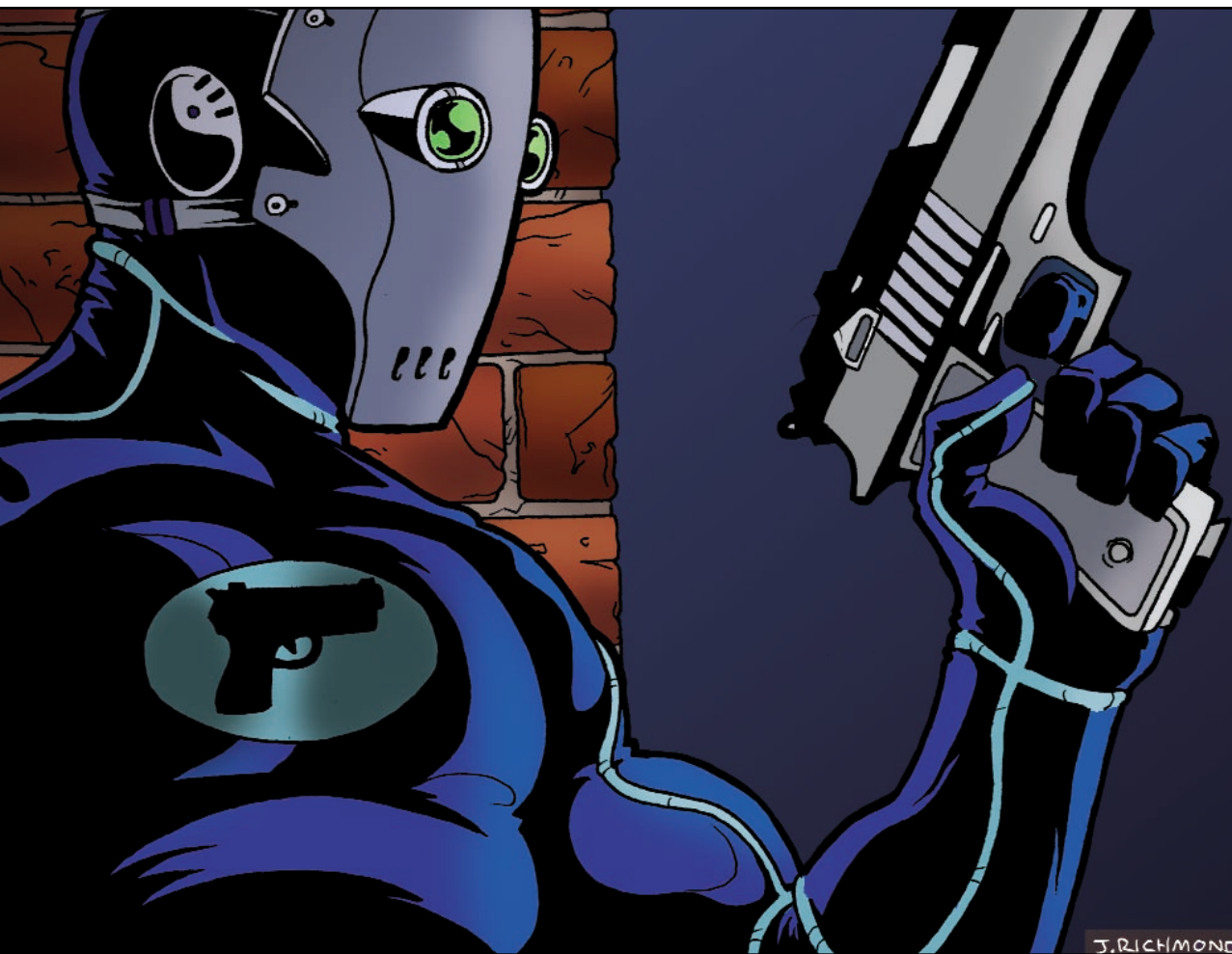
The *Mastermind's Manual* introduces a number of new, optional skills for the game, providing additional levels of detail as desired. One of these is the skill of using your powers to the greatest effect: the Power Use skill.

Power Use Ability Varies, Specialty

This skill covers proper and careful use of a power. It incorporates many of the functions of Concentration given in

the **Powers** chapter of *M&M*. It's most useful for campaigns where you want to differentiate between a power's effectiveness (determined by its rank) and a character's skill in applying the power (determined by rank in this skill).

There is a different Power Use specialty for each power, although you can allow a single Power Use skill for an array of Alternate Powers, since they are



all essentially aspects of the same power (see **Alternate Powers** in **Chapter 5** of *M&M*).

Check: You may make Power Use checks for the following:

Activate Power: The GM may require a Power Use check to activate a power. The DC of the check is usually 10 + power ranks activated, and characters may choose to activate fewer than a power's maximum number of ranks in order to make the check easier (at the cost of making the power less effective). If a Power Use check to activate a power fails, then the power doesn't work, but any effects on the character for activating the power (action required, fatigue, side-effects, etc.) occur.

If a Power Use check isn't normally required to activate powers, needing one is a very common, minor power drawback, worth 3 power points (enough to pick up some ranks in Power Use, in fact).

Extra Effort: The GM may require a Power Use check in order to use extra effort with a power with a DC of 10 + power rank. A successful check means you can use extra effort, a failed check means you cannot.

Optionally, the GM can apply this requirement only to certain aspects of extra effort, such as enhancing a power's rank or power stunts (see the following section).

Maintain Power: Power Use can take the place of the Concentration skill for maintaining powers with a Concentration or Sustained duration. Substitute a Power Use check where a Concentration check would normally be required.

Power Stunts: At the GM's option, a Power Use check can substitute for extra effort to perform a power stunt (see **Extra Effort** in the **Characteristics** chapter of *M&M*). The DC is usually 15 + the power's rank, although the GM can modify it depending on the desired power stunt, with more outlandish or

involved power stunts having a higher Difficulty Class. If the check is successful, the hero can perform that power stunt without fatigue or spending a hero point. If the check fails, the attempt to perform the power stunt fails, but the hero uses up the normal action the power stunt would have taken. Making a Power Use check to perform a power stunt takes no time in and of itself and is a free action.

A harsher option is requiring a Power Use check in *addition* to the extra effort normally required for a power stunt. If the check succeeds, the extra effort is successful. If it fails, the power stunt doesn't work, but the character suffers the fatigue (or spends a hero point to avoid it) normally.

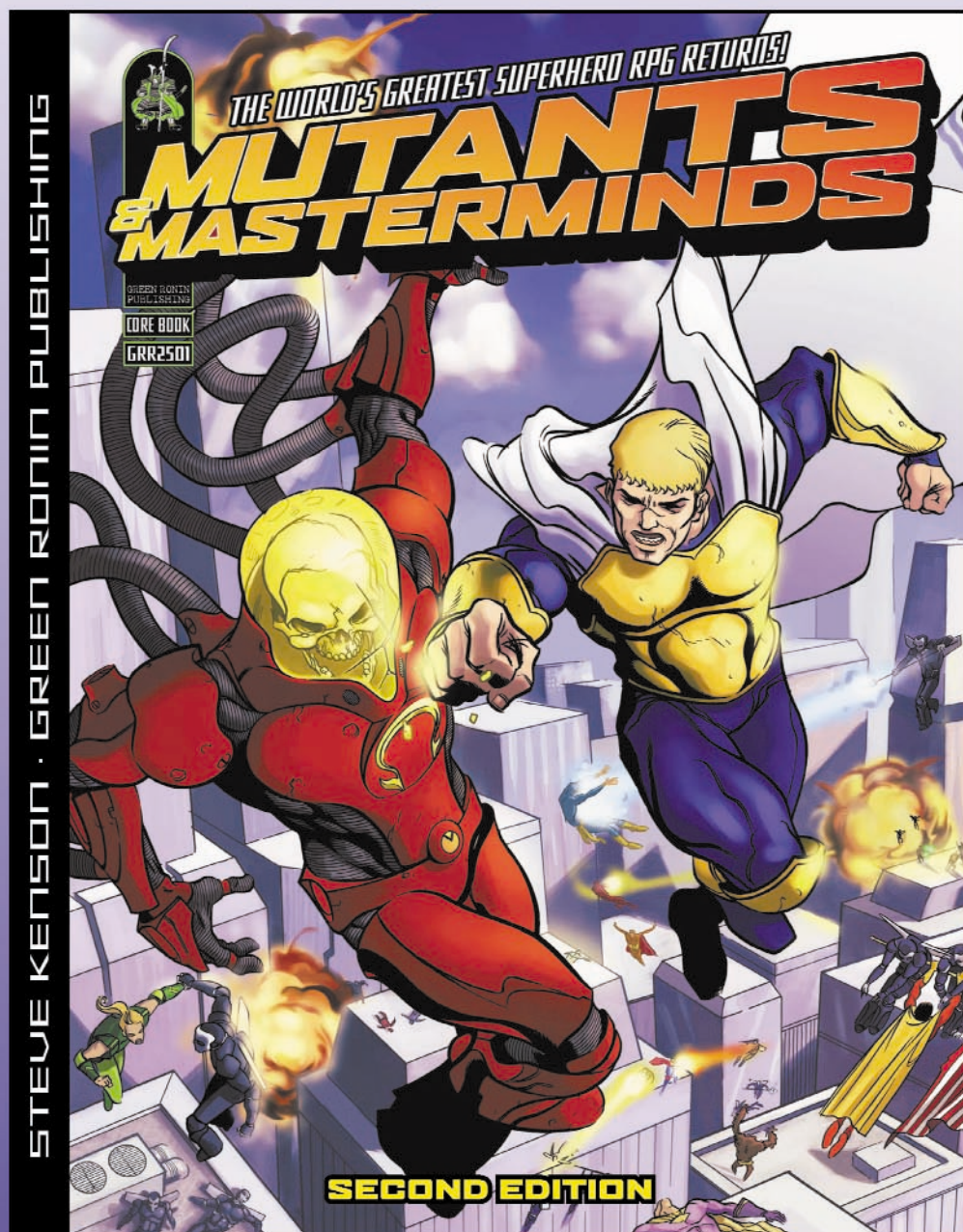
Precision: You can make a Power Use check (DC 10 + power rank) to apply the benefits of the Precise power feat to the power (see **Power Feats** in the **Powers** chapter of *M&M*). In fact, the GM may *require* a Power Use check to use a power precisely, and can either ban acquisition of the Precise power feat, or have it apply a +5 bonus to the Power Use check result rather than granting automatic precision with a power. This approach makes powers less precise and controlling them a bit less certain.

Action: A Power Use check is normally a free action associated with some other action in which a power is used.

Normal: Any of the applications of Power Use can be Concentration checks instead, if the GM prefers not to add a new skill.

Option: If you prefer, you can make Power Use checks based on a power's cost rather than its rank. Where it says "power rank" in the skill's description, substitute "one-half power point cost" instead. This keeps DCs the same for powers costing 2 points per rank, but makes them slightly easier for lower-cost powers and harder for higher-cost powers.

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