

# DARK CHAMPIONS™

## HEROES OF VENGEANCE



By **Steven S. Long**

SLC



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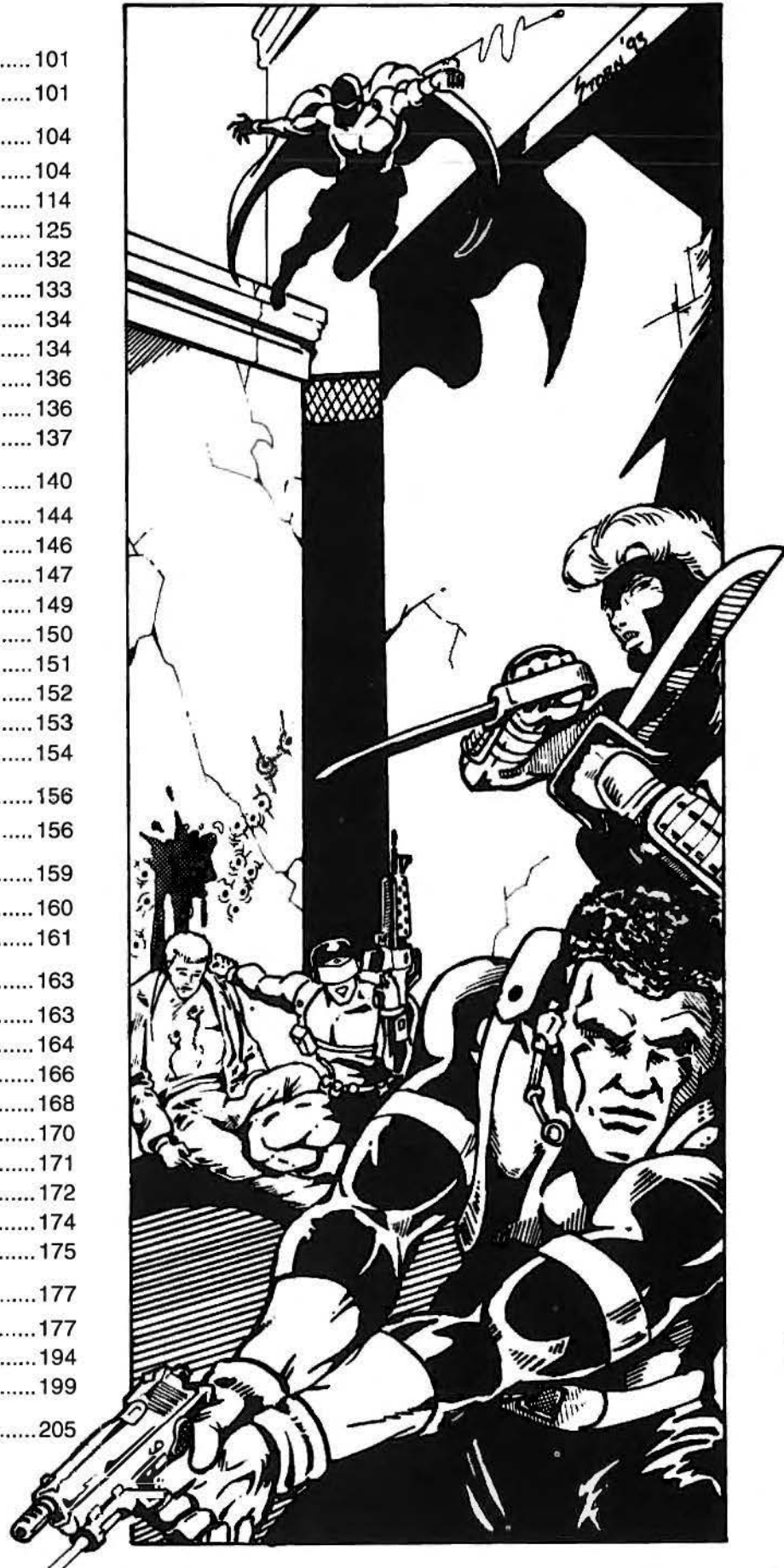
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# INTRODUCTION

## Operations Of 4/7/90, 10:40 PM, Patrol Pattern 7-J, Near Intersection Of Commerce and Murphy Streets

While on patrol in the southeastern sector of the city, I heard a scream coming from an alley near the intersection of Commerce and Murphy Streets. I immediately stopped the car and ran silently towards the alley's mouth.

When I got there, I found three members of a gang, the Satanic Skulls, attacking a young woman. Whether their intentions were rape, or robbery, or both, I did not know. Nor did I care—Justice demands that both offenses be appropriately punished. I stepped into the alleyway and said in a loud voice, "Enough!"

The three maggots turned to see who would dare spoil their fun—and felt in themselves the fear that they had so often inflicted upon the innocents of society. The first one started to run, but he made it less than five steps before I brought him down with my Mark I Wire Gun. He would do for interrogation.

The second maggot drew a knife and ran at me. When he got close enough, I grabbed his knife hand and broke it in three places—three very painful places. He screamed once, fell down, and lapsed into shock. If he does exactly what his doctor says, he may regain the use of that hand someday.

The third maggot thought to use his victim as a shield. He grabbed her, pulled a .38 revolver, and said, "Back off, man! Do it now, or she gets her head blown off!" I began to lower my gun, waiting for him to make his move. As I expected, he was too stupid to press his momentary advantage and immediately turned his gun on me. In the blink of an eye I retrieved my Mark I Pistol and shot him in the head. One execution.

The woman looked at me in horror, afraid that I would shoot her next. Her reaction was all too typical, but it is not something which overly concerns me. Though I regret that the press sees fit to spread misunderstandings about me, I do not fight crime to become popular. As I left my "calling cards" on the corpse and the man in shock, she took her purse and fled. When she recovers from her terrifying experience, she will be thankful that I was there.

After interrogating my prisoner, I returned to my car. I happened to glance up and see The Champions flying overhead, returning to Homestead after attending a charity banquet held that night in their honor. I hoped that no one attacked the banquet in an attempt to kill them—too many innocents also attend such events. What has always puzzled me, though, is how they can go to banquets and to Sanctuary when there are still people like those three criminals loose on our streets.

—Excerpt from the journals of  
the Harbinger of Justice

Some heroes fly above the streets, dressed in colorful costumes, dealing with menaces that the average man can barely comprehend. These heroes stay the evil hands of Dr. Destroyer, King Cobra, Sunburst. But in their appointed role as guardians of the world, they too often overlook the more common crimes that occur in our cities every day—murder, rape, robbery, drug offenses, organized crime, and a myriad of other evils. The police work hard, but they are too often outmanned and outgunned. *You* must take a stand to aid the police and provide what protection you can for the potential victims of these crimes. The press may hound you, the police may hunt you, and you may be derided as a "vigilante" who is no better than the criminals he fights. So be it. The people may fear you, but so do the criminals, and that is what counts—this is not a popularity contest, it is a war. The Champions wage their war, and you wage yours—in this era of the revolving door justice system, you are the best defense the innocent man has against organized crime, ruthless drug dealers, psychopathic youth gang members, serial killers, and other criminals which afflict modern life. The guilty must pay for the evil they have caused, and you are the one who is going to make them do it.

Welcome to *Dark Champions: Heroes Of Vengeance*, the HERO System supplement for **Champions** which shows you how to run "street-level" **Champions** campaigns. In the street-level subgenre, most characters are very different from those in a normal "four-color" **Champions** campaign. Often they are "merely" normal human beings with some training, some Skills, and a gun. Many of them do not wear flashy costumes, preferring instead black or other "camouflage" colors. Their attitudes towards crime and how to deal with it are often very different from those of normal **Champions** characters.

*Dark Champions* is designed for GMs and players who enjoy "action" comic books such as Marvel Comics' *Punisher*<sup>™</sup> or *Daredevil*<sup>™</sup> or DC Comics' *Batman*<sup>™</sup> or *Vigilante*<sup>™</sup> and want to re-create them in a roleplaying setting; and for gamers who want a little bit more "realism" in their **Champions** games.

The first part of *Dark Champions* deals with the basics of street-level campaigning: the different type of street-level campaigns; vigilantism in **Champions** campaigns; street-level character creation; and street-level campaign creation and gamemastering.

The second chapter is a brief discussion of superhumans and the law. It discusses how the law would "adapt" to the presence of superpowered humans, and how the law would affect them.



The third chapter deals with combat. It covers a lot of different combat options for street-level campaigns, provides some new combat modifiers and maneuvers to help simulate the genre, and discusses how to construct guns and other weapons in the HERO System.

The fourth chapter is the Sourcebook, which will be useful for GMs running just about any modern-day campaign. The first section covers "tools of the trade"—weapons and gadgets for street-level characters. The second section is an in-depth discussion of the street-level hero's enemies—organized crime, street gangs, serial killers, terrorists, and other evil people who are all too common in modern society. This part of the Sourcebook includes numerous NPC writeups, from Mafia dons to yakuza oyabuns, to street-level "supervillains" and villainous organizations. The last section includes several scenarios which can be used by street-level characters or, with a little reworking, superpowered characters.

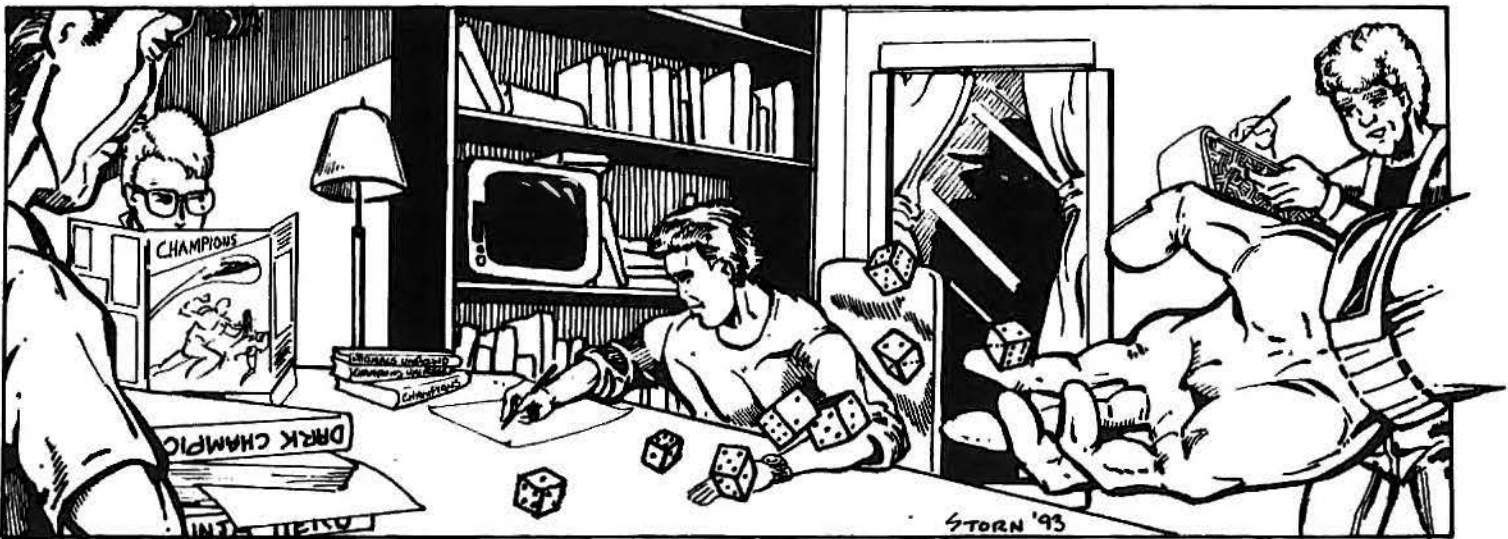
## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

*Champions* players can use *Heroes Of Vengeance* in one of three ways. First, they can use the ideas and rules presented here to change the focus of a regular *Champions* campaign by coming up with street-level characters and scenarios. Second, a GM can use *Dark Champions* to create an entire street-level *Champions* campaign, one where all the PCs are vigilantes or other street-level characters. Such a campaign will usually feature "trained paranormal" characters—persons with few or no superpowers, just skills and abilities which they have learned to help them fight crime. Third, a GM can simply read through this book and use the NPC and gadget writeups for his campaign, and ignore the rest of the material. When used this way, *Dark Champions* becomes a combination Organizations Book and Enemies Book.

## A FEW NOTES ON REALISM AND GAMING

Despite the fact that one of the chief hallmarks of the street-level subgenre is its increased "realism," there is always a certain amount of realism that has to be sacrificed in favor of playability—after all, *Champions* is a game, not a training exercise at the police academy. Therefore, although this book tries to be as realistic as possible in its portrayal of characters and equipment, where necessary that which enhances playability is favored over that which is realistic. Thus, in the discussion of guns and ammunition, there is less concern with what types of guns and ammo really exist, or how they really work, than there is with increasing the playability of the game by providing different ways to simulate different powers and attacks. Similarly, in the Sourcebook's coverage of modern-day organized crime groups, the intent was to provide interesting and fascinating foes for the heroes to encounter and, hopefully, defeat. In most cases, the real facts were sufficient—modern-day real-world criminals are evil and powerful enough to provide a challenge for any street-level hero. However, where necessary, we have perpetuated genre stereotypes which are more "fun," more playable, over the real facts. Those who want more realism in their street-level *Champions* campaigns should have no trouble revising the rules given here to suit their own tastes.

In short, even though the genre is designed to simulate reality much more closely than the average comic book or *Champions* game, don't let an interest in realism compromise the fun of the game!





## CHAPTER ONE: CHARACTER CREATION AND CAMPAIGNING

This part of *Dark Champions* will cover several topics. The first section is a discussion of the street-level subgenre and how it differs from regular *Champions* campaigns. The various types of campaigns are defined.

The second section deals with character creation. This section discusses street-level character archetypes, vigilantism, and how to use vigilantes in regular *Champions* campaigns. Suggestions on ways to "customize" Skills, Perks, Talents, Powers, and Disadvantages to fit the subgenre are given.

Last but not least, the third section deals with campaign creation and gamemastering. Suggestions for designing and running street-level *Champions* campaigns are included.





## THE STREET-LEVEL GENRE

Bob Lives Eh  
Disco Sucks WATCH ME IF YOU CAN SUPERHERO  
Mushyuko never jumps  
Pool

### WHAT IS A STREET-LEVEL CAMPAIGN, ANYWAY?

The Introduction provided a quick look at what a street-level *Champions* campaign is and how it differs from the regular “four-color” *Champions* campaign. A more precise list of the differences will help to distinguish the two even further:

**1) Different Characters:** The characters in the two campaigns are often completely different. The most apparent difference at first is how they dress. Four-color characters are, as the name implies, colorful—they have bright, flashy costumes, with capes fluttering in an ever-present breeze. Street-level characters are more concerned with camouflage and protection; they often use less gaudy colors like black and grey.

A more fundamental difference relates to the characters’ motivation and psychology. Most four-color characters refuse to kill their opponents or to use excessive force. They want to be morally superior to their opponents in every way possible, including their approach to violence. Street-level heroes often (but not always) have a different philosophy—they have no qualms about causing death in certain situations. They realize that death is a part of the gritty reality of the streets, and sometimes they are the cause. In part this stems from the fact that, because of their lack of superpowers, they use guns, knives, and other deadly weapons. Some heroes even go further than that with a “do it to them before they do it to you” philosophy (this is one of the defining elements of the “Vigilante” archetype). However, not all street-level *Champions* PCs are cold-blooded killers—some characters combine street-level attitudes with loftier moral outlooks. In HERO System terms, most *Dark Champions* heroes would not have an extremely powerful Code Versus Killing Psychological Limitation; some would not have this at all.

Another difference between four-color *Champions* and *Dark Champions* is in the personal style of the heroes. Four-color characters tend to form “hero groups,” like The Champions. In part, this is because of the group-oriented nature of roleplaying games, but it is also a genre convention—the group of heroes banding together to save the world from some threat. *Dark Champions* heroes are more likely to be solo operatives; they work with other people as needed to accomplish a goal, but they don’t join highly-structured groups. Some heroes won’t work with others under any circumstances, but such characters are very hard to handle in group roleplaying and should be avoided.

Even heroes that normally operate in a standard *Champions* campaign may act differently when put into *Dark*

*Champions* situations. Heroes are faced with very different challenges in a *Dark Champions* campaign; this very difference makes for exciting roleplaying.

**2) Different Enemies:** The enemies faced by the four-color hero are evident when one looks at any *Champions* product or Enemies book. They are just like the heroes—they wear gaudy costumes, use the same grandiose speeches, and have the same sorts of powers.

Street-level villains, on the other hand, can be quite different from the heroes. While some villains are the usual superpowered ones (albeit, perhaps, with nastier motives and methods), many villains encountered by *Dark Champions* heroes are a different sort: thirteen-year-old street gang members who use submachine guns, mob assassins who callously murder other human beings for money, and sociopathic serial killers who brutally assault and murder young women. Street-level villains like that are not usually fun to interact with, the fun lies in defeating them.

**3) Different Settings And Battles:** Four-color villains have secret bases filled with the latest scientific equipment and hordes of costumed agents carrying blasters. Street-level enemies, on the other hand, are found mostly in squalid urban settings, and if they have any “agents,” those agents carry guns, knives, and other deadly weapons. Four-color heroes have abilities which allow them to go just about anywhere, and fight just about any type of battle, from the depths of the Earth to the depths of space. Street-level heroes usually deal with more human level problems in recognizable surroundings, from grimy back alleys to posh penthouses.

When street-level heroes finish a fight, sometimes there are corpses and blood littering the battlefield; if this happened in a four-color game, the offending character would probably be booted off of the hero team and arrested by the authorities. Though few street-level characters are killed, death is a more pervasive threat in the street-level environment than in the four-color world.

**4) Campaign Tone:** On page S17 in the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook* there are some guidelines for campaign “tone” which illustrate the differences between four-color and street-level games. As the examples given in the book show, four-color campaigns are on the “low” end of the spectrum, reflecting a certain amount of romanticism about crimefighting. Street-level campaigns are usually just the opposite—they exist on the “high” end of the spectrum, reflecting a grimness and realism which clearly distinguishes them from four-color adventures. One note on the Morality component: it is possible to run a street-level campaign where morality is as black-and-white, or nearly so, as a four-color campaign. Indeed, the players may prefer this.



## WHY RUN A STREET-LEVEL CAMPAIGN?

There are a number of reasons for running a street-level campaign. Perhaps you or your players have gotten tired of your campaign as it currently exists and are looking for an alternative type of *Champions* campaign. The change of scenery, attitudes, and power level that a *Dark Champions* campaign will entail could be just what you're looking for. A second reason for running a *Dark Champions* campaign is that maybe this is the sort of comic-book campaign you've wanted to run all along, but the lack of source material and ideas has prevented you from starting one with the normal *Champions* rules. With *Dark Champions* as a "building block" for just such a campaign, you now have enough ideas and support material to get the ball rolling. A third reason, not to be overlooked, is education and learning. There are educational elements to any well-run roleplaying campaign; even if you don't learn any purely factual things, you will probably learn something about yourself. A well-run street-level campaign should offer both its GM and its players a chance to learn at least a little about modern-day crime, the same way players in a *Fantasy Hero* campaign tend to learn about medieval customs and weapons, and players in espionage campaigns learn about current events and politics.

## A WORD OF WARNING

Unlike just about any other type of roleplaying campaign, a *Dark Champions* campaign requires a certain level of maturity from its participants. There are two reasons for this. The first is the subject matter of the campaign. Both the players and the GM in a street-level campaign should be mature enough to deal with such subjects as illegal drugs, rape, and serial murder. While any good roleplaying campaign, even a street-level campaign, will involve a lot of joking and kidding around, these are obviously not subjects which should be joked about too much. If you don't think that you'll be able to refrain from joking about them, then don't play in a street-level campaign—neither it nor you will benefit from your participation. In a similar vein, some street-level subjects, particularly drugs and rape, may strike a little too close to home for some gamers. If this is the case with your gaming group, try to work around these topics, or talk with the players who may be disturbed by these subjects and figure out how to present them in an inoffensive way. A little sensitivity is always appreciated.

The second reason that maturity is required for *Dark Champions* campaigns is that street-level characters act in ways that usually require maturity. In short, some street-level characters kill their opponents, rather than knocking them out and sending them to jail. Obviously, if your street-level campaign involves a group of Idealist characters (see "Street-Level Character Archetypes," below), there shouldn't be any problems of this sort. But if there are one or more player characters who are at least willing to kill, there needs to be a certain level of maturity, in the form of restraint, on the part of the players of such characters. Players should not use the fact that they are in a campaign where killing may sometimes be necessary as an excuse to become "mad slashers," gunning down anyone they don't like or who gets in their way. As discussed below, street-level characters, especially vigilante types, need some sort of legitimate motivation or justification for their often lethal activities. A player's desire





to gun down as many people as he can just because "it's fun" is not a legitimate justification by any means. If the players are not mature enough to avoid this sort of behavior, they should not be a part of a street-level campaign which may involve killing. The same goes for working off real-life frustrations: escapism is one of the great benefits of roleplaying games, but it's not a good excuse for random game violence and killing. If all the players really want to do is spill a lot of blood, a hack-n'-slash fantasy campaign or a horror campaign are probably better places for them to be.

## TYPES OF STREET-LEVEL CHAMPIONS CAMPAIGNS

There are two main types of street level campaigns: heroic and superheroic. Within those types, there are several different variations. Those two main types are distinguished not only by the number of points available to the characters, but by the selection of gadgets and Powers available to the PCs. *Dark Champions* provides you with everything you need to play any of these campaign types, but most **Champions** players will probably want to use the Superheroic campaign rules.

The table lists a summary of the rules for each type of campaign.

### HEROIC DARK CHAMPIONS CAMPAIGNS

This campaign is essentially a standard heroic campaign as defined by the *HERO System Rulesbook*: the characters are normal human beings (i.e., Normal Characteristic Maxima are in force), and they are usually built on about 150 points (75 base points plus up to 75 points in Disadvantages). The characters do not have to pay points for their weapons, but must buy Weapons Familiarity skills in order to use their weapons.

Generally, heroes in such a campaign should be kept at a level where they still feel threatened by normal thugs. This means keeping DCV and defenses at a fairly low level; more than a DCV of 8 or so, or a resistant defense of 8, and the hero won't be too worried about most fights. This makes the game less interesting.

Most heroes will have many Skills, and perhaps some Perks. Talents and Powers are allowed with the GMs permission, though most Powers should be bought as gadgets of some sort. Generally, heroes should have available to them most common technology, including weapons and electronics. More powerful gear (such as military weapons) would only be available under special circumstances; the GM should make obtaining such gear part of the roleplaying experience. Heroes should not pay points for ordinary technology; money will suffice in most cases.

The GM must make it clear to the players that they should expect to have the same level of offense used against them as they use themselves. Thus, if the PCs are bound and determined to carry several M60 machine guns (and they have a reasonable explanation for how they could obtain such weapons), let them—but give the enemy M60s as well. A list of real-world weapons can be found in the Sourcebook. If this common-sense approach does not properly limit the

average offensive power being used by the PCs, then the GM should resort to enforcing blanket limits on the number of DCs the player characters' guns can have (for example, PCs could have guns doing up to 2d6 Killing damage, with Advantages considered on a case-by-case basis).

Remember that a character's background and/or Skills must provide a reasonable explanation for how he got the item(s) in question—a character cannot just declare himself to be the owner of a brand-new box of fragmentation grenades, he has to have spent time in the Army or otherwise have had an opportunity to acquire them. If this rule has the players worried, they shouldn't be. As the campaign goes on and the foes they face become more powerful and more evil, the PCs will undoubtedly have the opportunity to obtain more powerful guns (as the "spoils of victory," so to speak). Additionally, the GM can use the "equipment allowance" rules to limit the amount of equipment that the PCs can carry at any one time (see the Sourcebook for details).

For an example of a modern-day heroic campaign player character, see the writeup of Scarecrow at the very end of the Character Creation section. The Sourcebook section on "Villainous Organizations And Criminals" for heroic campaigns includes The Master Of Crime, a criminal opponent for the player characters in a modern heroic campaign.

Availability of other technology depends on the nature of the campaign background. The GM must decide if the background is the present-day world (as in many action pictures like the *Lethal Weapon* series) or futuristic (as in *Predator II* or *Blade Runner*). Perhaps the campaign is based on a subset of the standard **Champions** campaign, where blasters, force fields, and VIPER agents are commonplace. Whatever the case, the GM must decide on what level of technology is available, and provide a list of weapons and equipment for the campaign. *Dark Champions* includes a comprehensive list of modern weapons, and other Hero Games products contain useful weapons and equipment for modern and near-future campaigns. Of particular use are *Star Hero*, *Ninja Hero*, *Cyber Hero*, and the **Champions** rules themselves.

A high-tech heroic campaign is similar to the standard heroic campaign, but in this type of campaign, characters are allowed to use the high-tech gadgets and devices that the comics are famous for. Characters in a high-tech heroic campaign might use lasers and blasters instead of normal guns, might have force-fields or battle armor to protect themselves, and might employ super-sophisticated computers, communications technology, and vehicles to aid their war on crime. The high-tech campaign is a good mix of traditional and street-level elements—in many cases, the only difference between a high-tech heroic campaign and a four-color campaign is that there are no "innate" superpowers, just gadgets.

Characters in a high-tech heroic campaign should not spend points on weapons, instead using the "equipment allowance" rules for other types of equipment and gadgets (see the "Tools Of The Trade" section in the Sourcebook for the equipment allowance rules). If the GM prefers this approach, he should come up with a list of standard high-tech weapons and devices for the characters to choose from. The short list of science fiction weapons in the *HERO System Rulesbook* is a good starting point for developing an individual GM's own, more extensive list. The *Gadgets* book written for first-edition **Champions** is also a good source.





If the GM wants to make characters buy their weapons and high-tech devices with points, he should allow the characters to be built on more points. The amount of points will vary from campaign to campaign, but should be at least 200 total points, and can range as high as the standard starting total for superheroic characters in your games (250 points or more). Of course, the characters should possess the Skills needed to build these weapons, or should have some source they can acquire them from and where they can have them repaired.

Since the weapons used by high-tech characters are likely to be more lethal than those used in pure street-level campaigns, GMs should allow higher levels of defense as well—up to 12 points of resistant PD and/or ED in some campaigns. This defense can be defined as a force-field, high-tech body armor, or any other special effect which fits the theme of the campaign. As with pure street-level campaigns, the characters should not have so much defense that they are unafraid of most attacks.

Depending on the campaign background, high-tech heroic characters may buy Powers defined as gadgets (i.e., with the "Focus" Limitation)—for example, Flight defined as a jetpack. The GM should carefully examine any Powers which are likely to ruin mysteries or otherwise compromise plotlines (such as N-Ray Vision, Precognition/Retrocognition, and Telepathy). If a Power is probably going to be too detrimental to the campaign, it should be disallowed or toned down. Of course, the hero should have a good reason to own technology that is not available elsewhere.

Attacks in a high-tech campaign will usually be more powerful than in a pure street-level campaign. While a

character's own hand-to-hand damage should still be limited to 2-6 DC, damage from weapons and devices could be considerably higher, up to 10 DC or more (plus appropriate Advantages), depending on what the GM allows the characters to use (or what the characters can afford).

For an example of a high-tech street-level hero, see the writeup of Copperhead at the end of the Character Creation section. The "Villainous Organizations And Criminals" section of the Sourcebook includes two criminal groups which can be used in high-tech street-level campaigns: The Berberks, a high-tech mercenary squad; and the villain Card Shark and his underlings. An excellent source of villains for such a campaign can be found in *High-Tech Enemies* (though you may need to reduce some of their stats to make those villains match the power level of your campaign).

## SUPERHEROIC DARK CHAMPIONS CAMPAIGNS

The most common type of *Dark Champions* campaign is the superheroic campaign—in other words, *Dark Champions* played with heroes built on 100 points plus 150 points in Disadvantages. In order to get the proper feel, though, some additional restrictions are necessary. *Dark Champions* heroes must be vulnerable to ordinary people with ordinary weapons, so defenses cannot be too high. In that same vein, Powers must be kept limited in points so that the heroes do not overwhelm the opposition.

The summary table shows the suggested point ranges for a superheroic campaign. Generally, starting heroes should have no more than 40 active points in a power, resistant defenses no greater than 8, and CVs in the 5-10 range. Most powers other than attacks would be allowed even fewer active points, no more than 10 to 20 unless at least a -1 Limitation is taken on the Powers (and even then, no more than 25 to 40 active points in the Power should be allowed). This reflects the fact that many *Dark Champions* heroes buy their Powers through a Focus of some sort, or they tend to have severe limitations on the Power's usefulness (Activation Rolls, extra END cost, Extra Time, and so on).

For example, Telepathy could obviously be very useful to *Dark Champions* heroes; large amounts of Telepathy could render many types of plots too simplistic. But if the Telepathy is weak (say no more than 20 points) and erratic (Activation Roll of 8-), then it doesn't unbalance the game.

An example of a superheroic-level vigilante, the Harbinger of Justice, is provided at the end of the Character Creation section. Harbinger can also be used as a "villain" in regular four-color *Champions* campaigns. Card Shark and his organization, as written up in the "Villainous Organizations And Criminals" section of the Sourcebook, can be used as villains in a superheroic street-level game or a four-color campaign.

Other campaign variations are possible. The GM and the players may decide to run *Dark Champions* as an occasional sub-campaign of the normal *Champions* campaign. This is the way many street-level stories are told in comics; a four-color hero often deals with four-color villains and situations, but sometimes he takes a trip down to the shady side of town and mixes it up with the drug dealers. (Sometimes such heroes even seem like they have two different write-ups; a high-powered one for four-color adventures, and a low-powered one for street-level adventures.)



Of course, you may have a group of heroes where some are four-color types and others are more street-oriented. For instance, in *The Champions*, Defender is clearly a more four-color hero while Jaguar is a street-oriented hero. In campaigns where you mix both types of heroes, the difficulty lies in properly challenging both types without letting the more powerful heroes and NPCs easily defeat the street-level characters and NPCs. Often, a mixed campaign ends up with a sort of "symbiotic" relationship between the characters: the street-level characters are the best ones at obtaining information and solving mysteries, and the superpowered characters are better at combat. Make certain that the players are willing to get involved in this sort of "lopsided" campaign before you start, or you will get nowhere fast. Every player wants to feel that his contribution is equal; a player will be upset if he thinks that his character is less powerful or useful than the other PCs.

Another variation is the non-super *Dark Champions* campaign, where the GM limits heroes by saying that all Powers must be bought through some sort of Focus. Of course, this is usually the way most Powers are bought by *Dark Champions* heroes, but in this type of campaign the restriction is absolute. Thus, the heroes are all normal people, though of course they are exceptionally well trained.

### IDEALISTIC STREET-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS

One important type of street-level campaign is the "idealistic" street-level campaign. This sort of campaign differs from the other types only in the "philosophy" which motivates the characters—idealistic campaigns combine street-level settings, enemies, point totals, and power levels with four-color ideals and motivations. Idealists are good choices for gamers who want to play street-level characters without concerning themselves with the moral questions presented by pure vigilantism. Idealistic street-level characters, like

their four-color compatriots, usually refuse to kill their opponents, preferring instead to capture them and take them to prison. Idealistic campaigns also give the participants a chance to "plumb the depths" of a character's background and personality—for example, how far can a particular character be pushed before he begins to think about giving up his Code Against Killing?

Idealistic street-level campaigns offer the GM an opportunity to use the rules and ideas presented in this book, while still retaining a "comic book feeling" to the campaign. This can solve some of the problems presented by trying to "mix" four-color and street-level characters, thus saving the GM a lot of headaches. Any comments and suggestions made in this book about four-color campaigns apply equally to most idealistic campaigns.

Idealistic street-level campaigns can be structured to resemble any of the other three types of street-level campaigns. The only real difference between this type of campaign and the other types is that idealistic characters are required to have Codes Against Killing or similar Psychological Limitations which restrain them from killing their foes. Their Powers (or lack thereof), point totals, DCs, and CVs will be the same as those prescribed for the other types of street-level campaigns.

For an example of an idealistic street-level character, look at Seeker or any of a number of other non-superpowered heroes depicted in HERO Games products. With few or no changes, most of these characters could fit into one or more of the various types of street-level campaigns.

Powers with more points than those listed should often have additional limitations. For every 5 points the active cost of a power exceeds the recommended maximum, the power should need to have at least a -¼ limitation. This limits the disruption of very powerful gadgets or powers because they will take time to use, have activation rolls, be made through foci, or have other limitations on their use.

**SUMMARY TABLE — TYPES OF STREET-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS**

	Heroic		Superheroic	
<b>Base Points</b>	75+		100+	
<b>Disad Points</b>	+75		+150	
	<b>Starting</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Starting</b>	<b>Max</b>
<b>Damage (DC)</b>	2-8	10	4-10	12
<b>Resistant Defense</b>	0-7	10	0-8	12
<b>Non-Resistant Defense</b>	2-8	12	5-12	16
<b>Combat Values w/Levels</b>	3-9	14	5-10	15
<b>Skill Rolls</b>	8- / 14-	18-	8- / 14-	18-
<b>Dexterity</b>	10-20	23	15-23	26
<b>Speed</b>	2-4	5	3-5	6
<b>Attack Active Pts</b>	Min - 40	50	Min - 50	60
<b>Power Active Pts</b>	Min - 15	30	Min - 20	40

## COORDINATING STREET-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS WITH OTHER TYPES OF CAMPAIGNS

Some GMs may prefer to use street-level elements in their regular campaign rather than running a full-blown street-level campaign; or they may want to have characters from a street-level campaign “cross paths” with characters from other genres. This is not hard to do, but there are several things to consider, based on what type of campaign you are running.

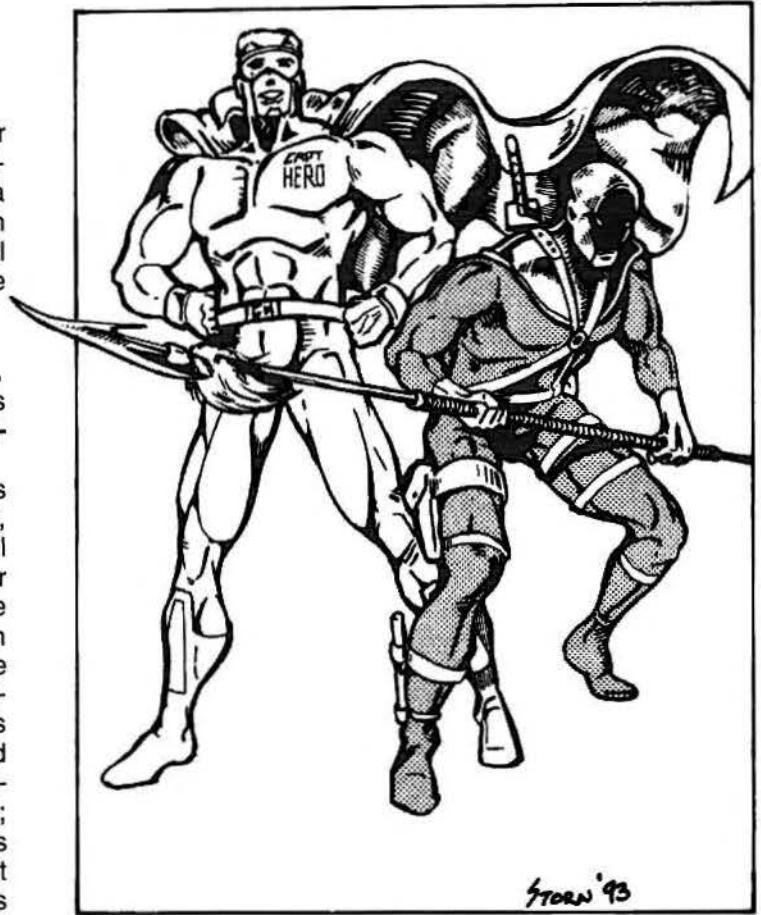
### REGULAR CHAMPIONS CAMPAIGN

The type of campaign which presents the most difficulties for this sort of “integration” is the regular, four-color *Champions* campaign. There are two problems to deal with.

The first is personality. Unless your street-level characters are all Idealists (see the “Character Archetypes” section, below), their viewpoints and methods of crimefighting will probably be extremely different from those of the four-color characters. This is likely to create conflicts between the characters, which may even go as far as outright fighting in some cases, as the four-color characters attempt to capture the street-level “vigilantes.” This sort of inter-character conflict upsets some gamers, and often results in bruised egos on one side or the other. Some gaming groups are very good at roleplaying this sort of conflict without having it affect real-world relationships between the players, and they enjoy it; but others are not and hate it. Unless you and your players are capable of dealing with this sort of conflict responsibly, it is best avoided. However, it does have its rewards, in terms of opportunities for roleplaying and exciting scenes, so don't be too quick to dismiss its possibilities.

One good way to deal with this sort of clash of personalities, if the GM is up to it, is to “separate” the group. This means that the GM shifts back and forth from the four-color characters to the street-level characters, as each group (or character) attempts to deal with whatever is happening in the scenario in its (or his) own way. However, this requires the GM to do a lot of extra work when running the scenario.

A second problem with integrating street-level and superheroic campaigns is power levels. Even if they are built on the same amount of points, four-color characters are likely to be more effective at some things (such as combat), because of the way their points are spent. The GM can deal with this in two ways. First, he can direct his efforts at the lowest common denominator. This means that he has to come up with ways to limit the four-color characters in situations where they would be overwhelmingly powerful, so that they can be challenged by NPCs who are already a challenge to *Dark Champions* characters. The second, and perhaps better, way to balance power levels is the “smorgasbord” approach—something for everybody. This means that the GM has to tailor the scenario so that each type of character has something meaningful to do (especially in combat, because many players will be upset if their character fails to match up with the other PCs in a battle).



There are two major benefits to mixing *Dark Champions* and four-color *Champions* characters. The first is character development. By seeing the way “the other half” lives, both street-level characters and four-color characters can learn how their characters react to different situations, and perhaps alter their characters' personalities to take these new experiences into account. Four-color characters might learn something from being brought “back down to earth” for a while; street-level characters might learn new ways to fight crime, or might “soften” harsh and sometimes irrational attitudes.

A second benefit is the roleplaying opportunities presented. The clash between street-level and four-color points of view provides some of the best opportunities that exist for complex, in-depth roleplaying. Elements of both debate and diplomacy are combined as each character tries to “convert” the other without provoking a major fracas between PCs. Sure, your character knows what to say to Dr. Destroyer when he begins yet another world-conquering scheme, but could you talk the Harbinger of Justice out of murdering some anonymous street gang member? Would you be willing to risk your life, and the punk's, to try to capture Harbinger at the same time? How would you defend your views on crimefighting against his? Do you even have a defined philosophy of crimefighting? Why not? These are the sorts of things that you can learn about your character when the two genres are properly mixed.



## OTHER TYPES OF CAMPAIGNS

**Espionage campaigns:** Espionage campaigns can be coordinated with pure and high-tech *Dark Champions* campaigns very easily. The characters in both campaigns are often built on the same numbers of points, and in roughly the same way (no Powers, an emphasis on Skills, and so forth). Both campaigns involve frequent gunplay and ruthless enemies willing to kill for any reason. High-tech street-level campaigns are especially similar to espionage campaigns, because of their shared emphasis on strange technological devices (ballpoint pen guns, cufflink radios, and similar gadgets).

**Cyberpunk campaigns:** Cyberpunk stories (and roleplaying games) are set in the near future; they are known for their urban settings, high level of violence, and emphasis on technology (from cybernetic body implants to powerful computer networks in which the characters can “scavenge” for valuable data). Cyberpunk campaigns have a lot in common with street-level games, especially high-tech

campaigns: advanced technology, frequent firefights, and the like. However, given the differences in setting (“modern day” versus “near future”), it is unlikely that player character groups from the two genres will ever meet. However, GMs in cyberpunk campaigns can use some of the suggestions or rules in *Dark Champions* to improve their campaigns, and vice-versa. For more information on cyberpunk campaigns using the HERO System, see *Cyber Hero*.

**Martial arts campaigns:** *Ninja Hero* campaigns can be coordinated with *Dark Champions* campaigns with little trouble. Many *Ninja Hero* characters will be built on about the same point totals as pure street-level characters. The attacks and special abilities possessed by characters in each genre are often similar. Both types of characters usually keep tabs on what’s going on “in the street,” so they may feel compelled to deal with the same crimes or menaces. However, the GM should watch out for potential ideology conflicts (the martial artists’ “codes of honor” versus the “vigilante mentality”).



This section will discuss street-level characters’ motivation and personalities, show how to build street-level characters in the HERO System, and provide three sample characters to get you started. While GMs should of course read this section (if for no other reason to find out what sneaky tricks the players are up to), the main audience for this section is, naturally, the players—those who engage in most of the in-depth character-creating. Since a lot of the rules presented here provide new “twists” on old rules, or have been created especially for the street-level genre, players should talk with their GM to find out which rules he is going to use in his campaign. This is especially true with regard to existing campaigns, where the GM may not want to see some characters be entirely or partially revised. Obviously, as with any other HERO System product, the gamemaster should disallow or change any of the material presented here if he feels it would be best to do so—the watchword with any roleplaying game is to do whatever you think is fun, not just what the rulebook says to do.

## THE STREET-LEVEL CHARACTER

Becoming a street-level character is not the easiest thing in the world. In many cases, it involves years of intense training, devotion to a cause, and sometimes severe psychological problems as well. Besides providing some character archetypes to guide you, this section will help you get a grasp on your character’s motivations, goals, and psychology.

### MOTIVATIONS AND PSYCHOLOGY OF STREET-LEVEL CHARACTERS

It takes a certain world-view to go out and begin fighting crime on the street, a world-view often significantly different from that which would motivate someone to put on a flashy costume and use his superpowers to fight crime and evil. Even before putting pencil to paper to design the nuts-and-bolts part of your *Dark Champions* character, it is extremely important for each player to come up with a solid, legitimate idea of what motivates his character. It doesn’t have to be a complex explanation—a fairly simple story can have all sorts of fascinating ramifications for how the character will act. If both the players and the GM give some consideration to this sort of character development before beginning play, the campaign will probably be a lot more interesting.



## PSYCHOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS FOR DARK CHAMPIONS CHARACTERS

**Observation: 12/12/87 at 1:22 AM, Stakeout, Type 8-F Delaney Street**

*The people of this city, from the uneducated man in the street to the psychiatric "expert," say that I am insane, a homicidal maniac, even a sociopathic serial killer. But they have all overlooked a profound fact: what I do is for the good of society, not to its detriment. The personality defects which they ascribe to me all contain as a fundamental part of their definition the performance of anti-societal activities. Although the executions I perform seem frightening and cruel to the inhabitants of this city, they are certainly not anti-societal. Hence these "expert" analyses fail for want of clarity of vision.*

— Excerpt from the journals of the Harbinger of Justice

There are several "mental problems" (i.e., Psychological Limitations, in HERO System terms) commonly a part of the street-level subgenre which are not as common in many *Champions* campaigns. They include:

### Casual Killer

"Of course I killed him. What of it?" This Limitation is frequently used for vigilante characters, and for many criminals and villains as well. It signifies a person who has no compunctions about killing. He can kill quickly and unhesitatingly, without a second thought—it is a part of his nature. While that person's targets may be dictated by other Psychological Limitations, a Casual Killer will feel no remorse when he kills those targets.

In many ways, though, this Limitation should be left to the criminals. It marks a callousness and evil which is generally not even appropriate for vigilante characters. *Dark Champions* players who feel that their characters would be this cold-blooded should instead look into taking "Vigilante Mentality," discussed below.

Casual Killer can be bought this way:

**Example:** *Casual Killer: Very Common, Strong: 20 points.*

### Devoted To Justice

"I must strive so that Justice always triumphs. Those who are evil shall be treated as they deserve." A character who is Devoted To Justice puts the ideals of justice (or his conception of them) above everything else. Most of the character's actions in life, and certainly all of his actions as a crimefighter, will be taken with a view towards increasing the "amount" of justice in the world, or doing the "just" thing. This doesn't necessarily mean that the character is doing the just thing—he may be mistaken, confused, or have odd ideas about what constitutes justice (possibly causing him to come into conflict with the authorities or other PCs).

A similar Limitation is "Devoted To Talion." The law of talion, sometimes known as the Mosaic law, is summed up by the phrase, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." A character with this Psychological Limitation believes that the evil that a man does should be done to him in return, in retribution for his evil. For example, if a street gang member

stabs a robbery victim in the stomach with a knife, a character who is Devoted To Talion will stab the gang member in the stomach.

Devoted To Justice can be bought this way:

**Example:** *Devoted To Justice: Very Common, Total: 25 points.*

### Hunting \_\_\_\_\_

"I'll find him someday, and that will be the day he dies." Many *Dark Champions* characters are Hunting someone, or some organization. For whatever reason, the character feels compelled to track down the target NPC or group and punish them properly.

Hunting can be bought this way:

**Example:** *Hunting \_\_\_\_\_: Uncommon, Strong: 10 points.*

### Loner

"I can trust no one to assist me on a crusade as important as this." Characters with the Psychological Limitation "Loner" (or its near relatives "Mysterious And Enigmatic" and "Secretive") want to work by themselves, without help from others. Maybe the character feels that other heroes, not understanding his motivations, will get in his way or try to stop him. Maybe he's afraid that his objectives are so dangerous that he does not want to risk the lives of others in pursuit of his own goals. Players who want to take this Limitation had better make sure that their characters are capable of fending for themselves. Characters who are "Mysterious And Enigmatic" have a somewhat different outlook on things. While they may work with others, they will never reveal any secrets to them—their identities, information sources, and abilities will always be kept as secret as possible; they concoct elaborate schemes to maintain these secrets. They also like to "appear out of nowhere" with crucial information. This Psychological Limitation often requires a lot of good roleplaying and a little fast thinking to pull off; it also requires a player who is willing to come up with a lot of background development material for his character.

GMs should hesitate before letting a player take Loner for his character. Having a Loner in a group setting is often extremely disruptive and frustrating. Mysterious And Enigmatic is much less of a problem, so perhaps players who want to have a Loner character can be steered in that direction instead.

**Example:** *Loner: Common, Strong: 15 points.*

### Must Overcome Failure To Protect \_\_\_\_\_

"I can never rest until the streets are safe for women like my darling Roberta." This character has suffered some devastating loss at the hands of the criminal element. The typical traumatic event involves the character seeing his parents, spouse, children, or friends murdered. The character feels that had he done something differently, or done better whatever he did do, his loved one(s) would be alive today. This event has shaped his entire life, causing him to become a crimefighter in an attempt to make up for his previous failure and/or to keep the same thing from ever happening to anyone else.

**Example:** *Must Overcome Failure To Protect \_\_\_\_\_: Common, Strong: 15 points.*



### Obsessed With Crimefighting

"No thank you, Quantum, I can't go out on a date with you while there are still criminal scum loose on the streets of Campaign City." This Psychological Limitation signifies a character who lives and breathes crimefighting. He regards crimefighting, the foiling of criminal plans and the defeat of criminals, as the highest good. He has devoted his life to achieving this good. If taken at a high enough level, this Limitation will prevent the character from ever relaxing or having normal relationships with other people. It may cause the character to drive himself to skip sleeping for long periods, or to otherwise ignore normal human activities and preoccupations (such as bathing). This Limitation often has a lot in common with Devoted To Justice; a character should not take both of these Limitations without GM permission.

**Example:** *Obsessed With Crimefighting: Very Common, Total: 25 points.*

### Thrillseeker

"This crimefighting thing is a *lot* of fun." Characters with the Psychological Limitation "Thrillseeker" are crimefighters at least in part because of the danger and excitement involved. This Limitation causes the character to take risks that most characters would never even dream of, just for the "rush" he gets from putting himself in danger and then overcoming it. Sometimes characters with this Limitation have some deeper, subconscious motivation for their behavior: a death wish; insecurity with their role as a crimefighter; a fear which they are masking.

Of course, just because a character is a Thrillseeker does not mean that he does not also have some more serious motivations for fighting crime. Behind the devil-may-care facade might lurk someone who is Devoted To Justice, a Vigilante, an Idealist, you name it. Thrillseeker can be bought this way:

**Example:** *Thrillseeker: Common, Strong: 15 points.*

### Triggerhappy

"<BR-R-R-R-RRRAPP!!!> I love the sound of machine gun fire in the morning!" Triggerhappy is similar in many ways to Casual Killer, but with important differences. Triggerhappy characters often kill, but not with the uncaring attitude that Casual Killers have. Rather, a Triggerhappy character is always on the lookout for a chance to shoot things. He regards gunfire as a good way to solve most problems—especially the crime problem. Shoot first, ask the remains questions later.

Triggerhappy also carries some of the implications of being "hair-triggered": a Triggerhappy character will often go off half-cocked, ready to fight over some imagined insult. This makes a Triggerhappy character dangerous to be around in some instances. If a Triggerhappy character is strong-willed (i.e., has a high EGO), other characters will have problems calming him down, convincing him not to shoot, and keeping him from starting fights at inopportune moments. Triggerhappy characters are often poor choices for infiltration missions and other activities that require stealth, circumspection, and tact. They are great for combat missions, though, since they probably have more guns than the rest of the characters combined.

**Example:** *Triggerhappy: Common, Moderate: 10 points.*

### Vengeful; Out For Revenge

"I'll never rest until the criminals who destroyed my business, stole my wife, and ruined my life are all six feet under!" These Psychological Limitations apply to a character who is out to get someone else. They are related, but different. A character who is Out For Revenge will usually have a set target or targets for his hatred; once they have been permanently dealt with, he will have to find some other outlet for his rage (this can be a great opportunity for roleplaying and character development). A Vengeful character tends to be revenge-minded, wanting to wreak vengeance on any NPC who offends him, shoots at him, or gets on his nerves. Both types of characters sometimes take other Psychological Limitation such as "Hunting" or "Must Overcome Failure" to give themselves a special focus. However, the GM should not let a character take more than one of these Limitations unless they are distinct enough that they each limit the character in different ways. "Vengeful" and "Triggerhappy" can also mesh too much to both be allowed for the same character.

Vengeful is written up in the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*, p. 124; Out For Revenge can be bought this way:

**Example:** *Out For Revenge On \_\_\_\_\_: Uncommon, Total: 15 points.*

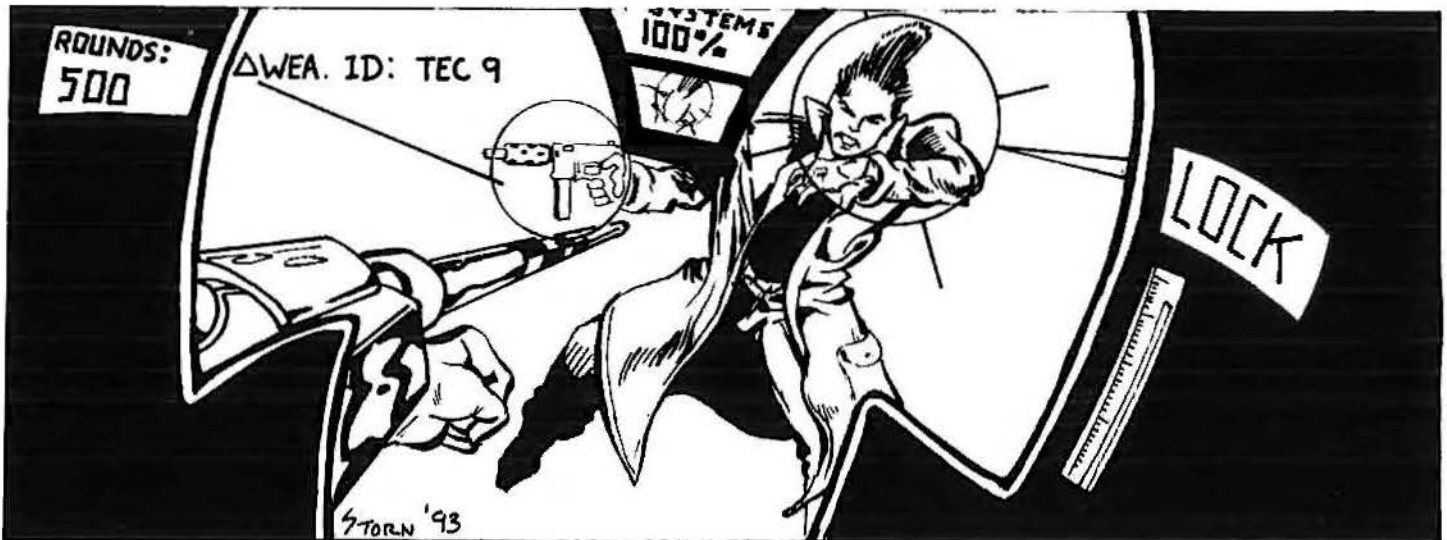
### Vigilante Mentality

"Of course, I killed him. Evil men deserve to die. He should be thankful I killed him so quickly." A character with this Psychological Limitation has set himself up as judge, jury, and executioner. Vigilante Mentality characters have a set of standards by which they judge people, and those who fail to live up to these standards will be punished harshly (or even fatally). These standards may be well-known (the laws on the books, the Ten Commandments), or they may be completely personal to the vigilante character. The character with a Vigilante Mentality will justify his actions on various grounds—deterring crime; punishing evildoers; "doing the work the cops can't do."

Most characters with this Limitation are willing to kill those they deem worthy of death. They can do this without remorse or any qualms—sort of like Casual Killer, but with a focus. A Vigilante will mow a street gang down with his assault rifle, gaze coolly upon the bleeding remains, then leave to track down more criminals.

**Example:** *Vigilante Mentality: Common, Total: 20 points.*





## THE USE AND NON-USE OF CODES AGAINST KILLING: VIGILANTES AND VIGILANTISM IN CHAMPIONS CAMPAIGNS

The "Vigilante Mentality" Disadvantage brings up a subject at the heart of *Dark Champions*: vigilantism in *Champions* campaigns (and gaming campaigns in general). A "vigilante" is generally defined as someone who enforces the law on his own. However, for *Champions* purposes, the term has a slightly different meaning: it refers to crimefighters who prefer to kill or severely injure their enemies rather than capture them and send them to jail.

In four-color campaigns, "pure" vigilantism is strictly forbidden. All PCs have Codes Against Killing, or at least the default "Reluctance To Kill" which all characters have unless they take Psychological Limitations such as those discussed above. On the other hand, street-level campaigns, full of "grit" and "realism," frequently include PCs who kill. Some *Dark Champions* characters will be out-and-out vigilantes, deliberately tracking down criminals and killing them in cold blood. Not all *Dark Champions* PCs are killers, but those who want to be, can be. The default Psychological Limitation in a *Dark Champions* campaign is not "Reluctance To Kill," but is more like "Willing To Kill Those Who Deserve To Be Killed."

Like any other character motivation, vigilantism can have both benefits and drawbacks in a roleplaying campaign. Rather than automatically dismissing vigilante characters as "evil," as sometimes occurs in four-color *Champions* games, *Champions* players and GMs should examine how vigilantes can be used to improve their campaigns. A quick look at modern comic books shows that vigilante or vigilante-like characters are quite popular. Obviously, something about vigilantism appeals to comic book fans; that appeal is, by itself, reason enough to deal with the subject in a comic-book roleplaying game.

## DRAWBACKS TO VIGILANTISM

The drawbacks to vigilantism are most apparent in four-color campaigns, but they can be seen in street-level campaigns as well. To begin with, vigilante characters will generally be despised by the public, the press, and law enforcement officials. This not only makes their "job" more difficult, but tends to wear away at some of them psychologically—not everyone can stand to be so alienated from society. Additionally, the police will probably be hunting the vigilante character (see below). If the vigilante character gets caught, he will receive severe punishment. All this "attention" tends to make vigilante characters paranoid—though they would call it "being cautious." Criminals also treat vigilante characters more harshly than they do four-color characters, because a vigilante really gives them something to worry about. Prison they can escape from eventually, but not Hades.

Even worse, most other player characters will also be hunting vigilante PCs—and they're a lot harder to escape from than the police. Not only is this hard on the character, but it can be even harder on the players. Most gamers do not like having to try to track down and capture their best friend's character. Feelings can get hurt, and egos can get bruised. As mentioned previously, a campaign which puts four-color heroes and vigilantes together takes mature players who know what they're doing and won't let such conflicts ruin the fun of gaming.

Another drawback to vigilantism is the possibility of accidentally killing an innocent person. This usually occurs because the vigilante character thought that the innocent victim was actually a criminal. Players who want to play vigilante characters have to be prepared for this to happen—they must be very careful and very discrete in their use of force, for a good GM will hold the threat of an accidental killing over the players' heads. If it does occur, the player needs to be ready to react as the character would react—shock, rage, denial, overwhelming grief, an apologetic continuation of crimefighting, or whatever reaction is appropriate. Events of this sort can become turning points in a vigilante character's career, and should be used to their best roleplaying potential.

At the same time, though, the players should not have to worry too much about killing innocents. If they do, the GM is turning the genre on its head. Street-level comic-book heroes usually have no trouble identifying the bad guys and "taking care of them" without hurting innocent bystanders. A GM who is constantly trying to trick his characters into killing innocent citizens shouldn't be running a *Dark Champions* campaign, because that sort of attitude reveals either a fundamental dislike for street-level games or a misunderstanding of the subgenre. Sure, it would be realistic to always keep the players on their toes that way, but that much realism even a street-level campaign doesn't need. The GM should keep the possibility of an innocent's death at the hands of a vigilante as a background threat, something the PCs are always aware of. If it is left primarily as a threat and does not become reality, most players will figure out what's going on and moderate their characters' behavior accordingly. Only if the characters continue to act inappropriately should the threat be invoked.

## BENEFITS TO VIGILANTISM

Though all these drawbacks may make playing a vigilante character seem like a thankless task, there are benefits to playing a vigilante character that make it all worthwhile. Those benefits can be summed up in two words: roleplaying opportunities. First of all, for most *Champions* players, a vigilante character is an excellent change of pace. It offers new vistas of crimefighting to explore and new concepts to use in character creation and development. Second, the roleplaying that results from interaction between vigilantes and four-color characters can equal or top anything seen in a regular four-color campaign, both in terms of character development potential and in terms of tension. A scenario with a vigilante PC who is trying to kill his worst enemy while being chased by the police and several four-color player characters leads to edge-of-your-seat, nail-biting *Champions* games which are better than any comic book.

What all this boils down to is this: don't immediately dismiss vigilante characters as evil non-heroes who don't belong in any properly-run *Champions* campaign. At least give them a try. Whether you like them or not, they *are* better than the criminals they fight, if sometimes only marginally, and there's no reason not to allow them as PCs if the player and the GM are both capable of handling them. Like any other type of PC, a well-run vigilante character adds a lot of fun and excitement to the game.

## TYPES OF CODES AGAINST KILLING

There is more than one type of Code Against Killing. Not every character has to be totally four-color, or purely a cold-blooded criminal-killer—in fact, most *Dark Champions* PCs will be somewhere in between these two extremes. Some characters, both four-color and street-level, are less opposed to killing than others. In other words, not every character with a Code Against Killing has to have the full, 20-point Code mentioned in the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*, and not all street-level characters want to gun down every criminal they see. Different Codes Against Killing (CAKs) can be bought this way:

**20 points:** This is the standard CAK in four-color campaigns. A character with this Code will never kill, and to the extent he can he will try to prevent other characters, PCs and NPCs, from killing as well. He will not insist that any character with a gun or a knife throw it away (though a character with a related Psychological Limitation, "Hatred Of Killing Attacks," would), but he will monitor the use of Killing Attacks very closely. If a 20-point CAK character accidentally killed someone, he would feel horrible pangs of guilt, guilt so strong it might very well change his life—he might give up adventuring, rededicate himself to his ideals with renewed vigor (i.e., temporarily have a Hatred Of Killing Attacks), or have any other appropriate reaction.

**15 points:** A 15-point CAK is like a 20-pointer, only less so. A character with this CAK would never kill anyone himself, but he might be able to tolerate other characters who killed on rare occasions and with good reason. A 15-point character will feel terribly guilty if he accidentally kills someone, and may even make major changes in his life or his superheroing style, but will not be totally changed by the experience in the same way a 20-point CAK character would be.

**10 points:** The 10-point CAK character is still generally opposed to the use of lethal force by anyone. However, this character is willing to consider killing in certain extreme situations—when an enemy triggers the character's Psychological Limitation or Enraged, when a DNPC or loved one is threatened, and so forth. The character will feel remorseful, of course, but will not be debilitated by his guilt for a long time like a 15- or 20-pointer would be. Furthermore, a character with a 10-point CAK is usually willing to work with characters of more vigilante-like philosophies—they're not his methods, and he doesn't approve of them, but it's not his place to dictate to another hero how to do his job. Persuasion and example will be more likely to win over the vigilante than forcefully confronting him would be.

**5 points:** This CAK is so feeble that it almost doesn't exist. It represents a character who is a "mercenary with morals." He prefers not to kill in most situations (the average battle, for example). But if he feels that killing is called for (outnumbered in battle, when seriously injured, an extremely evil opponent, someone who hurt one of his DNPCs or a PC friend), a 5-point CAK character will strongly consider using lethal force, and will use it in some cases. If other characters want to use deadly force, that's their business (at least in combat—out-and-out assassination and cold-blooded killing is looked down upon by any character with a CAK, no matter how few points he gets for it).

## BEING HUNTED BY THE POLICE

Most vigilante characters will be Hunted by the police or other law enforcement agencies, whether they actually take it as a Disadvantage or not. Law enforcement agencies take a dim view of killing, even if the victims are criminals. Besides the local police department, characters could choose to be Hunted by the State Bureau of Investigation, the FBI, PRIMUS, or quasi-law enforcement groups such as the Central Intelligence Agency. What is said below about police departments generally applies to these agencies as well.



The police not only have extensive non-combat influence (NCI), but should almost always be taken as a More Powerful group. Certainly the police force in a large city is going to be more powerful than a 150-point *Dark Champions* character. But the police can be considered more powerful than most 250-point superheroes as well. Don't think so? Well, their bullets may bounce off of some characters in battle, but there's more to life than just combat. Compared to most characters, the police have an enormous amount of manpower and resources to call on. They have access to money, special equipment, massive amounts of crimefighting data, other governmental agencies, and public opinion. The police also have a squad of detectives—and even a 25-point detective NPC can make a lot of progress towards cracking secret identities and finding characters. If the police decide to focus all these resources on a particular character, that character is in a lot of trouble, despite his superpowers. And this analysis assumes a police agency like those in the “real world”—in a *Champions* or *Dark Champions* campaign, the police may also have superhumans working for or with them. There might even be a special police combat unit whose job is to handle superpowered menaces. The police will normally Hunt a character to capture him; they will only Hunt to kill if the target is considered too dangerous to take alive. (The police will only be Watching a character if they suspect him of being involved in crime and can properly monitor him.)

If the police are Hunting a character on an 8-, then he is just one of many persons that the police are after. He may be the “pet project” of one or two devoted cops, but the force as a whole isn't really looking for him, just keeping their eyes open in case they run across him. The police are unlikely to come after the character with any special equipment, or otherwise give him any special attention above and beyond what other dangerous wanted criminals get. If the police are Hunting the character on an 11-, that character is getting some special attention that the average “Huntee” is not. Several officers may have been assigned to the character's “case,” at least part-time, and the PC is those officers' chief priority. Depending on why the character is being Hunted by the police, there may even be a task force specifically devoted to capturing the character. At the very least, the character will be one of several whose case is assigned to a “Superhuman And Paranormal Criminals Bureau,” or “Vigilante Squad,” or something of the sort. The police will have thick file on the

PC, and may even know things (Vulnerabilities, forensic data, habits, and so forth) that the character wishes they didn't. Special tactics will be developed for dealing with the PC.

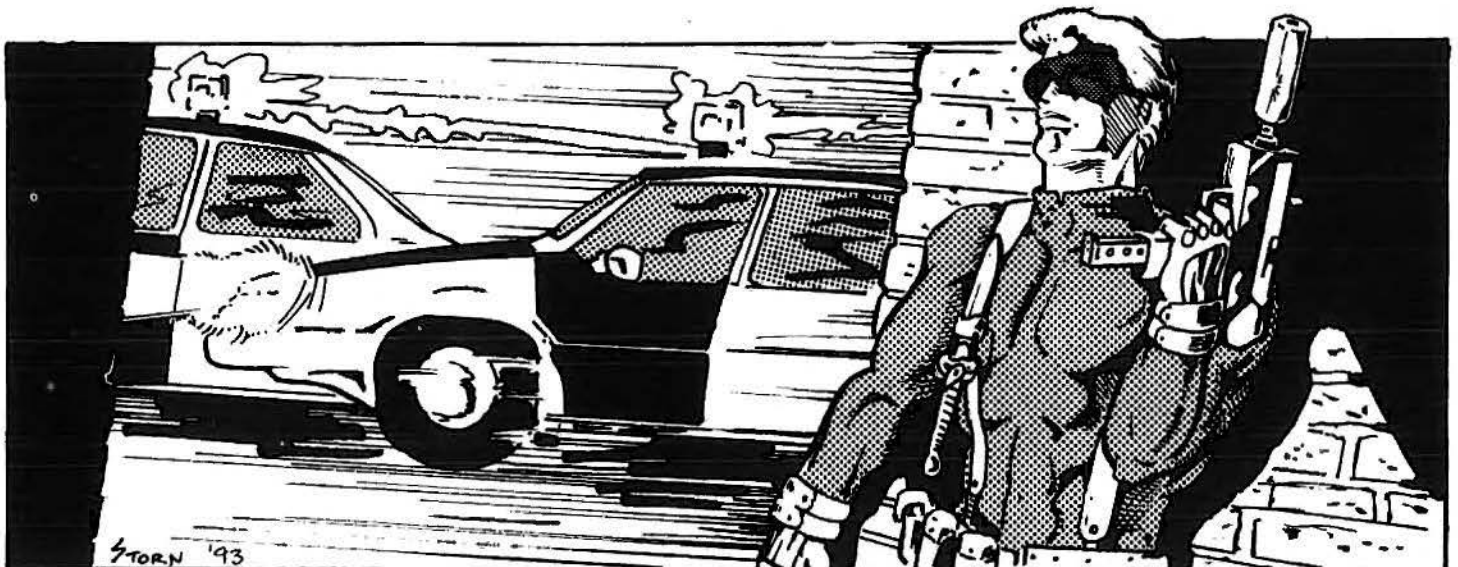
If the police are Hunting the character on a 14-, the character is a major priority for the department. There is a task force or special squad whose sole purpose is to find the character and deal with him. This task force will have as much information on the character as they can possibly find, as well as special equipment and tactics to help them capture the character if the situation calls for it.

Of course, the guidelines above should not be taken to mean that the police are going to be a constant problem for any PC they are Hunting—they are just suggestions. Many vigilantes (and other comic book characters) seem to be pretty talented at avoiding the police, so don't make the cops too much of a factor in your game. Keep your wanted characters on their toes, but don't make them paranoid.

### THE VIGILANTE AS A VILLAIN

Not every *Champions* or *Dark Champions* campaign will have vigilante characters. Sometimes the GM will decide he simply doesn't want such characters, and sometimes none of the players will have the desire to play vigilante characters. Some street-level campaigns are as idealistic as any four-color campaign, they just have a different type of character and a different focus for the characters' activities. But even four-color campaigns will have at least one use for vigilante characters: as villains. Vigilantes have a lot of potential as villains for four-color campaigns. In the first place, they are different from the usual world-conquering master villains the PCs so often encounter. Even though the vigilante is a crimefighter like the PCs, his methods of crimefighting will be so repulsive to them that they will have no qualms about going after him.

Secondly, using vigilantes as villains offers the GM a way to introduce the players to some of the benefits of vigilante characters, while avoiding most of the pitfalls. Although the characters will be united in their efforts to capture the vigilante, they will also be exposed to the vigilante's ideals, philosophy, and handiwork, possibly causing some of them to question their own motivations or methods. Will some PCs be tempted to give the vigilante a break, while others are determined to “bring him to justice?”





Another method for achieving the same effect is to force the four-color PCs to work with the vigilante character temporarily. This, too, will expose them to a vigilante character while minimizing the effects of the exposure. One way to set up such a scenario is to create a NPC vigilante who has crucial information that the PCs cannot get from any other source. Perhaps the PCs quickly need to find out everything they can about the Chinese tongs in the campaign. The only NPC that they can get the proper information from in time is the vigilante Swamp Fox, vulpine terror of the criminal element—but Swamp Fox will only give them the information if he is allowed to help out on the mission. Of course, at the end of the scenario, the PCs will probably try to capture the vigilante they were so recently allied with. Give them a shot, but remember that any good vigilante is smart enough to expect this and be prepared for it. Make it as fair a fight as possible, rather than a cake walk for the PCs. Unless they somehow see the vigilante as an equal of sorts, they will not learn much from the scenario.

There are two ways to introduce a vigilante villain into a four-color campaign: the “starting off with a bang” method (featuring headlines such as “Vigilante Massacres Dozens!” or “Entire Gang Slaughtered!”); and the “one step at a time” method (in which the GM announces a vigilante murder or two every game session, thus building up the vigilante as a gradual threat). The choice depends on whether the GM wishes to use the vigilante NPC as a focus for a single evening’s adventure (the first method), or whether he wants him to be a long-term plot element (the second method). In either case, make sure that while the vigilante is around you rub the players’ faces in it a little. Have the vigilante kill some villain they were never able to catch—make him a little more effective than they are, at least in a few situations or encounters. Or, have him do something horrifying and dramatic to get his point across (like a mass execution of an entire Mafia family at the don’s daughter’s wedding). Hopefully, one or two of the PCs will see the vigilante as something more than just another nutcase to fight and capture.

## STREET-LEVEL CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

In the street-level subgenre, there are a number of character “archetypes” or stereotypes which can always be found. Some characters are drawn from more than one archetype. Because most of these archetypes are fairly broad, no Package Deals are provided for any of them. These archetypes include:

### THE ANTI-TERRORISM SQUAD

This “archetype” is actually the basis for the entire campaign. The PCs are all members of an elite force whose job is bringing terrorist and hostage situations to a safe ending. The members of the team will have some Skills in common (Stealth, for example), but each member will also have a few Skills that no one else on the team has, so that the squad is prepared to deal with many different situations and incidents. Combat Driving and Piloting, Demolitions, Electronics, Forgery, Lockpicking, Mechanics, Security Systems, Systems

Operation, and Weaponsmith are all useful Skills. Unlike most *Dark Champions* campaigns, this sort of campaign usually has the characters travelling all over the world. Thus, the characters often have Languages, Area Knowledges, and Cultural Knowledges to complement their combat skills.

There are two common variants on this concept which can also form the basis for a campaign. One is the freelance mercenary team. This team takes on all sorts of missions, from anti-terrorism to extraction to seek-and-destroy, but will only work for governments and private citizens the team feels are “good” or worthy of help. The other variant is the SWAT team (or some other special police squad). This campaign will be confined to a single city, and the scenarios will usually consist of rescue and assault missions against the city’s criminal elements. This squad is usually an “elite” unit of the force, and is sometimes given more leeway and freedom of action than the average policeman (for example, a team member would not be questioned as closely about killing a criminal as a normal cop would). The characters’ Skills will be about the same as those of PCs in a regular street-level campaign.

### THE BOUNTY HUNTER

This character doesn’t care too much about “justice” and saving the innocent from the evil. He cares about money. He captures or kills criminals because they have a price on their heads, not because of their inherent badness. Other street-level characters who are more nobly motivated may despise the Bounty Hunter’s callousness and greed, but will sometimes find him a useful ally.

Bounty Hunters tend to know a lot about criminals, not only those in the campaign city but all over the country. They have to, since they make their money by knowing who’s wanted, what he’s like, and where he might be found. Bounty Hunters also have a lot of skills on relatively low rolls, since they learn a little here and there as they earn their living—sort of the “jack of all trades” of the street-level scene.

### THE COP GONE “BAD”

This character is a vigilante in policeman’s clothing. He has gotten fed up with the way criminals are treated by “the system,” and has decided to take the law into his own hands. He may be a cop by day and a vigilante by night, or he may try to combine the two roles and dispense a little “curbstone justice” when he feels he can get away with it. The Cop Gone “Bad” will spend a lot of time and effort concealing his “double identity”—if he were caught, it would mean the end of his career as well as a lengthy jail sentence.

The Cop Gone “Bad” doesn’t necessarily have to be a policeman. He can be any member of the justice system—a district attorney, a judge, the police department’s filing clerk, you name it. The primary feature of this archetype is his dual role as a member of “the system,” and as someone who has become a crimefighter because he feels that “the system” is not doing the job properly.

Cops Gone “Bad” usually carry over a lot of useful Skills from their legitimate job: Streetwise; Stealth; knowledge of the city’s underworld; and Contacts in the department, other law enforcement agencies, and the courts, just to name a few.



## THE EX-MERCENARY

This character is a former mercenary, bounty hunter, or military man who has had a change of heart. For some reason, he has developed altruistic motives and become a crimefighter. Maybe his conscience finally kicked into overdrive after he almost killed a little girl. Perhaps he tried to settle down in the campaign city but discovered that the underworld or his old enemies had other ideas. This motivation can last just until he gets back at a specific criminal, or it can drive the character to make crimefighting his “second career” (this may depend on why the Ex-Mercenary has turned crimefighter). Whether the Ex-Mercenary will still be as brutal and vicious as he was “before” can also depend on the character’s motivation for crimefighting.

In any event, this archetype brings a lot of combat skills and other useful knowledge to his war on crime. He may also have a lot of heavy weaponry left over from his earlier career, and the skill to build still more guns. Last but not least, his mercenary activities may have left him a wealthy man, capable of financing an entire team of like-minded men.

## THE FED-UP NORMAL

This character is mad as hell about crime, and just isn’t gonna take it anymore. He’s got himself a gun, and he thinks he knows what he’s doing, so the criminals had better watch out! The Fed-Up Normal is some ordinary guy, such as a storekeeper, who has seen too much crime to sit by quietly anymore. Perhaps he or his loved ones were victims of crime, or his store was robbed one too many times. In any event, since the cops aren’t doing the job, he’s finally decided to take the law into his own hands. This character may or may not have any real crimefighting skills. He may be another archetype, such as the Ex-Mercenary, but he’s just as likely to have little or no training. If this is the case, the player should not spend a large portion of his beginning points, but should save them until such time as the Fed-Up Normal has a chance to learn some useful skills. He should also take Disadvantages such as Unluck or Psychological Limitation: Naive which can be bought off later on, if he survives his baptism by fire.

## THE IDEALIST

This character brings four-color attitudes to his street-level crusade against crime. This isn’t to say that he can’t be a brutal person—he may fight viciously, break bones, and use severe interrogation methods to get the information he wants—but he will never, ever, intentionally kill someone. Naturally, Idealists have Codes Against Killing; they may also have sidekicks or other four-color trappings which are less common in *Dark Champions* campaigns. Idealists are also more likely than other street-level characters to work with the police, but they don’t have to. Idealists have as much trouble as four-color characters do with vigilantes and many other street-level characters, so this archetype is often the basis for the whole campaign—all the PCs are Idealists (see the description of campaign types for more information).

## THE INVESTIGATOR

This character is the intellectual of the street-level set. He prefers to think his way through a scenario, rather than fight his way through it. This may be something the Investigator can’t help (for example, an old war injury may keep the character from being a good combatant), or it may simply be a matter of personal preference. An Investigator doesn’t necessarily have to be the stereotypical hard-boiled private eye; he could just as well be a police detective who’s “gone bad” (see above), or a nosy little old lady who knows a lot about crime. Investigator characters sometimes tend to “look down” on characters who aren’t “in the know” like they are: “He’s Yat Sing, crime-lord of Chinatown, that’s who—don’t you read the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin?” An Investigator character may also think that he knows a lot about combat, even though this is not necessarily so. Investigators tend to be heavily-laden with crime-detecting Skills such as Criminology, Deduction, Forgery, Streetwise, KS: [Campaign City] Underworld, KS: The Mafia, and the like. They may also have lots of Perks, such as Money, Favors, and especially Contacts. They might take Psychological Limitations such as Loves To Show Off What He Knows, Afraid Of Guns, Always Thinks He Knows What He’s Doing, or Enjoys Tricking His Opponents.

## THE MARTIAL ARTIST

This character is a master of one or more martial arts, which he uses to fight crime. Unlike other *Dark Champions* characters, who tend to rely on guns and other weapons, the Martial Artist uses his fists and his fighting skills. This preference for hand-to-hand combat makes the Martial Artist something of a standout in a group of street-level characters; but the Martial Artist usually surpasses the other characters in hand-to-hand fighting ability. The Martial Artist also functions as the player characters’ liaison in Chinatown and expert on Asian organized crime.

## THE MYSTIC/OCCULT-ORIENTED STREET HERO

This character differs radically from most street-level characters. Unlike the average street-level PC, who is firmly mired in the “real world,” the Mystic Street Hero is just that—a street-level hero with magic-based powers. The Mystic Street Hero will usually be found in high-tech or superheroic street-level campaigns, since he usually has superpowers which make him inappropriate for pure street-level games.

The Mystic Street Hero might be: a man who has a contract with Satan to provide evil souls to keep Hell “stocked;” a person possessed by some “Spirit of Justice” which gives him special powers; or even a demon with severe personality problems (for a demon, that is). His Powers generally include some sort of mystic Killing Attack (“Flames of Justice” and the like); some way to detect evildoers or lawbreakers; a Movement Power or two to get him to those evildoers (Teleportation and Flight seem to be the most popular); and a few strange defenses or other bizarre powers (Damage Shield, Desolidification, Shape Shift, and so forth). The Mystic Street Hero also has Disadvantages which are not normally seen in street-level characters (“Watched By The Spirit Of Justice;” “Reputation: Demon From Hell;” and so on).

Though the Mystic Street Hero resembles regular four-color heroes in the way he is built, what sets him apart from them is his street-level outlook. Just like other street-level characters want to use their guns and fists to “clean up the streets,” the Mystic Street Hero uses his powers to overwhelm and destroy criminals. However, because he is a hero with Powers, he tends to attract higher-level threats than 150-point street-level characters do (demons, superpowered criminals, and so forth).

## THE OBSESSED SEEKER OF VENGEANCE

This character is a street-level hero with a big chip on his shoulder. Somehow, he or his loved ones have been victimized by crime, and the Obsessed Seeker is out for revenge. No matter who he has to go through, what he has to do, or how long it takes him, he’s going to find the object of his hatred and deal with him. The Obsessed Seeker may have spent a long time training, and have a lot of Skills; or he may be more of a Fed-Up Normal, acting on anger and not really capable of handling himself at first.

This character should buy Psychological Limitations such as “Vengeful” or “Must Overcome Failure.” Many players find it difficult to play an archetype which they see as so “focused” and “one-dimensional,” but there’s no need for every Obsessed Seeker to be like that if the player doesn’t want that sort of character. Take the main Psychological Limitation at a lower level than normal, and give the character some other interests or abilities which you are comfortable with.

There are two important questions to ask about this character. First, is he seeking vengeance on one man (for example, the assassin whose bullet confined him to a wheelchair for life), or on an entire group (such as the yakuza)? This will have a big effect on how the character is played. If the target is but one man (or a small group), the Obsessed Seeker can be more focused and more reckless. If he’s after an entire organization, he has to take a more long-term view, racking up one small victory after another, rather than trying to destroy the entire organization in one fell swoop.

Second, what is the Obsessed Seeker planning to do to the target once he finds him? Kill him quickly? Make him suffer? Make him confess his crime and go to jail for it? Let him go, in a fit of self-pity at the way he (the Obsessed Seeker) has totally warped his own life? Deal with him and move on to other targets? The possibilities are almost limitless, but the answer to this question will usually determine how long a particular Obsessed Seeker is a part of the campaign. If all he wants to do is eliminate one man (or organization), after he succeeds he may retire, dropping out of the “hero scene.” The player would create a new character if he wanted to continue playing in the campaign. If the Obsessed Seeker has decided to maintain his war on crime, he may need to buy off or change one or more Psychological Limitations. Completing his “quest” may have other effects on his personality and his life, but this will vary from character to character.

## THE RENEGADE COP

This character, a staple of many comic books and action movies, is a policeman whose on-the-job attitude and style set him apart from the average cop. The Renegade Cop is not usually worried about protocol, standard operating procedures, or keeping department property in one piece. He wants to do his job, and do it right, and he doesn’t care who he offends or how many criminals he injures in the process. The important thing is stopping the bad guys, not maintaining a good public image or following the rules all the time. Psychological Limitations like “Thinks Results Are More Important Than Rules” reflect these beliefs. Usually, the Renegade Cop is found in the presence of several supporting characters. First, there is his partner (if anyone else can stand to work with him at all), who is usually trying to get the Renegade Cop to calm down and take it easy. Then there is the immediate superior, who is constantly chewing the Renegade Cop out, but who secretly admires him and the results he achieves and defends the Renegade Cop to the higher-ups. Lastly, there are the high-level police officials who can’t stand the Renegade Cop, consider him a bad example of how policemen should act, and try to punish him or get him thrown off the force. The Renegade Cop usually works in the Homicide or Narcotics branches of the police department. Other cops and the public may admire him and help him, but they may think of him as a dangerous maverick who is best avoided. The Renegade Cop may take a Reputation to indicate how others regard him.

## THE VIGILANTE

This character is judge, jury, and executioner, all wrapped up in one gun-toting package. Ordinary citizens and law enforcement officers consider him a murderer, a serial killer, a psychopath, or all of the above. He considers himself to be a man doing a job the way it is supposed to be done—no more mercy for the criminal scum.

Most *Dark Champions* PCs and four-color heroes can be considered vigilantes in the broad sense of the word—someone who takes the law into his own hands. Furthermore, many street-level characters are willing to kill criminals if need be. What sets The Vigilante archetype apart from these other characters is his outright desire to hurt and kill criminals. The Vigilante doesn’t just fight crime, he hunts criminals down and forces them to answer for their misdeeds. Besides their murderous tendencies, most Vigilantes are willing to break the law in other ways which aid their war on crime—they burglarize criminals’ houses, assault street punks (to gain information, for example), and so forth. Some Vigilantes go even further and do things like kidnapping enemies’ DNPCs to put pressure on them. The Vigilante needs to have at least one Psychological Limitation reflecting this mindset—Vigilante Mentality is the obvious choice, but Casual Killer, Triggerhappy, Devoted To Justice, and several others will also do, depending on the character’s other personality attributes. The Vigilante usually does not have Powers—even in a superheroic street-level campaign, he tends to have lots of crimefighting Skills, and some big guns which he is a very, very good shot with. The Vigilante will often look underpowered or “out-gunned” by the opposition; what helps him win the day is his consummate skill and his unstoppable urge to bring criminals to justice.

See previous sections for more information on vigilantism in *Champions* campaigns.



# CHARACTER DESIGN

This section will go over the Skills, Perks, Talents, and Powers of the HERO System and discuss how they might be used by characters in a street-level campaign. Not every Skill and Power will be covered, just those with special applications in street-level campaigns.

Players should be sure to check with their GMs before designing characters to determine whether he intends to use any or all of the rules in this section. Not all GMs will want to use these rules; some of them may be considered too "outlandish" for a truly gritty, realistic campaign. Or, GMs may wish to limit the numbers of things each PC can do—for example, a GM might rule that no character could have more than two non-powered Powers. These comments are particularly true with regard to existing campaigns—a GM might not be comfortable with whole-scale revisions and alterations of characters. Whatever you as a player want to do, be sure to get GM permission first.

## SKILLS

In general, street-level campaigns are heavily "Skills-based" (as opposed to the standard "Powers-based" *Champions* campaign). All of the Skills listed in the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook* are appropriate to *Dark Champions* campaigns. However, some are especially appropriate, or have unique applications to the street-level subgenre, and it's those Skills which will be discussed here.

The GM may also want to review the Skill descriptions given in *Ninja Hero* to see if they can be used in his street-level campaign. Some of the special martial-arts applications for Skills may be useful in *Dark Champions* campaigns, even if not genre-specific enough to be repeated here.

## COMBAT SKILL LEVELS

The street-level subgenre sees as much fighting as any other *Champions* genre, and most *Dark Champions* characters will buy some Combat Skill Levels to help them win their battles. There are several ways in which *Dark Champions* characters can buy Combat Skill Levels as "Powers," taking Limitations on them to reflect certain abilities a character could have. Remember that only 5-point and higher Combat Skill Levels can be limited, and that Combat Skill Levels with Limitations usually only apply to OCV.

### Combat Skill Levels Against Autofire Modifiers

Combat Skill Levels can be bought with the -1 Limitation, "Only Works To Offset Autofire Modifiers." If the GM uses the OCV penalty for shooting at multiple targets, these Levels counteract that penalty. This sort of Combat Skill Level reflects a character who has had a lot of practice at controlling and using Autofire weapons.

A similar type of Level with Autofire attacks is one which "Only Applies When Firing Multiple Shots At A Single Target" (-1). This Level gives a character OCV bonuses for firing Autofire attacks at single targets. Many street-level comic-book characters are more accurate with Autofire weapons than the *Champions* rules allow, and this sort of Level is how they do it. Players should refer to the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*, p. 148, and Chapter Three of this book for details on Autofire attacks.

### Combat Skill Levels Against Hit Location Penalties

Characters can buy Combat Skill Levels with the -1 Limitation, "Only For Decreasing Hit Location Penalties." These Combat Skill Levels "nullify" the OCV minuses imposed by the Hit Location chart (see the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*, p. 162); they will not affect a character's OCV in instances where the character is not "calling a shot" against some Hit Location (or other target). Eight of these Levels will remove any of the ordinary Hit Location modifiers (but see the Chapter Three for an expanded list of modifiers). This would make a character a truly lethal combatant, since his shots to the Head or Vitals will suffer no OCV minuses. For this reason, GMs may want to establish limits on how many "anti-targeting" Levels he will allow characters to buy. If the gamemaster establishes a limit of, say, four anti-targeting Levels, then PCs could still have an easy time making most placed shots, but would still have a hard time shooting their foes in the Head with every shot.

There are two reasons why characters might want to buy anti-targeting Levels. First, a player may want to have a character who is an extremely good shot. In addition to several other Combat Skill Levels, he could buy a few anti-targeting Levels, to ensure that the character could make called shots frequently. This would allow the character to shoot guns out of hands, cripple escaping foes with foot shots, or perform any assassination with relative ease: "Which eyeball do ya wan' him shot through, Mr. Scatucci?" This fits the genre well, but may be a bit too powerful for some *Dark Champions* campaigns.

The second reason is to make the "average shot" count. If a character buys three anti-targeting Levels, he can nullify the OCV minus and always target the Chest area. Then the PC can always call a Chest shot, guaranteeing a x3 STUN Multiplier and a x1 BODY Multiplier. Similarly, a PC could buy two anti-targeting Levels and always take a "High Shot" (see page 163 in the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*). In either case, more lethal shots would still be difficult.



### Combat Skill Levels Against Dodging

Related to “anti-targeting” Levels are Combat Skill Levels bought with the -1 Limitation, “Only Applies To Counteract Dodge Modifiers.” A character with these Combat Skill Levels is capable of quickly “drawing a bead” on any target, no matter how fast it is moving or how agilely it can Dodge. Five of these Levels will cover most Dodging characters. However, since Dodging is often a “last resort” for characters and NPCs in desperate situations, GMs may want to consider not allowing or limiting this sort of Combat Skill Level.

### Combat Skill Levels Only Usable When Dodging

Characters can buy DCV Levels which only apply when they are already Dodging (a -1 Limitation). These Levels only increase the character’s DCV when he is Dodging or making a Maneuvering Shot (see Chapter Three). Even more cinematic is a character with DCV Levels which only activate if he makes certain Skill Rolls, such as Acrobatics, Danger Sense, or a DEX Roll.

### Combat Skill Levels Based On Knowledge Skill: Analyze Combat Technique

Characters can buy Combat Skill Levels which only apply if they make their KS: Analyze Combat Technique roll (see below). These Levels will help the PC fight a foe whose combat style is predictable or has recognizable “weakpoints.” Usually, these are bought as OCV levels, but they can be DCV levels if the player wishes.

## COMPUTER PROGRAMMING

From the FBI’s massive National Crime Information Computer (NCIC), which covers crime and criminals all over the nation, to the smallest local police department, crime records are being put on computer. This can be a big help to *Dark Champions* PCs who have Computer Programming Skill. Rather than spending countless hours assembling their own databases, they can “borrow” the police department’s information. However, this is not an easy thing to do, since law enforcement computers have tight security. At a minimum, there should be a -3 penalty to the Computer Programming roll to break into the computer records of the police department in the campaign city. Attempting to break into the NCIC would require at least a -6 to the roll. (Alternately, the GM might allow PCs to buy this sort of computer link as a 2-point Fringe Benefit.) Of course, such skills as KS: Computer Security, KS: Computer Hacking, and so forth could make this easier.

## CRIMINOLOGY

Criminology is one of the most useful Skills in a *Dark Champions* campaign—it is one of two basic Skills which allow the PCs to gather information about crimes and criminals (the other is Streetwise). Some details on what characters can do with this Skill (and its companion, Forensic Medicine), and what sort of things they can find out by using it, are given in the Campaign Creation section of this chapter. Players should not read that section without GM permission, because it contains information he may wish to keep secret.

## DISGUISE

Many street-level PCs will take the Disguise Skill, since it is extremely useful for stakeouts, gathering information, and infiltrating criminal organizations (of course, Acting and Mimicry are also necessary). These characters can use Forgery (see below) to document their false identities. Some disguises also require extensive computer records and other information that a suspicious NPC can check to verify that the character is who he says he is. For example, a disguise as an FBI agent won’t last very long unless there are records of the “disguise identity” in the FBI’s computers. A character can set up these records in two ways. First, he can buy a “Deep Cover” Perk (see the Perks section, below). Alternately, if the PC has Computer Programming, a Disguise roll (to make sure that the character knows what information he needs to concoct and where it needs to be put) and a Computer Programming roll at -2 (to correctly plant the information without leaving any traces) will do the trick.

## INTERROGATION

In four-color or idealistic campaigns, heroes do not often have Interrogation, because of its unsavory connotations. Other street-level PCs are much more likely to have it and use it. A few street-level PCs will go so far as to use mental manipulation or outright torture to obtain information from criminals. This should be allowed, though not necessarily encouraged. From a *Dark Champions* perspective, Interrogation is a heroic Skill—it is a way to gain vital information from criminals, whose health and welfare are usually not worth considering in the first place.

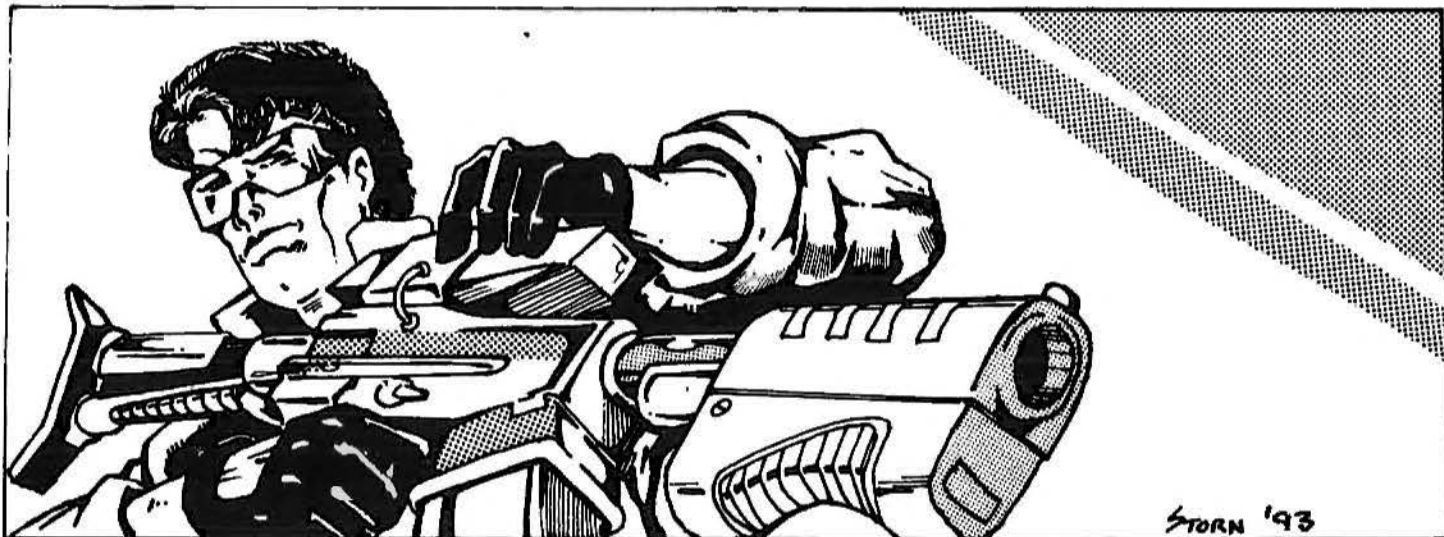
Depending on what methods are being used, Conversation, Persuasion, Science: Pharmacology/ Toxicology, Science: Psychology, and similar Skills might act as complementary skills. A character’s Reputation might also improve his Interrogation abilities (see “Reputation” in the Disadvantages section, below).

## LOCKPICKING AND SECURITY SYSTEMS

Street-level PCs sometimes need to sneak into someone’s home, office, car, or safe to look for evidence and gather useful information. The Lockpicking and Security Systems Skills are of course crucial to this sort of breaking-and-entering activity.

These situations also offer the GM an opportunity for a little roleplaying, and a chance to make the players sweat as well. Rather than just telling the players that there’s a lock to be picked, the GM can go to a little trouble and describe just what sort of locks and security devices there are. Then, the players have to figure out how best to approach the problem before they are able to make their skill rolls. Greg Porter’s two-part article, “Sound The Alarm,” in *Adventurer’s Club #8-9*, will provide a GM with lots of ideas for different security systems which can be used to test the players’ ingenuity.





## PARAMEDICS

In a genre which makes heavy use of Killing Attacks, Paramedics is an extremely useful Skill. It can also help the GM keep his scenarios running smoothly. Unlike four-color characters, who rarely take BODY, street-level PCs are likely to take BODY in the minor encounters leading up to a scenario's climax. This hurts their chances of succeeding in the end, and may ruin the GM's carefully arranged plotline. The solution is to allow the characters to use Paramedics to heal minor amounts of BODY—one BODY per wound taken. The character with Paramedics must make a roll for each wound, at -1 per 2 BODY taken from that wound. Of course, each wound can only be treated once. If the Paramedics roll for a wound is failed by 3 or more, the character loses an additional point of BODY. This system requires characters to keep track of wounds taken separately, rather than lumping all their lost BODY into one big number, but it's worth it.

Each BODY healed should require from one to five minutes of Paramedics work (cleaning wounds, stitching cuts, putting bandages on, and so forth). Some field medicine (for example, removing bullets or making temporary stitches), may require anesthesia, or the character will take some STUN from the pain. This rule can be justified by the "special effect" of "the characters weren't as hurt as they looked" or "they're tough enough to take it and keep fighting." This fits the genre perfectly—many times a street-level comic book hero has to struggle through lots of thugs and agents, receiving a few wounds with each battle, but then seems relatively fresh and ready to fight when he finally gets to the master criminal he's after. It's also a good way to encourage PCs to work together. See the Optional Damage Recovery Rules in the Combat Section.

## STEALTH

Some street-level characters are said to have a "unique knowledge of the city" (i.e., very high City Knowledge rolls). Characters like this can, in some situations, use their City Knowledge roll as a complementary skill for Stealth. If the character is trying to escape pursuers by hiding in the city environment, a City Knowledge roll will tell him the best place to hide in the area, and can thus improve his Stealth roll. This same system can be used for Shadowing rolls when characters are trying to track NPCs in the city.

## STREETWISE

Streetwise is a vital Skill for most *Dark Champions* PCs and NPCs. In fact, it is so important that GMs should consider making it an Everyman Skill for the campaign (especially for pure street-level games).

The use of Streetwise can be expanded slightly in street-level campaigns. Because information is crucial for street-level PCs, the GM should allow them to make broad use of Streetwise. For example, many street gangs speak with their own distinctive slang "language" (see the Sourcebook for more information). PCs can buy these as Languages (see below), but if the GM allows, characters may be able to understand this slang by making a Streetwise roll at -1 to -3. Similarly, characters who don't have specialized Knowledge Skills such as KS: Mafia or KS: Street Gangs (see below) could use their Streetwise rolls to identify prominent mob members, different gang symbols and colors, and the like.

## WEAPON FAMILIARITY

WF: Off Hand, from *Ninja Hero*, p. 33, should be allowed in most *Dark Champions* campaigns. For one point, characters can buy WF: Off Hand and gain +1 to their DCV when fighting with a melee weapon in each hand. In street-level campaigns, this Weapon Familiarity is usually bought by experienced knife-fighters and martial artists.

GMs should add an additional Weapon Group to the list of Weapon Familiarity Groups for street-level campaigns: Street Weapons. A character who takes a two-point familiarity with Street Weapons knows how to use weapons such as chains, street knives (switchblades, straight razors, and the like), brass knuckles, broken bottles, bricks, tire irons, and so on with proficiency. Characters without this Weapon Familiarity may suffer penalties of -1 to -3 when using such crude weapons (since some street weapons are very easy to use, the normal -3 penalty for lack of proficiency should be reduced in some situations). Alternately, GMs could add Street Weapons to the Common Melee Weapons groups list.

## KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Knowledge and information are perhaps the greatest tools for a street-level character. Information skills are arguably more important to street-level PCs than combat skills are: it doesn't matter how good a shot a PC is if he can't find out who he should shoot at and where the target is. In short, smart players will buy some Knowledge Skills for their street-level PCs. The following are just a few examples of Knowledge Skills that street-level characters could take.

### KNOWLEDGE SKILL: ANALYZE COMBAT TECHNIQUE

This Skill, similar to KS: Analyze Style from *Ninja Hero*, p. 31, allows a character to analyze an opponent's combat ability and techniques. If the character is good enough, this knowledge may give him some advantages in combat. KS: Analyze Combat Technique can be a complementary skill to Tactics in some situations (and vice-versa). This is a INT-based skill, costing 3 points, +1/2 points.

Depending on how much the PC makes his roll by, he can gain certain types of information about his opponent:

<b>Makes Roll By</b>	<b>Information Gained</b>
0 (exactly)	Where/how opponent was trained (has been in the Green Berets; has had marksman or sharpshooter training; etc.). If the foe has not had any recognizable training, the character cannot find anything out about him this way.
1-2	Character has general idea of how good his opponent is in relation to himself ("He's fair/good/excellent," "He's better/worse than me," "I can't beat him unless I get lucky")
3	Character can discover distinctive mannerisms about the opponent that allow the character to recognize the opponent's maneuver or attack type before the attack is declared. This allows the characters to abort (if necessary) and react to the attack.
Half or better	Character can figure out so much about the opponent's fighting technique that he can recognize the opponent's maneuver or attack type, the general division of the opponent's levels (if any), and targeting of placed shots (if any). This gives the character the full information necessary and allows the character to abort (if necessary) and react to the attack.

Characters cannot make successive Analyze Combat Technique rolls against the same opponent in the same fight—they get one try only. Knowledge and combat bonuses gained through use of KS: Analyze Combat Technique last for that combat only; they do not "carry over" to future attacks.

### KNOWLEDGE SKILL: [Campaign City] UNDERWORLD

This Knowledge Skill tells the character who's who in the underworld in the campaign city, from the lowest thug or street gang member to the most powerful mob boss. In appropriate circumstances, this Knowledge Skill can be a complementary skill for Streetwise.

In superheroic street-level campaigns, this Knowledge Skill may include superpowered criminals who live in the campaign city, or the GM could require a separate Knowledge Skill, [Campaign City] Supervillains. In either case, if the character makes the roll by enough (by 3 or more, at least), he can know things like the supervillain's powers, methods, weaknesses, and even secret identity.

Characters could also take a more detailed Knowledge Skill about specific types of criminals, such as KS: Burglars or KS: Serial Killers. Some of these skills, especially KS: Serial Killers, will cover criminals of that type from all over the country, not just from the campaign city.

### KNOWLEDGE SKILL: [Organized Crime Group]

This Knowledge Skill will give the character in-depth knowledge of a particular organized crime group: the Mafia, the yakuza, criminal motorcycle gangs, the Chinese Tongs and Triads, or whichever group the character prefers. The character will know who the members of the group are, the group's organizational structure, culture, and customs; what sort of crimes the group is involved in; and how to contact the group. KS: [Organized Crime Group] can be a complementary skill for Streetwise in circumstances involving that particular group.

### KNOWLEDGE SKILL: SCENTS

Some street-level characters have spent a lot of time memorizing the distinctive odors of poisons, perfumes, and other substances. This sort of information can come in handy for solving mysteries and tracking down criminals. Characters who want to have this ability should buy KS: Scents; the roll should be bought to a level which matches the character's Smell PER Roll.

### KNOWLEDGE SKILL: [Street-Level Subculture]

Much like the martial artists of *Ninja Hero* have their own subculture, The Martial World, street-level characters may have knowledge of and access to several different subcultures. Knowledge of a subculture acts as a Streetwise skill for that subculture, so the character knows how to gather information on the members of that subculture, how to act when dealing with them, and where to find them. Normal Streetwise will not work well in these subcultures, because they are very suspicious of outsiders, and because it requires a degree of specialized knowledge to contact some of these people which is beyond the scope of the basic Streetwise Skill. Often a character has knowledge of a subculture because of his "origin" or activities before becoming a crimefighter. A Subculture Knowledge can act as a complementary skill to Disguise or Bureaucratics rolls related to that subculture. However, based on the character's origin, his knowledge of some aspects of a subculture may be limited, requiring penalties to the roll (for example, a



character with KS: Law Enforcement World based on his former job as a New York cop might know very little about how policemen in Great Britain act).

The following are some of the subcultures *Dark Champions* PCs might have knowledge of:

**Knowledge Skill: The Espionage World:** A character with KS: The Espionage World knows a lot about spies, spying, and intelligence agencies world-wide. He can identify distinctive assassination and bugging styles, knows how to use those clever spy gadgets (for example, ballpoint pen guns), and knows who's important in the various government espionage agencies. Depending on how much he makes the roll by, the character may know drop points for secret information, that a particular person is an agent on a mission, what certain code-words mean (this skill can be a complementary skill to Cryptography in some instances), or other sensitive intelligence data.

**Knowledge Skill: The Law Enforcement World:** This Knowledge Skill gives the character information on how lawmen and law enforcement agencies work; the skill covers local police departments, the FBI, the DEA, and other such agencies. The character knows where cops hang out when they're off-duty, what police signals and codes mean, and maybe even when a big arrest is coming down. He also knows about the organization and structure of these agencies.

**Knowledge Skill: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World:** Characters with this Knowledge Skill know all about the military culture and how to get by in it. Furthermore, they have contact with the world-wide mercenary network and the world of terrorism. This Skill allows the PC to identify a NPC's military rank, find out which mercenaries are currently in the country, and know which terrorists have enough skill with Demolitions to build the type of bomb that exploded at the airport last month.

### KNOWLEDGE SKILL: TELEPHONE, SEWER, AND UTILITIES SUBSYSTEMS

Characters with this Knowledge Skill know all about the telephone, sewer, and power systems in the campaign city. The character knows where different sewer tunnels lead, how to shut off power to portions of the city, and so forth. This information can be useful when the character needs to get into certain buildings or listen in on certain information. With regard to the telephone system, this Knowledge Skill can act as a complementary skill to Bugging when the character is trying to place a wiretap. With regard to the sewer system, the GM may also require the character to purchase Area Knowledge: [Campaign City] Sewer System.

### KNOWLEDGE SKILL: WORLD CRIMINALS

This Knowledge Skill is similar to KS: [Campaign City] Underworld, but it covers criminals all over the world. The more obscure a criminal is, the less the character is likely to know of him (i.e., the GM should assess penalties to the roll if a character wants to know about little-known criminals from far-flung locales). This Skill can be particularly useful if foreign criminals decide to set up shop in America, when dealing with Interpol or UNTIL, when the character wants to infiltrate a world-wide criminal organization, and so forth. The GM may include world supervillains in this skill, or he may make the PCs buy a separate skill, KS: World Supervillains.

## LANGUAGES

There are several languages which might be useful to street-level characters:

**Battle Codes:** A group of street-level PCs (or criminals) might create their own battle-language or coded commands to enable them to coordinate maneuvers and attacks. If the players are willing to spend one or two points each and put in a little effort to develop their own battle-language, they can have an almost foolproof secret communications system. This language can be as elaborate as they wish (i.e., they could get by with a simple one-point code, or could invent a complex 3-point language).

**Foreign Organized Crime Languages:** Many of the organized crime groups that street-level PCs will encounter, such as the yakuza, Mexican Mafia, and Chinese Tongs and Triads, do not always use English. If the characters are to be able to effectively fight and/or infiltrate these groups, they will need to be able to speak the "mother tongue."

**Gang Slang:** Many street gangs, including Jamaican posses, have their own distinctive slang. A character who wanted to infiltrate such a gang or interrogate a gang member would need to know something about this language. Characters can purchase any one type of gang slang for one point (these "languages" are usually not complicated enough to require a greater cost). Each different type of gang slang has to be purchased separately.

## SCIENCES

*Dark Champions* characters can use scientific methods and knowledge in their war on crime. Here are some of the Science skills that a street-level PC might consider buying:

**Science: Accounting:** Remember Al Capone? He wasn't convicted of murder, robbery, or bootlegging—he was sent to prison for tax evasion. The FBI and other law enforcement agencies have continued to use this sort of tactic in fighting crime. A skilled accountant can examine a suspected crime figure's books to see if he has been trying to hide or launder funds. Accounting can also help provide clues as to how large a criminal organization is and what "subsidiaries" it may have.

**Science: Criminology:** Criminology is the sociological study of crime (Science: Criminology should be distinguished from the Skill Criminology, which has more to do with forensics and investigation). Knowledge of criminology can tell the character what causes people to become criminals, how criminals act, what criminal organizations are like, and what the crime patterns in a particular city or country are. *Dark Champions* PCs may be able to use Science: Criminology to predict how a criminal will act, where a killer will strike next, and so forth. However, criminology is neither infallible, nor a crystal ball—it cannot provide a lot of details, and a failed roll can lead the character down the wrong trail. Criminology can work very well with Science: Psychology (below).

**Forensic Sciences:** Characters who want to be expert forensic scientists can buy several Science skills which will act as complementary skills to their Criminology and Forensic Medicine Skill rolls. Descriptions of these Skills are detailed in the Campaign Creation section.



**Science: Graphology:** Graphology is a Science which involves determining a person's personality and mental state from his handwriting. The GM may allow characters to use their Forgery Skill this way (at -3 to the roll), or he may require them to buy this ability as a Science. Graphology can be used to analyze ransom notes, suicide notes, serial killers' letters to the newspaper, Card Shark's journal, and so forth.

**Science: Pharmacology/Toxicology:** Pharmacology is the study of drugs and their effect on the human body; Toxicology is a branch of pharmacology which deals specifically with poisons and toxins. Characters who want to be master poisoners, or who want to be able to analyze and cure drug and poisoning victims, should buy this Science. In some circumstances, Science: Human Biology would be a complementary skill for Pharmacology/Toxicology rolls.

**Science: Psychology/(Criminal Psychology):** Characters with Science: Psychology understand something of the workings of the human personality. To a limited extent, they can predict how people will act, what it is that makes them act the way they do, and so forth. *Dark Champions* PCs will primarily be concerned with Psychology for the insight it can give them on the criminal mind. If they desire, they can specialize in criminal psychology by buying this Skill as Science: Psychology/Criminal Psychology. This should give them a slight bonus to figuring out the criminal mind, but a slight minus to their roll in other cases.

## SKILL ENHANCERS

Certain Skill Enhancers are very useful in combination with the Disguise Skill, because they help make the character's disguise more believable. Jack Of All Trades is particularly good for this, as are Linguist and Traveler if the character wants to infiltrate a foreign criminal organization. The Scholar Skill Enhancer is also popular with *Dark Champions* PCs, to whom knowledge is a vital tool.

## PERKS

Just about all of the Perquisites listed in the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook* are appropriate for street-level campaigns. The following notes will cover the most important ones, and provide some suggestions on how to use them in *Dark Champions* campaigns.

### CONTACT

Most street-level PCs will have one or more Contacts; unlike many four-color heroes, street-level PCs often begin their careers with a few Contacts under their belts. Some types of Contacts which are frequently encountered in street-level comic books include:

**The Armorer/Technician:** This Contact is a supplier and technical aide for a PC who has little or no skill with technology. This Contact is an expert at weaponsmithing, computers, vehicle design, or whatever other technical field the PC needs help in. He provides the PC with his expertise because the PC once saved his life, is an old friend, or maybe just because the PC pays him (but the PC may get a volume discount!). The Armorer himself will have Knowledge Skills or Contacts which enable him to get his hands on the latest guns, bullets, body armor, computer technology, and so forth, so that the PC can have a technological edge on his enemies.

**The Friend On The Force:** This Contact is a member of some law enforcement agency. He assists the character by tipping him off when the cops are after him, and by giving the PC access to the agency's information. The Friend's motives for subverting his own employer vary. He may think that the police are not dealing with the crime problem properly (i.e., the way the PC and other vigilantes deal with it), he may admire the character for some other reason (perhaps the PC rescued his daughter from kidnappers), or the PC might be blackmailing the "Friend" with some dark secret from his (the Friend's) past.

The Friend is not necessarily a patrol officer. He might be a file clerk or clerical worker with easy access to the agency's files, for example. High-ranking police officers are also common Contacts (for example, the police commissioner).

**The Old Friend:** This Contact is a good friend of the PC's from days gone by. They may have served in the armed forces together, worked for the same intelligence agency, or patrolled the same beat as cops. Whatever the connection, the bonds of friendship remain strong, and the PC can call on his buddy for assistance from time to time. The Old Friend typically holds some position which is of benefit to the character (police captain, reporter, politician). Unlike the two Contacts described above, the Old Friend often does not know about the PC's crimefighting activities, so the character has to be sure to guard his secret well.

### CONTACTS LIMITED BY IDENTITY

A vigilante or other street-level character might have one or more Contacts which are Contacts for a particular disguise or identity that the PC maintains (either through normal Disguise rolls, or because the character has the "Deep Cover" Perk, see below). The character can get in touch with the Contact only through that particular false identity; the Contact would not necessarily cooperate with another false identity or the character's crimefighting persona. This limiting factor is worth a -1 point cost on the Contact (although all Contacts still have a minimum cost of one point). Thus, a Contact limited by identity would be on an 11-for-one point (or 12-if the character had the Well-Connected Skill Enhancer). At the GM's option, the same rule applies to Contacts which are accessible to a character's Secret Identity, but not to his crimefighting persona.



**New Perk: Deep Cover (2 points)**

A character with this Perk, also known as "Alternate Identity," has a long-established, nigh-unquestionable false identity or disguise which he can use. He may have spent years creating this persona, or he may have killed someone and taken over their identity. In any case, the cover is so well-established that no one suspects that it is a cover. The GM should carefully examine every Deep Cover a player wants to take to make sure that it will not unbalance the campaign (for example, no PC should ever be allowed to buy a Deep Cover as the boss of a major organized crime group).

Deep Cover has one drawback that most other Perks do not have: it can be lost. If the PC acts oddly for a long time, does something completely out of character, or is somehow discovered, then the Deep Cover is "blown": the PC has been exposed, and can never use that identity safely again. The PC does not get the two points back to spend again, they are forever lost. The GM may allow the character to replace the blown Deep Cover with another Deep Cover, but it should take the PC months or years of game time to build another such identity.

**FOLLOWERS**

Followers are relatively uncommon in the street-level subgenre. Bright-eyed kid sidekicks are usually out of place in gritty, realistic vigilante adventures. However, some characters may have "agents" which could be bought as Followers; Idealist characters may also have Followers. These Followers should be tough enough to handle themselves, because the PC isn't always going to be around to protect them.

**FRINGE BENEFITS****Organized Crime Figure (1-5 points)**

This Fringe Benefit denotes all of the advantages and benefits that being part of an organized crime group can bring—power, respect, influence, prestige, control over others. It can only be taken by members of organized crime groups, not by PCs.

The more points an organized crime figure spends on this Perk, the more powerful he is within his organization. A street-gang member or the lowest-ranking members of a Mafia family or a tong would have this Perk at the one-point level. A mid-level yakuza oyabun, a Mafia captain, or the leader of a large outlaw motorcycle gang or Jamaican posse might buy this Perk at the two- or three-point level. Mafia godfathers, chief oyabuns of the yakuza, leaders of Colombian drug cartels, and the like will buy this Perk at the five-point level (or maybe at an even higher level, if the GM feels that this would be appropriate).

The exact name of this Fringe Benefit will vary from organization to organization, as detailed in the "Organized Crime" section of the Sourcebook. For example, in the Mafia, this Perk will be called "Made Man" in addition to the title of the individual Mafioso's position in the Mafia hierarchy; in a Chinese Tong or a yakuza gang, the Perk's name will be the title of the member's position in the gang.

**Security Clearance (1-10 points)**

This Fringe Benefit is for characters who work with the federal government. It represents someone with access to classified or secret government data. The cost varies depending upon the character's degree of access: a low-level filing clerk might have only one point of Security Clearance; the President has ten points. GMs should be wary of letting characters buy this Fringe Benefit at too high a level. It can unbalance the campaign to give PCs free rein to study a lot of sensitive information. The GM should examine and approve every Security Clearance to make sure that it isn't abusive.

**Top Man (2 points)**

"Who do you have analyzing the latest data on Colombian drug cartels, Mister Secretary?"

"Top men, Senator."

"Who?"

"Top men, sir. Don't worry, it's all being taken care of."

A character with the Top Man Fringe Benefit is one of the "top men" so often referred to in the highest government circles. In short, he is an expert who is kept on retainer by the government (or a particular government agency) as a consultant and "problem solver." Unlike Security Clearance, this Perk does not give the character access to any information he wishes to look at; rather, it means that he is on call and may be asked to help with a particular problem—the GM controls the character's access to information. However, a Top Man might be asked to look at data that exceeds his Security Clearance (if any), since desperate times may call for desperate measures.

**MONEY**

Money is a very important Perk for many street-level characters—all that ammunition gets expensive after a while. The number of "millionaire playboy" comic book characters is practically uncountable. Organized crime figures may also be quite wealthy.

*Dark Champions* characters, particularly vigilantes, sometimes get their money from an unusual source: the criminals themselves. After they defeat a drug dealer and his gang, they simply help themselves to the thousands of dollars in cash which the dealer has been saving. Thus, bad money is put to good use. Other characters, who have independent sources of wealth, will anonymously donate such money to charity.

However, the options for the Money Perk are limited. A character has to settle for being Middle Class (less than \$75,000 per year), or pay five points and get bumped all the way up to Well Off (\$500,000 or less per year). A lot of characters want to be comfortable financially, but not five points' worth of comfortable. The following chart provides some optional Money levels for street-level character:

**Points Income**

1	\$ 100,000 or less per year
2	\$ 200,000 or less per year
3	\$ 300,000 or less per year
4	\$ 400,000 or less per year

The GM can work up a similar chart for 6-9 points of Money, and so on.

## VEHICLES

Vehicles are a very common Perk in street-level games. Many characters have vehicles that are a little bit “souped up,” but are not the super-vehicles that are seen in four-color campaigns. Since street-level PCs do not have Movement Powers, vehicles are a necessity for inner-city travel. This leaves the GM in a quandary—either give the characters a non-standard, better-than-normal vehicle for money (i.e., for free, the usual rule for equipment in heroic-level campaigns); or charge them character points for a vehicle which is not much better than normal. Characters in most street-level campaigns are built on 150 points or so, and cannot afford to spend a lot of points on a vehicle that will mostly be used just to get them from one place to another.

A suggested solution for this problem is to charge the characters one point for every ten points the vehicle costs, rather than using the one-for-five rule in the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*. This will allow street-level PCs to buy a good vehicle at a low cost; if they want a vehicle which is armed and armored, the cost will still be high enough to keep the campaign balanced. Alternately, the GM might rule that the one-for-five cost has to be used on any vehicle which has combat equipment (guns, armor, and so forth). Several sample vehicles built with the one-for-ten rule are provided in the Sourcebook.

Another optional rule for making vehicles cheaper is to reduce the vehicle's cost based on the amount of Money a character has. The Active Cost of the vehicle can be reduced by 5 points for every point of Money a character has.

## BASES

As with vehicles, heroic-level characters are often allowed to buy bases for money. This rule works fine for “safehouse” bases, which are usually little more than a studio apartment (equipped with the bare necessities of life) for the character to hide out in. However, if a character wants a huge, elaborate base, filled with criminalistics labs, firing ranges, and the like, the GM should make the PC pay character points for his base. The “one-for-ten” and “Money” rules suggested for vehicles can be used for bases as well.

As an alternate rule for “safehouse” bases, the GM might charge a PC a flat rate of one character point per safehouse. This would entitle the character to a small apartment, equipped with some furniture and a few appliances. Safehouses can be used not only as hideouts, but to store spare equipment, extra ammunition, and fresh costumes and clothing. At the GM's option, a safehouse could also have a personal computer, or a small amount of basic scientific equipment for forensic analysis. This “one-point” rule allows a PC to cheaply establish a whole string of hidden bases and equipment depots.

## TALENTS

With the possible exception of Universal Translator, all of the Talents are appropriate for any street-level campaign. Some Talents have special applications or implications in *Dark Champions* campaigns:

### CRAMMING

Cramming can add a dimension of believability to a disguise. The character can choose a subject which the disguise identity should know about, and then Cram that subject so that he is can make conversation on that topic if someone questions him. This is particularly useful when the character is attempting to imitate some real person in order to infiltrate an organization or base.





## DANGER SENSE

Instead of the quasi-mystical form of Danger Sense often seen in four-color campaigns, *Dark Champions* PCs can buy a more mundane form of this Talent: intuition-based Danger Sense. A Character with this sort of Danger Sense is very observant and intuitive, giving him an almost preternatural ability to detect possible dangers.

Naturally, Intuitive Danger Sense is limited to the character's immediate vicinity (at most), and only covers attacks the character could sense. It can be bought for combat or non-combat situations, as the character chooses. Because it is intuition-based, it is not as accurate as a mystic Danger Sense—the character is not allowed to make a half roll and launch attacks at full OCV. His intuition merely lets the character know "Something's not right here..."

The GM can grant bonuses or assess penalties to the Danger Sense roll based on how familiar the situation is to the PC. For example, if the PC has spent a lot of time disarming security systems, his intuition in such situations might be heightened, and he would get a bonus to his Danger Sense roll. If the character has never tried to disarm a security system, he might have a substantial penalty to his Danger Sense roll the first few times he tried to do so.

All of these drawbacks to intuitive Danger Sense are reflected by taking the Limitation "Intuitive" (-1) (if the GM wants to allow "half rolls," then this would be a -½ Limitation).

**Example:** *Danger Sense, 12-, out of combat, immediate vicinity; Intuitive (-1): 11 points.*

## IMMUNITY

Characters who often use poisons like this Talent, for obvious reasons. However, buying enough Immunity to protect one's self from even a few poisons can get prohibitively expensive, because each Immunity has to be bought separately. There are several possible solutions for this problem. First, make all Immunities cost one point, regardless of how common the substance is. This will ease the burden on the PCs somewhat. Or the GM could charge a set cost (say, two or three points) for related groups of venoms or diseases, just like Weapons Familiarities are purchased: all snake venoms, for example, or all poisons the character commonly uses.

## RESISTANCE

Besides its normal use (allowing a character to stand up to Interrogation), Resistance can be used to pass lie-detector tests. Each point of Resistance a character has will be a -1 to the lie detector operator's PS: Polygraph Operator roll.

Because they help a character withstand pain, Resistance points can also add to a character's EGO Rolls when Wounded (if the GM chooses to use the Wounding rules; see Chapter Three). Every point of Resistance a character has will add one point to the character's base EGO Roll when Wounded.

## SIMULATE DEATH

Simulate Death is even better than Resistance for fooling lie detectors. Characters with this Talent who make their roll at +2 will completely fool any polygraph, regardless of how skilled the operator is.

## POWERS

This section describes "Powers" that street-level characters can buy. Since any *Champions* player or GM can figure out how to buy Powers for normal superpowered characters, the comments in this section are directed towards pure *Dark Champions* characters and other heroic-level PCs.

The Powers in the HERO System can be used to build "non-powered" abilities. These are abilities which street-level comic-book characters possess, but which tend to exceed the capabilities of normal men using just the Skills, Perks, and Talents. Powers are used to simulate these abilities, although they are not superpowers in the traditional comic book sense. A classic example of a "non-powered" Power is a hero who has an uncanny ability to "vanish" when no one is looking at him. In theory, this could be done with the Stealth Skill, but this ability seems to go a little bit beyond what most characters can do with Stealth. By using the various Powers, Advantages, and Limitations, this sort of skill-like "non-Power" can be simulated.

Lots of characters who appear to be well-trained normals may have low point Powers as an "unfair advantage" over their opponents. Remember that Running, Superleap, Swimming, basic Enhanced Senses, Knockback Resistance, Lack of Weakness, and many other powers can be explained as special training.

## AID

There are some uses for Aid in street-level campaigns, and all of them should be bought with the Limitation "Self Only" (-½). However, most of the abilities that can be simulated with Aid will work better if they are bought as Characteristics with Limitations. See "Characteristics," below, for more information.

## ARMOR

Armor is the standard defense power in *Dark Champions* campaigns; Damage Resistance and Force Field should not normally be used. Many street-level characters will wear combat armor made of various space-age plastics and other materials. Kevlar, the most common form of body armor, is a type of strong, lightweight fiberglass which is bulletproof. However, Kevlar does not offer any protection from knives or damage taken from falling; pure Kevlar armor can be built with a -½ Limitation to reflect this. Kevlar can be layered with other materials to create armor which is proof against knives and other attacks in addition to gunfire. The *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*, p. 203, has further information on Kevlar and other armor materials.

## CHANGE ENVIRONMENT

Probably the most common non-powered use for this Power is to create illumination, in the form of a flashlight (an OAF). Street-level characters can also use this Power to create eerie "special effects" which accompany them and disquiet their enemies: feelings of unease and gloom which affects everyone near the character; a fog which follows the character everywhere he goes; and strange sound effects and eerie voices are just a few of the many ways to use Change Environment in this fashion. A PC might even buy bonuses to his Presence linked with this sort of Change Environment effect.





## CHARACTERISTICS

There are lots of ways *Dark Champions* characters can treat Characteristics as Powers to create some interesting new abilities. A few examples are given below. GMs should impose limits on how many points worth of a Characteristic a character can buy. In the "extra Strength based on willpower" example given below, the GM could limit characters to buying no more than five additional points of Strength with this Limitation (this will, after all, double the character's lifting capacity).

Remember that Characteristics with Limitations do not increase Figured Characteristics which are not also affected by the same Limitation. For example, a character who gains some extra Strength from special substances does not get a corresponding increase in his Physical Defense, so he might injure himself when he uses that extra Strength.

**Strength:** Some heroes have the willpower to lift weights which are heavier than they could normally lift, if the situation is desperate enough. These hardy souls should buy five extra points of STR which "Requires An EGO Roll" (-1/2), "Costs 5 x END" (-2), and "Can Only Be Used When The Character Pushes His STR" (-1/2) (this is sometimes known as an "extended Push"). Characters who want to take risks with their health might consider buying extra STR which comes from "super-steroids" or other dangerous substances (usually bought as an OIF with Continuing Charges). (Substances could also boost other Characteristics, such as SPD.)

**Dexterity:** Extra DEX which "Only Works To Act First In A Phase" (-1/2) is a good way to simulate characters who are quick-draw experts. Another option is extra DEX which "Requires a Skill Roll" (Tactics or KS: Analyze Combat Technique, -1/2). A character with this Power is using his tactical sense to figure out what the enemy is going to do in a battle, and then compensating for these actions when he makes his own attacks.

**Constitution:** Many street-level characters use their sheer willpower to keep themselves on their feet and fighting when lesser men would fall. To have this ability, a character should buy extra CON with the Limitations "Only To Prevent Being Stunned" (-1/2) and "Requires An EGO Roll" (-1/2).

**Ego:** The same willpower shown by a high CON can be reflected by a high EGO as well. Heroes often have the willpower to keep struggling against evil when lesser men falter. Extra Ego also helps with Wounding rolls.

**Presence:** Fearsome or frightening characters could buy extra PRE which "Only Works For Presence Attacks" (-1/2). This type of PRE could also take Limitations like "Only When Holding A Gun" (-1/2) or "Only When Holding [A Specific Gun]" (-1), to reflect a character whose skill with firearms makes him particularly terrifying. PRE which "Only Works To Protect Against Presence Attacks" (-1) is a good ability for fearless crimefighters, jaded master villains, and other people who do not scare easily.

**Speed:** If the GM is generous, he might allow the PCs to buy extra points of SPD "Only To Attack" (-1/2), or only to use a particular attack (-1). This can have unbalancing effects on a campaign, though, so GMs should think carefully before they allow characters to buy this ability.

## CLAIRSENTIENCE

The typical Clairsentience power is mainly a "mystical" power which is inappropriate for street-level campaigns (except for a Mystic Street Hero character). However, there are some other, more limited uses of Clairsentience which for *Dark Champions* campaigns. For example, a vigilante character could be psychic; he would buy Precognition with Limitations like "Activation Roll," "No Conscious Control" (-2), and/or "Visions Are Often Unreliable" (-1) to reflect this ability.

Precognition can also be used to simulate a form of "super-Tactics" or an especially reliable form of Danger Sense. Characters with this ability are so skilled at tactical analysis, or are so intuitive, that they can almost envision what their enemies are doing or what danger lies ahead. If the GM is willing to let characters buy such an ability, he should allow the "visions" that the character has to be absolutely accurate, provided that the appropriate Skill Roll is made.

**Example:** *Super-Intuition: Precognitive Clairsentience (40 Active Points); Limited Use (a form of "super Danger Sense") (-1/2), Requires A Danger Sense Roll (-1/2): 20 points.*

Some forms of Clairsentience, mainly Clairaudience, can be used to build high-tech sensing devices and "bugs." With base Clairsentience and a few points of extended range, a character can listen to someone from half a city away.

**Example:** *Shotgun Microphone: Clairaudience, x8 range (800"); (35 Active Pts); OAF (Shotgun Mike, -1): 17 pts.*



## CLINGING

Literally “walking on walls” may not be an appropriate ability for many *Dark Champions* characters. However, Clinging could be bought as a form of “super-Climbing.” Characters should not buy this form of Clinging at a higher Strength than their natural STR, and cannot use this sort of Clinging to resist Knockback. A 15 STR character could buy Clinging this way:

**Example:** 15 STR Clinging (12 Active Points); Requires A Climbing Roll (-½), Cannot Cling To Ceilings (-¼), Cannot Be Used To Resist Knockback (-¼): 6 points.

## DAMAGE REDUCTION

Damage Reduction is a relatively rare Power in *Dark Champions* campaigns, but there are a few applications for it. For example, a character might have an ability to ignore pain which could be reflected with Damage Reduction (a good example of this is the character Pokerface in the Sourcebook). Another use, suggested in *Ninja Hero* on p. 39, is to build a character who can take a lot of damage but still keep fighting, seemingly ignoring the pain. This type of Damage Reduction might be bought with Limitations like “Requires A CON (or EGO) Roll” (-½).

In any case, the GM should limit the amount and type of Damage Reduction that *Dark Champions* characters can buy. PCs should usually be limited to Physical Damage Reduction only, and should never be allowed to buy Damage Reduction at a higher level than 50 percent. Since Killing Attacks are common in street-level games, characters can buy their Damage Reduction as resistant.

**Example:** Damage Reduction, 25 %Physical, Resistant (15 Active Pts); Requires A CON Roll (-½): 10 pts.

## DARKNESS

There are a lot of attacks and combat devices which can be built using the Darkness Power. Perhaps the most common one is the smoke grenade or pellet:

**Example:** Darkness to normal sight, 3" radius (30 Active Points); OAF (Smoke Grenades, -1), Range Based On STR (-¼), Does Not Work In Winds Or Rain (-¼), 4 Charges lasting for 1 Minute each (-¼): 11 points.

For campaigns where characters often have Enhanced Senses such as Infrared or Ultraviolet Vision, the effects of a smoke grenade can be expanded to cover those senses. Other possibilities for Darkness in street-level campaigns include “screamers” (Darkness to Hearing), radio jamming devices (Darkness to Radio Sense Group), and stink bombs (Darkness to Smell Group, good for confusing dogs and other creatures with Tracking Scent). Darkness can also be Linked with other Powers—for example, a dose of knockout gas Linked with a smoke grenade, so that the smoke will hide the gas.

## DRAIN

*Dark Champions* characters can simulate a wide variety of attacks and abilities with Drain. Drugs and poisons are the most obvious attacks that can be bought using this Power. For example:

**Example:** Interrogation Serum: 4d6 PRE Drain, recover at 5 pts per Hour (+½) (60 Active Pts); OAF, fragile (easily spilled or diluted serum, -¼), 1 Charge (-2): 14 points.

**Example:** Weakness Drug Darts: 2d6 STR Drain, recover at 5 points per Minute (+¼), Ranged (+½) (35 Active Points); OAF (Poisoned Darts, -1), Range Based On STR (-¼), Must Target Non-Armored Hit Locations (-¼), 16 Charges (-0): 14 points.

Drain can also be used to build poisons which coat knives and other bladed weapons. Once the poison is rubbed onto the blade, it will stay there until an attack (successful or not) is made with the poisoned blade. If the character wants to poison someone else, he has to take time to coat the blade again (i.e., re-set the Trigger). This sort of poison will not work unless it enters the victim’s bloodstream.

**Example:** Blade Poison: 3d6 STUN Drain, recover at 5 points per Minute (+¼), Trigger (blade attack does BODY, +¼) (45 Active Points); OIF (any bladed weapon, -½), 1 Charge lasting for 2 Phases with 8 doses (-¾): 20 points. (Note: the same poison could be bought as a RKA with No Range (-½).)

## EGO ATTACK

Ego Attack is usually an inappropriate Power for street-level characters. However, when bought with the Limitations “Mental Power Based On CON” (-½) and “No Range” (-½), Ego Attack simulates pain-causing drugs used to torture prisoners.

## ENDURANCE RESERVE

Besides being used to build batteries and power-packs, END Reserve can simulate characters who have had special training in some particularly strenuous endeavor. For example, characters who have practiced holding their breath for long periods of time could buy an END Reserve for that purpose. Street-level END Reserves of this sort should be no larger than 50 END (5 points worth of END); Recovery should be limited to no more than the character’s natural REC. The Recovery for the Reserve should be bought with the Limitation “Personal” (-½): if the character cannot Recover, the Reserve cannot either, and if the character is Knocked Out, the END Reserve is lost just like normal END would be. And don’t forget that Powers such as Running which can draw off of either the END Reserve or the character’s natural END must be bought with a +¼ Advantage.

**Example:** In his Secret Identity, The Samaritan likes to run in marathons and other long-distance races. He decides to buy an END Reserve to help him run farther (and faster, if necessary). He pays 5 points for 50 END in the Reserve, and 5 points for 8 points of REC with the Limitation “Personal” (-½). This gives him a total cost of 13 points for his END Reserve. He also buys 8 extra inches of Running with a +¼ Advantage (total cost 20 points), so that he can use the Reserve’s END or his natural END with his Running.

## ENERGY BLAST

Energy Blast can be used in several ways. For example, merciful characters can shoot rubber bullets instead of the lethal variety, and buy this attack as an Energy Blast. A multipower in a pure street-level campaigns can have rubber bullets with the same number of DCs worth of Energy Blast as the attack has in Killing Attacks. Energy Blast also works well for explosives and grenades.

Some characters are “throwing masters,” experts at turning any object into a thrown weapon. Characters who want to be able to do this can buy this effect as an Energy Blast, with a maximum of 6d6. The EB is on an OIF, since taking one object away from a character with this ability does not disarm him (he can always grab something else and throw it). Characters with this talent should also buy a Ranged Killing Attack with the same Limitations, since sharp objects will do Killing Damage when thrown.

**Example:** *The hero Eightball is an expert juggler who can use small objects (bottles, ashtray, paperweights, and the like) as throwing weapons. He buys an Energy Blast to reflect this skill:*

*6d6 Energy Blast (30 Active Points); OIF (any blunt object of opportunity, -1/2), Range Based On STR (-1/4): 17 points.*

## ENHANCED SENSES

Enhanced Senses are always a good thing for *Dark Champions* characters to buy; the only concern is differentiating those that are mundane enough to be permitted in a street-level campaign (such as bonuses to PER Rolls), and those which are superpowers and may not be allowed in a street-level game (360-Degree Vision, for example). Check with the GM to find out what Enhanced Senses he's willing to let street-level characters buy.

## ENTANGLE

Many different types of Entangles are available to street-level characters:

**Example:** *Handcuffs are an Entangle: 6d6 Entangle (60 Active Points); OAF (Handcuffs, -1), 1 Recoverable Charge (-1/4), Set Effect (only ties up hands or feet, -1), Does Not Prevent Use Of Most Accessible Foci (-1): 11 points.*

**Example:** *Bolas and line-guns are traditional types of Entangles: 4d6 Entangle, Entangle And Character Both Take Damage (+1/4) (50 Active Points); OAF (Bolas, -1), 1 Recoverable Charge (-1/4): 15 points.*

## FLASH

Flash is a common Power in street-level games. Characters might have anything from the typical flare grenades to paint bombs to thrown pepper or sand which they could use to blind opponents.

**Example:** *Paint Pellets: 2d6 Sight Group Flash, NND (see below, +1) (60 Active Points); OAF (Paint Pellets, -1), 4 Charges (-1), Range Based On STR (-1/4): 18 pts.*

The defense for this NND Flash is wearing rigid eye protection—the usual forms of Flash Defense (polarized mask lenses or eyes which have the ability to withstand bright light) are still going to be coated with paint, and must be wiped off before the character can see again. Rigid eye protection, such as a helmet's faceplate or a pair of glasses, can be wiped off so quickly that the Flash is ineffective. The same analysis would apply to Flashes which were defined as thrown pepper or poking someone in the eyes.

*Dark Champions* characters can also Flash other Senses: electronic “screamers” might be used to Flash the Hearing or Radio Sense Groups; spices could be thrown in a hunting dog's path to Flash his sense of Smell, and so forth.

## GLIDING

Besides obvious uses (such as parachutes and hang-gliders), Gliding can be used to simulate characters who are trained to walk without leaving discernible footprints. This ability allows the character to avoid pressure plates, squeaky floorboards, and other such security measures, at the GM's discretion. This form of Gliding should not be bought at more than half of the character's normal walking rate.

**Example:** *3" Gliding (3 points); Concentration (1/2 DCV, -1/4), Only To Avoid Leaving Footprints (-2): 1 point.*

## IMAGES

Images is a Power with many uses in *Dark Champions* campaigns, though none of them are the magical “illusions” and phantasms that are usually associated with this Power.

Sound Images can be used as a form of “super-Mimicry” or “super-Ventriloquism.” Characters with this sort of Skill are so good that they have greater range than others with those Skills do, and can impose minuses to the PER Rolls of their listeners. The same effects can sometimes be achieved through clever use of sound recording equipment (if the PC can manage to get enough recorded conversation of the person to be imitated, he can splice the recordings together to create a fake conversation).

**Example:** *Images to normal Hearing, 1 hex, -2 to PER Rolls (16 Active Points); Requires A Mimicry Roll (-1/2), Can Only Be Used To Mimic Other Sounds (-1/2): 8 points.*

A character can use Sight and Sound Images to create fake “props” to fool his enemies with: fake guns, fireworks which sound like gunfire, dummies which bear an uncanny resemblance to the PC, and the like. These props can be used to distract enemies, lose pursuers, and throw investigators off the trail of the character's Secret Identity (“Jack Clauson can't be the Scarecrow—I've seen the two of them together!”). Characters with this sort of Images power can only carry one or two props at a time. They have to return to their base, car, or some other place where they can store a whole variety of props if they want to “switch” one Image for another (this is reflected in the Limitation, “Set Effect Until Changed”). It requires a little time to take down one illusion and set up another; the amount of time will depend on how complex the props are.

**Example:** *Images to normal Sight and Hearing, 1 hex, -2 to PER Roll (21 Active Points); IIF (various props, -1/4), Set Effect Until Changed (-1/2), Takes Extra Time To Set Up An Image (from +1 Phase to 1 Turn) (-1/2): 9 points.*

Images can be used as a tactical distraction—a high-tech improvement on the old “thrown pebble” trick. A character could rig up a sort of “grenade” which was nothing but tape recorded combat sounds, thus making the enemy feel outnumbered and outgunned. Depending on how cleverly a character used this sort of Image, the GM might give him OCV or DCV bonuses of +1 to +3.

**Example:** *Images to normal Hearing, 4 hexes (+1/2), -2 to PER Rolls (21 Active Points); IAF (Tape Recorder Grenade, -1/2), Range Based On STR (-1/4), Set Effect (mimics combat sounds, -1/2), 8 Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-0): 9 points.*



## INSTANT CHANGE

Characters who want to be quick-change artists can purchase Instant Change. This ability can be very handy for characters who use a lot of disguises. Even better is the character who can quickly switch clothes with an unconscious enemy when no one is looking. This tricks his other enemies into shooting the "decoy," and then the disguised character can ambush them.

**Example:** *Instant Change, only with clothes character(s) currently have on, Usable Against Others (+1) (10 Active Points); Can Only Be Used On Unconscious Or Incapacitated Others (-½): 7 points.*

## INVISIBILITY

Super-Stealthy characters can buy their "stealth" talent as a form of Invisibility. These characters can fade into the shadows so well that they cannot be seen at all (except for their "fringe effect"), and move so silently that almost no one can hear them. This ability works particularly well if the character carries a few smoke grenades, since the clouds of Darkness give him a lot of dark places to slip in and out of.

**Example:** *Invisibility to normal Sight and Hearing, 0 END (37 Active Points); Requires A Stealth Roll (-½), Sight Invisibility Only Works In Shadows/Darkness (-¼): 21 points.*

## LACK OF WEAKNESS

Dark Champions characters can easily buy Lack Of Weakness if they want some. An enemy with Find Weakness can't find the weak points in someone's armor if he cannot see that armor. Thus, any character wearing an overcoat, that staple of costuming for mystery men everywhere, could define the overcoat as Lack Of Weakness on an OAF (since the coat could easily be ripped away).

## LIFE SUPPORT

There are plenty of creative ways that street-level characters can use Life Support (in addition to obvious uses such as aqualungs).

GMs should consider allowing characters to buy 1-4 points of Life Support defined as the ability to hold one's breath for an extended period of time. 1 point would increase the time that a character can hold his breath by 1½; 2 points would double it; 3 points triple it, and 4 points quadruple it (see "Holding Breath And Drowning," *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook* p. 167, for more information).

Life Support is often the defense for NND attacks defined as knockout gas. Street-level characters could buy some special nose-filters to protect themselves from such gases:

**Example:** *Nose Filters; LS: Self-Contained Breathing (10 Active Points); IIF (nose filters, -¼), Only Works To Protect Against NNDs (-1): 4 points.*

Similarly, some characters seem to have a knack for grabbing a lungful of fresh air just before knockout gas grenades are thrown at them. This protects them from the gas until they can get out of the cloud:

**Example:** *LS: Self-Contained Breathing (10 Active Points); Activation Roll 14-(-½), Character Can Hold His Breath For 1 Minute Maximum (-¼): 6 points.*

Characters whose origin includes some sort of "super-soldier serum" or "anti-aging drug" would be justified in buying LS: Immune To Aging or LS: Immune To Disease. Some street-level characters might undergo treatments which would grant them LS: No Need To Sleep.

## MIND CONTROL

Characters who are accomplished hypnotists can buy Mind Control to simulate that ability. The GM should establish a ceiling on the number of dice that can be bought (6-8d6 is probably a good limit). Other Limitations required to buy this ability include: No Range (-½), Extra Time (1 Minute, -1½), Concentrate (0 DCV, -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires Eye Contact (-½), and Requires A PS: Hypnotist Roll (-½).

When the Limitation "Mental Power Based On CON" (-½) is tacked on, Mind Control can be used to simulate various drugs and poisons. For example:

**Example:** *Paralysis Drug: 8d6 Mind Control (40 Active Points); OAF, fragile (easily spilled or diluted drug, -1¼), Set Effect (paralysis, -½), Mental Power Based On CON (-½), 1 Charge (-2), No Range (-½): 7 points. (Note: for one more point, the "No Range" Limitation can be changed to "Range Based On STR" (-¼), and the "Fragile" Limitation dropped entirely, to create a Paralysis Dart [the character might also want to buy more Charges].)*

**Example:** *Truth Drug: 8d6 Mind Control (40 Active Points); OAF, fragile (easily spilled or diluted drug, -1¼), Set Effect (answer all questions you are asked truthfully, -½), Mental Power Based On CON (-½), 1 Charge (-2), No Range (-½): 7 points.*

## MIND LINK

Characters can use Mind Link to establish their own encrypted radio link. The link will be affected by attacks which affect the Radio Sense Group (such as a Flash of the Radio Group), not those which affect the Mental Sense Group. If a Mind Link radio system was combined with a battle language, the player character group would have an almost foolproof communications system.

**Example:** *Mind Link, related group of minds (the PCs or any other small group; 10 Active Points); OIF (Radio Helmet, -½), Can Only Be Maintained With Other Persons Who Have This Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio Sense Group, Not Mental Sense Group (-0): 4 points.*

## MIND SCAN

Mind Scan is generally inappropriate for *Dark Champions* characters. However, in some campaigns, a character might be allowed to use Mind Scan as a sort of "super-Streetwise"—he knows the criminal minds of the underworld so well that he just "knows" where to find the criminal he's looking for ("A filthy piece of human trash like Big Lenny would be at Jake's Bar tonight! I'm certain of it!"). The GM should impose bonuses or penalties on the Streetwise roll based on how well the character knows the criminal he is looking for.

**Example:** *8d6 Mind Scan (40 Active Points); Requires A Streetwise Roll (-½), Can Only Be Used To Locate Criminals (-¼), Does Not Allow Character To Use Any Other Mental Powers (-¼), Extra Time (1 Hour, -2½): 9 points.*

## MISSILE DEFLECTION & REFLECTION

Whether the character defines the special effect of his Missile Deflection as blocking or dodging incoming attacks, this Power is certainly appropriate for street-level campaigns. It's a good way for a character to dodge a storm of bullets and keep fighting. If bought as a way to "block" attacks, a character might buy it through a Focus (such as a billy club or a shield); if defined as a way to "dodge" attacks, no "Focus" Limitation should be taken. Any level of Missile Deflection is allowable.

Likewise, Reflection is appropriate for *Dark Champions* PCs, but only up to the level of thrown weapons such as shuriken. Reflecting bullets, arrows or other such attacks is a little beyond the pale.

**Example:** *Missile Deflection for all attacks (20 Active Pts); Reflection, only back at attacker (20 Active Points); Only For Thrown Objects (-½): 13 pts. Total: 33 pts.*

## MULTIFORM

Classic Multiform powers, where the character changes his shape into creatures like a wolf, a dinosaur, or a bird are not appropriate for *Dark Champions* campaigns. However, this Power does have at least two uses for street-level characters.

The first use is for characters who maintain more than one costumed identity. If the character's powers are different in each identity (for example, one identity is a gun-toting vigilante, and the other is an armored hero), the character could buy the different identities as Multiforms.

The other use is to simulate characters with severe mental problems such as "split personality." If a character's personality (i.e., Psychological Limitations, Berserks/Enraged, and other Disadvantages) changes radically from time to time, the two different personalities could be reflected by building the character with a Multiform. This is particularly appropriate if the two personalities have completely different views of crimefighting (i.e., one is a ruthless Vigilante, and the other is an Idealist).

## POWER DEFENSE

Power Defense can be used in a street-level campaign to give characters some immunity to poisons and drugs, since many such attacks are bought as Drains. The -1 Limitation, "Only Protects Against Poisons And Drugs" should be taken. Characters should be limited in the amount of Power Defense that they can buy this way—15 points is usually a good limit, since most poisons will not be more than a 2-4d6 Drain.

## SHAPE SHIFT

The Shape Shift Power can be used by *Dark Champions* characters as a form of "super-Disguise." With the proper Limitations, a character can use Shape Shift to create a disguise that is so real that people cannot tell it apart from the real thing. Such a disguise takes a long time to put on, but once established it will fool even those close to the person the character has disguised himself as. Shape Shift disguises work well with the "Deep Cover" Perk (see "Perks," above).

Shape Shift disguise can be bought this way:

**Example:** *Shape Shift, limited group (humans), 0 END (+½) (30 Active Points); Requires A Disguise Roll (-½), Extra Time (5 Hours, -3): 7 points.*

## SKILLS

There are many possibilities for building Skills as Powers in a *Dark Champions* game. For example, a character might buy a line-gun which aids his Climbing Skill. A set of loaded dice might add +2 to a character's Gambling Skill when the character is playing craps. A character who is adept at Lockpicking might have built himself an especially advanced set of lockpicks and tools which give him +3 to his Lockpicking roll. Many guns will have inherent Combat Skill Levels bought as sighting and targeting devices.

## STRETCHING

Street-level characters can buy Stretching through various types of Foci, such as whips, line-guns, staves, and the like. This means that the character has some lengthy object that he can use to reach things or hit enemies who are standing away from him. This sort of Stretching should be bought with the Limitation "No Non-Combat Multiple" (-¼).

**Example:** *+5d6 HA (15 Active Points); OAF (Staff, -1): 7 points; 1" Stretching (5 Active Points); OAF (Staff, -1), No Non-Combat Multiple (-¼): 2 points. Total: 9 points.*

## SUPERLEAP

Though *Dark Champions* characters can't leap for miles and miles like some "brick" characters in four-color games can, they can buy at least a few inches of Superleap. They can also buy Superleap through Foci.

Natural Superleap should be limited so that a character can only buy enough inches of Superleap to double his natural leap based on STR (for example, a STR 15 character would only be allowed to buy +3" of Superleap). Any more than this will make the characters too superhuman. Characters with Acrobatics or similar Skills might be allowed to buy a few more inches with the Limitation "Requires A Skill Roll" (-½).

However, more Superleap can be bought through devices. For example, a character might build a line-gun with an attached motor which would whisk him up to rooftops in no time (the line-gun could also be bought as bonuses to Climbing Skill, but Superleap is quicker and quieter). The line-gun would not allow the character to "leap" forward, or to absorb the impact of landing from a leap, like Superleap normally does. This could be bought as follows:

**Example:** *8" Superleap (8 Active Points); OAF (Line-Gun, -1), Only Works To Carry Character Upwards (-½), No Non-Combat Multiple (-¼): 3 points.*

## TELEKINESIS

The stereotypical form of Telekinesis, which involves moving objects with mental force, is not appropriate for *Dark Champions* campaigns (unless some of the vigilantes in the campaign are psychic). However, more innovative uses of TK might be allowed. For example, a character could buy a line-gun which will throw out a line that wraps around small objects and pulls them back to the character:

**Example:** *6 STR Telekinesis (9 points); OAF (Line-Gun, -1), Only Works To Pull Objects To The Character (-¾), Affects Whole Object (No Squeezing) (-¼): 3 points.*



## TELEPATHY

Mind-reading is generally out of place in *Dark Champions* campaigns. However, some street-level characters display an uncanny knack for being able to tell what others are thinking. By observing someone for a little while and knowing a little basic psychology, they can make astounding deductions as to what that person is thinking. This can be bought as Telepathy:

**Example:** 6d6 Telepathy, 0 END (45 Active Points); Requires A SC: Psychology (or Deduction) Roll (-½), Extra Time (5 minutes, -2), Character Must Closely Observe Subject, Including Facial Expressions, During The Five Minutes (-½), Concentrate (½ DCV, -¼), Only Surface Thoughts May Be Read (-½): 9 points.

**Note:** If the Skill Roll is failed, an incorrect idea of what the subject is thinking will be obtained. Furthermore, the GM may rule that there are situations in which there is no possibility of "reading" someone's mind this way.

## TELEPORT

Remember the example given in the introduction to this section, about characters who have the ability to "vanish" when no one is looking at them? This "Power," which can be a lot of fun to roleplay, is built with Teleport; it is sometimes known as a "Vanishing Teleport." Vanishing Teleportation also allows a character to "re-appear" in places it would have seemed impossible for him to reach.

Vanishing Teleportation is based on a Stealth roll, which makes it quiet. It can only be used when no one is looking at the character or when no one can see him (such as when he's in a cloud of Darkness—the Darkness clears and the character has "disappeared without a trace"). Characters cannot Teleport further than their normal movement rate (the base rate, without Pushing or non-combat multiples); nor can they Teleport into areas they could not normally reach. For example, a character with Lockpicking could "Teleport" through a locked door (if he made his Stealth and Lockpicking rolls at, say, -3), but a character who did not know Lockpicking could not. Characters using Vanishing Teleport cannot carry extra mass, or use non-combat multiples. This ability can be built as follows:

**Example:** Eightball has 10" of Running and 10" of Swinging. He decides to buy a Vanishing Teleport, and builds it this way: 10" Teleport (20 Active Points); Requires A Stealth Roll (-½), Only To "Vanish" When No One Is Looking (-½), Can Only Teleport To Places Character Could Normally Go (-½), No Non-Combat Multiple (-¼): 7 points.

GMs should carefully monitor the use of this power. Characters should not be allowed to use it any time they are alone and want to bypass a locked door; that's not what it's for. Vanishing Teleport is designed to give characters the ability to disappear mysteriously and then re-appear in a place that no "normal" human being could have reached so quickly. It should heighten the roleplaying in the campaign as much as aid the character. If there is absolutely no way that a character can make it out of a place without being seen, he should not be allowed to use Vanishing Teleportation.

## TRANSFORM

Most types of Transform—such as turning princes into frogs, purifying spoiled food, and the like—are inappropriate for *Dark Champions* campaigns. However, Transform is a very flexible Power, and some applications of it work well in the street-level subgenre. For example, a martial arts-type attack designed to permanently blind an opponent by poking out his eyes could be bought as a Major Transform.

Transform can also be used to wipe an area clean of evidence. A character with Criminology would know enough to scan a room for possible clues, and could then spend a few moments removing or obliterating that evidence, effectively making his crime untraceable. Since most forensic trace evidence is fragile, it is easily "Transformed" (removed). This ability can be bought as follows:

**Example:** 3d6 Cosmetic Transform (remove/alter evidence), Area Of Effect (any area, 6", +1½) (37 Active Points); Requires A Criminology Roll (-½), Extra Time (5 minutes, -2), Concentrate (½ DCV, -¼): 10 points.

## POWER ADVANTAGES

This section details some street-level uses for Advantages, as well as several new Advantages for *Dark Champions* campaigns.

The following Advantages are usually (but not always) inappropriate in street-level campaigns: Affects Desolidified, Based On Ego Combat Value, Damage Shield, Delayed Effect, Difficult To Dispel, Indirect, Sticky, and Uncontrolled. All other Advantages are usually allowable, at least in some situations. The most important Advantages are discussed below.

## AREA OF EFFECT

**One Hex:** One Hex Area Of Effect can be used to create explosive bullets, mini-grenades, and similar attacks. The tactical advantage of only having to hit a DCV 3 hex makes this Advantage very useful.

Some attacks which fill a whole hex when they "go off" might still require an individually-targeted "to hit" roll, rather than a roll to hit a hex. For example, an explosive bullet can't "explode on impact" unless the victim is hit with a normal "to hit" roll. These attacks should take the Limitation, "Must Hit Target, Not A Hex" (-¼), effectively making One Hex a +¼ Advantage. (This Limitation could also be imposed by the GM in certain combat situations where the character has to try to shoot an Area Of Effect attack through a small opening—for example, where a PC is trying to throw a grenade through a window.)

**Cone:** Cone can be used for flamethrowers and some shotguns (see Chapter Three).

**Line:** Line also works for some types of flamethrowers. It can also be used to simulate an "autofire" attack. This creates a gun which fires so many bullets in a tight pattern that anything in the line of hexes in front of it will be cut to pieces:



**Example:** *The Harbinger of Justice wants to build a Man-Portable Vulcan Machine Gun, capable of firing thousands of bullets a minute, to use against alleyways full of street gang members and other criminal scum. He buys his gun this way:*

*2d6 RKA, Area Of Effect (12" Line, +1) (60 Active Points); OAF (Really Big Gun, -1), 16 Shots (-0), Cannot Move On The Phase The Gun Is Fired (-¼): 27 points.*

**Any Area:** Any attack which might have a different area each time it is used should be bought with this type of Area Of Effect. Characters could use this Advantage to buy attacks which represent their ability to quickly shoot at (or otherwise attack) several individuals in a tight group:

**Example:** *The Sandman wants to carry some "moon-darts," small throwing blades shaped like crescent moons. He is able to throw the moon-darts so that he hits several targets in a close area while missing any "friendly" targets. He buys the following attack:*

*1d6 RKA, Area Of Effect, Selective (Any Area, any 12 hexes, +2) (45 Active Points); OAF (Moon-Darts, -1), 6 Charges (-¾), Range Based On STR (-¼): 15 points.*

## ARMOR PIERCING

Armor Piercing (or AP, for short) is one of the most common Advantages in street-level campaigns. It is used to build AP bullets (such as teflon-coated bullets), especially sharp knives, and secret martial arts blows unknown to most fighting men. However, GMs who run street-level campaigns with low limits on the amount of Armor a character may have should be wary of this Advantage, since it can render characters virtually defenseless.

## AUTOFIRE

This Advantage is also very popular with *Dark Champions* characters. Usually 5-shot Autofire (or less) is enough, but some attacks will go as high as 10-shot Autofire. Autofire can also be used to simulate various shooting skills, such as the ability to "rapid-fire" ordinary guns, or the ability to fire two guns (one in each hand) in the same Phase.

## CONTINUOUS

Continuous is usually not an appropriate Advantage for street-level games—Continuing Charges are a preferable method for constructing long-lasting attacks and devices (such as smoke bombs or napalm). However, there may be some instances in which Continuous would be allowed; players should consult with their GMs if necessary.

## DOUBLE KNOCKBACK

Double Knockback is usually inappropriate for *Dark Champions* campaigns, since they don't normally use the Knockback rules (see "No Knockback," below, for details). Instead, the Advantage "Does Knockback" (+¼) can be substituted (see "Champions Errata," by Rob Bell, *Adventurer's Club* #16, for more information on this Advantage). Does Knockback can be bought for combat shotguns and other guns which do actually have enough force to knock a character back. Additionally, some explosives might be bought with Double Knockback, with the GM's permission.

In campaigns using the Knockdown rules instead of Knockback, this Advantage can have a slightly different

effect: Double Knockdown (+¼). This Advantage will double the effect of any Knockdown the attack would normally do; if the damage roll results in no Knockdown, attacks with Double Knockdown will still knock the victim off his feet.

## HARDENED

In most cases, Hardened is not appropriate for street-level characters' Armor. Hardened Armor tends to make a street-level character too big for his britches—since even AP attacks can't get through his defenses, he tends to ignore attacks that, by genre convention, he should at least be a little afraid of.

However, in special cases the GM might allow a character to harden his Armor. The GM should establish a limit on the number of points of Armor that a character could Harden. For example, characters might be allowed to Harden no more than 3 points of Armor. This would give them some protection against AP and Penetrating attacks, but not enough that they would shrug such attacks off with impunity.

## INDIRECT

Indirect at the +½ level can be used to simulate certain armor-piercing weapons. Some powerful weapons are designed to penetrate through a wall or heavy armor before exploding or hitting the target. A special bullet which is built to penetrate most forms of cover while still retaining enough energy to seriously injure someone could be bought this way as well.

**Example:** *The Samaritan wants to buy a special form of tear-gas grenade for use in hostage crises. The grenade will have a special steel tip to enable it to penetrate walls before releasing the tear gas. He buys this as follows:*

*3d6 Sight Group Flash, Area Of Effect (4" radius, +1), Indirect (+½) (100 Active Points); OAF (Grenade Launcher, -1), 6 Charges (-¾): 36 points.*

## INVISIBLE POWER EFFECTS

Invisible Power Effects can be used to construct silencers, flash suppressors, and other such devices which serve to mask an attack. These devices are particularly useful for assassins and snipers. See the "Guns" section of Chapter Three for a list of the costs of silencers and flash suppressors by Damage Class. Weapons other than guns can also be silenced. For example, there are silenced, "invisible" rocket launchers, such as the Armbrust 300 anti-tank weapon; some low-tech attacks, such as bows or blowguns, are also silent.

Four limited forms of Invisible Power Effects, each a +¼ Advantage, are available for *Dark Champions* campaigns. The first is to hide the cause of death. Some attacks, such as certain poisons or fiberglass bullets, have effects which are very difficult to detect. Attacks with this Advantage will impose a -3 to -5 penalty to Criminology or Forensic Medicine rolls when someone is trying to find the cause of death. The second is "Invisibility To Metal Detectors." Some weapons, such as fiberglass knives, do not register on metal detectors, thus allowing them to be smuggled onto planes and into courtrooms. The third is "Invisibility Only To Normal Vision." Some attacks are invisible to the naked eye, but are clearly visible when infrared or ultraviolet vision is used. The fourth is "Invisibility To Tracing," which prevents bugs, radios, and other transmissions from being traced to their source.



## PENETRATING

Since few targets in street-level games have Hardened defenses, Penetrating attacks are quite deadly. GMs should carefully monitor the use of Penetrating attacks in the campaign, to make certain that they do not become the dominant form of attack. Penetrating should indicate something especially deadly about a particular gun or attack. If Penetrating becomes too common, it loses some of its mystique, characters start dropping quickly, and the game suffers. Keeping a proper grip on the problem will allow the characters to have fun with Penetrating attacks, without ruining the campaign.

## REDUCED END

In a lot of comic books, street-level characters seem to have an almost infinite supply of ammunition. Despite the fact that they are using a submachine gun with a 32-shot clip, they can fire at full Autofire capacity again and again, without ever changing clips. *Dark Champions* PCs who want to have this same ability should buy their guns at 0 END (+½, or +1 for Autofire attacks). However, this ability borders on the ridiculous in a subgenre which is supposed to have fairly strong connections to "realism," so check with your GM to make sure that he will allow this Advantage.

## TIME DELAY AND TRIGGER

The most obvious use for these Advantages is to build bombs, landmines, and other explosive devices. However, both Advantages, but especially Trigger, can be used in more imaginative ways as well. E.g., a character could rig up a series of four smoke grenades on a bandolier. Whenever he gave a quick jerk on one, it would go off, giving him some Darkness to hide in. This attack could be bought this way:

**Example:** 3" radius Darkness to normal sight, Trigger (pull the grenade, +¼) (37 Active Points); OAF (Rigged Smoke Grenades, -1), No Range (-½), 4 Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-½): 12 points.

This example illustrates an important point: use your imagination when thinking of ways to Trigger attacks. Not every Trigger has to be a switch; a button, or a coded radio signal. In fact, a character could define just about any action as the Trigger method, the special effect being defined as "reflex action." In the example given above, pulling the pin on a smoke grenade is usually a ½-Phase or full Phase action. When bought with the Trigger Advantage, the character can rig up his four grenades (thus "priming" each Charge of the Power), then explain to the GM that his character has trained himself to reflexively pull a grenade off whenever some cover is needed. Voilà—a 0-Phase, No Range Darkness attack. If the Power is on Charges, as in this example, then each Charge needs to have the Trigger set or "primed" before going into combat. Setting the Trigger only once means that the character has only rigged up one grenade, and the others will have to be rigged up later. Priming a Trigger should take at least 1 Phase, and often takes longer.

## USABLE BY OTHERS

Usable By Others is a way for a character to create a matched set of pistols which he can hand out to all of his friends. One or two attacks bought this way will keep a group of PCs from running out of ammunition or weapons. This idea also works well with Variable Advantage, which allows each of the different guns to use a different type of bullet.

## VARIABLE ADVANTAGE AND VARIABLE SPECIAL EFFECTS

These Advantages are usually inappropriate for street-level campaigns, but they do have at least one use. A Ranged Killing Attack can be bought with Variable Advantage (+½ Advantage, +1½ total) and with Variable Special Effects (limited group, +¼) to reflect a character's ability to shift between different clips of bullets: AP bullets one Phase (Advantage: Armor Piercing); Glaser bullets the next time (Advantage: Penetrating); and so forth. The limited group for the special effects means that the character can only use special effects that he can create with bullets in use in the campaign. This sort of gun/attack should take a -¼ Limitation: "Requires A Phase To Switch Advantages" (the time it takes to change clips). See the "Guns" section of Chapter Three for details on how to use different bullets to create different Advantages for guns.

**Example:** Caliber decides to build a "Modular Assault Rifle." This gun has a basic stock to which Caliber can attach different barrels, sights, and other components, as well as using clips of different bullets, so that he can alter his attack to take advantage of his enemy's weak points. He build his gun this way:

1½ d6 RKA, +½ Variable Advantage (+1½), Variable Special Effects (anything you can do with a gun part or bullet +¼) (69 Active Points); OAF (Modular Assault Rifle, -1), Requires A Phase To Change Advantages (-¼): 30 points.

## ESPECIALLY EFFECTIVE ADVANTAGES COMBINATIONS

The following list is a short (and not necessarily complete) list of combinations of Advantages which are particularly effective in combat. Players should consider these combinations when building guns and other attacks; a low-dice attack with several Advantages tacked on can often be more "picturesque" and more fun to roleplay than a simple high-dice attack. More importantly, GMs should carefully examine any attacks with these combinations to ensure that they will not ruin the campaign: a group of Advantages that would make a 3d6 RKA too lethal to be allowed in the game can help make a 1d6 RKA a viable option in a campaign where the average attack is several DC higher than that. In some situations, the GM might consider charging extra for certain Advantages when they are bought in combination with certain other Advantages (much like Autofire and NND, see the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*, p. 92).

The especially effective Advantages combinations are:

- Armor Piercing and Autofire
- Armor Piercing and Increased STUN Multiplier
- Armor Piercing and Penetrating
- Autofire and Area Of Effect
- Autofire and Increased STUN Multiplier
- Autofire and NND/AVLD
- Autofire and No Range Penalty
- Autofire and Penetrating
- Double Knockback and Increased STUN Multiplier
- Increased STUN Multiplier and No Range Penalty
- Increased STUN Multiplier and Penetrating
- Two or more levels of Armor Piercing and/or Penetrating



## LIMITATIONS

Most of the Limitations in the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook* have at least some applications in street-level campaigns. Some of them, such as "Requires A Skill Roll" and "Increased Endurance Cost," are generally only used to simulate "non-powered Powers" (see above). Others, such as "No Knockback" and "Charges," can be quite common. The only Limitations which generally should not be used at all are: Always On, No Conscious Control, and Only In Hero ID.

### ACTIVATION

The "Jammed" variant of this Limitation can be used when building guns (especially experimental ones). At the GM's option, a Jammed gun can be "unjammed" for re-use in 2 Phases, or 1 Phase if the character knows the Skill Weaponsmith (Slugthrowers). Jammed Autofire weapons may "runaway": fire all of their bullets in one or two Phases (the bullets are simply wasted—the character cannot point the weapon at his enemies and make use of a runaway, unless he makes a Luck roll).

Additionally, guns bought without the Jammed Limitation may still jam in some cases. If a character's gun becomes especially dirty during the course of an adventure, or if the gun is not cleaned for a long period of time, the GM might impose a Jamming roll of 15-(this may also apply to some guns when they get wet). The longer the gun goes without being cleaned, the lower the Activation Roll will get. Once the Activation Roll is missed and the gun finally jams, it must be thoroughly cleaned before it can be used again (i.e., 2 Phases is not nearly enough time—at least several minutes of cleaning with a gun cleaning kit are necessary).

### GESTURES

While normal guns do not require Gestures to use, some advanced weaponry might. For example, a man-portable rocket launcher might need to have several rangefinders set and a few electronic switches turned on before the rocket would be primed to fire ("Step One: Extend firing tube. Step Two: Defilerate the framistat; then enter activator code. Step Three: ..."). This could be bought as a  $-\frac{1}{4}$  Gestures Limitation (and possibly an Extra Time Limitation as well; a separate Weapons Familiarity might even be required for especially complex weapons).

### INCANTATIONS

Some high-tech weapons might only work if a special verbal command is given. For example, while invading Card Shark's base, the characters stumble upon an experimental laser tank. The laser is not fired with a trigger—it is activated by Card Shark saying "Laser: fire at \_\_\_\_\_." This phrase is loud and out of the ordinary, everything needed for a  $-\frac{1}{4}$  Incantation Limitation. If the characters are good enough at Mimicry, they may be able to get the cannon to work themselves...

## LIMITED POWER

There are a number of Limitations which are used in *Dark Champions* campaigns to simulate different kinds of weapons and attacks:

### All Unused Charges Are Lost ( $-\frac{1}{4}$ )

This Limitation reflects an attack with several Charges which, once triggered, must keep operating until all Charges have been used. If the character shuts the attack off before the Charges run out, all unused Charges are lost. This is only a Limitation if the weapon has more Charges than it can fire in a single Phase. Weapons such as missile pods might take this Limitation.

### Cannot Move In Phase When Power Is Used ( $-\frac{1}{4}$ )

This Limitation reflects a weapon which is so big and/or difficult to fire that the character has to remain stock-still in the Phase in which he fires the weapon. Essentially, the character is bracing himself to keep from being bowled over or even injured by the recoil. If the character tries to make a half-move before using a power with this Limitation, or if he takes Knockback or Knockdown from an attack in the same Phase before he gets to fire, he should suffer substantial minuses to hit his target (at least -3), and at the GM's option, may even be injured by his own attack (i.e., the GM should impose a Side Effect on the use of the weapon that Phase). This Limitation is appropriate for larger weapons such as rocket launchers and some grenade launchers, and also for powerful combat shotguns.





### Cannot Use Targeting With Weapon (-½)

This Limitation represents a weapon which is inherently inaccurate and unaimable. All of the character's efforts have to be directed simply at hitting the target, the character cannot "call shots" against Hit Locations or otherwise try to hit one specific location or target. This Limitation can also represent an attack which by its nature will do the same damage wherever it hits, thereby making targeting useless.

**Example:** *The Harbinger of Justice decides to build himself a large rocket launcher for use against heavily-armored supercriminals. He takes the Limitation "Cannot Use Targeting With Weapon" for two reasons. First, this weapon is large, heavy, and complex—just hitting the right target will take all of his skill. Second, it fires a rocket, and that rocket is going to explode and damage the victim's entire body (i.e., targeting would not be effective, since all parts of the body will be affected equally).*

### Can Only Be Used At Full Power (-¼)

Guns and most other street-level missile weapons always work at full power—characters can't "turn them down" and decide to only use half of their dice this Phase, like they could with most offensive superpowers. The GM may not want to let characters buy this as a Limitation; he may prefer to unilaterally impose it on all guns, since it is so common.

### Does Not Work In Winds Or Rain (-¼)

This Limitation is primarily taken on gas and smoke grenades. If a character tries to use such attacks when a good wind is blowing or a steady rain is falling, the gaseous material will get blown or washed away so quickly that the attack will effectively be useless. This Limitation does not necessarily mean the same thing as "Does Not Work Underwater;" some weapons may work underwater but would still be blown away by wind and rain.

### Must Target Non-Armored Hit Locations (-¼)

This Limitation is taken for darts and other small weapons which do not have the power to penetrate any kind of resistant PD. A character doesn't have to take this Limitation for such weapons if he doesn't want to—for example, some blowguns are powerful enough to penetrate Kevlar. But it is an appropriate Limitation if the character wants to take it.

### Range Based On STR (-¼)

This Limitation is taken on grenades, darts, and other weapons whose range should be based on a character's Strength, not on the range rules provided for the Power being used. Attacks with this Limitation should use the Throwing Table in the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*, p. 174, to determine what the attack's range is. Weapons designed with this Limitation should always be considered either Balanced or Aerodynamic; some may be both (throwing darts, for example).

## MENTAL POWER BASED ON CON

This Limitation is often used to build drugs and poisons. These Limitations should also be considered: fragile Focus (the drug is easily spilled or diluted); No Range (if they have to be injected, as opposed to being coated on a dart); and Visible (mental powers are normally invisible, drug-filled syringes are not). Side Effects might also be considered (if a drug or anaesthetic gas is improperly administered, some of it will affect the character using the attack).

## NO KNOCKBACK

In those street-level campaigns where the GM opts to use normal Knockback rules (see Chapter Three), this Limitation can be absolutely crucial. If Knockback is used, almost all firearms should take the No Knockback Limitation. It is true that most guns have "stopping power," and can often knock a target down or even back a little (thus, many GMs will use the "Knockdown" rules in a street-level campaign).

At the GM's option, No Knockback could be redefined as "Only Does Knockdown," thereby allowing superheroic attacks to do Knockback when they should, and limiting guns to only Knockdown.

## SIDE EFFECTS

Side Effects is a little-used Limitation in street-level games, but it does occur. Some uses are standard, involving Skill Rolls or Activation Rolls, and are potentially quite dangerous. For example, a bomb could be built with a Side Effect which occurs if the character's Demolitions roll is failed—the bomb explodes prematurely, severely injuring the character.

However, other street-level Side Effects are not nearly this grim. Some may occur not when a separate Skill Roll is failed, but on a ruined "to hit" roll, or when a character improperly uses a complicated or dangerous weapon. For these attacks, a non-standard form of Side Effect should be used. This is a -¼ Limitation, and does not necessarily require a Skill Roll or Activation Roll. The exact effects of the Side Effect should be determined by the player and GM together.

**Example:** *The Harbinger of Justice wants to buy a powerful combat shotgun, capable of blowing down the steel doors of crackhouses. He takes the Limitations "Cannot Move In Phase When Power Is Used" (see above) and "Side Effects (-¼)," since he has to stand still and concentrate on holding the gun steady, or the recoil and blowback from the blast will injure him. The Side Effect will occur when Harbinger tries to move on the same Phase he uses the shotgun, or is successfully attacked in the same Phase before he uses the shotgun. The player and GM agree that the Side Effect will be a 4d6 Energy Blast (no defense), with Hit Location rolled as a High Shot, and Harbinger will be Knocked Down.*

## POWER FRAMEWORKS

Multipowers and Variable Power Pools (VPPs) can both be used in street-level campaigns where characters must pay points for their weapons; Elemental Controls generally cannot. VPPs and Multipowers, usually used to group different types of attacks which can only be used one at a time, fit the street-level subgenre much better than ECs, which are designed to let characters use several related Powers at the same time.

**Example:** *The Sandman has an enormous variety of weapons and gadgets which he can use in his war on crime. In fact, he has so many that he can't carry them all—he can only carry a few at any one time. He can switch to a different set of gadgets whenever he goes back to his base. He buys a VPP: Gadget Pool, 40 base + 20 control cost; OAF (various gadgets, -1), Can Only Change VPP In Arsenal (-½); final cost 40 + 8 = 48 points.*



**Example:** *Caliber carries a large number of guns and other weapons, but of course he can only use one in any given Phase. He decides to save points by buying a Multipower for his weapons. He chooses as the Multipower's base cost the number of Active Points in his most expensive attack. He makes each slot a "fixed" slot, since he can only use the weapons one at a time. When he is finished, he has a lot of weapons at a fairly low cost.*

One especially common street-level Power Framework is the "one-weapon Multipower." Some weapons have more than one type of attack they can fire or be used for, and this is bought as a Multipower. See the Sourcebook for some examples of one-weapon Multipowers.

## CHARACTER DISADVANTAGES

Most of the Disadvantages can be used in street-level campaigns; some have special uses or applications, which are described below.

### DEPENDENCE

Four-color Dependencies (such as a character who can only survive outside of water for a short time) are inappropriate for street-level characters. About the only things to be Dependent on in street-level campaigns are alcohol, drugs, and medicine (such as a diabetic who is Dependent on insulin). *Dark Champions* PCs should usually avoid having a Dependence unless they can figure out a way to do it in a heroic fashion (drug addiction is almost never heroic, but overcoming a Dependence on a medicine could be).

### DEPENDENT NPC

This is another Disadvantage which is open to *Dark Champions* characters, but which many of them steer away from. For example, one of the standard "origins" for vigilante characters is seeing their loved ones slain by criminals. This drives them both to fight crime and to avoid "entanglements" which might interfere with their crusade. However, players should be willing to turn this stereotype on its ear if need be. Maybe a character has taken up crimefighting because the street is no longer safe for his kids. Or, the man driven to vigilantism when he saw his daughter gunned down before his eyes may still have to care for a wife driven slightly insane by the same sight. The conflict between a gentle DNPC's beliefs and the player character's vigilante attitudes can make for interesting roleplaying.

### DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

This Disadvantage is very common in street-level campaigns; in most cases, these Distinctive Features are easily concealed. Street-level heroes may have old military tattoos, scars, eerie voices, or "ego signatures" which are part of their costume (noticeable signs or symbols which are known and feared as the character's mark; for example, the Harbinger of Justice's "ego signature" is a blue crescent moon). Street-level criminals may have some special "criminal" Distinctive Features besides those listed above: the "aura of respect" which accompanies many high-level organized crime figures; yakuza members' mutilated hands; and so forth.

## HUNTED AND WATCHED

The most common Hunteds for street-level PCs will be the police and organized crime groups. As discussed previously, the police are usually More Powerful, and always have NCI. Organized crime groups will vary. The Mafia will usually be More Powerful and have NCI; depending upon which city the campaign is set in, the yakuza and Chinese organized crime may also be this powerful, or they may be a much smaller and weaker element in the underworld. Lesser crime groups, such as the Mexican Mafia and outlaw motorcycle gangs, are usually As Powerful or Less Powerful, do not have NCI, and Hunt a character sporadically.

GMs should also allow street-level characters to buy "floating Hunteds" (also known as "generic Hunteds"). This is a Hunted which is not defined as a precise group, but rather as a type of group:

**Example:** *Floating Hunted: any organized crime group, More Powerful, NCI, 11-: 25 points.*

**Example:** *Floating Hunted: an assassin, As Powerful, 8-: 10 points.*

This sort of undefined Hunted allows the GM to tailor the Hunted to fit the scenario. If the GM wants to run a game featuring the Mafia, the character will be Hunted by the Mafia for a while. When the focus of the campaign shifts to the yakuza, so does the Hunted. This is necessary in street-level campaigns because street-level enemies don't always keep returning, again and again, to bedevil the PCs, because the PCs sometimes kill the criminals. If PCs have to buy off Hunteds every time they go out to fight crime, they'll never get to spend their Experience Points on anything else. The "generic" Hunted allows them to keep their Hunted points when they kill one Hunted; they will soon acquire another.

The GM should consider giving characters with a Public Identity an extra 5 or 10 points for their Hunted Disadvantages. Character whose identity is known to the public, making them easy to find, are in a lot more danger than characters who can hide behind an alternate identity.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL LIMITATION

Psychological Limitations which are often used for street-level characters are discussed above, in the "Motivations And Psychology Of Street-Level Characters" section.

## REPUTATION

Reputation is an extremely useful and common Disadvantage in the street-level genre. After all, *somebody* has to terrorize the underworld, and the PCs have volunteered. While not all characters have a Reputation, many will. There are a number of ways to tailor this Disadvantage to work even better in street-level campaigns.

### Reputation Among A Limited Group

Not everyone pays attention to crime; in fact, many people do their best to ignore it completely. By virtue of this and its own inherent secrecy, the underworld is something of a closed and shunned society. A criminal with a Reputation among underworld figures as a ruthless assassin may be known to the outside world as a kindly professor. The average law-abiding citizen may never have heard of the vigilante whose name and visage strikes fear into the hearts of criminals. *Dark Champions* characters can simulate this phenomenon by taking a Reputation among a limited group. Such a Reputation is worth -5 points.



On a related point, some street-level characters may have a "split Reputation." This means that the underworld thinks of them one way, and normal society another. For example, a Mafia capo might be known to the underworld as a feared and respected criminal leader, but to the normal world he is a philanthropic businessman. As long as the rolls and point totals do not change, characters can buy this as one Reputation, interpreted differently by different groups.

**Example:** A street-level PC has an 11- Reputation. To law-abiding citizens, this would be "Famed Crimefighter," and "Feared Crimefighter" to the underworld. This is a 10-pt Reputation; or, if the character wishes, he could take two 11- limited Group Reputations, each worth 5 pts. However, if the Reputation among criminals was "Ruthless Vigilante," it would be Extreme, worth 15 pts to start with. Therefore, the two Reputations would have different point totals and would have to be bought separately (one as a 10-pt Reputation, the other a 5-pt Reputation).

### Reputation And Presence Attacks

The Presence Attack Modifiers Chart, *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook* p. 170, lists "Reputation strong" as a +1d6 modifier. However, in a genre where Reputations are so important, this modifier can be more precise. If *Dark Champions* characters are making Presence Attacks on criminals, and those Presence Attacks are based on fear or threats, the character's Reputation in the criminal world will aid his Presence Attack if the person being threatened makes the Reputation roll. An 8-Reputation will get a +1d6 bonus, an 11- Reputation a +2d6 bonus, and a 14- Reputation a +3d6 bonus. An Extreme Reputation will add another +1d6.

Similarly, Reputation can add to Interrogation rolls: a Reputation will add +1 to the roll for every +1d6 mentioned above, if the person being interrogated is aware of the Reputation (i.e., makes the Reputation roll).

Since this rule makes having a Reputation very useful in some situations, GMs who use it should consider a -5 point deduction from the cost of the Reputation.

### Reputation As A Required Skill Roll

GMs who don't want to use the Presence Attack bonuses listed above can still allow characters to purchase extra PRE which Requires A Skill Roll. If the person being attacked makes the character's Reputation roll, the character gets the bonuses. Reputation can be used as a complementary "skill" for Interrogation, and as the Skill Roll for a number of non-powered Powers. When a PC uses a Power with this Limitation, each person targeted by the Power has to make the roll individually (i.e., one NPC might know of the hero's Reputation, and the other would not, so that the Power would only work on the first person).

**Example:** *The Headless Hangman relies on his eerie appearance and his Reputation as a "Murderous Vigilante" to make criminals fear him. In fact, most criminals are so frightened of him that they tend to fire blindly at him, rather than taking time to aim properly. To reflect this, the Hangman buys the following ability: +2 DCV (10 points); Requires A Reputation Roll (-½): 7 points. Later, the Hangman is fighting three street gang members. Two of the members make the Reputation roll—they know who he is, and that he is to be feared. The Hangman can use his DCV levels against them. However, the third punk has never heard of the Hangman, so he isn't smart enough to be afraid, and can fight without panicking.*

## POSSIBLE REPUTATIONS

Some Reputations which are commonly found in the street-level genre include:

**Feared Crimefighter:** This Reputation is similar to "Ruthless Vigilante" (see below), but usually only applies to criminals. Members of the public at large tend to be either neutral towards or supportive of this sort of character. The GM should consider making players take this as a "split" or Limited Group Reputation; it may only apply to criminals in some cases. Depending upon how the character defines this Reputation, it may or may not be Extreme.

**Organized Crime Figure:** This is a Reputation for the bad guys. It may be bought by a low-level organized crime group member, but it is more commonly seen with NPCs who are underworld powers: Mafia capos, yakuza oyabuns, and the like. This is usually an Extreme Reputation.

**Racist:** This label will be stuck on crimefighters who appear to be bigoted towards one or more minority groups. Whether it is true is up to the player (it usually isn't, but who said a Reputation had to be deserved?). This is an Extreme Reputation.

**Renegade Cop:** This Reputation is bought for characters who are cops that are known for their maverick attitudes and crimefighting methods (see the "Renegade Cop" character archetype for more details). Some people consider them heroes, others (particularly other cops) consider them to be too rough, too dangerous, showoffs, and the like. John McLean from the *Die Hard* movies; "Dirty Harry" Callahan; and Martin Riggs of the *Lethal Weapon* movies all have this Reputation, for example. This Reputation may or may not be Extreme.

**Ruthless Vigilante:** This Extreme Reputation is also seen as "Murderous Vigilante," "Cold-Blooded Killer," "Terror Of The Underworld," and so forth. It signifies a character who is not only regarded with fear and hatred by the underworld, but who is looked upon unfavorably by the general populace (which considers him triggerhappy, a vicious murderer, and a dangerous lunatic).

**World's Greatest \_\_\_\_\_:** A character with this Reputation is thought to be the world's premier sharpshooter, assassin, cat burglar, or whatever. Other characters may seek him out to challenge him, but this is not as common in the street-level subgenre as it is in western or martial arts campaigns. This Reputation may or may not be Extreme.

## VULNERABILITY

For the most part, Vulnerability is a superheroic Disadvantage, not a heroic one. However, it can be used in street-level campaigns if the attack forms used are limited to those found in street-level games. For example, a character who was shell-shocked in Vietnam might be Vulnerable to Explosions (Common, x1½ STUN, 10 points) or to Hearing Flash Attacks (Uncommon, x1½ effect, 5 points). A character whose eyesight has been weakened by a strong dose of tear gas might be Vulnerable to Sight Flash Attacks (Common, x2 effect, 20 points). A character who once took a wound in the arm that healed badly might be Vulnerable to attacks which hit Locations 7-8, because of the extra pain they cause him (Common, x1½ STUN, 10 points; bad arm will be the one hit on a roll of 1-3 on a d6). Street-level Vulnerabilities should be limited to STUN only in most cases, and should be logically explained.



## SAMPLE CHARACTERS

This section details three street-level characters: the Harbinger of Justice, Copperhead, and the Scarecrow. These three characters are provided for two purposes. The first is to give examples of how street-level characters can be built. These characters have many of the Skills, non-powered Powers, and Disadvantages discussed above, and should help players who don't know where to start in designing their own *Dark Champions* PCs.

Second, these characters can be used as villains in four-color *Champions* campaigns (and even in some street-level campaigns). The Harbinger of Justice is especially suited to this role, for two reasons: first, he is built on enough points to give a group of PCs a tough fight if he is run properly; second, his extreme approach to crimefighting will offend characters who would be willing to put up with less brutal vigilantes.

### THE HARBINGER OF JUSTICE

**Background/History:** No one knows the story of the man who calls himself the Harbinger of Justice, but who is better known to the world as the "Blue Moon Killer." He first appeared in 1986, and since that time has murdered an estimated two thousand-plus persons, mainly in (campaign city); about one hundred of these victims were superpowered criminals. About 85½ of his victims had criminal records (usually for violent crimes), but many had no criminal records, or only minor ones. Most victims were killed one at a time, but on a number of occasions he has massacred close to a hundred criminals at once. The Blue Moon Killer has clashed with law enforcement in the past; he has been captured several times, but has always managed to escape somehow. His methods and cautious nature have allowed him to remain nearly as mysterious today as the day he first appeared. His nickname, "the Blue Moon Killer," is taken from the "calling cards" he leaves on his victims, which are black with a blue crescent moon. The symbolism of these cards has never been explained.

**Personality/Motivation:** Harbinger is motivated by one thing, and one thing only: the desire to destroy crime and those who commit it. He has no family, no desire for romance, and no real friends. His entire life and being are devoted to crimefighting and the upholding of Justice.

Harbinger will stop at nothing to kill ("execute," as he insists) those he feels deserve killing. He has never made entirely clear just who qualifies for "execution." Murderers, rapists, robbers, and other violent criminals clearly meet his standards, as do drug dealers and members of organized crime groups. Harbinger's crimefighting philosophy seems to be based on the concept that everyone is free-willed and has the capacity not to commit crimes, even if they cannot be

genuinely "good." At a minimum, people must leave one another in peace and not hurt each other. Those who commit minor infractions of this "rule" deserve one chance to correct their behavior and act as they should. If they fail to act properly thereafter, they will be "executed" as threats to society. Certain persons, such as murderers and sadistic rapists, are so evil that they could never redeem themselves, so they are "executed" immediately.

The Blue Moon Killer's justification for his lethal methods of crimefighting is threefold: retribution (seeing that criminals receive their "just desserts;" this is the least important justification); general deterrence (preventing crime by making an example of those who are caught); and incapacitation (preventing a specific criminal from committing more crimes; this is the most important justification).

Harbinger has no interest in "fun" or humor. He takes his job—destroying crime—absolutely seriously. He always tries to act with ruthless efficiency and is more concerned with getting the job done than in making a name for himself or acting courteously. These attitudes often make him seem arrogant, domineering, and rude. Furthermore, Harbinger's well-honed "survival instinct" prompts him to be as secretive as possible. Since he often cannot trust other, "less dedicated," crimefighters, he tends to keep information to himself. He also goes to great pains to keep all of his secrets secret (he has elaborate procedures to keep from being followed, for example).

**Quote:** "The innocent know me as a Harbinger of Justice. But criminals know me as a Harbinger of doom."

**Powers/Tactics:** Harbinger's main Power is his Variable Power Pool, which he uses to "summon" weapons. This ability allows him to "teleport" weapons to him from an unknown location, then teleport them back and summon new ones as needed (repeated attempts to trace this teleportation have been unsuccessful). His most-used gun is an enormous handgun (christened the "anti-tank pistol" by some media wit), but the number of weapons he has access to seems limitless. Each weapon has a unique "teleportation signature," so that once it runs out of ammunition, Harbinger cannot summon an exact duplicate of that weapon and keep firing (he could send a half-empty weapon away, and then summon it later, but it would still only be half full). If a gun is taken away from him, the "interdimensional circuit" is interrupted, and he cannot summon any other weapons until he gets the first one back or recalibrates the entire system. Laser and blaster weapons and mental attack devices, which contain fragile parts and/or energy packs, cannot be summoned—they break or become useless. The system will not work over vast interdimensional distances (any dimension too far removed from Earth's cannot be "accessed"). All of Harbinger's weapons are personal Foci; they are built with special "signature" devices so that only he can use them.



Harbinger will fight from cover and/or use guerrilla tactics whenever he can. He prefers to render his opponents unconscious, so that he can interrogate them extensively and learn more about the underworld; then he executes them. When in combat, Harbinger fights in a cool, efficient manner. He is interested only in winning (i.e., destroying criminals). He will "cheat," break his word, or fight "dishonorably" in order to achieve this aim. Despite his reputation as a master marksman, Harbinger is not dependent on guns; he is a skilled martial artist and hand-to-hand combatant as well.

Harbinger will also use crueler crimefighting methods, if necessary. For example, Harbinger is willing to brutally torture criminals for information. But he does not torture criminals for amusement; he prefers quick, clean, efficient kills. Torturing for pleasure would reduce him to the criminals' level and increases the chances of a criminal escaping to commit further crimes.

Harbinger often works undercover. He is a master of disguise, capable of changing his appearance and identity well enough to fool even the most suspicious criminals. His vast repertoire of disguises varies from the homeless, to blue collar workers, to law enforcement personnel, to other vigilantes, to criminals.

In addition to his combat skills and weapons, Harbinger's talents and abilities are almost endless. He has been described as having "nearly God-like knowledge of every subject." He also has access to a fleet of vehicles and to a large network of contacts.

In sum, Harbinger's vast capabilities and consummate skill make him a force to be reckoned with. The GM should remember that Harbinger is a genius, extremely skilled at his chosen "occupation." He will not fight or act stupidly, is prepared for virtually any contingency or emergency, and acts as efficiently and ruthlessly as need be. At times, he seems more a force of nature than a human being, and GMs should run him accordingly.

**Appearance:** The Harbinger of Justice is approximately six feet tall, with an athletic build. When not in disguise, he favors two "costumes." The first, worn for investigation and patrol missions, is a black men's suit with a black shirt, tie, pants, shoes, gloves, and fedora. Over this he wears a black trenchcoat, tied at the waist, with the collar turned up. His mask is a black full-face mask with a royal blue crescent moon over the left eye, with the points to the right. His second costume is used for combat-oriented missions. It includes the fedora, mask, gloves, and trenchcoat, but the trenchcoat is open, like a duster. Underneath it he wears a black bodysuit, boots, and gloves, and a black combat vest (which holds grenades, spare clips of ammunition, and other equipment).

**Scenario:** As his powers and point totals make clear, Harbinger is a vigilante for superheroic campaigns. His extremist attitudes toward criminals and crimefighting will alienate him even from most other vigilante characters. If the GM prefers to introduce Harbinger as a brand-new vigilante, his previous history can be ignored and the information available about him restricted accordingly.

**Record:** Harbinger is wanted by all local, national, and international law enforcement organizations for more than two thousand murders and uncounted acts of assault and kidnapping. The total reward money offered for him, dead or alive, from both law enforcement and criminal organizations exceeds \$ 5,000,000.

## THE HARBINGER OF JUSTICE

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats	
15	STR	5	<b>OCV:</b> 13	
30	DEX	60	<b>DCV:</b> 15	
23	CON	26	<b>ECV:</b> 8	
12	BODY	4	<b>Phases:</b> 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	
33	INT	23	<b>Costs</b>	
20	EGO	20	<b>Char:</b> 207	<b>Base:</b> 100
38	PRE	28	+	+
10	COM	0	<b>Powers:</b> 688	<b>Disads:</b> 795
8	PD	5	=	=
5	ED	0	<b>Totals:</b> 895	895
6	SPD	20	* = IIF (Armored Costume, -1/4)	
12	REC	8	# = OIF (Mask, -1/2)	
46	END	0		
40	STUN	8		
Cost		Powers		END
123	Weapons Power Pool: 80 point base + 40 control cost, Cosmic (+2), Invisible to being traced (+1/4), Attacks Only (-1/4), Weapons Must Be Hand-Held (-1/4), May Not Summon "Duplicate" Weapons (-1/4), No Lasers Or Blasters (-1/4), No Mental Powers (-1/2), Weapons Cannot Be Retrieved In Far-Removed Dimensions (-1/2)			var
24	+10 DEX; Only To Determine Who Goes First And For CV (-1/4)			0
27	Martial Arts—no particular style			
16	+4 DC (already added in)			
	<b>Maneuver</b>	<b>OCV</b>	<b>DCV</b>	<b>Notes</b>
	Killing Strike	-2	+0 1d6+1(2d6+1 w/STR)	HKA
	Martial Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
	Martial Dodge	+0	+5	Dodge all attacks, Abort
	Martial Escape	+0	+0	50 STR vs. Grabs
	Martial Strike	+0	+2	9d6
	Martial Throw	+0	+1	7d6 + vel/5, Target Falls
	Nerve Strike	-1	+1	4d6 NND (solid Armor)
27	Armor (9 PD & ED), Hardened; *			0
20	Missile Deflection (all attacks)			0
12	Mental Defense (17 points)			0
5	Power Defense (8 points); #			0
5	Sight Flash Defense (8 points); #			0
3	LS (Breathe Underwater); #			0
2	Lack of Weakness (5 points); OAF (Overcoat, -1)			0
6	+3" Running = 9" total			1
3	Infrared Vision; #			0
3	Ultraviolet Vision; #			0
8	+8 vs. Range for Sight Group; #			0
8	+8 vs. Range for Hearing Group; #			0
6	HRRH; #			0
Skills, Talents, Perks				
3	Acting 17-			
3	Bugging 16-			
3	Combat Driving 15-			
3	Combat Piloting 15-			
3	Computer Programming 16-			
3	Contortionist 15-			
3	Criminology 16-			
3	Cryptography 16-			
3	Deduction 16-			
3	Demolitions 11-			
11	Disguise 15-			
13	Electronics 16-			

Skills, Talents, Perks	
3	Forensic Medicine 16-
9	Forgery 14-
3	Gambling 11-
3	Interrogation 17-
3	Inventor 16-
3	Lockpicking 15-
3	Mechanics 11-
9	Mimicry 14-
3	Paramedics 16-
3	Security Systems 16-
3	Shadowing 11-
3	Stealth 15-
3	Streetwise 17-
3	Tactics 16-
4	Transport Familiarity: All Ground and Air Vehicles
10	Weaponsmith (slugthrowers, energy weapons) 14-
3	CK: campaign city 16-
2	CK: nearby city 11-
3	Linguist
0	1) English (native language; idiomatic)
2	2) Japanese (completely fluent, with accent)
2	3) Spanish (completely fluent, with accent)
1	4) Mandarin Chinese (fluent)
1	5) Italian (fluent)
1	6) Arabic (fluent)
3	Scholar
2	1) KS: [Campaign city] Underworld 16-
2	2) KS: World Supercriminals 16-
4	3) KS: Card Shark And His Organization 18-
2	4) KS: The Mafia 16-
2	5) KS: The Mexican Mafia 16-
2	6) KS: The Yakuza 16-
2	7) KS: Chinese Tongs & Triads 16-
2	8) KS: Street Gangs 16-
2	9) KS: World Criminals 16-
2	10) KS: Serial Killers and Serial Killing 16-
2	11) KS: Telephone, Sewer, and Utility Subsystems 16-
2	12) KS: The Martial World 16-
2	13) KS: The Mercenary/Military/Terrorist World 16-
2	14) KS: The Espionage World 16-
1	15) KS: World Literature 11-
1	16) KS: High Finance 11-
3	Scientist
2	1) Biology 16-
2	2) Dimensional Engineering 16-
2	3) Pharmacology/Toxicology 16-
2	4) Chemistry 16-
1	5) Physics 11-
2	6) Accounting 16-
2	7) Criminology 16-
2	8) Psychology/Criminal Psychology 16-
2	9) Ballistics 16-
20	+2 Overall
10	+2 with Ranged Combat
8	+4 with Gun #1
10	+2 DCV
10	+4 OCV; Only vs. Hit Location Modifiers (-1)
3	Combat Sense 16-
12	Danger Sense 16- (out of combat); Intuitional (-1)
10	Eidetic Memory
10	Find Weakness 11-, Gun #1
15	3d6 Luck
3	3 points of Resistance
15	Wealth
45	8 300-point vehicles

Skills, Talents, Perks	
10	5 Deep Covers
3	Well-Connected
1	1) Police Department, Paranormal Operative Squad, 11-
1	2) Police Department, Records Division, 11-
1	3) [Campaign city] Penitentiary, 11-
1	4) FBI, Behavioral Sciences Unit, 11-
1	5) FBI, Records Division, 11-
1	6) FBI, Counterintelligence Unit, 11-
1	7) CIA, 11-
1	8) DEA, Records Division, 11-
1	9) U.S. Army, Colonel, 11-
1	10) Interpol, Records Division, 11-
1	11) UNTIL, 11-
1	12) UNTIL, Records Division, 11-
1	13) PRIMUS, Records Division, 11-
1	14) PRIMUS, a Silver Avenger, 11-
100+ Disadvantages	
20	Psychological Limitation: Vigilante Mentality
25	Psychological Limitation: Obsessed With Crimefighting
15	Psychological Limitation: Mysterious And Enigmatic
15	Distinctive Features: blue moon insignia on costume (easily concealed, extreme reaction)
20	Reputation: Killer vigilante, 14-
25	Hunted: An organized crime group, 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
20	Hunted: Card Shark, 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
20	Hunted: Police, 11- (As Pow, NCI, Imprison)
15	Secret Identity
625	Vigilante Bonus





## COPPERHEAD

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
20	STR	7*	OCV: 7
20	DEX	30	DCV: 7
20	CON	20	ECV: 3
10	BODY	0	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
13	INT	3	
10	EGO	0	
15	PRE	5	
10	COM	0	
8	PD	6	
7	ED	3	
4	SPD	10	
8	REC	4	
40	END	0	
35	STUN	10	

## Costs

Char:	98	Base:	100
	+		+
Powers:	141	Disads:	139
	=		=
Totals:	239		239

\* = OIF (Battlesuit)

Cost	Power	END
30	Multipower: 45 point base (all OIF)	
2u	1) 2d6 RKA, Armor Piercing (+½); OIF (Rifle attached to battlesuit, -½), No Knockback (-¼), 12 Charges (-¼), Will Not Work Underwater (-¼)	0
2u	2) 1½d6 RKA, Autofire (5 Shots, +½), 32 Charges (+¼); OIF (Rifle attached to battlesuit, -½), No Knockback (-¼), Will Not Work Underwater (-¼)	0
3u	3) 8d6 EB; OIF (Rifle attached to battlesuit, -½), 16 Charges (-0)	0
1u	4) 2d6 HKA; OIF (Laser Claws, -½), No STR Adds (-½), No Knockback (-¼), 12 Charges (-¼)	0
2u	5) 4d6 Entangle; OIF (Linethrower attached to battlesuit, -½), 12 Charges (-¼)	0
24	Armor (12 PD & ED); *	0
16	12" Flight; OIF (Jetpack, -½)	2
3	Infrared Vision; *	0
3	Ultraviolet Vision; *	0
4	+4 vs. Range for Sight Group; *	0
7	RRRH; *	0
3	Sight Flash Defense (5 points); *	0

## Skills

3	Computer Programming 12-
3	Deduction 12-
3	Electronics 11-
3	Security Systems 12-
3	Stealth 13-
3	Streetwise 12-
3	Systems Operation 12-
3	KS: [Campaign city] Underworld 12-
5	KS: Street Gangs 14-
3	SC: Lasers 12-
3	CK: campaign city, 12-
6	+2 with Multipower Powers

## 100+ Disadvantages

15	Psychological Limitation: Must Protect Her Family And Her Neighborhood
15	Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Drug Dealers And Street Gangs
10	Reputation: Bounty Hunter, 11-
15	DNPC: Sister, normal, 11-
15	DNPC: Brother, normal, 11-
20	Hunted: The Berserks, 11- (Mo Pow, Kill)
25	Hunted: Group of street gangs, 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
15	Secret Identity: LaJean Priestley
9	Vigilante Bonus



**Background/History:** LaJean Priestly grew up in the inner city slums. Although she was "intellectually gifted," she hated school. Soon she was running with the gangs. Before LaJean could become too involved with gang life, her mother yanked her off the street and started keeping her at home to watch her younger brother and sister. LaJean hated this and tried to "escape" her mother's watchful eye as much as possible.

Her life turned around the day that her mother and sister were attacked by a gang. Left to fend for herself and her brother for three weeks while they recovered in the hospital from near-fatal beatings, LaJean had time to take a long, hard look at her world and her attitudes. She decided they stank. She realized that drugs, gangs, and crime were making life unlivable for her and her friends, many of whom had already been injured or killed by gang violence. She decided to do something about it.

Throwing herself into her studies with uncharacteristic vigor, LaJean began to study science, realizing that therein lay the tools to help her clean up the streets. After many years of study and hard work, she built herself a suit of body armor and some personal weaponry. She designed the armor with a "snake" motif, chose the name "Copperhead," and began a one-woman crusade to dismantle the gangs. In order to conceal her identity and earn enough money to keep her battlesuit repaired, she took work as a bounty hunter. But she wasn't able to keep her other life secret from her brother and sister, who soon found out what she was doing. She is terrified that her mother will find out, too, and works hard to keep her secret to herself.

**Personality/Motivation:** LaJean's motive for becoming Copperhead is a good and simple one—she wants to clean up the streets and make the city livable for plain, honest folk. She has seen first-hand what drugs, gangs, and crime can do to a neighborhood, and she is determined to get rid of them. Sometimes, her goal requires that she kill, but she prefers to deal with street kids in nonlethal ways whenever possible. Although she has adopted extreme methods for stopping crime, she in fact cares deeply about her neighborhood and all the people who live there, and wants to help them as much as possible. In her "secret identity" she runs a community center where local teenagers and children can escape from the drug-filled, violence-ridden streets.

**Quote:** "There ain't no way I'm gonna let you sell that stuff, here or anywhere else."

**Powers/Tactics:** Copperhead's powers derive from her laser rifle and battlesuit. The laser rifle does not work when waterlogged, so she tries to avoid situations where she might be thrown in the water. When chasing "normal" criminals, Copperhead will usually rely on her Entangle to capture them; when she has to deal with superhumans, she will try the Entangle, but is prepared to use her lasers if necessary.

Copperhead prefers to attack from the air. She will usually start combat with a "strafing run" or two; if there are flying enemies, she will try to pick them off first to gain command of the skies. She makes clever use of buildings and structures, using them as cover and as "terrain" to confuse and outmaneuver her foes.

**Appearance:** Copperhead's armor is copper-colored with dark green highlights and a scaly, serpent-like motif. Power cables run from the powerpack on her back to her rifle and gauntlets.

**Scenario:** Copperhead is the sort of character that might be found in a high-tech street-level campaign. In her original campaign, Copperhead had to pay points for all of her weapons and equipment, so the GM allowed characters to be built on as many as 250 points.

**Record:** LaJean Priestly has a minor criminal record from the days when she ran with a gang. Copperhead is wanted on several counts of breaking and entering, four counts of kidnapping, many counts of aggravated assault, and two counts of murder.

**THE SCARECROW**

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats	
13	STR	3	<b>OCV:</b> 6	
18	DEX	24	<b>DCV:</b> 6	
15	CON	10	<b>ECV:</b> 3	
10	BODY	0	<b>Phases:</b> 4, 8, 12	
18	INT	8	<b>Costs</b>	
10	EGO	0	<b>Char:</b> 60 <b>Base:</b> 75	
20	PRE	10	+                    +	
10	COM	0	<b>Powers:</b> 90 <b>Disads:</b> 75	
6	PD	3	=                    =	
3	ED	0	<b>Totals:</b> 150                    150	
3	SPD	2		
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
25	STUN	0		

Cost	Powers	END
5	½d6 HKA, Damage Shield (+½); OIF (Spikes in armor, -½), No STR Adds (-½), No Knockback (-¼), Activation Roll 14- (-½)	0
13	Martial Arts—Dirty Infighting	
	<b>Maneuver</b> <b>OCV</b> <b>DCV</b> <b>Notes</b>	
	Off. Strike    -2            +1                    6½d6	
	Nerve Strike    -1            +1                    2d6 NND (rPD on vitals)	
	Killing Strike    -2            +0                    ½d6 HKA (1d6 w/STR)	

Skills and Perks	
3	Well-Connected
8	8 Contacts (Police, DEA, FBI, etc.) (all 11-)
8	Vehicle (souped-up motorcycle)
1	License to practice law
1	Computer Programming 8-
3, 3	Criminology 13-;    Deduction 13-
5, 1	Interrogation 14-;    Lockpicking 8-
1, 1	Mechanics 8-;        Paramedics 8-
3, 3	Shadowing 11-;      Stealth 13-
5, 2	Streetwise 14-;      CK: campaign city 11-
2, 2	PS: Policeman 11-;    PS: Attorney 11-
3	Scholar
5	1) KS: [Campaign city] Underworld 16-
2	2) KS: Organized Crime 13-
2	3) KS: Law 13-
2	4) KS: The Law Enforcement World 13-
6	+2 with commonly-carried weapons (see below)

75+ Disadvantages	
20	Psychological Limitation: Vigilante Mentality; Has No Regard For The Lives Or Welfare of Criminals
20	Psychological Limitation: "Split Personality;" Addicted To Spending Time As Scarecrow
20	Reputation: Vicious Vigilante, 14- (extreme)
15	Secret Identity: Jack Clauson, Assistant D.A.

**Weapons & Equipment** (see Sourcebook for details)

- 2 Desert Eagle .44 Magnum handguns with 2 clips each
- 2 combat knives
- Brass Knuckles
- Taser
- 3 Smoke Grenades
- Body Armor (Armor, +6 PD & ED)



**Background:** Jack Clauson was born and raised in the heart of [campaign city], with drugs and crime all around him. However, his family was loving and devoted, and he and his brothers and sisters usually managed to avoid the perils of inner-city life. Jack's father was a security guard, and this inspired Jack to become a policeman.

Jack worked on the force for many years. During that time, he was shot, stabbed, assaulted, spit upon, harassed, and saw too many of the scum he arrested released too soon by courts and prison officials who didn't seem to understand the crime situation on the streets. Finally, this disgusted him so much that he decided to do something about it: he went to law school, became an attorney, and went to work in the district attorney's office. He hoped he could make a difference, but his hopes were soon dashed. He found a monolithic bureaucracy which was more interested in processing criminals and getting them out of the system than it was in making sure that they got the punishment they deserved.

The last straw was the day he was viciously assaulted and almost killed by a burglar/rapist he had convicted only three months before who was already out on parole. As he recovered in the hospital, Jack decided that the time had come to abandon "the system," which didn't work properly, and try an unorthodox approach to cleaning up the streets. He began to train himself, augmenting his policeman's training with criminology skills, burgling skills, and the like. After designing himself a suit of armor and picking out the right weapons for the job, Jack began to spend his nights stalking the streets as "the Scarecrow," a name he was given because of his tattered overcoat. By day, he works as an assistant district attorney; at night, his brutal, vicious style of crimefighting evokes fear and hatred in the underworld.

**Personality/Motivation:** While Jack Clauson is extremely devoted to his war on crime, he sees himself almost as two different men: Clauson, who works within the system; and the Scarecrow, who deals with criminals in the "proper" way. As time has passed, this attitude has become so pronounced that Jack is nearly a split personality. He refers to his two identities as separate persons, and seems to be "addicted" to spending time as Scarecrow. The longer he is forced to remain as Jack Clauson, the more bizarre his behavior will get as he begins to lose hold on Clauson's polished exterior. At some point in the future, he will completely snap, and begin spending all of his time as Scarecrow; right now, he is still far from reaching this point.

The Scarecrow personality is much more extreme than the Clauson personality. While Clauson is certainly hard on crime, and punishes criminals to the full extent of the law, Scarecrow goes far beyond this. Scarecrow's approach to crimefighting involves torture, mutilation, and murder. He has no compunctions whatsoever about treating criminals this way, for he considers them to be subhuman, bestial things. Scarecrow's very name is enough to make hardened criminals speak in hushed whispers, for they know that any criminal who attracts his attention is bound to regret it.

**Quote:** "You still have one knee left. I still have a sledgehammer. Where can I find Roberto de la Viracocha?"

**Powers/Tactics:** Scarecrow's approach to fighting crime depends mainly on his elaborate information network, which not only includes his contacts in the Police Department and the criminal justice system, but his skill at finding information on the street. He often supplements this skill by torturing information out of captured criminals; he has a keen eye for

knowing who he can shoot right away and who he needs to take prisoner. He knows that he is not capable of taking on large numbers of opponents and winning, so he uses his reputation and dirty tricks to make up the difference. He hates to be drawn into open combat, preferring instead to attack his enemies from ambush.

Scarecrow's armor is a combination of leather, chain mail, and Kevlar; it offers protection from both bullets and knives. The armor is studded with sharp, tiny spikes in strategic locations (this is bought as Damage Shield; since it is not a standard weapon, Scarecrow had to pay points for it). His helmet not only offers him head protection, but is built to keep him from being injured in the face and neck (which would be difficult to explain to his co-workers).

**Appearance:** Scarecrow covers his dark brown leather-and-chain armor with an old tan overcoat; the spikes on the armor have made the overcoat tattered and ragged. Scarecrow's weapons are attached to holsters and sheaths on the armor, and are positioned so that he can reach them quickly and easily. His dull gray helmet is adapted from a football helmet; he also wears a bandanna mask and set of sports glasses to conceal his identity and protect his eyes.

**Scenario:** Scarecrow is a sample character from a "pure" street-level campaign. He is built on a base of 150 points (75 base + 75 Disads). He is also a good "villain" for some idealistic street-level games. If and when Scarecrow finally "snaps" and forgets about his everyday persona entirely, he will become a good example of the "Misguided Vigilante" villain archetype (see Chapter Four).

**Record:** Scarecrow is wanted for numerous acts of torture, aggravated assault, and murder.





# CAMPAIGN CREATION AND GAMEMASTERING

This section addresses some of the aspects of creating and running a *Dark Champions* campaign. Options and ideas for designing and running street-level scenarios and campaigns are discussed; and some of the problems that may arise in street-level campaigns are dealt with. This section and the Sourcebook should provide a GM with all the tools he needs to get a *Dark Champions* campaign up and running.

## CAMPAIGN DESIGN

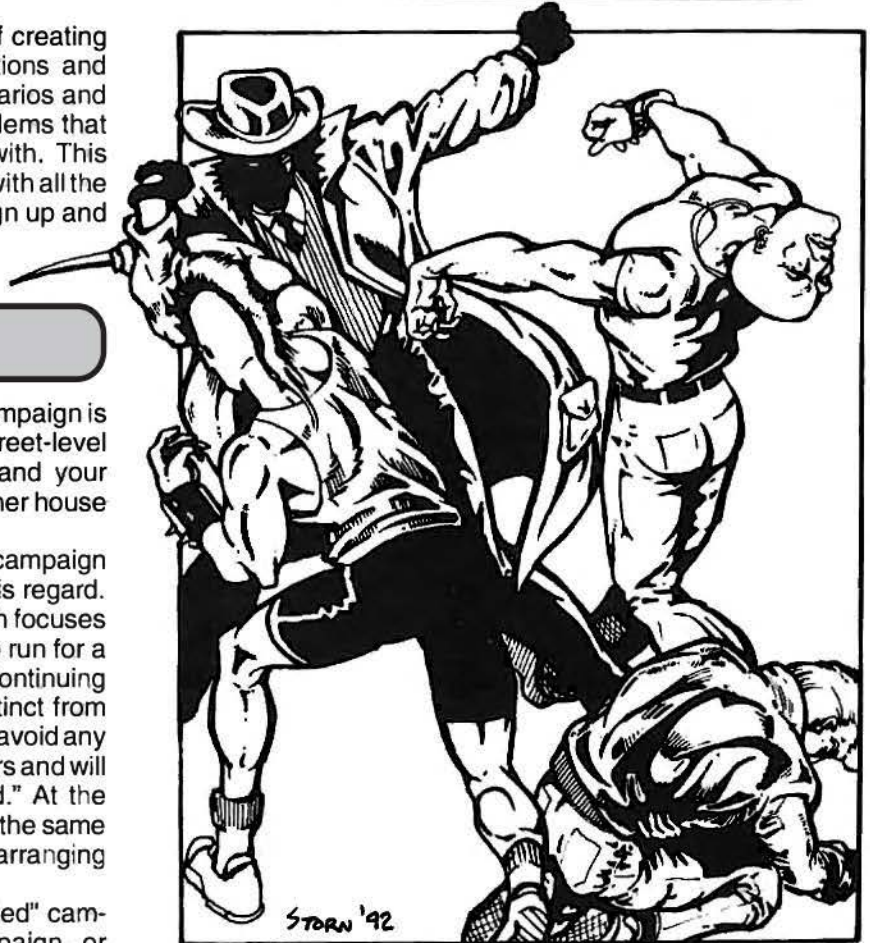
The first step in designing a *Dark Champions* campaign is to refer back to the earlier section on the types of street-level campaigns. Pick a type of campaign that you and your players will enjoy, and establish point limits and other house rules.

The next topic the GM needs to address is campaign continuity. The GM has basically two options in this regard. First, he can establish a full-blown campaign which focuses entirely on the street-level PCs and is designed to run for a long time with a fairly strong degree of continuity. Continuing campaigns should be set up so that they are distinct from other campaigns run by the gaming group. This will avoid any conflicts between different types of player characters and will give the street-level PCs their own "playing field." At the same time, because all of these characters exist in the same campaign world, the GMs should have no trouble arranging "crossover" adventures if they want to.

Second, the GM might decide to create a "limited" campaign, one which is secondary to another campaign, or which is only played occasionally and has no real continuity to speak of. This sort of campaign is for gamers who like the street-level subgenre, but not enough to play it on a regular basis. A limited campaign can be run in the shadow of another campaign; for example, it could be set in the same city where four-color superhero PCs are based.

## DESIGNING AND RUNNING STREET-LEVEL SCENARIOS

Once you've figured out what sort of street-level campaign you want to run, you can begin designing scenarios. You may already have ideas—in fact, your ideas may have influenced how you designed your campaign. If so, designing the scenarios should come easily to you. Here are a few suggestions on scenario design, and a discussion of some of the problems and pitfalls found in running street-level scenarios and campaigns.



## TYPES OF STREET-LEVEL PLOTS

There are several different types of plots which recur frequently in street-level comic books. They include:

**Crisis Management:** This plot starts the character off at "ground zero" when some crime-related emergency or disaster occurs. The basic feature of this plot is that the character was in the wrong place at the wrong time, at least as far as the criminals are concerned. The character has to defeat the criminals, rescue hostages or other innocent victims, and get to safety. For Crisis Management adventures, the GM needs to have a relatively small area thoroughly mapped out, several criminals fully written up and properly armed, and a relatively detailed plotline. The "Harcor Towers" setting in the Sourcebook is the sort of location needed for a Crisis Management plot.



**Hunting Trip:** This plot involves someone hunting for someone else. Usually the goal is to kill or destroy the target, but it could be to kidnap the target or recover some object. There are two variations: the player characters are hunting a particular criminal or criminal organization; or a criminal or criminal organization is coming after the player characters (or after something or someone they are guarding). This plot works well in combination with some other plot types, such as *Revenge!*. Assassination-based scenarios are this type of plot. Hunting Trip plots have the virtue of being easy to run. What the GM mostly needs is a complete write-up of whoever the PCs are hunting/being hunted by, and some sort of idea of where and in what sequence the two enemies will encounter each other. The settings for the various confrontations need not be exceptionally detailed, and in fact could even be settings from earlier adventures which are slightly revised for this scenario.

**Infiltration:** In this plot, the characters have to get into a highly-guarded area, usually to obtain something or kill someone. They may be acting on their own initiative, or they may have been recruited by a patron or old military buddy. Generally, the PCs have to wade through security devices and hordes of agents and thugs before reaching their goal, then survive one last battle with the leader of the evil forces before they achieve their end. To prepare for this adventure, the GM needs to have the area to be infiltrated mapped out in detail. The agent-level enemies can be run from a generic write-up, but any major criminals need to have their own character sheets.

**The New Kid(s) In Town:** This sort of plot is a staple of stories with “renegade cops.” It involves stumbling across a major crime figure or criminal operation which has just decided to move into the campaign city (or which has been secretly operating under the characters’ noses for some time). The characters have to investigate the situation to find out about this new threat, and then they have to deal with it. Usually, Contacts and new-found friends provide assistance and information to the characters. The GM needs to have the main villain and his organization written up in enough detail that he can answer the players’ questions about it. He also needs to have a good explanation for why the PCs have never stumbled across this man or his organization before.

**Ongoing War:** This “plot” is actually more of a campaign theme. In this sort of game, the characters have been fighting a particular organized crime group for a long time. This group is their chief opponent (maybe their only one). The campaign will eventually boil down to one big battle or final confrontation, winner take all. A variation on this plot is a war between two criminal groups in which the PCs are “third parties,” or perhaps merely observers (see the “Gang War” scenario in the Sourcebook). As that scenario shows, it is possible to mix this sort of campaign theme in with a normal campaign. The GM just needs to keep careful track of the events in the “war” between the PCs and the criminal organization(s), so that he can figure out what the organization will do next, how many men and resources it has left, and so forth.

**Revenge!** This plot is usually combined with another plot, but not always. It begins when something disastrous happens to the character(s): his family is killed before his eyes; the master villain captures his partner and tortures him to death; and so forth. The characters then make it their mission in life to get appropriate revenge on whoever did this. This plot works better if the target is a single person or a small group; if it’s a large group, such as the Mafia, this plot element is better used as part of a character’s background motivations, or as the subject of an entire campaign. What the GM needs to run this plot is a detailed character description of the person(s) upon whom the character(s) are seeking revenge. That will give the GM a good idea of how the target will react to the PCs’ attentions, what he will do in response, and how much of a match he will be for the PCs when they finally catch up to him.

## GROUP SCENARIOS AND SOLO SCENARIOS

Besides the nature of the plot, there are two types of adventures the GM needs to consider: group adventures and solo adventures.

### GROUP ADVENTURES

Group adventures are, naturally, adventures which involve groups of player characters. Most roleplaying adventures, in this or any other genre, are group adventures, because roleplaying is primarily a group activity. Thus, most *Dark Champions* adventures that GMs design will have to be set up for groups of PCs. This is in direct contrast to most street-level comic books, which often portray a hero acting on his own.

Getting the group of player characters together may be a problem. In some campaigns, such as those based around an anti-terrorist squad or a group of old Army buddies reunited, getting the PCs together is easy. But trying to run group adventures with PCs who are all Loners can drive a GM crazy. If this “individuality problem” is not dealt with, it will soon become more trouble than it’s worth to make the PCs work together.

There are several ways to solve this dilemma, however. The best method is to use preventive medicine: tell the players before they begin creating their characters that all PCs need to be able to work in a group. Player characters can be mysterious if they like, but only to a point—when it ceases to be fun and starts to make the game harder to run, they will have to quit it.

Another way to cope with the individuality problem is to give “loner” characters extra Experience Points they can only use to buy off the Psychological Limitations that make them act like lone wolves. The GM will have to run a few scenarios the hard way, but that’s better than having to do it for a whole campaign.

A third solution is to force logical interconnections on the characters. For example, if one PC has a DNPC, defined as his sister, have another PC start to date the sister. Then bring the sister into every scenario where you need those two PCs to work together—this will give them the same motivation and make them work as a team. Another example is to have separately captured PCs imprisoned together, thus forcing them to cooperate to effect an escape. This will teach them how (and why) to work together.



Lastly, you can always bludgeon the players with the obvious. Point out to them that they have common goals and ideals (if they do), and that they will accomplish more as a group than they could individually. Drive this point home by having a PC acting on his own be beaten by a criminal that the group as a whole is then able to defeat.

In a campaign which mixes four-color and vigilante PCs, the GM is going to have to get used to dealing with the two sub-groups of player characters. He will need to plan his scenarios so that each type of character can become involved separately. Explain to the player(s) with the vigilante character(s) that he needs to learn to be patient—because he is a minority (often of one), he will only be able to command a little of the GM's time, perhaps only five or ten minutes per gaming hour.

## SOLO ADVENTURES

The other type of adventure, one which is seen more often in street-level campaigns than in other *Champions* subgenres, is the solo adventure. Solo games have their own advantages and disadvantages, just like group adventures.

The advantage of solo adventures is the potential for in-depth character development. The GM's undivided attention gives a player the chance to have his character do things that he could never do when playing with a group: going after an old enemy one-on-one, going deep undercover to infiltrate the Mafia, and so forth. The GM can come up with adventures and enemies specifically tailored to the character's strengths and weaknesses, rather than having to design scenarios with a group in mind. For example, running a scenario where an assassin is trying to kill one character out of an entire group can be difficult, since a lone assassin is usually not too much trouble for several trained heroes. However, as a solo adventure, this scenario can be a lot of fun.

The disadvantage to solo games is that the GM usually has to spend a lot more time preparing the adventure. A player who is the sole focus of the GM's attention is going to have to be alert and asking questions all the time, and will usually test the GM in ways that group play does not. The GM will need to have clues, hints, and other evidence ready for the character, who will be relying totally on his own wits and abilities rather than on the collective talents of a group of PCs.

The GM will also need to be prepared for the occasional unexpected turn of events. The most common of these is the character who accidentally gets knocked out in a fight you expected him to breeze through (by a lucky shot to the Head, for example). When designing the solo adventure, the GM should try to anticipate as many of these problems as he can, and have a solution for them (for example, know in advance how much damage it takes to Stun the PC, and avoid doing that much STUN to him if he needs to win the fight). However, no GM, no matter how good he is, can anticipate everything a player (or the dice) will do, so be ready to improvise.

The GM has to be aware of the player's personality when designing solo games. For example, some players love scenarios which are based on lots of tiny clues and deductions; other players are horrible at making deductions, and will enjoy the game more if they just get to hit the bad guys a lot. Give the player what he wants, since he can't just sit back and let other characters shoulder the burdens he detests.

## SPECIAL "SCENES"

Every genre has its own special "scenes"—occurrences or events common to many of the comic books of that genre. There are two which are common to the street-level subgenre: the Opening Vignette and the Training Scene.

The Opening Vignette is usually found at the beginning of the adventure, as the name implies. What occurs is this: the character comes across some minor criminal or criminals in the act of committing a crime—robbing a jewelry store, mugging an old lady for her Social Security check, or whatever else pleases the GM's fancy. The player character has to stop this crime and save the day. This has nothing at all to do with the main storyline, it's just a way to get the game started. It can be used to foreshadow later scenarios, though. Since many players expect at least one combat per session, Opening Vignettes are a good way to get that fight out of the way, if the GM wants to run an "investigation" scenario.

The Training Scene is another staple of the street-level subgenre, and other genres as well. It depicts the character learning or practicing the skills and abilities he will use in his fight against crime. In some versions, it shows the character as a younger person, learning at the side of a master or mentor; in others, it depicts a character re-training himself to build his abilities up to the point where he can take on a new and deadlier foe. A variant on the Training Scene is the Equipping Scene, in which the character gathers and puts on the equipment he needs for the coming confrontation. Unlike Opening Vignettes, Training Scenes are difficult to work into gaming scenarios. The player may mention them to the GM when he tells the GM about his character's origin. Otherwise, they often are simply assumed to be part of the game, but are not roleplayed.

## SOME FREQUENT PROBLEMS

In this section, we're going to discuss a number of problems which sometimes arise in *Dark Champions* campaigns. In general, each of these problems is nothing more than an aspect of the genre which differs significantly from four-color campaigns, so GMs need to be prepared to deal with them.

### KILLING PLAYER CHARACTERS

Besides the problem of killing innocents mentioned earlier, the GM should also be concerned about killing PCs. One of the conventions of four-color *Champions* campaigns is that player characters never get killed. They might get badly wounded, even to the point where they require new body parts or other bizarre remedies, but they don't die. However, street-level PCs don't have comic-book medicine to heal them. There is a greater chance that, whether by accident or because of overwhelming odds, they will get killed in the line of duty (after all, Killing Attack is the standard offensive power for most street-level campaigns). This is not to say that *Dark Champions* characters cannot cheat death like four-color characters do: they are as likely to have narrow escapes or be rescued by unexpected coincidences as any superpowered PC. Street-level PCs just need to be more aware of the possibility of dying, because they are more "fragile" than superpowered beings.



Naturally, no one likes to see a PC die. But, as with the possibility of killing innocents, the threat has to be there, or the subgenre loses much of its flavor. If the players know that the GM will move Heaven and Earth to keep them from being killed, they will take all sorts of inappropriate risks, because they know they can get away with it. On the other hand, if they know that the threat of dying is a real one, they will act like heroic-level characters should—heroically, yet cautiously.

## RECURRING ROLES VERSUS THE EVER-RETURNING VILLAIN

**Note: 3/11/90 at 11:40 PM,  
Stakeout, Type 7-D Red Carpet Hotel**

*I have heard rumors on the street that the remnants of the Card Shark organization have finally been brought under the control of one man. Unfortunately, the civil war between the different factions could not go on forever. Once again, a new Card Shark is born.*

*One would think that the criminals of this city would have learned by now that there is no future in being Card Shark. This one will last no longer than his predecessors. And this time, when I am through with him, no one will dare assume Card Shark's identity again.*

— Excerpt from the journals  
of the Harbinger of Justice

Four-color campaigns always feature villains who escape, either from the PCs or from jail, and return to battle the characters yet another time. Even villains thought long-dead tend to come back for another crack at Our Heroes. For example, all **Champions** players know that no matter what they do, or how lucky they get, Dr. Destroyer is going to escape and return with another mad scheme. In contrast, many street-level characters are prone to dealing with their enemies in a “permanent” fashion. This puts a lot of strain on GMs who don't want to have to keep coming up with new villains for the characters to fight. However, a GM who tries to keep street-level PCs from killing criminals will frustrate some of them, since the potential for killing criminals is supposed to be one of the things that sets the street-level subgenre apart from four-color campaigns.

A partial solution to this problem is the “recurring role” villain: a villain who is essentially just a collection of equipment and/or skills that could be used or learned by lots of people. Thus, the players get to kill the criminal, and the GM eventually gets to give the criminal's equipment to some other criminal who will assume the identity of the first criminal. There is a good example of this in the Sourcebook—the villain Card Shark. As his Background/History indicates, the current Card Shark is the fifth man to claim that name. In the ongoing war between the Card Shark organization and the Harbinger of Justice, “Card Shark” has been killed by Harbinger four times. Some of those times, the entire organization was defeated and had to be rebuilt; other times it was merely a change of leadership. Each of the Card Sharks has been different: some clever and devious, others arrogant and powerhungry; some in firm control of the organization and others in a precarious leadership position; some more interested in assassination, some in gambling. The GM can use the death of Card Shark as a major campaign event, but then “recreate” him as necessary by giving the main elements of the Card Shark character (his costume, weapons, and organization) to another NPC.

## STREET-LEVEL SETTING AND SCENERY

The settings, locations, and scenery that GMs use for their street-level battles are very important, for two reasons. First, street-level characters don't have a lot of armor, so they need to rely on cover. The more cover a setting has, the better the characters like it, and the more chance they get to use tactics, surprise moves, and the like. Make sure that the setting has some elements which will help the characters, and some which will get in their way or help their enemies.

Second, settings have to be chosen with an eye towards street-level characters' movement abilities. Unlike superheroes, who can fly and teleport, *Dark Champions* characters have limited movement capacity. Don't stage street-level battles which require a lot of moving around, or the characters will spend most of their time moving and only a little of it actually fighting.

The following list is but a small sample of good locations for street-level battles:

- Airports
- Alleys
- Apartment buildings
- Banks
- Courtrooms
- Cruise ships
- Dormitories or other college buildings
- Fairs and amusement parks
- Factories (abandoned)
- High-rise buildings
- Hotels
- Malls (indoor shopping malls; outdoor markets and bazaars)
- Mansions (belonging to the major villain, usually)
- Office buildings
- Parking garages
- Parks
- Police stations and other government buildings
- Prisons
- Restaurants
- Rooftops
- Schools and schoolyards/playgrounds
- Stores
- Streets (especially when full of people or traffic)
- Vacant lots
- Vehicles in motion
- Warehouses
- The Waterfront (docks, piers, fishing boats, etc.)





## ADDING COLOR TO YOUR SCENARIOS WITH FORENSICS AND CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY

### Forensics Laboratory Notes: 7/27/88, Investigation of Possible Serial Killing 4769, Whittington Avenue (Case # SM5-F-2/5-037LAX)

All blood samples from the bedroom murder scene have now been analyzed. They contained two surprises. The first samples were predictable: O+ and A+, the victims' blood types; but a third sample was O-. Premise—one of the victims, probably the husband, was able to fight back and wounded his attackers. This would explain the massive bruises on his body; they were so angered at him that they beat him before they killed him.

A fourth sample contained the biggest surprise of all. The precipitin test revealed that the blood was not human blood. By comparing its cell structure to the usual reference materials, I determined it to be rabbit blood. Premise—animal sacrifice. This raises the unpleasant specter of ritualistic murder. Voodoo posse, Satanic cult, lone psychopath? I am currently cross-referencing this data with my notes on those types of criminals.

— Excerpt from the workbooks of the Harbinger of Justice

Street-level heroes can't usually rely on Telepathy, Clairvoyance, N-Ray Vision, and similar powers to help them solve mysteries and catch criminals. Instead, they have to use the same methods that the police and other law enforcement agencies use to gather the information needed to find and catch a criminal. This means that *Dark Champions* PCs will need to know something about forensic science (also known as criminalistics) and criminal psychology. As Thomas Harris's novels *Red Dragon* and *The Silence Of The Lambs* show, this sort of information can be used to provide the PCs with clues which are vital to catching criminals, and can also create a lot of tension and suspense for them. Proper use of forensic science data and criminal psychology can add a lot to a *Dark Champions* game, giving it an air of "realism" and grim excitement.

Accordingly, this section will provide a brief introduction to criminalistics, from a gaming point of view. This information should give *Champions* GMs a look into the world of the criminalistics lab, and will include plenty of hints on the types of clues that can be thrown at the players. GMs who want to learn more can glean other bits of forensic data from comic books, movies, mystery novels, and the like; or they can purchase textbooks on the subject to get more in-depth information. Refer to the Bibliography at the end of this book for the titles of some books which are good places to start.

## FORENSIC SCIENCE

Forensic science, or criminalistics, concerns the application of science and scientific processes to criminal investigation. Put another way, it is the use of scientific techniques, such as fingerprinting, to gather information which will help law enforcement (and street-level player characters) apprehend and convict criminals. In *Champions*, characters who



have the Skill Criminology (which would more accurately be referred to as Criminalistics) are well-versed in this area; they are able to analyze trace evidence left at crime scenes to gather information on the criminals who left that evidence. (The techniques of forensic pathology, and the **Champions** Skill Forensic Medicine, are discussed in the next section.) This section will illustrate the sort of things that characters with Criminology can find out. Each topic will mention one or more Science Skills which act as complementary skills when characters are using their Criminology Skill.

## BLOOD

The study of blood is known as Serology. Blood samples and stains can be extremely useful to the criminalist. They can help identify murderers and show what happened at a murder scene. The basic steps in a blood investigation are these: is it blood; if so, is it human blood; if so, what are its characteristics. Special chemical tests provide the answers to these questions.

Blood is identified by its "type." The most common blood typing system is the A-B-O system, but others, such as M-N and Rh, can also be used (there are more than fifteen such classification systems). Blood cannot as yet be "fingerprinted," i.e., typed to a specific individual (however, due to advances in DNA "fingerprinting," criminalists may soon be able to match a blood sample to a specific person; see below). By determining what a blood sample's type is in each of the classification systems, a serologist can establish what percentage of the population has that specific blood type. If a suspect has that type, this fact is of some evidentiary value—the lower the percentage, the greater the likelihood that that suspect is the perpetrator. Another way to further individualize a blood sample is to analyze the blood enzymes in it; this method can identify the blood by racial type.

Sometimes a criminalist will not have a blood sample, but will have a sample of some other body fluid (for example, the saliva left on the rim of a glass). If a person is a "secretor," then their blood type can be determined from their other bodily fluids, such as saliva and semen. Approximately 80% of the populace are secretors.

Blood samples should be gathered when fresh. As blood dries and ages, it gradually becomes more and more difficult to determine its characteristics, because the red blood cells rupture. Impurities can also occur when blood mixes with other substances, such as dirty water. Depending upon the age and purity of a blood sample, the GM should assign a -1 to -5 penalty to a character's Criminology roll. The exception to this is the test for distinguishing human blood from animal blood, for which the age of the sample does not matter. Additionally, a test called the absorption-elution technique has been used to type blood samples up to eleven years old, but this test is more complicated and difficult. Depending on a character's equipment and skill, the GM might rule that this test cannot be performed, or can assess penalties to the Criminology roll.

Besides its capacity to help identify an offender, blood can also provide information based on the way it has stained and splattered the crime scene. Analysis of blood patterns is an extremely complex process; at his option, the GM should assess Criminology roll penalties of -2 to -6 unless a character has Science: Bloodstain Interpretation as a Skill. The size and shape of a blood pattern can determine which direction the blood came from, what angle it hit the surface at, and other information which can help reconstruct a crime.

## FIBERS AND HAIRS

Fibers of many sorts are often found at crime scenes. These include animal fibers, clothing fibers, carpet fibers, and the like. Criminalists usually distinguish between natural fibers (such as wool) and man-made fibers (such as polyester, dacron, and spandex). Natural fibers can be identified the same way that hairs are (see below). Man-made fibers can be examined under a microscope to determine such characteristics as cross-sectional shape, color, striations, dye composition, chemical composition, and fiber type and subtype. Fibers are most useful when they can be definitely matched with fibers clearly connected to the criminal; otherwise, a particular batch of a certain fiber may be so large that connecting it with any one owner may prove impossible.

Hair is most often found at crime scenes when the crime is a violent one like murder or rape. Hair is not yet "fingerprintable": a particular hair cannot be definitely matched to an individual. However, if the root is attached to the hair (such as when it has been violently pulled out of the scalp), DNA analysis may be possible. The age and sex of the person who left the hair also cannot normally be determined. What can be told about a hair is what part of the body it is from (for example, scalp hair versus beard hair), the race of the person whose hair it is, and whether the hair is human or animal hair. The best that criminalists can do is try to match a hair to someone by comparing a hair's color and structure to that of control samples taken from the suspect. As with blood typing, the more comparisons that are found, the smaller the group of potential suspects becomes, and the more likely that the suspect in question is the culprit. Another useful trait of hair is that it chemically "reflects" the substances that a person has ingested in the past several days; this can provide clues regarding a person's diet or lifestyle (for example, the fact that a person had taken drugs or ingested poison could be told from his hair).

Characters who want to be experts at hair and fiber identification can take Science: Fiber/Hair Analysis.

## FINGERPRINTS

Fingerprints are extremely useful for identifying criminals, for two reasons. First, fingerprints are completely individualized—every person's fingerprints are unique to him. Each fingerprint has ridge characteristics which form whorls, arches, and loops that are easily identifiable from a sufficiently clear print. Sometimes even a partial print is enough for a positive identification. Depending upon how much of a print is present, the GM may impose a -1 to -3 penalty to a character's Criminology roll; a failed roll means no identifiable print can be recovered. A fingerprint's loops, arches, and whorls provide a basis for classifying the print by type and subtype for analysis and categorization. Second, a person's fingerprints never change during his lifetime. They always remain the same. Some criminals have tried to obliterate or alter their fingerprints, without success. It is possible to wound the fingertips so deeply that scars will cover the fingerprints, but such scars are themselves easily identifiable.

Fingerprints which are not visible to the naked eye are known as latent prints. Latent prints can be detected in several ways. The method of detection will vary depending upon what type of surface the print is on. Hard and/or nonabsorbent materials (such as metal or glass) can be dusted for prints; the dust adheres to the oily deposits left by the fingertip and reveals the print. The color of the surface

dictates what color of powder will be used for the best contrast; magnetic and fluorescent powders are also available if needed. Prints on soft and/or porous materials (such as a paper or cloth) can be treated with chemicals. These methods are limited by time—the older a print is, the less likely it can be detected. However, new methods using chemicals or lasers can sometimes detect fingerprints which are 15-40 years old on some surfaces. Depending upon the age of a fingerprint and the equipment available to analyze it, the GM might assign a -1 to -4 penalty to the Criminology roll. Science: Fingerprint Analysis covers this subject.



## FIREARMS AND BULLETS

A lot of information can be recovered from guns, bullet fragments, bullet holes, and powder residue. Science: Ballistics and Weaponsmith (Slugthrowers) are complementary skills.

When a gun is fired, the grooves which line the barrel leave markings on the bullet. These markings are sort of the gun's "fingerprint." If enough of the bullet can be recovered, the gun can be test fired and the two bullets compared using a comparison microscope. This method can positively identify which gun fired the bullet. This procedure does not apply to shotguns, which have no grooves in their barrels. The bullet casing may also have markings from the firing pin, breechblock, and/or shell extractor which will identify the gun (shotgun shells will also have these markings).

Gunpowder residues are also important forensic clues. The amount of residue left on the victim's clothing or skin will provide an estimate of how far apart the shooter and the

victim were—the more powder residue, the closer together they were. If the two are farther apart than three feet or so, the only traces will be a "bullet wipe" (lead, carbon, and lubricant residues) in the edges of the entrance wound. Similarly, shotgun pellets spread about one inch per yard, giving some indication of the distance between shooter and target. By analyzing the chemical composition of a gunpowder sample, a criminalist can usually identify the type of bullet, and sometimes even the specific lot of bullets it came from. Gunpowder residue information can vary based upon barrel length, caliber, weather conditions, and the condition of the gun; sometimes infrared photography is needed to expose gunpowder residues. In certain situations, the GM might impose Criminology roll penalties of from -1 to -3 to indicate the difficulty of gaining useful data. Note that, despite the Skill descriptions in the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*, making findings on the distance between shooter and victim is a function of the Criminology Skill, not the Forensic Medicine Skill.

Characters should not pick up guns by putting something in the barrel, as this could remove powder deposits or make marks that will hinder ballistics tests (if a gun has been picked up this way, the GM can assess a -1 to -2 penalty to the Criminology roll). The best way to pick up the gun is by the trigger guard or by the checkered portion of the grip, since these areas are the least likely to have fingerprints on them.

Residue of the gunpowder and primer are also blown back to land on the shooter's hands. However, a relatively sensitive test is required to detect these traces, and all it proves is that the subject recently fired a gun (the particular gun in question cannot be identified). Moreover, the powder residues do not remain very long, and can be easily washed off.

Lastly, forensic science can help restore obliterated serial numbers. Criminals often attempt to remove the serial numbers on guns (and on other items) to prevent them from being identified. If the criminal does a poor job of removing the number, an etching reagent can be applied to bring out the patterns below the surface of the metal where the number was stamped into the gun. If the criminal knows what he is doing and obliterates all traces of the number, restoration of it is not possible.

## PRINTS, IMPRESSIONS, AND TOOLMARKS

Fingers are not the only things which leave prints. Tools, shoes, tires, teeth, and other things can leave prints, marks, and impressions on various substances, and these marks can provide clues to the knowledgeable character. *Dark Champions* PCs who want to be experts in this field should buy Science: Print And Impression Identification.

Tools can usually be identified by comparing them to the impression and looking for distinctive nicks, marks, scoring, or other distinguishing features. However, the tool should never be "fitted" into the impression in an attempt to match them, since this may alter the mark and ruin the evidence. Depending on the nature of the toolmark, an expert may also be able to determine what sort of tool made the mark.

Other impressions or tracks can be made by things like shoes, cloth, and tires. When the suspect is apprehended, the print in question can be compared with the object that might have made it (for example, a footprint can be compared to the suspect's shoes). If a good enough print is obtained, it may also be possible to compare it to a database of known prints and identify it by type (for example, as a Brand X shoe rather than a Brand Y shoe).



## OTHER FORENSIC TECHNIQUES

**Arson:** Criminalists are sometimes called upon to investigate fires to determine whether they could be arson. Science: Arson/Explosion Investigation covers this field. An arson scene should be examined as soon as possible after the fire is put out. The investigator first tries to find the fire's point of origin. Fire tends to move upwards, so the investigation usually starts at the lowest point at which there is evidence of burning; factors such as wind and building collapse can alter the usual pattern of burning. A series of random fires throughout a building, or evidence of "streamers" (substances such as gasoline which are used to spread a fire) often indicate arson.

Once the fire's point of origin is located, it is protected and pictures are taken. An electronic "sniffer" can detect the residue of any substances used to start or spread the fire, since such chemicals do not usually burn up completely. A gas chromatograph can be used in the lab to tell what type of accelerant was used. Normally, not even intense firefighting efforts will obliterate all useful forensic evidence; but at the GM's discretion, they could lead to a -1 to -4 penalty to a character's Criminology roll. Similar penalties will result if the characters wait too long to investigate a fire. Lastly, inexperienced arsonists often burn themselves badly; a quick call to the local emergency rooms may help locate such an arsonist.

**Dental records:** Besides the impressions that teeth may leave, the teeth themselves may also be useful. Dental records are a good way to identify an otherwise unidentifiable body, if records exist for the decedent. Examination of a person's teeth can also provide clues about his diet and related habits.

**DNA "Fingerprinting":** DNA, deoxyribonucleic acid, exists in the nuclei of living cells. Each person's DNA is unique. In recent years, great strides have been made towards identifying individuals by their DNA. More and more courts are allowing DNA evidence to be admitted in criminal trials. Even a tiny sample of tissue (for example, a drop of blood or the root of a hair) is sufficient for identification. When DNA tests are developed to the point that they are absolutely accurate (as yet, there is still a small margin of error), they will be a foolproof method of identifying criminals. Police laboratories will have "libraries" of DNA prints just as they now have fingerprint libraries.

**Documents:** Criminalists analyze documents to determine who wrote them, whether they are authentic, whether they have been altered, and so forth. Characters who have the Skills Forgery or Science: Graphology (see the "Skills" section) can use them as complementary skills when working with documents. With handwritten documents, characters with Criminology can determine if a particular individual wrote that document, if two sufficiently lengthy writing samples are available for comparison. Typewriting may be identifiable to a particular typewriter, depending on the wear and tear on the typewriter's letters (remember the end of *The Jagged Edge*?). Text printed out by a computer printer can often be identified by printer type, but not necessarily as coming from a specific printer.

Documents which have been altered or erased can be examined microscopically for traces of such activity. If another type of ink is used (to alter or blot out part of the document), the different inks can be identified and read by infrared photography, thus exposing the fraud. Infrared photography can sometimes also be used to determine what is written on burned document fragments. Lastly, forensic scientists have several techniques for determining what was written on a piece of paper by examining the indentations left on the piece of paper below the written-on sheet.

**Drug identification:** Drugs can be identified in the laboratory, or even in the field, by means of simple chemical color tests (Chemistry or Pharmacology are complementary skills). For example, certain chemicals turn purple when exposed to heroin; orange-brown when exposed to amphetamines; turn marijuana purple; or change colors three times when exposed to cocaine. Other techniques, such as microcrystalline tests and chromatography, can be used in the laboratory to confirm these identifications.

**Explosives:** Explosives can be "low" explosives or "high" explosives; the distinction is based on the speed at which the substance "decomposes" (i.e., explodes). Black powder and smokeless powder are a low explosives; dynamite, TNT, and RDX (plastic explosive, called C-4 by the military) are high explosives. Low explosives are usually set off by a flame; high explosives by a primer (a small ultrasensitive explosive device) contained in a blasting cap and triggered by an electric charge.

The investigator should examine the scene of an explosion as soon as possible, before the evidence is obliterated. Explosives almost always leave traceable residues in the crater and surrounding areas. Microscopic examination of materials from the scene is the method used to find these unexploded particles, which can be identified with a chemical color test. Demolitions or Science: Arson/Explosion Investigation are complementary skills.

**Glass:** Glass fragments from the crime scene and the criminal may fit together like a jigsaw puzzle for a quick identification. In other cases, a piece of glass's chemical composition, density, and refractive index may help to match it to a particular piece. Science: Glass Analysis is a complementary skill.

**Paint:** The criminalist compares paint chips under a microscope, looking at color, color layers, surface texture, and other characteristics to match the two samples. If the paint chips are large enough, it may be possible to fit them together and obtain a definite match.

**Soil:** Forensic scientists try to identify soil as coming from a particular location, thereby linking soil samples found at a crime scene to soil found in another location. The more unique a soil sample is, the easier it is to identify it as coming from a particular place. Criminalists examine soil characteristics such as color, mineral content, the size of the soil grains, soil density, and components (foreign matter). The Science "Geology" is a complementary skill when analyzing soil; City Knowledge or Area Knowledge may also help identify the origin of soil samples.

## CONTENTS OF A CRIME LABORATORY

A lot of *Dark Champions* characters will have their own crime labs. (Sometimes the hero's crime lab is even better than the local Police Department crime labs.) This section will briefly describe some of the equipment that a character might need to have in his criminalistics laboratory. Crime labs can be built using the Base rules, *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook* pp. 187+. If a character cannot obtain some of the equipment described below, the GM can establish a negative modifier to Criminology rolls made when using the lab, or can simply rule that some of the tests described above cannot be performed.

A chromatograph is used to separate and identify chemical compounds. The substance to be identified is placed in a stationary medium. A moving medium passes over or through the stationary medium, and separates the various substances in the sample. The chromatograph cannot by itself identify the tested sample, but when linked with a mass spectrometer it can provide unquestionable identifications of thousands of substances. Both gas and thin-layer chromatographs are used; the former to identify gases and vaporized materials, the latter to identify liquid mixtures or dissolved solids.

A spectrophotometer measures an object's "absorption spectrum," the quantity of radiation a substance absorbs. Each substance's absorption spectrum is distinctive and identifiable; once a readout is obtained, it is compared to a vast library of known readouts to identify the tested substance. Spectrophotometers can be set up to work with ultraviolet, visible, or infrared energy.

Another technique for identifying substances is neutron activation analysis. This process involves bombarding a sample with neutrons so that you can measure the resultant gamma ray radioactivity and identify the sample. Unlike chromatography, this process has the benefit of not destroying the sample. Additionally, neutron activation analysis will work on minute quantities of a substance.

No crime laboratory would be complete without several different types of microscopes. Besides the standard compound microscope, criminalists also use the comparison microscope (which allows a side-by-side comparison of two objects for identifying marks); the stereoscopic microscope (a low-powered microscope which provides a three-dimensional image of the viewed object, good for viewing bulky items); and the scanning electron microscope (which uses electrons to display images of very tiny objects). Microspectrophotometers combine a microscope and a spectrophotometer.

## FORENSIC PATHOLOGY

Sometimes it is necessary for characters to examine bodies as well as physical evidence. Forensic pathology is the "branch" of medicine which is concerned with establishing the cause of death (many coroners are trained forensic pathologists). This section will provide a brief look at some causes of death and how they might be used by *Dark Champions* GMs to create mysteries and clues. Characters should buy the Skill Forensic Medicine if they want to be knowledgeable in the field of forensic pathology; this will also allow them to perform autopsies. Characters with PS: Sur-

geon can perform autopsies, but without more specialized knowledge their conclusions will be sketchy and subject to doubt. If a Forensic Medicine roll is failed by three or more, the character will receive incorrect information (usually because he overlooked something when performing the autopsy). A roll failed by less than three simply means that the character finds no useful information. Sciences such as Human Biology, Anatomy, and Pharmacology can act as complementary skills to Forensic Medicine.

## TIME OF DEATH

First, it is often necessary to determine how long a corpse has been dead. There are three traditional signs or indicators that provide evidence of what time a person died. The first is rigor mortis, the "stiffness of death." It begins about two hours after death, starting in the face and spreading throughout the body. The stiffness continues for about twelve hours thereafter, then gradually disappears until approximately thirty-six hours after death. By judging what point a body is at in this process, a time of death can be estimated.

The second sign is algor mortis, or "temperature of death." Body temperature falls at the rate of about one degree per hour. Environmental factors, such as the temperature, can alter this, though. GMs may assign a penalty of -1 to -3 to the Forensic Medicine roll to reflect adverse environmental conditions.

The third sign is livor mortis, the "color of death." After the heart stops beating, red blood cells settle into the regions of the body which are nearest to the ground at that time—for example, the back if someone dies while lying face-up on a bed. This colors the skin in that area, similar to a bruise. The further along this process is, the longer the person has been dead; the settling ends and becomes permanent at about eight hours after death. Livor mortis can also provide evidence of whether or not a body has been moved, based on the distribution of the coloring in relation to the position the body is found in.

These three conditions usually provide an accurate indication of the time of death. However, some circumstances can hasten or slow these processes. Besides the environmental factors mentioned above, the use of drugs, exercising shortly before dying, and struggling with the murderer can all sometimes affect the rate at which these three processes progress. The GM can assign Forensic Medicine modifiers of from -1 to -5 to simulate these factors.

There may be other clues as to the time of death. For example, if the victim ate shortly before dying, the amount of food digested can show the time of death, since digestion is a steady, measurable process. The presence of insects (most commonly flies and their larvae) in and around the corpse also provides clues; they will almost always be found in the first 24 hours after death unless the temperature is too cold for them. Another method which is increasingly used is a test which measures the level of potassium in eye fluid, which increases slowly and measurably after death, and is not affected by temperature. GMs and players can probably think of other creative ways to ascertain the time of death if the scenario calls for it.

Generally, a body will begin to decompose about 3-5 days after death. A body will completely rot in approximately 5-9 weeks.



## CAUSES OF DEATH

**WARNING:** This section should be read only by GMs, not by players. The information in this section can be used to create "murder mystery" scenarios which will be ruined if the players have read this section.

There are thousands of causes of death, of course, but *Dark Champions* GMs and player are primarily concerned with those which involve murder. A clever GM can provide characters clues to the cause of death, then feed them a little more information when they make their Forensic Medicine rolls. Eventually, the players should be able to deduce what happened, perhaps earning a non-combat Experience Point or two if they have been especially quick-witted. The GM could just tell them the cause of death straight out if they make a Forensic Medicine roll; but if possible, the GM should give the players a chance to figure it out on their own, because that's more fun for everyone.

Of course, this section is by no means complete—that would require a medical textbook. The information given here was chosen with an eye towards presenting facts which would be useful in planning *Champions* and *Dark Champions* scenarios. GMs who feel the need to know more can always dig up more information on this subject with a little research.

### Falling Deaths

When someone dies after a fall, the question is whether it was suicide, an accident, or murder. The injuries are the same each way. However, if the fall is an accident, the body is usually near the wall; if the person jumped or was pushed or thrown out, the corpse will be further away from the wall. Lastly, a victim will bleed more if he is alive on impact.

### Poison

There are many different varieties of poison, with many different effects. Poisons are often difficult to detect and can be overlooked in an autopsy unless specifically tested for. (For more information on building poisons using the HERO System rules, see "Toxic Terror: Poisons, Venoms, And Drugs For The HERO System," by Scott Heine, *Adventurer's Club* #16.)

Arsenic is a colorless, odorless powder which acts slowly. Four to seven hours after being fed arsenic, a victim will develop diarrhea and stomach pains—symptoms often mistaken for illness. Eventually, arsenic kills by dehydrating the body, causing fatal shock.

Curare is an injected poison. It kills by paralyzing the muscles needed to breath. The paralyzing effects disappear quickly, leaving no traces visible to the naked eye. Two similar drugs, Pavulon and succinylcholine, are used as anaesthetics.

Cyanide has become infamous in recent years because deranged individuals have killed people by putting it in Tylenol, Kool-Aid, and other products. Because it works very quickly, it is also used in "suicide capsules" carried by spies. It even works as a gas (the Bhopal disaster involved a form of cyanide gas). Cyanide has two "distinctive features" which make it easy to find if it is looked for. First, to some people it smells like almonds: forty percent of the population has genes which allow them to smell cyanide. Second, cyanide turns the blood and skin a dark scarlet color and corrodes parts of the stomach, effects which are easily detected.

Insulin, a drug given to diabetics, can kill if too large a dose is given. Special tests are required to find the traces.

Ricin is derived from the castor oil plant. Its effects include abdominal pains, nausea, and cramps; convulsions; and dehydration (similar to many illnesses). Ricin kills by interfering with the blood's ability to carry oxygen to the heart and brain. Even tiny amounts of it can cause a slow, painful death.

Strychnine is a fast-acting poison which kills by disrupting nerve impulses, causing intensely painful convulsions which prevent breathing. The victim is left with a "risus sardonicus," or sardonic rictus grin. However, the muscles soon relax, leaving no trace of the cause of death unless special tests are run.

### Strangulation And Smothering

Strangulation is often easy to detect. A fractured windpipe and bruised throat are the most obvious signs. Additionally, the capillaries in the eyes burst, causing pinpoint hemorrhages in the whites of the eyes. Smothering and suffocation, though, are a different matter. There is no bruising, and the pinpoint eye hemorrhages may not occur. There is a form of smothering known as "burking" which leaves no traces; it involves covering the victim's mouth and nose with the hands while sitting on the victim's chest. It would be difficult for the PCs to catch a murderer who burked his victims and left no fingerprints.

### Torture

Unfortunately, some murderers, such as some serial killers, derive pleasure from torturing their victims before killing them. Wounds from torture may look just like wounds which were received during a struggle. However, if the victim is still alive for a while after the wounds are inflicted, certain blood traces and biochemicals, such as leucocytes or serotonin, will be found in the edges of the wound and/or in increased levels in the body. Between this and the location





and type of wound, a forensic pathologist can determine that the victim was tortured, rather than mutilated after death. Ligation marks (marks left in the skin by rope when someone has been tied up) may also offer clues as to the victim's demise. This sort of information, while not pleasant, can be used to give street-level PCs a warning as to what sort of person they're dealing with.

## CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY

The discipline of forensic psychology (also known as criminal psychology) often goes hand-in-hand with criminalistics and forensic pathology. Forensic psychologists attempt to learn how a criminal will act, where he will strike next, by studying his activities and the evidence he leaves behind. These studies are most often used when the perpetrator is a repeating offender, such as a serial killer or serial rapist. While criminal psychology is not the "crystal ball" that it is sometimes depicted as being, it can be an extremely helpful tool in the race to catch such a criminal. Information provided by experts in these fields can narrow down the search, allowing the police to use their resources most efficiently. For example, most serial killers are men who stick to victims of their own race. Thus, if the victims are all white women, the police are going to concentrate their search on white men. Characters who want to be able to analyze the behavior of criminals in this way should purchase the Science "Psychology/Criminal Psychology."

Unfortunately, the field of criminal psychology is too vast and too complex to go into in any further depth here. The GM and players simply needs to be aware of it as one more element which can be added to a *Dark Champions* scenario. A little bit of research should provide the GM with enough information to make a particular character seem realistic.

## USING OTHER HERO GAMES PRODUCTS IN DARK CHAMPIONS CAMPAIGNS

Unfortunately, most other Hero Games products are not very useful for *Dark Champions* campaigns. They are written with four-color heroes in mind, and this makes them almost completely unusable for street-level campaigns, at least as far as the villains are concerned. (However, in the *Champions* universe, street-level characters may occasionally meet superpowered villains—one or two supervillains might be a good challenge for a group of street-level PCs to tackle.) The locations and maps can still be adapted for street-level campaigns, as can normal NPCs.

**Enemies Books:** Most of the villains in *Classic Enemies*, *Alien Enemies*, *High Tech Enemies* and *European Enemies* are superpowered, and thus are of limited use in street-level campaigns. From *Classic Enemies*, a few of the martial arts-oriented or gadget-oriented characters, such as The Whip, Scorpia, Black Claw, Blowtorch, Dragon Master, Mongoose, Rainbow Archer, and Utility, can be used with a little re-working. A couple of villains, such as Foxbat, can be used if they are changed from silly villains to "realistic," deadly criminals. Some villains, such as Lazer and Mechassassin, will work well in high-tech street-level campaigns. A few

villains, such as The Monster, could be used if weapons and gadgets were substituted for their superpowers. From *European Enemies*, The Godfather, Marauder, Blackjack, and Hood could all possibly be used. Of course, as mentioned above, *Dark Champions* characters could occasionally encounter superpowered criminals; this would be a good change of pace for some street-level games.

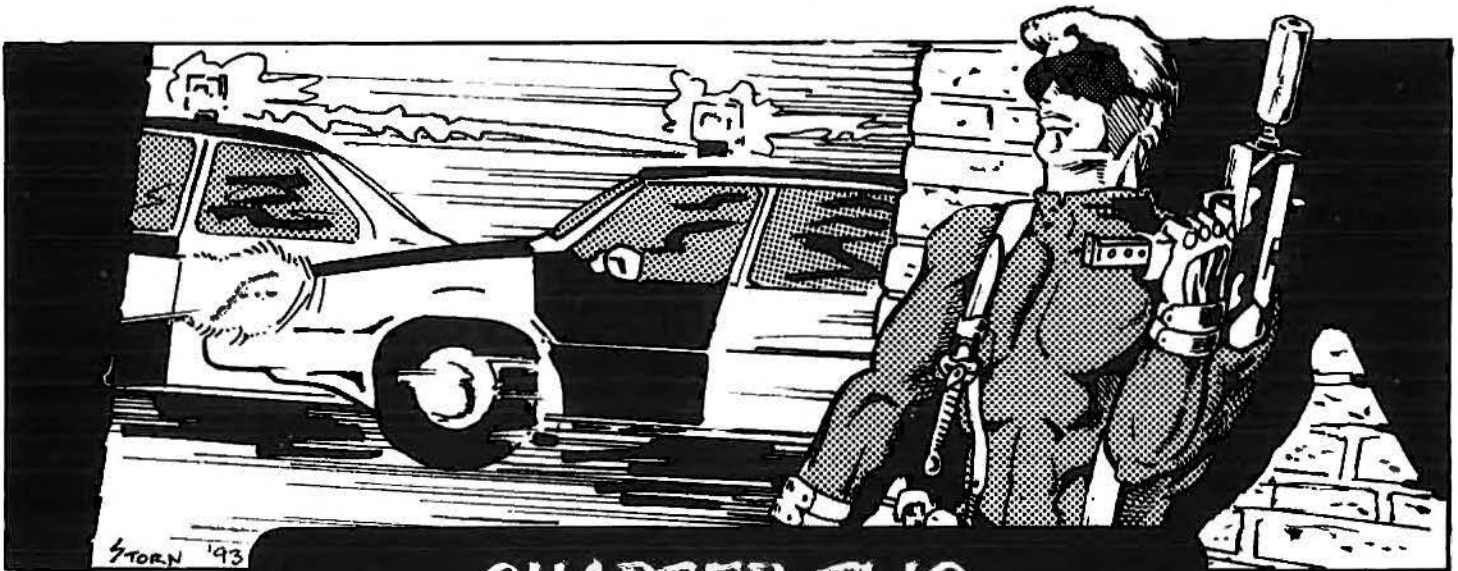
**Classic Organizations:** Like the *Enemies* books, most of this publication is written for four-color campaigns, so only the maps will be of any use to *Dark Champions* gamers. Some of the NPCs, such as Pooka, Trasher, and some of the Russian characters, could be used if their superpowers are removed. The organizations themselves generally revolve around superpowered characters or themes, and would require major revision if they were to work properly in a pure street-level campaign.

Most of the modules and adventures published for *Champions* are also good only for the maps. However, *Challenges For Champions*, by Andy Robinson, does have a couple of scenarios and characters which can be used in *Dark Champions* campaigns: "Soft Targets," "Mexican Standoff," and "Fire And Ice," with their associated characters, would work in a street-level game.

**Campaign Books And Supplements:** Of the Campaign Books and Supplements published since the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook* came out, Aaron Allston's *Ninja Hero* is the only one which is of any use to street-level GMs—but it more than makes up for the lack. It is full of characters, ideas, optional rules, and information which can be extremely useful in *Dark Champions* campaigns. *Cyber Hero* could be of use to a GM running a futuristic *Dark Champions* campaign. Some of the Supplements published for the first edition of *Champions*, such as *Danger International* and *Super Agents*, can be adapted to the new system. They have a lot of characters, scenarios, and source material that can be used in street-level campaigns with a little re-working.

**Adventurer's Club:** The first 17 issues of *Adventurer's Club* have a lot of material which can be used in street-level games, though some re-working may be necessary. The "Covert Action" column for *Espionage!* and *Danger International* often had suggestions which could be used in street-level campaigns. "Send In The Marines," by Greg Porter in Issue #5, provides data on the American armed forces, and Steve La Prade's "Impossible Crimes" in the same issue is full of good ideas for mystery scenarios. Janissaries, Unlimited, from Scott Jamison's "Grasp, Inc." scenario in Issue #6, could be brought into a street-level campaign as a worldwide mercenary organization. In Issue #7, the villain Packmaster, created by Phil Masters, could become an adversary for a group of street-level PCs. Another organization, Troubleshooters, described by Rodford Smith in Issue #9, works excellently in street-level campaigns, if Frederic Fagin's involvement and the in-house supervillains are removed. The organization can either be independent, or it can be one of the groups controlled by The Master of Crime (see the Sourcebook). Also in #9, the villain Berserk works well as a serial killer, if some of his Powers are toned down. "Exotic Weapons For Justice Inc.," by Greg Porter in Issue #11, offers good suggestions that need not be confined to pulp-era adventures. And, of course, the general articles on running *Champions* campaigns and Disadvantages are useful for any genre.





## CHAPTER TWO: SUPERPOWERED HUMANS AND THE LAW



This chapter discusses what American law might be like if superpowered humans actually existed. It has five main topics: the legal status of superheroes; criminal procedure; constitutional law; and a brief section on suggested scenarios which includes a mob lawyer NPC.

Throughout this chapter, the reader will find references to various court cases. Obviously, any case dealing with a superhuman is fictional, but the other cases are real. To look a case up, use the "cite" following its name. In a cite, the first

number is the volume number, the letters describe which "case reporter" (series of books containing case reports) the case is in, and the second number is the page the case is on. For example, the case at "400 U.S. 256" would be found in volume 400 of the U.S. Reports on page 256.

This chapter is essentially a work of legal fiction. Readers should not consider anything herein to be legal advice; nor should they rely on this material as an entirely accurate statement of the law as it currently exists.

## HEROES AND THE LAW

Comic-book heroes, from street-level characters to super-heroes, often work with official law enforcement agencies as “sanctioned” heroes. This relationship has usually been accepted as part of the story without anything being said about how it arose, what the sanctioned hero’s duties and responsibilities are, or even how the law defines “super-hero.” This section addresses these issues.

### TYPES OF HEROES: SUPERHUMANS & TRAINED PARANORMAL OPERATIVES

American superhuman law (also known as “superlaw”) began with the 1968 case of *James “Smasher” Aronson v. United States*, 390 U.S. 1420 (1968). In *Aronson*, the Supreme Court created what has become known as the “different strokes” rule:

*It cannot be denied that... superhumans possess capabilities and powers that elevate them above the status of normal humans. Thus, rules and laws that apply to normal humans will not apply in precisely the same ways to superhumans. Simply put, legal standards granting rights to humans will, in many cases, have to be altered in order to account for the vastly increased capabilities of superhumans.*

*Id.* at 1428. This legal theory has been the basis for all of the special legal rights and liabilities of superhumans.

The Court in the *Aronson* case also defined the difference between superhumans (also known as “metahumans”), trained paranormals (also known as trained paranormal operatives, or “TPOs”), and normal humans. The federal government and almost all states use these definitions. The basic rule is this: normal legal standards often apply to trained paranormals, but not to superhumans.

In order to be “superhuman,” an individual must inherently possess capabilities or powers which exceed those that a normal human being could ever possess. For example, a normal human, no matter how much training he undergoes, could never teach himself to become desolidified. A TPO is “an individual who, by means of training and dedication, or by use of devices, has reached levels of human capability which are extraordinary, but within maximum human limits; or an individual who, by use of devices or other means, is able to

simulate superhuman powers.” A trained paranormal operative is not “superhuman” because his abilities stem from training or technology that could, in theory, work for any human. Categories of “levels of human capability” can include non-physical achievement (such as extensive knowledge of science). TPOs are also known simply as “paranormals;” despite popular misconceptions, the use of the term “paranormal” to mean “superhuman” is legally wrong.

To give a few examples from *Champions*, Obsidian and Quantum are “superhumans;” Seeker and Defender are TPOs, because their abilities are derived from extensive training and/or devices. All characters in a pure street-level campaign will be TPOs.





## A HERO'S LEGAL STATUS: SANCTIONED OR NON-SANCTIONED

Besides figuring out whether his character is a superhuman or a TPO, a player also has to decide whether his character will be "sanctioned" or "non-sanctioned." A sanctioned hero works with the police, and has police powers. A non-sanctioned hero does not work with the police, and they are probably trying to arrest him.

### SANCTIONED HEROES

Most player characters in regular *Champions* campaigns will probably be sanctioned, though this is not always true for street-level campaigns. Sanction has two major advantages. The first is that sanctioned characters will have access to all of the police department's vast resources: money, men, equipment, and information. The second advantage is respectability and prestige. A sanctioned hero will usually be well-liked by both the public and the force, will be able to get help from all responsible citizens, and will generally have an easier time doing things as a hero.

However, sanction has two drawbacks as well. The first is that police departments and other law enforcement agencies will require a hero to reveal a lot of information about himself before they will sanction him—secret identity, powers, and other information. In part, this is so the hero can be properly identified in court; but it is also a security measure. All police departments with sanctioned superheroes keep their information on them very, very secure. (This "fact" has been established for fairness' sake—if the GM wants the PCs to be sanctioned, he should treat them fairly and not use this as a sneaky, underhanded way for every villain in the book to find out vital information about the PCs.)

The second drawback to being sanctioned is that sanctioned heroes must follow normal police procedures, such as arresting villains only upon "probable cause" and reading criminals their rights. *Starblaze v. Washington*, 446 U.S. 1535 (1980). To some heroes, this may seem contrary to the reasons they decided to become superheroes—to cut through all the red tape that sometimes strangles the justice system. But most courts have given sanctioned heroes a lot of leeway on procedures. They have held that the "different strokes" rule of *Aronson* justifies giving sanctioned superhumans a little "extra authority." A "superhero exception," used by a few states, gives sanctioned heroes the power to ignore many criminal procedure rules when extreme circumstances are present.

The GM should establish just how far sanctioned superheroes can bend the normal police rules, and then tell the players. Any player who goes beyond that point should be in a lot of trouble (he could be arrested and jailed, suspended, fined, or sued, for example). Make sure that the players are aware that their actions as law enforcement officers have consequences, but do not pressure them so much that being a sanctioned hero is no longer worth it.

### FEDERAL SANCTION: SPAD

At the federal level, the organization which sanctions costumed crimefighters is the Superhuman and Paranormal Agents Division (SPAD), a division of the Department of Justice. Unlike PRIMUS, whose mission is to defeat super-powered menaces, SPAD's purpose is to recruit superhumans and TPOs to work for the government, and to coordinate the activities of all superhumans working for the federal government. SPAD operatives have national police powers. The Director of SPAD is Diana Blair.

The following zero-point Package Deal should be used for heroes who are SPAD-sanctioned.

SKILLS	
PERK: Fringe Benefit: Licensed SPAD Operative	6
KS: Federal Police Procedures 11-	2
KS: Criminal Justice System 11-	2
Radio Listen and Transmit (OIF—Wrist Radio)	3
Contact: SPAD commanding officer, 11-	2
Any two other Contacts of player's choice	4
DISADVANTAGES	
Package Bonus	3
Subject to orders	10
Watched by command officers, Justice Dept., etc., 11-	8
PACKAGE COST	
	0

The Perk "Licensed SPAD Operative" is the equivalent of national police powers, plus permission to use superpowers, gadgets, or weapons in the line of duty (similar to a concealed weapons permit).

### FEDERAL AGENCIES WHICH DEAL WITH SUPERHUMANS

SPAD and PRIMUS are not the only federal agencies which work with superhumans; there are two others: the National Institute for Parapsychological Studies (NIPS) and the Metahuman Research and Defense Agency (MRDA). There are several other agencies, such as NASA and the EPA, which use superhumans occasionally.

**NIPS:** The mandate of the National Institute for Parapsychological Studies is to study two phenomenon: mental powers and magic. In addition to its laboratory research, NIPS has special "strike teams" which go out into the field to investigate mentalist and magical phenomena. Field teams have five members: three combat/capture personnel, one scientist, and one Roman Catholic priest; they are equipped with the latest in high-tech devices and weapons. NIPS and PSI are deadly enemies. NIPS is currently headed by Dr. Alexander Baxter.

**MRDA:** The Metahuman Research and Defense Agency combines some functions of both SPAD and NIPS. It has two purposes: one, to research all superhuman powers and phenomena not already covered by NIPS; and two, to coordinate and evaluate superhuman resources as they relate to national defense and security. The current Administrator is Hubert Greenleaf, who has come under fire for his allegedly bigoted attitudes toward some superhumans.

## STATE SANCTION

Many states also have sanctioned heroes. Most state programs are patterned after one in Los Angeles. To become a member of Los Angeles' Paranormal Operatives Squad (P.O.S., usually referred to as "the Posse"), a hero must: submit to tests to determine the nature and extent of his powers, and to enable the prosecutor's office to determine his identity in court; submit to a mental reading to determine his honesty and sincerity about fighting crime; and reveal his identity.

Heroes who are sanctioned by a state or a city should use the following zero-point Package Deal.

SKILLS	
Perk: Fringe Benefit: Licensed Police Operative	4
KS: Police Procedures 11-	2
KS: Criminal Justice System 11-	2
Radio Listen and Transmit (OIF—Wrist Radio)	3
Contact: Commanding officer, 11-	2
Contact: another officer, 11-	2
Another Contact of player's choice, 11-	2
DISADVANTAGES	
Package Bonus	3
Subject to orders	10
Watched by commanding officer, IAD, etc., 11-	8
PACKAGE COST	
	0

The Perk "Licensed Police Operative" is a combination of local police powers, plus the ability to use superpowers, gadgets, or weapons in the line of duty (roughly equivalent to a concealed weapon permit).

## NON-SANCTIONED HEROES

Non-sanctioned heroes are "unlicensed" heroes who fight crime without police sanction. Being a non-sanctioned hero has its good points and bad points, just like being a sanctioned hero. The drawback is that non-sanctioned heroes do not have access to police powers and police department resources, and are actively pursued by the police because "costumed crimefighting" by non-sanctioned heroes is illegal (see the Criminal Law section).

The benefit to being non-sanctioned is that non-sanctioned heroes do not have to follow any police procedures at all. The Supreme Court held in *Burdeau v. McDowell*, 256 U.S. 465 (1921), that the Fourth Amendment's search and seizure rules do not apply to private citizens (unless they are working as agents of the police). In *Burdeau*, a private citizen burgled and vandalized McDowell's office to obtain certain papers. Some other papers incriminated McDowell in a crime. McDowell was arrested and convicted for that crime. Since the police had not participated in or instigated any wrongdoing, there was no Fourth Amendment violation, and the conviction was valid.

The Court confirmed that the *Burdeau* rule applies to superhuman crimefighters in the case of *Parkson v. California*, 479 U.S. 1363 (1986), in which the activities of a non-sanctioned crimefighter led to Parkson's arrest for drug trafficking. Parkson established the so-called "vigilante doctrine": just because someone wears a mask and costume to conceal his identity and engages in crimefighting practices which would be unconstitutional if the police used them does not prevent the state from using evidence that these costumed "vigilantes" obtain. In other words, a non-sanctioned costumed crimefighter can break into a criminal's house, beat him up, tear his house apart looking for evidence, and then turn the criminal and the evidence over to the police—and the state can use that information to prosecute the criminal. (The non-sanctioned hero can still be arrested for doing this [breaking and entering and assault are crimes], and he can be sued by the "victim".)



# CRIMINAL LAW

Criminal law defines what is a crime, and what punishment each crime deserves. A related area, criminal procedure, is covered later.

## THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

There are a total of fifty-one court systems in the United States: one for each state, and the federal system (which includes Washington, D.C.). The vast majority of criminal cases are brought in state court, because most crimes are defined by state law. The criminal laws vary from state to state; an act which is Crime X in State One may be Crime Y in State Two.

Crimes are divided into two types: misdemeanors (crimes punishable by less than a year in jail, such as petty theft, minor acts of assault, and so forth); and felonies (crimes punishable by a year or more in jail, such as murder, rape, armed robbery, and aggravated assault).

The criminal process generally works as follows. First, there is a pre-arrest investigation (if necessary), and then an arrest, based on *probable cause* that the suspect committed the crime in question. An arrest warrant is not always necessary, but probable cause always is.

Then the suspect is "booked," at which point he is searched, asked for his name, address, and other pertinent information, and sent to a holding cell. If bail is allowed and the suspect can pay, he may be able to go free until his first appearance. Suspects will be released on bail if they are not considered to be dangerous and the state can assure itself that the suspect will reappear for trial. After booking, further investigation may be performed. If the suspect cannot afford a lawyer, one must be appointed for him at the state's expense. Then the prosecutor, who is the attorney for the state, must decide what offenses, if any, the suspect will be charged with. The chief prosecutor for a county is known as the District Attorney.

If he decides to prosecute, the prosecutor files the complaint with the magistrate court, and then the suspect makes his first appearance. If he has been released on bail, this will happen several days after his arrest. If the suspect has not been released on bail, which is usually the case, the first appearance is held without unnecessary delay. The first appearance is a brief proceeding. A neutral judicial official, known as a magistrate, will once again inform the suspect of his rights, and arrange for him to get a lawyer if that has not been done. The magistrate also sets bail, if necessary.

## FELONY PROCEDURE

If the crime is a felony (most supervillain crimes will be), the next step is the preliminary hearing. At the preliminary hearing, a magistrate will determine whether or not there is probable cause to believe that a crime was committed and that the defendant committed it.

About one-third of the states and the federal government also require review by the grand jury, a body of 12-24 citizens who determine whether there is sufficient evidence to justify holding a trial. A grand jury has broad powers to conduct investigations and issue subpoenas requiring witnesses to come in and testify. People who ignore subpoenas can be punished by the court. If the grand jury finds that there is sufficient evidence for a trial, it indicts the defendant. States without the grand jury use an information instead of an indictment. After the indictment or information is filed, the defendant is arraigned: brought before the court to enter his plea of guilty or not guilty. Most felonies will be resolved at this stage by a guilty plea. This is usually the result of plea bargaining, in which the defendant agrees to plead guilty in exchange for concessions from the state (such as a reduced sentence).

If the case goes to trial, several issues are resolved with pre-trial motions. This is when the defense attacks the prosecution's procedures and conduct. Evidence which has been unconstitutionally seized would be excluded at this point.

## THE TRIAL

Next, the trial is conducted. The defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty; his guilt must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt—a much higher standard of proof than "probable cause." The defendant does not have to testify if he does not want to. Dangerous defendants, including most supervillains, will be restrained while in court, so that they do not escape. The defendant has the right to be tried by a jury of six to twelve persons (depending on the jurisdiction and the offense). In most jurisdictions, the jury must be unanimous in order to render a verdict; otherwise, there is a hung jury and the case is retried. Only about thirty percent of felony defendants are acquitted (found not guilty at trial).

Most supervillain trials will require that one or more superheroes testify. In a gaming campaign, these superhero witnesses will usually be the PCs who caught the defendant. The main legal issue regarding superpowered crimefighters who testify is whether they may testify while wearing a mask. The Supreme Court decided that masked testimony was constitutional in the case of *Craig "Mechassassin" Vandersnoot v. California*, 487 U.S. 1644 (1988). "*Mechassassin*" held that there was no right to a "bare-face"



face-to-face confrontation. This ruling was based on the history of the Sixth Amendment and public policy considerations. See also *Maryland v. Craig*, 110 S.Ct. 3157 (1990). Today, all states allow "masked testimony"; foolproof identification procedures are used to prevent someone from taking a hero's place and giving false testimony.

## SENTENCING AND APPEALS

Defendants will be found guilty or not guilty. If found not guilty, a defendant is free to go and is completely absolved of responsibility for that crime—the state that tried him cannot try him again, because that would be double jeopardy, which is forbidden by the Fifth Amendment. However, in some cases another state or the federal government could try the defendant for the same crime. A guilty defendant proceeds to sentencing. The defendant may receive jail time, a fine, and/or some other punishment as his sentence. The defendant may appeal his sentence, in an attempt to get it reversed or reduced or to get a new trial. However, even if his appeal is successful, a defendant stands almost no chance of being released without further ado.

## PRECEDENT: HOW CASES ARE DECIDED

The basis for decisions in the American legal system is the concept of precedent. This means that when a ruling of law is made, it is considered to be controlling in the jurisdiction where it was decided—later cases on the same point have to be decided the same way. A rule will not be changed unless circumstances or a changing society make it clear that the previous ruling was wrong. Thus, past cases serve as "examples" or "guidance" for how similar cases should be decided in the present.

If the player characters in your campaign are the first superheroes in the campaign world, or if superhumans have not been around for very long, there will not be any precedents about superhumans. The PCs will have to work to establish some.

## CRIMINAL LAWS CONCERNING SUPERHUMANS

Besides the actual crimes committed by superpowered criminals, the main impact of criminal law on superpowered crimefighters is when their powers or activities are, for some reason, illegal. Here are some examples:

**Aggravated Assault:** Superpowers can be used to commit aggravated assault (also called assault with a deadly weapon). The offensive use of any superpower is a form of aggravated assault, regardless of the power's potential lethality. Legally, a Killing Attack, Ego Attack, Transform, Desolidification Usable Against Others, and Drain are all "deadly weapons." Punishment for an act of aggravated assault usually ranges from two to five years plus a possible fine.

**Concealing Your Identity In Public:** Most states have laws which forbid concealing one's identity in public. "Anti-mask" laws which increase the penalty for any crime committed while wearing a mask have been passed to specifically target supercriminals.

**Reckless Endangerment:** A super's use of his powers may constitute reckless conduct. N.Y. Penal Code § 22.05, for example, defines reckless conduct as "recklessly engag[ing] in conduct that places another in imminent danger of serious bodily harm." This includes pointing a firearm at someone or threatening to use a superpower on them.

**Excessive Force:** A police officer or sanctioned superhero who uses excessive force when arresting a suspect can be prosecuted or sued. The test for whether or not force is excessive is one of objective reasonableness: a particular degree of force is allowable if it would be used by a reasonable police officer on the scene in light of the need for split-second decisionmaking in a potentially lethal situation. This is a lenient test which disregards the officer's underlying intent or motivation. *Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386 (1989).





**Laws Outlawing Specific Superpowers:** Some states have laws outlawing the use of specific superpowers. These laws are usually grouped into three categories. First, powers which make it too easy to commit burglaries and other crimes may be outlawed (for example, Clairvoyance, Desolidification, Invisibility, Mind Control, and Teleport). Second, laws may forbid powers which make it too easy to invade someone's privacy (for example, Clairvoyance, various Enhanced Senses, Invisibility, Mind Scan, and Telepathy). Third, superpowers which can be considered inherently dangerous, especially if they are "Always On," may be outlawed (for example, Damage Shields, Density Increase, Invisibility, Growth, Mind Control, and Summon). Some of these laws only forbid a power in certain places or on certain occasions.

**Superpower Registration Laws:** This sort of law requires all superpowered beings and TPOs to "register" themselves. These laws usually require superhumans to register their "nom de guerre," powers, and secret identity. Most states have enacted such laws, but are waiting to enforce them until the Supreme Court rules that they are constitutional. Experts acknowledge that to be constitutional, a superpower registration law must require the registration of *all* superhumans: a registration law for any one type of superhuman (for example, mutants) would violate the Equal Protection Clause.

The federal government, spurred on by the lobbying efforts of PRIMUS, SPAD, and the MRDA, recently began discussion of a federal law which would require the registration of all superhumans and TPOs in a national registry. The Superhuman And Paranormal Registration And Data Collection Act of 1990, popularly known as the Paranormal Registration Act, is currently before Congress. Debate on the matter has been suspended pending a Supreme Court ruling on a similar state law. (GMs who want to learn about the Paranormal Registration Act and how to use it in their campaign should refer to *Classic Organizations*, p. 124.)

A related proposal, recently introduced in Congress, is the outlawing of superhuman crimefighters altogether. As yet, this concept is only in the discussion stage. (For more information on this idea, GMs should refer to the "Spectrum" scenario, by Scott Sigler, in *Champions Presents #1*.)

## DEFENSES TO CRIMES

This section will concentrate on four defenses which are frequently used in comic books: the insanity defense; defense of self, others, or property; crime prevention; and diplomatic immunity.

### The insanity defense

When a defendant successfully uses the insanity defense, he is found not guilty, but he is committed to a mental institution. He remains at the mental institution until he is cured; this may keep him confined for a longer period than the jail sentence he could have gotten if he had been sane. Legally, "insanity" usually means one or more of the following: the defendant did not know the wrongfulness of his actions; the defendant was unable to understand the nature

and quality of his actions; or the defendant lacked the capacity to conform his conduct to the law, even though he knew that what he was doing was wrong. Supervillain insanity defense cases include: *Earl "Binder" Whitacker v. California*, 487 U.S. 1388 (1988) (putting on a silly-looking costume and committing unusual crimes does not necessarily mean that that person is insane); *John "Deathblade" Doe v. United States*, 877 F.2d 1734 (2d Cir. 1989) (a murderous vigilante's delusion that several federal government officials were plotting to take over the United States was not sufficient for an insanity acquittal, because even if the delusion had been true, it would not have entitled him to kill those officials); and *Commonwealth v. Frederic "Foxbat" Foswell*, 226 Va. 690, 309 S.E.2d 1001 (1983) (Foxbat's deranged idea that he is a great and powerful supervillain, and that he is actually "in a comic book," meant that he could not understand the nature and quality of his actions when he kidnapped the employees of a small Charlottesville, Virginia game company).



### Defense of Self, Others, And Property

**Self-defense:** People who are attacked have a legal right to defend themselves. The issue is how much force a person can use in his own defense. The main distinction is between deadly and non-deadly force. An individual who is without fault can use whatever amount of non-deadly force reasonably appears necessary to protect himself from an imminent unlawful attack. He can use deadly force when he is without fault and reasonably believes that he is threatened with imminent death or great bodily



harm. The key here is the person's reasonable belief. Just being attacked does not mean that you are entitled to use deadly force, because not all attacks could reasonably cause death or great bodily harm. In a few states, there is a duty to retreat before using deadly force in self-defense. However, retreat is never necessary if one cannot retreat safely, and is almost never necessary when one is in one's own home.

**Defense of others:** The standards for defense of another are basically the same as those for self-defense. However, the individual claiming the "defense of others" defense must have reasonably believed that the person he saved would have had the right to use force in his own defense.

**Defense of property:** The use of non-deadly force to protect one's home is always legal; sometimes this rule applies to other property as well (such as a car). Deadly force is sometimes justified in protection of one's home, but is never justified to protect other property.

### Crime Prevention

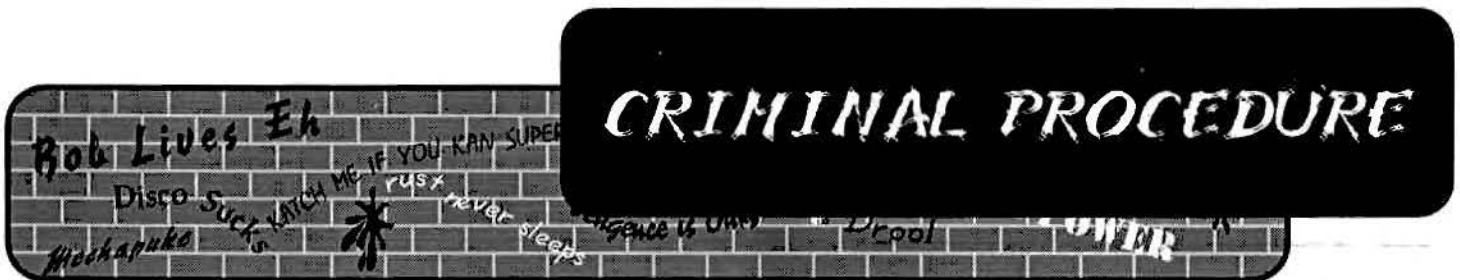
Generally, a person can use force to the extent that the force seems reasonably necessary to prevent the commission of a felony. Deadly force can be used to prevent dangerous felonies (such as murder, rape, or robbery). See, e.g., *John "Deathblade" Doe v. United States*, 877 F.2d 1734 (2d Cir. 1989) (vigilante found innocent of twelve murders on the grounds that he had properly prevented a crime).

### Diplomatic Immunity

Diplomatic immunity, which is extended to some representatives of foreign governments, makes them totally immune to prosecution for crimes they commit in the United States (or any other host state). Under the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations:

- the premises and buildings of a diplomatic mission are inviolate, and may not be entered or searched;
- the papers and correspondence of the mission are immune from search;
- the diplomatic bag (a clearly marked pouch used to carry diplomatic documents) and diplomatic couriers may not be detained or searched; and
- diplomats (ambassadors, ministers, counselors, and so forth) and all members of their families have full criminal immunity—they may not be convicted of any crime. The same applies to administrative and technical staff (such as clerks and typists) and their families. Service staff (such as drivers) have criminal immunity only for official acts.

If a foreign government appointed a superhuman as its representative to the United States or the United Nations, that superhuman would have diplomatic immunity. For example, Dr. Destroyer might petition the United Nations for membership for his "new country" of Destruga Secundus. If his petition were granted, he could appoint Menton as his ambassador to the U.N.; Menton would have full criminal immunity for crimes he committed while in the United States as ambassador.



Most criminal procedure rules are based on two Amendments to the Constitution: the Fourth Amendment, which forbids "unreasonable searches and seizures" by the government, and which requires that "no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause;" and the Fifth Amendment, which defines the privilege against self-incrimination.

## THE FOURTH AMENDMENT: SEARCHES AND SEIZURES

### ARREST WARRANTS

An arrest is the "seizure" of a person. Arrest warrants are not required, at least for most felony arrests: all that the police need to arrest someone for a felony is probable cause to do so. This means probable cause that a crime was committed, and that the suspect was the one who committed it. However, the police will usually get a warrant if they have

time, since it makes the arrest more "official." Warrants are issued by "neutral and detached" magistrates. If a person attempts to escape arrest, the officer may only use deadly force to stop the suspect if the officer has a reasonable belief that the suspect is a danger to the officer or to others. *Tennessee v. Garner*, 471 U.S. 1 (1985). See also *Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386 (1989), discussed above with reference to excessive force.

### SEARCH WARRANTS

Search warrants are usually required to search a person or a place for evidence of a crime. A search warrant has to meet three criteria to be valid. First, a search warrant will only be issued by a magistrate based on—you guessed it—"probable cause." This means probable cause that a certain item is evidence of a crime, or was used to commit a crime; and that the item is at the place which is to be searched. To have probable cause, an officer must have a "substantial basis" for concluding that the search will find an incriminating object. *Illinois v. Gates*, 462 U.S. 213 (1983). Probable cause may be established in a number of ways, including



confidential informants, witnesses, physical evidence, and police observation (but a policeman's or superhero's sworn statement, by itself, is not sufficient to show probable cause).

The second requirement for a valid search warrant is that the warrant must give a "particular description of the place to be searched." Third, a search warrant must provide a "particular description of the item to be seized," i.e., a description which is accurate enough that the item can easily be found, and so that a "general search" will not be conducted. An item may require more or less description, depending on its nature—unique items (such as many villains' Foci) require less description, common items (e.g., a radio) require more.

If the police have a valid warrant, they may search any place that it authorizes them to search. However, they may only search where an object could reasonably be located—for example, if they are searching a house for a shotgun, they cannot look through the papers on the suspect's desk. Once the police find the object they are looking for, they must stop searching.



## NO SEARCH WARRANT REQUIRED

There are six basic situations in which the police are not required to obtain a search warrant before they search a person or place. They are:

**Searches incident to a lawful arrest:** after making a lawful arrest, the police are allowed to make a warrantless search of the person arrested and his "wingspan"—the area within his immediate control, from which he could seize a weapon, or from which he could seize evidence that he could destroy. *Chimel v. California*, 395 U.S. 752 (1969).

**Plain view:** if an officer is in a place where he has a right to be, and he sees something illegal in plain view, he may seize it at once. There is no expectation of privacy in objects which are in plain view. *Coolidge v. Hew Hampshire*, 403 U.S. 443 (1971). The object must be immediately apparent as illegal (for example, drugs are obviously illegal, but a gun may not be).

**The vehicular exception:** this exception, described in *California v. Carney*, 471 U.S. 386 (1985), allows the police to make warrantless searches of vehicles when they have probable cause to believe that evidence of crime will be found in the vehicle. This is allowed for two reasons: first, vehicles are easily moved, and may not be available to be searched if the officer takes the time to get a warrant; second, since vehicles are subject to so many regulations, there is a decreased expectation of privacy in them.

**Consent:** a person can consent to a warrantless search of his home, car, or other area that he owns. Consent must be given voluntarily, without any form of coercion. *Schneckloth v. Bustamonte*, 412 U.S. 218 (1973).

**Stop-and-frisk:** if a policeman does not have probable cause to arrest someone, but does have an "articulable suspicion," based on specific facts and inferences, that the person is armed and dangerous, the officer may stop that person and "pat him down" for weapons (but not anything other than weapons, such as drugs). *Terry v. Ohio*, 392 U.S. 1 (1968). "Terry stops" must be as short and as least intrusive as possible.

**Hot pursuit:** if the police are in "hot pursuit," or if getting a search warrant would put them in danger, they do not need to obtain a warrant. See *Warden v. Hayden*, 387 U.S. 294 (1967). This exception is limited; it is not a "general emergency" exception to the warrant requirement.

These six exceptions are based on two concepts. The first concept is diminished expectations of privacy. The Fourth Amendment will not protect areas and situations in which a person's expectation of privacy in his person and property is "diminished." For example, the police may make warrantless searches of abandoned property, *California v. Greenwood*, 486 U.S. 35 (1988), or of "open fields" (land not immediately adjacent to a building), *Oliver v. United States*, 466 U.S. 170 (1984). Similarly, the Fourth Amendment offers no protection against "overflights"—when the police or superheroes fly over a person's land to look for evidence of a crime. *California v. Ciraolo*, 476 U.S. 207 (1986). The second justification for not requiring a search warrant is exigent circumstances. This means that there are instances where the nature of events or circumstances requires the police to act immediately. An example of exigent circumstances is when the police fear that evidence will be destroyed or removed in the time it takes to have a warrant issued.

## SEARCHES MADE WITH ENHANCED SENSES AND SENSORY DEVICES

Searches can be conducted with enhanced senses and sensory devices. Searches conducted with ordinary enhancements (for example, flashlights, binoculars, or even magnified aerial photographs) have always been allowed. *Dow Chemicals v. United States*, 476 U.S. 227 (1986). The rule for X-ray vision and other "super-senses" is that super-senses which are innate superpowers (such as Jaguar's



Discriminatory Smell) are always allowed (the Fourth Amendment does not require superhumans to deliberately “blind” themselves). However, super-sensing devices (such as Defender’s Ultraviolet Vision) are allowed only if they are not unreasonably superior to commonly-available sense-enhancing devices. *Diana “Shrinker” Whitmore v. United States*, 483 U.S. 1723 (1987). Under this standard, if Quantum’s powers gave her X-Ray Vision, she could always use it to perform searches; but an X-Ray Vision device built by Defender could never be used, since it would be unreasonably advanced when compared to common sensing devices such as binoculars (this may vary depending upon the level of technology commonly available in your campaign).

Electronic tracking devices are a special type of sense-enhancing device. They can be used without a warrant in some cases; but because their use is almost always planned in advance, a warrant is usually obtained. See *United States v. Knotts*, 460 U.S. 276 (1983). Similar to electronic tracking devices are wiretaps and hidden microphones (including “bugs” hidden at a particular location and “wires” worn by informants). Their use is carefully controlled by law; a search warrant can and should be obtained in almost all cases.

Most states consider Mind Scan and Telepathy to be legally similar to electronic tracking devices. A search warrant must be obtained in most situations before Mind Scan can be used to find someone. See, e.g., *Christine “Icicle” Saunders v. State*, 487 N.Y.S.2d 1105, 479 N.E.2d 1436 (1985). Warrantless Mind Scan is allowed only in case of an emergency.

## THE FIFTH AMENDMENT: MIRANDA WARNINGS

The other main branch of criminal procedure regulates interrogation and confessions. The Fifth Amendment, which prevents people from being compelled to be witnesses against themselves, is the basis for the “*Miranda* rules” which must be read to suspects before they are questioned. *Miranda v. Arizona*, 384 U.S. 436 (1966).

Briefly put, *Miranda* assumes that a person who is subject to interrogation while in police custody and who confesses or gives other incriminating information has been compelled to do so. *Miranda* does not apply if the suspect is not in police custody or is not questioned by the police (in other words, just because you’ve been arrested does not automatically entitle you to a reading of your rights). This presumption of compulsion can only be overcome if the state shows two things. First, the state must prove that the suspect was informed of these rights:

- 1) The suspect has the right to remain silent.
- 2) If the suspect gives up this right, anything he says can and will be used against him.
- 3) The suspect has the right to have an attorney present, both at the interrogation and afterwards.
- 4) If the suspect cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed for him by the state.

Second, the state must prove that the suspect made a “knowing and voluntary waiver” of these rights before he confessed. “Knowing and voluntary” means that the suspect was fully aware of his rights and the consequences of foregoing his rights.

The key elements in this analysis are “police custody” and “interrogation.” A person is considered to be in “police custody” if he is not free to leave, when his freedom of action has been significantly curtailed (this does not necessarily require an arrest). See, e.g., *Orozco v. Texas*, 394 U.S. 324 (1969). “Interrogation” is any words or actions by the police which they know, or should know, are reasonably likely to elicit incriminating information from the suspect. *Rhode Island v. Innis*, 446 U.S. 291 (1980). The stereotypical act of “beating a confession out of him” is not required; many lesser acts are considered to be “interrogation.” In one sense, a person is only in “custodial interrogation” if he knows he is in custody and is under interrogation—if someone talks to an undercover officer, this is not usually “interrogation” because he does not know that he is talking to the police. See *Illinois v. Perkins*, 496 U.S. 292 (1990).

One important exception to *Miranda* is the “public safety” exception. *New York v. Quarles*, 467 U.S. 649 (1984). The need for answers to questions about immediate public safety concerns overrides a suspect’s Fifth Amendment rights. Statements taken for public safety purposes do not violate *Miranda*. An example of this is questioning a suspect about a gun he threw away while fleeing from the police—the need to retrieve the gun as soon as possible is more important than the suspect’s *Miranda* rights.

## THE EXCLUSIONARY RULE

Evidence (including confessions) which is obtained in violation of a suspect’s constitutional rights is subject to the exclusionary rule. Such evidence, and any other evidence derived from it, may not be admitted at the trial of the defendant whose rights were violated. *Mapp v. Ohio*, 367 U.S. 643 (1961). The case against the defendant still stands, but it will have to be dropped if the prosecution no longer has enough evidence to convict. This is what the public refers to as dismissing a case “on a technicality.” “Technicalities” are not nearly as common as comic books and television make them seem to be, but GMs can run an occasional scenario based around a technicality without distorting reality too much.

There are several exceptions and limitations to the exclusionary rule. The first was mentioned earlier: the exclusionary rule applies only to the government, not to private citizens acting on their own. The second is the “good faith” exception of *United States v. Leon*, 468 U.S. 897 (1984): if the police are relying in good faith on a warrant that they believe is valid, but which later turns out to be invalid, the search is considered to be constitutional. The third exception is “independent source:” if the police have learned about what would otherwise be illegal evidence from a legal “independent source,” a source not tainted by a constitutional violation, then the evidence is legal and is admissible in court. The fourth exception is “inevitable discovery:” if the state can show that illegal evidence would have inevitably or eventually been found by legal means, then the evidence is legal. *Nix v. Williams*, 467 U.S. 431 (1984).



# CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Constitutional law is the law dealing with the rights granted by the United States Constitution. Besides the rights relating to criminal procedure, several constitutional amendments and doctrines have implications for superhumans:

## THE SECOND AMENDMENT

The Second Amendment provides: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." It prevents Congress or the national government from infringing this right. It does not apply to the states, which may regulate weapons possession. *United States v. Cruikshank*, 92 U.S. 542 (1876). However, many states have state constitutions with amendments which duplicate this Amendment, thus preserving Second Amendment rights at the state level. High-tech weapons (such as lasers, blasters, and powered armor) are protected to some extent by the Second Amendment. Of course, states require these weapons to be registered and licensed, just like ordinary firearms.

## THE EIGHTH AMENDMENT

The Eighth Amendment prohibits "cruel and unusual punishment." "Cruel and unusual" does not have a set definition, but depends, in part, on "the evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society." *Trop v. Dulles*, 356 U.S. 86, 100-101 (1958). Furthermore, a punishment must not be "excessive," which means two things: first, a punishment must not be grossly disproportionate to the severity of the crime for which it is given; second, the punishment must not needlessly inflict pain. For example, the death penalty may only be imposed for murder, because death is a disproportionate penalty for other crimes; the method of execution used must not be unnecessarily painful.

The basic case on the Eighth Amendment as it affects superhumans is *James "Smasher" Aronson v. United States*, 390 U.S. 1420 (1968). *Aronson* was a challenge to the state of Illinois' proposed method of incarcerating Smasher, a superhuman criminal capable of lifting 100 tons. The state, aware that no conventional prison cell could hold him, proposed to keep Smasher in a drugged state of weakness. It would be possible for a therapist to exercise him, and for a nurse to feed him, but Smasher would not be able to use his strength to break free. The dosage was to be precisely based on Smasher's metabolism and capabilities. After reviewing current Eighth Amendment standards, and stating the "different strokes" doctrine (see above), the Court held, 390 U.S. at 1432:

*In the case of Eighth Amendment considerations, it is obvious that the capabilities and powers of many superhumans make it impossible to incarcerate them by normal means... Thus, certain methods of incarceration which would be unconstitutional if used on normal human criminals will be constitutional if used to restrain superhuman criminals. The methods which may be used on a particular superhuman criminal must be as narrowly tailored as possible to restrain that individual, so that his rights will not be infringed.*

## PRISONS AND RESTRAINTS FOR SUPERHUMAN CRIMINALS

The states have developed several ways to deal with supercriminals. The most elaborate method is a prison specially designed to keep superhuman criminals in jail for their full sentence—a so-called "superprison." The most notable of these superprisons are Stronghold, a federal government facility in New Mexico, and Dodds Penitentiary, in California. In *People v. Deng "Green Dragon" Chow*, 150 Cal.Rptr. 935, 586 P.2d 1412 (1978), certiorari denied, 448 U.S. 1431 (1979), incarceration in a superprison was held to be constitutional only if it was the only reasonable way to prevent the defendant from escaping. The Supreme Court of California stated:

*There is no reason why a trained paranormal cannot be held in a regular prison—it merely requires that extra steps be taken to prevent his escape. Stronghold (or similar "supervillain" prisons) may only be used to incarcerate a criminal if the State shows by clear and convincing evidence that the felon's powers and capabilities are such that only Stronghold is reasonably capable of containing him, and only if the felon represents a clear and present danger to society's well-being and safety.*

*Id.* at 1420.

A second California case, *William "Utility" Chow v. Kowalski*, 157 Cal.Rptr. 968, 598 P.2d 1493 (1979), certiorari denied, 449 U.S. 1377 (1981), clarified the "reasonableness" standard to be applied in "superprison" cases. The court held that if a trained paranormal had proven so adept at escaping from normal facilities that it was reasonably unlikely that such a facility could ever contain him for the length of his sentence, incarceration in Stronghold was allowable. Cases since the two *Chow* decisions have almost always been decided in favor of allowing incarceration in the superprison.



## “HOT SLEEP”

The issue of restraints for superpowered criminals was further complicated by the introduction of “Hot Sleep,” a controversial form of “induced coma” which allows unrestrainable criminals, such as Firewing or Sunburst, to be kept “asleep” and on life support for the duration of their sentence. But recently, in *Sydney “Grand” Potter v. Atkins*, 109 S.Ct. 3386 (1989), the Supreme Court held:

*If it is reasonably likely that no other form of restraint will suffice to keep the individual in prison for the duration of his sentence, “Hot Sleep” or similar methods which do not permanently injure the individual are constitutional and may be used.*

Though the Supreme Court mentioned only “Hot Sleep” by name, by analogy other high-tech restraints (such as psionic interference helmets and fatigue handcuffs) are also constitutional. See *Maria “Sparkler” Romano v. Muench*, 676 F. Supp. 1597 (N.D. Tex. 1987) (use of fireproof restraining suit upheld).

## THE THIRTEENTH AMENDMENT

The Thirteenth Amendment prohibits any and all forms of slavery or compulsory or involuntary servitude. There are two “superlaw” issues under it. The first is mental control. The courts have been unanimous in holding that “mental control of another person is a violation of that person’s Thirteenth Amendment rights, and the controller is liable for an infringement of those rights.” *Jane “Esper” Doe v. Claxton*, 480 U.S. 1356, 1361 (1987). A number of courts have developed a “law enforcement” exception for superheroes. This exception is limited—it only covers the arrest of a criminal. Mind Control cannot be used for interrogation or other purposes without violating a defendant’s Thirteenth Amendment rights.

The second, and more controversial, Thirteenth Amendment question is whether owning artificially intelligent devices is “slavery.” The courts have not yet provided a firm answer to this question, although they seem to be in favor of extending AIs at least some constitutional rights.

## THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT

The Fourteenth Amendment guarantees due process of law and equal protection of the law to all persons in the United States. It is used to justify a whole panoply of rights, many of which are not specifically mentioned in the Constitution. Two important issues concerning superhumans have arisen under this Amendment.

The first is the “right to maintain a secret identity.” The Supreme Court has held that there is no such right, at least for criminal purposes. *John “King Cobra” Doe v. New Jersey*, 395 U.S. 1603 (1969).

The second and more important issue is the rights of so-called “non-humans”: alien life-forms; artificially intelligent computers, androids, and robots; human mutants; the undead; clones and genetic constructs; and so forth. The Supreme Court dealt with this question in 1978 in six consolidated cases: *One Unnameable Alien Life-Form From Tau Ceti III v. United States* (alien being), *Avar-7 v. New York* (artificially intelligent android), *Ohio v. Julesz the Kind* (vampire), *Gordon “Power Crusher” Donovan v. California* (mutants), *Frank “Pulsar” Costen v. United States* (mutates), *United States v. The Lizard-Thing* (extradimensional beings), and *Number 32 v. Central Intelligence Agency* (human clone with genetic enhancements), 428 U.S. 1471 (1976) (collectively, *Tau Ceti III*). The Court stated:

*The Fourteenth Amendment guarantees of due process and equal protection extend to all persons within the United States or its territories. But ... the term “persons” means humans. Neither alien and extradimensional life forms, nor artificial intelligences, nor the undead are “persons,” and hence they have no rights under the Fourteenth Amendment.*

*Mutants, mutates, clones, and genetic constructs from human stock are a different case. Essentially, they are a “subspecies” of humanity. In many cases, even the most thorough examination of them cannot differentiate them from humans. They are so close to being human that there is no legal justification for considering them not to be human. We hold that free-willed mutants, mutates, clones, and genetic constructs, from human stock, are “persons” under the Fourteenth Amendment and are possessed of all rights thereunder.*

*Id.* at 1480-1483 (citations omitted).

In response, Congress passed the Android, Artificial Intelligence, and Alien Life-Form Rights Act of 1977 (usually known as the “Triple-A Act”). The Triple-A Act grants civil rights to all “sentient” beings who can prove that they are independent and free-willed. “Sentient” is given various definitions relating in part to the capacity for creative and philosophical thought, not just problem-solving capability. Most states have also enacted laws or passed their own constitutional amendments granting “alternate sentiences” various civil rights (though the undead still lack rights in many states).

A related phenomenon is anti-superhuman discrimination. In recent years there has been a marked increase in the number of incidents of discrimination against superhumans. Under *Tau Ceti III* and the Triple-A Act, superhumans are still humans, and have all the civil rights that any other citizen has. Several lobbying organizations devoted to “superhuman rights” have been created, including: The Paranormal Protection League (PPL); the National Association for the Rights of Superhumans (NARS); and the American Superhuman Activist Patrol (ASAP, a militant superhuman group considered to be a terrorist organization by the FBI).



## LEGAL SCENARIOS

Here are a few suggestions for scenarios based around some of the things you've read in this chapter.

**The Great Escape:** Not all supervillain escapes have to be from prison. There are several points in the criminal system where there is the potential for an escape: booking (because the police may not yet have had time to fully secure a supervillain prisoner); the villain's first appearance (because magistrate's offices or courtrooms are sometimes not carefully guarded); bail (if a supervillain somehow got bail, he could forfeit it and escape); and the trial itself (good for highly dramatic escapes).

**Trial scenarios:** Besides potential escapes, there are a lot of roleplaying and adventure possibilities at a trial. Try roleplaying the giving of testimony, for example: players can be the attorneys or the jury, and the GM is the judge. A PC who is a lawyer or judge in his Secret Identity may be appointed to defend a villain that he or one of his teammates captured, or be put in the position of having to judge his worst enemy (which would violate standards of judicial ethics).

The GM could wrongly accuse one of the PCs and put him on trial. This would give the other PCs a real reason to go out and find the true facts, so that their friend can be acquitted. What if the PC's lawyer is a mob stooge who is in on the frame-up?

If a PC is going to testify at a trial, the defense attorney will do everything he can to make the PC look bad. He might learn embarrassing facts about the PC, or even uncover his Secret Identity and threaten to reveal it if the PC doesn't lie on the stand.

**Jury Duty:** A PC might be summoned (in his secret identity) for jury duty on the case of a villain he captured; or, the PCs might find out that the jury is being bribed, threatened, or Mind Controlled to acquit a villain and have to correct the situation without causing a mistrial.

**See you in court!:** Someone might get mad at a PC and sue him for some reason. Perhaps the plaintiff was injured during one of the PC's battles, and is suing him for his negligence. Perhaps the plaintiff claims that the PC's mutant powers gave him cancer. Excessive force claims could be filed by villains the PC has captured. Wicked GMs can think up a lot of reasons to sue PCs. And who knows who might really be behind such a suit....

**Congressional activities:** Superheroes associated with the federal government might become involved with Congress as committee witnesses (for example, if Dr. Destroyer tried to have the Triple-A Act repealed), or even as members. This offers a whole host of scenario opportunities. For a really terrifying battle, nominate a PC for the Supreme Court!

### RUDOLPH THOMAS

10-STR 12-DEX 12-CON 10-BODY 18-INT  
12-EGO 13-PRE 12-COM 3-PD 3-ED  
2-SPD 4-REC 24-END 24-STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Acting 12-; Bribery 12-; Bureaucratics 12-; Conversation 12-; High Society 12-; Oratory 14-; Persuasion 12-; KS: The Law 14-; KS: The Court System And How To Manipulate It 13-; Languages (French, German, Italian, Japanese; all basic conversation); Contacts with major Mafia figures in campaign; Contacts with lawyers and in the legal system.

**75+ Disadvantages:** Watch by State Bar; Watched by FBI Organized Crime Section; Lawyer Bonus.

**Notes:** *Rudolph Thomas is a highly skilled trial lawyer who works for several major Mafia figures. He is an expert in criminal law, including "superhuman law." He is a talented attorney, but he is more interested in getting his clients off the hook than he is in conducting himself ethically—he will "cheat" or break the law to help his clients. He has a detailed diary of his work with the Mafia which he keeps in his safe deposit box.*





Combat is an important part of most roleplaying campaigns, and *Dark Champions* campaigns are no exception. This chapter will cover ways to use the HERO System combat rules in *Dark Champions* campaigns; changes or alterations that you might want to make in the rules; some new rules for street-level campaigns; and some suggestions on how to build guns and other weapons in the HERO System. All of these rules and rules changes are optional, and should be considered carefully by the GM.



## DETERMINING DAMAGE

There are several optional rules presented in the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook* at pages 162-65 which should be used in street-level campaigns. They are: Wounding, Impairing, Disabling, and Bleeding. Some of these rules can be used for NPCs, but should not be used for PCs, or should be slightly relaxed. For street-level campaigns, it is recommended that you relax them slightly; don't abolish them entirely, since that would take away some of the realism, action, and suspense which is a hallmark of the street-level genre. Lastly, remember that using these rules will tend to slow the game down.

### Wounding

As mentioned in the Character Creation section, characters can use any Resistance points they have to aid their EGO Roll when wounded. GMs might also consider making the standards for Wounding rolls higher for PCs (for example, -1 to the EGO Roll for every 3 points of BODY taken). This will give the GM the opportunity to use the Wounding rules without slowing the characters down too much.

Whether the characters buy these abilities or not, the GM should be careful not to let Wounding rolls interfere with the game. The Wounding rules are going to come into play much more frequently than the Disabling or Impairing rules, and therefore have a greater potential to disrupt or slow down the game. They also have a higher "frustration potential": most players can understand having to worry about massive wounds that Impair or Disable them, but no player likes to be "nickel-and-dimed" to death by taking a couple of BODY here, a couple of BODY there, so that they are constantly grimacing in pain and never getting to fire back. Use the rule, just use it with discretion.

### Disabling

Disabling wounds have the potential to be more dangerous in *Dark Champions* games than in other genres. Unlike fantasy, superhero, or cyberpunk genre characters, street-level characters are not usually going to have access to any sort of advanced healing or "body repair" methods. Therefore, a Disabling wound could become a permanent facet of a character, and this may ruin a player's fun.

There are ways around this, though. First, the GM could allow player characters a straight CON Roll when they take a Disabling wound. If they make the roll, the Disabling effect will be long-term, but not permanent. Eventually, the character will be back to his normal self. Second, the GM could rule that characters with access to immediate medical attention (such as another PC who knows Paramedics) who are quickly treated will suffer no permanent Disabling effects, just long-term ones. Third, the GM could grant the Disabled characters extra Experience Points which they can only use to buy back Disabled Characteristics and Powers. This should be done gradually, over many game sessions, but eventually, such Characteristics should return to full strength.

One final word on Disabling: don't usually let a character suffer from more than one Disabling wound at any given time. Allow him to heal before you severely injure him again; no player wants to run a walking combat medicine textbook.

### Bleeding

Bleeding is the one optional damage rule which street-level GMs should consider ignoring entirely. Although it is realistic, it adds a great deal of bookkeeping to the game; it can also ruin a player's day if his character bleeds to death just seconds before completing some vital task. However, Bleeding can add a great deal of tension when used wisely; for instance, as a hero struggles to retain consciousness long enough to defeat the villain. Keep these things in mind before opting to use the Bleeding rules.

## KNOCKBACK AND KNOCKDOWN

As discussed under the "No Knockback" Limitation, using the Knockdown rules, instead of the more familiar Knockback rules, is almost mandatory for *Dark Champions* games. Especially powerful guns can be bought with the "Double Knockdown" Advantage to reflect their stopping power. If the GM decides to use the standard Knockback rules anyway, then he and the players should change the way street-level weapons are built. Almost all of them should take the "No Knockback" Limitation (or, alternately, a -1/4 "Only Does Knockdown" Limitation). Guns, knives, flamethrowers, brass knuckles, club-like weapons, and so forth should all use this Limitation to avoid unrealistic Knockback rolls.

For purposes of the street-level genre, when the "No Knockback" Limitation is used GMs should ignore the rule that such attacks have no kinetic force. There is no reason why a character should not be able to shoot guns out of enemies' hands or knock objects off of shelves with bullets and knives. (This is also a good reason to define the Limitation as "Only Does Knockdown".) The "no kinetic force" rule works well with attacks like lasers, but it is unrealistic when applied to most street-level weapons.

## HIT LOCATIONS AND PLACED SHOTS

The Hit Location rules should often be used in street-level games; they increase the realism of the game, add color to combat, and differentiate heroic and superheroic genres. Here are some suggestions for using Hit Locations and targeting in your game.



## EXPANDING THE HIT LOCATION CHART

These are some optional "new" Hit Locations. These are provided only for taking placed shots; the Hit Location chart itself should not be changed.

Location	STUNx	N STUN	BODYx	To Hit
Finger	x1	x½	x1/4	-8
Eye †	x5	x2	x2½	-12
Knee/Elbow	x2	x1	x½	-7
Spine ‡	x3	x1	x1	-10
Neck/Throat §	x5	x1	x2	-9

† — In many cases, even heavily-armored characters will have little or no eye protection.

‡ — A hit to the spine from which the target takes BODY will usually result in some sort of paralysis; the extent and duration of the paralysis will depend on the wound. A spine shot can only be taken from behind.

§ — A hit to the throat will usually cause loss of voice or similar problems in addition to any other damage it causes.

## TARGETING WEAPONS & GADGETS

Sometimes a character prefers to shoot at an enemy's weapon rather than shoot the enemy himself. The character may want to damage or destroy the weapon, or may just want to disarm his opponent. Damaging Foci is covered at pages 105-06 of the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*.

Shooting to disarm can be done two ways. First, a character who takes an Impairing or Disabling wound to the Hand or Arm may drop whatever he is holding. The character should be allowed to make an EGO Roll, -1 to the roll for each 2 BODY taken, to see if he can hold on to his weapon.



Characters can attempt to disarm their enemies by doing Disabling or Impairing wounds to their Hands and Arms.

Second, a character can directly target the weapon itself, hoping to knock it out of the enemy's hands or damage it beyond use. The following target modifiers are suggested for guns and other weapons. These modifiers are generally based on the modifier for the Hand (-6); this modifier is increased or decreased depending on the size of the weapon. GMs should tailor these modifiers to fit particular situations.

Weapon	To Hit
Pistol	-5 to -8: especially large handguns, such as the .44 Automag, would be -5; derringers and other small guns could be -7 or -8. Most handguns will be -6.
Submachine Guns	-4 to -6
Rifles	-3 to -4
Assault Rifles	-3 to -5
Shotguns	-3 to -5
Bows	-4 to -6: this assumes the character is targeting the bow itself; targeting the bowstring would be a -12, but any hit to a bowstring will break it.
Crossbows	-3 to -6: most crossbows are large and bulky enough that they are fairly easy to hit, but pistol crossbows are as difficult to target as a handgun.
Knives	-5 to -8: depends on size of knife
Swords	-3 to -5: depends on size of sword

After a weapon is hit, the GM should determine whether the attack was powerful enough to knock the weapon out of the enemy's hand. This is done by converting the Damage Classes of the attack into STR. Each DC is worth 5 points of STR for purposes of calculating whether a weapon can be knocked out of an enemy's hand with a STR versus STR roll. (See the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*, p. 158, to determine an attack's DC.) Attacking characters cannot use the Martial Disarm maneuver modifier when firing at an opponent's weapon.

This system can also be used to determine whether the force of a particular attack is enough to knock over an object. GMs should be realistic about this, though—it isn't usually possible to tip over cars and other large objects with guns, even if they have the "STR" to do it.

**Example:** Scarecrow is trying to sneak into a drug lord's mansion when he trips an alarm and has to fight his way in. Early on he encounters a guard armed with a USAS-12 combat shotgun. He decides he needs the shotgun, so he tries to shoot it out of the guard's hands. The USAS-12 is a large shotgun, so the targeting modifier will be -4. Rolling a 5, Scarecrow hits the gun with a shot from his Desert Eagle .44 Magnum. This handgun does 2d6 RKA, which works out on the Damage Class Table to a DC of 6, or 30 STR for disarming purposes (6 x 5 STR = 30). The guard only has STR 10, so the shotgun goes flying from his hands. As he scrambles to recover it, Scarecrow shoots him and then grabs the shotgun.



A short time later, the Scarecrow runs into two more guards in the mansion's garden. The guards are using a stone statue for cover, so Scarecrow decides to try and tip it over onto them. The GM rules that he could never do this with his Desert Eagle, so he shoots the statue with the USAS-12, shooting not destroy it, but to knock it over. The USAS-12 does 2½d6 RKA, for a DC of 8, which converts to a 40 STR. The statue is not anchored to the ground in any way, so the shotgun's slugs knock it over. The statue falls on the guards, rewarding Scarecrow with the sound of their cries of pain.

## CRITICAL HITS

Unlike many roleplaying games, the HERO System does not have a rule for "critical hits," hits which are so accurate (or lucky) that they hit especially vital spots and do extra damage. Here are three possible critical hits systems which GMs can consider for use in their *Dark Champions* campaigns. However, a critical hit system is likely to make combat in the game much deadlier than it would be otherwise. Critical hits are a "wild card" in combat, since they cannot be predicted or prepared for. Use them only if this is the sort of combat atmosphere you wish to create.

**Critical Hit Rule One:** This rule is just like the one described in *Ninja Hero*, pp. 82-83. A character will achieve a critical hit if his "to hit" roll is half or less of what he needs to hit.

Under this rule, only living targets can be critically hit, because it would be too easy to get critical hits on cars, walls, and the like.

**Example:** A character with OCV 8 is shooting at a character with DCV 4. This means that the shooter needs  $1 + 8 - 4 = 15$  or less to hit. If he rolls an 7 or below, he has made a critical hit. If his target had a DCV of 8, he would have had to roll a 5 or less to get a critical hit ( $1 + 8 - 8 = 1$ ).

**Critical Hit Rule Two:** Under this rule, a character gets a critical hit only if he rolls a "3" on his "to hit" roll (a 1 in 216 chance). Obviously, this will result in a lot fewer critical hits than the first rule. However, under this rule the GM could allow the characters to do critical hits to non-living objects.

**Critical Hit Rule Three:** This is an expanded version of Rule Two, based on how many dice of Luck a character has. Characters with 0-1 d6 of Luck will make critical hits when they roll a "3" to hit. A character with 2d6 Luck will roll criticals on a 3-4; characters with 3d6 or more of Luck will roll criticals on a 3-5.

Whichever rule is used, the effects of a critical hit are the same. The victim takes maximum damage, both BODY and STUN, from the attack. If Hit Locations are used, the STUN damage for Killing Attacks which critically hit is based on the Location's STUN Multiplier, not the maximum damage.

# MODIFIERS, MANEUVERS, AND OPTIONAL RULES

## COMBAT MODIFIERS

Combat modifiers are covered in the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook* on pages 147-151. This section will discuss some of them as they are used in street-level games. Generally, Combat Modifiers which are not discussed are appropriate for street-level campaigns.

### Bouncing An Attack

The *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook* says that the Bouncing rules should only be used in superheroic campaigns. However, they are appropriate for *Dark Champions* campaigns, at least as far as gunfire is concerned. For example, many law enforcement officers are trained to bounce bullets under cars to hit the legs of the criminals hiding behind the car. The GM might rule that certain bullets (such as Glaser bullets, hollow-point bullets, and tumbler bullets) cannot be properly bounced; nor can attacks like arrows or thrown knives.

### Multiple Attackers Bonus

The Multiple Attackers Bonus should not be used in street-level campaigns, at least for gunfire. Many street-level heroes have the ability to wade through a sea of gunfire,

calmly firing back without getting hit. The Multiple Attackers Bonus makes it too difficult to simulate this sort of daredevil tactics. At the GM's option, the Bonus could also be ignored when hand-to-hand attacks are made, as in martial arts campaigns (*Ninja Hero*, p. 72), but this is not recommended.

## COMBAT MANEUVERS

All of the Combat Maneuvers listed in the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook* on pages 152-157, including all the optional Maneuvers, are appropriate for street-level campaigns.

Here is a new optional Combat Maneuver, Hipshot, which help to simulate various combat events in the street-level subgenre. The GM can determine whether or not he wants to use it in his game.

### Hipshot

Hipshot is a Combat Maneuver first featured in *Western Hero*. It is designed for those situations where a character just has to get off the first shot. To use it, a character sacrifices 1 point of OCV to get +1 DEX for this Phase only for the purpose of going first in the Phase. The character's DCV is not affected by making a Hipshot. The player who





wants to take a Hipshot must declare this at the beginning of his Phase, so that the GM will be able to keep the combat in order. If two characters with the same DEX both declare a Hipshot, the GM should randomly determine who gets the first shot off. Despite this maneuver's name, it can be used with hand-to-hand attacks as well as ranged attacks.

**Example:** *The Sandman and Crossbow both have the same DEX, 26. This means that the GM and the player have been randomly determining who will go first each Phase. As a result, The Sandman has taken a couple of bad wounds, and he can't last much longer. He tells the GM he will use a Hipshot, so he sacrifices 1 point of OCV to get a DEX of 27 for purposes of going first. This will give The Sandman a guaranteed chance to strike first this Phase (unless Crossbow also uses a Hipshot, in which case they will use the random determination method to see who goes first).*

## OPTIONAL DAMAGE RECOVERY RULES

An unfortunate reality of combat is that the damage sustained during one fight carries over to the next. In a scenario where there are several fight scenes, this can be a problem, since the characters are often so weakened by early combats that they have little chance when they finally reach the ultimate confrontation.

Fortunately, there are several ways to deal with this problem.

First, the encounters can be balanced so that the characters can easily defeat the opposition in "earlier rounds" and they will be at full strength for later and more difficult encounters. This is not an ideal solution, as a well-balanced battle is more fun than the cakewalk offered by initial encounters of this kind.

Several possibilities arise. These optional rules are based on the assumption that several small wounds are easier to heal than one large wound that did the same total damage. These rules are very advantageous to characters wearing heavy armor as their individual wounds tend to be smaller.

To implement these rules, characters have to keep track not just of how much BODY they lose, but how much they lose from each attack. Instead of just saying "I've lost 7 BODY," a player must be able to say, "I took three blows, one doing 1 BODY, one doing 2 BODY, and one doing 4 BODY." The character can then deal with healing each wound separately.

## CONVENTIONAL HEALING

In the HERO system, conventional (non-magical) healing is accomplished through the use of Paramedic skill and PS: Doctor (or Surgeon). As the rules stand, Paramedic skill is only useful for stabilizing the condition of a dying patient and negating the effects of Bleeding wounds. PS: Doctor is used for long-term care, such as the increased Recovery rate for hospitalization.

The GM can increase the effectiveness of conventional healing by allowing characters with PS: Doctor to cure a little BODY damage from each wound. The character rolls his PS: Doctor once for each wound. If he is successful, the character regains 1 BODY from that wound. Each wound may only be treated once and may not regain more than 1 BODY from this treatment. Paramedic skill does not confer this benefit, only PS: Doctor does.

This treatment takes a minute or two per wound and requires bandages of some sort; even a wound defined as a nasty bruise should be taped up and supported. This is not useful to characters during combat, only afterwards.

## MINOR WOUNDS

With this option, characters take damage normally, but after the combat is over, the minor wounds they have sustained will heal quickly. This does not alter game balance while the characters are in combat, but makes characters more durable in the long run.

A "minor wound" is defined as any wound of 1 BODY. If these minor wounds are treated by a successful Paramedic roll, they are considered healed after 10 minutes or so. Even without a Paramedic roll, a character can quickly heal up to his REC in minor wounds in a single day. This healing can be proportioned over the course of the day if the GM so desires.

When combined with the Conventional Healing optional rule, any wound of 2 points that is doctored down to 1 point may be quickly healed as a minor wound. This means that an attack will have to do 3 or more points of BODY to have long-term effects.

Both the Conventional Healing and Minor Wounds rules give major advantages to characters in heavy armor or with high resistant DEF (the armor will reduce many wounds to the 1 or 2 point range). The GM should carefully decide when to apply both rules.



# GUNS AND OTHER WEAPONS

Most *Dark Champions* characters will use guns. This section will offer some suggestions for designing firearms and firearms accessories using the HERO System rules. In campaigns where the PCs do not have to pay points for their weapons, the GM can either design some special guns they can use (in addition to the standard list of guns in the Sourcebook), or he can let the players present him with gun write-ups for approval. The second part of this section will present some optional rules and variants for use in street-level campaigns.

## GUNS AND GUN DESIGN

Building guns using the HERO System rules is a fairly simple matter. The trick is knowing how to simulate the Advantages you want, while still taking all the Limitations necessary to make the gun at least semi-realistic.

### LIMITATIONS FOR GUNS

The place to start is usually the Limitations. All HERO System guns should be designed with the following Limitations: OAF, Charges, and No Knockback (if the GM is using standard Knockback rules; see above).

The *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*, at p. 205, offers some suggestions for gun design. They add to this list the "Independent," "Has A STR Min," and "Weapon Type" Limitations. However, *Dark Champions* players should think carefully before taking these Limitations. First, unless a gun is a unique, unrecractable weapon, it is probably not Independent. It is true that most guns can be used by anyone—they are Universal Foci. But in most cases a lost gun can be replaced with a Weaponsmith roll or a trip to the local gun shop. This is not how Independent Foci work. However, Independent would be appropriate if a gun were, for some reason, irreplaceable (i.e., a custom design).

The "STR Min" Limitation usually should not be used in *Dark Champions* campaigns. Most street-level heroes in comic books don't have any trouble controlling even the largest guns. STR Min rules are probably too realistic for most street-level games. Alternately, the GM could require guns to have STR Mins, but could set them unusually low—for example, a set STR Min of 10 for all but very large guns. Similarly, the "Weapon Type" Limitation, which deals with how many hands are needed to fire a gun, can be too realistic for this subgenre. Many street-level heroes can fire submachine guns, assault rifles, and shotguns one-handed, despite the fact that this is nigh-impossible and likely to cause injury in the real world. Allow the players to use the Weapon Type Limitation if they wish, but don't force them to use it.

Many minor Limitations are often taken as special effects. At the GM's option, these minor Limitations can be combined as a  $-\frac{1}{4}$  Limitation. No matter how many of these minor Limitations a weapon has, it only has a  $-\frac{1}{4}$  Limitation. Minor Limitations include "No Single Shots Allowed," "Cannot Be Bounced," "Half Effect Through Barriers," "Does Not Work in High Winds or Rain," "Range Based on Strength," etc.

### ADVANTAGES FOR GUNS

The next step is to choose the Advantages you want for your gun. Building Advantages into a gun is done in three ways: the type of gun, the type of ammunition, and the gun's accessories. (See the Advantages section, above, for more information on Advantages in *Dark Champions* campaigns.)

#### TYPE OF GUN

The type of gun is not as important as the type of ammunition, but it does matter. The following Advantages can be simulated by the type of gun or weapon used: Area of Effect/Explosion (grenade launchers and rocket launchers); Autofire (submachine guns, assault rifles); Double Knockback (combat shotguns, explosives); Increased Maximum Range (sniper rifles); No Range Penalty (sniper rifles); Variable Advantage and Variable Special Effects (a gun with many different clips/parts which can be switched).

#### TYPE OF AMMUNITION

The type of bullets a gun uses are the best way to simulate many Advantages. Here are some types of bullets which *Dark Champions* characters might be able to use; some are fictional or semi-fictional.

**Armor Piercing:** Armor-piercing bullets are usually built with a hard core and softer jacket. Modern AP bullets use Teflon coating, which allows them to penetrate just about any type of armor—for example, a Teflon-coated bullet will slide right between the fibers in Kevlar. This bullet can be used for the "Armor Piercing" Advantage.

**Armor Piercing Explosive:** This bullet combines armor piercing features with a small explosive charge. These bullets can be simulated with the "Armor Piercing" and "One Hex" Advantages (see related entries for details).

**Armor Piercing Incendiary:** An AP bullet with an incendiary charge. This is bought as Armor Piercing and Continuing Charges.

**Caseless:** This type of ammunition, developed for the H&K G11 rifle, does not have a metal jacket. Instead, its "case" is a block of propellant. This allows a high fire rate (since there are no shell casings to be extracted), and leaves no casings as evidence. This isn't really bought as an Advantage; it's more of a special effect.





**Duplex:** This bullet is actually two bullets in one. This means that the two duplex bullets are lighter than normal bullets. The two bullets increase the chances of hitting the target. This can be bought as a 2-shot Autofire attack, with the  $-\frac{1}{4}$  Limitation, "No Single Shots Allowed/Both Shots Must Be Taken At The Same Target."

**Explosive:** Explosive bullets contain a small charge of some explosive material which will detonate upon striking the target. Since actual explosives may explode upon firing, the "explosive" substance is often mercury, held in the bullet's hollow tip. When the bullet is fired, the mercury is compressed against the back of the hollow area; when the bullet hits its target, the mercury vaporizes and explodes from the bullet's tip. Explosive bullets usually do not have a chance to penetrate deeply before the charge explodes, but large wounds are still created—even larger than those created by most hollow-point bullets. Since the amount of explosive in a bullet is not large, they can be bought with the One Hex Advantage, with the  $-\frac{1}{4}$  Limitation, "Must Hit Target, Not The Hex" (since the bullet won't explode unless it hits something). Other appropriate Limitations would be "Half Effect Through Barriers" Limitation described under hollow-point bullets. Explosive bullets can also be bought as Penetrating attacks.

**Fiberglass/Plastic:** Fiberglass or plastic bullets are like normal bullets, but made out of fiberglass or plastic instead of metal. This means that they don't show up on X-rays, thereby hiding the cause of death in some cases. This can be bought as a limited form of Invisible Power Effects: hide cause of death (+ $\frac{1}{4}$ ). This doesn't make the attack itself invisible—you can still see the gun being fired—but may prevent forensic pathologists from uncovering the cause of death. A Forensic Medicine roll at  $-3$  is required to find these bullets in a body.

**Flechette:** The flechette "bullet" actually looks more like a large needle with rocket fins. They are fired from special smoothbore guns, not from ordinary firearms. The flechettes themselves are contained in fiberglass sabots which are peeled away by the force of the shot (flechettes can also be carried in shotgun shells). The flechette's small weight means that it can be fired much further and faster than ordinary bullets. This allows the flechette to do a great deal of damage; it also cuts through body armor with ease because of its shape. Flechettes can be coated with poisons or drugs as well. Flechettes can be bought as straight Killing Attacks; as NND attacks (defense is resistant PD); or as a dart (see "Low-Tech Missile Weapons," below) without the "Range Based On STR" Limitation. In either case, use the "Armor Piercing" and/or "Increased Maximum Range" Advantages to reflect the flechette's capabilities.

**Glaser:** Glaser rounds are "prefragmented" bullets which are filled with small buckshot, creating a round like a miniature shotgun shell. When the bullet hits the target, it breaks up on impact to create a devastating wound like a contact shotgun wound. This bullet has an enormous amount of stopping power, and a hit is often instantly fatal—the Glaser is said to transfer its energy faster than any other bullet, and the explosive effect of the scattering pellets can cause terrible damage to the target. Glaser bullets are designed to always fragment upon hitting their target, so they do not ricochet. The Glaser's other effects can be bought as Increased STUN Multiple or Penetrating, as desired. As with Explosive rounds, bouncing these bullets is not possible ("Cannot Be Bounced" ( $-\frac{1}{4}$ )), and the bullets are at Half Effect Through Barriers (as described under hollow-point bullets,  $-\frac{1}{4}$ ).



**Gyrojet:** This bullet is essentially a miniature rocket. It is fired out of a special pistol, which ignites the bullet and then recocks itself as the bullet leaves the gun. The entire bullet is fired, leaving no case to be ejected. The effect of the gyrojet is to stabilize firing (there is very little recoil). Gyrojets also have a slightly greater range than many handguns. Because the ammunition is self-contained, gyrojets can be fired underwater or in a vacuum. The gyrojet bullet can be bought as a small amount of Increased Maximum Range, or as No Range Penalty for guns with standard ranges.

**Hollow Point/Dum-dum:** Hollow point bullets, also known as dum-dums, have the tip of the metal jacket cut away, exposing the lead core of the bullet. This causes the bullet to "mushroom" when it hits the target, leaving large, horrible wounds. Some shooters try to achieve this effect by cutting a notch in the tip of an ordinary bullet. These bullets can be bought with the "Penetrating" or "Increased STUN Multiple" Advantages. They should also take the Limitation, "Half Effect Through Walls, Shields, And Barriers" (-1/4). Dum-dum bullets don't work as well as normal bullets when you have to shoot at the target through cover—going through the barrier causes the bullet to start "mushrooming," so that the target only takes half damage.

**Incendiary:** Incendiary rounds contain a small incendiary charge which ignites upon impact. This will set any flammable material the target is wearing on fire. This can be bought as a Continuing Charge, though it will not continue for very long in most cases.

**Magnum:** "Magnum" is a trademark name for certain kinds of bullets which have pressure and energy which is greater than normal. As a result, they do more damage than an ordinary bullet of the same size. This is reflected with extra dice of damage, not with an Advantage.

**Poison:** Poison bullets are normal rounds coated with cyanide, arsenic, or some other deadly poison. Thus, even if they cause only a small flesh wound, the victim can still die. These bullets should be bought with extra RKA dice bought on a Trigger (base attack must do BODY, +1/4).

**Rubber:** Rubber bullets are designed to knock a target out, not to kill him. They are bought as an Energy Blast, not as a Killing Attack. To determine how many d6 of damage the rubber bullets from a particular type of gun do, use the Damage Class Table on page 158 of the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook* to find out how many DC of Killing Attack damage the gun would do if it was loaded with normal bullets. Then, convert that to DC of Energy Blast. For example, a gun which normally did 1d6+1 RKA would fire rubber bullets which do 4d6 Normal damage.

**Sabot:** There are two types of sabot bullets. One is simply a carrier for another type of round, like a flechette, and peels away harmlessly after the round is fired (a "discarding sabot"). The other, more fictional type is a "bullet inside a bullet," a sort of advanced AP round. The outer shell impacts the target, breaking through armor and allowing the inner bullet to pass through and hit the target unimpeded. This bullet should be bought as Armor Piercing and Penetrating.

**Semi-Armor Piercing:** This is a normal bullet whose lead core is partly replaced with steel. This creates a slight armor piercing effect.

**Spent Uranium:** This bullet is, as the name indicates, made out of "spent" (non-radioactive) uranium. Because uranium is so heavy, a spent uranium bullet will have more force of impact than a regular bullet of the same size. Also, spent uranium bullets can be made smaller than normal bullets but of equal weight; this allows the bullet to have more powder, so that it can be propelled faster and further than a regular round. Spent uranium bullets should be bought with either the "Increased STUN Multiplier" Advantage or the "Increased Maximum Range" Advantage.

**Thunderzap:** This is a type of plastic bullet which is lightweight, yet extremely lethal. It expands in the target's body, like a hollow point bullet, but better. Thunderzaps can be bought with the "Penetrating" or "Increased STUN Multiple" Advantages. Using Thunderzaps could also be simulated simply by increasing the damage done by a particular gun (for example, a 1d6+1 RKA handgun might do 2d6+1 RKA using Thunderzaps).

**Tracer:** Tracer bullets are normal bullets which also contain chemicals that ignite upon firing, causing the bullet to glow and "trace" a path to the target. This allows the shooter to correct his aim. Tracer bullets work best at night or in darkness, but they are bright enough to be seen in the daytime. The tracer effect can be included with other bullets, such as AP or incendiary. Similar to the tracer bullet is the Observation bullet, which gives off a puff of smoke and a flash when it hits a target. Tracer bullets should be bought as one 5-point Combat Skill Level (OCV only) with these Limitations: OAF (-1), Levels Do Not Apply To The First Shot (-1/2): 2 points.

**Tumbler:** Unlike other bullets, which are designed to "spin" along the long axis and fly straight toward the target, tumbler bullets are designed to tumble end over end towards the target. This makes the bullet tear into the target and then bounce around inside, rather than going straight in and coming to a stop like most bullets. This can be bought as an extra die of Killing Attack on a Trigger (the first part of the attack must do BODY, +1/4).

### Taped Clips

Character using assault rifles, submachine guns, and other weapons with long clips can tape two clips together end-to-end. This allows the character to change clips quickly: switching from one taped clip to the next takes only a half Phase, rather than the full Phase normally needed to change clips. The equivalent of taped clips for revolvers is the speedloader, a device which allows all of the bullets in a cylinder to be reloaded at once, rather than one at a time.

## FIREARMS ACCESSORIES

There are five accessories which street-level characters might wish to buy for their guns: flash suppressors; recoil compensators; silencers; sights; and energy enhancement devices. At the end of this section, there is a chart giving the costs of silencers and flash suppressors by Damage Class.

**Flash suppressors:** Flash suppressors hide the muzzle flash of a gun from normal sight. They are usually found only on rifles, but for *Dark Champions* purposes it is assumed that characters could make or buy flash suppressors for handguns if they wished. Flash suppressors can sometimes be used together with silencers (see below). Flash suppressors are bought as Invisible To Normal Sight (+1/4) on an OAF.



**Recoil compensators:** Recoil compensators channel the explosive force of a gun's discharge so that it helps to counteract recoil and "rideup" (a gun's tendency to jerk upwards when fired). Recoil compensators are most often found on Autofire weapons, but there are recoil compensators which work for some handguns as well. Either type of recoil compensator can be bought as Combat Skill Levels on a Focus. All kinds of compensators should take the Limitations "OAF" and "Levels Do Not Apply To The First Shot" (-1/2), since the compensator cannot help steady a character's aim until he starts firing. Compensators for Autofire weapons can also take the Limitation, Levels Only Work To Counteract Autofire Negative Modifiers (-1/4). Recoil compensators for handguns should not add more than +1 OCV; those for Autofire weapons not more than +2 OCV. Thus, handgun recoil compensators cost 2 points; Autofire recoil compensators cost 2 points for +1 OCV, or 4 points for +2 OCV.

**Sights:** Sights can be bought for almost any kind of gun, and range from simple iron sights to complex laser-based sights. These devices simply help the shooter to aim better; hence, they are bought as Combat Skill Levels on a Focus (some kinds could be bought as Range Skill Levels instead, at the buyer's option). More advanced sights, such as lasers, may not work well in smoke, mist, or similar conditions, and may not remain useful over long distances. Reflect this by taking a -1/4 Limitation, "Works Poorly In Adverse Conditions," on such sights.

**Silencers:** Silencers, more accurately known as sound suppressors, trap the exploding gases given off when a gun is fired, thus muffling the sound of the explosion which propels the bullet forward. Silencers use baffles or absorbent materials to prevent the gases from escaping. The silencer slows the bullet down to some extent, but not enough that you should worry about it for gaming purposes. Most smaller guns can be silenced, including submachine guns; automatics are easier to silence than revolvers. Silencers tend to wear out quickly with use, allowing more and more noise to leak through until they are effectively useless; again, you need not worry about this for game purposes unless you want to be extremely realistic.

Silencers should be bought as Invisible To Hearing Group (+1/2) on an OAF. Characters standing nearby when a silenced gun is fired can hear the gun if they make a Hearing PER Roll at -5 (-4 for revolvers; -3 for silenced Autofire weapons). If you want silencers to wear out with use, take the additional Limitation "Charges" on the silencer (the chart below does not use any Charges Limitation). Some silencers also act as flash suppressors, or as partial recoil compensators; characters could combine all three accoutrements into one device if the GM allows.

Characters can make crude homemade silencers either by making a Weaponsmith (Slugthrowers) roll at -2, or by knowing about "homemade weapons" (see below). A lot of objects can be used as "one-time silencers": firing through a pillow, towel, or similar object can effectively silence a bullet.

**Example:** Scarecrow wants to buy a silencer for his 2d6 RKA handgun. The GM rules that all silencers should wear out after no more than 16 shots, but that characters can then obtain a new silencer (i.e., characters need not take the "Charges Never Recover" Limitation). Scare-

crow buys his silencer this way: Silencer for 2d6 RKA: Invisible To Hearing Group (15 points); OAF (Silencer, -1), 12 Charges (-1/4): 7 points.

## SILENCERS AND FLASH SUPPRESSORS: COST BY DAMAGE CLASS

Bought as the appropriate Advantage on an OAF

Damage Class	Silencer	Flash Suppressor
2 (1/2d6, 1d6-1 RKA)	2	1
3 (1d6 RKA)	3	2
4 (1d6+1 RKA)	5	2
5 (1 1/2d6, 2d6-1 RKA)	6	3
6 (2d6 RKA)	7	4
7 (2d6+1 RKA)	9	4
8 (2 1/2d6, 3d6-1 RKA)	10	5
9 (3d6 RKA)	11	6
10 (3d6+1 RKA)	12	6
11 (3 1/2d6, 4d6-1 RKA)	14	7
12 (4d6 RKA)	15	7

**Energy enhancement devices:** These devices are like batteries which attach to a gun. They impart energy to the expanding gases which propel a bullet down the barrel, thereby causing the bullet to maintain a higher speed than it could if the gases were allowed to expand and lose energy normally. They are bought as +1d6 RKA for the gun, with Charges to simulate the limited amount of stored energy.

## SHOTGUN OPTIONS AND VARIANTS

All of the shotguns written up at pages 200-201 of the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook* take the "Reduced By Range" and "Reduced Penetration" Limitations, to reflect the fact that shotgun blasts disperse quickly, becoming fairly useless beyond a short range. This makes sense if the shotgun is loaded with buckshot, which is made up of a lot of little pellets. However, shotguns can also be loaded with "slugs," which are groups of one or more very large pellets. These pellets go farther, spread less, and do more damage.

Therefore, characters do not necessarily have to take and "Reduced Penetration" as a Limitation on their shotguns if they do not wish to—they can use slugs and avoid the "spreading" problem. However, in exchange for allowing them to do this, the GM could make them take an altered form of "Reduced By Range" as a Limitation—slugs don't spread as much as shot does, but they can spread out and become useless after a point. The GM should decrease "Reduced By Range" to a -0 Limitation, but only subtract 2 Damage Classes every 8", not 4" as the normal rule would have it.

Shotguns can be defined in other ways. For example, a character could buy a shotgun as a Cone Area Of Effect, provided the Cone is kept relatively small. For example, a 2d6 RKA Cone would extend 7", which is about the range of a 2d6 RKA with Reduced By Range. The One Hex and Line Area Of Effects could also be used this way, if the GM allows.



There are a few types of combat shotguns which have automatic fire capability (Autofire, in HERO System terms). This can be incredibly deadly, especially if the "Reduced Penetration" and "Reduced By Range" Limitations are not taken and some Advantages are used. GMs should be very cautious about letting characters use these weapons.

Besides Autofire, there are several other Advantages which can be bought for combat shotguns. Double Knockback is one; some combat shotguns have enough force to blow over objects much heavier than men. Penetrating and Increased STUN are others—even if your armor protects you from having holes blown in you, the force of a shotgun blast can still cause internal injuries.

One last dirty trick for shotguns: assassins can fill shotguns shells with ice or rock salt. At close range (i.e., within 4"), such a shell is still lethal, but the cause of death will be difficult to determine. This is bought as an Advantage, "Invisible Power Effects: hide cause of death" (+1/4); it will cause a -3 or worse penalty to Forensic Medicine rolls.

## OTHER WEAPONS

Guns are not the only weapons that *Dark Champions* characters will use (or have used against them). There are many others which they will come in contact with, or use themselves: knives, arrows, poisons, brass knuckles, and many other implements of destruction are part of the street-level environment. This section will cover a few of these weapons, and discuss how to build and use them in the HERO System.

### BLADE WEAPONS

Knives, swords, and other bladed weapons (HKAs in HERO System terms) are common sights in street-level games. If normal Knockback rules are in use, blades should be bought with the "No Knockback" Limitation. Most blades can also be bought with the Limitation "Blade Weapon" (-1/4). This Limitation signifies that a blade-based HKA shouldn't be able to cut through some things, no matter how many dice it has. For example, knives generally can't be used to cut through solid rock or brick walls (some swords have been known to penetrate stones, but they usually get stuck there for a long time). The Blade Weapon Limitation also means that bladed weapons will become dull if used improperly. If this happens, the blade will do less damage (say, -2 or -3 Damage Classes) until it is sharpened.

Blades can be built with Advantages like Armor Piercing or Penetrating, but most other Advantages are inappropriate for blades. Although some blades make little or no noise when thrown or used hand-to-hand, there is no need to buy Invisible To Hearing Group—make a Stealth roll to use a knife silently.

Thrown blades, such as shuriken, should be bought as a HKA with the Advantage Ranged (+1/2) (this allows characters to add their STR Bonus to the HKA): Knives which are not made to be thrown can be thrown with an OCV penalty of -1 to -2. Swords can be thrown at an OCV penalty of -3 to -4.

### HAND-TO-HAND WEAPONS

A "hand-to-hand weapon" is any Hand-To-Hand Attack (HA) bought through a Focus. Here is a list of some common street-level hand-to-hand weapons, and how much damage they add to a character's base STR damage:

Object	Damage
Bottle	1d6 (after first hit, becomes 1/2d6 HKA)
Roll of coins in fist	1-2d6
Brass Knuckles	2d6
Brick	2d6 (Usable At Range—can be thrown)
Pistol butt	2d6
Shot gloves	2d6 (gloves with pockets on the outside of the fingers which are filled with lead shot)
Blackjack	2-3d6
Chain	2-3d6
Claw hammer	2-3d6 (claw is a 1-pip HKA)
Chair; other small furniture	2-4d6 (Usable At Range—can be thrown)
Tire Iron	2-4d6
Rifle butt	3d6
Lead Pipe	3-4d6
Nightstick/Billy club	4d6
Tonfa	4d6
Two-by-Four	4d6

### LOW-TECH MISSILE WEAPONS

"Low-tech" missile weapons include bows, crossbows, and thrown blades (the latter are dealt with above). Modern bows and crossbows are incredibly powerful, and can be as lethal and as accurate as any gun. Arrows and crossbow bolts are bought as a RKA on Recoverable Charges. They should be bought with the Advantage "Invisible To Hearing Group" (+1/2), since they are extremely quiet (a Hearing PER Roll at -5 is allowed in appropriate circumstances to hear an arrow). "Cannot Be Bounced" (-1/4) is a mandatory Limitation for arrows; the "No Knockback" Limitation is also required in campaigns where Knockback is used.

Some Advantages, such as Armor Piercing or Penetrating, can be bought for ordinary bladed arrows. Characters could also have "gimmicked" arrows with special arrowheads for different attacks—for example, an arrowhead might actually be a small explosive charge (a One Hex attack). A collection of arrows can be bought as a Multipower.

Other low-tech missile weapons include javelins, darts, blowguns, and slingshots. All of these weapons should take the "No Knockback" Limitation. Javelins are bought as straight RKAs, sometimes with the "Armor Piercing" Advantage to reflect the fact that they are so slim and sharp. Darts might be a tiny Killing Attack (1/2d6 HKA at Range, at the most), and are often used as the carrier for poisons or drugs (which are bought with a Trigger [the dart must do BODY damage]). If you prefer not to buy darts as a straight KA, buy them as a poison with the Limitation "Must Target Non-Armored Hit Locations" (-1/4). Blowguns are bought as the second type of dart; they sometimes also take the "Does Not



Work In Winds Or Rain" (-¼) and "Range Based On STR" (-¼) Limitations. Some blowguns are powerful enough that the darts can penetrate body armor. Slingshots are bought as a Multipower, with two slots: an Energy Blast slot for large pellets (6d6 EB at most); and a RKA slot for tiny pellets (1d6 RKA at most).

## POISONS

Poisons come in two basic varieties: organic (those derived from plants or animals); and inorganic (those which are chemical or metal compounds).

Poisons have been mentioned in several places above. To briefly recap, poisons are normally bought as Drains, Ranged Killing Attacks with "No Range" (-½), or as "Mental Powers Based On CON" (-½). In some cases, they will use the Advantage "No Normal Defense" (the defense is one or more of the following: Power Defense; LS: Immunity To Poisons; or Talent: Immunity). Don't forget that buying NND for Killing Attacks costs +2 (if the GM even allows this). Possible Limitations for poisons include Gradual Effect (see article cited below), No Knockback, Visible (for poisons designed as mental powers, which are not normally visible), and fragile Focus (poisons are easily ruined or spilled).

Since poisons are so effective, street-level characters who do not have to pay points for their weapons must still pay points for any poisons they wish to use; they can brew them themselves if they have SC: Pharmacology/Toxicology. Alternately, GMs can establish a "point total" limit on how many poisons a character can use during a particular game, similar to the "equipment allowance" rules presented in the Sourcebook section.

For more information on building and using poisons in the HERO System, see *Fantasy Hero*, pp. 187-88; *Ninja Hero*, p. 104; and Scott Heine's article "Toxic Terror: Poisons, Venoms, And Drugs For The HERO System" in AC #16.

## HOMEMADE WEAPONS

"Homemade weapons" are common, everyday substances and items which can be turned into weapons if necessary. For example, characters who know about homemade weaponry can brew napalm in their own kitchen with materials found in the pantry; can turn aerosol cans into miniature flamethrowers; can make crude homemade silencers and "zip guns;" and know which common foods and spices can

be turned into poisons. They can also use some household objects (such as screwdrivers) as HKAs. Characters who have the appropriate Skill (see below) also know how to scrounge and/or make weapons in prison (such as shanks, shivs, zip guns, and the like). Generally, homemade weapons will not do more than ½d6 Killing, but this depends on circumstances, the available materials, the character's skill, and the goodwill of the GM.

The GM can use one (or more) of three ways to determine how characters know how to make homemade weapons. First, he can let characters buy KS: Homemade Weapons. Second, he can require characters who want to make these weapons to buy Weaponsmith (Homemade Weapons). Third, he can make Homemade Weapons a 2-point Uncommon Melee Weapons category for Weapons Familiarity. In any case, characters who buy the appropriate skill can make these weapons. Depending on the situation, SC: Chemistry or PS: Home Economics might be a complementary skill.

## EXOTIC AND UNUSUAL WEAPONRY

Not all weapons are as commonplace as some of those listed above. As science advances further and further, what once was fiction becomes reality. Many *Dark Champions* characters won't have access to ultra-high-tech weapons like lasers, but there are a few exotic weapons which already exist today that they could use.

Tasers are one example. They shock the victim with 2,000 or more volts of electricity, enough to knock him out, but not kill him (though a character could up the voltage to lethal levels). They come in ranged and non-ranged varieties. They can be bought as NND Energy Blasts; the defense is resistant Energy Defense.

**Example:** Taser: 6d6 EB, NND (def. is rED, +1) (60 Act. Pts.); OAF (Taser, -1); 1 Recoverable Use (-1¼): 18 pts.

Another example is sonics. High-pitched, high-decibel sound can cause headaches, feelings of nausea, confusion, and similar symptoms with no visible cause. Sound below the pitch of human hearing is also dangerous—it can shake buildings and rupture internal organs in some cases. However, it can also affect the person using the attack (i.e., it would have a Side Effect).

Other exotic attacks and weapons can be taken from comic books; James Bond movies; and other spy movies and TV shows.

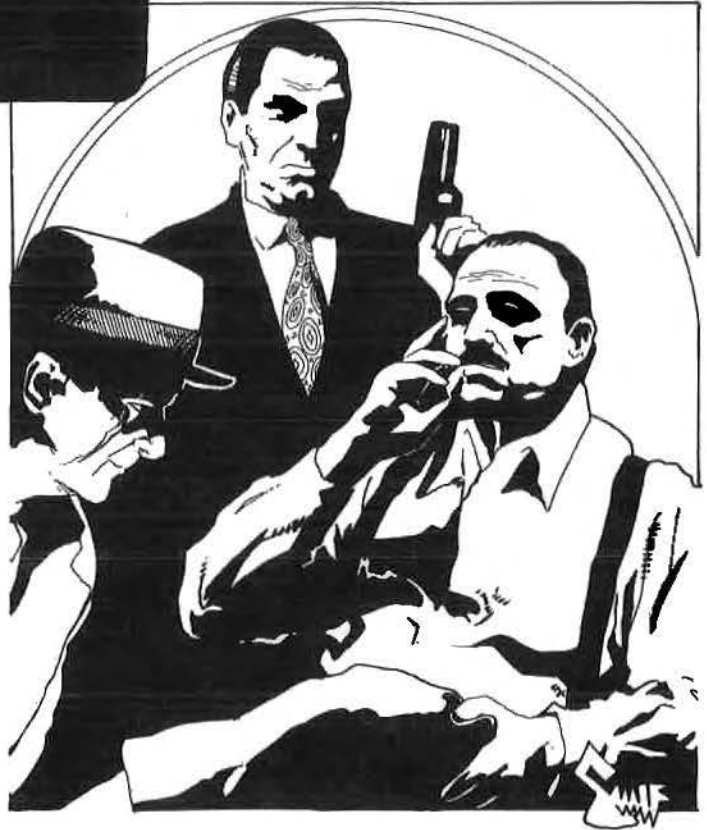




## CHAPTER FOUR: SOURCEBOOK

This chapter contains information on several subjects. First, there are write-ups of guns, other weapons, vehicles, and street-level gadgets. Also included are some optional "equipment allowance" rules for street-level campaigns where the GM does not make the PCs pay character points for their equipment.

Second, there is an extensive section on the enemies of the street-level hero. Besides descriptions of villain archetypes, there is in-depth information on many organized crime groups, including the Mafia, the yakuza, Chinese organized crime, and Colombian drug cartels. There are also write-ups of three villain groups and several independent criminals who are appropriate for *Dark Champions* campaigns. Last but certainly not least, there are several scenarios ready to be included in any *Dark Champions* campaign.



## TOOLS OF THE TRADE: WEAPONS & GADGETS

The following sections provide descriptions of plenty of weapons and gadgets for *Dark Champions* characters to use. Each description includes the Active and Real Points costs for each item.

### GUNS AND RELATED WEAPONS

The following is a list of some guns and similar weapons which might be used in *Dark Champions* campaigns. The weapons are listed alphabetically by category, in these categories: Revolvers; Automatic Pistols; Submachine Guns; Rifles; Assault Rifles; Machine Guns; Shotguns; Grenade Launchers; Grenade Rounds (launched grenades); Hand Grenades (thrown grenades); and Heavy Weapons.

Several categories of information are given for these weapons. Some information (caliber, number of shots) is taken strictly from real-world data. Other types of information (OCV, Damage) are game statistics, based on the author's estimation of how these weapons would be reflected in game terms. The data can be changed to suit individual campaigns and tastes.

**Name:** The name of the weapon. This may include a manufacturer and/or model number.

**Cal:** The weapon's caliber. This is given in fractions of an inch or in millimeters (mm).

**OCV:** The weapon's OCV modifier. Obviously, plus modifiers increase the user's OCV, and negative modifiers subtract from it.

**RMod:** The weapon's Range Modifier. The Modifier is added onto the normal Range Modifiers (see p. 146 of the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*). Thus, positive modifiers are good, negative modifiers are bad.



**Dam:** The Damage the weapon does. All figures are Killing Damage unless specified otherwise. The Damage figure is taken roughly from the following chart. Seeming inconsistencies in this chart are usually the result of different bullet lengths, military versus civilian rounds, and other considerations not apparent from the raw numbers. Exceptions were often made based on various modifiers and/or playability considerations.

CALIBER	DAMAGE
4.7mm	1d6-1
4.85mm	1½d6
.22	1d6-1
5mm	2d6
.22 LR / 5.7mm	1d6
.221	1½d6
.223 / 5.56mm	2d6
.25	1d6
.30	1d6+1
.30-06	2d6+1
.32 / 7.65mm	1d6
.357 M	1½d6
.38 / .380	1d6
.40	1d6+1
.41 M	1½d6
.308	2d6
.44 M	2d6
7.62mm	2d6+1
9mm	1d6+1
.45	1d6+1
.45 M	2d6
10mm	1½d6
.454	2d6+1
11mm	2d6-1
.50 / 12.7mm	3d6
14.5mm	3d6+1

**StunX:** This is the Stun modifier for the weapon.

**Shots:** The number of shots in the gun's cylinder or clip. If a gun can use more than one size clip, the largest clip is listed. Guns with a "clip" of 1 shot are single-shot guns (often for target shooting) which have to be re-loaded after each shot. The cost for carrying more than one clip is not included.

**STRMin:** The STR Min necessary to use the weapon effectively. STRMin data is provided for campaigns which want to use the STR Min rules. For details on STR Min rules, see pages 201 and 204-05 of the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*. Because these weapons were purchased without the STR Min Limitation, the STR Mins were not strictly calculated on their active point costs. Rather, they were based on the weapon's real characteristics. If a player buys the weapon with the Limitation, the cost would go down, but the STR Min would need to be recalculated.

**PERMod:** This number is the Perception Roll Modifier to be used when someone tries to hide a gun on his person—obviously, the larger the gun, the harder it is to hide. Alternately, this number can be used as a negative modifier for the Concealment Roll for the character trying to hide the gun.

**A/RCost:** The Actual/Real Cost of the weapon, in character points. Costs are calculated using all Advantages and the "Focus" (OAF) and "Charges" Limitations (and other Limitations in some cases); OCV modifiers, Range modifiers, and STR Mins are not used in the calculations. The following point costs were used:

Dice	Base Cost
½d6	10 points
1d6-1	12 points
1d6	15 points
1d6+1	20 points
1½d6	25 points
2d6-1	27 points
2d6	30 points
2d6+1	35 points
2½d6	40 points
3d6-1	42 points
3d6	45 points
3d6+1	50 points
3½d6	55 points

**Notes:** Any notes about the weapon. All notes and abbreviations are explained at the end of the gun chart.





GUN & SIMILAR WEAPON LIST										
Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/RCost	Notes
<b>REVOLVERS</b>										
ADC Derringer	10mm	-1	-1	1½d6	1d6-1	2	10	+0	25/7	
Colt Anaconda	.44 M	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	6	12	+3	45/16	
Colt Detective	.38	+0	-2	1d6+1	1d6-1	6	9	+1	20/7	
Colt King Cobra	.357 M	-1	-1	1½d6	1d6-1	6	11	+2	25/9	
Colt Lawman Mk III	.357 M	-1	-1	1½d6	1d6-1	6	11	+2	25/9	
Colt Peacemaker	.45	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6	6	12	+2	30/11	
Colt Police Pos.	.38	+0	-2	1d6+1	1d6-1	6	9	+1	20/7	
Colt Python	.357 M	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	6	12	+2	25/9	
Derringer	.38	-2	-2	1d6-1	1d6	2	4	+0	22/6	
Enfield Revolver	.38	+1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	6	7	+1	15/5	
Field Grade Casull	.454	-1	+0	2d6+1	1d6	5	15	+3	52/19	
Llama Comanche	.38	+1	-1	1d6+1	1d6-1	6	9	+2	20/7	
Llama Super Comanche	.44 M	-1	+0	2d6	1d6	6	14	+3	45/16	
Nam Mini Revolver	.22	-2	-2	1d6-1	1d6-1	5	4	+0	15/5	
Remington XP-100R	.350	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	3	12	+4	25/8	
Rossi M851	.38	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	6	9	+3	15/5	
Ruger Redhawk	.44 M	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	6	13	+3	45/16	
Ruger Su. Blackhawk	.44 M	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	6	13	+3	45/16	
Ruger Super Redhawk	.44 M	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	6	13	+3	45/16	
S&W Model 10	.38	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	6	7	+2	20/7	
S&W Model 19	.357 M	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	6	9	+2	20/7	
S&W Model 27	.357 M	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	6	10	+2	20/7	
S&W 29 Silhouette	.44 M	-1	-1	2d6	1d6	6	14	+2	45/16	
S&W Model 36	.38	+1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	5	7	+1	15/5	
S&W Model 49	.38	+0	-1	1d6	1d6-1	5	7	+1	15/5	
S&W Model 57	.41 M	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6	6	12	+3	37/14	
Taurus 669/669VR	.357 M	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	6	12	+3	20/7	
Weatherby Mark V	.308	+0	+0	2d6+1	1d6	1	15	+4	52/13	
Wesson Supermag	.357 M	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	5	13	+3	20/7	
<b>AUTOMATIC PISTOLS</b>										
Accu-Tek AT-380	.380	-1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	5	6	+1	15/5	
American C.O.P.	.357 M	-2	-2	1½d6	1d6-1	4	6	+0	25/8	
AMT Automag IV	.45 M	+0	+1	2d6	1d6	7	14	+3	45/18	
AMT Backup	.380	+1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	5	6	+1	15/5	AMT
Javelina	10mm	+0	+1	1½d6	1d6-1	8	12	+3	25/10	
Australian SAP	5.56mm	+1	+1	2d6	1d6-1	30	10	+5	37/18	
.44 Automag	.44 M	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	7	14	+4	60/24	
Bauer	.25	+0	-2	1d6-1	1d6-1	6	10	+0	12/4	
BDA 9C	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	7	10	+1	20/8	
Beretta 84F	.380	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	13	10	+2	15/7	
Beretta Model 92	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	9	+2	20/10	
Bren Ten	10mm	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	11	9	+1	25/11	
Browning Hi Power	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	7	+2	25/12	
Calico M-110	.22 LR	+1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	100	11	+3	26/13	



**GUN & SIMILAR WEAPON LIST**

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/RCost	Notes
Calico M-950	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	100	13	+3	35/17	
Caspian Wide Body	.38	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	20	10	+3	19/9	
Claridge Hi-Tec	9mm	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	10	+3	25/12	
Colt Double Eagle	10mm	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	8	10	+2	25/10	
Colt Govt. Mk. IV	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	9	9	+2	20/8	
Colt Govt. Model	.380	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	9	8	+2	15/7	
Colt M1911A	.45	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6	7	9	+2	30/12	
Czech M52	.32 Cz	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	8	9	+2	20/8	
Desert Eagle .357	.357 M	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	9	12	+2	25/11	
Desert Eagle .41	.41 M	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6	9	13	+2	37/16	
Desert Eagle .44	.44 M	+1	+0	2d6	1d6	9	15	+2	45/20	
Desert Eagle .50	.50 M	+1	+0	2d6+1	1d6	9	18	+2	52/23	
Detonics Compmaster	.45	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	7	9	+2	20/8	
D Max Model 100P	10mm	+1	+1	1½d6	1d6-1	30	11	+4	31/15	
FireStar Model 31	.40	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	11	8	+2	20/9	
FTL Auto Nine	.22 LR	-1	-2	1d6-1	1d6-1	9	6	+0	12/5	
Glock 17	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	17	9	+2	25/12	1
Glock 17L	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	19	9	+2	25/12	1
Glock 19	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	9	+2	20/10	1
Glock 20	10mm	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	15	9	+2	25/12	1
Glock 21	.45	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	13	9	+2	20/10	1
Glock 22	.40	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	9	+2	20/10	1
Göncz GA-9	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	18	11	+4	25/12	
Hammerli 232	.22	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	6	9	+3	15/5	
Hammerli 280	.32	+2	+0	1d6	1d6-1	6	9	+2	15/5	
H&K P7K3	.380	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	13	9	+1	15/7	
H&K P7M13	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	13	9	+1	20/10	
H&K P9S	9mm	+0	-1	1d6+1	1d6-1	9	9	+1	20/9	
H&K VP70Z	9mm	-1	-1	1d6+1	1d6-1	18	9	+2	25/12	
Hi Standard Trophy	.22 LR	+2	-1	1d6-1	1d6-1	10	6	+2	12/5	
L.A.R. Grizzly .45	.45 M	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	7	13	+3	45/18	
L.A.R. Grizzly 10mm	10mm	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	7	12	+3	37/15	
Llama Large Frame	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	9	9	+2	20/9	
Llama Model 87	9mm	+2	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	10	+2	20/10	
Llama Small Frame	.32	+1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	7	7	+1	15/6	
Luger P-08	.30	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	8	+2	25/12	
MAB-15P	9mm	+1	-1	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	10	+2	20/10	
Mark 22 Model 0	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	8	10	+3	30/12	Sil, 2
MBA Gyrojet Pistol	13mm Gy	+2	-1	1d6+1	1d6-1	8	5	+2	20/8	3
Makarov PM	9mm	+0	-1	1d6	1d6-1	8	5	+1	15/6	
Mauser Parabellum	.30	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	8	9	+2	20/8	
Norinco Model 77B	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	9	9	+2	20/9	
P6	9mm	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	8	10	+3	22/9	Sil, 4
Para-Ordinance P13	.45	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	13	10	+2	20/10	
Pardini/Fiocchi S&W	.32	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	5	9	+3	15/5	
Par./Fio. 22-PGP	.22 LR	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	1	9	+3	15/4	



GUN & SIMILAR WEAPON LIST										
Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/RCost	Notes
Parker 10mm	10mm	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	9	10	+3	25/11	
Ram-Line Exactor	.22 LR	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	15	9	+3	15/7	
Ruger Model P85	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	10	+2	20/10	
Ruger Model P90DC	.45	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	7	10	+2	20/8	
Ruger Mk. II	.22 LR	+2	+0	1d6	1d6-1	10	8	+3	15/7	
SIG P210-6	7.65mm	+1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	8	7	+2	15/6	
SIG/SAUER P226/P228	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	8	+2	25/12	
SIG/SAUER P229	.40	+0	-1	1d6+1	1d6-1	12	8	+2	20/9	
S&W ASP	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	7	10	+2	20/8	
S&W Model 41	.22 LR	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	10	10	+3	15/7	
S&W Model 1006	10mm	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	9	8	+3	25/11	
S&W Model 4506	.45	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	8	8	+3	20/8	
S&W Model 5904/5906	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	8	+3	20/10	
SSP-91	.44 M	+1	+0	2d6	1d6	1	14	+3	30/7	
Star M31	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	10	+3	20/10	
Steyr GB	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	18	10	+3	25/12	
Ultra Light 20 REB	.308	+1	+0	2d6	1d6	5	14	+3	30/11	
Unique Model 32U	.32	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	5	8	+3	15/5	
Walther OSP/GSP	.32	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	5	8	+3	15/5	
Walther P38	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	8	9	+2	20/8	
Walther P88	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	9	+2	20/10	
Walther PPK-S	.380	+1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	7	7	+1	15/6	
Wichita Int'l.	.357 M	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	1	10	+3	37/9	
Wildey .45	.45 M	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	8	14	+3	45/18	
Wildey 11mm	11mm	+1	+0	2d6-1	1d6-1	8	14	+3	27/11	
<b>SUBMACHINE GUNS</b>										
Ares FMG	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	10	+1/+3	35/17	AF5, 5
Beretta 93R	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	10	+3	35/17	AF5
Beretta PM-12S	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	40	10	+5	40/20	AF5
Bushmaster	.223	+1	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	30	12	+4	47/23	AF5
Colt M-16 Commando	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	12	+5	35/17	AF5
Gustav Model 45	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	36	12	+4	40/20	AF5
H&K HK MP5 or 54	9mm	+2	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	12	+4	35/17	AF5
H&K HK MP5K or SP89	9mm	+1	-1	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	12	+3	35/17	AF5
H&K HK MP5SD3	9mm	+2	-1	1d6	1d6-1	30	12	+4	37/18	AF5, FS, Sil
H&K MP2000	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	10	+4	45/22	AF5, Sil
Ingram MAC-10	.45	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6	32	12	+3	45/22	AF5
Ingram MAC-11	.380	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	32	12	+3	26/13	AF5
Intratec TEC-9	9mm	+0	-1	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	12	+4	35/17	AF5
Intratec TEC-22	.22 LR	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	30	12	+4	26/13	AF5
JATI MATIC	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	40	10	+5	40/20	AF5
M3A1 "Grease Gun"	.45	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6	30	12	+4	45/22	AF5 Only
Madsen M-50	9mm	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	32	10	+4	26/13	AF5
MAT-49	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	12	+3	35/17	AF5 Only
MK 760	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	36	10	+4	40/20	AF5
MP-40	9mm	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	32	10	+4	26/13	AF5



## GUN &amp; SIMILAR WEAPON LIST

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/RCost	Notes
MPi69/MPi81	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	10	+4	35/17	AF5
PPsh-41	.30 Ru	+2	-1	1d6	1d6-1	35	8	+6	30/15	AF5
Sidewinder SS-1	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	45	13	+4	40/20	AF5
Skorpion Model 61	.32 Cz	+1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	20	8	+2	26/13	AF5
S&W M-76	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	36	12	+4	40/20	AF5
Spectre M-4	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	50	12	+5	40/20	AF5, 6
Stechkin APS	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	12	+3	35/17	AF5
STEN Mark II	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	12	+4	35/17	AF5
Sterling L2A3	9mm	+2	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	34	13	+4	40/20	AF5,7
Sterling L34A1	9mm	+2	-1	1d6	1d6-1	34	10	+4	37/18	AF5,Sil
Steyr MPi-69	9mm	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	32	10	+4	26/13	AF5
Steyr MPi8as	9mm	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	25	10	+3	26/13	AF5
Thompson M1-A1	.45	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6	50	12	+6	50/25	AF5
Thompson M-1928	.45	+2	+0	1d6+1	1d6	50	13	+6	50/25	AF5 8
Uzi	9mm	+2	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	40	12	+4	40/20	AF5
Mini Uzi	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	12	+3	35/17	AF5
Micro Uzi	9mm	+1	-1	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	12	+2	30/15	AF5
Walther MPK/MPL	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	12	+4	35/17	AF5
<b>RIFLES</b>										
Anschutz Model 1913	.22 LR	+2	-1	1d6	1d6-1	1	10	+5	15/4	
Anschutz 54.18MS	.22 LR	+2	-1	1d6	1d6-1	5	10	+5	15/5	
AR-7 Explorer	5.7mm	+2	-1	1d6-1	1d6-2	8	8	+5/+3	12/4	9
Barrett Model 82A1	.50	+1	+4	3d6	1d6+2	11	15	+8	112/50	
Calico M-105	.22 LR	+1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	100	12	+6	26/13	
Calico M951 Carbine	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	100	12	+6	35/17	
Claridge Carbine	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	12	+6	25/12	
Colt Sporter Delta	5.56mm	+1	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	20	12	+7	35/17	
.50 Caliber Sniper	.50	+1	+3	3d6	1d6	1	18	+9	135/34	
Galil Sniper	7.62mm	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	25	13	+5	37/18	
Galil Sporter	.308	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	5	13	+5	30/11	
Gyrojet Carbine	13mm Gy	+2	+0	2d6	1d6	6	8	+4	75/27	3
H&H African	.45 M	+0	+2	2½d6	1d6	2	18	+5	60/17	
H&K HK94SG1	9mm	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	10	+5	25/12	
H&K PSG-1	7.62mm	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	20	15	+6	44/22	
H&K SR-9	.308	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	5	13	+6	25/11	
M-1 Garand	.30-06	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	8	17	+7	52/21	
McMillan M-87	.50	+2	+2	3d6	1d6	5	17	+8	67/24	
McMillan M-88	.50	+2	+2	3d6	1d6	1	17	+8	67/17	
RAI Model 500	12.7mm	+1	+2	3d6	1d6	1	15	+7	62/15	
Remington M700	7.62mm	+2	+2	2d6+1	1d6	5	10	+6	52/19	
Ruger Mini-14	5.56mm	+2	+1	2d6	1d6-1	30	10	+5	37/18	10
SAR-4800	.308	+1	+1	2d6	1d6-1	20	12	+6	37/18	
SKS Carbine	7.62 RL	+2	+2	2d6	1d6-1	10	10	+7	30/13	
Springfield M1903	.30-06	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	5	14	+5	52/19	
Steyr SSG-69/69 PII	7.62mm	+2	+2	2d6+1	1d6	10	15	+6	52/23	
SVD Sniper Rifle	7.62 RL	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	10	15	+8	52/23	
Walther WA-2000	7.62mm	+2	+2	2d6+1	1d6	6	13	+6	61/22	FS



## GUN &amp; SIMILAR WEAPON LIST

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/RCost	Notes
<b>ASSAULT RIFLES</b>										
AIWS	5mm	+1	+0	2d6	1d6-1	60	13	+6	60/30	AF5
AK-47/AKM-47	7.62 Ru	+2	+1	2d6	1d6-1	30	17	+6	52/26	AF5
AK-74/AKS-74	5.54 Ru	+2	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	30	9	+6	47/23	AF5, 11
AR-18	.22 LR	+2	-1	1d6	1d6-1	40	10	+6	30/15	AF5
AR-180	.22 LR	+2	-1	1d6	1d6-1	40	8	+6	22/11	12
CAR-15	5.56mm	+1	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	40	12	+6	47/23	AF5
CETME ASAW	5.56mm	+2	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	200	12	+5	70/35	AF5
Colt M16A1	5.56mm	+2	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	30	12	+6	54/27	AF5, FS
FA-MAS	5.56mm	+2	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	25	10	+6	54/27	AF5, FS
FN-CAL	5.56mm	+2	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	30	10	+6	52/26	AF5, FS
FN-FAL	7.62mm	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	20	15	+7	87/43	AF5, FS
FNC	5.56mm	+1	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	30	10	+6	52/26	AF5, FS
Galil ARM	5.56mm	+2	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	35	10	+5	61/30	AF5, FS
H&K G3	7.62 Na	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	30	15	+5	79/39	AF5
H&K G11	4.7mm	+2	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	50	10	+5	67/33	AF10, 13
H&K HK33A2	5.56mm	+2	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	40	10	+5	60/30	AF5, FS
L85A1	5.56mm	+1	+0	2d6-1	1d6-1	30	10	+7	52/26	AF5, FS
M-2 Carbine	.30	+2	+1	1½d6	1d6-1	30	9	+6	44/22	AF5
M-14	7.62 Na	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	20	12	+7	79/39	AF5, 14
M-19 SPIW	Fle	+2	+0	1d6+1	1d6-2	50	11	+5	50/20	AF5, AP
SAR-3	7.62mm	+0	+0	2d6	1d6-1	20	12	+5	67/33	AF5
SATS-G3	7.62mm	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	20	15	+6	67/33	AF5
SIG 550	5.56mm	+1	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	30	10	+6	52/26	AF5, FS
Sig STG-57/510-4	7.5mm	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	24	13	+7	87/43	AF5, FS
Stoner M22 or M23	5.56mm	+1	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	30	12	+5	52/26	AF5
Steyr ACR	Fle	+1	+2	1½d6	1d6-1	30	12	+5	56/28	AF5, AP
Steyr AUG	5.56mm	+2	+2	2d6-1	1d6-1	30	10	+5	54/27	AF5, FS, 15
Valmet M82	5.56mm	+2	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	30	12	+6	47/23	AF5
<b>MACHINE GUNS</b>										
Ares 5.56 LMG	5.56mm	+1	+1	2d6	1d6-1	200	13	+6	75/37	AF5, LMG
AUG LSW HBAR	5.56mm	+1	+0	2d6	1d6-1	42	15	+5	60/30	AF5, LMG
FN-MAG/MAG-58	7.62mm	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	50	—	+6	105/42	AF10, HMG
H&K Model 21	7.62mm	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	100	15	+7	114/57	AF10, LMG
KPV	14.5mm	+1	+4	3d6+1	1d6	100	16	+8	163/65	AF10, HMG
4.85 LSW	4.85mm	+2	+2	1½d6	1d6-1	30	12	+6	56/28	AF10, LMG
M2HB Heavy Barrel	.50	+2	+4	3d6	1d6	105	—	+7	146/58	AF10, HMG
M60	7.62mm	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	100	14	+7	114/57	AF10, LMG
M60E3	7.62mm	+2	+2	2d6+1	1d6	100	13	+6	144/57	AF10, LMG
M-134 Minigun	7.62mm	+1	+4	2d6+1	1d6	1500	—	+8	184/73	AF20, HMG
Minimi/Minimi-Para	5.56mm	+1	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	200	14	+7	81/40	AF10, LMG
RPD	7.62 Ru	+1	+2	2d6	1d6-1	100	13	+7	82/41	AF10, LMG
RPK	7.62 Ru	+2	+2	2d6	1d6-1	75	13	+7	82/41	AF10, LMG
Stoner M207/Mk 23	5.56mm	+1	+1	2d6	1d6-1	150	13	+7	90/45	AF10, LMG
Ultimax 100 Mk III	5.56mm	+2	+1	2d6	1d6-1	100	13	+6	75/37	AF5,FS,LMG
XM-214 Six-Pac	5.56mm	+2	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	1000	—	+7	94/38	AF10, HMG



## GUN &amp; SIMILAR WEAPON LIST

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/RCost	Notes
<b>SHOTGUNS</b>										
18" Full Choke	.410	+1	+2	2d6	1d6	5	9	+5	45/14	RR/RP, 16
18" Open Choke	.410	+2	+0	2d6	1d6	5	8	+5	45/14	RR/RP
Sawed Off .410	.410	+3	-2	2d6	1d6	5	8	+4	45/14	RR/RP
18" Full Choke	22	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	5	10	+5	52/16	RR/RP
18" Open Choke	22	+2	+1	2d6+1	1d6	5	10	+5	52/16	RR/RP
Sawed Off 22 gauge	22	+3	-2	2d6+1	1d6	5	10	+4	52/16	RR/RP
18" Full Choke	12	+0	+2	2½d6	1d6	5	12	+5	60/18	RR/RP
18" Open Choke	12	+1	+0	2½d6	1d6	5	12	+5	60/18	RR/RP
Sawed Off 12 gauge	12	+2	-2	2½d6	1d6	5	12	+4	60/18	RR/RP
18" Full Choke	10	-1	+2	3d6	1d6	5	14	+5	67/21	RR/RP
18" Open Choke	10	+0	+1	3d6	1d6	5	14	+5	67/21	RR/RP
Sawed Off 10 gauge	10	+1	-2	3d6	1d6	5	14	+4	67/21	RR/RP
AAI CAWS	Fle	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	12	12	+5	60/26	AF5
Atchisson Assault	12	+2	+1	2d6	1d6	20	12	+6	60/29	AF5
Benelli 121 M1	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	7	12	+4	100/33	RR/RP, AF8
Benelli Super 90	12	+2	+1	2½d6	1d6	7	10	+6	60/18	RR/RP
Bernardelli B4	12	+1	+0	2½d6	1d6	8	10	+5	60/20	RR/RP
Entry Team Striker	12	+1	+1	2½d6	1d6	12	10	+5	80/29	AF3, RR/RP
Franchi SPAS-12	12	+1	+1	2½d6	1d6	8	10	+5	80/27	AF5, RR/RP
H&K CAWS	12	+1	+2	2d6	1d6	10	12	+5	60/26	AF5
High-Standard M10B	12	+1	+1	2½d6	1d6	5	10	+5	60/18	RR/RP
Ithaca MAG-10	10	+0	+0	3d6	1d6	2	12	+4	62/18	
Ithaca Stakeout	20	+1	+0	2d6+1	1d6	4	10	+4	52/15	RR/RP
Jackhammer Mk 3A-2	12	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	10	12	+5	60/26	AF5
Mossberg M500 ATP8S	12	+1	+1	2½d6	1d6	7	10	+5	60/20	RR/RP
Mossberg 590	12	+1	+1	2½d6	1d6	9	10	+5	60/22	RR/RP
Remington 870 P	12	+2	+1	2½d6	1d6	8	12	+3	60/20	RR/RP, 17
"Street Sweeper"	12	+1	+0	2½d6	1d6	20	10	+6	90/45	AF5
USAS-12	12	+2	+2	2d6	1d6	20	12	+6	67/34	AF5
<b>GRENADE LAUNCHERS</b>										
AGS17	30mm	+0	+4	—	—	29	—	+8	—	MGL
ARMSCOR	40mm	+1	+1	—	—	6	10	+7	—	
ARWEN-37	37mm	+1	+1	—	—	5	10	+6	—	18
BG15	40mm	+0	+1	—	—	1	8	+6	—	19
Falconet	24mm	+1	+3	—	—	5	16	+6	—	
H&K 69A1	40mm	+1	+1	—	—	1	10	+4	—	
Mk 19 Model 3	40mm	+1	+1	see Notes		100	10	+8	—	20
M79	40mm	+1	+1	—	—	1	8	+5	—	21
M174E3	40mm	+0	+4	—	—	12	—	+8	—	MGL
M203	40mm	+0	+1	—	—	1	8	+6	—	22
Mark 19	40mm	+0	+5	—	—	50	—	+9	—	MGL
Rifle	22mm	-1	+0	—	—	1	8	+5	—	23



GUN & SIMILAR WEAPON LIST										
Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/RCost	Notes
<b>GRENADE ROUNDS</b>										
22mm Fragmentation	22mm	—	—	1½d6KX	1d6-1	1	—	—	37/9	
24mm Fragmentation	24mm	—	—	2d6KX	1d6-1	1	—	—	45/11	
30mm Fragmentation	30mm	—	—	2d6+1KX	1d6-1	1	—	—	52/13	
40mm Fragmentation	40mm	—	—	2½d6KX	1d6-1	1	—	—	60/15	
22mm Concussive	22mm	—	—	5d6NX	—	1	—	—	37/9	
24mm Concussive	24mm	—	—	6d6NX	—	1	—	—	45/11	
30mm Concussive	30mm	—	—	7d6NX	—	1	—	—	52/13	
40mm Concussive	40mm	—	—	8d6NX	—	1	—	—	60/15	
FERRET	40mm	—	—	3d6 Flash	—	1	—	—	110/34	24
M397A1 Airburst	40mm	—	—	2d6+1KX	1d6-1	1	—	—	47/11	25
M433 HEDP	40mm	—	—	2d6KX	1d6-1	1	—	—	50/12	AP
Rubber Impact	40mm	—	—	10d6 N	—	1	—	—	50/12	
<b>HAND GRENADES</b>										
Fragmentation	—	+0	RBS	1½d6KX	1d6-1	1	RBS	—	37/9	
Fragmentation	—	+0	RBS	2d6KX	1d6-1	1	RBS	—	45/10	
Fragmentation	—	+0	RBS	2d6+1KX	1d6-1	1	RBS	—	52/12	
Concussive	—	+0	RBS	5d6NX	—	1	RBS	—	37/9	
Concussive	—	+0	RBS	6d6NX	—	1	RBS	—	45/10	
Concussive	—	+0	RBS	7d6NX	—	1	RBS	—	52/12	
Smoke	—	+0	RBS	3"r Darkness	—	1	RBS	—	30/8	26
Stun Grenade	—	+0	RBS	2d6NND&Flash	—	1	RBS	—	60/15	27
Tear Gas	—	+0	RBS	3d6 Flash	—	1	RBS	—	80/23	28
M460/M465	—	+0	—	6d6 NH	—	1	—	—	45/11	29
<b>HEAVY WEAPONS</b>										
Armbrust 300	67mm	-1	+1	4d6KH	1d6	1	12	+6	212/35	AP, 30, 31
ASP 30mm	30mm	+1	+1	3d6+1	1d6	100	—	+8	137/55	AP, 32
M72A3 LAW Rocket	66mm	+0	+1	4d6KX	1d6	1	12	+5	150/25	AP, 31
M202A1 Flash	66mm	+0	+0	3d6KX	1d6	4	13	+6	101/34	33
RAW	140mm	+0	+0	15d6NX	—	1	12	+4	112/28	34
Recoilless Rifle	57mm	-1	+3	4d6	1d6	1	15	+8	90/20	
Mounted Recoilless Rifle	90mm	+0	+1	4½d6	1d6	1	15	+7	175/39	Mounted,35
Stinger SAM		+2	NRM	14d6NX	—	1	12	+6	140/23	NRM, 31
Wire Guided Missile		+0	NRM	6d6	1d6	1	12	+6	225/56	AP, NRM
XM 174	40mm	+0	+0	3d6KX	1d6	12	16	+6	90/40	36

**KEY AND NOTES**

AF3 = Autofire up to 3 shots (a +½ Advantage)  
 AF5 = Autofire up to 5 shots (a +½ Advantage)  
 AF8 = Autofire up to 8 shots (a +½ Advantage). This Advantage is used for the Benelli M121 M1 shotgun because a trained shooter can fire all 8 of its rounds in one second. Untrained shooters cannot use the Autofire Advantage.

AF10 = Autofire up to 10 shots (a +1 Advantage)  
 AF20 = Autofire up to 20 shots (a +2 Advantage)  
 AP = Armor Piercing (a +½ Advantage)  
 CAWS = Close Assault Weapon System  
 Cz = Czech  
 EB = Energy Blast  
 Fle = Flechette (see Chapter Three)



FS = Flash Suppressor (Invisible to normal sight, a +¼ Advantage; additionally, almost all modern flash suppressors can be used as 22mm rifle grenade launchers)

Gy = Gyrojet

HMG = Heavy Machine Gun. These weapons must be mounted on a tripod or vehicle to be fired, and two or three men of ordinary strength are needed to lift them. HMGs are bought as Bulky Foci (an additional -½ Limitation to the Focus Limitation)

H&K = Heckler & Koch, a German gun manufacturer

KH = Killing-damage, One Hex Area Of Effect

KX = Killing-damage Explosion

LAW = Light Anti-tank Weapon

LMG = Light Machine Gun. In a more realistic campaign, these can only be fired from a vehicle, tripod, or when the firer is prone. In more cinematic campaigns, this is not required (and so no Bulky Focus Limitation has been taken for LMGs)

LR = Long Rifle

M = Magnum

MGL = Mounted Grenade Launcher. These must be mounted on a tripod or vehicle to be fired, and two or three men of ordinary strength are needed to lift them (i.e., they are Bulky). mm = millimeter Mounted = means the same thing as "HMG," but the weapon is not a machine gun.

Na = NATO bullet

NH = Normal-damage, One Hex Area Of Effect

NRM = No Range Modifier (a +½ Advantage)

NX = Normal-damage Explosion

Only = Autofire only, no single shots

RBS = Range Based On STR (a -¼ Limitation)

RL = Russian Long

RR/RP = Reduced By Range and Reduced Penetration (each is a -¼ Limitation)

Ru = Russian

SAM = Surface-to-Air Missile

Sil = Silenced (Invisible To Hearing Group, a +½ Advantage)

S&W = Smith & Wesson (an American gun manufacturer)

1) The Glock pistols are the infamous "plastic" pistols. In reality, only the outside covering is plastic; the inner workings of the gun, about 80% of it, are metal, and these guns will register on standard metal detectors. If the GM wanted them to be fully plastic, he would have to recalculate the Real Cost with the +¼ Advantage, "Invisible To Metal Detectors."

2) The Mark 22 Model 0 "Hush Puppy" is the standard suppressed pistol for U.S. Navy SEAL teams. With special plugs, it can be carried underwater and not be damaged.

3) See Chapter Three for more information on Gyrojet ammunition.

4) The P6 is a specially-designed suppressed Soviet pistol.

5) The Ares FMG is a folding submachine gun. The weapon folds up into a 26.2 x 8.4 x 3.5 cm box, and can be unfolded and fired in less than two seconds. When it is folded, use the smaller PER Modifier.

6) The Spectre M-4 commonly comes with a four-column clip "file system," thus allowing the firer to carry 200 rounds of ammunition (the A/R Cost with all four clips is 50/25). The extra clips count as "taped clips" (see Chapter Three).

7) There is special "compact" version of the Sterling L2A3 known as the Sterling Mark 7. It has the same statistics as the L2A3, except for the PER Modifier, which is +3.

8) The M1928 is heavy, can jam easily when it gets dirty, and can be noisy when carried. GMs can reflect this by increasing the weapon's chances to Jam (see "Activation Roll" in Chapter One).

9) The AR-7 is a lightweight rifle which breaks down into parts that can be stored in waterproof compartments in the butt of the gun. When it is carried this way, use the smaller PER Modifier. Whether broken down or not, the AR-7 floats in water.

10) In addition to the rifle version of the Mini-14, there is also a fully automatic version (add the "Autofire" Advantage [5 Shots], making the A/R Cost 52/26).

11) The AK-74 is fitted with a muzzle brake which stabilizes the gun when it is firing full-auto. Players can buy this effect as Combat Skill Levels Against Autofire Modifiers (see Chapter One).

12) The AR-180 is a civilian version of the AR-18, and hence is not capable of fully automatic fire.

13) The H&K G11 is an experimental rifle using "caseless" ammunition. See Chapter Three for more details.

14) Not the same as the Mini-14.

15) The Steyr AUG can be converted into a carbine, rifle, or assault rifle by switching barrels. If the GM allows, a player could build this weapon as a "one-weapon Multipower," with different slots for the different types of weapons and a Limitation on the entire Multipower pool cost: "Takes 1 Phase To Switch Slots" (-½).

16) Remember that shotguns do not necessarily have to be bought with the "Reduced By Range" and "Reduced Penetration" Limitations. See Chapter Three for details.

17) Because the Remington 870 P is a slide-action shotgun, it requires two hands to fire it.

18) The ARWEN-37 is a British grenade launcher which fires several different types of 37mm grenades. For *Champions* purposes, the 37mm grenades should be considered to have the same statistics as the 40mm grenades listed in the table.

19) The BG15 grenade launcher is "underslung" beneath an AKS-74 assault rifle. It is not a stand-alone weapon.

20) The Mark 19 Model 3 is essentially a heavy machine gun which fires grenades instead of bullets. It has the same Limitations as a MGL and the Advantage AF5. Its standard round is the M433 HEDP grenade, but it can also fire other 40mm grenades.

21) The M79 grenade launcher is a stand-alone weapon which resembles a large shotgun.

- 22) The M203 grenade launcher is "underslung" beneath a M16A1 assault rifle. It is not a stand-alone weapon. However, modern refinements include a universal mounting bar which allows the M203 to be mounted underneath most major assault rifles (and the Ithaca Stakeout shotgun as well). This modified M203 is known as the Talon grenade launcher.
- 23) Almost all modern flash suppressors also act as rifle grenade launchers. Rifle grenades are 22mm grenades which are fired from the end of a rifle using special blank cartridges (or ordinary ball ammunition if the grenade is equipped with a "bullet trap").
- 24) The FERRET grenade round is a tear gas grenade. The gas is a 3d6 Sight Group Flash, 5" radius Area Of Effect, and each charge lasts for 1 Turn. This round also has the Advantage Indirect, defined as an armor-piercing capability which allows it to penetrate walls and barriers before releasing the tear gas.
- 25) The M397A1 is an "airburst" grenade. It contains a miniature fuse which "bounces" the grenade into the air when it hits the ground, causing it to explode at head level rather than at ground level. All shots with this grenade should be considered High Shots and the Hit Location rolled accordingly.
- 26) The smoke grenade acts as 3" radius Darkness to normal vision; the smoke cloud lasts for 3 Turns.
- 27) This is a generic stun grenade. It is a 2d6 NND EB (the defense is resistant PD) plus a 2d6 Sight and Hearing Group Flash.
- 28) Tear gas is a Sight Group Flash in a 4" radius Area Of Effect. The gas cloud lasts for 1 Turn. If the GM wishes, he can add a NND EB to the Flash (the defense would be Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing).
- 29) The M460 is known as a "Thunderstrip." It is 30.5 cm long, 7.6 cm wide, and 2.5 cm thick; it is made to slip underneath doors or through open windows. The M465 is the "Thunder Rod;" it is a cylinder 35.5 cm long with a 1.7 cm diameter and is designed to slip through holes made by a 12-gauge shotgun slug.
- 30) The Ambrust 300 is a one-shot rocket launcher designed to destroy tanks. It is smokeless, flashless, virtually noiseless, and uses a counterweight system to eliminate most of the recoil and backblast. This is bought as Fully Invisible (a +1 Advantage). The blast covers a 2" radius, this is bought as a One Hex Area Of Effect with a +1/4 cost to double the radius.
- 31) These are one-shot weapons—the rocket tube is discarded after the rocket is fired. This is bought as Charges Which Never Recover (an additional -2 Limitation).
- 32) The ASP 30mm (not to be confused with the S&W ASP semiautomatic pistol) is a belt-fed machine cannon. It is built with the same Limitations as a HMG and is AF5. Besides its AP round, the M789 HEDP, it can fire the M799 HEI, an explosive incendiary round (8d6 EB, One Hex).
- 33) The M202A1 Flash is a four-shot napalm rocket launcher (it fires the M74 napalm rocket). Its Explosion is x2 area, and each shot burns for 1 Turn. It is built with the Limitation "Backblast" (-1/2). This means that the area behind the weapon and anyone in it takes half of the weapon's damage (in this case, a 1d6 RKA, Cone Area Of Effect) from the backblast caused when the rockets are launched.

- 34) The RAW (Rifleman's Assault Weapon) is a sort of one-shot rocket launcher underslung beneath an assault rifle. Besides the basic explosive warhead, several other types of rounds are being developed (including an AP round).
- 35) The 90mm Recoilless Rifle fires AP rounds (other rounds, including a flechette round, are available). It has a 3d6 Cone Area Of Effect RKA Backblast (-1/2; see Note 33 for details).
- 36) The XM-174 is a small, man-portable "rocket launcher." It fires 40mm grenades/rockets.

### ONE-WEAPON MULTIPOWERS

The following weapons are examples of one-weapon Multipowers (discussed in Chapter One). Although point costs are provided, most of these weapons are nothing more than a combination of two or more of the weapons provided in the charts above, so GMs who allow player characters to have their weapons for free should allow them to have one-weapon Multipowers for free also. The point costs provided do not reflect the "No Knockback" Limitation; if Knockback rules are used in your campaign, recalculate the costs with the additional -1/4 Limitation.

**Assault Rifle + Grenade Launcher:** This weapon is a basic assault rifle with an underslung grenade launcher. There is a bayonet attached to the rifle barrel, and the rifle's butt can be used as a club.

Cost	Powers	END
30	Multipower: 61-point base (all OAF)	
3u	1) 2d6-1 RKA, Autofire (5 shots, +1/2), Invisible To Normal Vision (flash suppressor, +1/4), 2 clips with 30 Charges each (+1/2); OAF (Assault Rifle, -1)	
2u	2) 8d6 EB, Explosion (+1/2); OAF (Underslung Grenade Launcher, -1), 1 Charge with 8 "clips" (-1)	
1u	3) 1d6 HKA (1 1/2d6, 2d6 w/ STR); OAF (Bayonet, -1)	
1u	4) +3d6 HA; OAF (Rifle Butt, -1)	

**Assault Rifle + Shotgun:** This Multipower is basically the same as the one above, but with a shotgun underslung in the place of the grenade launcher.

Cost	Powers	END
30	Multipower: 61-point base (all OAF)	
3u	1) 2d6-1 RKA, Autofire (5 shots, +1/2), Invisible To Normal Vision (flash suppressor, +1/4), 2 clips with 30 Charges each (+1/2); OAF (Assault Rifle, -1)	
2u	2) 2 1/2d6 RKA, +1 STUN Multiplier (+1/2); OAF (Underslung Shotgun, -1), 8 Charges (-1/2), Reduced By Range (-1/4), Reduced Penetration (-1/4)	
1u	3) 1d6 HKA (1 1/2d6, 2d6 w/STR); OAF (Bayonet, -1)	
1u	4) +3d6 HA; OAF (Rifle Butt, -1)	

**Spring Knife:** This handy little item is an ordinary combat knife with a powerful spring in the hilt. When a button is pressed, the spring propels the blade out of the hilt with tremendous force, making it a lethal missile.

Cost	Powers	END
12	Multipower: 25-point base (all OAF)	
1u	1) 1d6 HKA (2d6 w/ STR); OAF (Spring Knife, -1), Cannot Use HKA Slot After RKA Slot Is Used Until RKA Charge Is Recovered (-1/2)	
1u	2) 1 1/2d6 RKA; OAF (Spring Knife, -1), 1 Recoverable Charge (-1/4)	



**Combat Shotgun + Grenade Launcher:** This combination is a combat shotgun with an underslung grenade launcher, plus the usual bayonet and gun butt.

Cost	Powers	END
30	Multipower: 60-point base (all OAF)	
2u	1) 2½d6 RKA, +1 STUN Multiplier (+½); OAF (Shotgun, -1), 8 Charges (-½), Reduced By Range (-¼), Reduced Penetration (-¼)	
2u	2) 8d6 EB, Explosion (+½); OAF (Underslung Grenade Launcher, -1), 1 Charge with 8 "clips" (-1)	
1u	3) 1d6 HKA (1½d6, 2d6 w/STR); OAF (Bayonet, -1)	
1u	4) +3d6 HA; OAF (Gun Butt, -1)	

**Combat Crossbow:** The combat crossbow is a lethal weapon which is as deadly as a rifle under most conditions. It has a "rack" mounted underneath, out of the user's way, where six bolts can be carried; the arrowheads on some of the bolts are miniature grenades, rather than blades.

Cost	Powers	END
22	Multipower—45-point base (all OAF)	
2u	1) 2d6 RKA, Invisible To Hearing Group (+½); OAF (Crossbow, Blade Arrowhead, -1), 3 Recoverable Charges (-¾)	
1u	2) 6d6 EB, Explosion (+½); OAF (Crossbow, Explosive Arrowhead, -1), 1 Charge (-2)	
1u	3) 2d6 Sight Group Flash, Explosion (+½); OAF (Crossbow, Tear Gas Arrowhead, -1), 1 Charge (-2)	
1u	4) 6d6 EB, Invisible To Hearing Group (+½); OAF (Crossbow, Blunt Arrowhead, -1), 1 Recoverable Charge (-¾)	

## VEHICLES

This section has write-ups of several vehicles which *Dark Champions* characters can use. Unlike the "Guns" section, which relies heavily on real-life data, these vehicles are all strictly fictional. They are based on the sorts of vehicles commonly found in street-level comic books. They are designed so that they can be used as templates—each can be "custom-altered" to suit the needs of a particular character.

The statistics for each vehicle are the same as those found in the Vehicle List on page 195 of the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*. However, there are two additional categories of information. The first is "Equipment," which gives the cost in Real Points of all equipment the vehicle has in it. Remember that the all vehicle Foci are considered Bulky, an extra -½ Limitation. The second is "Cost," which gives the cost in Real Points of the vehicle. The cost listed is the total cost of the vehicle, 1/5 of the cost and 1/10 of the cost.

## MOTORCYCLE I

This motorcycle is essentially a normal motorcycle which has been slightly "souped up" for use by street-level characters. Motorcycles are good vehicles for street-level characters: they are fast, can go places a car cannot, and don't require frequent refueling. The drawback is that they are difficult to arm and armor (but not impossible—see below).

Val	Char	Cost
1.25 x .64	Size	5
0	DCV	0
200 kg (-1)	Mass (KB)	0
15	STR	0
4	DEF	6
11*	BODY	0
20	DEX	30
4	SPD	10
38" x 4	Move	69
608"	MAX	0

Cost	Equipment	END
7	Radio: HRRH; OIF (-½)	

**Cost: 127/25/13**

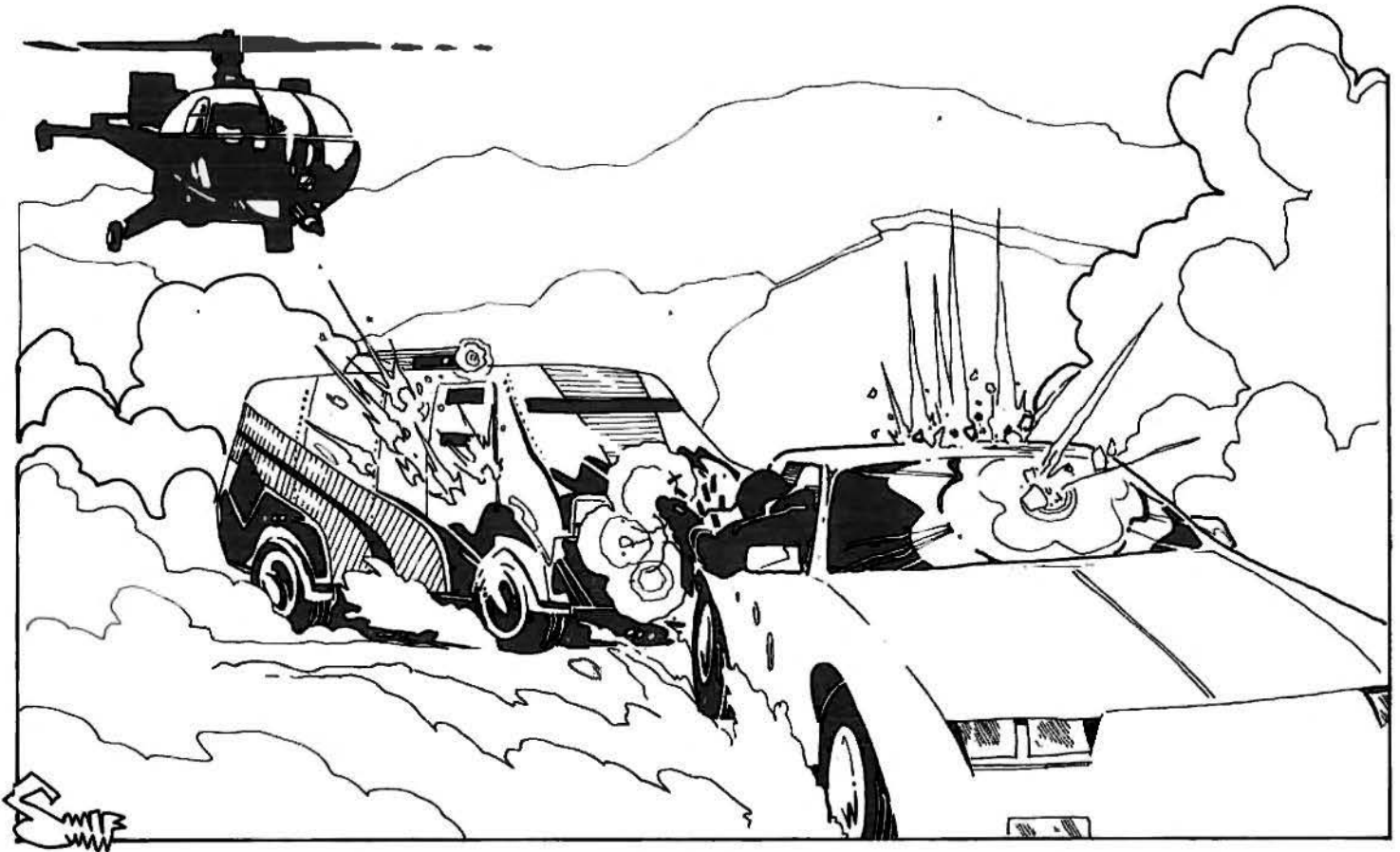
## MOTORCYCLE II

This motorcycle is an armed and armored version of the motorcycle described above. Not only does it help the rider get to the fight, but it helps him fight, too. Since the weapons can only be used one at a time by the driver (passengers cannot use them), they are bought as a Multipower. Because the vehicle's armor only protects its rider from gunfire part of the time, it is bought with an 11- Activation Roll. However, since the armor usually offers complete protection against crashes, it is bought with a 14- Activation Roll for those purposes. Rather than getting complicated, only the lesser Limitation value is used for the entire Limitation.

Val	Char	Cost
1.25 x .64	Size	5
0	DCV	0
200 kg (-1)	Mass (KB)	0
25	STR	10
6	DEF	9* *Activation Roll
15	BODY	4 14-; see above
20	DEX	30
4	SPD	10
38" x 4	Move	69
608"	MAX	0

Cost	Equipment	END
5	Radio: HRRH; OIF (-1)	0
22	Multipower: 44-point base (all OIF)	
2u	1) 1½d6 RKA, Autofire (5 shots, +½), 32 Charges (+¼); OIF (Front-Mounted Machine Guns, -1), Limited Arc Of Fire (60 degrees in front, -½)	0
1u	2) 1d6 RKA, Autofire (3 shots, +½); OIF (Rear-Mounted Machine Gun, -1), Limited Arc Of Fire (60 degrees behind, -½), 16 Charges (-0)	0
1u	3) 1d6 HKA, 0 END (+½); OIF (Wheel-Blades, -1), No STR Adds (-½), Can Only Be Used With A Move-By (-½)	

**Cost: 168/34/17**



### SPORTSCAR

Street-level characters who want more room and comfort than a motorcycle can give them should consider a sportscar. Sportscars offer speed and style, while allowing characters to ride in air-conditioned comfort with a CD player and other luxuries. They can also be built with more weapons and armor than a motorcycle can. Because the driver is the only one who can control the weapons, they are bought in a Multipower. This sportscar also has a remote control computer so that the owner can "summon" it with a radio signal or have it drive if he is too injured or busy to do so. Lastly, there is a self-destruct device in the car, to keep it from falling into enemy hands.

If you make the Sportscar larger and get rid of some of the weapons and the self-destruct device, this write-up can also be used for the armed and armored limousines favored by Mafia bosses and other organized crime figures.

Val	Char	Cost
2 x 1	Size	15
-2	DCV	0
800 kg (-3)	Mass (KB)	0
30	STR	5
8	DEF	18
15	BODY	2
20	DEX	30
4	SPD	10
30" x 4	Move	53
480"	MAX	0

Cost	Equipment	END
5	Radio: HRRH; OIF (-1)	0
30	Multipower: 60-point base (all OIF)	
2u	1) 2d6 RKA, Autofire (5 shots, +½), 32 Charges (+¼); OIF (left side machine gun, -1), Limited Arc Of Fire (180° on left side, -¼)	0
2u	2) 2d6 RKA, Autofire (5 shots, +½), 32 Charges (+¼); OIF (right side machine gun, -1), Limited Arc Of Fire (180° on right side, -¼)	0
2u	3) 2d6 RKA, Autofire (5 shots, +½), 32 Charges (+¼); OIF (Front-Mounted Machine Gun, -1), Limited Arc Of Fire (60° forward, -½)	0
3u	4) 8d6 EB, Explosion (+½); OIF (Turret-Mounted Grenade Launcher, -1), 16 Charges (-0)	0
1u	5) 2" radius Darkness to Sight Group; OIF (Smoke Generator, -1), No Range (-½), Limited Arc Of Fire (straight back, -¾), 16 Charges (-0)	0
3u	6) 3d6 EB, NND (defense is resistant ED, +1), Damage Shield (+½), 0 END (+½), Persistent (+½); IIF (Anti-Theft System, -¾)	0
14	6d6 RKA; IIF (Self-Destruct Charge, -¾), No Range (-½), 1 Charge which Never Recovers (-4)	0
15	Computer (OIF), INT-8, DEX-10, SPD-2	
<b>Cost: 210/42/21</b>		

**Skills:** City Knowledge 17-, TF: Ground Vehicles, Lang: English (for voice commands), KS: [Campaign City] Superhumans 11-, KS: Driving Protocols 17-, WF: Car Weapons, Mechanics 11-, Combat Driving 11-

**Programs:** Drive From A to B; Attack And Destroy Target; Search Databanks For Information On Topic; Diagnose Car Malfunction



### COMBAT VAN

Street-level characters who want real firepower usually opt for a van instead of a sportscar. A van has enough room to pack in a lot of weaponry, and can be armored so that it is nearly unstoppable. The van's weapons include four machine guns (one mounted on each side) and two turrets, one with a grenade launcher and one with a rocket launcher. The weapons are not in a Multipower, so that passengers and the driver can both fire if necessary. However, all of this equipment causes the van to move much slower than many other vehicles.

Val	Char	Cost
2.5 x 1.25	Size	20
-2	DCV	0
1.6 tons (-4)	Mass (KB)	0
45	STR	15
10	DEF	24
18	BODY	4
20	DEX	30
3	SPD	0
28" x 4	Move	49
336"	MAX	0

Cost	Equipment	END
5	Radio: HRRH; OIF (-1)	0
45	3d6 RKA, Autofire (5 shots, +½), 125 Charges (+¾); OIF left side machine gun, -1), Limited Arc Of Fire (180° on left side, -¼)	0
10	x4 Machine Guns (one on each side of the Van)	0
40	2½d6 RKA, Explosion (+½), +1 STUN Multiplier (+½); OIF (Rear Turret Grenade Launcher, -1), 16 Charges (-0)	0
23	2d6 RKA, +½ Variable Advantage (+1½); OIF (Front Turret Rocket Launcher, -1), 4 Charges (-1), Advantages Can Only Be Switched At Armory (-¼)	0
9	2" radius Darkness to Sight Group; OIF (Smoke Generator, -1), No Range (-½), Limited Arc Of Fire (straight back, -¾), 16 Charges (-0)	0
14	6d6 RKA; IIF (Self-Destruct Charge, -¾), No Range (-½), 1 Charge which Never Recovers (-4)	0
15	Computer (as Sportscar, above)	0

**Cost: 303/61/30**

### MINI-COPTER

This is a small, two-man helicopter. It is not armed; its only purpose is to get a character where he needs to go quickly and quietly. Because it weighs much less than a normal helicopter, it can land on rooftops that a normal helicopter could not.

Val	Char	Cost
2 x 1	Size	15
-2	DCV	0
800 kg (-3)	Mass (KB)	0
30	STR	5
4	DEF	6
13	BODY	0
20	DEX	30
4	SPD	10
32" x 4	Move	69
512"	MAX	0

### INVESTIGATOR'S VAN

This van is for the street-level character who is more investigation-oriented than combat-oriented. While it is armored, it contains only one weapon, a pop-up turret with a machine gun which can be loaded with different kinds of bullets. The rest of the van is filled with communications equipment, sensors, computers, and a fully-equipped miniaturized forensics laboratory. All of the sensors are bought as IIFs, so that people watching the van cannot tell that they are also being watched. Other types of labs (electronic labs, gunsmithing labs, etc.) could be built into a van like this.

Val	Char	Cost
2.5 x 1.25	Size	20
-2	DCV	0
1.6 tons (-4)	Mass (KB)	0
35	STR	5
8	DEF	18
14	BODY	0
18	DEX	24
3	SPD	0
26" x 4	Move	45
312"	MAX	0

Cost	Equipment	END
5	Radio: HRRH; OIF (-1)	0
10	+6 vs. Range For Sight and Hearing Groups; IIF (Sensors, -¾)	0
3	Infrared Vision; IIF (IR Sensors, -¾)	0
3	Ultraviolet Vision; IIF (UV Sensors, -¾)	0
2	Ultrasonic Hearing; IIF (Sonic Sensors, -¾)	0
5	Eidetic Memory; IIF (Recorders, -¾), Only Sounds And Visual Images (-¼)	0
43	2d6 RKA, +½ Variable Advantage (+1½), 125 Charges (+¾); OIF (Turret Machine Gun, -1), Advantages Can Only Be Switched At Armory (-¼)	0
18	Forensics Lab: Criminology 14-, Forensic Medicine 14-	0
20	Computer (OIF): INT-13, DEX-10, SPD-2	0

**Cost: 221/42/22**

**Skills:** City Knowledge 17-, TF: Ground Vehicles, Lang: English (for voice commands), KS: [Campaign City] Superhumans 12-, KS: Driving Protocols 17-, WF: Car Weapons, Mechanics 11-, Criminology 12-, Forensic Medicine 12-

**Programs:** Drive From A to B; Attack And Destroy Target; Search Databanks For Information On Topic; Diagnose Car Malfunction; Perform Forensic Analysis

Cost	Equipment	END
5	Radio: HRRH; OIF (-1)	0
12	Radar: Radar Sense, 360 Degrees; OIF (Radar Array, -1)	0
4	+6 vs. Range for Radar; OIF (Radar Array, -1)	0
52	Movement is Invisible To Hearing Group (a +½ Advantage), 0 END (+½)	0

**Cost: 208/42/21**

## COMBAT HELICOPTER

The Combat Helicopter is a flying gunship capable of operating in the inner city. However, characters may have a hard time hiding such a massive vehicle when not in use.

Val	Char	Cost
4 x 2	Size	30
-4	DCV	0
6.4 tons (-6)	Mass (KB)	0
40	STR	0
9	DEF	21
16	BODY	0
20	DEX	30
4	SPD	10
42" x 4	Move	89
672"	MAX	0

Cost	Equipment	END
5	Radio: HRRH; OIF (-1)	0
12	Radar: Radar Sense, 360°; OIF (Radar Array, -1)	0
4	+6 vs. Range for Radar; OIF (Radar Array, -1)	0
45	3d6 RKA, Autofire (5 shots, +½), 125 Charges (+¾); OIF (Front Machine Gun, -1), Limited Arc Of Fire (180° in front, -¼)	0
20	2d6 RKA, Explosion (+½), Armor Piercing (+½); OIF (Rocket Launcher, -1), 10 Charges (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (straight ahead, -¾)	0
5	x2 Rocket Launchers (one ahead, one behind)	0
30	8d6 EB, Explosion (+½); OIF (Grenade Launcher, -1), 16 Charges (-0)	0

**Cost: 301/60/30**

## GADGETS

This section presents a few sample street-level gadgets. These gadgets are divided up into four categories: Movement; Reconnaissance; Computers; and Miscellaneous.

### MOVEMENT GADGETS

These movement devices do not really qualify as "vehicles," because they do not provide enough movement capability or carrying capacity. However, they make up for this lack with their portability.

#### MINI-HANG GLIDER

This gadget is a miniature hang glider which is useful for inner-city missions—it helps a character get from one building to a smaller building with virtually no noise. Because the hang-glider is so small, it can be broken down and carried in a large suitcase, the trunk of a car, or even beneath a character's cape. The person using the mini-hang glider cannot carry any passengers or extra weight (other than his normal equipment).

**Mini-Hang-Glider:** 8" Gliding (8 Active Pts); OAF (-1): 4 points.

#### CLING-GRIPS

Characters sometimes need to be able to crawl up the sides of buildings. Usually this is a good way to avoid security devices or surprise enemies. By using Cling-Grips, a character can climb easily and safely.

**Cling-Grips:** Clinging, 10 STR (10 Active Points); OIF (Cling-Grips, -½), Cannot Be Used To Resist Knockback (-¼): 6 points.

## THE MULTIPURPOSE LINE-GUN

Although this gadget has several uses that do not involve movement, it is primarily a transportation device. A line-gun is a device of some sort (gun, billy club, bracer, or whatever you want) which can project a thin, strong line of cord. This gives the character a variety of Powers, primarily Swinging and Superleap, which can help him get around the city and capture criminals.

Cost	Equipment
18	Line-Gun: 36-point Multipower (all OAF)
1u	1) 20" Swinging; OAF (Line-Gun, -1)
1u	2) +18" Superleap; OAF (Line-Gun, -1), Only Works To Carry User Upward (10" up, -½), No Non-Combat Multiple (-¼)
1u	3) +5 to Climbing Rolls; OAF (Line-Gun, -1)
1u	4) 10 STR Telekinesis; OAF (Line-Gun, -1), Only To Pull Objects Towards User (-½), Affects Entire Object (No Squeezing) (-¼)
1u	5) 3d6 Entangle; OAF (Line-Gun, -1), 1 Recoverable Charge (-¼), Lockout (cannot use Line-Gun's other powers until Charge is recovered, -1), Range Based On STR (-¼), Cannot Create "Walls" (-¼)

**Cost: 23**

## RECONNAISSANCE GADGETS

The following devices, used for watching and detecting, are all "real-life" devices. Accordingly, GMs may allow characters to use them for free (no point cost), or to buy them with the "equipment allowance" rules (see below).

### BINOCULARS

This pair of binoculars is fairly small, so it can be placed in a jacket pocket without being noticeable. Larger binoculars would be less concealable, but would provide greater range,





and maybe even electronic readouts on scale and distance as well as other useful information.

**Binoculars:** +6 vs. Range for Sight Group (9 Active Points); OAF (Binoculars, -1): 4 points.

## INFRARED GOGGLES

This set of goggles gives the wearer the ability to see in the infrared spectrum, which allows him to detect heat. This makes it easy to see heat sources (like humans) in the dark. However, these goggles are large, heavy, and obvious when worn.

**Infrared Goggles:** Infrared Vision (5 Active Points); OAF (Goggles, -1): 2 points.

## NIGHTVISION GOGGLES

Unlike IR Goggles, which give the wearer the ability to see in an extra spectrum, Nightvision Goggles allow the wearer to see at night by amplifying and enhancing what light does exist. They are useless in complete darkness, but in other situations can make maneuvering in darkness as easy as in the daytime. These goggles are as heavy and obvious as the IR Goggles.

**Nightvision Goggles:** +4 to Sight PER Rolls (8 Active Pts); OAF (Goggles, -1), Only Works To Counteract Darkness Penalties (-½), Does Not Work In Total Darkness (-¼): 3 pts.

## BUGS

Bugs are electronic tracking and/or listening devices. There are two basic kinds: those that emit a simple radio signal which can be traced; and those that are actually miniature microphones, allowing a listener to hear noises or conversation in the vicinity of the bug. Either type of bug needs to be properly placed so that it is hidden but will work as well as possible. This may involve sneaking into someone's office or home to plant the bug. However, there are highly sophisticated listening devices which can listen through walls, windows, or waterpipes and so do not need to be placed in the target's immediate location. Some bugs can be carried by undercover agents, to transmit the conversations the agent has with other people.

**Tracking Bug:** Detect Transmitter, at Range, +6 vs. Range for the Detect (17 Active Points); IAF (Bug and Detector, -½), Requires A Bugging Roll (-½): 8 points.

**Listening Bug:** Clairaudience, 400" range (30 Active Points); IAF (Bug and Detector, -½), Requires A Bugging Roll (-½): 15 points.

**Sophisticated Listening Bug** (can hear through walls, etc.): Clairaudience, 400" range, Indirect (+½) (45 Active Points); IAF (Bug and Detector, -½), Requires A Bugging Roll (-½): 22 points.

## BUG DETECTOR/NEUTRALIZER

This device can detect and destroy bugs, even if they are hidden inside walls or phone systems. It is small enough to fit into a briefcase.

**Bug Detector/Neutralizer:** Detect Listening Devices, at Range (8 Active Points); OAF (Bug Detector, -1) (4 points) plus 7d6 Listening Device Dispel, Indirect (+½) (31 Active Points); OAF (Bug Detector, -1), Requires A Detect Listening Devices Roll (-½) (12 points): 16 points total.

## BOMB DETECTOR

This device detects explosives whenever it is relatively close to them. It does this by identifying the chemical vapors that explosives give off. The device needs to be near the explosives for just under two seconds in order to detect them.

**Bomb Detector:** Detect Explosives, at Range (range limited to 10") (8 Active Points); OAF (Bomb Detector, -1), Extra Time (2 Segments, -½): 3 points.

**Wolf's Ears:** This device serves two purposes. One, it enhances the user's hearing. Two, it screens out all sounds above a certain level, preventing the wearer from being deafened by explosions or gunshots. Wolf's Ears: +4 PER for Hearing Group (8 Active Points); OIF (Wolf's Ears, -½) (5 points) plus Hearing Group Flash Defense (10 points) (10 Active Points); OIF (Wolf's Ears, -½) (7 points): 12 points total.

## COMPUTERS

Computers are a cheap, easy way for a character to carry around a lot of useful information without having to actually memorize it (i.e., pay points for the appropriate Knowledge Skill). Because of advances in miniaturization, it is not too far-fetched to use the *Champions* rules to construct tiny computers that street-level characters can carry. Both of the examples given below are just this sort of computer: a mini-computer worn on the wrist. Because the small size does not allow room for a keyboard, the computer is voice-activated.

The first way to build a computer in the HERO System is to use the Computer rules, beginning on page 181 of the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*. A vigilante's mini-computer might be built this way:

### MINI-COMPUTER

Val	Char	Cost
13	INT	3
10	DEX	0
2	SPD	0
Cost		Equipment
1	Language: English	
1	Program: Search Reference Materials For Information On A Particular Subject	
10	5 KSs at 11- (these "slots" can be pre-filled with KSs, or can be left empty, so that information can be downloaded to the mini-computer during a scenario)	
<b>Cost:</b> 15 pts		<b>Limitation:</b> OAF (-1) <b>Total Cost:</b> 7 pts

The other way to build a computer is to buy it as bonuses to Skills on a Focus. This sort of computer helps its user analyze various situations and provides additional information on the subject, improving the user's chance of performing an action correctly.

**Mini-Computer:** +2 to Computer Programming, +2 to Demolitions, +2 to Electronics, +2 to Mechanics, +1 to Paramedic, +2 to Security Systems, +1 to Systems Operations, +2 to any three Sciences (character's choice), +2 to KS: World Supervillains; OAF (Mini-Computer, -1), Must Know Base Skills, Or The Bonuses Are Useless (-0): 16 points.



## MISCELLANEOUS GADGETS

The Miscellaneous section includes just one device: the utility belt. A utility belt (or pouch, kit, vest, or whatever other method your character prefers) is a group of miniaturized devices which can be useful in crimefighting situations. Most of them have fairly small point totals.

The example given below is bought as a Multipower, as most utility belts should be. However, this may become a cheap way for characters to carry more equipment than the GM wants them to have; if necessary, the GM can limit utility belt Multipowers to no more than, say, 10 slots.

Each slot below is followed by two numbers written this way: ##/##. These numbers are the Active/Real Point costs for the device, in case this information is needed. The slots are listed in no particular order; none of the slots costs any END.

Cost	Equipment
15 1u	Multipower—Utility Belt—30-point base (all OAF)
	1) Mini-camera: Eidetic Memory; OAF, Visual Images Only (-½) (10/4)
1u	2) Mini-Recorder: Eidetic Memory; OAF, Sound Only (-½) (10/4)
1u	3) Smoke Pellets: 2" radius Darkness to normal sight; OAF, 8 Charges (-½), Range Based On STR (-¼) (20/7) (add "Autofire" Advantage; 30/11)
1u	4) Flash Pellets: 2d6 Sight Group Flash; OAF, 6 Charges (-¾), Range Based On STR (-¼) (30/10)
1u	5) Thermite Pellets: 1d6 RKA, Armor Piercing (+½), One Hex (+½); OAF, 6 Charges lasting 2 Phases each (-½), Range Based On STR (-¼) (30/11)
1u	6) Sleep Gas Pellets: 3d6 EB, NND (defense is LS: Self-Contained Breathing); OAF, 6 Charges (-¾), Range Based On STR (-¼) (30/10)
1u	7) Throwing Blades: ½d6 HKA (1d6 w/ STR), Ranged (+½); OAF, 6 Recoverable Charges (-¼), Range Based On STR (-¼) (15/6)
1u	8) Calculator: Lightning Calculator; OAF (3/1)
1u	9) Rebreather: LS: Breathe Underwater, 4 Charges lasting 1 Hour each (+¼); OAF (6/3)
1u	10) Mini-radios: Mind Link, related group, up to 4 persons; OAF (20/10)
1u	11) Mini-Console: HRRH; OAF (10/5)
1u	12) Monocular: +6 vs. Range for Sight Group; OAF (9/4)
1u	13) Swing-Line: 10" Swinging; OAF (10/5)
1u	14) Flashlight: Change Environment, 1" radius (provide light), 0 END (+½); OAF (7/3)
1u	15) Painkillers: 25 percent Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, resistant; OAF (Pills, -1), 3 Charges lasting 1 Hour each (-0), Addictive Effect If Used Repeatedly Over A Long Period (-¼) (30/13)
1u	16) Paramedics Kit: +2 to Paramedics; OAF, 4 Charges (-1) (4/1)
1u	17) Lockpick Set: +2 to Lockpicking; OAF (4/2)
1u	18) Security Systems Analyzer: +2 to Security Systems; OAF (4/2)
1u	19) Crime Scene Kit: +2 to Criminology; OAF, 8 Charges (-½) (4/2)
1u	20) Bomb Defusing Kit: +2 to Demolitions; OAF, 4 Charges (-1), Only To Defuse Bombs (-¼) (4/1)
1u	21) Weakness Darts: 2d6 STR Drain, Ranged (+A); OAF (Darts, -1), Must Target Non-Armored Hit Locations (-¼), 6 Charges (-¾) (30/10) (any other Characteristic may be substituted for STR)

## EQUIPMENT ALLOWANCES

In a heroic-level *Champions* campaign, where characters do not have to pay character points for their weapons and equipment, there is a tendency on the part of some players to "over-equip" their characters—to take just about every piece of equipment they can think of. GMs can control this tendency, while still allowing the PCs to take their fair share of devices and gadgets, by instituting equipment allowance rules. Equipment allowance rules are simply a limit on the total number of Real Points of gadgets that characters can take, plus a limit on the Active Points that a character can have in any one "free" gadget. This "allowance system" can also be used for weapons.

The number of points in question varies depending on the campaign and the situation. The point allowance will be smaller when the characters are going about their everyday business than it will be when they are deliberately going on patrol or into a planned combat. The chart below provides the suggested limits:

CAMPAIGN TYPE	EVERYDAY	PATROL	COMBAT
	Real • Active	Real • Active	Real • Active
Pure			
Heroic	20-30 • 20	40-60 • 40	50-100 • 50
High-Tech			
Heroic	30-40 • 30	45-75 • 60	80-120 • 90

"Everyday" refers to times when the character is not acting as a crimefighter (his job, his home life, and so forth), i.e., when the character is least likely to be "armed." "Patrol" refers to situations where the character is on patrol, actively looking for crime and/or otherwise expecting trouble, and is prepared for that trouble. "Combat" situations are times when the character is going after a specific target, or times when the character knows that conflict is inevitable. Characters in this situation are going to be the heaviest "armed," and the gadgets they carry will probably be specifically chosen to deal with the situation or target they are expecting.

"Real" means the total number of Real Points in all gadgets the PC is carrying. The number provided is a range, since different GMs will have different ideas about how much equipment they want the player characters in their campaigns to be carrying. Devices in Power Frameworks are considered to have their normal costs for this purpose (i.e., use the Real Cost of each Power in the Framework for purposes of the equipment allowance). GMs should also keep in mind that clever use of Limitations can make a device with a small Real Point total much more powerful than it would seem; if necessary, GMs can increase a gadget's Real Cost for purposes of the equipment allowance. "Active" means the Active Points in any one gadget. The number provided is the point limit on any one gadget or device.

Remember that equipment bought with money must be replaced by money. A character may find replacements for equipment bought with points without expending money.

If the GM uses this system for weapons, he should increase the point totals slightly. Otherwise, characters will not be able to afford some of the larger, more spectacular weapons.



## THE WORLD OF CRIME: THE STREET-LEVEL HERO'S ENEMIES

This section of the Sourcebook describes reason the street-level character exists: criminals. The first part of this section will look at criminal archetypes; the second part will be an in-depth discussion of most of the major organized crime groups in America today. Lastly, several fictional comic book-like criminal organizations are provided for use in the different types of *Dark Champions* campaigns.

This subject has been covered as comprehensively as space would allow, but there is always more to be said about organized crime. There is plenty of room for a *Dark Champions* GM to do his own research and create his own criminal organizations. If necessary, the GM should change these organizations to suit his taste and that of his players.

### CRIMINAL ARCHETYPES

Just as there are archetypal street-level heroes, so too there are several types of criminals which appear frequently in street-level comic books, movies, and novels. These common character types include the following:

#### THE ASSASSIN

This character is a killer for hire, or sometimes for a political cause. Unlike the Terrorist/Mercenary, who will commit all sorts of criminal acts for politics or money, the Assassin only kills.

Assassins come in many varieties. Some are skilled professionals, others are little more than masochistic thugs with a veneer of sophistication. Some prefer weapons, others like to use their bare hands. Some are vain, preferring to leave an "ego signature" of some sort to identify their kills, others would rather leave no traces for the sake of anonymity. The deadliest assassin is usually the professional. He may be an ex-espionage agent, a member of a small, highly secret organization devoted solely to committing assassinations, or an individual trained in the arts of death; but regardless of where or how he got his training, his skill and ruthlessness should not be underestimated.

Professional assassins tend to have lots of Combat Skill Levels with weapons and other attacks, useful Skills like Stealth and Bribery, and other abilities related to their chosen profession of killing. Cruder assassins usually have several Skill Levels in one or two attacks of choice, and few if any complementary Skills.

#### THE CON ARTIST

The Con Artist is a criminal who makes his living by bilking people out of their money. "A fool and his money are soon parted" is his adage, and he does his best to find as many fools as possible. Some Con Artists are two-bit operators, living from day to day on petty scams; others are more high-class, attempting to pass themselves off as members of the social elite in order to make a really big score off of some rich sucker. Most Con Artists are male, but female Con Artists are not unknown.

The Con Artist's Skills lean toward setting up scams and then weaseling out of bad situations when he gets caught. Acting, Bribery, Conversation, Disguise, Forgery, Gambling, High Society, Persuasion, Seduction, and Sleight Of Hand are all good Skills for a Con Artist to have.

#### THE DRUG CARTEL LEADER

The Drug Cartel Leader is a specialized form of the Organized Crime Boss (see below). The Drug Cartel Leader is involved in one type of crime, and one type only: drug smuggling. His base of operations is somewhere in South America, Central America, or the Caribbean, and he commands an enormous network of smugglers and dealers who bring his poison to the United States for sale.

While some Drug Cartel Leaders have an polished outward facade and some do not, one thing that they all have in common is that they are extremely violent. Some prefer to remain discreet, ordering their lieutenants to torture and murder those who cross them; other will do the maiming and killing themselves. Their chosen instruments of torture and destruction—chainsaws, sharks, piranha, shotguns, butcher's knives, and so forth—are vicious and brutal. They are dangerous men to cross.

Besides Weapons Familiarities and other Skills of violence, Drug Cartel Leaders often have Skills such as Bureaucratics, Combat Piloting, High Society, Interrogation, Stealth, and Survival.

#### THE MISGUIDED VIGILANTE

This character is a vigilante who has gone wrong somehow. Usually, this means that he has gone over the edge, and has decided that anyone who stands in the way of his war on crime (i.e., the police, the PCs, and so forth) is a "criminal" who deserves nothing but death. Other types of Misguided Vigilantes are the vigilante who has been drugged, brainwashed, or tricked into acting improperly; and the vigilante whose methods are overbroad (i.e., he blows up an entire bus to get one criminal).

Misguided vigilantes have the same Skills and abilities as other vigilantes—big guns, Stealth, Streetwise, lots of Knowledge Skills, and so forth (see Chapter One for details).





## THE ORGANIZED CRIME BOSS

The Organized Crime Boss is the head of an organized crime group of some sort. Mafia capos, yakuza oyabuns, and leaders of Chinese tongs all fall into this category. However, the organization does not have to be that large—a street gang leader or the leader of a Jamaican posse might qualify as an Organized Crime Boss.

Organized Crime Bosses generally fall into one of two categories. The first is the Boss who is old, weak, or cowardly, and so is not fit for combat. This type of Boss leads his organization through respect, cunning, contacts, and personal power rather than his ability to physically destroy his rivals. Although not a direct danger, this type of Boss will have plenty of guards and lots of influence in both the underworld and regular society, making him as dangerous as any fighter. The non-fighting Boss usually has Skills and Perks like High Society, many useful Knowledge Skills, Contacts, and lots of Wealth.

The second type of Boss is just the opposite. He is a skilled combatant of some sort, and leads his organization not only through respect and wit but through his ability to personally enforce his orders. This sort of Boss usually sacrifices some of the Perks and Skills that the other type of Boss has in favor of such Skills as Martial Arts, Weapon Familiarities, Stealth, and so on.

## THE ORGANIZED CRIME LIEUTENANT

The Organized Crime Lieutenant is the Organized Crime Boss's right hand man or chief underling. His actual title—captain, underboss, consiglieri, vice-chairman—will vary from organization to organization.

Like Organized Crime Bosses, there are two main types of Organized Crime Lieutenants. The first type is the “bookkeeper.” This Lieutenant has no combat Skills to speak of, but is a master administrator who runs the organization in a smooth, efficient manner. He can obtain or arrange anything. “Bookkeeper” Lieutenants have Skills like PS: Administrator or PS: Accountant, dozens of Contacts in the underworld and normal society, Streetwise, Knowledge Skills of the underworld, and so forth. This type of Lieutenant can be found with either type of Boss.

The second type of Lieutenant is the “enforcer.” He is usually found with the first type of Boss, and makes up for the Boss's lack of combat prowess. He has the typical combat Skills—Martial Arts, Combat Skill Levels, and so forth. Depending on the organization, this type of Lieutenant might just be a fairly skilled fighter (someone capable of winning your average barfight or gun battle), or he might be a fighter skilled enough to take on the entire group of PCs.

## THE PSYCHOTIC

The Psychotic is a completely deranged criminal. He may be a murderer, a rapist, a robber, a kidnapper, or just about anything. Unlike the Serial Killer (see below), who usually limits himself to the crimes of murder and sexual assault, and who usually has some twisted logic to his actions, the Psychotic could commit just about any sort of crime, for any reason.

Psychotics should be roleplayed so that they are not only very strange, but very frightening as well. Even if the Psychotic has so far limited himself to relatively mild crimes, the threat of unrestrained violence should always be lurking right beneath the surface. Player characters should handle encounters with Psychotics very, very carefully, lest they set off a powderkeg.

## THE SERIAL KILLER

One of the most frightening types of criminals is the Serial Killer. Serial Killers are usually sociopaths—aggressive, callous, antisocial men who repeatedly commit violent crimes without feeling any guilt or remorse, and who are not influenced by punishment. They are almost always white males in their twenties or thirties. They generally feel little emotion and view others as objects. As a result, their murders are horrifying, involving sexual assault, torture, and mutilation. Serial killers should be distinguished from mass murderers, who kill a large number of people at one time; Serial Killers commit one murder at a time, again and again until caught.



The FBI divides Serial Killers into two groups: organized and disorganized. These classifications do not cover all Serial Killers perfectly (some are "mixed," displaying traits of both categories). Organized Serial Killers are usually intelligent, seemingly normal men whose crimes are based upon depraved, sadistic fantasies which sometimes have a twisted logic (for example, a particular killer's victims may all part their hair a certain way). (This "logic" can provide the GM a "hook" to create interesting scenarios—when the PCs figure out the killer's motivation, they will be able to find him and stop him.) Organized Serial Killers plan their murders with care, bringing weapons and needed "equipment" (such as rope) with them. They pick victims by staking out or patrolling areas to find the type of victim they want, then get close to the victim and gain control of him or her with their verbal skills or ruses. After the murder, an organized killer hides the body and removes evidence (for example, by dismembering the corpse, making identification of it difficult). They may take "trophies," such as jewelry or clothing, from the victim. The more killings an organized Serial Killer commits, the better he becomes at covering his tracks, but he may become overconfident as well.

A disorganized Serial Killer is motivated not so much by perverse sexual fantasies as by a deep-seated mental illness or delusion (such as believing he must drink others' blood to sustain his own life). Disorganized Serial Killers are extremely introverted, and are so disturbed that they cannot function normally: they may be unable to drive, and their homes and personal effects are slovenly and in bad condition. They do not choose victims safely and logically; they are more prone to take high-risk victims in quick attacks. The crime scene will be chaotic, with no attempt to hide evidence; the victims will probably be mutilated, and often the victims' faces are covered (to "depersonalize" them). If a "trophy" is taken, it is likely to be some hair or a body part.

Serial Killers will almost always have at least a few combat related abilities or Skills—Weapon Familiarities, Martial Arts, high Strength, Combat Skill Levels, Stealth, and the like.

## THE SMUGGLER

The Smuggler is a criminal courier. He specializes in sneaking illegal items (such as guns and drugs) into and out of the United States. Smugglers are known more for their in-depth knowledge of the area and the city's underworld than they are for their combat abilities. But smuggling can be a rough job, and many Smugglers are capable of handling themselves in a fight. Still, their main concern is getting their goods to where they need to be safely. Methods of smuggling are nearly infinite; the GM should be sure to give the players a good test of their intelligence when they are after a skilled Smuggler.

Smugglers usually have Skills like Bribery, Combat Driving or Piloting, Stealth, Streetwise, Survival, Transport Familiarity, Weapon Familiarity, and lots of Area Knowledges and City Knowledges.

## THE TERRORIST/MERCENARY

Terrorists and Mercenaries are two basically similar types of criminals. Both types will commit just about any crime, though they are best at violent crimes. The main difference is their motivation. Terrorists are motivated by a political cause of some sort. This can be national independence for some ethnic group, a desire to destroy some ethnic or religious group, eco-terrorism, or any one of a thousand other causes. Mercenaries, on the other hand, are usually motivated by money. They will do whatever someone needs done—a murder, an assault mission, an extraction mission—as long as the money is good. Some Mercenaries have a "code of honor" which drives them to complete any job they take, but many mercs are dishonorable and treacherous—after all, they will kill for money, so why wouldn't they betray someone for money?

Terrorists and Mercenaries are extremely dangerous, because they have training, weapons, and Skills that many street-level villains lack. The weapons can range from ordinary guns to military weapons to powerful explosives. Of the two, Mercenaries are likely to be more dangerous, since anyone can commit an act of terrorism, but surviving for very long as a Mercenary takes some talent and skill.

## THE WORLD'S GREATEST THIEF

This character is the world's most talented cat burglar and thief. His skill at getting into guarded, locked areas, bypassing all security devices, and then vanishing without a trace is legendary. If there is a fabulous treasure under lock and key somewhere in the campaign city, rest assured that the World's Greatest Thief probably has plans to obtain it.

Some of these characters are flamboyant and flashy, willing to attempt the impossible and leaving an ego signature to prove that they did it. Other, less showy contenders for this title carefully plan all details of their thefts and go to great lengths to conceal their involvement with the whole affair.

Crucial Skills for the World's Greatest Thief include: Acrobatics, Breakfall, Climbing, Contortionist, Forgery, Gambling, High Society, Lockpicking, Security Systems, and Sleight Of Hand.



## ORGANIZED CRIME

This section of *Dark Champions* provides game information on the major organized crime groups troubling America today. Because each group's membership and goals change over time, no information is given about real-life organized crime figures; instead, each portion of this section provides some fictional organized crime groups for use in all types of *Champions* campaigns.

Gamemasters who want more in-depth information on these groups should consult the sources listed in the Bibliography at the end of this book.

### THE MAFIA

*Vito Torccone, consigliere of the Torccone family, got up at 6:30 AM like he always did. He did some stretching exercises quietly, so as not to wake his wife, and then took a shower and shaved. After he finished, he put on a flannel robe and went downstairs. He put two slices of bread in the toaster, poured himself a glass of orange juice, and then went to the front door to get the paper.*

*He opened the door and bent down to pick up his morning copy of the Post. As he stood back up, he saw a man in a suit get out of a parked car and walk toward him. It's too late, he thought to himself. Nothing I can do now. Goodbye, Rosa.*

*The man in the suit pulled a .45 from underneath his jacket as another car came speeding around the corner. "Don Carlo sends his regards, fat man," he snarled. Three quick shots broke the morning stillness; and Vito Torccone fell back inside his house with three holes in his chest. The car picked the hitman up and sped away with a screech of tires.*

The most well-known form of organized crime in America today is the Mafia, also known as La Cosa Nostra ("this thing of ours," abbreviated LCN). In fact, in the minds of many, the terms "Mafia" and "organized crime" are synonymous. This section of *Dark Champions* will take a look at how the Mafia works, and how it can be used in a *Champions* campaign.

#### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MAFIA

The precise origins of the Mafia are shrouded in mystery; even the meaning of the term "Mafia" is hotly debated by various experts. The American Mafia can probably trace its beginnings to the Sicilian Mafia, which was "brought over" to this country by Italian immigrants. Some people also trace the Mafia to the "Black Hand" shakedown rackets found in Italian neighborhoods and communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but this seems doubtful.

Prohibition was the Mafia's key to success. It brought the Mafia enormous profits from illegal liquor, and caused the American Mafia to depart from its Sicilian antecedents. The Sicilians were much more concerned with maintaining "honor" than the American gangsters, who were interested primarily in profit. Beginning in the Twenties, the Sicilian bosses were quickly eliminated, and the Mafia in America became much more profit-oriented, and much more violent as well.

Prohibition also encouraged gangs in different cities to work together to increase the profits for everyone. This cooperative spirit culminated in 1931, when Charles "Lucky" Luciano formed The Commission, a group which is said to "control" the Mafia to this day (see "Organization Structure, and Culture of the Mafia," below, for more information on the Commission).

For many years, the Federal Bureau of Investigation denied that the Mafia even existed. But by the 1960s, they were forced to admit its existence as more and more Mafia figures, such as Joseph Valachi, turned state's evidence and began to reveal the inner working of the LCN. Attorney General Robert Kennedy's willingness to tackle the "Mafia problem" also contributed to the acknowledgement of the Mafia as a potent force in the American underworld. However, this formal recognition did not bother the Mafia much; it continued to operate, and reaped enormous profits from its illicit activities, despite occasional crackdowns, gang wars, and assassinations.

The FBI and other law enforcement groups have for many years devoted a great amount of resources to the task of destroying the Mafia, but they have never succeeded. In the 1980s and 1990s there have been many prosecutions of top-level Mafiosi as a result of diligent law enforcement work, and some experts have begun to predict that the Mafia will come to an end and be replaced by some of the other organized crime groups profiled later on in this book. However, while it is true that the Mafia families in some cities have been virtually eradicated, most families are still intact and functioning.

There is evidence which seems to indicate that the Sicilian Mafia, which of course remained active in Sicily even when it was removed from the United States, is returning to America. The increasing number of prosecutions of Mafiosi in Italy have driven many of them to America. Some authorities believe that they are establishing their own criminal families, rather than merging with existing American LCN families. However, the lack of friction between the two groups (so far) seems to indicate that there are "working agreements" or "understandings" between them. It is up to the GM to determine whether or not he wants to include both the American Mafia and the more honor-bound Sicilian Mafia in his campaign.



Another modern development in the Mafia is the abandonment of tradition. The newer, younger leaders are less concerned with tradition and "respect" and are more concerned with pure profit. They are also more willing to use violence as a means to accomplish whatever ends they have in mind.

The Mafia has been hurt by all the recent arrests and prosecutions, but it is far from gone. It is merely wounded, and maintains its membership and most of its power base. Perhaps the PCs can help rid their city of La Cosa Nostra, but it will take a lot of dedicated work—and perhaps a lot of gunfire as well...

## ORGANIZATION, STRUCTURE, AND CULTURE OF THE MAFIA

The basic unit of the Mafia is the *borgata*, or "family." A family is usually not related by blood at all, though the leadership or some of the members are often related by blood or marriage. Most sources believe that there are approximately 24 families in the United States; estimates of the total core membership range from about 1,700 to as high as 5,000 or so. Compared to other organized crime groups, such as the *yakuza*, or even to a large corporation, the Mafia is small, but its influence is much greater than its size would lead one to expect. Additionally, there are many thousands of other criminals who are not members of the Mafia, but who associate with them and work for them.

About half of the Mafia's membership is concentrated in the northeastern portions of the United States. This region is dominated by the so-called "Five Families" of New York City: Bonanno, Colombo, Gambino, Genovese, and Lucchese (these names may change slightly, depending on what point in time one looks at and the source that is consulted). The Mafia tends to be more organized, entrenched, and powerful in the Northeast; families in the West are not as formally organized or as strong. According to many sources, the authority of the New York families extends up and down the eastern seaboard and as far west as Chicago. The Chicago Mafia families control Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, and most of the rest of the Midwest and West.

A family is ruled by a *capo*, or "boss," sometimes more picturesquely known as a "godfather" or a "don." Much like an emperor or other despotic ruler, the boss is aloof from the everyday activities of those under him—he just gives a few orders, and lets his underlings take care of the rest of the work. Generally, a boss communicates only with his underboss and his *consiglieri*, leaving to them the chore of sending orders down to the captains and soldiers (see below). Thus, no crimes can be pinned on the boss. Many bosses, if they are caught and arrested, are arrested on charges such as conspiracy or tax evasion, rather than the more violent and direct crimes of lesser family members. However, despite his "non-involvement," the boss is supposed to receive a "cut" from every money-making activity his family is involved with. Anyone who fails to follow the boss's orders, or who tries to avoid paying the proper "cut," will be dealt with severely. If the transgression is bad enough, the transgressor will be murdered, and his body dumped in some out-of-the-way locale.

The boss's role as head of a family is to maintain order within the family and to maximize profits. Except for those rare instances where a boss is "overruled" by the Commission (see below), the boss's authority is absolute. What he says goes, and anyone who knows what's good for him will do as he's told.

Bosses sometimes fight for the nigh-legendary position of "*capo di tutti capi*" ("boss of all the bosses") for the whole country. Supposedly, no one has been able to claim the title since Salvatore Maranzano claimed it in 1931, and he was killed five months later. A boss who managed to eliminate all of his other rivals, consolidate his power, and avoid the wrath of the Commission would wield great power and control great wealth. But his life would be in constant danger from the soldiers of the other bosses he had murdered, traitors within his own organization who want to usurp his position, and other enemies. Thus, most bosses are content to remain just as boss of one family—it takes a man of rare ambition and ruthlessness to want to become the don of dons.

If the GM wants to establish a *capo di tutti capi* for his campaign, to give the PCs a powerful foe to confront again and again, he can easily do so. But keep in mind that this will remove most of the possibilities for gang wars, inter-gang intrigue, and similar storylines. Many players would rather try their hands at playing one gang off against another than make repeated frustrating attempts to bring the same man down; it will take a long and bloody conflict for the PCs to have any effect on a boss of bosses.



The boss's second in command is known as a *sottocapo*, or "underboss." The underboss is something like a vice president: he advises and assists the boss, gathers information for him, gives orders on his behalf, and fills in for him when necessary. In some cases, the underboss is the boss's protégé, the man who is being groomed to take over the boss's job when the boss dies or retires (but even if that is the boss's plan, other family members may make their own bids for power). In some families, there may be two or three underbosses.

Advising the boss, but outside the regular chain of command, is the *consiglieri*, or "counselor." The *consiglieri* gives the boss his counsel and advice on how to deal with family matters. The *consiglieri* may be an older family member who has retired from everyday mob activity, or it may be someone such as the family's chief attorney. There is only one "official" *consiglieri* per family, though there may also be several other people whom the boss asks for advice on various occasions.

The rank below the underboss is the *caporegima* ("captain," also known as a "lieutenant" in some families), *notto* be confused with a *capo*. There is more than one *caporegima* in a family; the exact number depends on how many members of the family there are. The *caporegima* supervises the day-to-day criminal operations and moneymaking activities of the family. He also acts as a "middleman" between the underboss and the rank-and-file members, taking profits to the upper echelons and bringing back orders. Unlike an underboss, a *caporegima* does not have the power to speak to his underlings with the boss's authority. A *caporegima's* position and authority have been compared to that of a plant manager or a district sales manager: he supervises the soldiers, and can give them some orders, but has to report to higher authority himself. Each *caporegima* commands a "crew" of soldiers and non-member associates (some of whom, if Italian, may be potential future members); a captain's crew is associated with him for life. A *caporegima* attains his rank by being an "earner"—someone who has made a lot of money for the family. Captains often own businesses or other ventures and get income from them in addition to the money earned by their soldiers.

*Caporegimas* command *soldatos*, or "soldiers," also known as "wiseguys," "button men," or "made men" (see below). The soldier is the lowest-level member of the family, and usually works as the "supervisor" of a particular criminal operation (the numbers bank on 52nd Street, a particular hijacking ring, and so forth). He may operate this criminal "business" on a commission basis, or he may own it outright and pay a portion of his profits to the family for the right to operate it. Soldiers often form partnerships or other "joint ventures" between themselves and/or with higher-ups to accomplish various criminal ends. Despite being the lowest rung on the Mafia ladder, soldiers nonetheless command a great deal of respect, even fear, from any non-member who knows who they are. People on the street know that they often have to get "permission" from the local wiseguy before they do something like try to expand their business (in the Package Deal for Mafiosi, this is represented as a Distinctive Feature—anybody who knows what to look for can spot a made man by the way people treat him).

There are two informal positions below that of *soldato* which are made up of non-members. The first is "associates." These are the workers who do the tasks needed to keep the Mafia working—they run numbers, sell drugs, drive trucks, work in the legitimate businesses used as "fronts,"

and so forth. They are not protected from the law by the family, as a member would be. However, associates need not be Italian. Second, there are "protectors:" corrupt lawyers, policemen, accountants, public officials, and others who use their skills, learning, power, or influence on the Mafia's behalf, usually because they are on the take.

## BECOMING A "MADE MAN"

In order to become a "made man," and thus begin one's climb up into the ranks of the *Cosa Nostra*, one must be a male of Italian ancestry (women have no formal place in the Mafia except as wives, mistresses, and prostitutes). Long before being considered as a "candidate" for soldier, a person under consideration will have participated in various crimes, such as burglary. The candidate will then be asked to work with family members on some crimes, perhaps including a murder (this murder is sometimes known as "making your bones"). The next step is to circulate the candidate's name around the family, and sometimes around other families or corrupt law enforcement officers, to see what people know or think about the candidate.

To be made, one needs a "sponsor." If the new member turns out "sour" (no good, worthless, or a traitor), the sponsor may also pay the penalty, so sponsorship is a serious relationship. The candidate is then initiated (sometimes a small ceremony is involved). He vows to keep the family as the foremost thing in his life, and swears that he will die rather than reveal its secrets. The new member is now considered "made," and is referred to in conversations between family members as "a friend of ours" (rather than "a friend of mine"). As stated above, the number of made men in the United States is estimated to be between 1,700 and 5,000.

## INTERFAMILY RELATIONS; THE COMMISSION

When two families meet to discuss a deal or settle a dispute, only members of the same rank deal with one another. The underboss of the Scatucci family deals with the underboss of the Marcelli family, not with Marcelli captains or soldiers.

Just because a Mafioso is a member of a particular family does not mean that he can deal only with members of that family—generally, a Mafioso is free to make deals and do business with whomever he pleases. However, when there is a dispute or a conflict, family members are expected to side with the family, regardless of who they think is in the right. This includes representing family members at *arguimendo*, or "arbitration," when families meet to settle differences peacefully.

Perhaps the most important aspect of Mafia inter-family dealings is the so-called Commission, established in 1931 by "Lucky" Luciano. Traditionally, the Commission has been made up of the bosses of the Five Families of New York City, plus the bosses of some of the more important families from around the country (such as the bosses of the Buffalo, Detroit, Chicago, and Philadelphia families). The Commission's function is to regulate disputes over territory, rules, or policies which affect all of the families, and to help coordinate inter-family enterprises and deals. It also oversees initiation of new members in some cases. However, the Commission generally concerns itself only with things which affect the overall conduct and strength of the LCN, such as destructive inter-family wars; local matters and intra-family



disputes are usually left to the various families. When the Commission does interfere with "local" affairs, it usually restricts itself to offering "advice" on how best to settle matters. The only Mafia family which is said to be totally independent of the Commission is the New Orleans family; however, the Chicago mobs are often thought to be only partially under the Commission's authority.

The Commission was said to have established an enforcement arm known as Murder, Inc. in the 1930s. The hitmen of Murder, Inc. were to kill only for business reasons; they did not murder politicians, district attorneys, reporters, or persons with whom they had personal vendettas. When gangster Dutch Schultz ignored this policy by ordering the murder of New York prosecutor Thomas Dewey, Murder, Inc.'s commanders had Schultz hit instead. The original Murder, Inc. is supposed to have withered away in the 1940s, as members and leaders were arrested. However, the GM could certainly establish his own Murder, Inc. for use in his campaign. A generic hitman character writeup can be used again and again as desired. A sample hitman character, Dominic Tarontelli, a member of the "Killing Syndicate" hit squad, is provided for the GM at the end of this section of the Sourcebook.

Some authorities say that the Commission is not nearly as powerful today as it once was, but each *Dark Champions* gamemaster should determine for himself how powerful he wants the Commission to be in his campaign. If the campaign is one which involves a lot of travel (for example, if the PCs are members of a special FBI anti-crime strike force), then they might run into the Commission's handiwork fairly frequently; the Commission and its "agents" would need to be strong enough to give the PCs a challenge. However, if the campaign is generally limited to one city, the PCs will probably only encounter the Commission if a particular scenario calls for its involvement, or because a Mafia boss in their city is a Commission member. In this case, the Commission be as powerful as the GM wants, since it will act as more of a "plot device" than as an actual foe to be fought.

## MAFIOSO BEHAVIOR: THE "CODE OF CONDUCT"

Most Mafiosi are subject to a stringent code of conduct, though it does not involve fictional customs such as the "kiss of death" or only assassinating someone by shooting him from the front. (However, the GM may prefer to retain such customs as genre "bits;" more information on fictional Mafia customs can be found in some of the books listed in the Bibliography.) In the Mafioso Package Deal, the code is represented by the Psychological Limitation "Mafia Code Of Conduct."

There are two components to the Mafia code. The first is omerta, translated either as "silence" or "manliness." Omerta prescribes that members remain absolutely silent when questioned by the police, and that they do not go to the police or become informers. A person who squeals or informs has violated omerta, and must be punished (often with death). However, omerta does not always apply to a family's higher-ups, who may inform the police about another family or "feed" the police lower-level members of their own organization if necessary.

The second part of the Mafia code is *rispetto*, or "respect." Respect means that lower-echelon Mafiosi are absolutely loyal to their commanders and their boss. Respect is shown

not only by fawning obedience and speaking only when spoken to, but by turning over a portion of the profits you make to your boss. Anyone who fails to pay the proper respect, particularly with regard to giving the boss his "cut," risks punishment, up to and including being murdered. Some bosses are more interested in the little rituals of respect, such as having the door held open for them by their underlings, than are others—the GM should decide what each capo in his campaign demands of his men.

## MAFIA ACTIVITIES

The Mafia, like any organized crime group, is involved in many different illegal activities. These activities may vary from city to city and family to family, but there are a number of "core" criminal activities for which the Mafia is known. A brief description of some of them is given below.

### DRUG SMUGGLING

There is a romantic fiction that "the Mafia is not involved in drug dealing." This is not true at all; the Mafia is heavily involved with drug crime (of course, if the GM prefers, he can make this "no drugs" myth the truth in his campaign, just to differentiate the Mafia from most of the other organized crime groups described in this Sourcebook; also, some individual bosses may forbid drug trafficking while others allow it). The extent of drug activities differs from family to family.

LCN drug activities began in the 1960s and '70s with heroin smuggling, and the Mafia has since moved into cocaine smuggling as well. The Mafia tends to avoid small-time drug sales; they import large amounts of drugs which they sell to "middlemen" who in turn distribute the drugs to drug dealers on the street. The Mafia's chief competitors in the heroin industry are Chinese organized crime and the Mexican Mafia (see below), but it continues to be profitable, so the Mafia continues to be involved.

### GAMBLING

Illegal gambling is thought to be the Mafia's biggest money-making enterprise. Estimates of the annual intake nationwide range from \$7 billion to as much as \$50 billion. The Mafia is involved in several types of gambling.

First, the Mafia has control of legitimate gambling casinos in Las Vegas and Atlantic City, but it also runs its own illegal casinos, high-stakes poker games, illegal dice games, and the like.

Second, the Mafia is involved in illegal sports betting, otherwise known as "bookmaking." This includes illegal betting on horse races, and professional sporting events. The Mafia does not control bookmaking; there are many independent bookies. A bookmaker or "bookie" is essentially a broker for bets who does not do any betting himself. Most betting is done by phone; a customer calls the bookie to place his bet, thereby keeping the operation from attracting undue attention (bookies have a lot of scams to keep the police from being able to find them by tracing their phone lines). Clerks are hired to answer the phones, record bets, and calculate the bookie's current financial standing. A "runner" or "sheetwriter" will call the clerk to find out the results, and then go around to pay winners and collect from losers. A runner is paid a percentage of the bets he deals with.

A bookie's profit is known as "vigorish" or "juice." He earns it partly because he does not have to pay taxes (as legal horse betting operations do), and partly from the difference between what he earns from losers but must pay winners (the formulas for calculating "vig" vary from sport to sport and are too complicated to go into further). If too many bettors are betting on the same team or horse, a bookie will "lay off" some of the bets (by making opposing bets at the track or with bookies in other parts of the country) to balance out the betting. Ideally, the vigorish is to 10% of all money bet.

The biggest money is in illegal sports wagering. Sports betting is based on the "line," legally calculated by Las Vegas experts. Essentially, the line is a predetermined number of points added to or subtracted from a team's predicted score. It is established to even out the betting, since a bookie makes more money the more evenly matched his pool of bets is. An individual bookie can adjust the Las Vegas line if necessary (if, for example, home team favoritism will automatically unbalance his betting pool). Once betting is opened, the line cannot be changed, but a game can be "scratched" (no more betting allowed) or "circled" (limits amount of any one bet).

The third form of gambling the Mafia is involved with is "numbers," sometimes also known as "policy." Though the Mafia is not the only group involved in numbers running, it is one of the Mafia's most popular forms of illegal gambling. In this simple game, players bet an amount of money that a particular number, from 1-3 digits and from 000-999, will be that day's "number" (for example, the number "876" could be bet, and the winner would collect if that number came up; or the number "6" could be bet, and any number that has a 6 in it somewhere would pay off). A player can bet as many numbers as he wishes, and he can "box" his numbers (bet all possible combinations of three digits; also known as a "combination"). The amount bet can be very small (as little as a dime or a quarter), but there is usually some upper limit (for example, \$100) on how much a numbers player can bet on any one number. The payoff depends on the number of digits bet, and varies from six-to-one to six hundred-to-one.

The method of picking the daily number varies from city to city. They include taking the last three digits of: the total amount bet that day at a designated racetrack (the track's "handle"); the number of stocks which advance, decline, or are traded on the New York Stock Exchange; and so forth. Any three-digit number which changes each day and can be independently checked by the public will do.

Numbers rackets are well-organized. The bets are taken by small operators, known as "writers," "runners," or "sellers," and written on slips of paper which can be quickly destroyed in the event of a police (or vigilante) raid. Most writers use either flash paper (which can be burned instantly) or rice paper (which is easily swallowed). A writer is usually someone with easy access to the public (such as bartenders, newsstand operators, or waitresses). The bets are sent by phone or by a "pickup man" to a "collector." The pickup man, if there is one, usually comes by on a regular schedule. The collector in turn forwards the bets to a central locale, known as a "bank," "countinghouse," or "clearinghouse." The bank is run by a financier. It keeps track of the bets, and lays off heavily played numbers to avoid a large loss. The bank settles up with the writers weekly, ordering them to pay or be paid by the collector. The writer retains a percentage of the business he does as his earnings. Even desperate junkies know not to rob numbers runners and collectors, for the mob's "justice" for anyone who does is swift and deadly.

## OTHER VICE CRIMES

Besides drugs and gambling, the Mafia caters to other vices. The Mafia is involved in prostitution, and also produces pornography, though its activity in these fields has diminished considerably since the 1930s. Some Mafiosi distill and sell illegal liquor, and sell bootleg cigarettes. However, these fields are risky and relatively low-profit, so many organized crime members tend to avoid them.

## LOANSHARKING

The Mafia is willing to make loans at outrageous interest rates (sometimes as high as 150 percent per week). The interest rate is based on the relationship between the parties, the amount to be borrowed, and the loan shark's policies. There are two types of loans, the "knockdown" and the "vig." A knockdown involves a set repayment schedule (for example, a \$500 loan might be repaid at \$50 for thirteen weeks). The vig is the most common arrangement; it is usually a "6 for 5" loan, 20% interest per week. A default of even a few minutes can cause an increase in the interest rate. Some loansharks are specialists—they make loans only to particular sorts of persons (only legitimate businessmen; only for criminal activities such as gambling; and so forth).

Once the Mafia gets someone in its clutches with this sort of spiraling debt, they can often force them to carry drugs or perform other crimes for them. People who fail to pay, or who are late in paying, are often the victims of enforcers, who may brutally injure or kill the offending borrower. But the loanshark is more interested in being paid back, keeping control of the borrower, and insuring repeat business. He is likely to avoid violence altogether, or to use only a little violence (for example, he will have a delinquent customer's leg broken rather than kill the customer).

## CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

The Mafia has created much of its reputation by committing violent crimes. The most common is forced extortion, such as "protection rackets," where people (or, in some cases, their property) are threatened with injury (or damage) if they do not make payments on a regular schedule. Kidnapping and robbery are also part of the Mafia's repertoire.

The most spectacular of the Mafia's violent crimes is murder for hire. However, at least in the "real world," the term "for hire" is misleading, since the Mafia supposedly will not kill anyone for money—killings are for business purposes, and are restricted to Mafia members. But this is one case where realism should probably bow to the concept of playability. A branch of the Mafia, such as the Killing Syndicate (described at the end of this section), dedicated to murdering people for money is enough of a genre "bit" to justify inclusion in most *Dark Champions* campaigns.

Mafia executions are usually arranged in such a way that the person who originated the order is protected from any liability by a network of Mafiosi. The order will be relayed through a number of men. The killer or killers are given the victim's identity, habits, description, and whatever other information they need to complete the job. After the job, whether they succeed or fail the hitmen vanish into the woodwork, and tell the person who gave them the order what occurred.



## CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY

The Mafia also commits many different types of property crimes. These include hijacking, burglary, robbery, extortion, embezzlement, auto theft, arson, bombing, infiltration and corruption of legitimate business, forgery, kickbacks, and money laundering. Commonly stolen or hijacked items include electronics and appliances, jewelry, cigarettes, and securities (stocks and bonds). These items are easily disposed of and are usually indistinguishable from similar items.

The Mafia also provides financing, equipment, and expert advice to criminals who want to commit large-scale robberies and thefts. They are paid either up-front, or with a percentage of the take. After a theft, the Mafia helps convert or dispose of the stolen goods, often acting as a fence. The percentage of value that the seller gets for his "hot" merchandise depends on his status and relationship with the fence (a professional thief will get paid more than a junkie, for example). Many Mafia fences are "hoods," older, retired Mafia members. For items such as stolen stocks and bonds, the Mafia also employs "papermen," crooked financiers who know enough about the world of high finance to dispose of or launder the stolen securities (for example, by converting them through foreign banks, or using them as collateral for loans which are never paid back).

Another common property crime is the "scam," a scheme to milk a business for as much money as it can quickly obtain. A Mafioso will either buy a legitimate company or set up a dummy company which looks legitimate. Excessively large orders for merchandise are placed, and the merchandise is then stolen or fenced. The Mafioso disappears, leaving the business bankrupt. Scams are easy to run when the Mafia can gain control of a legitimate businessman because of gambling or loansharking debts, blackmail, or drug addiction. By infiltrating and taking over a legitimate business, the Mafia can keep it running and gain a way to "launder" illegal profits from other crimes. This sort of infiltration of the business world is the source of much of the Mafia's wealth and power.

## LABOR RACKETEERING

The Mafia has a long history of involvement in organized labor. Infiltration and control of labor unions is a major Mafia activity; it allows the Mafia to establish a sort of "monopoly" in a particular industry by controlling its labor supply (thus providing the Mafia with opportunities to extort money from that industry). The Mafia can also force non-union businesses to pay "bribes" to keep from being unionized. Control of unions allows the LCN to skim money from union funds; control of union workers facilitates other mob activities, such as hijacking, gambling, and loansharking. The Mafia is thought to be especially involved in trucking, longshoreman's, and hotel and restaurant workers' unions. The Mafia can be absolutely ruthless when it comes to protecting its interests in labor organizations.

Mafia control of organized labor offers a way for GMs to harass wealthy PCs who own or control a corporation. Labor agitation at a player character's factory or business could lead the heroes to investigate, which in turn reveals the organized crime connection to the current troubles and brings the PCs into battle against the mob.

## REGIONAL VARIATIONS

Depending on what area of the country your campaign is set in, the Mafia in question may have a particular "specialty." For example, labor racketeering is most common in the Northeast, forgery and arson in the South and West, and so forth. The GM can decide if one or more families in his campaign is well-known for a particular type of crime.

## MAFIA USE OF SUPERHUMANS

If your *Dark Champions* campaign is a "superheroic" campaign, you will have to address the question of each organized crime group's use of superpowered help. Unlike the yakuza (see below), the Mafia is more-or-less a "low-tech" organization. They tend not to use high technology or superpowered help in committing their crimes. Instead, the Mafia sticks to fairly traditional crimes which do not require too much equipment. For example, they won't hijack a truck by lifting it off the ground with a Graviton Negation Beam, they will simply stop the truck and take it from the driver at gunpoint.

However, if the superpowered crimefighters in your campaign begin to give the Mafia too much trouble, it is conceivable that a family might hire a supervillain or three to get rid of the heroes. The Mafia is nothing if not adaptable. But the GM should be careful not to destroy the Mafia's unique "charm" for gaming purposes—if the LCN becomes just another villainous agency, with high-tech gadgets and agents in colorful uniforms, then you might as well not use them at all. If possible, have the Mafia solve its problems with the PCs in more "old-fashioned" ways, such as discovering one character's secret identity and threatening his loved ones if the heroes don't "lay off." How will the character prevent his secret identity from being broadcast to the entire city? Well, that's a common problem in the comics, so let him figure it out for himself...

## ROLEPLAYING THE MAFIA

There are two ways to roleplay the Mafia in a *Dark Champions* campaign. The first is to follow the '30s gangster movies stereotype: the pinstripe suits, the Tommy guns, the gangster slang, the moll with a heart of gold. The GM who wants to do this needs to do learn about the proper slang for use in roleplaying dialogue and the backgrounds and lifestyles of the gangsters of that period. However, the most important thing for the GM to do is explain why modern gangsters are acting this way—after all, that stuff went out of fashion sixty years ago. While it is possible that some gangster will have a fixation on Thirties mobsters, it is unlikely that most gangsters will have this obsession.

It is recommended that you roleplay Mafiosi in the second way: as modern criminals, with degrees of sophistication depending on their exact roles in the Mafia. Some Mafiosi, such as dons, will tend to be fairly suave and calm, at least on the outside and until angered. Lower-echelon family members will tend to be cruder and more violent. Use movies like *The Godfather* and *Goodfellas* as guides—even though they are far from being completely realistic, the players will probably be familiar with them, and will expect Mafia characters to act like that. The GM should determine in advance what level of realism he wants to use with regards to classic Mafia "bits," such as the "kiss of death." Even though these bits are often not used in the real world, they can be fun in a *Champions* campaign.

# THE MAFIA SOURCEBOOK

## REAL-LIFE MAFIA FAMILIES

In the real world, there are a large number of Mafia families in the United States; most major cities, particularly in the Northeast, have strong Mafia presences. The best-known of these families are the Five Families of New York City: the Bonanno, Colombo, Gambino, Genovese, and Lucchese families. It is families like these that a *Dark Champions* GM is most likely to want to use in his campaign. However, the data available on these families often changes from day to day, as power shifts, new things are discovered, and old information becomes outdated. If a GM wants to use these groups, he should go out and do what research he needs to do, and fill in any gaps himself in ways which most suit his campaign. Consult the Bibliography for some good places to start. For GMs who would rather not use real-life families, this Sourcebook will provide five fictional Mafia families for campaign use.

## MAFIOSO PACKAGE DEAL

The following Package Deal can be used to represent Mafia characters. This Package Deal represents the average "soldier;" for higher-echelon members of the LCN, the "Made Man" Perk needs to be increased, and the Wealth should probably be increased as well.

**Typical Goals And Motivations:** Members of the Mafia, like members of other organized crime groups, are generally motivated by two things: profit and power. These desires can usually be reflected in the character's Psychological Limitations. Some Mafiosi also seem to be motivated by a love of danger and excitement, and tend to take great risks for high stakes. Still others may be ruthless, stone-cold killers.



**Typical Abilities:** Many Mafiosi in Champions games will be able combatants, skilled with gun, knife, and fist. Older LCN members may have fought in one or more wars, and bring the lessons of that experience to their work. Other wiseguys are less flamboyant, preferring to remain unnoticed as they quietly earn their illicit living; they may be skilled at managing various illegal enterprises or know a lot about financial schemes and money laundering. Mafia leaders will possess appropriate leadership skills and/or high PRE to aid them in that role.

**Suggested Disadvantages:** Mafiosi may be Hunted or Watched by the player characters, the police, or even other members of the Mafia (if they are suspected of being traitors). Psychological Limitations such as "Greedy," "Casual Killer," "Ambitious And Power-Hungry," "Insists That Mafia Traditions Be Followed," or "Desperately Wants The Community To Think Of Him As An Ordinary Businessman" would all be appropriate. Two members of the same family may be Rivals for the same job or woman. Especially vicious or well-known mobsters will probably have Reputations.

**Roleplaying Tips:** see "Roleplaying The Mafia," above.

Skills and Talents	Cost
Streetwise (PRE+2) .....	7
CK: [campaign city], 13- .....	4
KS: Mafiosi of [campaign city] 14- .....	5
Any one Professional Skill, 11- .....	2
WF: Small Arms .....	2
Language: Italian (fluent) .....	2
Perk: Fringe Benefit: "Made man" .....	2
Perk: Wealth .....	2
Perk: any three Contacts, 11- .....	6
Choose two from the following list: .....	6
Bribery, +1 with three related attacks, Forgery, Gambling, High Society, Interrogation, Lockpicking	
<b>Disadvantages</b>	
Package Bonus .....	-3
Mafia Code Of Conduct (common, strong).....	-15
Distinctive Features: Made Man (large group .....	-15
can identify character, major reaction)	
<b>Package Cost</b>	<b>1</b>

### DON CARLO "CHARLIE SNAKE-EYES" SCATUCCI

10-STR	12-DEX	12-CON	12-BODY	15-INT
13-EGO	20-PRE	12-COM	3-PD	2-ED
2-SPD	6-REC	30-END	25-STUN	

**Powers and Skills:** Mafiosi Package Deal (Gambling, High Society, 10 points of Wealth, Contacts with bribed officials).

**75+ Disadvantages:** Package Disadvantages; Hatred of Torcone Family; Age 65; DNPC (beautiful daughter, normal, 11-); Reputation (Mafia don) 11-.

**Notes:** Charlie Snake-Eyes is don of the Scatucci Mafia family. He initially got involved in the family's gambling operations, and worked his way up from there. A stereotypical capo, he is capable of both great affection and great cruelty. He is an honorable man who always keeps his word; but he is also a powerful man with many connections who is very dangerous to cross.



## JAKOB PONZI

8-STR 12-DEX 12-CON 10-BODY 18-INT  
 12-EGO 13-PRE 8-COM 3-PD 2-ED  
 2-SPD 5-REC 24-END 20-STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Mafiosi Package Deal (Bribery, High Society, 5 points of Wealth, financial Contacts); Bureaucratics 12-; Forgery 11-; Scholar (High Finance 15-, Business Scams 15-, Business Law 13-); PS: Accounting 15-; Fringe Benefit: License to practice Accounting; Cramming; Eidetic Memory; Lightning Calculator; 2d6 Luck

**75+ Disadvantages:** Package Disadvantages; Abject Coward

**Notes:** Jakob Ponzi is a mathematical genius who is considered to be the country's most skillful Mafia financial wizard. He knows just about all there is to know about "voodoo accounting;" he has mental records of many Mafia business crimes. He is an utter coward, totally unwilling to fight or place himself in danger. Since he is Jewish, he cannot be an actual Made Man, but he has been give that Fringe Benefit anyway to show that he commands great respect in Mafia circles.

## DOMINIC "DOM" TARONTELLI

13-STR 15-DEX 17-CON 12-BODY 10-INT  
 11-EGO 15-PRE 10-COM 7-PD 4-ED  
 3-SPD 7-REC 34-END 30-STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Mafiosi Package Deal (Gambling; +1 with .44 Magnum, Uzi, and Winchester shotgun; 3 points of Wealth; Contacts with crooked cops); Combat Driving 12-; Interrogation 12-; Lockpicking 12-; Martial Arts (Dirty Infighting); Shadowing 11-; Stealth 12-; Weaponsmith 11-; +1 with three weapons listed above; +1 Hand-To-Hand; Fast Draw 12-; Resistance (3 points); +1" Running

**75+ Disadvantages:** Package Disadvantages; Casual Killer; Hunted by one victim's brother; Reputation (ruthless killer) 11-; Villain Bonus

**Notes:** Dominic "Dom" Tarontelli is a hitman who works for the Killing Syndicate, the Commission's "murder for hire" organization. He is an experienced and fierce fighter who favors the three weapons listed above.

## MAFIA FAMILIES

There are probably some GMs out there who would be uncomfortable trying to use real-life Mafia families, such as the Bonanno or Gambino families, in a roleplaying campaign. Still other GMs would rather not have to do the sort of research necessary to use a real-life LCN family. This section of the Sourcebook solves both dilemmas by providing five Mafia families for use in any *Dark Champions* or regular Champions campaign.

These families are described in only rough detail. This was done on purpose, to allow each GM to tailor the families to fit his campaign and his needs. If it is necessary to change something in the description that is provided, go right ahead.

## THE MARCELLI FAMILY

**History:** The Marcelli family began with Juliano "Mac" Marcelli in the early 1930s. Marcelli drove out his own boss, Salvatore "Sal Adonis" Beroni, and assumed control of Beroni's territory and operations. In 1948, after more than a decade of profitable activity, Marcelli clashed with the Commission, which had ordered him to cut back the family's prostitution rings. In the space of a week, the hired killers of Murder, Inc. hit Marcelli and all of his top men; the Commission then installed its own "puppet" leaders. By 1955, enough opposition to the new leaders had arisen that Rudolph "Tombstone" Marcelli, Juliano's son, was able to wrest control of the family away from the Commission. Ever since, relations between the Marcellis and the rest of the Commission have been somewhat strained, but the Marcellis have learned not to oppose the Commission too openly.

In 1965, the Marcelli and Veronese families went to war because of conflicts over territory. The war lasted about 11 months, and then a "peace treaty" favoring the Marcellis was negotiated. Rudolph died in 1973. The family floundered without a definite leader until 1978, when Guiseppe "Gat Man" Marcelli, whose nickname comes from his love of guns and extensive gun collection, declared himself capo. He has run the family with an iron hand ever since. Rumors say that Guiseppe, who is possessed of immense family pride, yearns to exact revenge upon the rest of the Commission for their humiliation and murder of his ancestor Juliano. Only time will tell whether he can gather the power and support to make this dream, if indeed it is his dream, a reality.

**Current Leadership:** The Marcelli family is led by Guiseppe "Gat Man" Marcelli. His underboss is Mario "The Prince" Marcelli, and his consiglieri is his predecessor as capo, his uncle Giovanni "The King" Marcelli. As the nicknames indicate, Mario is widely regarded as the heir to the Marcelli throne. The family's captains include Alberdo "Chips" Marcelli (owner of a snack food distribution business), Pietro "Maestro" Carelli, Guido "Ham" Vachelle, Arturo "Ladder Man" Benetti (a former burglar), and Joseph "Jonny Blue" Galbone. Other prominent Marcelli men are Anastasio "The Sword" Rocca (a well-known hitman), Paolo "Pally" Sallucio, James "DH" Arrese, Sonny "Sunshine" Lambesti, and Anthony "Kirk" Salerri. Total family membership is about 300 men.

**Activities:** The Marcelli family is not thought to "specialize" in any particular area. The varied goals of their leaders and their checkered history have driven them to take part in a fairly broad range of criminal activities. However, their activities are somewhat more international in scope than some other families'; there is evidence that they have expanded into some major Canadian cities and that they have ties to the Yung Sat tong there, which provides them heroin at good rates.

**Family Politics And Relations:** The upper levels of the Marcelli family work well together, and frequently have common goals and beliefs. The lower ranks are not quite as cohesive, but manage to function well.

## THE MORELLI FAMILY

**History:** The Morelli family started as a “confederation” of independent bootleggers in the 1920s. After a lot of bickering and fighting, Antonio “Crash” Morelli overpowered his “allies” and took control. Morelli, who had his fingers in gambling and prostitution as well as liquor, had a solid foundation on which to build a crime family. After World War II, Antonio was one of the first to see the potential of Las Vegas as a moneymaking enterprise, so he set up a casino there. To this day, the Morellis have an interest (well-hidden, of course) in Antonio’s brainchild, The Blue Beacon Club, one of the biggest of the Las Vegas casinos.

Because the family had grown so fat with gambling money; it was a prime target for the Kefauver committee, and, a decade later, for Robert Kennedy’s attentions. By the mid-60’s, the Morellis were but a shadow of what they had been, though they were still powerful. In the 1970s, under the leadership of Alphonse “The Brain” Malerno, the Morellis regained power and became involved in heroin dealing. Malerno was arrested in 1980 when he fell victim to a DEA wiretapping operation. The most powerful men in the family began to fight over the position of capo, and eventually one, Robert “Bobby Bucks” Morelli, won the title. He has held it since then, leading the family into more and more profitable activities. The FBI and other law enforcement agencies regard the Morellis as one of the most powerful of the modern Mafia families.

**Current Leadership:** The Morelli family’s boss is Robert “Bobby Bucks” Morelli. As his nickname indicates, Morelli is well known for his wealth, which he jealously guards. His underboss is Jimmy “Youngblood” Morelli (the son of the recently deceased caporegima, Carmine Morelli). The family’s consiglieri is Bobby’s attorney, John Giatta. Richard “Lucky Ricky” Morelli (who loves to gamble), Mickey “Numbers” Tosconi, Albert “Javelin” Manneri, John “Fireball” Sanelo, Mario “Milkman” Santonelli, and Jack “Jackie Fingers” Poroni are some of the Morelli captains. The family numbers about 260 made men.

**Activities:** The Morellis are heavily involved in illegal gambling. They control many numbers operations and illicit casinos. However, the splits among the members have kept these activities from being as profitable as they might—anyone who runs such an operation feels obliged to pay off not only Robert Morelli, but all of the faction leaders as well, as insurance against possible difficult times to come.

**Family Politics And Relations:** Bobby Bucks’ takeover in the 1981-82 war has had its lingering effects. Though he eliminated most of his powerful enemies, those who were loyal to them are still part of the family. This has left him an organization riddled with dissension, backbiting, and hatred. Mickey Tosconi, Albert Manneri, and Mario Santonelli all command powerful factions within the family, and there are a number of smaller factions and sub-factions as well. It may only be a matter of time before the family explodes in war once again. Each of the three main faction leaders is interested in becoming boss, so they cautiously jockey for position, each trying to gain power at the expense of the others, with as little risk as possible to himself.

## THE SCATUCCI FAMILY

**History:** The Scatucci family first rose to prominence during World War II. Before then, they were a relatively small, weak family, trying to become bigger and more powerful. The boss at that time, Charles “Pretzels” Scatucci, got his chance to gain the influence he wanted because of his infiltration of dockworkers’ unions. The United States government called on him and other Mafiosi to keep United States ports running smoothly during the war. Charles, who even though he was a criminal still considered himself a patriot, gladly did his part—his men ruthlessly suppressed any labor agitation that threatened shipping. By war’s end, so many powerful men owed Charles Scatucci so many favors that his fortune was made. His successor, Donnie “Chopper” Colleti, strengthened Scatucci ties to corrupt politicians and labor figures.

When Colleti died in 1960, Carlo “Charlie Snake-Eyes” Scatucci took over. Carlo was a young man, only 33, but he was so well-respected within the family that there was little trouble with his “elevation.” His quick-witted defusing of the brief war with the Torccones in the late 1960s strengthened his reputation and cemented his position. Don Carlo still leads the Scatucci family today. The latest crisis to plague his family is a second Scatucci-Torccone War. Not even the Commission has been able to stop the War. If the Scatuccis win the War, Don Carlo will look more impressive and more powerful than ever before, a possible candidate for capo di tutti capi. If they lose, the old boss is probably a dead man.

**Current Leadership:** The Scatuccis are led by Carlo “Charlie Snake-Eyes” Scatucci, who got his start running illegal gambling parlors for the family. His underboss is Pico “Leonardo” Scarlotti; his counselor is Stefano “Whitey” Scatucci, a skilled lawyer who often gets Scatucci men “off the hook” when they are arrested and tried. The Scatucci captains include Joseph “Thin Man” Adrissi, Joseph “Big Joey” Bonavolente, Ricardo “The Penguin” Rosconi, and Anthony “Drummer Boy” Lambesti. Other prominent Scatucci family members include Alfredo “Shades” Giuliani (a skilled smuggler and hijacker) and James “Jimbo” Portonni (who is said to rule the dockworkers’ unions in the city with an iron fist). Before the War, the Scatuccis numbered 320 or so, but their current numbers have reportedly dropped to around 280.

**Activities:** The Scatuccis have been at “war” with the Torccone family for more than a year, though it is not necessarily a high-intensity conflict at this time (see the “Gang War” scenario later on in the Sourcebook).

The Scatuccis are said to be the chief players in the infiltration and control of the city’s labor unions. In addition to “Jimbo” Portonni’s domination of the city’s dockworkers, the Scatuccis are said to be the main family behind Mafia control of the waste disposal, janitorial, and deliverymen’s unions. One of the underlying causes of the War is the Scatuccis’ competition with the Torccones for control of the city’s construction unions.

**Family Politics And Relations:** Before the War, the Scatuccis were neither particularly tightly-knit nor particularly divided. However, the War has created something of a feeling of camaraderie among the surviving family members. Though there is occasional infighting regarding how the War should be conducted, the Scatuccis have joined firmly together, all for one and one for all, to the death.



## THE TORCCONE FAMILY

**History:** Aldo "Al The Rhino" Torccone, like so many of the forefathers of today's major Mafia figures, got his start in organized crime in the 1920s by bootlegging liquor. Aldo was known for his cruelty and ruthlessness in expanding his operations and grabbing new territory. He first came to national attention in 1930, when he and his men staged the infamous "Slaughterhouse Run," in which they managed to trap most of their enemies from several other gangs in a slaughterhouse, and then proceeded to massacre them with machine gun fire. In 1951, Aldo was killed in a car accident. He was replaced by his underboss, Thomas "Jacques" Antonelli. Antonelli was an ambitious man who in 1957 declared himself capo di tutti capi. This did not sit well with the other families and the Commission; after a short but bloody war, Thomas was killed, and the Torccone family returned to business as usual.

The new boss was Larry "Undertow" Torccone. Undertow continued to increase the family's wealth and power until 1968, when he initiated a war against the Scatuccis, who he thought had been the Torccones' chief antagonists in the removal of Thomas Torccone. This war only lasted about a year, and ended in a "draw," but it sowed the seeds of hatred between the two families which have blossomed anew with the latest Scatucci-Torccone War.

After Undertow's death of cancer in 1975, the Torccones went through a brief chaotic period. In 1978, Luigi "Hacksaw" Torccone took over as boss of the family. Don Luigi has run the family since then, and is carefully and ably leading them during the current war with the Scatucci family.

**Current Leadership:** The Torccone clan is led by Don Luigi "Hacksaw" Torccone. He is assisted by his underboss, Vito "Watchmaker" Torccone, and his half-brother and consiglieri, Robert "Bobby Red" Finelli. The family's captains include Umberto "Uzi" DePastori (who is thought to be slightly deranged), James "Torchie" Torccone, Ignazio "Iggy" Scafoddi, Frank "Cooler" Tarantelli, and Aldo "Aldo The Fish" Cardinale (who is notorious for his control of the city's fish market). Since the beginning of the Scatucci-Torccone War, a large number of hitmen, such as Vincent "Two-Spot" Pigellio (who gets his nickname from his habit of shooting his victims twice) and Salvatore "Happy Sal" Lanzanore, have become associated with the Torccones. Torccone ranks include about 240 men, though before the War that number was considerably higher.

**Activities:** The Torccone family is at war with the Scatucci family; see the Scatucci history, above, and the "Scatucci-Torccone War" scenario, below, for details.

The Torccones have never "specialized" in any particular type of crime; they have spread themselves out well, and command a power base which is both deep and broad. Their profits mainly come from gambling, drug sales, kickbacks, and extortion. The Torccone drug networks are connected with several black drug dealers and street gangs who distribute the family's heroin. The family has also long competed with the Scatuccis for control of various lucrative construction unions.

**Family Politics And Relations:** Torccone family relations are much like those of the Scatuccis—the War has turned the family into a cohesive, high-morale organization. The family is determined to bring the War to a swift end, with itself the victor and the Scatuccis crushed in the street like the dogs they are. Don Luigi takes an active hand in running things.

## THE VERONTESE FAMILY

**History:** The Verontese family was originally known as the Polloni family, after its founder, Albert "The Harpist" Polloni. Albert got his nickname from the fact that he was the subject of frequent hit attempts—people said he'd started taking harp lessons so that he'd be ready when he got to heaven.

Polloni deaths during World War II weakened the family greatly. Even worse, the new capo, John "Dragon Man" Polloni, had an aggressive, impulsive streak which eventually angered the Commission and attracted government attention. In 1952, hitmen from Murder, Inc. gunned him down in the street outside his home.

The hit touched off an internal war among the Polloni men. After several months of bloody infighting, Frederick "Stinger" Verontese managed to accumulate enough power to win the allegiance of the rest of the family and declare himself boss. He did this in part by eliminating any family member with loyalty to the Pollonis. He killed most of them in one well-planned night which became known as "the Night of the Whispering Wind." Soon, Verontese and his relatives were in total control, and the family has been known as the Verontese family up until the present day. The family prospered through the '60s and '70s, surviving a war with the Marcellis and a massive FBI conspiracy investigation. In 1982, Michael "Black Mike" Verontese took over as boss.

**Current Leadership:** The Verontese family's don is Michael "Black Mike" Verontese, and his underboss and consiglieri are Thomas "Slugger" Carrera and Frank "The Magician" Madonari (so called because of his ability to juggle the family's finances). The Verontese captains include Charles "Spats" Gambini, William "Willy the Juggler" Scapetta (a feared hitman, known for his sadism and viciousness), George "Pizza Boy" Dellarubia, Paul "Grins" Baldesti, Frederick "Freddie" Genovisa, and Alberto "Captain Al" Gerante (a skilled smuggler).

**Activities:** The Verontese family is more heavily involved in the drug trade than any other family—they are even rumored to have some labs set up to develop and produce designer drugs. They mainly deal in heroin, but have been slowly moving into cocaine smuggling as well. This has earned them the enmity of several Colombian drug cartels, and of some Jamaican posses as well. The Veronteses have also maintained their traditional gambling and hijacking operations, and have had some success in infiltrating various unions (especially hotel workers' unions).

**Family Politics And Relations:** Most of the Verontese family is behind Black Mike, a large, friendly man who inspires loyalty and enthusiasm. However, some of the family feel that he is too laid back, and that the family should be more aggressive in expanding its territory (particularly now, while the Scatuccis and Torccones are weakening one another). The leader of the dissatisfied men is Harold "The Shark" Ruggiero, a Verontese caporegima. If he sees an opportunity, Ruggiero will try to take over as the Verontese boss.



## THE COMMISSION

The Commission in the game world should be made up of the bosses of the five families described above, plus several other bosses or major Mafia figures created by the GM. The Commission's role is the same as it is in the real world: monitoring family activities for trouble, coordinating large-scale Mafia activities, keeping the families under control, and so forth. Whether the GM wants the Commission to take an even stronger hand in Mafia affairs is up to the GM. A strong Commission could deal with problems like the Scatucci-Torcone War quickly and decisively. A weaker Commission is more likely to have to work within inter-family politics, so that it will act more like a negotiating or mediating body than like a ruling council.

To enforce its will, the Commission has a corps of hitmen known as the Killing Syndicate. The exact numbers and membership of the Syndicate are unknown. Its inner workings and chain of command are just as mysterious. What is known is that all of its members are vicious, brutal killers, men capable of casually killing other men for money and prestige.



## THE YAKUZA

*Nakamura Hideo surveyed the men seated around the conference table in his office. Good men, men of accomplishment, men who could be counted upon to advance the causes and business of the Sawakiri-gumi—all except one. "Report," Nakamura said in a flat voice.*

*The first one to speak was the man to Hideo's left, Ono Kiyoshi. "The gambling operations in Little Tokyo continue to be profitable. We believe that the police have learned the location of one, and we plan to move it to another place as soon as possible."*

*"Very good," said Nakamura. "Sakiyuri Akira?"*

*"Our "talent agencies" are still doing good business. Five of the gaijin women have been lured to Japan with false stories of acting careers. One who discovered the true purposes of the agency was kidnapped before she could share her suspicions with the police."*

*The reports continued, with one man after another reporting their progress and activities to Hideo, chief oyabun of the Sawakiri-gumi. Finally, his eyes came to rest on the man who had failed him. "Nishi Noboyuki?"*

*Nishi shifted nervously and began his report. "The ninja under my command have been employed in various capacities since our last meeting. They have generally been successful."*

*"Generally?" said Nakamura, a hint of menace barely perceptible in his voice.*

*"Yes," continued Nishi. "But the assignment to guard the gun smuggling operation at the 27th Street warehouse was not successfully completed. Our activities were discovered by the accursed Blue Moon Killer. The ninja there were slain to the last man."*

*"How did the vigilante discover you, Noboyuki?"*

*"I ... I do not know."*

*"Is it not part of your job to be certain that no information about our activities is leaked?"*

*"Y-yes," stammered Nishi.*

*"Nishi Noboyuki, you have failed me, and you have failed the Sawakiri-gumi. You know what price you must pay if you wish to atone for your failure."*

*At those words, a servant who had been standing silently in the corner walked over to Nishi. He carried a tray, and on that tray was a small silver knife, a piece of fine cloth, and some cloth bandages. He placed the tray before Nishi. Nishi stood up, and with trembling hands picked up the silver knife, which he placed blade-up on the table. He set his right pinky against the blade, and began to lean forward. He stifled a cry of pain as the blade bit through his finger and sheared off the top joint of his pinky. The others watched wordlessly, no trace of emotion on their faces, a few rubbing their own hands thoughtfully. Pale and bleeding, Nishi wrapped the severed joint in the cloth and placed it on the tray. As he slumped into his chair and began to bandage his finger with some help from his neighbors, the servant brought the tray and severed finger over to Nakamura Hideo.*

*"Very good," said Nakamura, picking up the cloth and putting it on the table next to him. "Hiyata Miseo, I believe that you are the next to speak."*



The yakuza (pronounced "YA-ku-za," not "ya-KU-za") is the Japanese version of organized crime. The Japanese police call the yakuza Boryokudan, "the violent ones." In Japan, which is often thought of as a crime-free society, the members of the 2,500 or so yakuza gangs are said to number anywhere from 85,000 to 110,000. More importantly for most *Dark Champions* games, the yakuza have not been slow to enter the American crime market—there are generally considered to be approximately 26,000 yakuza members in the United States (most of them on the West Coast). America is both a market and a resource for Japanese gangsters, and their activities here can only continue to increase. This section of the Sourcebook will teach GMs and players about the yakuza and show them how to use this uniquely Japanese organized crime group in *Champions* campaigns.

Several of the customs and criminal activities described in this section are confined mainly to Japan. They are described here not because there will be a lot of *Dark Champions* campaigns set in Japan, but to give players and GMs an idea of how the yakuza will act in this country. Many of their customs and habits will be carried over to America or will influence their American crimes. The GM should determine how the yakuza gangs in his campaign will act in America.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE YAKUZA

According to many members of the yakuza, the yakuza gangs got their start in the 1600s, in the Tokugawa era of Japanese history. Many samurai (known as ronin) became masterless and unemployed, and took to forming gangs of criminals and raiders which were known as hatamoto-yakko ("servants of the shogun"). In order to oppose these bandits and keep themselves safe, townspeople formed bands of machi-yakko ("servants of the town"), who fended off the attacks of the hatamoto-yakko. The modern yakuza supposedly descended from these "honorable" defenders of the innocent (who in reality were often little better than the ronin they fought).

Another version of the origin of the yakuza, one which is more accepted by scholars, begins in the mid-1700s. At that point in time, there were generally two types of gangsters: tekiya and bakuto. The tekiya were traveling peddlers and merchants with a reputation for crime, cheating, and underhanded dealing (much like the gypsies of Europe). They formed groups which extorted money from peddlers and their booths at fairs—early forms of protection rackets, extortion, union infiltration, and corruption. The bakuto were gamblers who formed gangs and ran illegal gambling operations. They were the main seed of the modern-day yakuza. These gangs were generally based around the medieval Japanese road network and its hostels. They are also thought to have provided the name "yakuza," which comes from the card game hanafuda. In that game, the worst hand is an eight, a nine, and a three—"ya-ku-sa" in Japanese. This word passed into the language as a term for something useless and worthless, and was eventually applied to the gamblers themselves, and later to all Japanese organized crime.

The yakuza continued to grow and prosper until the late nineteenth century, when many gangs became deeply involved in far right-wing Japanese politics. Many gang bosses formed their own political parties, and in some instances helped to run Japan and direct its foreign policy towards militarism and empire.

World War II destroyed many of these gangsters and their nationalistic dreams, but out of the ashes of the Japanese empire arose the new yakuza. A third type of gangster, the gurentai or "hoodlum," has become part of the yakuza pantheon. Many gangsters are still involved in politics; there is even a special term, kuromaku ("black curtain"), for a "godfather" or "fixer" figure who acts as a link between the yakuza and the political and business worlds (the Japanese term for this corruption is kuroi kiri, "black mist"). But the yakuza still concentrate mainly on their criminal enterprises; they have expanded their power and formed some extremely large gangs, such as the Yamaguchi-gumi or the Sumiyoshi-rengo, which dominate the Japanese underworld today. The modern yakuza have grown in power, wealth, and prestige, but have also become much more violent, and often less honorable, than their predecessors. As the world has become smaller, the yakuza have branched out beyond the traditional confines of the islands of Japan, and have come to America and other places across the globe. If they are not effectively opposed and exposed, the yakuza may end up becoming as powerful and influential in America as they are in Japan.

## ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE YAKUZA

The yakuza has a unique and fascinating culture which in many ways is both similar to yet different from that of the American Mafia.

### THE OYABUN-KOBUN RELATIONSHIP

The most fundamental organizational "unit" or aspect of the yakuza is the oyabun-kobun relationship, which literally means "father-role—child-role" relationship. An oyabun acts as the sponsor and mentor for the kobun, who is often a younger man. The oyabun is comparable to a Mafia caporegime (or sometimes to a Mafia capo, because the term "oyabun" can also be applied to the chief boss of an entire yakuza family (see below)—such an oyabun is, after all, the "father-role" for all of the gang members). Each oyabun has immense power and influence within his nawabari ("roped-off area"), or territory. The nawabari of an oyabun who is the absolute leader of an entire yakuza family is of course quite extensive.

The oyabun "adopts" and sponsors the kobun, looks out for him, furnishes him with food and other necessities of living, instructs him, and helps him work his way into the yakuza ranks. In return, a kobun owes his oyabun unswerving loyalty and service: a yakuza proverb proclaims, "If the boss says that a passing crow is white, you must agree with him." The kobun acts as a teppodama, or "bullet," for his boss: he must fight for him, and risk his life for him if need be. The relationship becomes so close that the oyabun often need not give his "children" verbal orders, because he can indicate his intentions by his attitudes or his slightest gesture. The oyabun-kobun relationship continues to be a strong, cohesive force in modern yakuza gangs.

The yakuza gangs have an initiation ceremony for the "induction" of new kobun; it is known as the sakazuki-shiki, or "cup ceremony." The basis of the ceremony is a formal exchange of sake (rice wine) between oyabun and kobun; often the ceremony has Shinto religious elements as well. The amount of wine in the cup depends on the previous relationship between the two persons (father-son, brother-brother, and the like). The initiate is presented by an azukarinin, or sponsor, and all members of the family attend the ceremony. Modern yakuza gangs still have induction ceremonies, but they are usually shorter and somewhat less formal than they used to be.

### YAKUZA FAMILY STRUCTURE: GUMI AND RENGO

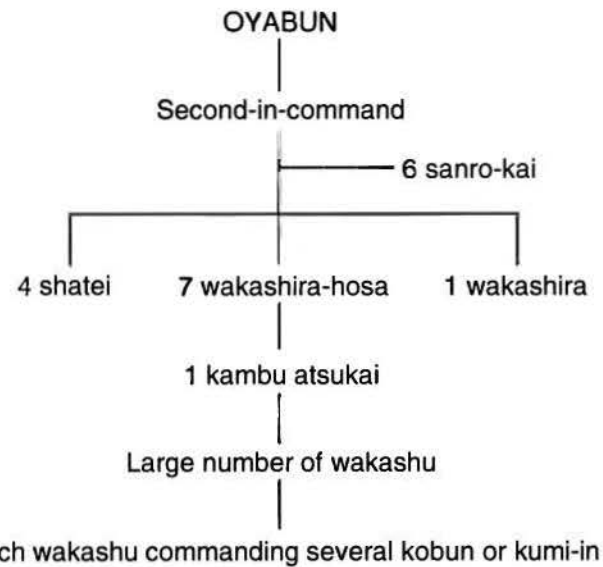
The yakuza, like the Mafia, is organized into large gangs known as ikka, or "families." These families are not related by blood, but by "adoption" and sponsorship. Members of a family are miuchi, or "members of the same body."

Yakuza families are generally have one of two basic types of structures. The first is the gumi (translated as "association," "company," or "gang"), which is exemplified by the largest of the yakuza gangs, the Yamaguchi-gumi. A gumi has a "corporate" or pyramidal structure, with one chief oyabun in total control of the gang, like a Mafia "godfather." In some families, this chief boss is called the kumicho ("supreme chief") or the kaicho ("chairman"). Like his Mafia counterpart, the yakuza boss is kept apart and insulated from the day-to-day running of the family; this task is left to the boss's second-in-command.

Below the second-in-command, there are twelve of the gang's leading bosses, acting as a sort of "Board of Directors" for the gang. This group is sometimes known as a Supreme Staff Council, or Saiko-kanbu-kai. Four of the twelve are shatei, "younger brothers" to the boss; the other eight are wakashira-hosa, "assistant young leaders," and one of them is chosen as wakashira, or "young leader." Another group, the six sanro-kai, are the boss's advisors, similar to the Cosa Nostra's consiglieri. The next rank in the hierarchy is the kambu atsukai ("executive"), a single man. Immediately below him are a large number (in the Yamaguchi-gumi, 83) of wakashu, "young men." Each wakashu commands his own groups of kobun ("children") or kumi-in ("enlisted men"), who are the street-level members of the organization (wakashu are sometimes also known as wakato; and their underling "soldiers" are sometimes called wakai shu—these terms can vary from gumi to gumi). All of these relationships and ranks are based on the oyabun-kobun system. A person's rank within a gumi is usually dependent upon his earning power and upon how many men owe him loyalty.

The gumi structure, being a hierarchy, has its own strengths and weaknesses. Because of its centralization, orders can be given quickly and obeyed quickly, and everyone knows who is in charge. On the other hand, lower-level yakuza members are not likely to act on their own initiative in many important situations. Player characters who are attacking the yakuza may be able to exploit this disadvantage.

### DIAGRAM OF GUMI STRUCTURE



The second type of yakuza gang structure is the rengo, or "federation" of gangs. A rengo is a "league" of yakuza gangs, with several powerful oyabuns as "partners." The rengo is exemplified by one of the Yamaguchi-gumi's main competitors, the Sumiyoshi-rengo. This sort of gang is much more decentralized than a gumi, giving members much greater autonomy and power than members of a gumi have. Each oyabun is still the absolute power in his own individual gang, so if the entire rengo is to act in concert, the bosses must come to an agreement on what is to be done. Thus, this sort of gang moves to action much more slowly than does a gumi, but retains an individual flexibility and independence which a gumi lacks.

### YAKUZA GANG STRUCTURE

As discussed briefly above, there are three types of yakuza gangsters: tekiya, bakuto, and gurentai. Each gang has its own individual type of structure (which is not the same thing as the overall structure of the family the gang is a member of). The tekiya, which are descended from groups of street peddlers, are involved with such crimes as drug dealing, extortion, protection rackets, infiltration and control of unions and businesses, and the like. A tekiya gang is led by a chomoto-oyabun; his lower-ranking bosses and assistants are called cho-waki. Beneath the cho-waki are yaki ("workers" or "dealers"); these dealers are responsible for wakaishu ("apprentices"). The apprentices start out as mere salesmen, earning a percentage of what they sell, and gradually begin to work independently and become fully assimilated into the gang. Each tekiya gang has a territory which is known as a niwaba, or "garden."



The bakuto, or gamblers, are involved primarily with gambling (one of the yakuza's biggest sources of revenue) and similar vice crimes. The leader of a bakuto gang is a Socho, or "president" (also known as a hon-beya, or "main room"). Under the president are eleven kashimoto-oyabun, bosses in charge of loans. Working under each boss are daigashi ("managers"), dekata (workers in the gambling houses), and sanshita (basic workers who perform menial jobs such as cleaning and guard duty). Daigashi are responsible for running a particular gambling establishment, but can take over for a kashimoto-oyabun in the event of an emergency. Each bakuto gang has control of all gambling operations within a set territory, known as a shima ("island") or a hibasho ("place of fire").

The gurentai, or "hoodlums," are gangs which arose as a distinctive group after World War II. They are involved primarily in acts of violence: enforcement, murder for hire, and similar crimes. They do not have their own unique structure, though they do have titles such as dai-kanbu ("subleader") and jun-kanbu ("semi-leader") which indicate relative rank.

Although these distinctions are still used on occasion, the differences between the three types of gangs are not nearly as pronounced or as important as they were in the past (especially in America). A tekiya group may have some involvement in gambling, and bakuto gangs may do their own enforcing. It is also important to remember that an individual gang is always subordinated to its family's overall structure.

### Yakuza Gang Cooperation And Conflict

Yakuza families often form alliances with one another to improve their ability to commit profitable crimes. Bosses of individual gangs will form "brotherhood" relationships with other bosses; weaker gangs will often try to ally themselves with stronger ones, creating a semi-feudal system of relationships.

However, as with any organized crime group, there are conflicts as well. Frequently, the differing gangs will come into conflict over territory, with the result a bloody war. When conflict threatens, a "go-between" may step forward to try to negotiate a non-violent settlement of the dispute. The go-between will try to use his status, charisma, and reasoning ability to arrive at a peaceful solution. If one is reached, the two feuding gangs will meet in a peace ceremony called the teuchishiki ("clapping ceremony").

### Recruitment By The Yakuza

Japanese from all walks of society can be recruited into the yakuza, but several groups provide an especially large share of the members. The first of these are the bosozoku, or hot-rod gangs. These are more or less the Japanese equivalent of street gangs and motorcycle gangs. They provide about one-third of yakuza recruits, though many yakuza members look down on them. Another steady source of yakuza recruits are those classes who are discriminated against in Japan: foreigners (such as Koreans and Chinese); and the burakumin, Japan's traditional caste of "untouchables." In some gangs, a majority of the members are from these groups. These people see the yakuza as their only way to achieve any sort of success in the rigid Japanese society. In a *Dark Champions* campaign, perhaps yakuza recruiting patterns in American Japanese communities will mirror recruitment in Japan.

Yakuza recruits usually spend from six months to a year or more in "training." This involves performing menial tasks for the boss and is often very boring. Training is also provided in the criminal activities the gang engages in, and in basic combat as well. In a *Champions* world, the training period might involve even more training in combat, but it is up to each GM to determine whether the yakuza gangs in his campaign are that violent (since they usually have ninja working for them, they may not need to be). Those who display the proper attitude and aptitude will move up the hierarchy of household tasks. Eventually they will be worked into some criminal enterprise, such as an illegal gambling ring. This "graduation" usually involves allowing the new member to take on the gang's "family name," and sometimes there is a formal presentation to the other members.

Not all apprentices make it so far, though. One can quit or be expelled from the yakuza. Many recruits find either that they cannot measure up to gang standards, or that they do not enjoy the life, and they leave; the annual "turnover" rate is estimated to be about ten percent. On the other hand, some members commit offenses against their yakuza family which result in their expulsion or death. Some of these offenses include disobedience, cowardice, betrayal of family secrets, rape, and petty theft (offenses which do not merit death or expulsion can be punished by forcing the offender to commit yubitsume, discussed below). After an expulsion, the gang sends notices to all the other gangs, so that the offender cannot usually join another family.

## YAKUZA CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

What really sets the yakuza apart from other organized crime groups, such as the Mafia, is its unique culture and customs. By emphasizing these traditions and details, the GM can establish the yakuza as its own group, rather than just some Oriental clone of more familiar organized crime groups.

To begin with, the early yakuza often tried to devote themselves to the ideals of bushido, the "warrior's code" of medieval Japan. This code dictated the calm endurance of suffering and considered a violent death to be the most honorable death. The yakuza also developed their own traditional code of conduct, known as jingi. Jingi regulates and controls relationships between yakuza members by establishing the level of respect and deference due to one's superiors. Among other things, it dictates formal greeting rituals (these are often not used by modern yakuza, but a *Dark Champions* GM may want to retain the custom because of its "flavor"). In addition to the values and practices prescribed by jingi, the yakuza also tried to follow the dictates of giri and ninjo. Giri is best translated into English as "sense of duty" or "obligation," though it usually has a stronger meaning than those terms. This concept causes a yakuza gangster to develop a strong sense of loyalty, honor, and "moral debt;" thus, it reinforces the oyabun-kobun relationship. It can also lead to bloody quests for vengeance in certain situations. Ninjo means "emotion" or "human feelings." This leads to expressions of sympathy, compassion, empathy, and charity. Unfortunately, these two concepts, giri and ninjo, are often at odds with one another, creating an inner turmoil of duty versus compassion.

Among the yakuza, all of these ideals combined to create in their minds another image, that of the "noble gangster." This was typified by the concept of katagi no shu, "citizens under the sun." This meant that a yakuza gang member kept gang business amongst the gang, leaving the public alone (the expression derives from the yakuza tendency to always walk on the least hospitable side of the street, leaving the better parts for the ordinary citizen). This part of the "yakuza code" also led the yakuza to act in the past as an "underground police force" which kept the rest of Japan's criminals from getting out of hand. This is one of the reasons for Japan's image as a nation free of violent crime. The image of the noble gangster is a common one in Japanese literature and film, similar to the Anglo-American obsession with noble criminals such as Robin Hood.

Like the Mafia, the yakuza has a more specific list of "unwritten laws" which govern the conduct of members. This list includes the following rules:

1. Never reveal the organization's secrets.
2. Never violate the wife or children of another member.
3. Never become personally involved with drugs.
4. Never fail to obey your superiors.
5. Never withhold money from the organization.
6. Never appeal to the police.

It is questionable how closely any of these rules or codes of conduct are followed by the modern yakuza. Certainly, some members, particularly the older ones who came into the gangs when they were more tradition-bound, try to follow them; but the younger, more violent generation seems to care little for many of them. In particular, the concept of katagi no shu has fallen by the wayside, as the gangs turn more and more to bloodshed to solve problems and innocent citizens get caught in the crossfire; the concept of the yakuza as a second police force is also not nearly as prevalent as it once was. How honor-bound the yakuza are will vary from campaign to campaign; for those GMs who want their yakuza to act honorably, the "Yakuza Code Of Conduct" is a possible Disadvantage for yakuza characters (see the Yakuza Package Deal, below).

## THE YAKUZA LIFESTYLE

Yakuza gangs in Japan are able to conduct their "business" in ways which other organized crime groups cannot. They operate right out in the open. For example, the larger gangs have their own newsletters, magazines, flags, and group songs. Yakuza gang members will often wear lapel pins or badges which show their gang's symbol. The yakuza bosses frequently have their own offices, clearly marked and open to the public. On occasion, yakuza bosses have given televised press conferences to make announcements.

Naturally, the yakuza in America are usually not this open, since the authorities here are not likely to ignore such a flagrant display of criminal affiliation. However, in private or at gang meetings, they might very well indulge in some of these practices; it is up to each GM to decide whether or not he wants the yakuza in his campaign to act this way. However, by throwing in at least a few of these elements, the GM can emphasize the differences between the yakuza and more traditional American organized crime groups.

## RECOGNIZING THE YAKUZA

Besides the badges and group songs, there are several other ways to identify members of the yakuza. Any of the details described here could be taken as a Distinctive Feature Disadvantage; see the Yakuza Package Deal for more details. But remember that yakuza gangsters are not stupid—if they realize that they are being "made" because of their distinctiveness, they will quickly try to remove or eliminate those details which give them away.

First, yakuza members often dress in recognizable styles. Lower-level members tend to favor flashy, gaudy clothes (often bright colors on a black background), or they emphasize white: white jackets, slacks, shoes, and/or shirt. High-ranking members lean towards more expensive clothing, and often wear a lot of expensive jewelry (such as rings and watches) to advertise their wealth and success. Many yakuza members try to dress like their American Mafia counterparts, but their ideas of the Mafia are usually colored by the way the Mafia is depicted in movies. These yakuza gangsters favor pinstripe suits, dark ties and hats, and sunglasses. Lastly, yakuza members often have a recognizable hair style; the particular style can vary from date to date or place to place, like any fad.

Second, lower-level yakuza members often have distinctive behavior traits. They swagger and strut, and display attitudes of authority and arrogance which are not common to most Japanese. This behavior can be particularly pronounced when yakuza members are dealing with non-member Japanese, whom they are used to being able to push around.

Third, the yakuza have their own slang language. This slang is so elaborate that it is virtually a language on its own, thus tipping off anyone who knows regular Japanese. The slang has been used for so long that it can even vary from gang to gang.

### Yubitsume

Additionally, there are two features which are unique to the yakuza. The first of these is yubitsume, the ritual of cutting off part of a finger to atone for offenses. Because of yubitsume, many yakuza members are missing parts of one or more fingers, a mutilation which makes them stick out like, pardon the pun, a sore thumb. Yubitsume is still a common practice today—some estimates state that up to 50% of modern yakuza members have cut off part of a finger, and up to 25% of those members have had to perform the ritual at least one more time.

Yubitsume is the punishment for offenses which are not serious enough to merit execution or expulsion. The magnitude of the infraction indicates whether the finger will be severed at the first or second joint, or whether the offending gang member must cut more than one finger. A yakuza member whose fingers are all intact can be considered a dangerous individual indeed, one who has never made a serious mistake or offended his oyabun.



The procedure is fairly simple. A small, extremely sharp silver knife is placed blade-up against a table or other steady object. The person performing the ritual places the finger to be mutilated on the knife's edge, and then bends over the knife, simultaneously pulling the blade up. The victim's weight helps the blade slice through the finger; usually the joint pops off cleanly. The finger is then put in a bottle of alcohol and sent to the oyabun whom the victim offended; if the boss is present at the ritual, the severed digit will be handed to him in the bottle or in a piece of fine cloth. Many gangs keep the fingers in bottles of alcohol at the group's headquarters and proudly display them as symbols of devotion to the organization. Traditionally, it was the right hand which was cut, so as to weaken the victim's sword-hand and make him more dependent on his boss's protection; in the modern day, either hand may be used.

### Tattooing

A second feature which is unique to the yakuza is their elaborate tattooing. About seventy percent of yakuza members have some form of tattooing; the pictures are usually extremely elaborate and artistic, depicting dragons, animals, plants and flowers, and legendary figures and scenes. The traditional method of applying these tattoos involves thousands of jabs into the skin with a tiny needle of wood or bone. For a large yakuza tattoo, such as one stretching all around the body from just below the collar to the base of the spine, the process can take more than one hundred hours; some yakuza have even larger tattoos covering virtually their entire bodies. The tattoos are usually arranged so that they cannot be seen when the gangster is fully dressed; hence, they generally stop just below the collar line. A yakuza member who can undergo the traditional method, rather than using modern electric needles, is accorded great respect for the torture he has endured. However, by getting a tattoo, the yakuza member has marked himself for life—the tattoos make his criminal lifestyle plain to any knowledgeable person (such as many player characters).

### YAKUZA CEREMONIES

Besides the initiation and peacekeeping ceremonies discussed briefly above, the yakuza engage in several other ceremonies on appropriate occasions (if possible, these ceremonies would be used in America). Their most elaborate ceremony is the one which is used to install a new boss for a major yakuza gang. This ceremony involves a great deal of preparation and expense; invitees include bosses from other gangs and other prominent underworld figures.

Another interesting ceremony is the demukai or homen-mukae ceremony, performed when a gang member is released from prison. The more important the imprisoned gang member, the larger the ceremony will be; attendees will line up in order of gang and rank to pay respect to the freed person. The released member often gets "promoted" within his gang upon his release to honor his loyalty to and sacrifice for the group. However, this ceremony attracts so much attention and annoys the police so much that some gang bosses have forbidden it.

Lastly, when a prominent yakuza member dies, his fellow gangsters will usually try to stage an elaborate funeral ceremony for him. This may involve processions or other lavish displays of mourning and affection. Yakuza leaders from all over Japan may attend or send flowers. Again, the police frown on this sort of display, and often try to prevent it; but in this case, the gangs usually go through with the ceremony anyway, to honor their departed comrade.

## YAKUZA ACTIVITIES

Like any other organized crime group, the yakuza have to engage in many different forms of criminal activity in order to earn money and survive as part of the underworld. A few yakuza activities may be confined strictly to Japan, but many flourish in America as well (indeed, many are possible only because of yakuza infiltration of the United States).

### Murder For Hire

The most spectacular of the yakuza's crimes is satsujin, murder, for hire. Like other organized crime groups, the yakuza is sometimes obliged to discipline traitorous members by killing them. On occasion, the yakuza will perform contract murders, but this activity is not an especially common or profitable one.

In a *Dark Champions* campaign, this fact should be changed slightly, because comic-book yakuza families usually employ large clans of ninja. There must be a good reason why they make such heavy use of the ninja, who are spies and assassins. Either the yakuza gangs are constantly at war with one another (which would have put them out of business long ago), or they perform contract murders on a much more regular basis than they do in the "real world." This gives the GM a good reason to run yakuza assassination scenarios in his campaign.

### Drug Trafficking

Yakuza drug smuggling is a little different from that of other organized crime groups. While the yakuza are involved in heroin smuggling, sometimes in concert with the Chinese Triads and tongs, their chief drug trafficking activity is the smuggling and sale of amphetamines, which the Japanese call shabu ("white diamonds"). Some sources estimate that the sale of illegal amphetamines accounts for half of the yakuza's income. The yakuza gangs manufacture the drugs in Korea and smuggle them into Japan and into Japanese communities in America. American law enforcement has only recently begun to deal with this smuggling into the United States, so there may be a lot of "speed" pipelines for *Dark Champions* characters to plug up. The yakuza is also one of the main suppliers of crystal methamphetamine, known on the streets as "ice," to America. In some areas of the country, the Japanese gangsters are the sole distributors of this dangerous designer drug.

### Other Vice Crimes

In addition to drug smuggling, the yakuza, like the Mafia and the tongs, is heavily involved in other vice crimes. Chief among these is *tobaku*, gambling: the various illegal gambling and bookmaking activities of the *bakuto* are estimated to account for approximately 25% of the yakuza's income. This sort of illicit activity can be run in any foreign Japanese community large enough to support it (such as Los Angeles' Little Tokyo). The types of gambling include high-stakes card games, betting on sports events, and just about any other type of wagering that there is a demand for.

The yakuza is also deeply involved in the illicit sex industries. Besides the usual *baishun torimochi* (pimping), the yakuza smuggles pornography into Japan from the United States. Hardcore pornography is illegal in Japan, so the yakuza can make vast profits on it in the black market. The yakuza sometimes exchanges Asian drugs for American pornography which is then resold in Japan.

Sometimes the yakuza actually brings the women themselves to Japan. Yakuza involvement in white slavery, often depicted in fiction, does in fact exist. Though the white slave trade from other Asian countries is more extensive, the greatest demand is for Western women. Caucasian women are regarded as "exotic" by Japanese men, who are willing to pay large sums of money for them (or to belong to clubs which use them). The usual yakuza scam is to work through a bogus "talent agency" which recruits aspiring American female performers for jobs in Japan. Once they arrive in Japan, they find out that the real job involves entertainment of a different sort. These hapless women, alone in a strange culture and unable to speak the language, are often kept as captives and virtual slaves, forced to obey the whims of their yakuza captors. In a *Dark Champions* campaign, the yakuza might set up extensive kidnapping rings to capture American women and smuggle them to underworld businesses in Japan.

### Gun Smuggling

When the yakuza smuggles drugs into the United States, it often smuggles guns out in exchange. In Japan, handguns are essentially illegal for anyone but policemen and the like to own. The yakuza has to buy its guns in the United States, where they are easily and cheaply acquired, and smuggle them into Japan. A handgun that sells in the United States for \$250-400 can be sold for as much as \$5,000-7,000 when it gets to Japan, and ammunition can cost \$5-12 per bullet on the black market. The easy availability of guns is one of the factors that led to the yakuza "expansion" into the United States; the influx of guns has also led to an increasing level of violence in Japan's underworld.

### Financial Crimes

Much like their legitimate counterparts in the Japanese business world, the yakuza sometimes show an aptitude for the world of high finance. However, the yakuza prefer business tactics that would make even the most hardened executive blanch.

One of the chief yakuza financial crimes is simple extortion, known as *kyohaku* in Japanese. Because of the Japanese culture's emphasis on station, dignity, and "face," Japanese are extremely vulnerable to blackmail. Many Japanese will do virtually anything rather than have their secrets exposed; a yakuza gangster who learns of such a secret may be set for life. (Japanese ideas of "loss of face" also make many other crimes, such as protection rackets, much easier than they would be in other cultures.)

Some yakuza members are *sarakin* (literally, "salary man financiers"), or loansharks. These men often work together, in firms, but the firms are yakuza-dominated. There are estimated to be between 42,000 and 220,000 *sarakin* in Japan. They have been so successful because of Japanese banks' general reluctance to get involved in consumer credit transactions. A *sarakin* will loan someone money at about 60% interest with no questions asked. It is only when someone does not pay their debt that the yakuza aspect of the business becomes truly evident. The *sarakin* begin their enforcement efforts with harassing letters and phone calls, and this can escalate to violence if necessary. However, often a far more effective technique is to threaten loss of face. By showing up at a delinquent borrower's home or business to make noise, disrupt activities, and embarrass the borrower, the *sarakin* can cause such loss of face that the borrower does everything he can to pay. The *sarakin* have been responsible for driving many people into bankruptcy or suicide. Though there is no firm evidence that *sarakin* operate outside of Japan, a *Dark Champions* GM can have *sarakin* firms begin operating in the Japanese community in the campaign city if he needs them to.

Another type of financial criminal is the *sokaiya*, or "shareholder's meeting man" (sometimes also known as the *interi yakuza*, or intellectual gangsters). The *sokaiya* are combination corporate extortionists and financial strong-arm men; they earn money by exploiting Japanese business' desire for a staid image and efficient operations. Their typical activity is to buy a few shares of a corporation's stock, thus entitling them to attend the annual shareholder's meeting. Then they contact the corporation's officers and threaten to disrupt the meeting and make trouble unless they are paid off. Rather than suffer the trouble and embarrassment, the corporation will usually pay. A related activity is to find out blackmail information about corporate officers or corporate activities, and then force the corporation to pay to keep the information secret.

Sometimes the *sokaiya* work for the corporation. For a price, groups of *sokaiya* will show up at the shareholder's meeting and quell any dissent or undesirable proposals by threatening or harassing stockholders. Sometimes, a corporation can deal with one group of *sokaiya* by hiring another group of *sokaiya* to take care of them.

Not one to pass up on potential profits, the *sokaiya* groups have made their way to the United States, and have begun trying to extort money from corporations here, both Japanese companies and American ones. At least one major *sokaiya* group, the *Rondan Doyukai Company*, has substan-



tial holdings in U.S. corporations. Since many *Champions* characters, both street-level and four-color, are wealthy men who own businesses, the sokaiya could offer GMs a chance to make them regret it. Comic-book heroes, who are used to dealing with their problems by fighting them, may have trouble dealing with the more sophisticated and non-violent approach taken by the shareholder's meeting men. And suppose a sokaiya learned that the Chairman of the Board spends his off hours fighting crime as a ruthless vigilante?

One particularly horrifying development in the world of the sokaiya is a more vicious type of corporate extortionist who attempts to extort money from food companies and similar corporations by threatening to poison their products (similar to the American "Tylenol poisonings," but for purposes of extorting money). The company is told to pay up or face huge losses and disasters; boxes of food are found with notes warning that they have been poisoned. Because this form of crime can be conducted by mail from just about anywhere, the participants are almost impossible to catch. As yet, this more ruthless type of sokaiya is not common in Japan; in America, where such psychopaths are less unusual, the sokaiya might try this someday soon...

#### **Infiltration, Corruption, And Money Laundering**

The yakuza have infiltrated and subverted many legitimate businesses, unions, and organizations in Japan (and perhaps in the United States as well). The tekiya are the gangsters most often involved in corruption of businesses and unions, as well as related protection rackets. The yakuza is involved in the trucking, construction, entertainment, real estate, sports, and tourism industries, among others. The gangs' control of tourism extends to America and other nations; the yakuza not only organize the tours, but they own "tourist trap" shops along the way where the tourists are pressured to buy goods. These knick-knack and clothing shops might also serve as links in a smuggling pipeline bringing drugs to the United States and sending pornography and guns to Japan.

The yakuza uses its ownership and control of legitimate industries to launder its vast illegal profits. Its favorite way to do this is through mizu shobai (literally, "water business"), a term for bars, nightclubs, restaurants, and similar institutions.

## **THE YAKUZA IN THE UNITED STATES**

As the preceding sections have made clear, the yakuza, despite their Japanese origins, are no strangers to American shores. America acts as a marketplace for yakuza drugs, as well as a source of guns and pornography.

Currently, the yakuza in the United States are mainly concentrated in Hawaii and on the West Coast. In particular, the yakuza is present in Los Angeles, because its 200,000-plus person Japanese community, Little Tokyo, offers them criminal opportunities similar to those in Japan. At least three yakuza gangs—the Yamaguchi-gumi, the Sumiyoshi-rengo, and the Toa Yuai Jigyo Kumiai—are known to be active in Los Angeles.

However, there is also evidence of links between the yakuza and the Mafia in New York City and elsewhere. The "agents" of the two groups can meet in Hawaii or Las Vegas to make deals and form alliances. The two organizations have worked together to set up illegal gambling operations which are profitable for them both. It is also thought that a vast international theft network, involving thefts of goods and cargo from international airports and docks, could be established between yakuza and Mafia gangs. Some law enforcement officials even fear that an "international shadow government" of organized crime could arise (especially in light of the Mafia's links to Chinese organized crime).

### **GENRE YAKUZA: NINJAS AND HIGH TECHNOLOGY**

In the comic books, the yakuza are often depicted as being involved in certain activities which they are not necessarily connected with in the "real world." These activities, being genre "bits," can be included in a *Dark Champions* campaign without any problem if the GM wants to do so.

The first such activity is the use of ninja. The ninja were the spies and assassins of medieval Japan; they are often seen in comic books. When the yakuza themselves are the main villains of the piece, they are able to call on ninja to perform thefts, assassinations, and the like. While there is no evidence of any historical link between these two groups, they are often inextricably joined in the minds of the modern American gamer. Therefore, there is no reason why the yakuza in a *Champions* or *Dark Champions* campaign



should not employ their own ninja clans. The Yakuza Sourcebook section, below, names an affiliated ninja clan for each yakuza family described. See *Ninja Hero*, pp. 6, 23, and 54 for more information on building and roleplaying ninja characters in the HERO System.

Similarly, adventures and stories featuring any sort of Japanese characters often have highly advanced technology as an element. Accordingly, the yakuza are sometimes portrayed as using a much higher level of technology than other organized crime groups—technology such as computers, high-tech security systems, and sometimes even advanced weaponry or humanoid-shaped battlemechs. If the GM is running a high-tech or superheroic street-level campaign, then there is no reason why the yakuza should not be allowed such devices. If the campaign is pure street-level, then the GM should of course be careful not to introduce any technology beyond current world standards.

In a related vein, in a world where superpowered humans exist, the yakuza might be more likely than other organized crime groups to make use of them as agents and soldiers. Some of the superpowered criminals presented in the Sourcebook section of *Ninja Hero* are good examples of characters who might be working for or with the yakuza.

## ROLEPLAYING THE YAKUZA

The trick to roleplaying the yakuza correctly is to differentiate them not only from their American counterparts, the Mafia, but to keep them from becoming too similar to other Asian criminals, such as the tongs. The way to do this is to emphasize the things which make the yakuza unique. Make sure that when you use them in the campaign that they perform a few crimes—such as sokaiya crimes—which are unique to them. Also, emphasize the politeness and civility which the Japanese are so often portrayed as possessing; along with this, make sure that your yakuza gangsters talk of “honor,” “face,” and other philosophies of Japanese society. Perhaps the player characters, in dealing with a yakuza oyabun, can save the day by forcing the boss to live up to his own personal code of honor; or, by insulting his honor and dignity, they can draw him into a disastrous personal combat. A similar plot involves teaming the PCs up with an “honorable” yakuza gang to combat a “dishonorable” or “evil” yakuza gang which is trying to take over the underworld.

If you really want to distinguish the yakuza from other organized crime groups, use the two genre bits discussed above: the ninja and high technology. When ninja begin to skulk about, attacking the characters with shuriken and martial arts, the player characters should realize pretty quickly that the yakuza are behind it.

## THE YAKUZA SOURCEBOOK

### REAL-LIFE YAKUZA GANGS

The following chart provides the names of and membership data for the major yakuza syndicates in the real world:

Name	Affiliated Members	Gangs
Yamaguchi-gumi	10,400	400
Sumiyoshi-rengo	6,723	113
Motoyokuto Aioh Rengo-kai	4,416	105
Inagawa-kai	4,347	119
Ichiwa-kai	2,800	140
Matsuba-kai	2,147	41
Nippon Kokusui-kai	943	22
Dai Nippon Heiwa-kai	914	51
Toa Yuai Jigyo Kumiai	796	none

Gamemasters who wish to use some of these gangs in their campaign can learn more about them by consulting some of the sources listed in the Bibliography. For GMs who prefer to use fictional groups, later sections of this Sourcebook provide descriptions of several yakuza gangs ready to be used in *Champions* campaigns.

### YAKUZA PACKAGE DEAL

This Package Deal can be used to represent a typical yakuza kobun. If you want to use it for an oyabun or other high-ranking member of the yakuza, the Perks and some of the Skills should be increased to appropriate levels.

**Typical Goals And Motivations:** Typically, a member of the yakuza has three main motivations: make money, serve the oyabun properly and well, and avoid being captured. Some yakuza gangsters, particularly the more powerful members, might also be devoted to increasing their power, destroying another yakuza gang, or acquiring political influence.

**Typical Abilities:** Besides the usual Knowledge and Professional Skills possessed by organized crime figures, many yakuza members will know Martial Arts and the appropriate Weapons Familiarities. Some members may even have been trained as ninja. If the yakuza are considered to be the most “high-tech” of the organized crime groups, some members will have the necessary Sciences and Skills, such as Computer Programming. A gangster, whatever his stature, will possess abilities learned at earlier stages of his career: Gambling, Lockpicking, and Sleight of Hand are all possible.



**Suggested Disadvantages:** The first Disadvantage that comes to mind for the yakuza is Distinctive Feature. The following could be taken as Distinctive Features, all are Easily Concealed: tattoos; yubitsume mutilations; style of dress, hair, and car; attitude; gang symbol lapel pin. (None of these Features are included in the Package Deal because none of them are mandatory for all yakuza members.) Also, a yakuza gangster may choose to follow jingi practices and values, and the giri-ninjo code, either of which would be bought as a Psychological Limitation: Yakuza Code Of Conduct. A yakuza gang member may have developed a Reputation of some sort. And, of course, many yakuza members are Hunted by the police or various crimefighters.

**Roleplaying Tips:** See the section on "Roleplaying The Yakuza," above.

Skills and Talents	Cost
Streetwise .....	3
CK: [campaign city] (or a Japanese city), 13- .....	4
KS: Yakuza Members 14- .....	5
Any one Professional Skill, 11- .....	2
WF: character's choice, 2 points worth .....	2
Language: Yakuza gang slang .....	2
Perk: Fringe Benefit: Member of the yakuza .....	2
Perk: Wealth .....	1
Choose two from the following list: .....	6
Bribery, Conversation, +1 with three related attacks, Gambling, High Society, Stealth	
<b>Disadvantages</b>	
Package Bonus .....	-3
Psychological Limitation: Totally Loyal To .....	-20
Oyabun/Must Follow Oyabun-Kobun System	
<b>Package Cost</b> .....	4

### NAKAMURA HIDEO

18-STR	17-DEX	15-CON	13-BODY	13-INT
14-EGO	18-PRE	14-COM	7-PD	5-ED
3-SPD	8-REC	30-END	30-STUN	

**Powers and Skills:** Yakuza Package Deal (Bribery, High Society, 10 points of Wealth); Acrobatics 12-; Breakfall 12-; Contortionist 12-; Conversation 13-; Martial Arts (Karate); Stealth 13-; English (fluent); +2 with Karate; Combat Sense 12-; Fast Draw 13-

**75+ Disadvantages:** Package Disadvantages; Casual Killer; Distinctive Features (tattoos, gang lapel pin); Reputation (powerhungry oyabun) 11-; Hunted by Tokyo police (As Pow) 8-; Villain Bonus

**Notes:** Nakamura Hideo is the chief oyabun of the Sawakiri-gumi yakuza gang. He is also a "rising star" in Japanese right-wing politics; he spends a lot of time in America taking care of both gang and political business. He is vicious and evil, interested only in expanding his own power and destroying anyone who defies him. He has received extensive karate training, but prefers not to enter battle in most circumstances.

### ARUKI AKIRA

20-STR	20-DEX	18-CON	12-BODY	15-INT
12-EGO	15-PRE	10-COM	8-PD	6-ED
3-SPD	8-REC	36-END	35-STUN	

**Powers and Skills** (see Ninja Package Deal, *Ninja Hero*, pp. 54-55): Acrobatics 13-; Breakfall 13-; Bugging 12-; Climbing 13-; Lockpicking 13-; Martial Arts (Ninjutsu with +2 DC); Security Systems 12-; Stealth 13-; Weapon Familiarity (Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Garotte, Blowgun, Fukimi-bari, Small Arms); Language: Clan Codes And Symbols; +2 with Ninjutsu; +2 with ninja weapons

**75+ Disadvantages:** Package Disadvantages; Utter Loyal To Aruki Clan; Distinctive Features (ninja night-suit); Watched by Aruki clan (Mo Pow, Harshly Punish transgressions) 14-; Villain Bonus

**Notes:** Aruki Akira is a ninja of the Aruki clan. He is totally loyal both to his clan and to the Miyamiji-kai yakuza gang which it serves. His ninja training makes him a highly skilled assassin and spy. Like most ninja, he will go to any lengths, including suicide, to accomplish his mission.

### YAKUZA GANGS

Described below are five yakuza syndicates. GMs who would rather not use the real-life gangs mentioned above can use these, adapting them as necessary to fit their campaigns. The five families are listed below in the rough order of their size and power in Japan; these relationships can change quickly and do not necessarily reflect the family's strength or level of activity in the campaign city.

#### HINAGAWA-KAI

**Size:** The Hinagawa-kai is the largest yakuza syndicate to become involved in criminal operations in the campaign city. In Japan, there are approximately 8,400 members, in 320 affiliated gangs. Authorities estimate that there are at least 200 members operating in the United States. The Hinagawa-kai controls the Ebukawa ninja clan.

**Current Leadership:** Arakida Motoko is the chief oyabun of the Hinagawa-kai; his second-in-command is Nakayama Shinji. Below Nakayama are seven men who act as a "council of advisers" to Arakida; below them are the oyabuns of the various affiliated gangs. The Hinagawa-kai tries to combine the best elements of both gumi and rengo for maximum efficiency.

**Activities In The Campaign City:** Like the other four yakuza gangs described in this section, the Hinagawa-kai is involved in smuggling guns and pornography back to Japan, and also has infiltrated the Japanese tourist industry in the city. Additionally, Arakida has ordered six of his Ebukawa ninja to set up a hidden base of operations in the city, so that he can use them in the future to eliminate rivals and perform contract assassinations.

**Gang Politics And Relations:** As with most yakuza gangs, the Hinagawa-kai functions well as a unit, since all members owe unquestioning obedience to the oyabun. Many members of the syndicate are related by blood or marriage.

### SAWAKIRI-GUMI

**Size:** The Sawakiri-gumi is 7,200 members strong, with approximately 240 affiliated gangs and groups; there are about 175 gang members in the United States, mainly on the West Coast. The Sawakiri-gumi's associated ninja clan is the Nohoda clan.

**Current Leadership:** The ruthless Nakamura Hideo is the unquestioned chief oyabun of the Sawakiri-gumi. His second in command is Kajitani Shun. His four shatei are Ono Kiyoshi, Sakiyuri Akira, Hayata Miseo, and Takemoto Hisato; his wakashira is Shirai Seiki. Below the "executive board" are his kambu atsukai, Kubota Isamu, and 52 wakashu, each of whom commands several kumi-in.

**Activities In The Campaign City:** Nakamura Hideo is interested in power, both criminal and political. He is in the United States for two reasons: first, his rivals are here, so he must be as well; second, the profits he can earn there will help him in Japan. Because of this, the Sawakiri-gumi in America avoids high-profile activities like white slavery and contract murder, and concentrates on sure money-earners like gambling and gun and pornography smuggling. Nakamura knows that his present power base in Japan is quite solid, so he spends a lot of time in his office in Los Angeles, directing his syndicate's American operations. He has brought a few Nohoda ninja over to the United States to assist him. He has begun to try to become involved in politics here, as he is in Japan, with mixed results.

**Gang Politics And Relations:** The gumi structure of this yakuza gang gives it a great deal of cohesiveness and loyalty; most members get along well, and are completely loyal to Nakamura. Like Nakamura, most members are very right-wing, and have formed several small right-wing political parties and interest groups. The most prominent of these is the Yasiruki Dai Nippon Society, which supports the re-arming of Japan and the re-establishment of the Emperor as the nation's ruler.

### MIYAMIJI-KAI

**Size:** There are approximately 4,400 gangsters in the Miyamiji-kai, in 110 affiliated gangs; the family is estimated to have about 100 members in America. Its ninja clan is the Aruki clan.

**Current Leadership:** Miyamiji Junzo is the oyabun of this yakuza gang (like all of the chief bosses of the Miyamiji-kai, he had his family name changed to that of the gang). His chief lieutenant is Tsurimi Eiji, and just below him are three other powerful bosses, Nakatoni Kenji, Morita Yoshio, and Sasaki Akio. Each of these three men have responsibility for eight wakashu, and each wakashu has command of two or more street-level operatives.

**Activities In The Campaign City:** Eager for the profits the white slave trade brings, the Miyamiji-kai has set up several talent agencies and temporary-employment agencies to lure in unsuspecting Western women. The women are either tricked into going to Japan, are kept for work in illegal sex clubs in the Japanese community in the city, or are drugged and spirited off to Japan by means of one of the tour organizations which the syndicate runs. The Miyamiji-kai has spent a great deal of time, effort, and money to set up these organizations, and will go to great lengths to protect



them. With the money the family gets for the women, it buys drugs which it sells in Japan and America for even more money. Last but not least, it is suspected that several sokaiya associated with the Miyamiji-kai have begun to operate in America.

**Gang Politics And Relations:** Not all members of the Miyamiji-kai are pleased with the family's operations beyond Japan; this faction would prefer to restrict gang activities to Japan and Southeast Asia. As yet, their resentment is not very strong, but a significant setback in American could fan the flames of their anger to the point where they would rebel.

### YAMAZAKI-RENGO

**Size:** The Yamazaki-rengo is a confederation of twenty-two gangs, numbering in size from around 20 men to as many as 60 men. So far, its activities in America are limited: it has only 50 members in the United States. The Kajirami ninja clan is associated with the Yamazaki-rengo. The Yamazaki-rengo is made up of smaller gangs which have split off from the other families in order to go their own way, and thus all of the other four yakuza families bear the gang some resentment.

**Current Leadership:** The Yamazaki-rengo is run by a council of the six most powerful gang leaders; currently, these are: Shiokawa Kazuhiro, Sakiyurai Yukio, Hamada Shigeru, Takabe Tashiro, Matsumura Shinobu, and Kobayashi Masao. Shiokawa Kazuhiro is nominally "first among equals." The leaders of the other sixteen gangs play an advisory role; often, however, matters are often decided based on which view commands the most support among the sixteen.



## CHINESE ORGANIZED CRIME

**Activities In The Campaign City:** The Yamazaki-rengo has the least presence of any of these five yakuza gangs in the campaign city. For now, their activities are mainly limited to a little gun smuggling and gambling, with a few sarakin operating as well. Authorities speculate that they are merely biding their time, waiting for the proper moment or opportunity to enter in force.

**Gang Politics And Relations:** The rengo structure and method of rulership make this yakuza gang somewhat unstable. Because the six bosses are often jockeying for political support among the other sixteen gang leaders, they end up selling favors, striking back-room deals, and sort of betraying one another. As a result, there are certain smoldering hatreds among the twenty-two; if a truly bitter argument or conflict were to arise, the group would probably split apart into two or more smaller gangs, and be gobbled up by one of the larger families.

### TSUKIHAMA-GUMI

**Size:** The Tsukihama-gumi has approximately 1,000 members, in 53 affiliated gangs. It has an estimated 80 members in the United States. Its ninja clan is the Tsurimatsuo clan.

**Current Leadership:** The oyabun at the present time is Nomura Emiko, the widow of a recently deceased oyabun. When her husband Isao died, his underlings began to fight over the leadership. A minor war broke out, several bosses were murdered, some gangs left to join the Yamazaki-rengo, and eventually Emiko more or less took over by default. She has so far proved to be a capable leader. Her second-in-command is her son, Nomura Sencho; as yet, she has not definitely "chosen" the rest of her "executive council." Nomura Emiko is old, and somewhat frail; the gang's members are afraid that Nakamura Hideo of the Sawakiri-gumi will be able to take advantage of her "weakness" and assume control of the gang.

**Activities In The Campaign City:** The recent internal war hurt some of the family's American activities; they are in the process of rebuilding. In addition to the usual smuggling operations, the gang is involved in white slavery, extortion, and corporate espionage and sokaiya operations. Before the war, the family was attempting to establish a ninja base, similar to that of the Hinagawa-kai; whether they will continue with this plan remains to be seen.

**Gang Politics And Relations:** The remnants of the family have more or less rallied behind Nomura Emiko, and are loyal to her. Still, the conflict has left scars, and there may be more backbiting or battles before everything is settled. If Emiko were to die, the Yamazaki-gumi would probably entirely disintegrate.

### INTRODUCTION

*The Dragon Head's mansion and offices were magnificently decorated: beautiful Chinese paintings set off against the opulent red and gold tracery of the silk wallpaper; Ming vases and ancient statuary on delicately carved tables and stands; and maidservants of rare beauty silently walking the carpeted halls, dressed in the most luxurious of gowns. Cheng Yi-Fe always felt nervous coming into his master's house—a nervousness which was only increased by the fear he felt for the master himself.*

*Cheng walked into the anteroom of the Dragon Head's office. His master's secretary opened the large double doors into the main office without a word, then stood aside to let Cheng pass through, closing the doors quietly behind him. The Dragon Head's office was, if anything, even more lavishly decorated than the rest of the mansion, for it was here that the master kept his favorite pieces of art and his favorite photos and mementoes of past days. "I am here to report," Cheng said, barely keeping a quaver out of his voice.*

*"Good," said Kun Feng, Dragon Head of the Sing Chun tong. "I hope for your sake that you were successful."*

*"We were. Kwan Yu was gunned down by my Scarlet Dragons as he left the Thousand Golden Sunsets restaurant. That is the last time he will tell any of his tales to vigilantes. Three others who got in our way were also killed."*

*"And the heroin?"*

*"The rest of the Scarlet Dragons broke into his house while he was eating at the restaurant. They found it hidden underneath the floorboards of his kitchen. Because his wife showed them where it was immediately, they spared her life and the lives of her children."*

*Kun Feng sat and thought in silence for a few moments. "Very well," he said when he finally spoke. "You have performed adequately, and I shall remember. Return now to your usual pursuits; I shall summon you when we need speak once more."*

*"Yes, great leader," said Cheng Yi-Fe, bowing as he exited the room.*

Though few Americans know about them, the Chinese Triads (or tongs, as Chinese organized crime is usually known in the United States) are one of the largest, most powerful, and most ruthless organized crime groups in the world. It is estimated that in Hong Kong, where most of the Triads are based, that there are at least fifty Triads, with approximately 300,000 members (as compared to no more than 5,000 or so "made men" in the Mafia in the entire United States). The Triads and tongs control a world-wide heroin distribution network which begins in the "Golden Triangle" of Southeast Asia and stretches as far as Europe and the United States. They are also extensively involved in other crimes, such as illegal gambling and murder for hire.



One reason that so little is known of Chinese organized crime is that it is one of the most difficult forms of organized crime to infiltrate and gain information on. Informants in the Chinese community—hon chews, “bananas,” so called because they are “yellow on the outside, white on the inside”—are rare. Furthermore, law enforcement officers who can speak Chinese and work their way into the world of the tongs are few and far between, even in cities with large Chinese populations.

As 1997, the date Hong Kong is returned to Chinese control, approaches, more and more members of the Triads will be coming to America, intent on working with the tongs or setting up their own criminal empires. *Dark Champions* characters need to be prepared to meet this potential onslaught—in the campaign world, they may be the only men standing between the tongs and a new American crime empire which could rival or surpass anything that came before it.

Much of the information on the Triads (and, to a lesser extent, on the tongs) concerns their activities in Hong Kong. While few *Dark Champions* campaigns will take place in Hong Kong, this information is provided to give players and GMs insight on how Chinese organized crime works and what sort of crimes it might commit in the United States.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHINESE ORGANIZED CRIME

Chinese Triad societies take their name from a symbol for three important concepts in Chinese thought—Heaven, Earth, and Man. The modern-day Triads were formed in the late 1600s not as criminal organizations, but as secret political organizations. They were devoted to the overthrow of the ruling Manchu dynasty, a dynasty of Mongol foreigners, and the restoration of the native Ming dynasty. The rebels' power base was in the south of China. The very first Triad was supposedly formed by five Chinese monks, the only survivors of a Manchu massacre at one of the rebels' bases.

Soon, these secret societies flourished throughout all of China. As Manchu rulers became more despotic, the Triads became larger and more numerous; in some areas, they essentially took the place of local governments. By the 1850s, they were powerful enough to help launch the Taiping Rebellion. But by 1864, after the conclusion of the Opium War between China, England, and France, the Taiping rebellion was crushed. During the Manchus' campaign of reprisals, many Triad members fled to Hong Kong or the United States.

But the war and slaughter did not destroy the Triads. By this time, many had added to their ideals the hatred of the white foreigners who had come into China. Additionally, the persistent persecution of the Triads by the Manchus had forced many Triad members to become criminals, living by crime at the fringes of Chinese society. By the year 1900, most Triads had turned away from politics to devote themselves to earning the enormous profits crime could bring them. With the fall of the Manchus and the establishment of a republican Chinese government in 1911, the Triads gained new respectability and power. Triad membership became a road to success for many. The Triads became a sort of “secret police” for General Chiang Kai-shek, who used them as an adjunct to his KMT army to suppress unions and other left-wing forces.

World War II, and the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong, changed the Triads' position even more. Under the Japanese, the Triads gained virtually total control over the Hong Kong black market and vice trades, cementing their power base for good. In exchange for providing the Japanese with intelligence information, the Triads had the Japanese destroy existing police records on their members and activities, thus crippling many post-war law enforcement efforts. Meanwhile, Chiang Kai-shek was fighting Mao Tse-tung's Communist forces for control of China. In 1949, he lost, and fled to Taiwan.

As Communist forces neared their 1949 takeover of China, hundreds of thousands of Chinese, many of them Triad members, poured into Hong Kong. This led to gang warfare, with different Triads competing for territory and markets. In 1956, major riots rocked Hong Kong. Thereafter, things calmed down considerably, as different Triads learned to work together to increase profit. Since then, there have been no major underworld wars in Hong Kong, and the groups in power in the 1950s continue, more or less, to be in power today. Fueled by the massive profits generated by the heroin trade, the Triads have expanded all over the world, including into the United States. Many members have gone into legitimate businesses as well as criminal ones.

### Chinese Organized Crime Comes To America: The Tongs

The Manchu crackdown in the mid-1800s sent thousands of Triad members fleeing not only to Hong Kong, but to the United States as well. Immigration laws were established to limit and repress them. For example, Chinese women were not allowed to come to America; only Chinese men, who could do hard labor on the railroads, were allowed to immigrate to the United States. This atmosphere of undesirability and discrimination led to the creation of “Chinatowns,” the most famous of which are in San Francisco and New York City.

Naturally, there were Triad members among the Chinese allowed into America; but rather than establish the Triads here, they set up tongs. “Tong” is Chinese for “town hall,” “assembly hall,” or “clan association.” Like the Triads in China, the tongs often served as sort of a “benevolent association,” helping the Chinese populace get by in a country of white men. In many ways, the tongs acted as a government, police force, and welfare agency; they did many good things for the Chinese community. But the tongs also controlled crime in Chinatown, especially the vice and opium trades. These enterprises attracted whites as well as Chinese, giving the Chinatowns reputations as little more than enormous vice dens. This control of crime was highly profitable for the tongs.

As the tongs grew in power and profits, they came into conflict, which led to a series of bloody tong wars. Because the major tongs have “branch offices” in cities other than their main city, a war between two of the tongs in one city led to war in all cities where those tongs were located. The tongs' favorite weapon was the Chinese axe, used both for assassinations and combat, and thus the battles were dubbed “hatchet wars” by whites. The last major tong wars took place in the 1920s.



Changes in immigration laws in the 1930s allowed Chinese women into America; World War II took many vice customers away. These factors and others signalled something of an end to the Chinatowns' reputation for vice and depravity. However, the tongs did not change so much. Even as more Chinese came in, and more whites came to enjoy the restaurants and sights of the Chinatowns, the tongs continued to control Chinese crime in America. Though they still fulfilled many of the functions of a "benevolent society" and aided Chinese-Americans in dozens of ways, most of them also had many criminals as members. Many tongs maintained links with the Triads in China, and spread to new cities. Today, five tongs control most of the Chinese crime in the United States, and every major Chinese criminal is a member of a tong, even though many tong members are not criminals at all.

Currently, both Triads and tongs are flourishing. Triad members in Hong Kong are estimated to number 300,000, in at least 50 different Triad gangs. There are no accurate numbers available for tong membership in the United States, but it can be assumed to be substantial.

## ORGANIZATION, STRUCTURE, AND CULTURE OF CHINESE ORGANIZED CRIME

The tongs have retained many aspects of the Triads, but the two are not necessarily just the same organizations with different names. However, unless specified otherwise, *Dark Champions* gamemasters can assume that both groups act in roughly the same ways, and that the information presented below applies to both groups.

### ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

#### Triad Structure

Triads are generally organized in a hierarchical fashion, with one supreme leader overseeing the activities of lieutenants and underlings. Each type of member has a special number and/or name; all of these numbers begin with "4", and they are usually divisible by three, to satisfy ancient Chinese superstitions. The leader is a 489, and is sometimes known as a "Hill Chief," or, more dramatically, as a "Dragon Head." Next, there are second-rank leaders, underbosses and lieutenants, each of whom is assigned a specific function. For example, there is the 432 (messenger or liaison), and the 438 (recruiter or incense master). Below the second rank is the 426, or "Red Pole" (sometimes translated as "Red Stick"), who is both enforcer and organizer for a Triad. Red Poles are brutal men who enforce Triad discipline and secrecy, often by violent or lethal means. Close in rank to the enforcer is the 415, who is an expert on such matters as finance, money laundering, administration of the Triad, and the like. Lastly, there are the ordinary, "street-level" members, who are given the number 49.

#### Tong Structure

Tongs are structured somewhat differently than Triads in most cases. However, a tong leader may organize his gang to be more like a Triad if he prefers, using the number designations and titles. For example, in some tongs, there is a 426 who is the street-level leader of the tong's street gangs.

The internal organization of a tong is generally similar to that of a Mafia family. The leader of a tong is known as a chairman; he may also be known as a "Dragon Head." His "underboss" is usually called a vice-chairman (no pun intended). The third position on the chain of command is occupied by the two types of tong secretaries. One type is the "English secretary," who speaks English well, helps run tong businesses, and also fulfills duties similar to those of a *consigliere* in the LCN. The second type of secretary is the "street secretary," a sort of lieutenant or *caporegime*. A street secretary controls a group of tong men. Below him are "first grade" tong members, and below them are the "look-sees," or soldiers of the organization.

Additionally, Chinese tongs each have an affiliated street gang which helps them run their criminal enterprises and does the tong's "dirty work." These are not necessarily youth gangs—though most members are young men, some members, particularly the leaders, are often older. The gangs are often organized with much more complexity than is normal for a "street gang." Some gangs also have affiliated groups of Viet Ching (Chinese-Vietnamese) working with them (not to be confused with pure Vietnamese gangs, which are dealt with in later sections of this Sourcebook).

As long as the gangs fulfill their proper roles for the tong, running criminal operations and enforcing orders, they are allowed to have their own "businesses" (such as gambling, black marketeering, and robbery). This has led to intense rivalries between some of the gangs; in some cases, enemy gangs have "shoot on sight" policies. This level of extreme violence pervades Chinese organized crime in America; it has caused a number of mass murders when one gang ambushes another at a restaurant, nightclub, illegal gambling casino, or some similar place. The tongs will usually crack down on their gangs at that point, hoping to avoid too much attention from the authorities.

Joining a tong is no easy matter. A prospective member must be sponsored by an existing member. Then, the prospective member's name is posted in the tong headquarters. If no member objects within three weeks, the new member is inducted (see below for details on Triad and tong initiation ceremonies).

There is evidence that the tongs have a national "ruling council," similar to the Commission of the Mafia. This body is based in New York. As yet, this group remains much less well known than the Commission; while its role can be hypothesized as being similar to the Commission's, no one is sure exactly what the tongs' council does. Establishing a role for this group in a gaming campaign is up to the gamemaster.

### THE CULTURE

Two points need to be made regarding the culture of Chinese organized crime. The first relates to group cohesiveness and secrecy. The criminal elements of a tong are notoriously close-knit and secretive. They have often been virtually impossible for law enforcement agencies to infiltrate (especially in light of America's scant number of policemen who can speak Chinese). *Dark Champions* GMs should be sure to keep this in mind when player characters attempt to gather information on tongs and Triads.

A second item of interest is the initiation ceremony; both Triads and tongs have one. The Triad ritual, known as "hanging the blue lantern," is descended from rituals developed centuries ago and contains elements of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. However, the modern ritual is much shorter, to avoid detection by the police—it used to be three days long, but today is no longer than one day, and is often only an hour or so long. The older ritual involved elaborate costumes, altars, swords, flags, and other sumptuous trappings; the modern ritual has been boiled down to just a few of the older elements. First, initiates are made to swear thirty-six blood oaths of loyalty, brotherhood, and secrecy; various rituals sometimes accompany these oaths. Usually the oaths invoke some horrible fate if the speaker betrays the Triad (for example, "May I be struck by lightning a thousand times if I betray the Triad"). Then a rooster is beheaded, to signify the fate of those who betray the Triad. The next step is for initiates to prick their fingers with a needle, and mix their blood into a bowl of water or wine; often, members will also add their blood to the mixture. Initiates must then drink from the bowl, signifying blood brotherhood.

The tong ritual derives from that of the Triads. Generally, initiates kneel before an altar and, while holding two crossed swords, take the thirty-six oaths of loyalty. Sometimes blood-drinking is also an element of the tong ceremony. Again, because of pressure from modern law-enforcement agencies, the tong ritual is much shorter than it was in the past.

Some Triads and tongs also have their own flags or banners. The flag will be hung outside of tong headquarters, for example, and when tong members gather they will display it. The tong's street gang may use the flag's colors as the gang's colors.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE TRIADS AND TONGS

To begin with, it must be stressed that many tong members are not criminals. A tong may be run by and influenced by its many criminal members, but some members are nothing more than members of what a tong appears to be—a benevolent association devoted to improving the lot of Chinese people in America. Thus, the tongs do not call themselves "tongs;" they have names such as "Sing Chun Merchants' Benevolent Association." These "merchants' associations" engage in many civic and charitable activities. *Dark Champions* PCs who think they ought to start shooting at any tong member they can find are very mistaken.

## HEROIN SMUGGLING

Chinese organized crime's biggest money-making enterprise is heroin smuggling. The Triads and tongs control almost all of the heroin produced in the so-called "Golden Triangle" region of Asia, an area roughly composed of Thailand, Burma, and Laos. The raw heroin is processed there in makeshift labs, then transshipped through Hong Kong and on to America and Europe. It is estimated that the tongs control 50% of the heroin currently sold in the United States (and 70% of the heroin sold in New York City). Asian heroin, a highly-refined form known as "China White," derives its name from its sellers.

The Chinese sell both #3 and #4 heroin. #3 is the heroin of choice for Asians. It is smoked, an activity known as "chasing the dragon." #4 heroin is for injection, and is the heroin of choice for American addicts. Using either type of heroin the wrong way (for example, injecting #3 heroin) can be fatal.

## GAMBLING

Another big money-earning activity for the tongs and Triads is illegal gambling. The Chinese people have a great love of gambling. Some Chinese start the day out with a game of chance the same way an American might consult his horoscope. Since gambling is illegal in most places in America, a huge market has been opened up for the tongs and their street gangs. Tongs run their gambling operations in two ways: either they are temporary set-ups which can be quickly moved to avoid detection, or they are elaborately-concealed gambling clubs. Favored games among the Chinese include mah-jongg, fan-tan (a card game), and paigow (a dominoes game).

## OTHER TONG ACTIVITIES

Besides heroin sales and gambling, the Triads and tongs engage in many of the crimes which other organized crime groups take part in: murder for hire, extortion, loansharking, prostitution and other vice crimes, protection rackets, and the like. These activities are usually (but not always) confined to the Chinese community, but the effects extend beyond it in some cases (for example, with murder for hire, since the tongs' street gangs are often rather indiscriminate in their use of violence). The Chinese have their own euphemistic terms for many of these activities; for example, paying bribes to corrupt officials is known as giving them "tea money."

Similarly, the tongs' affiliated street gangs have their own activities (as do Chinese street gangs with no particular tong connections). Some, such as protection rackets, helping with gambling operations, robbery, and the like, are related to earning money for the tong. Others are connected with warfare between the various gangs. Chinese gangs have a well-deserved reputation for incredible violence—as mentioned above, many rival gangs have a "shoot on sight" policy, and when they shoot, they use high-powered weapons such as Uzis, AK-47s, and combat shotguns which tend to cause a lot of collateral damage. One of the best-known examples of this is the infamous "Golden Dragon" massacre, which took place in 1977 at the Golden Dragon restaurant in San Francisco. Three members of the Joe Boys, a Chinatown street gang, went there to kill Michael "Hot Dog" Louie, the leader of the Wah Ching gang, with which the Joe Boys were at war. These three killers were only seventeen and eighteen years old. Using various guns, include an assault rifle and a powerful 12-gauge shotgun, the three gangsters killed five people and wounded eleven, yet all of their intended targets escaped unharmed.

## MONEY LAUNDERING

Like the Mafia and the yakuza, the tongs and Triads have a variety of methods for laundering their money, making it "clean" so that it does not seem to be derived from criminal activity. The tongs have the advantage of connections in Hong Kong's international financial businesses to help them. A Hong Kong bank or attorney can use sophisticated computer programs and manipulation of the legal system to



channel money through dummy corporations in Hong Kong, the United States, and elsewhere. Eventually, the money returns to the tong members, appearing to be "legitimate" rather than the fruit of illegal drug sales and gambling. Thus, many criminal tong members can ape their innocent brethren by establishing themselves as respectable businessmen.

## TONG LINKS TO OTHER CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

On occasion, two or more tongs and/or Triads will form special ties, forming "joint ventures" in crime. Often this is an attempt by the allies to monopolize a particular criminal industry (for example, the importation and sale of heroin in a particular city). These groups formalize their relationship by means of a ritual known as "burning the yellow paper," which signifies brotherhood. To what extent these relationships involve the "national council" which supposedly rules the tongs is unknown.

There is evidence of ties between the tongs and the Mafia. By a twist of fate, New York City's Little Italy and Chinatown happen to border on one another, thus making the two criminal organizations "neighbors" of a sort. The tongs supply heroin to the LCN, and the Mafia in return provides the tongs with untraceable guns, working capital for loansharking, and other criminal commodities. Both groups have worked together on illegal gambling operations, realizing a mutual profit greater than that they could obtain working individually. Additionally, the tongs perform contract killings for the Mafia, and vice-versa. It remains to be seen just how extensive and strong the links between the two groups are, but because they are so profitable they will probably continue to exist.

## ROLEPLAYING THE TONGS

If the tongs are properly roleplayed, players should have no difficulty distinguishing them from the Mafia, the yakuza, and other organized crime groups. In particular, the GM needs to strive to differentiate the tongs from the yakuza, lest the players come to think that all Oriental criminal gangs are the same. The best way to do this is to emphasize the aspects of Chinese organized crime which are unique to that group.

For example, the Chinese people and civilization are often regarded by Americans as exotic and mysterious. By playing up this "ambiance," the GM can give the tongs a feel all their own. With the tongs' lavish, elaborate rituals, ornate mansions and headquarters, and a language few Americans know, this should not be difficult to do. Throw in a few passwords, secret doors, and deathtraps for good measure, and the tongs' reputation will be firmly established. Keep in mind that when you are dealing with the tongs and Triads, you are dealing with criminal organizations with hundreds of years of history and experience, and a well-deserved reputation for secrecy and caution.

As movies like *Big Trouble In Little China* show, Americans often associate the Chinese with a fascinating and unique style of wizardry and a mythology which is bizarre to many Westerners. Particularly in superheroic street-level campaigns, this association with magic can be used to set the tongs apart from the yakuza, who rely more on technology and the deadly ninja.

Lastly, the tongs are more associated with high levels of violence than either the Mafia or the yakuza in America. The Mafia does not go into restaurants shooting patrons left and right hoping to hit the intended target. Neither does the yakuza; both groups are usually more circumspect than that. But the Chinese street gangs have done such things on several occasions. The GM should make this reputation for violence clear to the PCs through roleplaying and "news events."

## THE TONG SOURCEBOOK

### REAL-LIFE TRIADS AND TONGS

Though it is unlikely that *Dark Champions* GMs will make as much use of the Triads as they will of the tongs, the chart below provides a list of some of the major world Triads.

Generally, an entire Triad will not be involved in crime in the United States, but instead will have individual members working here on behalf of the Triad, or in conjunction with the tongs. Additionally, even groups which do not actually have members in America may be able to manipulate events here (either through alliances; or, for example, by controlling the use of Hong Kong entertainers in Chinese clubs in America).

Name	Home Base	Members	Areas Of Operation
14K Triad	Hong Kong	24,000	North America, Western Europe, Southeast Asia
United Bamboo Gang	Taiwan	15,000	North America, East Asia, Saudi Arabia
Sun Yee On	Hong Kong	30,000+	North America, Southeast Asia
Wo Hop To	Hong Kong	unknown	North America, Southeast Asia
Wo On Lok	Hong Kong	unknown	North America, Southeast Asia
Wo Group	Hong Kong	29,000	Southeast Asia
Chiu Chao	Hong Kong	16,000	Southeast Asia
Luen Kung Lok	Hong Kong	5,000	North America, Southeast Asia
Tung Group	Hong Kong	3,000	Southeast Asia
Niu-Pu Gang	Taiwan	1,000	Taiwan

The major tongs in the United States, their territories, and their affiliated street gangs, are as follows:

Name	Street Gang(s)	Territory
On Leong	Ghost Shadows Ping On	New York City, Chicago
Hip Sing	Flying Dragons Wah Ching	San Francisco
Ying On	—	Los Angeles, Southwest U.S.
Hop Sing	—	West Coast
Suey Sing	—	West Coast
Tung On	Tung On	New York City, Philadelphia
Fukien Association, Three Mountain Association	Fuk Ching	West Coast

The cities listed in the "Territory" column are where the tongs have their headquarters or largest operations; they also are involved in activities in other major cities. A tong's name may change from region to region; thus, the On Leong tong is called the Bing Kung on the West Coast (the reasons for this are not known).

There are a number of Chinese street gangs which are not associated with a tong. For example, the Cheung Ching Yee, or "Joe Boys," gang of Los Angeles is a splinter group which broke away from the Wah Ching of San Francisco to form their own gang. Some other independent gangs include the Black Eagles and the White Eagles.

Gamemasters who are interested in using real-life tongs and Triads in their campaigns should consult the references in the Bibliography for more information on these groups.

### TONG MEMBER PACKAGE DEAL

This is a Package Deal for tong members. It is structured so that it can be used either for normal tong members, or for the youths in a tong's street gang.

**Typical Goals And Motivations:** Besides the usual criminal motivations, such as greed, a tong member or street gang member may be motivated by a special hatred for another tong or its gang. Because of a tong's outward appearance of respectability, a tong member may have an interest in maintaining his image as an upstanding citizen, or may be involved in Chinese-American politics. Street gang members may be competing for membership in the actual tong itself.

**Typical Abilities:** Many tong members and street gang members will know martial arts; often, all members of a tong will use the same martial art, having learned it from older tong members. In a superheroic street-level campaign, some tong members may be accomplished Chinese wizards and alchemists. Older tong members will have a variety of Skills, reflecting a life of crime when they were younger and a life of respectability at the later stages of their careers. Older tong members may also need to pay for more Wealth of a greater Fringe Benefit than the Package Deal reflects (conversely, street gang members might need to "trade" the Wealth points for something else until they advance in the ranks enough to acquire such wealth).

**Suggested Disadvantages:** Being Hunted (by the police, vigilantes, or a rival gang) is a good Disadvantage for any organized crime group, including the tongs. Street gang members may be Rivals with one another, as they compete for advancement within the tong. A lower-level tong member or a street gang member may be Watched by the higher-ups. A tong may have a recognizable flag, banner, or article of clothing which would be a Distinctive Feature (easily concealed). Tong members who are Chinese wizards may have Disadvantages such as Vulnerability, Susceptibility, or Physical Limitation to reflect some limit on their magic.

**Roleplaying Tips:** See the section on "Roleplaying The Tongs," above.

Skills And Talents	Cost
Streetwise .....	3
CK: [campaign city], 11- .....	2
AK: [campaign city]'s Chinatown, 14- .....	5
KS: Tong Members 13- .....	4
Any one Professional Skill, 11- .....	2
WF: 2 points' worth, character's choice .....	2
Language: English (fluent) (Chinese is native) .....	2
Perk: Fringe Benefit: Member Of A Tong .....	2
Perk: Wealth .....	1
Choose two from the following list: .....	6
+1 with three related attacks, Forgery, Gambling, High Society, Interrogation, Shadowing, Stealth	
<b>Disadvantages</b>	
Package Bonus .....	-3
Psychological Limitation: .....	-20
Loyalty To The Tong (or Street Gang)	
<b>Package Cost</b> .....	<b>6</b>

### CHENG YI-FE

15-STR	14-DEX	15-CON	12-BODY	10-INT
10-EGO	13-PRE	8-COM	8-PD	5-ED
3-SPD	7-REC	30-END	30-STUN	

**Powers and Skills:** Tong Member Package Deal (Gambling 11-, Stealth 12-); Martial Arts (Resplendent Dragon style); Shadowing 11-; +2 with Martial Arts; +1 with Uzi; +1 with 12-Gauge Shotgun

**75+ Disadvantages:** Package Disadvantages; Distinctive Features (facial scars); Hunted by the police (Mo Pow, Capture) 8-

**Notes:** Cheng Yi-Fe is the leader of the Scarlet Dragons, the street gang associated with the Sing Chun tong. He is a vicious, amoral killer; the only person he fears is Kun Feng, the Dragon Head of the Sing Chun. He is trained in a variant of the Resplendent Dragon martial arts style, as are all of his gang (see "Ancient Chinese Secrets," by Steven S. Long, *Adventurer's Club* #17, for details).





### HUANG ZHU

10 STR	15 DEX	10 CON	10 BODY	18 INT
15 EGO	18 PRE	8 COM	4 PD	4 ED
2 SPD	6 REC	20 END	25 STUN	

**Powers and Skills:** Gambling 14-; Interrogation 13-; Martial Arts (Kung Fu); Oratory 13-; Persuasion 13-; Sleight Of Hand 12-; Stealth 12-; Streetwise 15-; Weapon Familiarity (Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Weapons); KS: Tong Members 16-; KS: Tong/Triad History 14-; Languages: Cantonese, English (both fluent, Mandarin is native); +1 with Kung Fu; +2 with Martial Strike; Fringe Benefit: Tong Arbitrator; 3 points of Wealth

**75+ Disadvantages:** Devoted To Maintaining Tong Peace; Love Of Gambling; Lamé (left leg, 3" maximum movement); Age 87; Reputation (man of influence in the Chinese community) 11-; Villain Bonus

**Notes:** Huang Zhu has been involved with the tongs since his youth. After surviving the bloody "hatchet wars" of the 1920s, he became disgusted with tong violence, and began to search for other solutions. Eventually, he used his great influence among the tongs to establish himself as an "arbitrator" for Chinese criminals. Huang Zhu listens to both sides in a criminal dispute and renders a fair decision. He is greatly respected for his wisdom; his word is almost as strong as law among the tongs.

### CHINESE TONGS

This section provides a GM with five ready-made tongs for use in *Champions* campaigns. GMs who do not want to spend time researching real-life tongs and Triads can use these instead. Since the focus of most *Dark Champions* campaigns is on American cities, no fictional Triads are presented here, but a GM who needs one can either adapt one of these tongs or can quickly create one based on the notes given above on the Triads.

All of the tongs and their affiliated gangs essentially engage in the same sorts of activities (heroin smuggling, gambling, robbery, and so forth), as described in the "Activities" section, above; therefore, no separate description of a tong's activities is given here, unless circumstances require it. Similarly, because of their hierarchical structure, the tongs generally have good internal relations; assume that all tong members get along well unless specified otherwise.

Membership figures and other information includes the tong's street gang. No mention is made of a tong's non-criminal members or activities.

### CHOY SING TONG

**Size:** There are 197 criminal members.

**Current Leadership:** Charles Zhou is the chairman of the Choy Sing. His vice-chairman is Lan Hou, his English secretary is Yip Tao, and his street secretary is Han Fei.

**Gang Relations:** Han Fei thinks that Charles Zhou is a poor Dragon Head for the tong. He believes that the tong will be ruined if it does not throw Zhou out and make himself chairman. Han Fei is attempting to recruit followers, but is having only moderate success so far.

**Street Gang:** The Choy Sing's affiliated street gang is the Emerald Door gang, which takes its name from the prominent green doors which lead into the Choy Sing's meeting hall. The gang has about 35 members, and is led by Phillip "Jackie Duck" Hsaio.

### THE GOLDEN SERPENT ASSOCIATION

**Size:** This association has about 200 members.

**Current Leadership:** Each branch of the Golden Serpent Association, including the one in the campaign city, is led by a man with the title of "Golden Mandarin," [Campaign city]'s Golden Mandarin's real name is Shiu Te. His second-in-command, known as a Silver Mandarin, is Xianhua Man. Below these two in the gang hierarchy are two men who have the title of Gold Fang: Jian Kuan-tai and Gao Shude. The Golden Mandarin is reputed to be an expert at the tong's unique style of martial arts, the Golden Serpent style, and to know the secrets of the dreaded dim mak as well (for information on the Golden Serpent martial art, see "Ancient Chinese Secrets," by Steven S. Long, *Adventurer's Club* #17; for details of the dim mak technique, see *Ninja Hero*, pp. 40-41). Some rumors also credit the Golden Mandarin with the powers of a Chinese sorcerer, but most people dismiss this as sheer fantasy.

**Activities:** The Golden Serpent Association has many branches all over the world. Besides its heroin smuggling activities, the tong is involved in the international black market for art and antiquities. Many tong members are highly skilled art appraisers, who steal valuable art objects for illegal resale. For this reason, the Golden Serpent Association in the campaign city often works with the Qi On tong, because that tong's leader, Mah Sze, uses them to help increase his art collection.



**Street Gang:** The Golden Serpent gang, with at least 45 members, is affiliated with the Association. Its leader is Kwan Shih Peng, and his followers are as ruthless and vicious as the creature whose name they bear.

#### ON AT-ZHANG TONG

**Size:** The On At-Zhang has about 220 criminal members.

**Current Leadership:** The On At-Zhang tong has adopted a Triad-like structure. The 489 or Dragon Head is Wu Kien. His second-rank members are Hsaio Loo (a 432) and the tong's recruiter, Chang Peng (a 438). The tong's Red Pole, or enforcer, is William Haifeng (a 426). A 415, Lai Yuwei, administers the tong and oversees its finances. At age 37, Wu Kien is a relatively young tong leader; his rapid rise in the tong has been due to his shrewd mind and ruthless tactics. Several rivals of his have been not-so-subtly "eliminated," and he would try to deal with any threat from the PCs in the same violent way.

**Activities:** The On At-Zhang tong is well-known for the elaborate street party they throw in Chinatown each year to celebrate Chinese New Year (in February); the party features lots of food and fireworks. The tongs usually mutually agree to suspend all violence during this festival, but you one never know when one of them will change its mind...

**Street Gang:** The On At-Zhang's street gang is the Dark Fist gang, which numbers about 30 but has a few dozen other "associates." The gang's leader is Xu Te-Wu. The Dark Fists take their name from the gang's initiation ceremony, which involves tattooing the Chinese ideograms for bravery, loyalty, and superiority on the backs of their hands (a Distinctive Feature). Most of the members are skilled in the martial art of Shao-Lin Tiger Style Kung Fu (see *Ninja Hero*, pp. 20-22, for details).

#### QI ON TONG

**Size:** The criminal members of the Qi On tong number approximately 300.

**Current Leadership:** The Dragon Head of the Qi On is the venerable Mah Sze, a 64-year-old veteran of tong life. His vice-chairman is Chang Shi-Ping, his English Secretary is Shiu Ning, and his street-level secretary is Lan Lieh. Mah Sze is known as an art collector and a connoisseur; his collection of Chinese art is said to be one of the greatest in the world. He goes to great lengths to protect his collection and acquire new pieces.

**Activities:** The Qi On and its Amber Moon gang are engaged in a mild war with the Sing Chun tong and its Scarlet Dragon gang. So far, this war has not escalated beyond interfering with each others' operations and several murders. The arbitrator Huang Zhu is attempting to prevent further violence, but he seems to be making little progress.

**Street Gang:** The Qi On's street gang is the Amber Moon gang, led by Johnny Fang. It has 40 to 50 members. The Amber Moon runs a floating dice game which many Chinese gamblers eagerly participate in. Because of the war with the Sing Chun tong, the Amber Moons and the Scarlet Dragons have a "shoot-on-sight" policy.

#### SING CHUN TONG

**Size:** The Sing Chun has an estimated 400 criminal members.

**Current Leadership:** The Dragon Head of the Sing Chun is Kun Feng, a cold, calculating individual who only looks at others with an eye to how much profit or trouble they can bring him. His vice-chairman is Qui Yixiao. His English secretary is a woman, Kwan Meizhu (female participants are an oddity for a tong; no one has been able to ascertain why Kun Feng and the others tolerate and, in fact, welcome her participation in tong governance). His street secretary is Sun Kuang.

**Activities:** The Sing Chun is at war with the Qi On tong; see that tong's description, above, for further details.

**Street Gang:** The Scarlet Dragon street gang works with the Sing Chun. It has approximately 40 members, and is led by Cheng Yi-Fe. The gang members are trained in a martial arts style which is descended from the Resplendent Dragon style (see "Ancient Chinese Secrets," by Steven S. Long, *Adventurer's Club* #17, for details); the gang takes its name from one of the style's maneuvers. The Scarlet Dragons and the Amber Moon gang have a "shoot-on-sight" policy which has led to many deaths, both of gang members and of innocent citizens.

## OTHER ORGANIZED CRIME GROUPS

This section will focus on six additional criminal organizations, some "organized" and others not especially so: the Mexican Mafia; Colombian drug cartels; Jamaican "posses;" Vietnamese gangs; American motorcycle gangs; and American street gangs, such as the infamous "Crips" and "Bloods" gangs of Los Angeles. The fact that these organizations are grouped together into one section, rather than each having its own section like the Mafia, the yakuza, and the tongs, should not be taken as an indication that they are any less evil or less important in the world of crime. It simply means that the groups in this section do not require descriptions which are as detailed as those of the three groups presented above. In some cases, this is because their activities and scope are much more limited than those of the "big three" groups. In other cases it is because there is comparatively little information available on these groups. Many of these groups are relative "newcomers" to the underworld, and so have not yet had the opportunity to expand their "business" or attract the attention that older, established groups have.

At the end of this section there are several write-ups of non-player characters who belong to these organizations; some other write-ups can be found in the "Independent Criminals" section of this Sourcebook. Outside of these character descriptions, no Package Deals or ready-made game versions of these groups are provided.

Generally, these groups do not use superhuman or paranormal agents. For the most part, they are too small or too insular, and therefore cannot attract superpowered help. The exception to this are the Colombian drug cartels, which are so large, powerful, and wealthy that they can use as many supervillains or paranormal mercenaries as the GM wishes.



## THE MEXICAN MAFIA

**Description:** The Mexican Mafia got its start in 1957 in the prisons of California. Mexican criminals, fearing for their safety, banded together for mutual protection. Gradually, their group became more and more powerful in the prison system, controlling the flow of illegal weapons and drugs to prisoners. They began to call themselves the "Mexican Mafia" out of admiration for La Cosa Nostra.

Eventually, as members got out of prison and continued their illegal activities, the group developed a presence on the outside. Soon they had formed alliances with criminal groups in Mexico; this facilitated the group's main function, the smuggling and sale of drugs. They continue in this activity today, competing with the Chinese tongs, the Mafia, and other groups for their share of the drug market.

The Mexican Mafia is still a powerful force in many prison systems, as well. In the prisons, they often compete with another Hispanic gang known as La Nuestra Familia. Ironically, the Mexican Mafia's ally in this struggle is the white supremacist, neo-Nazi prison gang called the Aryan Brotherhood, which also has links to American outlaw motorcycle gangs (see below). La Nuestra Familia is in turn allied with the Black Guerrilla Family, a Maoist-oriented prison gang for blacks.

Most members join the Mexican Mafia while they are in prison. Potential members must be "sponsored" by an existing member, and are voted on by the rest of the gang at that particular prison. The members are required to kill on command without hesitation. This capacity for extreme violence is carried over to activities in the outside world: the Mexican Mafia is well-known and highly feared for its willingness to maim and kill at the slightest provocation.

The Mexican Mafia is very simply structured. In America, there is a "general" who is in overall control, with several "godfathers" as underlings. These men control lower-rank members known, in descending order of importance, as captains, lieutenants, and "soldados" (soldiers). Individual gangs, and indeed the whole American organization, may by now answer to one or more of the powerful and sophisticated Mexican criminal families.

The Mexican families "branch" of the Mexican Mafia is often just that: an extended family whose leaders are related by blood and marriage (unlike a Mafia or yakuza "family," which is based on "adoption"). Ties to the American branch of the Mexican Mafia are also frequently based on blood relations. There are an estimated fifteen to twenty-five families, numbering from 15 to 3,000 members each; some of these members are the gang members in the United States. Much like the "families" of La Cosa Nostra, the Mexican Mafia families do not always work well together, and sometimes battle one another. There is as yet no evidence of a "commission" which rules over all of Mexican crime.

Readers should be aware that, for purposes of *Dark Champions*, the scope of the Mexican Mafia has been somewhat exaggerated. The group's links with Mexican drug-growing families are not altogether clear, but probably exist in some form. In general, the Mexican Mafia has been "broadened" for *Dark Champions* purposes, making it the Hispanic version of organized crime. If the GM prefers, he can return the Mexican Mafia to its prison roots, keeping it

mainly a prison-based gang, with released members working for it on the outside. The GM should also determine the extent of the links between Mexican drug-growing families and the American gangs; a Mexican criminal overlord, Miguel Mictlan, is provided at the end of this section for the GM's use. Lastly, the GM should also determine the geographical range of the Mexican Mafia. In the real world, they are mainly confined to the parts of the United States which are west of Chicago, especially the Southwest; but the larger and more powerful organization described here would be the main form of Hispanic organized crime all over the United States.

**Activities:** As stated above, the Mexican Mafia is mainly confined to a single activity: drug smuggling and sales. In addition to heroin and marijuana, which can be grown in Mexico, the gangs also deal in cocaine transshipped from Colombia and illegal pharmaceuticals (such as amphetamines and barbiturates) which are secretly manufactured in Mexico. (In the prisons, the Mexican Mafia also controls illicit activities such as gambling, homosexual prostitution, and making and selling illegal weapons.)

Mexican heroin is known as "Mexican brown" or "Mexican mud," because of its dark color (as compared to "China White" heroin, grown in the Golden Triangle of Asia and sold by the Chinese Triads and tongs). It is generally less pure than China White, though there is a variety of Mexican heroin known as "black tar" which is exceptionally pure. Mexican organized crime is estimated to supply from 33-40% of the heroin consumed in the United States.

Mexican heroin, derived from opium poppies as is all heroin, is grown primarily in the wild, mountainous Mexican states of Sinaloa, Durango, and Chihuahua. Some heroin can also be grown in Oaxaca, Michoacan, Jalisco, Nuevo Leon, and Veracruz. The harvest takes place twice a year, from September to November and March to April. After harvesting their crop, the Mexican crime families process it in hidden labs in the states of Sinaloa, Jalisco, and Guerrero. The processing of poppy sap into heroin generally takes from one to three days.

After processing, the heroin is smuggled across the virtually-unguarded 1,933-mile border into the United States to the families' American gang compatriots, who distribute it. Heroin for the western United States usually comes in through California; heroin for Chicago through Texas. Smuggling can be overland (by car or human carrier), by air (there are more than 300 airstrips in the Mexican poppy regions), or by ship. Mexican heroin is dominant in Chicago, but the Mexican Mafia faces stronger competition from the Chinese tongs on the West and East Coasts.

The Mexican Mafia is also involved in marijuana and cocaine distribution. Marijuana grows well in many places in Mexico, and the families are estimated to provide at least 30% of the marijuana used in the United States. Cocaine cannot be grown in Mexico, but the Colombian drug cartels (see below) use the well-developed Mexican smuggling routes to transship their product into the United States. The Mexican routes see the most use when American drug-prevention authorities crack down on the Caribbean-Florida smuggling routes. This cooperation has created strong links between some Mexican Mafia families and the Colombian drug cartels.

## COLOMBIAN DRUG CARTELS

**Description:** In the recent past, the infamous Colombian drug cartels have attracted more attention than just about any other organized crime group. This attention is justly deserved, because the cartels have high-absolute control over those regions of South America which are the only place in the world where coca plants, from which cocaine is derived, can be naturally grown. The Colombians dominate not only production but also the importation and distribution of cocaine in the United States, having violently eliminated their Cuban rivals in the mid-1970s.

There are about twenty Colombian cartels, of which five or so are dominant. The two largest cartels, the Medellin, Colombia cartel and the Cali, Colombia cartel, are estimated to control approximately 80% of the cocaine distributed in the United States. Each cartel is structured around a "family," an actual extended family based on blood, marriage, and godparenthood which forms its core. A family is despotically ruled by a single member; usually this is the eldest male, but female leaders and high-level members of the cartels are not unknown. Allied with the family are a number of semi-independent Colombian drug dealers. This allows the cartel to coordinate its entire cocaine manufacturing and distribution effort, resulting in a more efficient, and thus more profitable, operation. (A character sheet for a sample cartel leader, Teresa Maria Ochoa de Fonseca, is provided at the end of this section of the Sourcebook.)

A member's relationship and duty to the family is that member's main priority in life. Members of the cartels perform many different jobs: growers, processors, smugglers, bankers, lawyers, chemists, sellers, enforcers, assassins, and a unique type of operative known as a "corrupter" (whose job, as the title indicates, is to corrupt officials all over the Western Hemisphere, to ensure that the cartels can continue to operate with as little interference as possible). The cartels have a concept, *dignidad* or "dignity," which resembles the Mafia's *rispetto* and dictates how members relate to one another.

A cartel's drug processing and distribution network may have thousands of members. The networks are so easily rearranged that law enforcement officials have difficulty estimating how many there are, though every major American city has at least one network, if not more, operating in it. The security for the networks is incredibly tight; members often know only a few other members, and after every raid by law enforcement (or vigilantes), the cartel conducts a post-raid investigation to learn from its own mistakes.

**Activities:** The Colombian drug cartels are an organized crime group focused on one, and only one, activity: the growing and distribution of cocaine. They sell millions of dollars of it each year in the United States, earning money so quickly they cannot even spend it all. The cartels control so much cocaine that they have been able to effectively "insure" their shipments. If a shipment is seized, the cartels will often replace it for free, "writing off" the seized drugs as just another cost of doing business.

The cartels' reach extends far beyond the Caribbean basin. In order to launder their ill-gotten gains, they have resorted to investments and bank deposits all over the world (such as Swiss bank accounts). But much of their money is kept in banks in various Caribbean island nations, giving them a great deal of financial power in those countries to complement the political power they gain through bribery

and extortion. They also spend their money on luxurious homes in Colombia, the Caribbean, and the United States; on communications and recordkeeping equipment to keep track of their vast operations; on vehicles, including the planes and boats they use for smuggling; and on weapons. So far, the cartels have generally confined themselves to weapons such as high-powered handguns (9mm and .357 are their favorites), submachine guns, and assault rifles; if they were to obtain caches of military weapons they might become even more powerful and violent than they are now.

The five major cartels have generally been at war with one another since the late Seventies. This has not slowed the flow of cocaine into the United States, but it has led to a great deal of violence, not only in Colombia but in American cities as well. Different cartels will have gun battles in public places, caring nothing for the innocent people who are killed by the crossfire. While the Mafia will only retaliate against an offending member himself, if someone offends the cartels or tries to muscle in on their turf, the cartel will murder that person and his family (wife and children, that is) as well. They also engage in torture and assassination when they feel the situation calls for it. If a member of the cartel is captured and cooperates with authorities, the cartel will torture and kill his family; but if he keeps his mouth shut, the cartel will take good care of his family. This policy ensures group loyalty and security.

Nor do the cartels confine their murderous activities to members of the underworld. Their penchant for extreme violence has often been exercised against public officials who oppose them. Among their victims have been Colombian presidential candidates and Colombian judges, including members of the Colombian Supreme Court. Because the cartel leaders are essentially absolute rulers in their territory, it has proved very difficult to make them pay for these crimes. Whether the cartels will extend their narco-terrorism to the United States remains to be seen.

## JAMAICAN POSSES

**Description:** One of the newest forms of organized crime to emerge on the American crime scene is the Jamaican "posse," a name taken from the members' love of Western movies. A posse is a gang of young black men of Jamaican descent. Many of the members are in the United States illegally, with documentation which has been forged by other posse members. There are approximately 40 different posses in the United States, with an estimated 10,000 or more members. Some of their names include: Banton, Rankers (or Southies), Shower, Spangler, Super, Tel-Aviv, and Waterhouse Riverton City (some of these are names of Jamaican neighborhoods).

The posses have three "levels" of membership. At the top are one or more leaders who control the posse but do not get involved in street-level operations. Leadership can be shared, and sometimes shifts from one member to another. The second level is made up of lieutenants, who transport drugs, weapons, and profits to (and from) the leader(s). Occupying the lowest level are the street-level drug dealers, who also commit the bulk of the posse's violent crimes. Within a posse there may also be several factions. Many posses are made up of members who all come from the same neighborhood in Jamaica and/or are related by blood or marriage. Threats to loved ones in Jamaica can be used to keep a tight rein on members. While the posses are close-knit and disciplined,





and thus difficult to infiltrate or gather intelligence on, there seems to be little gang loyalty in most cases. If he wants to, a member can usually switch from posse to posse with no consequences. This transient nature further complicates law enforcement efforts.

Posse members can often be recognized by their "dreadlock" hairdos and Caribbean accents (which can be taken as a "Distinctive Feature" Disadvantage), but some posse members have begun to deliberately not have dreadlocks for this reason. There is no evidence that the posses are controlled by or strongly connected with the Rastafarian religious movement, despite the similarities between the two groups (some individual posse members may be Rastafarians, of course). However, some posse members do use Rastafarian "code words" to confuse the police (player characters can buy this as a Language if they wish, or, at the GM's option, can know what posse members are saying if they make a Streetwise roll at -2). Some examples include "baldhead," meaning an undesirable outsider; and "beast," a term for the police. Similarly, there is no known connection between Jamaican posses and voodoo or various voodoo-like religions, but since this religious element is often featured in comic books, GMs might want to create some "voodoo posses." Brother Namaan, a character in the "Independent Criminals" section of this Sourcebook, leads a voodoo posse.

**Activities:** Though the posses are involved in a number of criminal activities, by far their chief activity is drug smuggling. The posses smuggle cocaine and marijuana into this country and sell it for great profit; they are also well-known for their high-grade "sinsemilla" marijuana. However, the posses are especially involved with the distribution of crack cocaine; they are said to control 40% of the United States crack market.

Unlike other organized crime groups, posses collect their drug profits after the drugs are sold on the street—a sort of "drugs on consignment" system. Profits are then channelled back up to the leader, who distributes money back to the members as he see fit. This system has been the cause of some conflicts within posses. Posses also do not seem to be as involved in money laundering as other drug dealing groups; they keep their profits in cash, and use it to buy personal property, weapons, and even businesses.

The posses usually smuggle drugs into this country by using couriers and commercial airlines; sometimes a posse will have as many as ten "mules" (drug couriers) on the same flight (and none of the mules will know about the others). The drugs are then transported throughout the country in one of two ways: by means of posse-owned businesses, such as travel agencies or automobile rental agencies; or by the members themselves. Posse members will carry drugs on buses or by car, rather than planes, since they can avoid metal detectors that way. When the cocaine arrives, it is temporarily stored at a "stash house," which is usually located in some out-of-the-way neighborhood (so that police surveillance can be easily detected). When it is ready for sale, the cocaine or crack is taken to a "crackhouse" by a "runner," usually a local youth. This system keeps the posse's risk of a large loss of drugs to a minimum.

Crackhouses (sometimes also known as "gatehouses") are usually in old buildings and are extensively fortified (with solid steel doors, heavily armed guards, guard dogs, and the like). Posses set up crackhouses with help from local criminals, but the local help is never allowed to become part of the

"core" of the posse, which is for Jamaicans only. Before they move to a new city and set up such an operation, posse leaders will use "scouts" to do a "market survey" of the local drug market. When they arrive, they deliberately try to sell the highest quality drugs at the best prices, to drive any competitors out of business. If that doesn't work, they use violence and murder instead.

Besides drug distribution, posses are also involved in firearms smuggling, forgery, auto theft, kidnappings, robberies, insurance fraud, and "home invasions" (a combination violent robbery and party in which the homeowners are terrorized, and sometimes tortured and/or murdered).

These activities have given the posses a well-deserved reputation for incredibly violent, murderous behavior. There is nothing a posse member loves so much as a good gun; they favor powerful handguns, the "mini" submachineguns, and assault rifles. They do not hesitate to use these guns, either: posse members are thought to be responsible for more than 3,000 murders nationwide since 1983. They fight each other over profits and they fight anyone else who tries to muscle in on their "turf." There is evidence that individual posses actually train for combat; some authorities have described them as "lusting after" violence and guns. Even the Colombians, some of the most violent organized criminals, are reported to be afraid of the posses. With this sort of ruthlessness and firepower, the posses make a good foe for *Dark Champions* characters.

## VIETNAMESE GANGS

**Description And Activities:** When the Communist forces in Vietnam won the war there in the early 1970s, hundreds of thousands of non-communist Vietnamese fled for their lives. Many of them ended up here in the United States. Among those thousands were many who became involved in criminal activities against their own people.

Vietnamese crime gangs can be divided into two types: adult gangs and youth gangs. The adult gangs are made up of older men; often all of the members formerly belonged to the same South Vietnamese combat unit. Thus, many of them have combat-related skills such as Combat Skill Levels, Demolitions, Stealth, Survival, and Tactics. They engage in such illegal activities as gambling, murder, arson, fraud, and extortion (they threaten to label a Vietnamese-American as pro-communist unless he pays them a substantial sum of money). The adult gangs, because of their training and attitudes, are capable of extremely violent and brutal behavior.

The youth gangs are generally small, with from fifteen to thirty members. In some ways, they are very different from other street gangs. They do not claim a set territory, but instead are mobile, often travelling great distances to commit crimes (or entire crime sprees). The gang's members themselves sometimes change affiliation quickly, since there is neither an "initiation ritual" nor a penalty for leaving the gang. In fact, the membership can change daily, as the gang travels across the country on a crime spree. The gangs do not usually choose a name or color for themselves; however, this is changing in some cities, and according to reports there are a few nationwide named gangs (the Black Eagles, the Pink Knights, and the Thunder Tigers, for example). Beyond this, though, they often resemble other street gangs. They totally exclude females, though there are some all-female Vietnamese youth gangs; females are sometimes used as

money managers. The leader of a Vietnamese youth gang is usually one of the older members; he directs the gang's criminal operations, disposes of goods the gang has stolen, and obtains drugs for his followers.

Vietnamese youth gangs are mainly involved in property crimes such as theft, robbery of homes, and extortion; their usual targets are other Vietnamese. Most of the youth gangs are highly profit-oriented. They steal just about anything, but seem to specialize in cars and car stereos. They dispose of the stolen vehicles through sophisticated "chop shop" operations. The operations of the youth gangs are so sophisticated and precise that some sort of outside control, such as by an adult Vietnamese gang, is a possibility.

The Vietnamese gangs are also infamous for their so-called "home invasions." First, they gather "intelligence" about a particular family. When the time is right (often when a party, wedding, or similar event is taking place), the gang bursts in and begins terrorizing and robbing everyone present. Vandalism, sexual assaults, and murders are also a part of these attacks. After a home invasion or any other robbery, the gang will get its female financial manager to divide the money between them in proper proportion.

The Vietnamese youth gangs are known for their incredible viciousness and violent tendencies. High-caliber handguns are usually their weapons of choice. In contrast to many other youth gangs, Vietnamese gangs have even shown a willingness to become involved in armed confrontations with law enforcement agents. Because of this attitude about combat, the Vietnamese gangs may mean trouble for even experienced vigilante characters.

*Dark Champions* GMs should be careful not to confuse true Vietnamese gangs with Viet Ching gangs. The latter are gangs of Vietnamese-Chinese youth which work with the Chinese tongs and their associated street gangs. While the Vietnamese gangs do sometimes work with Chinese organized crime, unlike the Viet Ching they do not do so exclusively.

## AMERICAN OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE GANGS

**Description:** In the United States today, there are an estimated 800-900 criminal motorcycle gangs, some quite small but others extremely large (with world-wide membership in some cases). There are four major gangs: the Hell's Angels, the Outlaws, the Bandidos, and the Pagans. These four are known to be wide-ranging, full-time organized criminal groups, despite their attempts to maintain a facade of innocent activity. These four gangs are estimated by the Drug Enforcement Administration to have over 3,000 total members; estimates of non-member "associates" range as high as ten per actual member. Motorcycle gang members sometimes refer to themselves as "one-percenters," a nickname taken from an old American Motorcycle Association report which maintained that the outlaw motorcyclists comprised only one percent of American motorcyclists.

Besides a gang member's motorcycle (his most prized possession), each member also treasures his set of the gang's "colors." Each gang is symbolized by its "colors," a sleeveless leather jacket distinctively decorated with patches, gang logos, and sometimes the name of the owner's home chapter or town. These jackets are considered to be a member's greatest possession. In HERO System terms,



these jackets can be taken as a Distinctive Feature (usually "easily concealed," though some fanatic members may refuse to take the jacket off, making it a "major effort" to obscure). However, there are some reports of motorcycle gang members abandoning both the motorcycles and their colors, becoming more like "mainstream" organized criminals.

Despite their reputation as rowdy, almost anarchistic, rebels, outlaw motorcycle gangs actually have a sophisticated, organized structure. The overall gang is divided into "chapters," which are then members of "regional" groups as well as the national organization. The entire national gang is led by a "mother club," which is either the gang's very first chapter, or is a national body in which each member is responsible for overseeing a portion of the gang's chapters. The national president is not always an actual leader, however; he may just be the gang's spokesman.

The leadership of an individual gang chapter is composed of a president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, and sergeant-at-arms. These officers are usually elected for set terms; their responsibilities and duties are self-evident from their titles. Additionally, a gang may have informal "leaders" who in fact wield more power and influence than the elected leadership. Each chapter usually goes out of its way to avoid police surveillance. Many clubhouses are actually armed fortresses, complete with elaborate security systems.

Joining an outlaw motorcycle gang is no easy task. Prospective members are introduced to the chapter by an established member. Their backgrounds are extensively checked, often by women associated with the gang who work in government offices. If they come up "clean," they have to go through a probationary period. During this time, the potential member's loyalty to the gang and his ability and willingness to commit crime are tested. Only men can become members of an outlaw motorcycle gang. Women are regarded as property (either the gang's, or a specific member's), and are considered less important than a member's motorcycle—in other words, they are virtually treated as slaves. The gang's women are also used as spies, prostitutes, and drug couriers.

**Activities:** Outlaw motorcycle gangs are involved in just about every sort of criminal activity. Some of the major crimes they tend to commit include arson and bombings, assault, auto theft, drug trafficking, extortion, murder for hire,

kidnapping, rape, receiving stolen goods, and robbery. Some of the gangs are also involved in the production of methamphetamines, including the designer drug "ice," which sometimes brings them into competition with the yakuza for markets. Each chapter's mobility makes it difficult to investigate and apprehend, so the chapters often get away with their crimes. When the chapter's income exceeds its needs, it launders the money by using it to buy legitimate businesses.

Some criminal motorcycle gangs, particularly the Hell's Angels, are known to have links to the Mafia. The Mafia will use motorcycle gang members for contract murders, drug distribution, and the intimidation of witnesses in criminal trials.

The different criminal motorcycle gangs sometimes compete for criminal territory, and this can lead to bloody wars. In particular, the Hell's Angels and the Outlaws have a deep and abiding hatred for one another, and engage in ambushes, bombings, and outright combat in an attempt to destroy each other.

## STREET GANGS

**Description:** As American inner-city life has become more and more desperate, impoverished, and dangerous, even the children who live in these areas have become involved in crime. Today in all major American cities there are dozens, sometimes hundreds, of street gangs, made up of youths from pre-teen ages to their early twenties. Most of these gangs, which usually have a distinctive name and an identifying color, are black or Hispanic.

The city which seems to be the worst beset by street gangs is Los Angeles; hence, this section will sometimes refer to the Los Angeles experience as an example for *Dark Champions* gamemasters. Los Angeles has an estimated 750 active street gangs, with a total membership of around 70,000. The black gangs are primarily allied with either of two loosely-knit "coalitions" of gangs: the Crips (whose color is blue); or the Bloods (whose color is red). Thus, a gang might call itself the Grape Street Crips or the Ujima Village Bloods. Gangs frequently take their name from their territory ("turf"), their home street, or some distinctive landmark in their turf. Gangs mark their turf with graffiti.



Though the popular conception of street gangs is that they have only male members, this is not necessarily so. In the first place, there are all-female gangs in most cities. In the second place, mostly male gangs use females to perform useful activities, such as renting cars, establishing crackhouses and safehouses, carrying drugs, and managing the gang's finances.

For *Dark Champions* purposes, street gangs can be divided into three types. The first is the "independent" street gang, which stands on its own, without affiliations to any other group or person. These gangs tend to be small, and also very violent. Some of these gangs are strictly local, sticking closely to the turf they claim; others are wide-ranging, even semi-nomadic.

The second type of gang is a gang which is affiliated with some other organization. The individual Crips and Bloods gangs of Los Angeles, each a member of a "gang coalition," fit this description. Similarly, the Chinese and Vietnamese gangs described earlier in this Sourcebook are in this category, because of their association with an adult organized crime group. "Affiliated" gangs become powerful by association with a large organized crime group; they may also have access to better weapons and more cash than other gangs.

The last category of street gangs, unique to gaming campaigns, is the gang which is affiliated with a trained paranormal criminal or a supervillain. These gangs gain increased prestige and firepower because they are led by a superhuman; this also increases their profits and power in most cases. Sometimes, the superpowered leader wants to use his gang to take over the entire gang structure in the city. An example of this sort of super-criminal and his gang is Buckshot, who is described in the "Independent Criminals" section later on in this Sourcebook.

Street gangs are not usually rigidly organized or hierarchical. One or more gang members may be (or claim to be) the gang's leader at any point in time, and they do not normally have "sub-officers." Wealth, gang occupation (such as drug dealer), and reputation are more likely to gain respect in the world of the street gangs than a title is. However, some gangs do sort of "rank" members by age: thus, in some Los Angeles gangs, members go from being "baby homies" to "little homies" to "T.G.'s" ("tiny gangsters") to "O.G.'s" ("original gangsters").

**Activities:** Because of their varied nature, it is impossible to associate all street gangs with any one type of crime. However, there are several crimes which most gangs commit. The most important of these is drug dealing. Street gangs in Los Angeles, for example, are supplied with cocaine by Colombian drug dealers. The gangs set up their own crackhouses, which they guard with armored doors, sophisticated communications and security technology, and armed guards. The desire for increased drug profits drives gangs to expand beyond their home city to new markets, and this can bring them into conflict with Colombian drug networks, Jamaican posses, and other criminal groups. The gangs try to carve out a market by "doubling down"—selling twice as much of the drug for half the usual price.

Most gangs are also involved in property crimes (such as theft) and violent crime (such as robbery and murder). The gangs have developed a reputation for violence, and rightly so. Even the youngest members are often armed to the teeth, and willing to fight for just about any reason—an insult, a girl, being "mad-dogged," and so on. The weapon of choice

seems to be powerful semiautomatic assault rifles, for example AK-47s, which the gang will convert to fully automatic. A gang will frequently take out its intended target in a "drive-by shooting," which enables the killers to strike quickly and get away before the police can arrive. However, all of this violence spills over to persons who are not associated with any of the gangs: it has been estimated that in Los Angeles, more than half of the persons killed by gangs are not gang members at all, they are simply innocent bystanders.

## STREET GANG SLANG

The street gangs in a given city often have their own distinctive slang language. To someone who is not familiar with it, this slang can almost be an entirely different tongue. *Dark Champions* characters can buy this slang as a Language, or they can try to "translate" by making a Streetwise roll at -1.

The following terms are some examples of gang slang from Los Angeles:

*baller* (n.) — a gang drug dealer

*'bangin'* (v.) — being in a gang

*bud* (n.) — marijuana

*buster* (n.) — a coward

*Cavvy* (n.) — crack cocaine

*claim* (v.) — to announce your gang affiliation

*cluckhead* (n.) — crack cocaine addict

*deep* (adj.) — having lots of members in your gang

*dis'* (v.) — to disrespect, to insult

*down* (n.) — loyal to the gang, ready to fight for the gang

*drag* (n.) — a scam, a con game

*Essay* (n.) — a Hispanic person

*from the shoulder* (v.) — to attack hand-to-hand, with fists

*from out the pocket* (v.) — to attack with a gun

*g'ster* (n.) — gangster, a gang member

*gangbang* (v.) — to run with a gang

*'gauge* (n.) — a shotgun

*get busy* (v.) — to do any dangerous activity

*ghetto star* (n.) — a gang member with a major reputation

*grip* (n.) — some money, a "stake" to start a deal

*head up* (v.) — to start a fight

*high roller* (n.) — a gang drug dealer

*'hood* (n.) — neighborhood

*jack* (v.) — to hold up, to rob

*jump in* (v.) — to join a gang; a member is "jumped in"

*kick* (v.) — to relax

*kickback place* (n.) — hangout

*loc* (adj.) — loco, crazy

*mad-dog* (v.) — to look at someone challengingly

*mummyhead* (adj.) — general insult (e.g., "Shut up, you mummyhead!")

*O.G.* (n.) — "original gangster," one who has earned his place in the gang

*on the outs* (adj.) — free, out of prison

*road dog* (n.) — best friend

*run up on* (v.) — to rob by means of a sneak attack

*set* (n.) — a gang clique, subset, or faction



*shank* (v.) — to stab  
*slipping* (v.) — being careless  
*smoke* (v.) — to kill  
*sprung* (adj.) — crazy  
*stack* (v.) — to save money  
*T.G.* (n.) — “tiny gangster,” a younger gang member  
*the Man* (n.) — a law enforcement officer  
*tight* (v.) — to be best friends  
*transformer* (n.) — a spy  
*trip* (v.) — to make mistakes, to get out of line  
*work* (n.) — any dangerous activity  
*Yay-o* (n.) — crack cocaine

### MIGUEL MICTLAN

10-STR 11-DEX 12-CON 10-BODY 15-INT  
 12-EGO 15-PRE 14-COM 2-PD 2-ED  
 2-SPD 5-REC 30-END 21-STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Bureaucratics 12-; Conversation 12-; High Society 13-; Persuasion 12-; Riding 11-; Seduction 12-; Weapon Familiarity (Small Arms); Language: English (fluent, Spanish is native); PS: Industrialist 14-; KS: Mexican Mafia 14-; KS: High Finance 12-; AK: Mexico and Southwestern US 12-; Fringe Benefit: Head of Mexican Mafia family; Well Connected (10 Contacts in Mexican and U.S. government and law enforcement); 15 points of Wealth; Passport

**75+ Disadvantages:** Ruthlessly Powerhungry; Devoted To His Daughter; Reputation (wealthy industrialist) 11-; DNPC (teenage daughter Roberta, competent) 8-

**Notes:** Miguel Mictlan is an extremely wealthy and powerful Mexican industrialist. He is also the head of a large Mexican Mafia family based in Durango. He would like to establish himself as the “ruler” of all the Mexican Mafia. The only thing which interests him as much as increasing his power and wealth is his lovely daughter, Roberta, a rebellious 14-year-old who knows nothing of his criminal dealings.

### TERESA MARIA OCHOA DE FONSECA

10-STR 14-DEX 15-CON 13-BODY 13-INT  
 17-EGO 13-PRE 18-COM 5-PD 4-ED  
 3-SPD 7-REC 30-END 33-STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Bribery 12-; Combat Driving 12-; High Society 12-; Martial Arts (Classic Comic Book); Riding 12-; Seduction 12-; Stealth 12-; Survival 11-; Tracking 12-; TF: small ground vehicles, planes, boats, scuba; KS: Colombian Drug Cartels 12-; PS: Drug Cartel Management 11-; +1 with Martial Arts; +1 with guns; Fringe Benefit: Leader of de Fonseca drug cartel; 10 points of Wealth

**75+ Disadvantages:** Hatred Of U.S. And Americans; Hot-Tempered; Reputation (drug cartel leader) 11-; Hunted by DEA (Mo Pow, Capture) 8-; Rival (Fennis, leader of Carillo-Mendoza cartel); Villain Bonus

**Notes:** Teresa Maria Ochoa de Fonseca is the daughter of infamous drug lord Jesús Alvarez de Fonseca. He wanted a son, so he raised his daughter as if she were one, teaching her to fight, hunt, and survive in the wild. When he was kidnapped by the DEA and taken to stand trial in America, she took over the leadership of his organization. She has a deep and abiding hatred of everything and everyone American (especially the DEA) for what they did to her family.

### GENERAL NGUYEN NOC TRANH

15-STR 17-DEX 18-CON 13-BODY 18-INT  
 14-EGO 18-PRE 10-COM 6-PD 5-ED  
 3-SPD 8-REC 36-END 35-STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Combat Driving 12-; Combat Piloting 12-; Demolitions 12-; Interrogation 14-; Martial Arts (Commando Training); Paramedics 12-; Stealth 13-; Streetwise 13-; Survival 11-; Tactics 12-; Tracking 12-; TF: all ground and air vehicles; Weapon Familiarity (Small Arms); KS: South Vietnamese Army 11-; KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-; Language: English (fluent, Vietnamese is native); +2 in combat; Fringe Benefit: Leader of Vietnamese gang; 5 points of Wealth

**75+ Disadvantages:** Casual Killer; Sadist; Reputation (Vietnamese crimelord) 11-; Hunted by North Vietnamese government (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill) 8-; Villain Bonus

**Notes:** Nguyen Noc Tranh was one of the most vicious and sadistic officers in the South Vietnamese army. When Saigon fell, he fled to America, where he soon established a criminal gang by banding together members of his old unit. His gang is a powerful one because all of its members are skilled, disciplined soldiers. General Tranh is a cruel man who likes to dominate people through fear and pain.

### BIG EDDIE MALINOWSKI

15-STR 15-DEX 15-CON 15-BODY 10-INT  
 10-EGO 13-PRE 8-COM 4-PD 4-ED  
 3-SPD 8-REC 30-END 30-STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Combat Driving 12-; Demolitions 12-; Gambling 11-; Martial Arts (Dirty Infighting); Mechanics 12-; Weapon Familiarity (Small Arms, Street Weapons); +2 hand-to-hand; +1 with Colt M1911A .45; Fringe Benefit: Leader of Satanic Skulls motorcycle gang

**75+ Disadvantages:** Enraged when injured, 11-, 11-; Anarchistic Hedonist; Hatred Of The Highway Mobsters (a rival gang); Hunted by the FBI (Mo Pow, Capture) 8-

**Notes:** Big Eddie is the president of a chapter of the Satanic Skulls motorcycle gang. He is a loud, obnoxious, brutal man given to alternating moods of anger and hedonism. He and his gang have a particular hatred for their rivals, the Highway Mobsters, and attack them at every opportunity. The gang's colors feature a flaming-demon's-skull insignia.

### DEEJU

10-STR 12-DEX 13-CON 12-BODY 10-INT  
 10-EGO 13-PRE 10-COM 4-PD 3-ED  
 3-SPD 6-REC 26-END 28-STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Lockpicking 11-; Martial Arts (Dirty Infighting); Stealth 11-; Streetwise 12-; TF: small ground vehicles; Weapon Familiarity (Small Arms, Street Weapons); CK: campaign city 13-; KS: Street Gang Members 13-; Fringe Benefit: de facto leader of 59th Street Outlaws

**75+ Disadvantages:** Hunted by the police (Mo Pow, Capture) 8-

**Notes:** William Glass is the younger brother of Robert Glass, a ghetto star known as Demon; therefore, William's gang name became “Demon Junior,” or “Deeju” for short. When Robert and several other gang leaders were arrested for murder and drug crimes, Deeju became the leader of the gang. Deeju is a sociopathic teenager, filled with hatred and anger which he expresses through murderous violence. He has no regard for the lives of anyone except his fellow Outlaws; he likes to use Uzis and other powerful guns during drive-by shootings of rival gangsters. His gang's color is green; the members like to wear Philadelphia Eagles jackets and caps.

# CARD SHARK

## Observation: 12/17/90 at 8:12 PM, En Route to Sector AA7

*Without question, the Card Shark organization is the most dangerous opponent I have ever encountered. The individual Card Sharks themselves have not always been dangerous—Card Shark II, for example, was a foolish, petty little dictator. But the organization, which has an uncanny knack for resurrecting itself after it has been destroyed, is a deadly enemy to Justice, and to me. And when the organization is commanded by a true leader—such as the current Card Shark, the fifth—it becomes more dangerous still.*

—Excerpt from the journals  
of the Harbinger of Justice

Card Shark and his organization are a criminal group for use in superheroic street-level campaigns (and some high-tech campaigns as well, at the GM's option). The organization and its agents are based on and named after various games and terms associated with playing cards. Although they have some four-color trappings (costumes, secret identities, theme weapons), the attitudes they have and the crimes they commit are primarily street-level in nature. Essentially, Card Shark is a street-level villain who has adopted four-color motifs out of vanity and for "advertising" purposes. Unlike other master villains, Card Shark is not interested in conquering the world; his ambition is "limited" to running as much of the underworld as he can.

## HISTORY

The Card Shark organization got its start in the late 1930s and early 1940s under the leadership of Emil Lagerfeld, the original Card Shark. When the United States began to gear up for World War II, Lagerfeld set up a ring of gun thieves, who stole weaponry from the U.S. military and sold it to the underworld and in black markets abroad. This operation was very profitable, enabling Lagerfeld to finance the original creation of the "Card Shark" identity. He took the name from a youthful nickname which he got from his love of gambling. He soon expanded his organization's activities into illegal gambling, filling a need left by crumbling Mafia gangs.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Card Shark continued to expand, branching out into drugs, assassination, and technologically-oriented crimes. He organized his men into "Face Card," "Deck," and "associate" agents. By 1958, Card Shark had his fingers in criminal pies on both seaboards, and was reckoned a major force in the American underworld. To keep himself from "aging out" of the world of crime, Card Shark had some of his scientists develop an anti-aging formula, AGF Serum, to keep him young and fit.

For the next two decades, Card Shark continued his criminal activities with little interference from law enforcement. But in 1981, Card Shark noticed a sharp increase in the number of superpowered crimefighters. They were making major inroads into his organization in several places. He did two things in response. The first was to publish his now-infamous "bounty list" (see below). The second was to recruit superpowered and trained paranormal criminals to act as his "bodyguards" and to help coordinate his organization's efforts to eradicate the "superhero threat." Card Shark I recruited One-Eyed Jack and Pokerface.

Card Shark met his first real opposition in 1986 when the Harbinger of Justice, better known as the Blue Moon Killer, began his bloody war on crime. The Killer apparently saw Card Shark as a priority in this war, for he murdered many Card Shark agents and disrupted many of Card Shark's bases and criminal operations. After several months of this warfare, Card Shark decided he'd had enough. He had a large group of his men ambush Harbinger, capture him, and bring him to one of Card Shark's hidden bases. Card Shark planned to torture the infamous vigilante for information on the underworld which he could use to eliminate several rival organizations, but the Killer escaped from the torture room and began cutting a swath through Card Shark's men. Card Shark himself waited at the only exit to kill Harbinger, whom he knew to be badly injured. However, Harbinger tricked Card Shark, ambushed him, and broke his neck.

The organization fell into disarray for several months as each of Card Shark's lieutenants struggled for control. Eventually one man, a brutal individual whose true name has never been determined, eliminated his rivals and assumed the Card Shark identity. He brought with him a large, hulking thug who eventually became the superpowered agent Blackjack. Card Shark II undertook a bloody pogrom designed to rid the organization of "whoever it was that helped the Blue Moon Killer." This paranoia-inspired tactic was unpopular, but the superpowered agents helped keep the rest of the men under control. However, this left Card Shark II vulnerable, and in July 1987 he was attacked by Harbinger and several superheroes. When he tried to use a Teleportation Platform to escape, Harbinger damaged it with a grenade and killed him by causing half of his body to be teleported away while half remained on the platform.



A third Card Shark, George Shackelford, almost immediately took over the organization. He quickly recruited dozens of new agents and scientists, including two new superpowered bodyguards, Deadman's Hand and Jack Of Diamonds. However, he had one Achilles' heel—his ambition. Card Shark III wanted to turn his organization into something more akin to groups like VIPER. To this end, he developed his "Four Horsemen" plot, designed to take over the city. He sprang this attack in August 1987, before many of his new recruits had been fully trained. As a result, several crimefighters got wind of the plan and were able to stop it after only the "Famine" branch of the assault had taken place. Card Shark III and his hired mercenaries were attacked at a dockside warehouse. Card Shark III was killed by Harbinger; many of the organization's agents were captured or killed.

This disastrous defeat, coming so soon on the heels of the death of Card Shark II, caused the organization to go deep underground. Andrew Polansky, who had served as Card Shark III's Ace Of Spades, became Card Shark IV by popular vote of the surviving "Face Card" and "Deck" agents. For more than a year, he quietly recruited new agents to take the place of those who had been captured and rebuilt the organization, concentrating on its more profitable but less dramatic enterprises (mainly gambling and gun smuggling). In December 1988 he broke his superhuman bodyguards out of jail with the bloody "Silent Night" attack on Dodds Penitentiary. This attack marked the return of the Card Shark organization as a major underworld power.

Over the next year, Card Shark IV continued to gain ground. He also directed his Scientific And Technical Branch's efforts into a new area: genetics. Evidence gathered later indicates that he was trying to develop ways to enhance his normal agents, so that he could deal with superhuman crimefighters more easily. He "created" several new life-forms for use as messengers and "attack dogs." He tested these new creations in a battle with several superheroes in mid-December, 1989. After a short but intense fight, the creatures were defeated and destroyed, and Card Shark IV himself disappeared. On the anniversary of the "Silent Night" attack, the police received an anonymous phone call directing them to an abandoned apartment building. When they got there, they found Card Shark IV's corpse, covered with cuts, burn marks, and other signs of torture. On the wall, written in Card Shark IV's blood, were the words "Holy Night." In the corpse's lap there was one of the Harbinger's blue-moon "calling cards."

The Card Shark organization, which had been in an uneasy truce while it awaited news of its leader's fate, now broke down into warring factions. After four months of assassinations and random violence, a new and powerful leader, Card Shark V, took over. He has run the organization since that time. Through clever and cautious management, he has expanded and improved the organization, taking it to levels of power and profit which equal (and sometimes surpass) those of the original Card Shark. What he will do next no one knows, but one thing is certain: it will not be pleasant.

## GROUP ORGANIZATION

The Card Shark organization has a hierarchical structure resembling a pyramid. At the very top is Card Shark. His word is law, and most of his agents are completely loyal to him. Immediately below Card Shark are his superpowered bodyguards, in this order: One-Eyed Jack, Pokerface, Jack Of Diamonds, Deadman's Hand. Blackjack is not ranked with his compatriots, because Card Shark considers him too stupid and brutal to be a leader. He essentially has the same rank as a Face Card agent.

The next rank is made up of the normal agents, both the "Face Card" and "Deck" agents. The normal agents are divided up into four "Suits": Spades, Diamonds, Clubs, and Hearts. The Face Card agents in each Suit are in charge of that Suit, much in the same way that captains, lieutenants, and sergeants command privates in an army. The chain of command in each suit is as follows: Ace, King, Queen, Jack. The Aces report directly to Card Shark, and are almost equal in rank to the superpowered bodyguards.

The Deck agents are roughly the equivalent of Mafia caporegimas—each one runs a particular Card Shark operation, such as a gun smuggling ring, a group of drug dealers, or an underground casino. Within a Suit, the Deck agents are assigned a number from 2 to 10. The number of agents with that particular number is inversely related to that number. Thus, there are ten Twos, nine Threes, eight Fours, and so on up to two Tens. Although Card Shark considers all Deck agents to be equal in rank, there is a widespread belief among the Deck that a Three ranks higher than a Two, a Six higher than a Five, and a Ten higher than any other Deck agent. Card Shark and the Face Cards exploit this belief to create a competitive spirit among the Deck and thus maintain morale.

Each Deck agent is the boss of several "associates," ordinary criminals who work with the Card Shark organization but are not actually members of it. Each Deck agent's group of associates is referred to as his "Hand." Most of the associates are not aware that their ultimate leader is Card Shark; instead, they are led to believe that they are working with the Mafia or some other criminal organization. The associates also include Card Shark's Scientific And Technical Branch, which is made up of unethical scientists and researchers working for Card Shark.

The agents belonging to each Suit are identified by a patch with that Suit's symbol on the left shoulder of the agent's uniform (Card Shark's men wear uniforms for meetings with other Card Shark agents, but not on an everyday basis). The patch also features the agent's number or face card designation. Each Suit is assigned a particular portfolio of duties and responsibilities, as follows:

**Spades:** The Spades Suit is responsible for the organization's assassination duties. They take care of all of the hits the organization contracts to perform (except for those that Card Shark wishes to perform personally). If Card Shark is hired to do "enforcement" work (i.e., threatening someone with violence to get them to do what the client wants them to do), the Spades take care of that also. Lastly, the Spades are generally Card Shark's best combat troops, and are usually better armed and trained than other Card Shark agents. Pokerface and Deadman's Hand are both assigned to Spades Suit as advisers, helpers, and observers.

**Diamonds:** The Diamonds Suit has two main duties. The first is "acquisitions," or, in less euphemistic terms, theft. If Card Shark needs anything stolen, or if false evidence has to be planted or an installation infiltrated, the Diamonds get the job. Second, the Diamonds Suit runs most of Card Shark's smuggling networks. This gives them a lot of power within the organization (since they generate so much of the revenue), so Card Shark sometimes takes a job away from them and gives it to Clubs or Hearts instead. Jack Of Diamonds is assigned to this Suit.

**Clubs:** Clubs Suit is responsible for Card Shark's gambling operations. They run the casinos, the floating craps games, underworld high-stakes poker, and so forth. However, they do not do their own security work or money laundering. One-Eyed Jack is assigned to Clubs suit.

**Hearts:** Hearts Suit's portfolio is usually called "Information And Interrogation." The suit contains Card Shark's expert information-gatherers. Their methods include not only bribery and extortion, but torture and other unsavory means as well. Hearts Suit also deals with Card Shark's money-laundering and accounting requirements; and they act as Card Shark's internal security and "secret police." Blackjack is assigned to Hearts Suit, but he works strictly in the internal security area, and takes orders from the Ace Of Hearts (unlike the other superhuman agents, who are allowed to give orders to the agents in their assigned suit).

**Scientific And Technical Branch:** Outside the regular structure of the organization is Card Shark's Scientific And Technical Branch. They create new weapons, devices, biological creations, computers, vehicles, and bases for Card Shark's use. Some of the best scientists in the world work for Card Shark, lured by the promise of unlimited research possibilities and an unrestricted budget. Jack Of Diamonds is assigned to "the Techie branch" as its direct "liaison" to Card Shark.

## CARD SHARK CODES

Card Shark transmits messages and orders to his men by means of a "playing cards code." The following is a brief description of the major "card-codes." The codes may change a little from time to time, but they do not change radically. In most cases, a code-card will be accompanied by a note or computer disk which provides the details of the mission. Deck cards signify specific Card Shark bases or operations.

## SPADES

**Ace:** Assassinate X

**King:** Destroy this object, building, etc.

**Queen:** Collect a debt from X and leave a "warning"

**Jack:** Assault X; provide X a "warning"

## DIAMONDS

**Ace:** Kidnap X

**King:** Steal X object; smuggle X object from Point Y to Point Z

**Queen:** Blackmail X

**Jack:** Special help (a supervillain, special high-tech equipment, etc.) will be provided for this mission

## CLUBS

**Ace:** Harass X or X group

**King:** Watch (and/or follow) X (or X location)

**Queen:** Have X or X group seduced, subverted, infiltrated, or corrupted; obtain potential blackmail information on X

**Jack:** Guard X or X location

## HEARTS

**Ace:** Attend a meeting at X location with Y person(s).

**King:** X is wanted, a reward of \$X is offered for him.

**Queen:** Report to X location to take part in a mission.

**Jack:** Obtain this information

## OTHER CARDS

**Card Shark:** a particularly styled Ace of Spades

**One-Eyed Jack:** a one-eyed jack with one corner bent

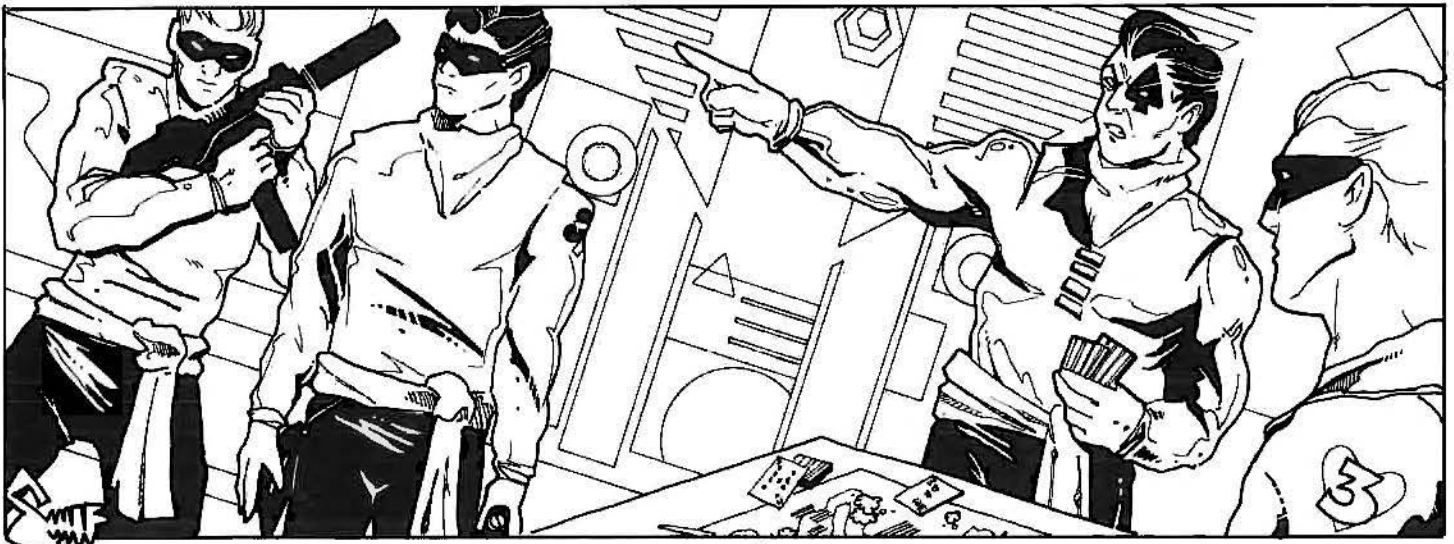
**Pokerface:** a blank card

**Deadman's Hand:** an Ace and an Eight bent in half together

**Jack Of Diamonds:** the Jack of Diamonds with one corner bent

**Blackjack:** any two cards totalling 21 in blackjack bent in half together

**Face Card agent:** that face card with two corners bent





## ACTIVITIES AND OPERATIONS

Card Shark derives his illicit income mainly from six areas, in this order: gambling, gun smuggling, murder for hire, drug smuggling, theft, and "high-tech criminal services." Card Shark is involved with other forms of crime, but they do not form a significant part of his operations. The Card Shark organization has never been involved in the illegal sex industry.

Gambling is Card Shark's biggest money-earning activity. His organization runs illegal gambling operations all over the United States, ranging from small illegal poker games to enormous hidden casinos. Card Shark is also rumored to hold a controlling interest in several casinos in Las Vegas and Atlantic City, but this has never been proven.

Card Shark's smuggling networks span the entire globe, bringing drugs, weapons, and technology into the United States, and giving weapons and money in exchange. Card Shark is more involved with the illegal weapons trade than the illegal drug trade; but he has begun creating some highly addictive designer drugs, so that he can "manufacture" his own market. The secret to Card Shark's success as a smuggler is a world-wide network of Teleport Platforms which allow him to quickly transport illegal goods with almost no risk of detection. His major Platforms are built into well-defended hidden bases in New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Tokyo, Bangkok, Beirut, London, Berlin, and Bogota. Some other cities have smaller Platforms which are built into vans or trucks so that they can be quickly moved to avoid detection.

Assassination has been a staple of Card Shark's organization for many years. Although the number of assassinations performed in any given year is relatively small, the enormous fees the organization commands (because of its professionalism and success rate) make it a lucrative trade. Occasionally, an assassination is so difficult as to command Card Shark's personal attention; his base fee is \$1,000,000 plus expenses, and can go higher if the job is especially difficult or dangerous.

The organization's theft activities mainly concern high-tech goods and inventions. Stealing an invention or device is cheaper than doing all of the development work. If possible, all relevant papers will be stolen or destroyed, and the creators kidnapped or killed, to give Card Shark a monopoly on the invention. This has given Card Shark a stable of patents which is large and profitable.

Lastly, Card Shark provides "high-tech services" to the underworld. He rents other criminals specialized devices they need for jobs, sells high-tech weapons, offers a "consulting service" for other criminal groups, and so forth. Most of his business is with small criminal gangs which are trying to hit the "big time," so to speak.

One other activity of Card Shark's which deserves mention is his "bounty list." Major underworld bars and hangouts all have copies of this list. The list is nothing more than a list of crimefighters (both superhumans and trained paranormals) that have bothered, aggravated, injured, or insulted Card Shark in the past, and how much he will pay to whoever kills

them and can prove it. The rewards start at \$10,000 and go all the way up to \$2,000,000 for the Harbinger of Justice; the average reward offered is about \$20,000. The owner or bartender at any establishment which has a copy of the list can tell someone how to go about claiming one of the rewards; the process involves many security checks, tests, and other means of keeping out infiltrators and fakes.

## CARD SHARK TACTICS

Card Shark does not regard his agents as combat troops. Whenever possible, he prefers for his men to avoid armed conflict, relying instead on ambush, blackmail, and assassination to accomplish what others do by fighting. However, in a world where crimefighters are a constant threat, he and his men have to be ready to fight skillfully at all times. For this reason, Card Shark developed a unique language, simply called "Card Shark Tactical Codes," for his agents to use in battle. If a particular code phrase or tactic has become obvious over time, it will be changed. The GM should develop some tactics and strategies for Card Shark and his men to use against the player characters in the campaign.

Card Shark's combat strategy usually depends on how much he knows about his enemy and how much time he has had to plan. If possible, he and his men will come equipped with weapons and gadgets specifically designed to interfere with a hero's powers or take advantage of his vulnerabilities or weaknesses. Otherwise, he and his agents have a basic strategy of hitting the enemy hard and then trying to escape. Experience has proven that they cannot stand up to most superheroes, so they prefer to escape and get back at their enemies some other day. (Several of the superpowered agents, notably Pokerface, Deadman's Hand, and Jack Of Diamonds, are often used as "decoys" and rescued later.) Card Shark's men use lethal force in most situations, although Card Shark is not adverse to taking heroes prisoner if he can.

In battle, Pokerface has overall tactical command of the entire organization, except for Card Shark himself. Pokerface will usually have one Face Card agent as a personal bodyguard. Card Shark prefers to avoid pitched battles; if he is forced to become involved in one, at least one of his superpowered bodyguards will remain with him at all times.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Card Shark's relations with other organizations are neutral at best. Those criminal organizations with whom he does business are regarded as clients, not allies or friends. Criminal organizations he does not do business with, such as VIPER and DEMON, are enemies, impediments to Card Shark's ambition and increasing profit margin. Even if he is not currently at war with another group, Card Shark still considers them hostile. For their part, other organizations see Card Shark either as a threat or a competitor or both. VIPER in particular seems to hate Card Shark, though the reasons for this have never been explained.

**CARD SHARK**

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
20	STR	10	<b>OCV:</b> 9
28	DEX	54	<b>DCV:</b> 9
23	CON	26	<b>ECV:</b> 6
15	BODY	10	<b>Phases:</b> 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
23	INT	13	
18	EGO	16	
25	PRE	15	
20	COM	5	<b>Costs</b>
10	PD	6	<b>Char:</b> 196 <b>Base:</b> 100
8	ED	3	+
6	SPD	19	<b>Powers:</b> 603 <b>Disads:</b> 699
12	REC	6	=
46	END	0	<b>Totals:</b> 799 799
50	STUN	13	* = OIF (Costume, -1/2)

Cost	Powers	END
45	Multipower—Throwing Cards —90-point base (all OAF)	
4u	1) 12d6 EB, Explosive (+1/2); OAF (Explosive Card, -1), 12 Charges (-1/4)	0
2u	2) 2d6 RKA, Armor Piercing x2 (+1); OAF (Razor Card, -1), No KB (-1/4), 12 Charges (-1/4)	0
2u	3) 2d6 RKA, One Hex (+1/2); OAF (Incendiary Card, -1), No KB (-1/4), 6 Charges lasting 2 Segments each (-1/2)	0
3u	4) 5" Darkness to Sight Group, Personal Immunity (+1/4); OAF (Smoke Card, -1), 6 Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-1/4)	0
4u	5) 8d6 EB, One Hex (+1/2), Double KB (+3/4); OAF (Explosive Card Mk. II, -1), 8 Charges (-1/2)	0
3u	6) 4d6 Flash vs. Sight & Hearing Groups, Personal Immun. (+1/4); OIF (Flare Card, -1), 8 Charges (-1/2)	0
15	1d6 (2d6) HKA, Ranged (+1/2); OIF (any sharp or pointed object of opportunity, -1/2)	1
42	Martial Arts—Classic Comic Book Plus	
	<b>Maneuver OCV DCV Notes</b>	
	Martial Strike +0 +2 10d6	
	Off. Strike -2 +1 12d6	
	Martial Dodge +0 +5 Dodge all attacks; Abort	
	Martial Block +2 +2 Block; Abort	
	Martial Throw +0 +1 8d6 + vel/5, Target Falls	
	Killing Strike -2 +0 1d6+1 (2d6+2) HKA	
	Nerve Strike -1 +1 4d6 NND	
	Passing Strike +1 +0 8d6 + vel/5, Full Move	
	Takeaway +0 +0 Grab Weapon, +30 STR	
	Martial Grab -1 -1 Grab, +30 STR	
16	+4 DC (already added in)	
25	Armor (+10 PD & ED), Hardened (+1/4); *	0
20	Missile Deflection (all missiles)	0
5	Flash Defense (8 points); *	0
5	Power Defense (8 points); Only Protects Against Poisons/Gases (-1/2)	0
5	Lack of Weakness (8 points); *	0
7	LS: Self-Contained Breathing; *	0
10	+5" Running = 11"	2
8	+8" Leap = 12" forward, 6" up	2
3	Infrared Vision; *	0
3	Ultraviolet Vision; *	0
6	+6 vs. Range for Sight Group; *	0
6	+6 vs. Range for Hearing Group; *	0
2	Ultrasonic Hearing; *	0
7	HRRH; *	0

Skills, Talents and Perks	
20	Find Weakness 13-, Card #2 (Razor Card)
15	3d6 Luck
85	Bases (32 300-point bases)
44	Followers—Face Card Agents (16 143-point agents)
61	Followers—Deck Agents (216 105-point agents)
3, 3	Acrobatics 15-; Breakfall 15-
3, 3	Combat Driving 15-; Combat Piloting 15-
3	Computer Programming 14-
3	Contortionist 15-
9	Electronics 14-
13	Gambling 16-
3	High Society 14-
3	Inventor 14-
3	Shadowing 11-
3	Stealth 15-
4	TF: All Ground and Air Vehicles
8	WF: Small Arms, Common Melee Weapons, Comm. Martial Arts Weapons, Common Missile Weapons
3	KS: Card Games and Lore 14-
2	Language: Card Shark Tactical Codes
3	Scientist
2	1) Electronic Engineering 14-
2	2) Biology 14-
2	3) Genetics 14-
2	4) Chemistry 14-
20	+2 Overall
20	+4 with Multipower
10	+2 with Hand-To-Hand Combat

100+ Disadvantages	
13	Enraged: if taunted/insulted or his leadership is challenged, 14-, 11-
20	Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer
20	Psychological Limitation: Vain, Arrogant, And Overconfident
15	Psychological Limitation: Powerhungry
15	Psychological Limitation: Code of Honor: Almost Never Refuses A Challenge To Gambling Or Combat
10	Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Superheroes
20	Reputation: evil crimelord, 14-
50	Hunted: Card Shark is hunted by the Harbinger of Justice and most other crimefighters, and all law enforcement agencies in the USA. He has plenty of underworld enemies as well, of course.
15	Secret Identity: unknown
521	Villain Bonus

**Background:** The background and history for previous Card Sharks and the Card Shark organization as a whole is given above. The current Card Shark, identity unknown, is the fifth man to adopt the Card Shark identity. From comments he has made, it is apparent that he grew up as one of those kids you love to hate—incredibly handsome, athletic, a genius—and he knew it. He developed a vast superiority complex, and decided that he deserved more power than he could gain legitimately. He drifted into crime with thoughts of eventually leading a criminal organization. He spent several years working as an assassin; and developed a talent for gambling. His criminal talents and native abilities made him a natural for the Card Shark organization, so he returned to the United States and managed to join up. Because of his skills and drive, he rose quickly in the ranks. Sensing opportunity when Card Shark IV died, he murdered two rivals and donned the Card Shark costume. He has been a major power in the underworld ever since.



**Personality/Motivation:** Card Shark V is motivated by his desire to amass power and wealth at the expense of others. He is clever, cold, calculating, ruthless, cautious, cruel, and extremely powerhungry. He would be a lot further towards his goals if it weren't for his big weakness: his pride, vanity, and overconfidence. He is unaccustomed to failure, and so he undertakes schemes and crimes which are more grandiose than they should be. Additionally, his vanity generally will not allow him to turn down challenges (such as to gambling or combat), though he may try to arrange the situation so that the odds are strongly in his favor (though he will never out-and-out cheat).

However, despite his pride, Card Shark V is very much a product of the streets and back alleys where he learned his criminal trade. Even though his costume and some of his plots mimic those of superpowered criminals, his attitudes and outlook are mainly street-level. He is as capable of brutality and vicious cruelty as any Colombian drug lord or Jamaican posse member, a fact his rivals sometimes tend to forget. He is a street-level wolf in four-color clothing.

**Quote:** "Now I'll deal you a real dead man's hand!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Except when his pride and arrogance get the better of him, Card Shark does not act without purpose. His every move is calculated to bring him some sort of gain. His plans are usually complex, multi-layer affairs, with double-

blinds and decoys masking his true purpose. Card Shark thinks nothing of spending weeks or months carefully planning and practicing a crime, because he knows that such efficiency is the cornerstone of his reputation and skills.

In combat, Card Shark is equally as economic and ruthless. His method of fighting is to quickly take his opponents down, one at a time, after his agents and bodyguards have had an opportunity to weaken them. He favors his Razor Card, but will use his other weapons or hand-to-hand combat skills if the situation calls for it. He will generally hold back from combat at first, allowing his men to do the work while he analyzes the opposition and Finds Weakness. When he feels it is time for him to become involved in the fray, he will do so.



If beaten or thwarted in some way, Card Shark will regroup and spend time with his most trusted bodyguards and advisors, analyzing the mistake and figuring out ways to correct it. No one ever beats him the same way twice.

**Appearance:** Card Shark wears a red tunic, v-neck with puffed sleeves, a gold belt sash in which his weapon-cards are kept, and blue pants and boots. His gloves are white. He wears a white ascot to protect his neck from bullets, and a white full face mask with a "spade" symbol over the left eye.

**Record:** Card Shark V has never been arrested as Card Shark, and so has no record in that identity. Since his secret identity is unknown, there is no way to ascertain what record, if any, he developed before adopting the Card Shark persona.

## ONE-EYED JACK

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
10	STR	0	<b>OCV:</b> 8
25	DEX	45	<b>DCV:</b> 8
13	CON	6	<b>ECV:</b> 6
10	BODY	0	<b>Phases:</b> 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
18	INT	8	
17	EGO	14	<b>Costs</b>
20	PRE	10	
18	COM	4	<b>Char:</b> 132 <b>Base:</b> 100
5	PD	3	+                    +
6	ED	3	<b>Powers:</b> 212 <b>Disads:</b> 244
6	SPD	25	=                    =
8	REC	6	<b>Totals:</b> 344                    344
26	END	0	
30	STUN	8	

Cost	Powers	END
45	20 STR Telekinesis, 0 END (+½)	0
50	Multipower—50 point base	
3u	1) 10d6 EB; OIF (Left Eye Blaster, -½), 16 Charges (-0)	0
2u	2) 5d6 EB, NND (defense is 10+ LS); OAF (Gas Blaster Cane, -1), No Range (-½), 16 Charges (-0)	0
16	Armor (8 PD & ED); OIF (Costume, -½)	0
5	Detect Lie, Sense, 13-	
3	Ultraviolet Vision; OIF (Mask, -½)	0
6	+6 vs. Range for Sight Group; OIF (Mask, -½)	0
3	Flash Defense (5 points); OIF (Mask, -½)	0

Skills and Talents	
10	Danger Sense, 11-, in combat
25	5d6 Luck
3	Acting 13-
3	Conversation 13-
11	Gambling 15-
3	High Society 13-
3	Persuasion 13-
3	Seduction 13-
3	Sleight Of Hand 15-
3	Streetwise 13-
4	Language: French (idiomatic)
2	Language: Card Shark Tactical Codes
6	+2 with Telekinesis and Multipower

100+ Disadvantages	
20	Vulnerability: Electricity, 2 x STUN
20	Psychological Limitation: Love of/Addicted to Gambling
15	Psychological Limitation: Love of Luxuries and the High Life
10	Psychological Limitation: Egotistical
15	Physical Limitation: No Left Eye, -1 CV at range (All The Time, Slightly)
50	Hunted: As Card Shark
15	Secret Identity: unknown
99	Villain Bonus



**Background:** One-Eyed Jack, real name unknown, is apparently a mutant with two odd and seemingly unrelated abilities: telekinesis and the power to detect lies. He lost his left eye in a childhood accident. Denied the ability to participate in physical activities, he drifted towards more cerebral pursuits. The excitement that his peers found in sports, he found in gambling. He was attracted to the casino as a moth to a flame, and he found that his mutant abilities helped him win. He met and befriended the first Card Shark during a three-day gambling contest between them in 1984, which Card Shark won by \$2. The two became close friends and partners in crime, with One-Eyed Jack acting as Card Shark's second-in-command. Since he liked the job, he kept it when Card Shark I was killed and his successors took over (no one, not even Card Shark II, has ever accused One-Eyed Jack of treachery—everyone knows how devoted he is to the organization, so later Card Sharks have always been willing to let him keep his job). One-Eyed Jack lacks the current Card Shark's ambition, whereas Card Shark lacks One-Eyed Jack's ability to attend to tiny administrative details, so both of them are comfortable with their arrangement. They play poker every week.



**Personality/Motivation:** One-Eyed Jack is a sybarite who desires but two things: to live the high life and to gamble. Working for Card Shark has brought him all of this. He dislikes anything which would put him in danger or disrupt the organization he works so hard to maintain. Most of Card Shark's agents consider him to be a fussy budget and a slavedriver.

One-Eyed Jack knows that he is one of the organization's poorer combatants, despite his phenomenal dexterity, so he will avoid fights if possible. However, his polished appearance masks a cold-blooded nature—he will fight and kill if he must. He particularly dislikes being taunted, which reminds him of his unpleasant childhood, and he will use his Telekinesis and weaponry on anyone who mocks him.

One-Eyed Jack is a compulsive gambler who can rarely resist a game of chance. However, unlike Card Shark, he is not so vain that he will be tempted by every challenge and dare that comes his way.

**Quote:** "What do you think the odds are that I can kill you before you knock me out?"

**Powers/Tactics:** One-Eyed Jack's main tactic is to avoid fighting entirely; he has no qualms about running away from battle if he can do so safely (and without annoying Card Shark). If he is forced into a combat situation, he will try to remain in the background, using his weapons and Telekinesis from cover. In one-on-one situations, or when captured, he will try to use his Acting skills to trick his enemies into thinking that he is weak and harmless. He likes to use his Telekinesis to ruin heroes' plans and attacks, steal Foci, and the like; he is very imaginative in his use of this power and often reserves a Phase so that he can make effective "sneak attacks" on his enemies. For unknown reasons, One-Eyed Jack's mutant physiology makes him especially vulnerable to electricity attacks, so he will make a special effort to avoid heroes with such powers.

**Appearance:** One-Eyed Jack usually wears very expensive hand-tailored men's suits. His full-face mask is completely black on the left side (where his useless eye and blaster are), and red on the right side. He normally has a flower in his buttonhole, and always carries a fancy walking stick.

**Record:** One-Eyed Jack has never been arrested.

**POKERFACE**

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats	
25	STR	15	<b>OCV:</b> 8	
23	DEX	39	<b>DCV:</b> 8	
25	CON	30	<b>ECV:</b> 4	
15	BODY	10	<b>Phases:</b> 3, 5, 8, 10, 12	
13	INT	3	<b>Costs</b>	
11	EGO	2		
15	PRE	5		
6	COM	-2	<b>Char:</b> 151	<b>Base:</b> 100
12	PD	7	+	+
10	ED	5	<b>Powers:</b> 250	<b>Disads:</b> 301
5	SPD	17	=	=
20	REC	20	<b>Totals:</b> 401	401
50	END	0		
40	STUN	0		

Cost	Powers	END
45	½ Physical and ¼ Energy Damage Reduction, resistant	0
30	Multipower--60 point base (all OAF)	
2u	1) 2d6 RKA, +1 STUN Modifier (+½); OAF (Automatic Pistol, -1), No KB (-¼), 2 clips of 8 Charges each (-¼)	0
2u	2) 2d6 RKA, Area of Effect: Cone (+1); OAF (Combat Shotgun, -1), 5 Charges (-¾)	0
2u	3) 4d6 EB, NND (defense is being electrically insulated); OAF (Taser, -1) No Range (-½), 16 Charges (-0)	0
1u	4) 1d6 HKA (2d6 w/STR), Armor Piercing (+½); OAF (Knife, -1), No KB (-¼)	3
24	Martial Arts—Classic Comic Book Plus	
	<b>Maneuver OCV DCV Notes</b>	
	Martial Strike +0 +2 10d6	
	Off. Strike -2 +1 12d6	
	Martial Dodge +0 +5 Dodge all attacks; Abort	
	Martial Block +2 +2 Block; Abort	
	Martial Throw +0 +1 8d6 + vel/5, Target Falls	
	Killing Strike -2 +0 1d6 (2d6 w/STR) HKA	
12	+3 DC (already added in)	
16	Armor (8 PD & ED); OIF (Suit, -½)	0
7	+15 PRE; Only To Protect Against PRE Attacks (-1)0	
10	Power Defense (30 points); Only To Protect Against PRE Drains (-2)	0
6	+3" Running = 9"	2

Skills and Talents	
25	Find Weakness 14-, Multipower Slot #1
10	2d6 Luck
10	Resistance (10 points)
3	Combat Driving 13-
3	Demolitions 11-
7	Interrogation 14-
3	Lockpicking 13-
3	Security Systems 12-
3	Stealth 13-
3	Tactics 12-
2	Language: Card Shark Tactical Codes
10	+2 with guns
6	+2 with Multipower weapons
5	+1 Hand-To-Hand

**100+ Disadvantages**

20,15	Psych. Limitation: Casual Killer; Psych. Lim.: Sadist
10	Psychological Limitation: Misogynist
10	Psychological Limitation: Utterly Fearless
10	Physical Limitation: Reduced Sense Of Touch
20	Dist. Features: No Facial Expressions (not conceal.)
15	Reputation: ruthless murderer, 11-
50,15	Hunted: As Card Shark; Secret Identity: Mark Knight
136	Villain Bonus

**Background:** Mark Knight grew up strong and tough—and a bully. In fact, he was so strong for his age, some suspected he was a mutant (though he was never tested). Despite being fairly intelligent, he made no effort at schoolwork, and nearly flunked out several times. When he graduated, he joined the armed forces rather than going to college. He was soon sent to Vietnam, where he distinguished himself by his ruthlessness and total disregard for the value of human life. He did so well that a secret government super-soldier project recruited him as a potential subject. However, the treatment backfired: it only made him more cold-blooded and fearless, and destroyed his nervous system to boot.

Rather than stay in the armed forces, Knight decided to make some real money. He deserted and returned to the States, where he drifted into the underworld as an assassin and enforcer. His unique facial characteristics and temperament made him a natural as “Pokerface” when Card Shark I began recruiting superpowered help. He continues to serve with the Card Shark organization to this day.

**Personality/Motivation:** Pokerface has all the personality (and facial expression) of a killer shark. He will maim or kill anyone who gets in his way. He likes his job because it gives him so many opportunities to hurt people. There is nothing likable about him from the sane person's point of view.

**Quote:** None. Pokerface does not usually speak, because the weakness of his throat and facial muscles gives him a harsh, unappealing voice which is difficult to understand.

**Powers/Tactics:** Pokerface's powers—his strength, agility, and resistance to pain—are mainly the result of the “super-soldier” treatments he underwent in 1970. The experiments wrecked his nervous system, so he doesn't feel most pain. However, his damaged nerve endings also mean that his sense of touch is not as good as most people's. On top of these abilities, Pokerface is a trained and clever soldier, with a lot of combat and tactical skills. He can stand up to interrogation, so he often sacrifices himself to let his comrades escape. They repay the favor by breaking him out of jail.

Pokerface knows that he is not capable of going toe-to-toe with most superhumans. He prefers to use cover and his Find Weakness to lay heroes low. He likes to take Head shots at his opponents if he has the drop on them. He is also good at “playing possum” and attacking from surprise after his enemies think he's down for the count. Because of his knowledge of tactics, Pokerface commands Card Shark's forces in large battles.

**Appearance:** Pokerface is most notable for his constant blank expression. The nerves in his face were almost completely destroyed, so he can't move his facial muscles except to chew and speak a little. He wears a dark suit, a tan overcoat, and a fedora. His guns are concealed under the coat.

**Record:** Pokerface is wanted on twelve counts of murder, 27 counts of aggravated assault, and 8 counts of kidnapping.





## JACK OF DIAMONDS

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
15	STR	5	<b>OCV:</b> 8 <b>DCV:</b> 11 <b>ECV:</b> 5 <b>Phases:</b> 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12  <b>Costs</b>  <b>Char:</b> 124 <b>Base:</b> 100 +                    + <b>Powers:</b> 150 <b>Disads:</b> 174 =                    = <b>Totals:</b> 274                    274
24	DEX	42	
18	CON	16	
12	BODY	4	
13	INT	3	
14	EGO	8	
15	PRE	5	
12	COM	1	
8	PD	5	
5	ED	1	
6	SPD	24	
8	REC	2	
36	END	0	
35	STUN	8	
Cost		Powers	END
20	1u	Multipower—Throwing Diamonds—40 base (all OAF) 1) 1d6 (2d6 w/STR) HKA, Armor Piercing (+½), Ranged (based on STR, -¼); OAF (Throwing Diamond, -1), No KB (-¼), 8 Recoverable Charges (-0)	0
2u		2) 4d6 Entangle; OAF (Throwing Diamond, -1), 8 Charges (-½)	0
1u		3) 1d6 RKA, Autofire (5 Shots, +½), Armor Piercing (+½), 64 Charges (+½); OAF (Throwing Diamonds, -1), No KB (-¼)	0
20		Martial Arts—Classic Comic Book	
		<b>Maneuver</b> <b>OCV</b> <b>DCV</b> <b>Notes</b>	
		Martial Strike    +0    +2            7d6	
		Off. Strike        -2    +1            9d6	
		Martial Dodge    +0    +5            Dodge all attacks; Abort	
		Martial Block    +2    +2            Block; Abort	
		Martial Throw    +0    +1            5d6 + vel/5, Target Falls	
8		+2 DC (already added in)	
16		Armor (8 PD & ED); OIF (Costume, -½)	0
3		Flash Defense (5 points); OIF (Costume, -½)	0
6		+3" Running = 9"	2
3		+3" Superleap (total 6" forward, 3" upward)	1
5		10" Swinging; OAF (Swingline, -1)	1
Skills and Talents			
15		Find Weakness 12- with Multipower Slot #1	
3		Acrobatics 14-	
3		Breakfall 14-	
3		Climbing 14-	
3		Shadowing 11-	
3		Stealth 14-	
2		Language: Card Shark Tactical Codes	
18		+6 with Throwing Diamonds	
15		+3 DCV	
100+ Disadvantages			
15		Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Card Shark	
15		Psychological Limitation: Greedy	
15		Psychological Limitation: Hopelessly In Love With Ace of Hearts	
15		Psychological Limitation: Dislikes Being Involved In "Demeaning" Crimes	
50		Hunted: As Card Shark	
15		Secret Identity: Thomas Flynn	
49		Villain Bonus	

**Background:** Thomas Flynn got his start in the underworld through petty theft and street gang warfare; he soon moved on to worse and worse crimes, including assault, murder, drug trafficking, and grand theft auto. He was an ideal candidate for membership in the Card Shark organization, and was recruited as a "Deck" agent by Card Shark III. He had a natural knack for the organization's work, and although he displayed a "soft" streak on occasion, Card Shark III decided that he would make a good costumed bodyguard. So, the "Jack Of Diamonds" persona (distinct from the Jack of Diamonds "Face Card" agent) was developed, and Flynn was trained to fill the role. Some of the organization's members believe that the current Card Shark is grooming Jack Of Diamonds as his protege and eventual "successor." They think that this is why Jack's weaponry seems so weak—Card Shark is trying to teach him to be self-reliant. Several of the bodyguards, notably Pokerface and Deadman's Hand, resent what they regard as the "preferential treatment" that Jack seems to get.

**Personality/Motivation:** Jack Of Diamonds is a surprisingly sensitive soul for a Card Shark employee. Although he had little formal education when he was growing up, he enjoys classical music, fine foods, and quality literature (Greek drama is a particular favorite). Although he would never admit it, he is also deeply in love with the current Ace of Hearts, whom he knows only by the name "Felicity."

Despite his life as a hardened criminal, Jack Of Diamonds dislikes "painful" crimes such as torture, rape, and the like, which he seems to regard as "dishonorable" and demeaning. However, he is neither a fop nor a coward. He is capable of committing vicious assaults and even murder; he simply prefers that his victims be given a fighting chance before he kills them.

**Quote:** "A Diamond is a girl's best friend."

**Powers/Tactics:** Jack's abilities are the result of intense training. His weapons are specially-crafted diamond-shaped throwing blades, some of which are actually a form of grenade. Usually he relies on his bladed diamonds, reserving his Entangles for use on martial artists and gadgeteers. Jack knows that his weapons are not nearly as powerful as some of the attacks used by other Card Shark agents, so he often acts as a "decoy" for opponents so that another Card Shark operative (usually Pokerface or a Face Card) can get in a good shot. This has made him good at dodging and evasive maneuvering.

**Appearance:** Jack Of Diamonds wears a rather gaudy costume styled after the Jacks in a deck of playing cards.

**Record:** Thomas Flynn has a record whose length and variety are staggering. He has committed murders, thefts, robberies, and scores of petty crimes. Jack Of Diamonds is wanted for a number of robberies, and two murders, but no one in the law enforcement community has yet connected Flynn with the Jack Of Diamonds identity.

## DEADMAN'S HAND

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
15	STR	5	<b>OCV:</b> 7 <b>DCV:</b> 7 <b>ECV:</b> 3 <b>Phases:</b> 3, 5, 8, 10, 12  <b>Costs</b>  <b>Char:</b> 99 <b>Base:</b> 100 +                    + <b>Powers:</b> 84 <b>Disads:</b> 83 =                    = <b>Totals:</b> 183                   183
21	DEX	33	
18	CON	16	
10	BODY	0	
10	INT	0	
10	EGO	0	
15	PRE	5	
10	COM	0	
8	PD	5	
6	ED	2	
5	SPD	19	
10	REC	6	
36	END	0	
35	STUN	8	
Cost		Powers	END
51	"Death Touch": 3d6 RKA, Armor Piercing (+½), 0 END (+½); No Range (-½), No KB (-¼)		0
16	Armor (8 PD & ED); OIF (Suit, -½)		0
Skills			
3	Stealth 13-		
2	Language: Card Shark Tactical Codes		
2	KS: Street Gangs 11-		
10	+5 with "Death Touch"		
100+		Disadvantages	
15	Vulnerability: 1½ x Effect From Drains		
20	Psychological Limitation: Loves To Use "Death Touch"		
15	Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Card Shark		
15	Secret Identity: Patrick Carlton		
18	Villain Bonus		

**Background:** Deadman's Hand is a relatively new member of the Card Shark organization; he was brought in by Card Shark III in 1988. He is a mutant whose "Death Touch" power manifested itself when he was 15. When he found out about it, in the middle of a gang fight, he thought it was great. He went on a killing spree, destroying two rival gangs and killing four cops as well. He was soon arrested with the help of a superhero with Telekinesis. He spent four years on death row before Card Shark III, sensing a potential recruit, broke him out and enlisted him. Deadman's Hand has served the Card Shark organization with complete loyalty ever since.

**Personality/History:** Other than his sociopathic glee when he gets to use his power to kill someone, Deadman's Hand is pretty much your average criminal scum: amoral, territorial, obnoxious, greedy, and vicious. He grew up in the world of the street gangs, and even now, surrounded by illicit wealth, his thoughts have not risen very far from the streets. However, he is completely loyal to Card Shark, and will do his best to serve Card Shark's interests at all times.

**Quote:** "Just wait 'til I get my hands on you...."



**Powers/Tactics:** Deadman's Hand's fearsome mutant power allows him to kill a man with but a touch. However, his mutant physiognomy is vulnerable to Drains of all sorts, including many drugs and poisons. In combat, Deadman's Hand relies totally on his power; he has never received any combat training. He will usually hide, so that he can ambush the enemy and get in a few attacks before he gets knocked out. He loves to make a Presence Attack after using his power. Despite his power, Deadman's Hand is physically perhaps the weakest and most vulnerable superpowered agent that Card Shark has, and Card Shark knows it.

GMs who prefer not to have a mutant with powers like Deadman's Hand's in a *Dark Champions* campaign can simply convert the "death touch" power into a device which uses electrical shocks to induce heart attacks.

**Appearance:** At most times, Deadman's Hand dresses in jeans and a tee-shirt. In combat, he usually wears a black bodysuit with a brown vest; on the lapels of the vest are embroidered a red and a black "A" (right lapel) and a red and a black "8" (left lapel).

**Record:** Deadman's Hand is wanted for 22 murders and 30 acts of aggravated assault.



## BLACKJACK

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats	
40	STR	30	<b>OCV:</b> 7	
20	DEX	30	<b>DCV:</b> 7	
25	CON	30	<b>ECV:</b> 3	
20	BODY	20	<b>Phases:</b> 3, 5, 8, 10, 12	
7	INT	-3		
10	EGO	0	<b>Costs</b>	
20	PRE	10		
10	COM	0	<b>Char:</b> 159	<b>Base:</b> 100
20	PD	12	+	+
15	ED	10	<b>Powers:</b> 55	<b>Disads:</b> 114
5	SPD	20	=	=
13	REC	0	<b>Totals:</b> 214	214
50	END	0		
53	STUN	0		

Cost	Powers	END
11	Multipower—22 point base (all OAF)	
1u	1) +4d6 HA; OAF (Blackjack, -1)	4
1u	2) 1d6 HKA (2d6 w/STR), Armor Piercing (+½); OAF (Knife, -1), No KB (-¼)	2
7	Damage Resistance (8 PD, 6 ED)	0
8	Lack of Weakness (8 points)	0

Skills and Talents	
5	Resistance (5 points)
3	Stealth 13-
3	Streetwise 13-
2	WF: Common Melee Weapons
2	Language: Card Shark Tactical Codes
12	+6 with Blackjack

100+ Disadvantages	
20	Psychological Limitation: Loves To Hit Things And People
15	Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Card Shark
15	Reputation: Brutal Card Shark enforcer, 11-
50	Hunted: As Card Shark
15	Secret Identity: Desmond Thompson

**Background:** Desmond Thompson, an obnoxious and brutal individual, was a bully and a thug from the moment he was born. His size and strength gave him an edge in the underworld. As Card Shark II was working his way into the top position in the organization, he heard about Desmond, and decided to bring him into the ranks as Blackjack. Using genetic techniques and advanced serums, Card Shark enhanced Thompson's natural strength to superhuman levels. Desmond was grateful for the "break," and has worked loyally for the organization ever since, though he can be a nuisance at times (Pokerface has had to dress him down a time or two when he got particularly rude).

**Personality/Motivation:** Blackjack is a classic bully who thinks he can solve any problem with violence. He loves to beat on people, break things, and be obnoxious when he has the upper hand; but he will often turn tail and run if things go

badly for him. Still, he is fiercely loyal to Card Shark and his comrades (in his own bull-in-a-china-shop sort of way), and will not abandon them if they need him. However, he is not particularly fond of Jack Of Diamonds or One-Eyed Jack, whom he regards as "sissies."

**Quote:** "Give you a break? Okay! Arm, leg, or head?"

**Powers/Tactics:** Blackjack's enormous strength and ability to resist injury are the result of experiments performed upon him by Card Shark II. He uses an enormous blackjack as his weapon, and he loves to hit and smash things. His combat tactics are very straightforward: hit it until it is busted into little bitty pieces, and then stomp on the pieces. This predictability is his one major weakness.

**Appearance:** Blackjack wears a full black bodysuit of rough weave, with a full black face mask with a sort of peaked hood (sort of like an executioner's hood). His hands are wrapped in leather thongs to help him keep a grip his blackjack.

**Record:** Desmond has been captured before as Blackjack, so the police know his identity even though the public at large does not. He has never committed a murder (though this is not for lack of trying), but is wanted on dozens of charges of aggravated assault, as well as on charges of kidnapping and rape in connection with a July 1989 incident.



## FACE CARD AGENTS

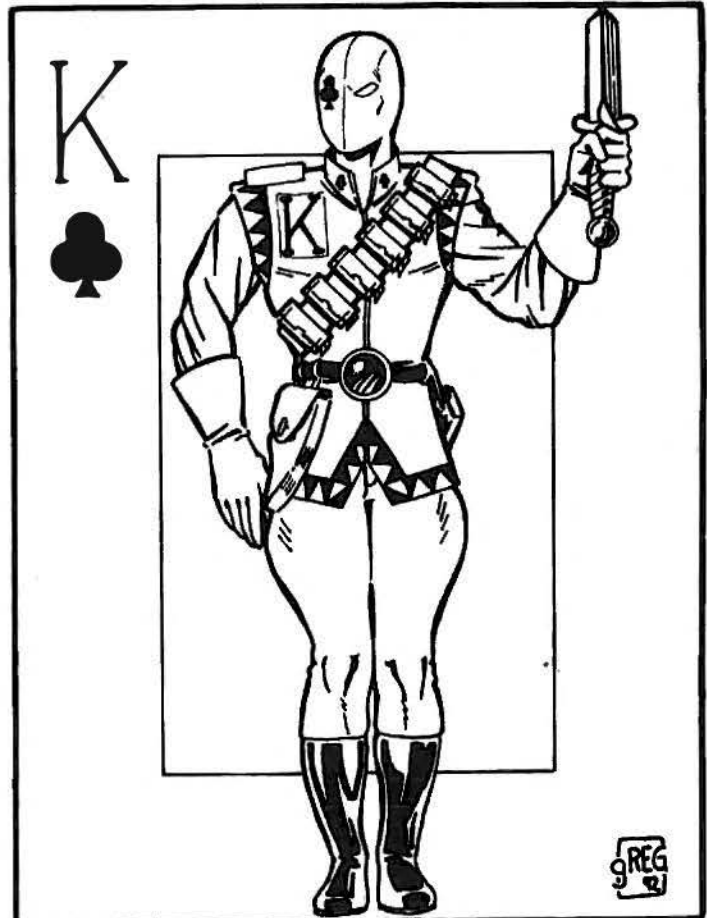
Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
15	STR	5	<b>OCV:</b> 6 <b>DCV:</b> 6 <b>ECV:</b> 3 <b>Phases:</b> 4, 8, 12  <b>Costs</b>  <b>Char:</b> 52 <b>Base:</b> 75 +            + <b>Powers:</b> 91 <b>Disads:</b> 68 =            = <b>Totals:</b> 143            143
17	DEX	21	
15	CON	10	
12	BODY	4	
10	INT	0	
10	EGO	0	
13	PRE	3	
12	COM	1	
5	PD	2	
4	ED	1	
3	SPD	3	
6	REC	0	
30	END	0	
30	STUN	2	
Cost Powers			
22	Multipower—45 point base (all OAF)		
2u	1) 2d6 RKA, Armor Piercing (+½); OAF (Pistol, -1), 2 clips of 12 Charges each (-0)		0
1u	2) 1d6 HKA (2d6 w/STR); OAF (Knife, -1)		1
1u	3) 2d6 Sight Group Flash; OAF (Flash Grenades, -1), 6 Charges (-¾)		0
2u	4) 6d6 EB, Explosion (+½); OAF (Grenades, -1), 6 Charges (-¾)		0
20	Martial Arts—Classic Comic Book		
	<b>Maneuver</b>	<b>OCV</b> <b>DCV</b>	<b>Notes</b>
	Martial Strike	+0    +2	5d6
	Off. Strike	-2    +1	7d6
	Martial Dodge	+0    +5	Dodge all attacks; Abort
	Martial Block	+2    +2	Block; Abort
	Martial Throw	+0    +1	3d6 + vel/5, Target Falls
7	Armor (6 PD & ED), Activ. 11-; OIF (Uniform, -½)		0
2	+1" Running (7" total)		1
4	+2" Superleap (total 5" forward, 3" upward)		1
3	Radio Listen and Transmit; OIF (Mask, -½)		0
Skills			
3	Stealth 12-		
2	WF: Small Arms		
2	Language: Card Shark Tactical Codes		
9	Choose 3 of the following: Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Contortionist, Demolitions, Forgery, Gambling, Interrogation, Lockpicking, Security Systems, Shadowing, Tactics		
6	+2 with Multipower weapons		
5	+1 Hand-To-Hand		
75+ Disadvantages			
15	Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Card Shark		
15	Psychological Limitation: Generally Evil Individuals		
15	Hunted: Police, 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)		
23	Agent Bonus		

**Background:** The "Face Card" Agents are the leaders of each of the four branches of Card Shark's organization. There is an Ace, King, Queen, and Jack of each suit. Most of them became involved with crime while they were still young. At some point, Card Shark saw something in them and recruited them as "Deck" agents. Through natural talent, aggressiveness, hard work, and an aptitude for viciousness, they clawed their way up the ladder to the post of Face Card agent. Because Card Shark recruits his agents based on merit, there are sufficient women in the ranks that the "Queen" in each suit is always a female (sometimes the other Face Cards are females as well).

**Personality/Motivation:** Besides their loyalty to Card Shark, the one thing that the Face Card agents all have in common is their criminal nature and viciousness. Any one of them is capable of committing murder or other violent crimes.

**Powers/Tactics:** Face Card agents are some of the best-trained criminal agents in the underworld. They have been trained in both weapons and hand-to-hand combat, and can give any group a tough fight. See "Card Shark Tactics," above, for more information.

**Appearance:** Face Card agents dress in a costume which is sort of a cross between Card Shark's costume and the way their namesake is depicted in an actual deck of cards. The Queens wear domino masks in the color of their suits, the others wear white full face masks with their suit symbol over the right eye.





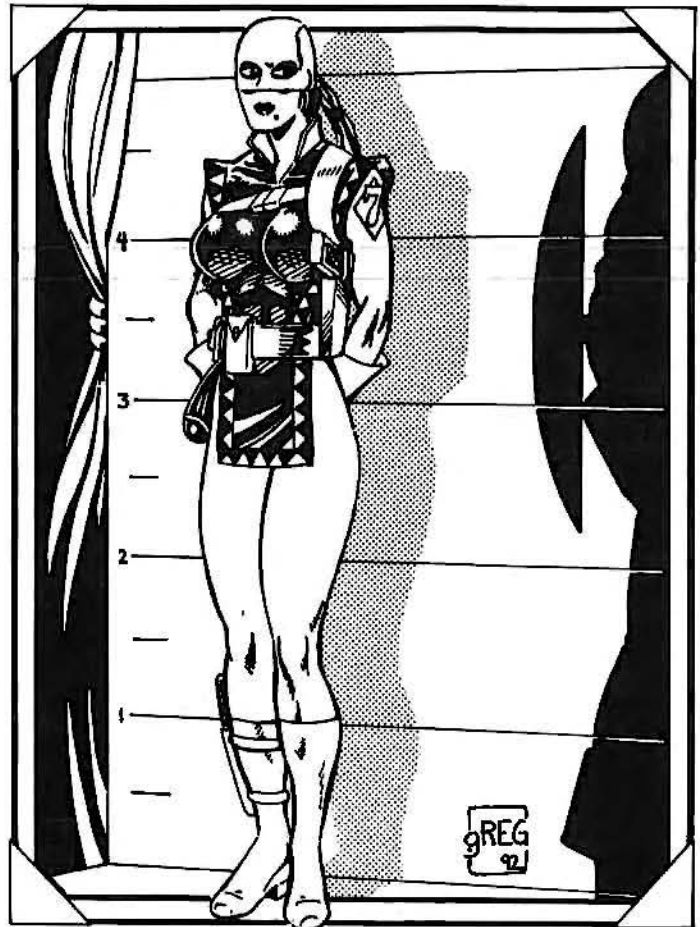
**DECK AGENTS**

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
13	STR	3	<b>OCV:</b> 5
14	DEX	12	<b>DCV:</b> 5
13	CON	6	<b>ECV:</b> 3
10	BODY	0	<b>Phases:</b> 4, 8, 12
10	INT	0	
10	EGO	0	<b>Costs</b>
11	PRE	1	<b>Char:</b> 29 <b>Base:</b> 75
10	COM	0	<b>Powers:</b> 76 <b>Disads:</b> 30
4	PD	1	<b>Totals:</b> 105                      105
3	ED	0	
3	SPD	6	
6	REC	0	
26	END	0	
28	STUN	0	

Cost	Powers	END
12	Multipower—22 point base (all OAF)	
2u	1) 1½d6 RKA; OAF (Pistol, -1), 2 clips of 12 Charges each (-0)	0
1u	2) 1d6 HKA (2d6 w/STR); OAF (Knife, -1)	1
1u	3) +3d6 HA; OAF (Blackjack, -1)	1
20	Martial Arts—Classic Comic Book	
	<b>Maneuver    OCV    DCV            Notes</b>	
	Martial Strike +0    +2            5d6	
	Off. Strike    -2    +1            7d6	
	Martial Dodge +0    +5    Dodge all attacks; Abort	
	Martial Block +2    +2            Block; Abort	
	Martial Throw +0    +1    3d6 + vel/5, Target Falls	
7	Armor (6 PD & ED), Activ. 11-; OIF (Uniform, -½)	0
2	+1" Running (7" total)	1
4	+2" Superleap (total 5" forward, 3" upward)	1
3	Radio Listen and Transmit; OIF (Mask, -½)	0

Skills		
3	Stealth 12-	
2	WF: Small Arms	
2	Language: Card Shark Tactical Codes	
9	Choose 3 of the following: Bribery, Bureaucratics, Combat Driving, Deduction, Electronics, Forgery, Gambling, High Society, Interrogation, Lockpicking, Mechanics, Security Systems, Shadowing, +1 with Multipower	
3	+1 with Multipower weapons	
5	+1 Hand-To-Hand	

75+ Disadvantages		
15	Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Card Shark	
15	Agent Bonus	



**Background:** The Deck agents are the rank-and-file of the Card Shark organization; they run its day-to-day criminal operations. They are also Card Shark's "combat troops" if necessary. Most of them were recruited from street gangs and other crime groups.

**Personality/Motivation:** The Deck agents are generally loyal to Card Shark, not only out of fear of him but because he provides for them, protects them, and usually treats them fairly. Otherwise, the Deck agents run the gamut of criminal personalities, from the sadists to the greedy.

**Powers/Tactics:** The Deck agents have received enough training to hold their own in combat, but most of them are not skilled combat agents. In combat they do not take much individual initiative.

**Appearance:** Deck agents dress like normal men and women on a day-to-day basis, as befits whatever job they actually do; in combat, they wear uniforms patterned after Card Shark's costume, but in colors which are slightly more drab. The uniform has an identification patch on the left shoulder.



## SCENARIOS

### ANTE UP

This scenario is designed to introduce Card Shark to the players and into the campaign. It can be used either as an exercise by an old, established criminal organization, or as a way for a new organization (or new Card Shark) to “announce” itself (or himself) to the world at large. The scenario is not only a test created by Card Shark for his men, it is also a way for him to obtain the money and equipment needed to build powerful new high-tech weapons for his agents and customers. These weapons could have the effect of radically altering the balance of power in several regions of the world, and would certainly cause more deaths than current weapons, so the player characters have plenty of reasons to want to figure out what’s going on and stop it.

### GETTING THE HEROES INVOLVED

The events of this scenario should be introduced gradually—tell the players about them at the rate of one per week or so (roughly one crime per game session). Find some way to let the PCs know about these crimes secondhand (police reports and the like); at least for the first three or four crimes, the PCs should not be present at the scene of the crime unless dumb luck or sheer coincidence happens to put them there. The scenario should be far enough along that the PCs have a chance to figure out what’s really going on before these crimes become a major feature of the campaign. Once the PCs figure out what’s happening, they will try to stake out the locations of possible upcoming crimes. The GM should provide the PCs with 2-6 possible crimes other than the one listed below. All of the rounds after Round Three include a list of possible alternate crimes that the GM could use.

### PLOT

Card Shark is sponsoring a “contest” among his men. The goal of the contest is for each “team” to complete its assigned crime with a minimum of trouble and witnesses; the teams must wear their Card Shark uniforms, but are not to leave any obvious signs that they work for Card Shark. The team with the most points at the end of the crime spree wins; special awards will also be given to the individual agents with the most points. The crimes are based on the hands in poker, in ascending order. Teams are not forbidden to kill witnesses, but killing anyone other than a guard or hero will result in fewer “points” for that team.

This contest has two purposes: one, it is a morale-booster; two, it will enable Card Shark to raise the money needed to purchase certain parts and hire the necessary researchers to develop the world’s first (relatively) inexpensive laser weaponry. These lasers, which are more lethal than conventional firearms, will give Card Shark unmatched supremacy in the illegal weapons market.

GMs should determine the composition of the competing teams so that they will give the PCs a good challenge should they encounter them. All of the teams should be roughly equal in power, so that no team has an unfair advantage over the others. The average team should have up to half a dozen Deck agents, 1-2 Face Card agents, and 1-2 of Card Shark’s superpowered bodyguards. The team for the last crime,

Royal Flush, will be Card Shark’s five superhuman bodyguards, who have to prove that they can succeed at the most difficult of the crimes as easily as the earlier teams could succeed at the simple crimes.

Although suggestions for the nine different stages of this crime spree are given below, GMs should alter these crimes to suit their own campaigns if it would be appropriate.

#### Round One: One Pair

The first crime must involve a pair of objects. Card Shark has decided to send the first team after a pair of jeweled daggers used by Amen-ha-tefra, a pharaoh of ancient Egypt. These knives can be found at the local museum, guarded by a bulletproof glass case and an elite security team armed with tasers. All other items in the museum will be left alone.

#### Round Two: Two Pair

The next crime requires two paired items. The goal for this round is two sets of diamond earrings recently put on display by Clive & Sons Jewelers. Card Shark plans to use one pair for laser research, and to sell the other to some wealthy collector. All the other pieces of jewelry will be left alone. Again, the team given this assignment must contend with elaborate security systems and trained guards, but these guards have handguns instead of tasers.

#### Round Three: Three Of A Kind

The “three of a kind” crime is the kidnapping and ransom of the famous Dubois triplets. These three young women work in show business and as models; their exploits are frequently featured in supermarket tabloids, *People* magazine, and similar publications. Card Shark knows he can get a hefty ransom for them; their millionaire parents dote on them and will gladly pay any sum to get them back. The trick to the kidnapping is that the three must be kidnapped at the same time while they are not together. Thus, the mission requires advanced reconnaissance and split-second timing.

Round Three may be a good place to start getting the PCs involved. If one or more of them is wealthy, he/they may very well know the Dubois triplets socially, and be present at one of the kidnappings (at a charity ball, society party, or similar event). A PC might even be dating one of them. A well-liked hero might be asked to deliver the ransom money.

#### Round Four: Straight

Crime number four is a “straight,” five cards in a row but not all from the same suit. This team’s assignment is to steal five paintings, each worth \$100,000 or more, by at least three different artists, from the same museum. At least two of the paintings must be stored away from public view. The team will once again have to overcome armed guards and security devices; if this is the same museum from which the daggers were stolen in Round One, newer and tougher anti-theft measures will have been installed. The paintings will be sold to unscrupulous private collectors.

Other possible crimes for Round Four include any five related objects which are not a matched set: five jeweled rings from five different private owners, five valuable antique cars of different makes and models, and so forth. Another approach would be to think literally and stage a crime around something “straight” (an airstrip, for example), as long as the “straight” concept is clear enough that the PCs could figure out what is going on.



**Round Five: Flush**

The fifth crime is a “flush,” five cards of the same suit but not in sequence. Card Shark will use this round to acquire useful equipment. The assigned task is to steal experimental lasers from five different high-tech companies. Card Shark’s contacts in these industries have provided him with data that none of the five companies possesses itself, so he knows that he can use their models as the prototype for his own laser weapon. The five thefts must be committed at approximately the same time. Because this is such a large assignment, the team is much larger than normal, and this Round is for individual agent points only.

Other possible “flush” crimes include the theft of anything which Card Shark would want five of the same type of (five large rubies of different sizes and quality, for experimental lasers; five antique Rolls Royces of different makes).

**Round Six: Full House**

The team for Round Six is assigned a simple task which will nonetheless require a lot of resources and cleverness. They must pick any one large house or mansion belonging to some wealthy individual, wait until there is a party or some other event there, and then steal every single thing in the house. That’s right, every single thing, down to the hors-d’oeuvres for the event, the clothes the guests are wearing, and the locked trunks in the attic. The team is allowed to hire outside help (common street thugs) to help move things and to drive trucks, but they cannot carry any of Card Shark’s weapons or give orders. The stolen items will be fenced or ransomed back to the family.

There are several other crimes that Card Shark could assign for Round Six. Any fancy store known as “House Of \_\_\_\_\_” could be robbed and then filled with junk. A charity organization with a name like “Hope House” could be the site of a hostage situation. A theft could be staged at the House Of Mirrors at the local amusement park to obtain mirrors for laser experiments.

**Round Seven: Four Of A Kind**

The “four of a kind” crime is another crime designed to acquire needed equipment rather than money. The team must steal four industrial diamond-making machines from some company in the campaign area. Card Shark will re-tool these machines so that he can use them to make cheap diamonds for his new lasers. Security will be tight at any company which makes diamonds, but the main problem to be overcome is moving these massive machines and their attendant equipment. Four tractor-trailer trucks will be needed; the team is allowed to hire outside drivers if it wishes. The GM might be able to make the climax of this encounter a big battle between the heroes and Card Shark’s men on top of four trucks speeding down the highway!

Any set of four valuable (or useful) things might be the subject of Round Seven. For example: the Bengali Diamonds, a set of four flawless diamonds; the four Unicorn Tapestries from The Cloisters in New York City; four laser pistols held in PRIMUS headquarters in the campaign city; or kidnapping four prominent physicists to force them to work on Card Shark’s laser project.

**Round Eight: Straight Flush**

A straight flush is five cards of the same suit in a row (for example, the 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of Hearts). For his straight flush crime, Card Shark has commanded that the team steal five of the twelve Fabergé eggs which are currently on exhibit at a local art gallery or museum (the choice of the exact location is left up to the GM). The other seven eggs are to be left alone. The five eggs will be sold or ransomed.

Any other selection of five similar objects which are part of a larger set can be the goal for Round Eight. Five of Renoir’s paintings, or five Ming vases of similar styles are two examples.

**Round Nine: Royal Flush**

The last crime in Card Shark’s contest is named for the most valuable poker hand of all, the royal flush (all five face cards from the same suit). The team for this crime is made up of Card Shark’s five superpowered bodyguards. Their goal is to steal an original, hand-illuminated copy of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History Of The Kings Of Britain* from the local university library’s rare book room. This book contains some of the earliest versions of the Arthurian legends. This is not as simple as it sounds: the book is kept in a specially sealed vault and is protected by a heavy guard and the latest high-tech security devices. Moreover, the five have to steal it without damaging it at all.

The book is not going to be sold on the black market—Card Shark is using it as a bribe. A prominent physicist at that same university, Dr. Gerhard DeVries, is an avid book collector. He is also an expert on laser physics. Card Shark recruited him by offering him the book as payment. DeVries, not the most ethical of scientists in the best of circumstances (he has been censured for improper use of grant money before), will accept this offer in a heartbeat. Card Shark will arrange a fake “kidnapping” to provide cover for DeVries.

Any other object or event associated with royalty could be the subject of Card Shark’s last crime. A visit by the royal family of Britain, a statue of Philip II of Spain, or a handwritten proclamation from Queen Elizabeth I are all possibilities.

**IF CARD SHARK SUCCEEDS**

If the PCs are unable to figure out what Card Shark is doing, or if they cannot stop him from committing these crimes, Card Shark will be able to assemble the necessary parts and expertise to build a new type of relatively cheap, powerful laser gun. The development and testing process will take about six months, during which time the Card Shark organization will proceed with business as usual but will avoid anything which would draw undue attention to itself. Once they are built, the PCs will start to encounter everyday thugs armed with powerful high-tech weapons; eventually they will have to find Card Shark’s laser factory and shut it down for good.

## OTHER SCENARIOS

### RECRUITMENT DRIVE

Card Shark may come to the conclusion that he needs more than five superpowered lieutenants. He will put out the word and begin testing candidates.

This offers the GM a lot of possibilities for scenarios. Perhaps some of the candidates are given the test of taking on one of the PCs in combat. Maybe a PC could try to infiltrate Card Shark's organization by trying out for one of the jobs, or maybe the whole recruitment drive is an attempt to lure the PCs into a trap in this fashion. Maybe the new recruits will begin training with the five "veterans," thereby giving the PCs the chance to capture or kill all of them at once.

Possible names for additional Card Shark bodyguards include: Bloody Jack, Crazy Eights, Deuce, Gambit, Ladybird, Suicide King, Trump, Two-Spot, and Wild Card.

### THE FOUR HORSEMEN RETURN

As the "History" section details, Card Shark III never completed his "Four Horsemen" plot to take over the city. He was in the middle of Famine when he was found and killed; he never even got to begin Plague, War, or Death. The supplies and plans for this elaborate scheme were shelved

by Card Shark IV and have never been used. If for some reason Card Shark V decided to try to conquer (or destroy) the entire city, he might dust this plot off.

Depending on what the GM prefers, he might or might not start over again with Famine, which involved an attempt to starve the city by preventing food shipments from arriving. This was to go on for about ten days, and then Plague, a deadly virus to which Card Shark and his men are immune, would be released. If any city officials were still alive after Plague, Death was a plot to have them assassinated by Spades agents. Lastly, any resistance would be mopped up by War, in which hired mercenaries would eliminate police officers and others who might oppose Card Shark with force (including other supervillains, whom Card Shark is prepared for). After these four attacks, the city would be ripe for an easy takeover.

### THE CARD SHARK TIMELINE

If the GM prefers, he can introduce Card Shark into the campaign at some point early in the history of the organization than is presented here. For example, he could start the Card Shark organization right after the death of Card Shark II, and give the player characters a chance to become involved with the "succession." This would give the PCs a chance to help create some of Card Shark's history.

# THE BERSERKS

*Meekapuka*

*2/3*

*sleeps*

*sense is out*

*Champions Drool*

*RAIDED*  
*Power*

## THE BASIC BERSERK PACKAGE

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
20	STR	10	<b>OCV:</b> 7
20	DEX	30	<b>DCV:</b> 7
20	CON	20	<b>ECV:</b> 5
15	BODY	10	<b>Phases:</b> 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
15	INT	5	
15	EGO	10	<b>Costs</b>
15	PRE	5	
10	COM	0	<b>Char:</b> 125 <b>Base:</b> 100
8	PD	4	+                    +
6	ED	2	<b>Powers:</b> 242 <b>Disads:</b> 267
5	SPD	20	=                    =
10	REC	4	<b>Totals:</b> 367                367
40	END	0	
40	STUN	5	

Cost	Powers	END
50	Multipower—75-point base (all at least OIF)	
3u	1) 2d6 RKA, Autofire (5 Shots, +½), +1 STUN Modifier (+½), 2 clips of 32 Charges each (+½); OAF (Assault Rifle, -1), No KB (-¼)	0
2u	2) 2d6 RKA, Armor Piercing (+½); OAF (Pistol, -1), 2 clips of 8 Charges each (-¼), No KB (-¼)	0
1u	3) +4d6 HA, 0 END (+½); OIF (Electrified Gauntlets, -1)	0
2u	4) 4d6 NND (defense is PD FF); OIF (Gauntlet Tranquillizer Darts, -½), 8 Charges (-½)	0
1u	5) 1d6 HKA (2d6 w/STR), Armor Piercing (+½), 0 END (+½); OAF (Dagger, -1), No KB (-¼)	0
2u	6) 5" radius Darkness to Sight Group, Personal Immunity (+¼); OAF (Smoke Grenades, -1), 2 Charges (-1½)	0
27	Martial Arts—Berserks Style	
	<b>Maneuver</b> <b>OCV</b> <b>DCV</b> <b>Notes</b>	
	Killing Strike    -2        +0                1d6+1 HKA	
	Killing Throw    -2        +0                1d6+1 HKA, Target Falls	
	Off. Strike        -2        +1                10d6	
	Def. Strike        +1        +3                6d6	
	Martial Dodge    +0        +5                Dodge all attacks, Abort	
	Martial Block    +2        +2                Block, Abort	
8	+2 DC (already added in)	



Cost	Powers	END
24	Armor (12 PD & ED); OIF (Berserks Combat Suit, -1/2) Helmet (all OIF, -1/2)	0 0
5	Mental Defense (11 points)	
5	Sight Group Flash Defense (8 points)	
5	Hearing Group Flash Defense (8 points)	
3	Infrared Vision	
7	HRRH	
12	+6 vs. Range for Sight and Hearing Groups	
3	+2 Sight PER Rolls	
3	+2 Hearing PER Rolls	
4	Mind Link (all the Berserks); Can Only Be Maintained With Other Persons Who Have This Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio Sense Group, Not Mental Sense Group (-0)	
15	15" Flight; Must Touch Down Every Phase (-1/2), OIF (Jumpboots, -1/2)	3
<b>Skills and Talents</b>		
3	Resistance (3 points)	
3	Stealth 13-	
3	Tactics 12-	
4	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons	
3	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 12-	
2	PS: Mercenary 11-	
1	Language: Old Norse (basic conversation)	
3	Traveler	
1	1) AK: Afghanistan 11-	
1	2) AK: Africa 11-	
1	3) AK: Central America 11-	
1	4) AK: Europe 11-	
1	5) AK: The Middle East 11-	
1	6) AK: South America 11-	
32	+4 with all combat	
<b>100+ Disadvantages</b>		
15	Psychological Limitation: Mercenary Attitude— Will Do Anything, No Matter How Amoral, For Money	
15	Psychological Limitation: Mercenary Code— Will Always Try To Complete The Job And Conceal Their Employer's Identity	
10	Psychological Limitation: Devotion To The Group	
10	Distinctive Features: Berserks Uniform (easily concealed; causes major reaction)	
15	Reputation: Amoral mercenaries, 11- (extreme)	
20	Hunted: Interpol, 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Imprison)	
5	Hunted: Fenris, 8- (Less Pow, Kill)	
10	Public Identities: seven known terrorists	
167	Mercenary Bonus	



## NOTES ON SPECIFIC BERSERKS

Odin:					
3	Computer Programming 12-				
3	Electronics 11-				
3	Inventor 12-				
Thor:					
	No notes				
Thjazi:					
	No notes				
Loki					
3u	New Multipower slot: 9) 2d6 RKA, Area of Effect (Line, 12", +1), Armor Piercing (+½); OAF (Flamethrower Pistol, -1), No KB (-¼), 8 Charges (-½)				0
Heimdall:					
40	Additional weapon, not in Multipower: 3d6 EB, AVLD (Mental Defense, +1½) plus 2d6 Hearing Group Flash, all Affects Desolidified Objects (+½); OAF (Sonic Pistol, -1), 8 Charges (-½)				0
Tyr					
2u	New Multipower slot: 9) 2d6 HKA (3d6+1 w/STR), 0 END (+½); OAF (Electro-Sword, -1)				0
Jotun					
5	+5 STR = 25 STR (5d6 HTH)				
10	+5 BODY = 20 BODY				
4	+4 PD = 13 PD				
6	+2d6 HA (base 7d6 HTH)				
4	Add Crush to Martial Arts (13d6, Must Follow Grab)				
	PD/rPD	ED/rED	SPD	STUN	BODY
Odin	20/12	18/12	5	40	15
Thor	20/12	18/12	5	40	15
Thjazi	20/12	18/12	5	40	15
Loki	20/12	18/12	5	40	15
Heimdall	20/12	18/12	5	40	15
Tyr	20/12	18/12	5	40	15
Jotun	25/12	18/12	5	47	20

**Background:** The Berserks are seven elite mercenaries who use high-tech equipment to give themselves a fighting chance against superpowered heroes. Additionally, they have all undergone drug treatments to increase their strength and reflexes to the level of maximum human potential. The Berserks do mercenary work of all sorts, from robberies to assassinations to terrorist activities. They are willing to do

just about anything if the pay is right; the chance to cause a lot of mayhem is always a plus as well. They take their names from various gods and creatures of Norse mythology; many of their code words and activities also rely on this symbolism.

The Berserks are intended for use in high-tech or superheroic street-level campaigns. Their weapons and technology make them too powerful for most pure street-level campaigns, but with a few reductions here and there they could be used in such campaigns.

**Group Tactics:** The Berserks have been working together for years, and are an efficient, skilled combat machine. Odin is the group's leader. They maintain constant contact over their shielded radio link (i.e., their Mind Link), so they coordinate their battles well. In battle, they communicate using Old Norse, so their communications are effectively secret even if someone figures out how to tap into their radio link. They are ready, willing, and able to fight superheroes; if they know which heroes they may be facing they will research them and try to plan a few "surprises." One of their favorite tactics is to suddenly concentrate all of their attacks on one opponent, thus taking their foes down one by one. If possible, at least one of them will be hidden and one positioned as a sniper. They will always plan at least two escape routes (they often use mini-helicopters to fly away from a battle at top speed).

Some of the Berserks' most common code-words include:

Thjazi play \_\_\_\_: Grab the designated person as a hostage and retreat.

Tyr play \_\_\_\_: The member named will sacrifice himself to allow the others time to accomplish their objective or escape.

Fenris \_\_\_\_: Hit the designated target with your hardest attack (once that person falls, a new target will be named).

Jormungandr maneuver: Form a defensive circle and make a fighting withdrawal.

Gjallar \_\_\_\_: Beware of an attack from the designated person or direction.

Loki by the river: Escape however you can; every man for himself.

**Group Dynamics:** The Berserks get along very well together. They have been working together for years all over the globe, and have saved each others lives many times. Despite the fact that their common bonds are greed and a "code" of mercenary amorality, they trust each other implicitly, and each would lay down his life for the rest.

**Appearance:** The Berserks wear a distinctive black and dark green combat uniform which is armored. Each has an identifying symbol on his helmet: an eye (Odin), a hammer (Thor), a screaming eagle (Thjazi), a flame (Loki), a sword (Tyr), a horn (Heimdall), and a fist (Jotun).

**Record:** All of The Berserks' identities are known to law enforcement authorities; they are wanted for dozens of violent crimes all over the globe.





## THE MASTER OF CRIME

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats	
15	STR	5	<b>OCV:</b> 7	
20	DEX	30	<b>DCV:</b> 7	
15	CON	10	<b>ECV:</b> 6	
12	BODY	4	<b>Phases:</b> 4, 8, 12	
23	INT	16		
17	EGO	14	<b>Costs</b>	
15	PRE	5		
12	COM	1	<b>Char:</b> 106	<b>Base:</b> 75
6	PD	3	+	+
5	ED	2	<b>Powers:</b> 523	<b>Disads:</b> 75
3	SPD	0	=	=
8	REC	4	<b>Totals:</b> 629	629
40	END	5		
35	STUN	7		
Cost		Powers	END	
20	Missile Deflection, all missiles		0	
6	+3" Running = 9" total		2	
4	+2" Swimming = 4" total		1	
20	Martial Arts—Classic Comic Book			
	<b>Maneuver</b>	<b>OCV</b>	<b>DCV</b>	<b>Notes</b>
	Martial Strike	+0	+2	8d6
	Off. Strike	-2	+1	10d6
	Martial Dodge	+0	+5	Dodge all attacks; Abort
	Martial Block	+2	+2	Block; Abort
	Martial Throw	+0	+1	6d6 + vel/5, Target Falls
12	+3 DC (already added in)			
Skills, Talents, Perks				
3	Well-Connected			
100	100 Contacts (criminals around the world, 11- each)			
60	Followers: The Midnight Syndicate, 1000 50-point followers			
15	Wealth			
65	Bases: 32 200-point bases			
15	3d6 Luck			
5	Resistance (5 points)			
3	Acrobatics 13-			
3	Acting 12-			
3	Breakfall 13-			
3	Bribery 12-			
3	Climbing 13-			
3	Combat Driving 13-			
3	Combat Piloting 13-			
3	Computer Programming 14-			
3	Contortionist 13-			
3	Conversation 12-			
3	Criminology 14-			
3	Deduction 14-			
3	Disguise 11-			
3	Electronics 11-			
3	Forgery 11-			
3	Gambling 12-			
3	High Society 12-			
3	Interrogation 12-			
3	Lockpicking 13-			
3	Mechanics 11-			
3	Mimicry 11-			
3	Persuasion 12-			
3	Security Systems 14-			
3	Shadowing 11-			
3	Sleight Of Hand 13-			

Skills, Talents, Perks	
3	Stealth 13-
9	Streetwise 15-
4	TF: All Ground and Air Vehicles
8	WF: Small Arms, Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Common Martial Arts Weapons
3	Scientist
4	1) Criminology 16-
2	2) Psychology/Criminal Psychology 14-
2	3) Pharmacology/Toxicology 14-
3	Scholar
6	1) KS: World Crime And Criminals 18-
2	2) KS: History Of Crime 14-
2	3) KS: World Crimefighters 14-
2	4) KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 14-
2	5) KS: The Law Enforcement World 14-
2	6) KS: The Mafia 14-
2	7) KS: The Yakuza 14-
2	8) KS: Chinese Organized Crime 14-
2	9) KS: Drug Cartels 14-
3	Linguist (English is native)
1	1) Japanese (fluent conversation)
1	2) Mandarin Chinese (fluent conversation)
1	3) Italian (fluent conversation)
1	4) Spanish (fluent conversation)
1	5) Arabic (fluent conversation)
1	6) French (fluent conversation)
24	+3 with All Combat
10	+2 with Martial Arts
10	+2 with Guns
10	+1 Overall
75+ Disadvantages	
20	Psychological Limitation: Driven To Establish World-Wide Criminal Empire
15	Secret Identity: Arthur Hobbes, criminologist
519	Villain Bonus

**Background:** Arthur Hobbes was raised in a wealthy family; he was rarely denied anything he wanted and everyone loved him. He was recognized as a genius early in life, and was taught by private tutors who were supposed to nurture his gifts. His life followed a fairly normal course until age 12, when his father was arrested for insider trading. Although this saddened Arthur, it fascinated him even more. He had never been exposed to anything as sordid as crime, and it interested him intensely. He began to study everything he could find about crime.

This wasn't just a passing phase, as his mother hoped. The more he read, the more he became obsessed with crime. By his fifteenth birthday, he had formed the idea of establishing a global criminal empire, with himself as its emperor. His studies showed him that although such a criminal conspiracy did not as yet exist, the seeds were there, if they could only be properly grown and cultivated. As soon as he seriously began to consider these ideas, he began to hide his criminal studies, so that his parents would think that he had "returned to normal." Soon, Arthur poisoned them for his inheritance, using his criminal skills to hide the evidence.

Arthur spent the next twenty years studying and travelling. He visited every major criminal "hot spot" in the world, meeting criminals, working with them, helping them, and learning from them. As he met them, he subtly sounded them



out on his ideas of a world criminal conspiracy, and found many willing converts. He also kept up his criminology studies, obtaining a Ph.D. so that he could maintain a comfortable cover as a professor.

When he felt the time had come, Arthur adopted his chosen title of "The Master Of Crime," and used his inheritance and criminal contacts to set up a network of hidden "bases." He contacted the criminals who had expressed the most interest in his ideas, found them still receptive, and brought them into a new organization which he cinematically dubbed "the Midnight Syndicate." Since that time, Arthur has worked tirelessly behind the scenes of normal life to establish a world-wide criminal conspiracy which would give him absolute power over the global underworld.

**Personality/Motivation:** Arthur Hobbes, The Master Of Crime, is a driven man. He has spent the past twenty-five years of his life working to create a criminal syndicate which will cover the entire globe. He is obsessed with achieving his life's goal, and will stop at nothing to make his dream a reality.

Because he believes that his organization must remain unknown as long as possible, he is also obsessed with secrecy and security. He insists that the Syndicate's activities proceed slowly and in as hidden a manner as possible. The one thing he fears is the light of publicity, which he feels would destroy the Midnight Syndicate's most valuable asset, its anonymity. Hobbes is ruthless when it comes to protecting the Syndicate; anyone who exposes his organization will earn his undying hatred.



In his "cover identity" as a professor of criminology, Hobbes is outgoing and affable. His professorial work is slanted towards supporting his criminal ambitions.

**Quote:** "I'll contact my men in Hong Kong. I'm sure that they can arrange things to your satisfaction."

**Powers/Tactics:** The Master Of Crime is aptly named: he has been trained in all criminal skills. He has committed every crime in the book, from murder to petty theft, and will commit any of them again if necessary.

Although he prefers to operate behind the scenes and avoid combat entirely, The Master is a skilled combatant. Besides the martial arts training he received years ago in the Orient, he knows how to use most types of guns and weapons. His weapons of choice are the Colt M1911A .45 automatic, the FN-FAL, and Japanese blade weapons. His main combat tactic is to take cover and put his Combat Skill Levels into OCV. He will then target the Hands (to knock weapons out of his enemies' hands) or the Vitals or Head (to kill). If his organization or its secrecy are threatened, he and his men will attack to kill.

**Appearance:** The Master Of Crime dresses in stylish men's suits of conservative cut and colors. He does not wear a mask, but when he is in his bases, his seat is always arranged so that his features are obscured by shadow. He has a nervous habit of polishing the sapphire in the ring he wears on his right hand.

**Record:** Because of his emphasis on secrecy and anonymity, Arthur Hobbes does not have a criminal record.

**Note:** Because he is intended for use in pure street-level campaigns, The Master did not pay points for any weapons, is built on a 75-point base, and uses the Normal Characteristic Maxima rules. If the GM wants to use him in other types of campaigns, this will have to be changed.

## SCENARIOS

### VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

In an attempt to recruit and train more agents and to earn money with which to advance his plans of empire, The Master has set up a "training school" for criminals. The school is based in a large section of abandoned subway tunnel located far beneath the city.

The school offers two services. The first is general training in the "criminal arts" for potential recruits. The classes have about 15 students each, and start about once every two months. The students are housed in makeshift "dormitories" built in the abandoned subway tunnel. The basic course curriculum includes gun use, lockpicking and security systems, getting away from the crime scene, how to hide from the law, and similar subjects. Mock robbery situations, gun battles, and other "exercises" are set up in the abandoned tunnel using stage props so that the students can "practice" their skills. Advanced courses, offered less frequently, cover subjects such as computer crime, forgery, demolitions, assassination, and how to hide or alter evidence at the scene of the crime. Students who decide not to join the Outer Circle of the Midnight Syndicate are "brainwashed" into forgetting the school's existence or are killed.



The second service the school offers is advising, planning, and equipping criminals for specific crimes. One of The Master's followers will interview the prospective "clients" to determine their needs. If the clients are willing to pay the price (either up front, or as a hefty percentage of their "take"), the Syndicate will obtain the necessary equipment (including floor plans and security codes if they can get them) and build models and sets so that the clients can practice their crime before it takes place for real. Once the clients return the equipment and pay their fee, they are brainwashed, so that they cannot betray the school to the law.

### GETTING THE CHARACTERS INVOLVED

The PCs will probably become suspicious when they notice a sudden upsurge in the crime rate (especially for property crimes, such as burglary and theft). Even more suspicious is the skill and precision displayed by the criminals who are pulling these jobs. Eventually, the characters are going to figure out that someone has been training criminals.

Finding the school will not be easy. The Master is no fool and has covered his tracks with care. The PCs' best option is to capture one of the criminals and try to break his brainwashing. This will prove extremely difficult, requiring an Interrogation Roll at -6. Even then, this will only tell the PCs where the criminal went for his training and how to get there; The Master's involvement is carefully hidden from all unrecruited students and clients. Another avenue to explore is tracing the equipment used by some of the school's clients; some of it might be unique enough that it can provide a few leads.

### Graduation Day

Once the PCs find out about the existence of a "school for crime," they will want to either infiltrate it or destroy it. Infiltrating will be tricky, since only known criminals with established records are allowed to sign up. The PCs also have to find the person who has the authority to sign them up in the first place (think of this as an "entrance exam"). (The "Director Of Enrollment" is an old black man who spends his time in Coogan's Bar on the bad side of town. Despite his appearance of frailty, this man is as tough as nails; he is highly unlikely to break under any form of interrogation or torture.) A PC with Disguise and Acting could try to sneak in, but given the dormitory-style housing for students, maintaining a disguise will be very, very difficult.

Simply attacking the place might get better results. However, the PCs will have to overcome the resistance of a lot of trained criminals (at least two dozen students are present at any one time). Then they have to try to break into the heavily-secured observation booth from which The Master (or whichever Inner Circle member is in charge of this important project) watches over the school. Once the PCs attack, whoever is in charge will trigger the self-destruct system and then escape through a concealed passageway. The self-destruct system is a series of small explosions which will cause the abandoned subway tunnel to collapse about 30 seconds after the explosions begin. Whether the PCs can fight their way through to the booth and prevent the escape and/or avoid being crushed to death will depend on their wit and skill.

### PEACE SUMMIT

This scenario presumes that The Master has found a criminal organization (perhaps a Mafia or yakuza family) that is receptive to his plans and is willing to enter into "negotiations" with him to become one of the main components of the Midnight Syndicate. The Master will need to rent a large, luxurious room for the "conference," since he does not want to let anyone know where his own bases are.

The PCs' goal is to find out about the conference and, if possible, disrupt it and capture both The Master and the crime boss with whom he is negotiating. The GM's main task is to let the PCs know about the meeting. The Master's organization is too secure to allow leaks, so the best method is to have a Contact or stool pigeon in the other organization let the characters know that "A big meetin' is goin' down!" Then the PCs simply have to get inside the meeting and ambush the participants (they may also want to listen to negotiations for a while, to learn about The Master and his plans). However, getting inside will be difficult. As always, The Master's penchant for security makes spying on him nearly impossible. Every possible entrance, including ventilation ducts, will be guarded or have security devices monitoring it. The PCs' best chance is to disguise themselves as waiters or guards, but waiters and other servants will be searched with a hand-held metal detector as they go in.

Once the PCs attack, The Master's actions will depend on how much he thinks they know. If he believes that they have been listening to his plans, he will try his best to kill them and then escape. If he thinks they don't know anything, escape will be his only priority. The GM is left to his own devices to determine The Master's escape routes, since that will depend on the conference's location; make certain that they are clever and nigh-foolproof, since The Master wouldn't have it any other way.

### LONG LIVE THE KING

Suppose The Master is able to achieve his goals, and link up all of the world's major criminal organizations in a "conspiracy" headed by himself. What will this mean for the PCs?

First, crime will probably become easier and more profitable. Different organizations will learn from each other, and maybe even train together or undertake joint criminal operations. Some types of crimes, such as large-scale theft and fencing of goods, will become almost unstoppable, since the global criminal economy will make it much easier to ship and sell stolen goods. The same considerations apply to drug smuggling.

Second, the PCs will have to move fast. If they cannot strike the Midnight Conspiracy a decisive blow in the first few months of its existence, it will become much more difficult to disrupt because the "members" will quickly see how beneficial cooperation can be. However, the larger the Syndicate gets, the easier it is to combat, because the harder it becomes to maintain security.

In addition to outright assaults on Syndicate bases, the players could have a lot of fun trying to infiltrate the Syndicate and bring it down by playing one member against another. Criminals, a cowardly and superstitious lot, tend to be distrustful of one another. If one Syndicate member can be tricked into thinking that another member is about to betray the Syndicate, is making a disproportionate share of profits or is about to try to take over, the Syndicate might split apart under the weight of its members' mutual distrust.



# INDEPENDENT CRIMINALS

This section features nine independent criminals for use in *Dark Champions* campaigns. So that they can be used in superheroic street-level campaigns, they are built on a 100-point base and pay points for weapons, armor, and gadgets. GMs who want to use these villains in heroic street-level campaigns can simply deduct the cost of standard weapons and armor (anything unusual still has to be paid for) and reduce Characteristics, Powers, and Skills to heroic levels.

## BROTHER NAMAAN

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats	
10	STR	0	<b>OCV:</b> 5	
14	DEX	12	<b>DCV:</b> 5	
15	CON	10	<b>ECV:</b> 5	
10	BODY	0	<b>Phases:</b> 3, 6, 9, 12	
18	INT	8		
14	EGO	8	<b>Costs</b>	
20	PRE	10		
10	COM	0	<b>Char:</b> 87	<b>Base:</b> 100
5	PD	3	+	+
6	ED	3	<b>Powers:</b> 135	<b>Disads:</b> 122
4	SPD	16	=	=
10	REC	10	<b>Totals:</b> 222	222
30	END	0		
30	STUN	7		

Cost	Powers	END
22	Multipower—50-point base (all OAF, No KB)	
2u	1) 1d6+1 RKA, Autofire (5 Shots, +½), +1 STUN Modifier (+½), 2 clips of 32 Charges each (+½); OAF (Ingram MAC-10, -1), No KB (-¼)	0
2u	2) 1d6+1 RKA, Autofire (5 Shots, +½), +1 STUN Modifier (+½), 20 Charges (+½); OAF (Mini-Uzi, -1), No KB (-¼)	0
2u	3) 2d6 RKA, +1 STUN Modifier (+½); OAF (LAR Grizzly .45, -1), 7 Charges (-½), No KB (-¼)	0
1u	4) 1½d6 RKA, +1 STUN Modifier (+½); OAF (S&W Model 57, -1), 6 Charges (-¾), No KB (-¼)	0
1u	5) 1d6 HKA (2d6 with STR), Armor Piercing (+½), OAF (Knife, -1), No KB (-¼)	1
22	½ Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, resistant; OAF ("zombie potion," fragile, -1¼), 1 Charge lasting for 1 Hour (-½)	0
8	2d6 CON Drain, Ranged (+½); OAF ("stinkweed juice," fragile, -1¼), 2 Charges (-1½)	0

Skills, Perks and Talents		
5,5,10	Wealth; Cramming; Eidetic Memory	
5	Immunity: rattlesnake venom; curare	
3, 3, 3	Lightsleep; Simulate Death; Acting 13-	
3	Forensic Medicine/Embalming 13-	
9, 3	Animal Handler 14-; Climbing 12-	

Skills, Perks and Talents	
3, 3, 3	Interrogation 13-; Mimicry 11-; Sleight Of Hand 12-
3, 3, 3	Stealth 12-; Streetwise 13-; Ventriloquism 11-
3, 5	WF: Small Arms, Knives; KS: Voodoo 15-

100+ Disadvantages	
25	Psychological Limitation: Psychotic
20	Psychological Limitation: Superstitious; Believes In Voodoo Spirits
5	Dependency: crack cocaine addict
15	Distinctive Features: dreadlocks, voodoo scars (concealable w/ effort, major reaction)
15	Reputation: violent posse leader, 11-
20	Hunted: Police, 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Imprison)
22	Villain Bonus

**Background:** Brother Namaan was born in Jamaica. As a teenager, he became a member of the Ghede posse, a vicious drug-dealing gang which is also a voodoo cult of the darkest sort. Namaan proved to have a talent for communicating with the spirit world, and was adopted as an "apprentice" by the group's leader, Walter. Unfortunately for Walter, Namaan's spiritual gifts were a side effect of his psychosis. One day, Walter angered Namaan, and Namaan in a fit of rage blew him to bits with a shotgun. Because of his voodoo talents, none of the other gang members dared to challenge Namaan, and he became the posse's leader.

Brother Namaan and the posse were making good profits in Kingston selling crack, but he soon realized that the real money was in America, so he brought the posse to the United States. His psychotic, unpredictable violent streak has made Brother Namaan and his voodoo posse one of the most feared drug-dealing gangs in [campaign city]. Today, Brother Namaan is still the unquestioned leader and houngan of the Ghede posse, untouched by the police or vigilantes.

**Personality/Motivation:** Brother Namaan is utterly psychotic. His extensive drug use does nothing to improve this condition. For long periods he will seem relatively lucid, even cunning, but eventually, something will trigger one of his psychotic rages, and he will lash out. When the mood is upon him, he is incredibly violent and murderous, willing to kill people for the slightest of offenses. He is prone to overkill, and sometimes continues firing at his foes long after they are dead. One wonders what he thinks he is actually firing at.

Namaan is extremely superstitious, as befits a voodoo priest. He truly believes that he has the ability to communicate with the spirit world, and he tailors his (and his posse's) actions based upon what he feels the spirits are telling him. Anyone who mocks the spirits becomes a target of Namaan's wrath. Sometimes members of his posse can influence him by creating fake omens, but given Brother Namaan's deranged temper, that is a dangerous game indeed.

**Quote:** "Mon, you lie. De spirits tell me many t'ings, many t'ings. Now, dey tell me to kill you. I like what dey tell me."

**Powers/Tactics:** Brother Namaan fights his enemies with the many guns he carries. He often supplements his usual arsenal with a shotgun, a weapon he likes for its bloody destructiveness—"Pretty red patterns, hey mon?"

In addition to his guns, Brother Namaan uses his skills as a voodoo houngan to brew "potions" which he can use in battle. His favorites are "zombie potion," a numbing drug that blocks pain but also sends him into violent psychotic fits; and "stinkweed juice," a substance so vile-smelling that it makes most men retch when it is near them. As the mood suits him, he may carry other potions or powders as well. He keeps these potions in tiny gourds hanging from his vest and belt.

Tactics generally mean little to Brother Namaan. When the gunfire starts, and his rage hits him, he cares only for killing. At the GM's option, his STR can be increased by 5 or 10 when he is under the spell of his psychosis. His intelligence does not disappear, so he can fight with a bestial cunning.

**Appearance:** Brother Namaan is a black man, about six feet tall, probably in his late twenties or early thirties. He usually dresses in a greasy leather vest and a pair of smoke-blackened jeans. His hair is in dreadlocks, and his face and back are covered with ritual voodoo scars. His accoutrements are an odd blend of modern and ancient: his guns hang from various holsters and straps, while the rest of his clothing is adorned with bones, feathers, and other, less pleasant, voodoo fetishes.

**Record:** Brother Namaan is wanted for questioning in connection with five murders in two cities. There is also a federal warrant for his arrest on drug trafficking charges.



## ABADDON

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats	
20	STR	10	<b>OCV:</b> 6	
19	DEX	27	<b>DCV:</b> 6	
20	CON	20	<b>ECV:</b> 4	
15	BODY	10	<b>Phases:</b> 3, 5, 8, 10, 12	
15	INT	5	<b>Costs</b>	
12	EGO	4		
13	PRE	3		
10	COM	0	<b>Char:</b> 112	<b>Base:</b> 100
10	PD	6	+	+
6	ED	2	<b>Powers:</b> 139	<b>Disads:</b> 151
5	SPD	21	=	=
10	REC	4	<b>Totals:</b> 251	251
40	END	0		
35	STUN	0		

Cost	Powers	END
22	Multipower—45-point base (all OAF, No KB)	
2u	1) 1d6 HKA (2d6 with STR), Armor Piercing (+½), Autofire (2 Shots, +½), 0 END (+1); OAF (Twin Knives, -¾), Separate Rolls And Levels (-¼), No KB (-¼)	0
1u	2) ½d6 HKA (1d6 with STR), Ranged (+½), Autofire (3 Shots, +½), 12 Recoverable Charges (+¼); OAF (Throwing Knives, -1), No KB (-¼), Range Based On STR (-¼)	0
24	Martial Arts—Commando Training	
	<b>Maneuver</b> <b>OCV</b> <b>DCV</b> <b>Notes</b>	
	Martial Strike    +0    +2            8d6	
	Martial Block    +2    +2            Block, Abort	
	Martial Throw    +0    +1            6d6 + vel/5, Target Falls	
	Killing Strike    -2    +0            1d6 HKA (2d6 w/STR)	
	Choke Hold        -2    +0            Grab, 3d6 NND	
	Martial Disarm    -1    +1            Disarm, +20 STR	
8	+2 DC (already added in)	
12	Armor (+6 PD & ED); OIF (Armored Uniform, -½)	0
2	+1" Running = 7" total	1

Skills and Talents	
3	Combat Sense 12-
5	Defense Maneuver
3, 3	Acrobatics 13-;    Climbing 13-
1	Demolitions 8-
1	Forgery 8-
3	Gambling 11-
3	Interrogation 12-
1	Paramedics 8-
3	Shadowing 11-
1	Sleight Of Hand 8-
3	Stealth 13-
3	Streetwise 12-
3	Survival 11-
2	TF: All Ground Vehicles
4	WF: Small Arms, Knives, Off Hand
3	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 12-
1	KS: The Espionage World 8-
2	Language: Hebrew (fluent conversation) (Arabic is native)
2	Language: Persian (fluent conversation)
1	Language: English (basic conversation)
1	Science: Pharmacology/Toxicology 8-
12	+4 with Knives
4	+2 with Twin Knives (Multipower Slot #1)



100+	Disadvantages
10	Enraged: if insulted, taunted, or belittled, 11-, 11-
20	Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer
15	Psychological Limitation: Always Looks Out For Himself First
10	Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of Israelis And Americans
15	Reputation: Sadistic assassin, 11-
20	Hunted: The Mossad, 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
20	Hunted: CIA, 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
5	Rivalry: with Caliber
10	Public Identity: Yusef al-Behraz
26	Villain Bonus

**Background:** Yusef al-Behraz is the son of a member of the Palestinian League for Retribution and Liberation (PLRL), a terrorist group whose stated purpose is the destruction of the state of Israel and the slaughter of all Jews residing in the Middle East. Yusef was raised to violently hate both the Israelis and their ally, the United States. As soon as he was old enough, his father was training him in the arts of combat and destruction. However, Yusef's talents lay in a slightly different area. One day, as his father watched, Yusef casually tossed three daggers into the bullseye of a wooden target, one after the other. Then he watched him do it again throwing all three daggers at once. Yusef's father alerted his superiors, who took Yusef away for training as an assassin.

Gradually, Yusef's training made him forget about home, and replaced any gentle thoughts he had with the cold desire to kill. As soon as he was ready, the PLRL sent him into the field to kill key Israeli personnel. Yusef worked for the PLRL for nearly ten years. He was so feared that the Israelis gave him the name of Abaddon, the devil of evil war. Eventually, Abaddon's hatred of the Israelis, strong though it was, was supplanted by a stronger emotion: selfishness. He came to the conclusion that he was wasting his talents on a seemingly unwinnable political cause, when elsewhere in the world governments and private individuals would pay top dollar for his services. Abaddon arranged to be sent on a mission to Europe and then defected and went to work as a freelance assassin. Since that time, he has worked for employers on three continents, continually proving that his nickname is well-deserved.

**Personality/Motivation:** The once good-natured Yusef al-Behraz has been totally "replaced" by the cold, cruel killing machine that is Abaddon. Whoever hires him is hiring the best sort of assassin, one with no feelings of remorse or pity whatsoever. Abaddon's one fault as an assassin (as some would see it) is his strong sense of "selfishness." He will run rather than fight for his employer's interests, and will talk rather than be tortured. He also insists upon high fees, and woe unto any employer who fails to pay him his full fee when required. Despite his lack of "assassin's honor," Abaddon is still able to bring in work and command those high fees because he rarely fails.

**Quote:** "Do not try to run, it is pointless. I am here, and so you are doomed to die."



**Powers/Tactics:** Abaddon's weapons of choice are knives and daggers. He typically fights with one dagger in each hand. This ability (Multipower slot #1) is bought as a two-shot Autofire attack. He must divide his Combat Skill Levels between the two attacks, and must make a separate "to hit" roll for each attack (this is defined by the Limitation "Separate Rolls And Levels"). The Limitation for the Focus is reduced by  $\frac{1}{4}$ , because he actually has two Foci. (This system can also be used for "two-gun" attacks.)

Abaddon is also skilled at throwing knives. One of his favorite tricks is to throw a knife at a foe so that the knife's hilt bounces off of a wall in back of the target, causing the knife to strike his target from behind.

Abaddon's method of performing assassinations is usually that of a hunter: he sits and waits in his victim's path and then leaps to the attack when the victim arrives. His reliance on knives means that he has to get fairly close to his victim before he attacks; if he cannot do this, he will leave and try another time. Everyone lets down their guard sooner or later.

**Appearance:** Abaddon is an Arabic man in his mid-thirties, with black hair and mustache. He wears no set costume or uniform. He has several different sets of armored clothing, and he wears whichever he feels is appropriate.

**Record:** Abaddon is wanted on three continents for eight murders.

**CALIBER**

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
15	STR	5	<b>OCV:</b> 8
23	DEX	39	<b>DCV:</b> 8
18	CON	16	<b>ECV:</b> 5
12	BODY	4	<b>Phases:</b> 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
13	INT	3	
14	EGO	8	
15	PRE	5	<b>Costs</b>
12	COM	1	<b>Char:</b> 126 <b>Base:</b> 100
8	PD	5	+
5	ED	1	<b>Powers:</b> 196 <b>Disads:</b> 222
6	SPD	27	=
10	REC	6	<b>Totals:</b> 322 322
36	END	0	
35	STUN	6	

Cost	Powers	END
29	Multipower—65 point base (all OAF, No KB)	
2u	1) Assassination/Sniper Pistol: 1½d6 RKA, Armor Piercing (+½), No Range Penalty, (+½), Invisible to Sight and Hearing Sense Groups (+¾); OAF (A/S Pistol, -1), No KB (-¼), 2 clips of 4 Charges each (-½)	0
3u	2) Modular Gun: 1d6+1 RKA, +½ Variable Advantage (+1½), Variable Special Effects (+¼), 0 END (+½); OAF (Modular Gun, -1), Takes 1 Phase To Change Advantages (-¼), No KB (-¼)	0
2u	3) Automag .44 Magnum w/ Hollow-Point Bullets: 2d6 RKA, Penetrating (+½), +1 STUN (+½); OAF (-1), No KB (-¼), 8 Charges (-½)	0
2u	4) Automag .44: as Slot #3	0
1u	5) Walther PPK: 1d6 RKA; OAF (-1), No KB (-¼), 7 Charges (-½)	0
1u	6) Knife: 1d6 (2d6) HKA, Armor Piercing (-½); OAF (-1), No KB (-¼)	2
1u	7) Knife: as Slot #6	2
18	4d6 Sight Group Flash; OAF (Flare Grenades, -1); 6 Charges (-¾)	0
26	Martial Arts—No particular style	
	<b>Maneuver OCV DCV Notes</b>	
	Martial Strike +0 +2 7d6	
	Off. Strike -2 +1 9d6	
	Killing Strike -2 +0 1d6 (2d6) HKA	
	Choke Hold -2 +0 Grab, 3d6 NND	
	Martial Dodge +0 +5 Dodge all attacks, Abort	
	Martial Block +2 +2 Block, Abort	
8	+2 DC (already added in)	
12	Armor (6 PD & ED); OIF (Armored Jacket, -½)	0
2	Sight Flash Def. (5 pts); OAF (Sun-glasses, -1)	0

Skills and Talents		
30	Find Weakness 13-	all Multipower weapons
3	Combat Driving 14-	
3	Demolitions 11-	
3	Shadowing 11-	
3	Stealth 14-	
5	Streetwise 13-	
3	Tactics 12-	
4	Weaponsmith 11-	(Slugthrowers, Muscle-powered)
2	KS: The Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-	
2	KS: The Espionage World 11-	
2	KS: [Campaign City] Underworld 11-	

Skills and Talents	
10	+2 with Guns
6	+2 with Multipower
5	+1 Hand-To-Hand
8	+1 with all combat
100+ Disadvantages	
15	Enraged: when he encounters a "vigilante", go 14-, recover 8-
15	Psychological Limitation: Greedy
15	Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of Vigilantes
15	Psychological Limitation: Brutal and Cruel; Loves To Toy With His Victims
20	Hunted: Police, 8- (More Pow, NCI, Imprison)
20	Hunted: Interpol, 8- (More Pow, NCI, Imprison)
5	Rivalry: with Abaddon
15	Secret Identity: Albert Steele, small-time hood
102	Villain Bonus

**Background:** Allen, Daniel, and Richard Striker were triplets. They nearly killed their mother during childbirth, and they didn't make things any easier on their parents after that. By the time they were 16, they were so uncontrollable and brutal that their parent kicked them out of the house. They drifted into the underworld, where they got involved in mercenary work. Soon, they were split up for the first time, as their various assignments took them all over the world to fight, murder, and pillage.

Allen was the first of the three to attempt to break into the lucrative American mercenary "market." He adapted several of the world's most powerful small arms and took on the identity of Salvo, killer-for-hire. His career was cut short by the Blue Moon Killer, who views this sort of activity with disfavor. Daniel was the next one to give the U.S. market a try, but in an effort to avoid his brother's fate, he went one step further: he designed a new type of gun which he christened the Assassination/Sniper Pistol. Daniel decided to call himself "Caliber." However, Caliber I fared little better than Salvo: after several successful months as an assassin/enforcer, Caliber was killed in combat with a vigilante during a robbery attempt.

When Richard got the news of his second brother's death at the hands of another vigilante, he became insanely angry. He decided to take up his brothers' career, so that he would have the chance to kill as many vigilantes as possible. He realized he needed a degree of adaptability that his brothers had lacked, so he designed and built a "modular gun." This powerful firearm has different parts and clips that can be attached or switched to make it as effective as possible in any given situation. As Caliber II, Richard operated as a mercenary, assassin, and enforcer in [campaign city] for some months, committing crimes and looking for revenge. He never got that revenge—he died from complications resulting from the terrible injuries he received when he attacked the armored crimefighter Shrapnel.





Even though there were no more Striker brothers to take up the "Caliber" mantle, Card Shark, who funded some of the original Caliber's weapon projects, found that Caliber was just too useful to do without. So, he took found a small-time punk, Albert Steele, whose attitudes and methods were similar to those of Richard Striker. Steele had seen several of his friends gunned down by vigilantes during a battle from which he himself escaped only through skill and luck. Card Shark provided Steele with training and the Caliber weaponry and then turned him loose on the world.

**Personality/Motivation:** Caliber is a powerful man with sadistic tendencies. He comes across as a bully who can, and will, back up his threats—and who will use lethal force if

he feels like it. Caliber is also driven by his hatred of the "vigilantes" who are constantly gunning for him. When he encounters a vigilante, he becomes enraged, and attacks him with all of the fury and firepower he can muster. He is thought to be responsible for the disappearances of several crimefighters. He is willing to take contracts on vigilantes at a discount, but the prices he charges for his other services more than make up for it.

**Quote:** "This little piggy gets broken <CRACK>. This little piggy is also gonna get broken unless you tell me where I can find Dominic Marcelli, you little !\$#@%!!\*..."

**Powers/Tactics:** In addition to the more "mundane" guns in his personal arsenal, Caliber has two special guns which his predecessors invented. The first of these is his Assassination/Sniper Pistol, designed to make sniping simple and easy. The second is his "modular gun", which is essentially a set of gun components and clips of different ammunition which he can fit together in different combination to create just the right gun for the job at hand. The gun could be an assault rifle firing incendiary bullets one Phase, a powerful pistol firing armor-piercing ammo a few seconds later, and so forth.

**Appearance:** Caliber wears a black leather armored jacket, black combat boots, and dark grey combat pants. His pants and jacket have enough pockets and pouches to carry all of the gun parts and spare clips for his modular gun. He wears a pair of large, square-frame sunglasses, but does not otherwise mask himself

or attempt to conceal his identity. His hair is black.

Caliber's two .44 Automags are kept in hip holsters, and his A/S Pistol is in a low-slung belt holster that reaches down the front of his left leg—the tip of the barrel drops just below his knee. The modular gun's base is kept in an over-the-shoulder holster, and the various modules and clips for it are carried in his many pockets and pouches. One knife is usually in a boot sheath, the other is hidden.

**Record:** As Albert Steele, Steele is wanted for a variety of offenses, mainly minor but ranging up to aggravated assault. As Caliber, Steele is wanted for numerous murders and robberies, though he has so far managed to evade capture.

## CROSSBOW

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
20	STR	10	<b>OCV:</b> 9
26	DEX	48	<b>DCV:</b> 9
23	CON	26	<b>ECV:</b> 5
14	BODY	8	<b>Phases:</b> 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12
15	INT	5	
14	EGO	8	<b>Costs</b>
13	PRE	3	
12	COM	1	<b>Char:</b> 161 <b>Base:</b> 100
8	PD	4	+                    +
7	ED	2	<b>Powers:</b> 430 <b>Disads:</b> 491
7	SPD	34	=                    =
11	REC	6	<b>Totals:</b> 591                    591
46	END	0	
40	STUN	6	

Cost	Powers	END
87	Multipower—100-point base (all OAF, 32 Recoverable Charges for entire Multipower)	
3u	1) 2d6 RKA, Armor Piercing x2 (+1); OAF (Crossbow, -1), No KB (-¼)	0
1u	2) 10d6 Dispel, any firearm (+¼); OAF (Crossbow, -1)	0
3u	3) 4d6 Entangle, Takes No Damage (+½), Backlash (+½, Backlash damage is the same as the Linked RKA); OAF (Crossbow, -1), Only Works When Target Is Near A Wall Or Other Large, Sturdy Object (-½), Victim May Still Be Able To Use Some Accessible Foci (-¼), Cannot Create "Walls" (-¼); plus 1d6+1 RKA; OAF (Crossbow, -1), Linked (-½), No KB (-¼)	0
10	1d6 (2d6) HKA, Armor Piercing; OAF (Knife, -1), Does No KB (-¼)	0
20	Martial Arts—Classic Comic Book	
	<b>Maneuver    OCV    DCV                    Notes</b>	
	Martial Strike    +0    +2                    9d6	
	Off. Strike        -2    +1                    11d6	
	Martial Block    +2    +2                    Block, Abort	
	Martial Throw    +0    +1    7d6 + vel/5, Target Falls	
	Martial Dodge    +0    +5    Dodge all attacks, Abort	
12	+3 DC (already added in)	
30	½ Damage Reduction, Physical and Energy, resistant; Requires A CON Roll (-½), Only Reduces STUN Taken (-½)	0
9	+3 PER, all senses	0
6	+2 vs. Range for Sight and Hearing Groups	0
20	Missile Deflection (all missiles)	0
10	+5" Running = 11" total	2
5	Superleap: 9" forward, 5" up	2
4	+4" Swimming = 6" total	2
6	12" Swinging; OAF (Swing-Grapple, -1)	2

### Skills, Perks and Talents

55	Followers—8 trained jungle animals (cost is based on the cost of a Tiger in <i>Fantasy Hero</i> )
3	Ambidexterity
3	Bump of Direction
3	Combat Sense 12-
19	Danger Sense 13-, out of combat
15	Immunity to most common animal venoms
3	Lightsleep
15	3d6 Luck
3	Resistance (3 points)
3	Acrobatics 14-
9	Animal Handler 14-
3	Breakfall 14-
3	Climbing 14-
3	Paramedic 12-
3	Riding 14-
7	Shadowing 13-
3	Stealth 14-
9	Survival 14-
7	Tracking 14-
3	Weaponsmith 11- (Muscle-powered)
4	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons
5	KS: Hunting 14-
5	PS: Hunter 14-
18	+6 with Crossbows/Multipower

### 100+ Disadvantages

15	Psychological Limitation: Hunter Mentality, Lives For The Thrill Of The Hunt
15	Psychological Limitation: Code of Honor: Everyone Deserves A "Fair" Chance To Win
15	Psychological Limitation: Hunting [current victim]
15	Hunted: Police, 8- (As Pow, NCI, Imprison)
15	Secret Identity—William Nairata, lost hunter
416	Villain Bonus

**Background:** William Nairata (born William Walters) grew up in Louisiana, where he learned to hunt and fish. Hunting became his greatest pastime, in fact his sole preoccupation. He got so good he switched from the rifle to the crossbow, which he felt better showcased his skill. After a while, he tired of Louisiana hunting, so he headed to Africa when he was 17. There he learned how to hunt big game. His hunting skill was so impressive that he became fast friends with many tribesmen and learned their hunting secrets. On occasion, he traveled to other parts of the world to hunt and study hunting techniques.

After twelve years, he became bored again, because normal hunting did not challenge him anymore. He finally realized that the one true hunting challenge left to him was hunting men—and even better, superhumans. With this goal in mind, he faked his death in Africa and emerged two years later in the United States as Crossbow, hunter of men. Sometimes he works as a bounty hunter or vigilante, but just as often he will pick a good target, hero or villain, send them a warning note, and begin stalking them.



**Personality/Motivation:** Crossbow is possessed of the hunter's mentality. He only enjoys himself when he is stalking and killing his quarry, but his skill is so great that hunting men is the only thrill left to him. His love of hunting has overridden his moral sense, giving him an almost psychopathic disregard of human life: he sees people as game, not as human beings. If some other way to stimulate his hunter's mentality could be found, his psychopathic tendencies would subside.

Crossbow always makes sure that his opponents have a "fair chance" to beat him, but his definition of "fair" is a little shaky. Often, this means nothing more than sending the victim a warning note—if he can't look out for himself, that's his problem. Similarly, an ambush is fair, provided that Crossbow leaves his victim some tiny sign that would allow him to detect him, if the victim is skilled enough to notice the clue. If Crossbow gets involved in open combat, his sense of "fairness" means that he will not shoot anyone from surprise.

Crossbow is very proud of the skills he has worked so long to hone. In order to show off his skills, he sometimes pulls flashy robberies for hire or performs assassinations that meet his criteria for "a good hunt." However, Crossbow's self-confidence in his skills and abilities is tempered by his hunter's caution and willingness to stalk his prey as long as can be. This combination can make him a deadly opponent.

**Quote:** "I wonder what the prey feels like when it realizes it is being stalked?"

**Powers/Tactics:** While Crossbow could use his powers to become a skilled assassin/sniper, his hunter's mentality drives him to the stalk and chase. If a hunt is going poorly, he may fire "warning shots" to liven up the prey, but in general he acts like a hunter would. If he is forced into direct combat that he feels he cannot handle, he has no compunctions about fleeing.

Crossbow's attacks (his Multipower) are all based on things he can do with his crossbow. Besides just shooting his prey with his crossbow bolts, he can ruin guns by firing a bolt down the barrel (his Dispel), or he can pin his quarry to a wall to keep it from escaping (his Entangle; the Backlash results



when the victim tries to "un-pin" himself). Besides his crossbow, Crossbow also uses several trained jungle animals which he brought back from Africa. He considers these beasts his "pets" and companions; he will take gruesome revenge on anyone who hurts them.

**Appearance:** Crossbow usually wears a tunic and pants of dark green, with black vest, boots, belt, and gloves. Though he does not wear a mask, he often paints his face for camouflage purposes. His dark brown hair is tied back in a short ponytail.

**Record:** Crossbow has never been captured, so he has no record; he is a suspect in 13 murders.

## BUCKSHOT

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
15	STR	5	<b>OCV:</b> 7 <b>DCV:</b> 7 <b>ECV:</b> 3
20	DEX	30	
20	CON	20	
10	BODY	0	<b>Phases:</b> 3, 6, 9, 12
13	INT	3	<b>Costs</b>
10	EGO	0	
15	PRE	5	
10	COM	0	
8	PD	5	
6	ED	2	
4	SPD	10	
10	REC	6	
40	END	0	
40	STUN	12	

Cost	Powers	END		
30	Multipower—60-point base (all OAF)			
1u	1) 2d6 RKA; OAF (Shotgun Pistol, -1), Reduced Penetration (-¼), Reduced by Range (-¼), 5 Charges (-¾)	0		
2u	2) 2d6 RKA, Penetrating (+½); OAF (Combat Shotgun with Slugs, -1), 8 Charges (-½)	0		
2u	3) 2d6 RKA, Double KB (+¾); OAF (Combat Shotgun Mk. II, -1), 8 Charges (-½)	0		
2u	4) 2d6 RKA, Area: Cone, 7"/side (+1); OAF (Wide-Blast Combat Shotgun, -1), 8 Charges (-½)	0		
25	Martial Arts—Dirty Infighting Plus			
	<b>Maneuver</b> <b>OCV</b> <b>DCV</b> <b>Notes</b>			
	Martial Strike	+0	+2	8d6
	Off. Strike	-2	+1	10d6
	Nerve Strike	-1	+1	3d6 NND
	Killing Strike	-2	+0	1d6 (2d6) HKA
	Martial Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, +25 STR
	Martial Dodge	+0	+5	Dodge all attacks, Abort
12	+3 DC (already added in)			
12	Armor (6 PD & ED); OIF (Armored Jacket, -½)			0
2	Sight Flash Defense (5 points); OAF (Sunglasses, -1)			0

### Skills, Perks and Talents

10	Find Weakness 11-, Combat Shotgun w/ Slugs (Multipower Slot #2)
13	Vehicle: souped-up motorcycle (Motorcycle #1 from the Sourcebook)
3	Combat Driving 13-
3	Lockpicking 13-
3	Stealth 13-
7	Streetwise 14-
3	Weaponsmith 11- (Slugthrowers)
9	+3 with Shotguns

### 100+ Disadvantages

15	Psychological Limitation: Loyal to Gang
15	Psychological Limitation: Ruthless And Powerhungry
10	Psychological Limitation: Hunting Tommy Brooks (leader of the 66 Blades)
15	Reputation: ruthless gang leader 11-
20	Hunted: Police, 8- (More Pow, NCI, Imprison)
10	Hunted: 66 Blades, 8- (As Pow, Kill)
10	Public Identity: Terry Hondo, leader of the Overlords
42	Villain Bonus



**Background:** Terry Hondo grew up in the projects in the worst part of [campaign city]. He quickly learned that he had to have friends to survive on the streets, so he joined a gang, the Overlords. Soon he became the gang's leader. He decided to make himself the most powerful gang leader in [campaign city]. He built several modified versions of his favorite weapon, the shotgun, obtained some body armor, and with his gang's backing has set out on a ruthless, blood-spattered quest to unite the street gangs of [campaign city] under his leadership. He has frequently clashed with another ambitious gang, the 66 Blades, and their leader Tommy Brooks, because of Brooks' similar ambitions.

**Personality/Motivation:** Unlike many of today's youth, Buckshot is quite motivated, but he is motivated by criminal ambition. He intends to become the leader of all of the street gangs in [campaign city], and he doesn't care who he has to maim or kill to do it. This project will require a lot of cash and favors, so Buckshot often works as a freelance assassin and enforcer for organized crime.

**Quote:** "When you get hit by a load of Buckshot, they ain't nuthin' left but a bloody mess."

**Powers/Tactics:** Buckshot, like many gang leaders, is not stupid—he fights cautiously, and yet with bravery and skill. In addition, he has more combat training than most street kids (as well as more powerful weaponry), so he tries to use his opponents' misperceptions of him as "just a street gang kid" to his advantage.

Buckshot's weapon of preference is his Combat Shotgun which fires slugs instead of shot. He will switch to the one with heavy shot (Double KB) if the gun's impact power would be



an advantage (e.g., would slam a foe into a wall, throw him off a rooftop, etc.). He saves the wide-blast gun for times when he is beset by several foes. His Shotgun Pistol is usually hidden (behind his back or under his jacket), and can be used as a last-ditch weapon.

**Appearance:** Buckshot is a black youth, about 23 years old, well-built and ruggedly handsome despite his many scars. He usually wears jeans, half-finger black gloves, and a black or brown (armored) jacket. He wears sunglasses, but no mask.

**Record:** Buckshot has been arrested several times, for drug crimes, attempted rape, attempted murder, and murder. He has served little time in prison, though, since he has either escaped or has used loopholes in the system to earn early release.

**JIHAD**

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
25	STR	15	<b>OCV:</b> 8
23	DEX	39	<b>DCV:</b> 8
25	CON	30	<b>ECV:</b> 5
18	BODY	16	<b>Phases:</b> 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
15	INT	5	
14	EGO	8	<b>Costs</b>
20	PRE	10	
12	COM	1	<b>Char:</b> 167 <b>Base:</b> 100
12	PD	7	+ +
8	ED	3	<b>Powers:</b> 200 <b>Disads:</b> 267
5	SPD	17	= =
12	REC	4	<b>Totals:</b> 367 367
50	END	0	
45	STUN	12	

Cost	Powers	END
41	Multipower—82-point base (all OAF)	
4u	1) 2d6 RKA, Penetrating (+½), Autofire (5 Shots, +½), 125 Charges (+¾); OAF (Assault Rifle with Explosive Bullets, -1), No KB (-¼)	0
2u	2) 8d6 EB, Explosive (+½); OAF (Underslung Grenade Launcher, -1), 1 Charge with 8 clips (-½)	0
3u	3) 2½d6 RKA, +2 Increased STUN (+1); OAF (Sideslung Combat Shotgun with Slugs, -1), 8 Charges (-½)	0
1u	4) 1d6 HKA (2d6 with STR); OAF (Bayonet, -1)	1
1u	5) +4d6 HA; OAF (Rifle Butt, -1)	1
24	Martial Arts—Commando Training	
	<b>Maneuver OCV DCV Notes</b>	
	Martial Strike +0 +2 9d6	
	Martial Block +2 +2 Block, Abort	
	Martial Throw +0 +1 7d6 + vel/5, Target Falls	
	Killing Strike -2 +0 1d6 HKA (2d6 w/STR)	
	Choke Hold -2 +0 Grab, 3d6 NND	
	Martial Disarm -1 +1 Disarm, +20 STR	
8	+2 DC (already added in)	
12	Armor (6 PD & ED); OIF (Armored Uniform, -A)	0

Skills and Perks	
10	Wealth
3, 3	Combat Driving 14-; Combat Piloting 14-
9, 3	Demolitions 14-; Electronics 11-
3, 1	Interrogation 13-; Lockpicking 8-
3, 3	Mechanics 11-; Oratory 13-
3, 3	Paramedics 13-; Riding 14-
1, 3	Security Systems 8-; Stealth 14-
9, 3	Survival 14-; Tactics 13-
6	TF: Horses, Camels, All Ground and Air Vehicles
4	WF: Small Arms, Heavy Weapons
3	Weaponsmith 11- (Slugthrowers)
2	Language: English (fluent conversation) (Arabic is native)
2	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-
5	KS: Arabic Terrorists 14-
16	+2 with all combat
6	+2 with Multipower
100+ Disadvantages	
20	Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer
25	Psychological Limitation: Fanatic Pro-Arab Terrorist
5	Distinctive Features: Arab (easily concealed)
20	Reputation: fanatic terrorist 14- (extreme)
20	Hunted: Interpol, 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
15	Hunted: Israeli hero, 8- (As Pow, Capture)
10	Public Identity
152	Villain Bonus



**Background:** Despite extensive research by experts all over the world, little has been learned about the early years of the terrorist who goes only by the name of "Jihad" ("holy war"). Her first confirmable appearance is as a lieutenant in a Middle Eastern terrorist group known as the Palestinian League for Retribution and Liberation (PLRL). After working with them for some years, she began to work with other pro-Arab terrorist groups as well. She is known to be responsible for at least 86 deaths. Despite repeated attempts by Interpol and other law enforcement agencies to capture her, she remains at large, planning her next terroristic attack.

**Personality/Motivation:** Jihad (she refuses to answer to any other name) is a fanatically pro-Arab terrorist. Any mention of the Israelis (or their American allies) may send her into paroxysms of rage. Her every thought and deed are seemingly slanted towards the cause of Arabic rule of the entire Middle East. Trying to get her to do anything which is not connected to this "crusade" is nearly impossible. In support of her cause, she will maim, kill, and destroy whoever or whatever she feels he must. The fact that many innocent people will be killed does not bother her at all, for she feels that there are no "innocents"—only those willing to die for the cause, and those who oppress the Arab peoples.

**Quote:** "All the Israeli pigs will be destroyed!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Jihad is a skilled terrorist with extensive training. Her main weapon is an assault rifle with an underslung grenade launcher and a combat shotgun attached to the right side. However, like most terrorists, Jihad prefers to avoid open combat. She would rather plant some explosives, poison a water supply, or attack from ambush. In combat, she will target Israelis and Americans first, ignoring other opponents. She is not above using her "feminine wiles" to try to gain an advantage or escape from a bad situation.

**Appearance:** When in the Middle East, Jihad dresses in typical Arab garb. When she must come to the United States or Europe on a mission, she usually wears a dark maroon uniform which is armored and contains many pockets for extra ammunition and equipment.

**Record:** Jihad is wanted for almost one hundred murders and several dozen kidnappings.

## FENRIS

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
20	STR	10	<b>OCV: 7</b>
20	DEX	30	<b>DCV: 7</b>
20	CON	20	<b>ECV: 5</b>
15	BODY	10	<b>Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12</b>
18	INT	8	
16	EGO	12	<b>Costs</b>
18	PRE	8	
10	COM	0	<b>Char: 140 Base: 100</b>
9	PD	5	+ +
7	ED	3	<b>Powers: 161 Disads: 201</b>
5	SPD	20	= =
10	REC	4	<b>Totals: 301 301</b>
40	END	0	
45	STUN	10	
Cost		Powers	END
15	1d6+1 RKA, Armor Piercing (+½), 2 clips of 13 Charges each (+¼); OAF (H&K P7M13, -1), No KB (-¼)		0
16	½d6 HKA (1d6 w/STR), Armor Piercing (+½); OAF (Knife, -1), No KB (-¼) plus 2d6 RKA, Trigger (when knife does BODY damage, +¼); OAF (Poison, -1), No KB (-¼), No Range (+½), 2 Charges (-½)		1
27	Martial Arts—Berserks Style		
	<b>Maneuver</b>	<b>OCV DCV</b>	<b>Notes</b>
	Killing Strike	-2 +0	1d6+1 HKA
	Killing Throw	-2 +0	1d6+1 HKA, Target Falls
	Off. Strike	-2 +1	10d6
	Def. Strike	+1 +3	6d6
	Martial Dodge	+0 +5	Dodge all attacks, Abort
	Martial Block	+2 +2	Block, Abort
8	+2 DC (already added in)		
Skills, Perks and Talents			
3	Leader Of Medium-Sized Drug Cartel		
10, 3	Wealth; Resistance (3 points)		
3, 3, 3	Combat Driving 13-; Combat Pilot 13-; Stealth 13-		
3, 3, 3	Survival 11-; Tactics 12-; Tracking 13-		
4	TF: All Ground and Air Vehicles		
7	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Weapons, and Common Missile Weapons		
3	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 12-		
2, 1	PS: Mercenary 11-; Language: Old Norse		
3	Traveler		
1	1) AK: Afghanistan 11-		
1	2) AK: Africa 11-		
2	3) AK: Central America 13-		
1	4) AK: Europe 11-		
1	5) AK: The Middle East 11-		
3	6) AK: South America 14-		
32	+4 with all combat		
100+ Disadvantages			
15	Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of The Berserks		
15	Psychological Limitation: Overconfident		
15	Reputation: drug cartel leader, 11-		
10	DNPC: Amada, fiancee, 8-		
10	Hunted: The Berserks, 8- (As Pow, Kill)		
25	Hunted: DEA, 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)		
5	Rivalry: Teresa Maria Ochoa de Fonseca		
10	Public Identity: Franklin Lynaugh		
96	Villain Bonus		



**Background:** Franklin Lynaugh used to be a member of The Berserks, code name "Fenris" (if the GM prefers not to use The Berserks in his campaign, he can substitute any similar group). However, he wanted to lead the team, while the rest of The Berserks preferred to have Odin at the helm. As time went by, Fenris quarrelled more and more with the others, and the arguments often ended in bloody fistfights. Finally, matters came to a head and an all-out combat between Fenris and the others was waged in downtown Madrid. Only luck, skill, and the timely passing-by of a tractor-trailer truck enabled Fenris to escape with his life.

Fenris kicked around the world for a few months, working as a mercenary and guard. In March 1988, he contracted with the DEA to infiltrate and destroy the headquarters of the Carillo-Mendoza drug cartel. But when he got to Colombia, Fenris decided to take over the cartel instead of destroying it. He changed careers and went from being a mercenary to directing a large smuggling network. He has spent the past few years leading the cartel, making money and enemies.

**Personality/Motivation:** Fenris has adapted well to his role as leader of the Carillo-Mendoza cartel. His attitudes are much like those of his competitors—greed, ambition, and hunger for power rule his thoughts. However, Fenris's success as a drug dealer has led him to become somewhat overconfident and complacent. His other flaw is his overwhelming hatred of The Berserks. He has spent millions of dollars trying to kill them, with no success so far. His only emotion which is stronger than his hatred of his former comrades is his love for his fiancée, a native Colombian named Amada. As far as he is concerned, nothing is too good for her, she should get anything she wants, and she should always be happy. If anyone harms or threatens her, a cold, cruel rage will possess him, and he will stop at nothing to kill that person.

**Quote:** "You may try to interfere with me if you wish. I will be sure to send flowers to your widow."

**Powers/Tactics:** Fenris is no longer a mercenary, so he tends not to be heavily armed. Generally, he carries only a H&K P7M13 automatic pistol and a poisoned knife. However, he knows how to use many other types of weapons, and has access to much more firepower if need be (and body armor as well).

Fenris's natural self-confidence tends to make him bold and daring, willing to take great risks to accomplish his objectives. This daring, when combined with his skill at warfare, makes him a foe to be wary of. But years of hunting



and being hunted by The Berserks has made Fenris cautious as well. He carefully considers each move before he makes it, never sticks his neck out (except to protect his fiancée), and always has an escape route available.

**Appearance:** Fenris is a tall, broad-shouldered man with a rawboned, wind-burned face. When in the jungle, going to a fight, or helping his men out on a drug run, he wears camouflaged clothing. The rest of the time, he favors light-colored suits with dark ties and sunglasses.

**Record:** Fenris is wanted for drug trafficking, assault, kidnapping, and murder in America, Europe, and parts of Africa. However, his political power in Colombia is enough to prevent the government from trying to extradite him, so for now he is not concerned about the warrants outstanding against him.

## RIGOR MORTIS

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
20	STR	10	<b>OCV:</b> 7
21	DEX	33	<b>DCV:</b> 7
20	CON	20	<b>ECV:</b> 5
14	BODY	8	<b>Phases:</b> 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
18	INT	8	
14	EGO	8	<b>Costs</b>
18	PRE	8	
6	COM	-2	<b>Char:</b> 136 <b>Base:</b> 100
9	PD	5	+
9	ED	5	<b>Powers:</b> 185 <b>Disads:</b> 221
5	SPD	19	=
12	REC	8	<b>Totals:</b> 321                    321
40	END	0	
40	STUN	6	

Cost	Powers	END
30	Multipower—60-point base (all OAF)	
3u	1) 2d6 (3d6 w/ STR) HKA, Penetrating (+½), 0 END (+½); OAF (Scythe, -1)	0
2u	2) 8d6 EB; OAF (Scythe Gun w/ Rubber Bullets -1), 6 Charges (-¾)	0
2u	3) 4d6 Entangle, Takes No Damage (+½); OAF (Scythe Paralysis Darts, -1), 8 Charges (-½)	0
12	+4d6 HA	1
16	Armor (8 PD & ED); OIF (Armored Costume, -½)	0
7	Sight Flash Defense (10 points); OIF (Mask Lenses, -½)	0
7	Mental Defense (10 points)	0
6	+3" Running = 9" total	1

Skills, Perks and Talents	
10	Resistance (10 points)
20	Base: "Haunted" mansion (200 points)
13	Vehicle: Motorcycle (Motorcycle #1 from the Sourcebook)
10	Wealth
3	Acrobatics 13-
3	Breakfall 13-
3	Combat Driving 13-
1	Computer Programming 8-
3	Electronics 11-
3	Lockpicking 13-
3	Security Systems 13-
7	Shadowing 13-
3	Stealth 13-
18	+6 with Scythe Multipower

100+ Disadvantages	
10	Psych. Limitation: Grim, Humorless, Emotionless
15	Psychological Limitation: Assassin's Code—Must Always Complete The Job
15	Psychological Limitation: Vengeful
15	Physical Limitation: Blind in left eye, -1 CV at range (All the Time, Slightly)
15	Distinctive Looks (scarred left side of face) (Concealable with major effort, causes prejudice)
15	Reputation: Assassin, 11-
15	Hunted: Police, 8- (As Pow, NCI, Imprison)
15	Secret Identity: Robert Grimsby, eccentric recluse
106	Villain Bonus



**Background:** Robert Grimsby is the only son of Nathan and Diana Grimsby, and hence was sole heir to the entire Grimsby Motor Oil fortune. Everyone expected Robert to grow up living the carefree life of the wealthy elite. However, when Robert was nine, he was injured in a battle at his father's motor oil factory between several superheroes and supercriminals. The accident spilled industrial acids on him, blinded him in the left eye, and incurably scarred the left side of his face.

To everyone's amazement, Robert accepted his fate rather stoically. He changed from a typical nine-year-old to a somber, grim child who never laughed or smiled, but that was his only reaction. But unknown to the world, Robert seethed with anger on the inside—anger at the world that had done this to him. He became bitter and hate-filled. Fortunately, Robert's parents could afford to educate him at home with the best tutors, so that no one had to look at him. He studied such diverse subjects as electronics, chemistry and computers; for exercise he preferred acrobatics, with a bit of basic martial arts training thrown in for good measure.

However, Robert had a plan—to become an assassin. Since the world had been so cruel to him, he would be cruel in return, yet never give it the satisfaction of seeing him either smile or be sad. He designed a mask that covered the left side of his face with a skull, and the right half with a featureless blood-red visage. To intensify the Death imagery, he built a high-tech scythe as his weapon.



When he was finally satisfied that he was ready to begin his career, he murdered his parents so that he could have the mansion and the money all to himself. A little bit of work turned the mansion into an excellent base of operations. Rigor Mortis is now a feared assassin, in demand by the underworld because of his ruthless efficiency and skill. By day, he is known as a rich, eccentric recluse, a bogeyman-figure for the neighborhood children. Little do they know how close to the truth some of their ghost stories are.

**Personality/Motivation:** Rigor Mortis has no personality—or at least, that's what he tries to make everyone think. No matter what happens to him, he never shows or expresses emotion. Even when he is wounded, no one can tell that he is in any pain; he is so good at this act that some people have speculated that he is a robot. Underneath, however, Rigor Mortis is possessed by sheer hatred: hatred of life, of the world, of all people everywhere. He is more inclined to take jobs based on the suffering and destruction he can cause than the money he can earn. Although you could never tell to look at him, he very much enjoys his work of death and destruction. Given his druthers, he would likely reduce the world to a state of brutal anarchy, and then, at last, laugh as people destroyed one another.

Robert adheres to his own personal "Assassin's Code of Honor." To him, this means that once he takes job, he will finish it, even if he has to repeatedly expose himself to danger or has to spend more money than he will earn for the job.

**Quote:** None. Rigor Mortis rarely speaks, even under torture.

**Powers/Tactics:** Rigor Mortis has built a reputation in the "industry" for grim, ruthless efficiency. He tends to approach his assignments very pragmatically: he assesses the victim and its resources and then plans the best way to hack it down with as little fuss or danger as possible. When drawn into open combat, his main tactic is to use his Paralysis Darts and then slash at the helpless foe with the blade of his scythe. He has little interest in taking prisoners.

Though he prefers to keep his "home life" separate from the "office," as a last-ditch effort to dispose of a foe Rigor Mortis might consider luring them back to his mansion, which has been redesigned so that it becomes one large "haunted house" deathtrap at the press of a button. The mansion is honeycombed with secret passages and trapdoors, and only he knows them all.

**Appearance:** Rigor Mortis' mask is split in half: the left half resembles a skull, but the right half is a plain blood-red full-face mask, featureless save for the eyehole. He wears a blue-black full bodysuit, with red boots, long belt sash, gloves, and collar.

**Record:** So far, Rigor Mortis has managed to escape arrest. He is a suspect in 8 murders.

**TRIGGERHAPPY**

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats	
20	STR	10	<b>OCV:</b> 7	
21	DEX	33	<b>DCV:</b> 7	
20	CON	20	<b>ECV:</b> 5	
10	BODY	0	<b>Phases:</b> 3, 5, 8, 10, 12	
15	INT	5	<b>Costs</b>	
12	EGO	4		
15	PRE	5		
10	COM	0	<b>Char:</b> 104	<b>Base:</b> 100
10	PD	6	+	+
6	ED	2	<b>Powers:</b> 231	<b>Disads:</b> 235
5	SPD	19	=	=
8	REC	0	<b>Totals:</b> 335	335
40	END	0		
30	STUN	0		

Cost	Powers	END
48	M60: 2d6+1 RKA, Autofire (5 Shots, +½), +1 Stun Modifier (+½), 125 Charges (+¾); OAF (-1)	0
33	Martial Arts—Commando Training Plus	
	<b>Maneuver</b> <b>OCV</b> <b>DCV</b> <b>Notes</b>	
	Martial Strike	+0    +2    9d6
	Off. Strike	-2    +1    11d6
	Martial Block	+2    +2    Block, Abort
	Martial Throw	+0    +1    7d6 + vel/5, Target Falls
	Killing Strike	-2    +0    1d6 (2d6) HKA
	Choke Hold	-2    +0    Grab, 3d6 NND
	Martial Dodge	+0    +5    Dodge all attacks, Abort
	Martial Disarm	-1    +1    Disarm, +20 STR
8	+2 DC (already added in)	
12	Armor (6 PD & ED); OIF (Armored Clothing, -½)	0
8	+4" Running = 10" total	2
7	HRRH; OIF (Helmet, -½)	0
3	Infrared Vision; OIF (Helmet, -½)	0

Skills, Perks and Talents	
30	Vehicle: Combat Helicopter (see Sourcebook)
3	Lightsleep
10	2d6 Luck
3	Climbing 14-
3	Combat Piloting 13-
1	Computer Programming 8-
9	Demolitions 14-
1	Gambling 8-
3	Interrogation 12-
3	Mechanics 11-
3	Navigation 11-
1	Paramedic 8-
3	Stealth 13-
3	Survival 11-
6	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Small Arms, Vehicle-Mounted Weapons
2	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-
10	+5 with M60
5	+1 with Guns
5	+1 Hand-To-Hand
8	+1 with all combat

**100+ Disadvantages**

20	Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer
15	Psychological Limitation: Misogynist
15	Psychological Limitation: Code Of The Mercenary
10	Reputation: ruthless killer and terrorist, 8-
20	Hunted: Police, 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Imprison)
20	Hunted: Deuxieme Bureau, 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
15	Secret Identity: Jack Bustamonte
120	Villain Bonus

**Background:** The man known as Triggerhappy is actually the second person to go by that name. The first Triggerhappy was a homicidal maniac who was killed by law enforcement agents. A few weeks after that, Jack Bustamonte, a mercenary and terrorist, came to [campaign city]. A French espionage agency, the Deuxieme Bureau, was after him because of the explosion of a powerful bomb on a French airliner, so Jack decided to return to the states. When he got to [campaign city] with the Deuxieme Bureau still on his tail,

Jack read about the first Triggerhappy's demise. Jack decided to adopt the identity as a cover for his activities, because Triggerhappy's weapon of choice, the M60, was also the weapon he was most skilled with. Adopting a disguise and new identity would also keep the Bureau off of his trail. Soon, a new enforcer and mercenary was available for work.

**Personality/Motivation:** Personality-wise, the two Triggerhappys could not be further apart. The first was a homicidal maniac, virtually uncontrollable, whose death was brought on partly by his lack of caution. Jack Bustamonte, on the other hand, is a ruthless killer who is very careful to look after himself. He is an experienced merc who knows how to deal with dangerous situations. He lives by the so-called "code of the mercenary," which mandates utter loyalty to one's employer and a willingness to use any means to complete the job. Triggerhappy is perfectly willing to, for example, blow up an entire planeload of people just to kill one person. "An ounce of overkill is always worth it" is his motto. As if these personality problems weren't enough,

Triggerhappy also has a fierce hatred of women. He always chooses women as his hostages and/or victims if he can, and he will go out of his way to humiliate and embarrass any female player characters.

**Quote:** "A pound of plastique ought to do it."

**Powers/Tactics:** Triggerhappy's "powers" are his skill with guns, hand-to-hand combat, and various other implements of destruction. When he can arrange it, he favors a strafing run on the target with his helicopter, then he leaps into the fray as the helicopter circles on remote. If he gets the chance, he will plant hidden explosives around the scene of a battle before the battle begins.

Triggerhappy is extremely devoted to his own freedom and well-being, and will take hostages or otherwise "black-mail" his way out of a corner if he must.

**Appearance:** Triggerhappy wears no set costume. He has a variety of armored military-style clothes, and chooses the best outfit for the mission. He always wears a helmet which contains a radio and an infrared lens; the radio allows him to pilot his helicopter by remote control.

**Record:** Triggerhappy has a long record of murder, assault, arson, and bombings; he has committed crimes in [campaign city] and in dozens of other cities around the globe. Not only the police, but the FBI, the Deuxieme Bureau, and Interpol would like to get their hands on him.







## SCENARIOS

This section of *Dark Champions* contains several scenarios for use in street-level Champions campaigns. None of the scenarios are written for a particular type of street-level campaign; each scenario is easily adapted to any of the four types of campaigns. Some of the scenarios, especially Harpcor Towers, could also be used in four-color campaigns if the GM does a little work to adapt the scenario for superpowered characters.

**Note:** *Players who expect to play in these scenarios should read no further. The rest of this material is intended for the GM's eyes only.*

### HARPCOR TOWERS

Harpcor Towers is not an actual scenario *per se*; rather, it is a scenario setting. It is a twenty-story skyscraper which can be used for battles and other adventures. After the description of the Towers there are several scenarios which you can run using Towers as the site for the adventure.

#### INTRODUCTION

Harpcor (formerly the Harper Corporation) is a multimillion dollar business enterprise with holdings and subsidiaries all over the world. Harpcor's main business is the production and marketing of computer chips and other high-tech electronics parts, but some of the Harpcor subsidiaries are involved in such diverse fields as food distribution, land development, and the manufacture of sporting goods. By 1986, Harpcor's operations had grown to the extent that it was necessary to move the United States corporate headquarters out of rented office space and into a building of its own. By 1989 the brand-new Harpcor Towers building had been completed and occupied.

The design of the building is in fact relatively simple. The first ten floors are basically a large, rectangular building; the first three floors of space are taken up by the main lobby and atrium, which includes some shops and a bar/restaurant for the workers in the building (who number approximately 1,200). The next ten floors, for a total of twenty, were split into two square towers turned at right angles to the rest of the building, giving them a diamond-shaped profile. The towers were built so that they could be rented to other firms who needed office space; Harpcor's corporate offices only take up the lower ten floors. At the top of Tower B is a fabulous revolving restaurant, the Spinning Diamond, which is fast becoming a trendy night spot for the city's social set. On top of Tower A is a helipad.

There are two places to park near Harpcor Towers. The first is the parking lot surrounding the building. The second is the underground parking deck located beneath the basement level. The spaces in the deck are limited, and are mostly used by executives and other top-level employees. The elevators and stairs run down to the parking deck. The parking deck can be sealed off by riot gates which are controlled from Security Headquarters on Floor One. Because of the need for parking space, it is unlikely that Harpcor Towers would be located in the heart of a city's downtown—a location on the fringes of downtown is more likely. However, the GM should locate Harpcor Towers wherever he feels he can use it to create the most interesting scenarios.

#### BUILDING SECURITY

Harpcor Towers is served by its own force of security guards (use the write-up for a Skilled Normal on page 134 of the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook* for the guards). Security Headquarters is located on Floor One. There are approximately 12 guards on duty at any one time, some of whom stay in Security Headquarters while others patrol the building, checking doors and windows. More guards can be called in if necessary. The guards carry 9 mm handguns (1d6+1 RKA) and walkie-talkies which can transmit throughout the building (they can also pick up nearby police radio signals if the user makes a Systems Operation roll). Security Headquarters has the radio equipment to monitor all of the guards on duty and to receive radio calls from helicopter pilots who are about to land on the roof of Tower A.

The building's hours of business are 6:00 AM to 12:00 AM (midnight). Key employees (executives, department heads, and so forth) have a card-key which will allow them to go in and out at other times; use of the card-keys is registered in the computer, allowing the guards to know who has come into the building after hours and where they have gone. After midnight, the guards activate all of the building's security systems which are not kept on full-time. In addition to locks and alarms on all outside doors and windows, there are security cameras covering the building's perimeter, the underground parking deck, and portions of the aboveground parking lots. The only security cameras inside the building are located at the elevators on each floor. All security cameras can be shut off or ruined from the Security Headquarters on the first floor; characters with the proper equipment and know-how can break into the security systems and shut the cameras down from any camera location or any computer tied into the building's security computers (which are separate from the secretarial network used by the building's workers and executives).



All alarms are directly linked to the police or fire department, as appropriate, so that any break-in or fire will register there as well as at the building's security desk. The police or fire department will respond immediately, unless one of three authorized security guards calls in to give a code signal and explain that it was a false alarm.

If the GM is running a campaign in which superhumans are common, Harpcor Towers will probably take additional security measures to detect such beings: motion sensors on the outside of the building; radar to detect flying superhumans; and pheromone detectors or other devices designed to negate Invisibility. Any such devices would be controlled through Security Headquarters. This write-up assumes that superhumans are non-existent or so rare that such measures are not needed.

## MOVING AROUND IN THE BUILDING

There are several ways in which the characters can move around Harpcor Towers:

**Elevators:** The elevators all move at a speed of 1 floor every 2 Segments. All elevators in the building have emergency phones, stop buttons, and escape hatches in the roof. The building's elevators can all be controlled or shut down from Security Headquarters; the "ding!" sound that the elevators make when they arrive at a floor can be shut off as well. The security guards all carry keys which can be used inside an elevator car to override the call buttons and take the elevator where the guard needs to go. These keys cannot be used to override control or shutdown from Security Headquarters. Characters who do not have keys can still override the elevators if they get inside an elevator and make an Electronics or Security Systems roll by -3.

The elevators have doors on both sides, which makes it difficult to use the elevators as cover or as a way to sneak up on people. The only exception to this is the elevator door in the Spinning Diamond restaurant, which opens only one way. Either set of doors can be shut off from Security Headquarters while leaving the other set functional; this can be done from within an elevator (for that elevator only) by making an Electronics roll at -4.

Characters with sufficient STR can pry open an elevator's doors and get inside the elevator shaft; a total of 30 STR points are needed to do this with bare hands, but one character of STR 15 or greater can pry the doors open by using a lever of some sort (a metal or wooden bar works best). Each elevator shaft has inset ladders to allow maintenance workers to move around; there is a ladder on each of the sides where there isn't an elevator door. Characters may climb these ladders at half of their movement rate when running (i.e., a normal man, moving at 6", can climb 3" per Phase). The elevator cable is strong enough to support a character; while it is too slippery to climb, it can be used for a controlled descent of one floor every two Segments (a faster descent would be possible, but might cause the character to take some damage when he hits the ground level).

**Stairs:** Of course, the stairs are always available for characters to use. There are no security cameras on the stairs, and the doors are not locked. The doors can be locked one at a time with a key carried by the security guards, or with a Lockpicking roll at -2. Characters can climb or descend one story worth of stairs per Phase; the stairwells are large enough that a character with Gliding could move downwards at a fairly even rate.

**Ventilation shafts:** Harpcor Towers is extensively ventilated so that fresh air can be pumped into the building and cooled or heated as necessary. Ventilation ducts are not shown on the maps; just assume that they are there. The ventilation shafts run around the building in the floor/ceiling areas in a "wheel" pattern, and up and down next to the elevator shaft. All ventilation shafts eventually join larger shafts until they descend to the Environmental Control and Air Pump rooms in the Basement. Most ventilation shafts are large enough for a human-sized character to crawl through at the rate of 1" per Phase; smaller characters could move more quickly.

**Ceilings:** The ceilings inside the building are all hung ceilings. Thus, characters may be able to get inside the ceilings and crawl around unnoticed. Characters can crawl at the rate of 1" per Phase in the ceiling spaces; they cannot get through to the next story up or down without smashing through that story's floor. The flooring materials are DEF 3, BODY 4 per hex, so a character will have to do 7 BODY or more to crash through from floor to floor.

**The outside of the building:** Characters with Clinging or Climbing could try to move around on the outside of the building. There are no sensors or alarms on the outside of the building. Climbing rolls must be made at -4 due to the steel-and-glass construction of the building. The glass used on the outside of the building is DEF 3, BODY 3.

Harpcor Towers faces east; the building's long axis runs north-south. At their nearest point (the north corner of Tower A and the south corner of Tower B), the two Towers are 3" apart. The distance from the east point or west point on either Tower to the same point on the other Tower is 20". At one floor, the seventeenth, there is a "Skybridge" connecting the two Towers.

Obviously, how the characters can move around inside the building is very important, since it will determine how they conduct battles and reconnaissance. However, the GM should be wary of allowing characters with movement Powers to play in this scenario. A character with a lot of Flight or Running, for example, can pretty much ruin a Harpcor scenario, because he can get to places other characters cannot, and get there so quickly that he interferes with carefully-timed adventures. If all the PCs and NPCs have movement Powers, the problem will be minimized, even though Harpcor can be less exciting that way (who's afraid of a 20-story fall if he has enough Superleap or Flight?).

## FURNISHINGS

Naturally, the offices in Harpcor Towers are filled with furniture and other objects. During combats in the building, these objects can be used as cover. However, most of them are not built to take a lot of damage, so it will sometimes be easier to shoot through them instead of around them. Characters who opt to shoot through this sort of cover, rather than trying to hit an exposed target, should take a -1 to -3 OCV penalty (depending on the type of object being used for cover and the object's size—a secretary's swivel chair would be -1 OCV, a large sofa would be -3). The objects have the following DEF and BODY per hex; this essentially acts as extra armor for a character hiding behind it.



Object	DEF	BODY
Chair, regular	3	3
Chair, stuffed	3	4
Computer bank	3	5
Copier	3	6-8
Couch	3	6
Desk, normal	3	4
Desk, large	4	6
Door	4	3
Interior glass wall	1	2
Interior normal wall	3	3
Library shelf full of books (1½" tall)	3	8
Planter	3	3-6
Refrigerator	4	5
Statue	5	6
Table, normal	3	4
Table, large	4	5

To determine the DEF and BODY of other objects, compare them to an object on this chart, or consult the Object List on page 177 of the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*.

### MAP KEY

The following designations are used on the map to indicate common features of the building:

**AO** = Associate's office. See below.

**B** = Bench

**BR** = Break room. Break rooms are places for employees to sit down and relax; usual furnishings include vending machines, refrigerators, microwave ovens, and chairs. Depending on the size of the room, it could include several small tables, a smoking area, and so forth.

**CL** = Column. These are cement columns with steel cores, used to support the building. They run down to the parking deck below the basement. If all of the columns are destroyed, the building is in serious danger of collapsing. They are DEF 8, BODY 20.

**CM** = Computer room. These rooms will have one or more computers, of varying sizes and types, for use by employees. Depending on the nature of the business, the computers may have specialized uses or software. The building's computers are all on a network (except for the security computers, which are on a separate system).

**CO** = Copy machine or copying room. Larger copying rooms may virtually be small print shops.

**D** = Desk. Depending on who uses the desk, it may be small or large, and may or may not have a computer.

**E** = Elevator. See above for more information.

**F** = Fountain. Fountains have standing water which is about one foot deep.

**JO** = Junior office. See below.

**M** = Men's room.

**MR** = Meeting room. These rooms are used for conferences, meetings, negotiations, and the like. They feature one or more large tables surrounded by chairs. There may be more chairs lining the walls (for use by secretaries and other assistants), as well as a small table or credenza for refreshments.

**Offices:** Offices usually have a desk, one or more chairs, bookshelves or cabinets, and some other pieces of furniture. There isn't enough space on the maps to show every single piece of furniture, so use your imagination and creativity in furnishing the offices, based on the guidelines given here. Offices contain many items which could be converted to impromptu weapons, such as letter openers, scissors, and the like. In order from worst to best, the types of offices are:

**AO** = Associate's office. This type of office belongs to the youngest and least powerful persons on the corporate ladder. They will be much less well furnished than other offices, and their furniture is likely to be as much utilitarian as decorative.

**JO** = Junior office. This office belongs to a junior executive of some sort. It will be much better furnished than an AO, but not as well as a SO.

**SO** = Senior office. These offices belong to senior executives, and are rich and luxurious. They contain plenty of comfortable furniture, and sometimes other amenities as well (such as a small bar).

**P** = Plant.

**R** = Receptionist's desk/area. This is where a receptionist sits to receive visitors and take telephone calls. The receptionist's desk is usually fairly plain, but depending upon the nature of the business she works for, she may have some secretarial duties in addition to acting as a receptionist. Located near the receptionist's desk will be a waiting area of some sort, containing comfortable chairs and couches, tables with magazines, and so forth.

**SA** = Secretarial area. Usually, these areas are furnished in a sparse fashion, with each secretary adding her own personal mementoes and family photos. Most secretaries have a computer. In some firms, "secretaries" might not be secretaries at all, but trained paraprofessionals (for example, for a law firm the GM could substitute a paralegal for a secretary).

**SO** = Senior office. See above.

**ST** = Stairs.

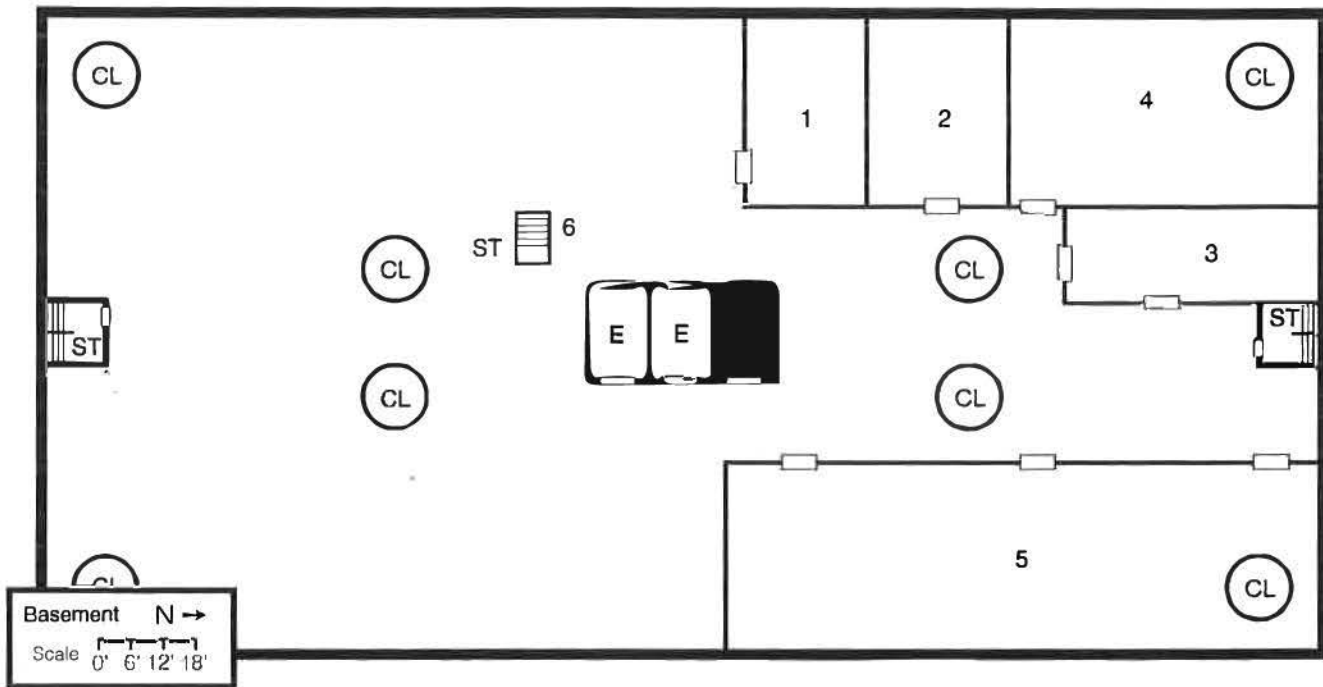
**SU** = Supply room. These rooms hold the supplies needed to restock offices and desks with paper, rubber bands, paper clips, pens, and other necessities of white-collar life. If the room is large enough, it may also contain a copier.

**T** = Table.

**W** = Women's room.

— — — — — = glass wall, DEF 1, BODY 2

— • — • — • — • — • = wall whose bottom half is a normal wall, and upper half is glass



## BASEMENT

Harpcor Towers has one basement floor. It can be reached by the elevators, the stairs, or a small staircase which runs down from Security Headquarters on Floor One. Below the Basement is the Parking Garage (not mapped).

- 1) Environmental Control Room:** This room contains the building's main heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment. Air is pumped in from the Air Circulation Room next door, heated or cooled as required, and then pumped throughout the building from this room. All of the building's ventilation shafts eventually lead down to here.
- 2) Air Circulation Room:** This room contains large fans and other equipment which bring air in from the outside and pump it into the Environmental Control Room next door.
- 3) Records Storage:** Harpcor stores old corporate records down here. Some are on paper, some on microfiche, and some on computer disks and reels.
- 4) Generator Room:** There is a "Danger: High Voltage" sign on the door leading to this room, which contains the building's backup generators. If the power to the building is cut, the backup generators supply enough power for minimal lighting, computer use, and the elevators and security systems.
- 5) Storage:** This room is used to store old equipment and anything else the building has no immediate use for.
- 6) Stairs:** Leading up to Security Headquarters.

## FLOOR ONE

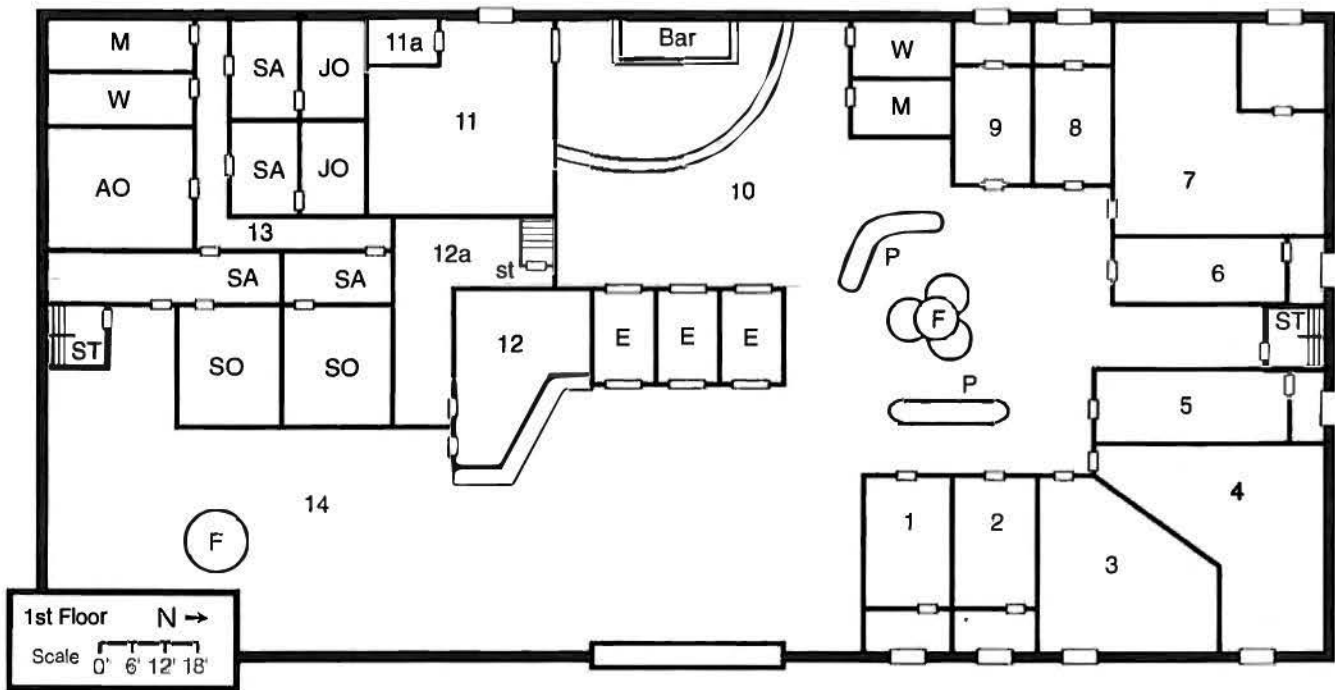
Floor One actually occupies the first three floors of space, giving it an airy, atrium-like effect. In addition to two lobby areas, this floor features the building security and administration areas, a small bar/cafe, and several stores for use by the employees. The stores themselves are only one story tall; on top of them are decorative plants and shrubs. A character could get on top of the stores and walk or hide among the plants.

The front of the building has been extended to provide enough space for a concealed walkway behind the stores, so that goods can be delivered without having to be carried through the lobby. The walkway can be accessed from

outside by means of a large set of double doors in the rear of the building. These doors are normally locked; a deliveryman has to press a button on an intercom, identify himself to the security guards, and be "buzzed in." Many of the stores have a small office and storage space in the rear where deliveries can be dropped off.

- 1) Monique Thierry Clothes:** This is a trendy, upscale women's clothing store. It caters mainly to Harpcor's women executives, since the clothes it sells are too expensive for most secretaries.
- 2) Candy And Gifts:** This store carries candy, some other snack foods, and a small selection of gift items.
- 3) Empty store:** This store, formerly a clothing store, is currently empty.
- 4) Aston Dry Cleaners:** Richard Aston and his family run a dry cleaning business here. There is a small counter area up front where clothes can be dropped off and picked up, and the rest of the store is taken up by clothing racks, presses, and other cleaning equipment.
- 5) Newsstand:** This shop carries newspapers, magazines, and books.
- 6) Harpcor Store:** This small store is owned by Harpcor itself, and features products which Harpcor makes or which use Harpcor parts.
- 7) Zoe's:** Zoe's is a clothing store which carries women's clothes and accessories in the price range of the average secretary.
- 8) Caspian Fashions:** This is a men's clothing store. Because many of the men in the building are high-paid executives, most of the clothes it sells are fancy and expensive.
- 9) Hanrihan & Sons:** Hanrihan's is a shoe store. It carries both men's and women's dress shoes.
- 10) The Sunset Café And Bar:** This trendy nightspot is the main reason that the building is open to the public until 12:00 AM. It features a well-stocked bar, an excellent kitchen, and live jazz seven nights a week. Harpcor rents the space to Fred Jacobsen, the manager and bartender at the Café. The Sunset Café is open for all three meals, and also functions as a "night-club."





**11) Kitchen:** This is the kitchen which provides the food for the Café. It is small, but head chef Roger Corbet manages it efficiently and the food is usually quite good. In addition to many knives, pans, and other utensils, the kitchen has several heavy tables and two large ovens. The kitchen has a door to the outside for food deliveries; although this door is locked, there is no security camera on it.

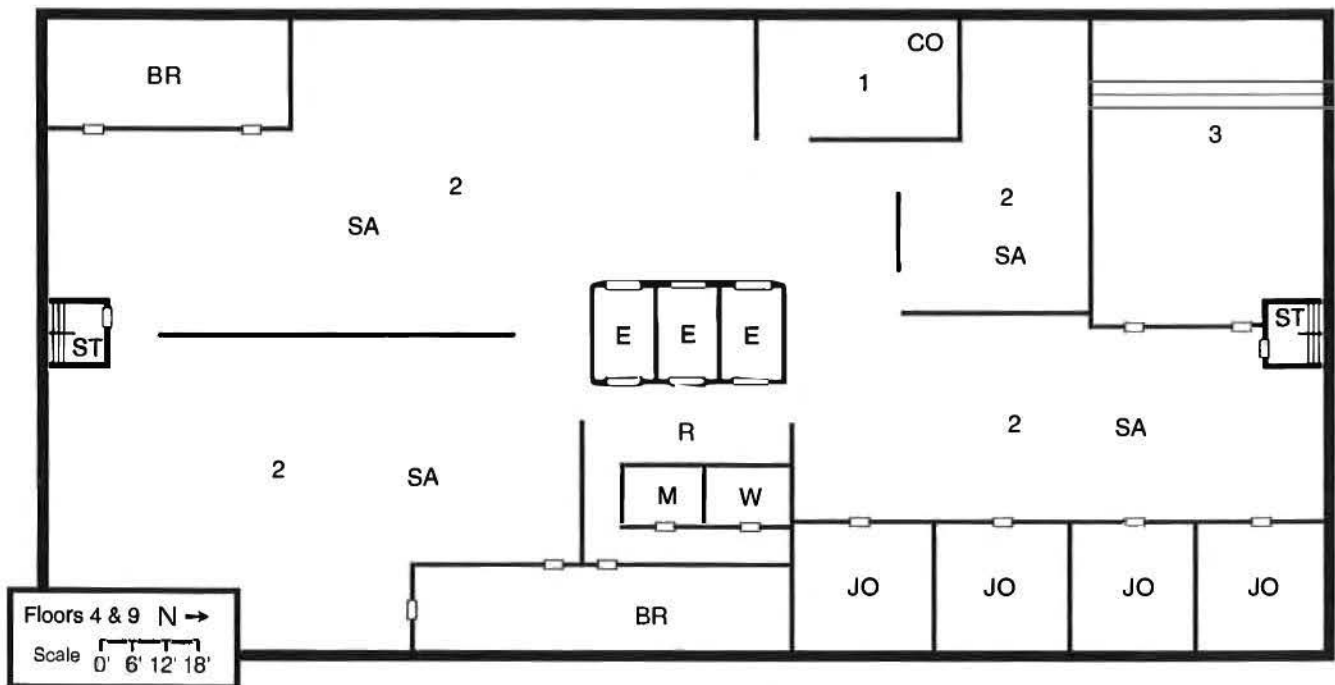
**11a) Meat Locker:** The kitchen also has a combination meat locker/refrigerator, kept at zero degrees Celsius. Its walls and door are DEF 6, BODY 6.

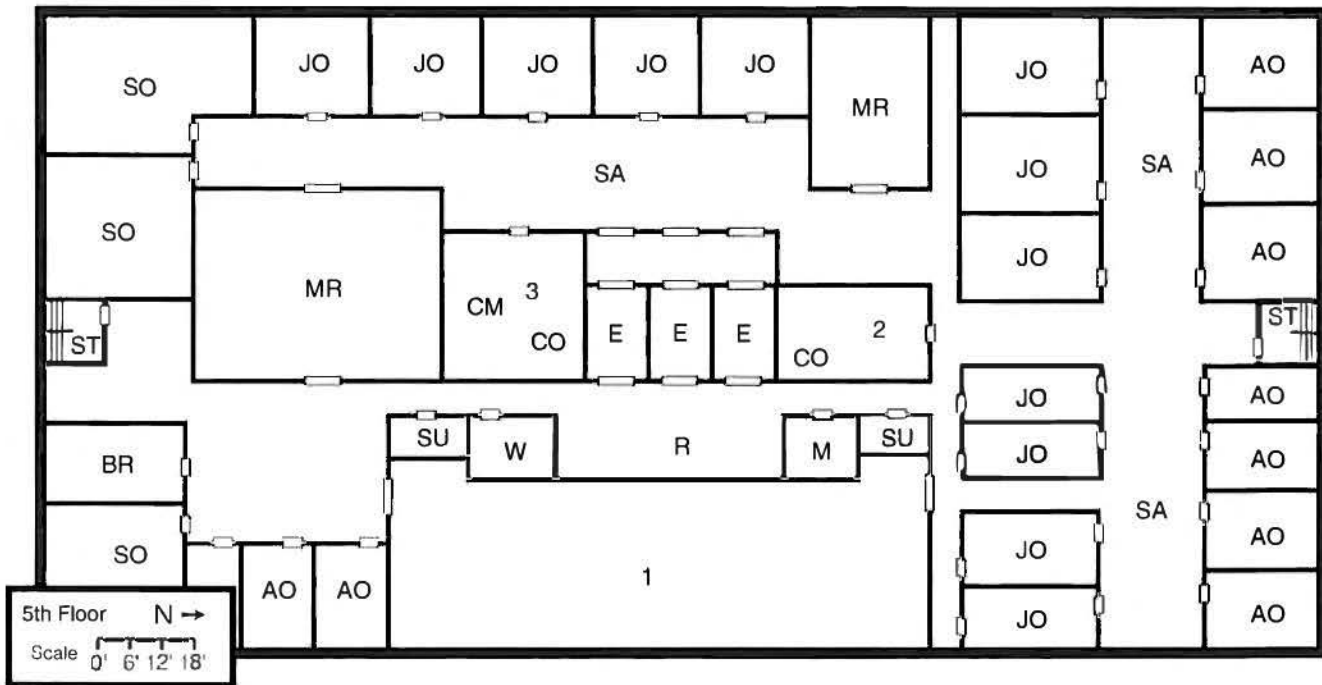
**12) Security Headquarters:** This area is the hub of the building's security operations. Most visitors to Harpcor Towers only see the security desk, at which there are always two guards. See "Building Security," above, for more information on Security Headquarters.

**12a) Security Monitoring Room:** Behind the security desk is where most of the real security work is done. To the left as you enter, there is a long console which is used to monitor the security cameras, alarms, and fire system. There is also a small office where the guard teams are coordinated, and a set of stairs to the basement level.

**13) Building Administration:** These offices are where the building manager and his staff work. They hire and run the building's service staff, coordinate the use of free space, deal with tenants, and plan building-wide events and programs. There are a total of five managers: four assistant managers led by Building Manager Bill Tillingsley. There are also several secretaries.

**14) Waiting Area:** The lobby's Waiting Area has several large couches and chairs grouped around a fountain. Tables hold current issues of many magazines for visitors' reading enjoyment.





**FLOORS FOUR AND NINE**

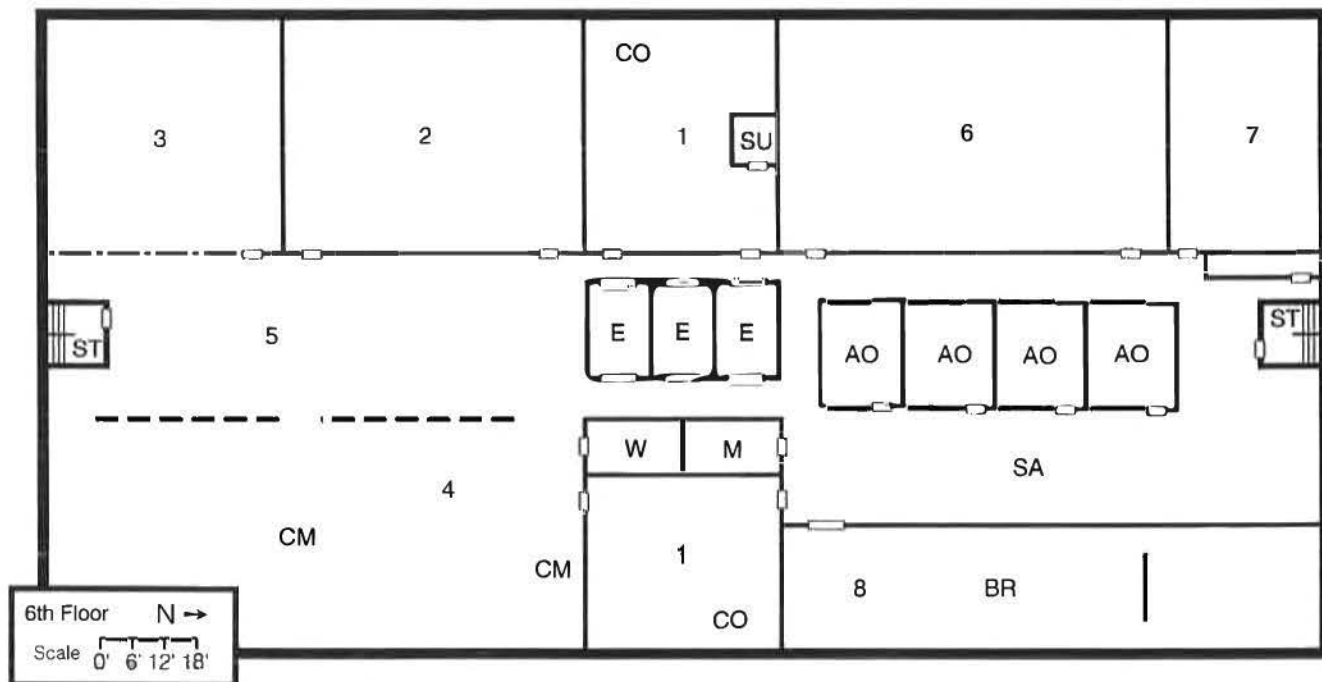
These two floors are both used for clerical staff, as well as a few offices for executives who are out of favor. Each floor also has two small break rooms. The secretaries on Floor Nine serve the top-level executives on Floors Eight and Ten, and thus are more competent than those on Floor Four, who are basically word processing staff.

- 1) **Copy Room:** The Copy Rooms contains several large, multi-function copying machines.
- 2) **Secretarial Work Areas:** All areas labelled "2" on the map are nothing more than rows of secretaries and clerical staff.
- 3) **Auditorium:** This room is a small auditorium. It is mainly used for word processing and motivational classes for the secretarial staff, but it can also be used for presentations by Harpcor executives.

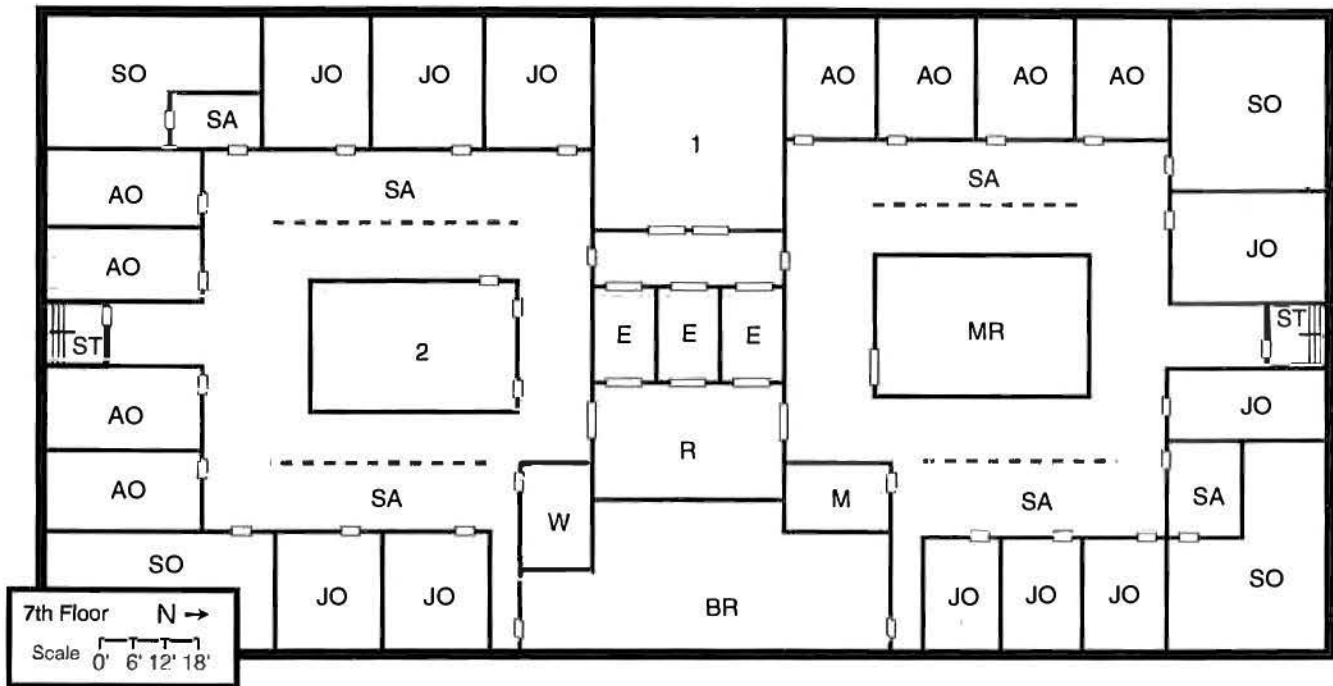
**FLOOR FIVE**

The fifth floor is occupied by the Harpcor accounting and legal departments. The western half of the floor (at the "top" of the map) is Accounting; the eastern section is Legal. In contrast to the plainly-furnished Floor Four, Five is tastefully decorated and has expensive furnishings. The carpet, curtains, and upholstery is done in a dusty rose shade, and paintings adorn the walls. The head of the Legal Department is Ken Butler; the chief accountant is Jerome Bixby.

- 1) **Library:** This is a law library for use by the Harpcor legal staff. In addition to standard lawbooks, it has extra materials for specialty fields relating to business and sales. The library also features two computers which are hooked up to legal databases.
- 2) **Copy Room**
- 3) **Computer Room:** This room holds the main computers used by the firm's accountants for financial reports. It has 2 copiers.







## FLOOR SIX

Floor Six combines several important departments. Harpcor Towers' main computers are located here; they hold data on all Harpcor activities and would be a prime target for corporate espionage agents. The building's communications equipment is located on this floor as well. Lastly, there are printing and other office support facilities.

**1) Printing Room:** Both rooms labelled "1" are printshops which create the major documents and reports for Harpcor. An enterprising character could find a lot of equipment and chemicals in these rooms for use as homemade weapons.

**2) Communications Room:** This room is Harpcor's link to the outside world. It contains fax machines, computers with modems, direct links to all major stock exchanges and NASDAQ, and other equipment needed to interact with the world business and financial community. Two secretary/technicians work here.

**3) Office Supplies:** This room has several enormous shelves and cabinets which are filled with all sorts of office supplies. Three "office boys" work here, keeping track of inventory and delivering supplies to other workers.

**4) Computer Room:** This is Harpcor's major computing facility. Eight computer technicians work here.

### 5) Secretarial Work Area

**6) Computer Workstations:** Also known as "Hacker Heaven," this room is home to Harpcor's brigade of computer software specialists. They not only help improve the company's in-house software and networks, they work to develop new products for Harpcor to market. The programmers are also responsible for the maintenance of the building's word processing computer network. They work closely with the technicians in the Computer Room (#4).

**7) Auditorium:** Similar to the ones on Floors Four and Nine, but slightly smaller. At the back there is a film projection room, which the Floor Four and Nine auditoriums do not have.

**8) Lunch Room:** This room is larger and better furnished than the average break room. On the north end it has a kitchen which can be used by employees who prepare their own lunch, or by caterers brought in by the company for a party or other event.

## FLOOR SEVEN

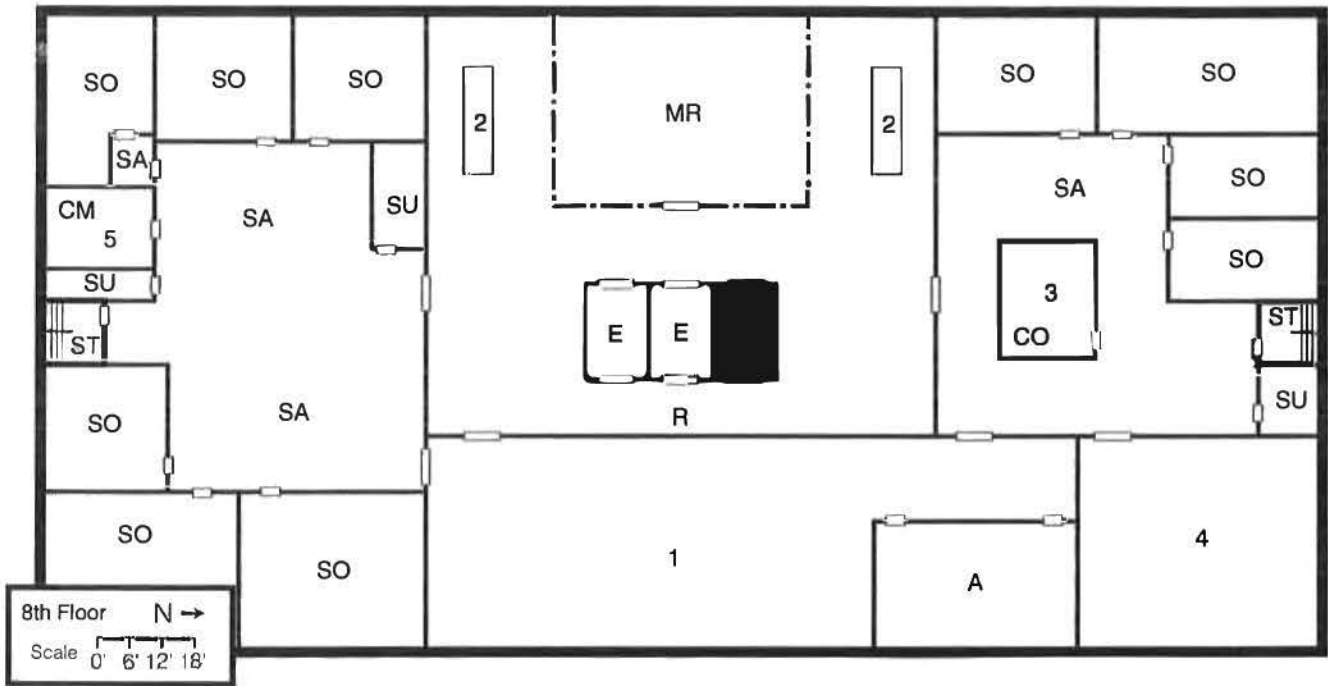
Harpcor's advertising department is on Floor Seven. Most of the employees working here are advertising executives whose job is to develop and coordinate ad campaigns. There is a small art staff; any work which is beyond their capacity will be "farmed out" to an outside advertising firm.

**1) Art Department:** A staff of eight artists works here, developing prototype ad material. Usually, their work is taken to an outside advertising firm, which will use it as the basis for a large ad campaign. The Art Department is generally cluttered, with papers, paint, and other artistic/design materials scattered around the room in a disorder which can be deciphered only by the art staff. The walls are covered with posters, the artists' work, and other bizarre decorations.

**2) Presentation Room:** This room is a small auditorium used to present prospective ad campaigns and materials to the Harpcor executives. There is a film projection room at the rear of the room for viewing commercials and video clips.

## SUBFLOOR NINE-A

Not depicted on the map is Subfloor Nine-A. This "floor" is only about five feet high. It is filled with heating and ventilation equipment, telephone relay boxes, and electrical equipment. The elevator does not stop here; the only way in is the stairs. Characters who go onto Subfloor Nine-A will find that the equipment prevents them from seeing more than ten feet in any direction at any point on the floor. There are twisting, confusing passages through the equipment. This floor is a good site for tense chases and stalking combats.



**FLOOR EIGHT**

The eighth floor is occupied by the lower-level executives and "brass." However, even a low-level executive is still an executive, and the surroundings denote that powerful men and women work here: plush carpets, decorative plantings and art pieces, and expensive furniture are all evident. The basic color scheme is a rich ivory with mahogany highlights. The furnishings and decorations here are better than those on Floor Five.

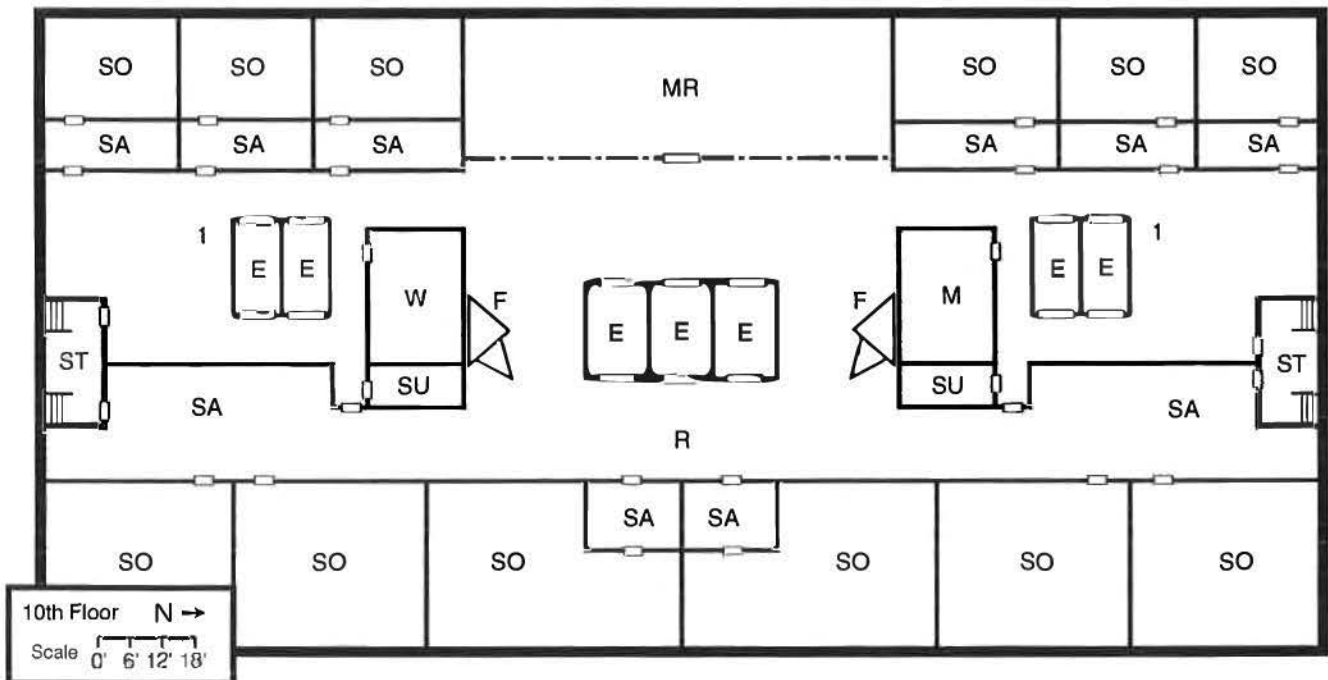
**1) Executive Dining Room:** This room is where the executives eat their lunch. It can also be used for small banquets and parties. Usually, the executives line up near the kitchen and place their orders; for special occasions, waiters are hired.

A) Kitchen: similar to the one on Floor One.

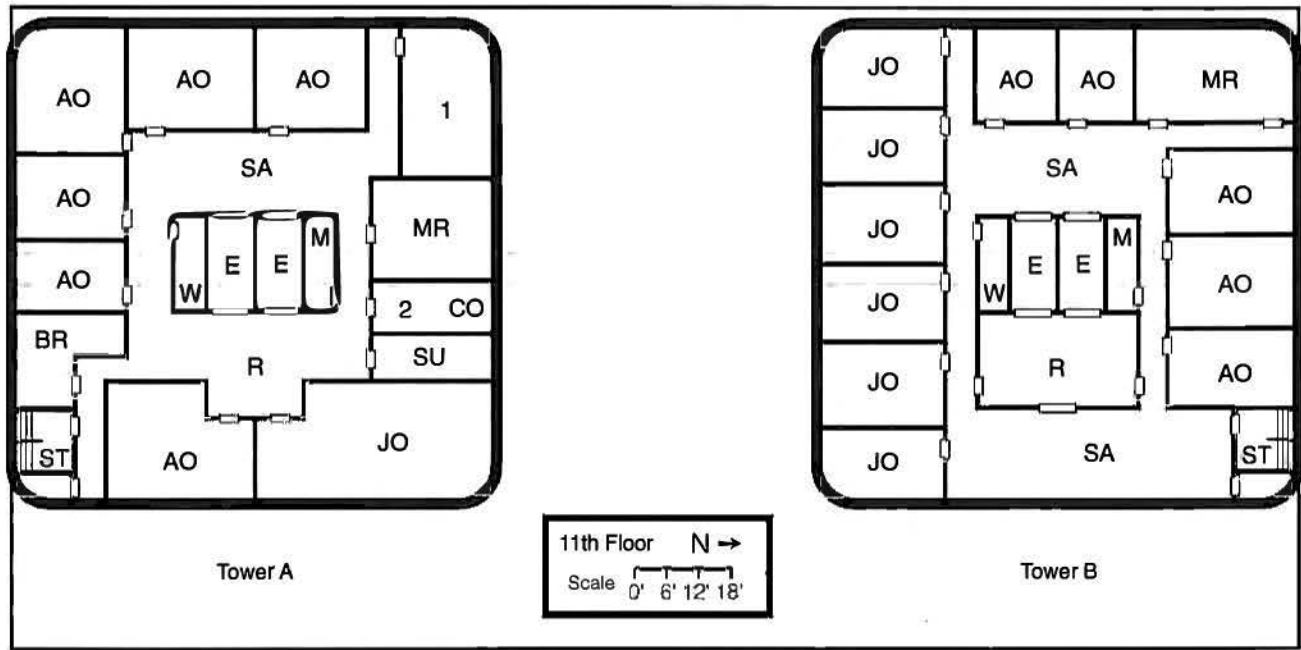
**2) Display Cases:** Flanking the eighth floor meeting room are two large display cases which hold models and photographs of Harpcor's other buildings, products, and projects. Every so often, the Art Department (Floor Seven) will add a new photo, diorama, or display, or remove an old one. Desperate player characters might be able to fashion crude weapons (such as a blowgun) out of some of the model parts.

**3) Copy Room**

**4) Executive Auditorium:** This auditorium is used by the executives to review stock campaigns, new projects and products, and other corporate developments. The seats and furnishings are of a much better quality than those in the auditoriums on lower floors.







**FLOOR TEN**

The top Harpcor executives occupy this floor. The furnishings and decor top even those on the eighth floor: the carpet is plush, the furniture fancier, and the artwork more expensive. The colors are primarily light brown and russet. The reception area includes two small fountains, each with a statue. The tenth floor also has a large meeting room. Other than that, this floor is entirely filled with executive offices.

1) **Tower Elevators:** These are the elevator banks for the Floors Eleven through Twenty. The floor is designed so that building employees can reach these elevators without disturbing the Harpcor executives.

**FLOOR ELEVEN**

**Tower A**

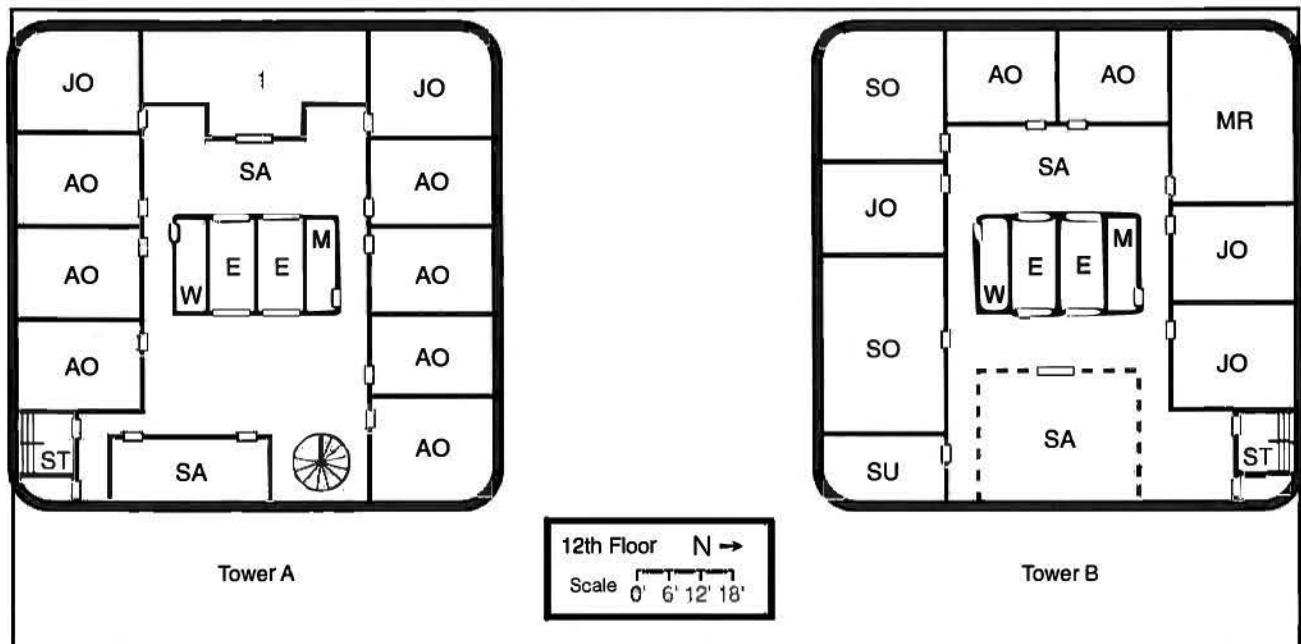
Tower A is the offices of the United Way. Harpcor allows the United Way to use the space for free. As a result, many Harpcor employees have become active volunteers in United Way-sponsored charitable organizations.

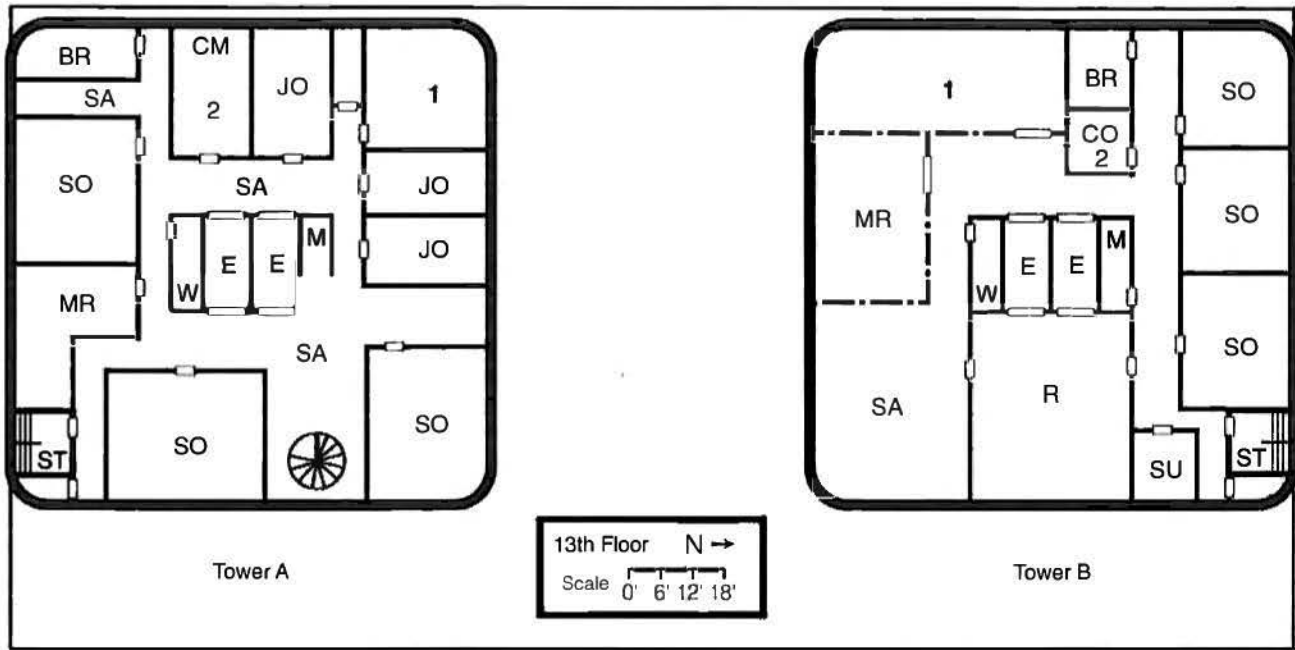
1) **Records Room:** This room is filled with filing cabinets containing information on all of the local agencies that the United Way distributes money to.

2) **Copy Room**

**Tower B**

Tower B is the first floor of Van Dusen & Jennings; a stock brokerage firm. The firm works closely (but not exclusively) with Harpcor and Harpcor employees.





**FLOOR TWELVE**

**Tower A**

Tower A is the first floor of California Financial And Trust Associates, a firm of money managers who help people organize their finances and invest their money; they also help set up trusts and act as trustees. Many of its employees are lawyers and/or accountants. In addition to the tower's elevators, there is a spiral staircase in the eastern corner of the tower which connects this floor with Floor Thirteen-A.

1) **Library:** This room is the firm's library of investment information. It includes computers with access to specialized financial databases.

**Tower B**

This is the second floor of the offices of Van Dusen & Jennings.

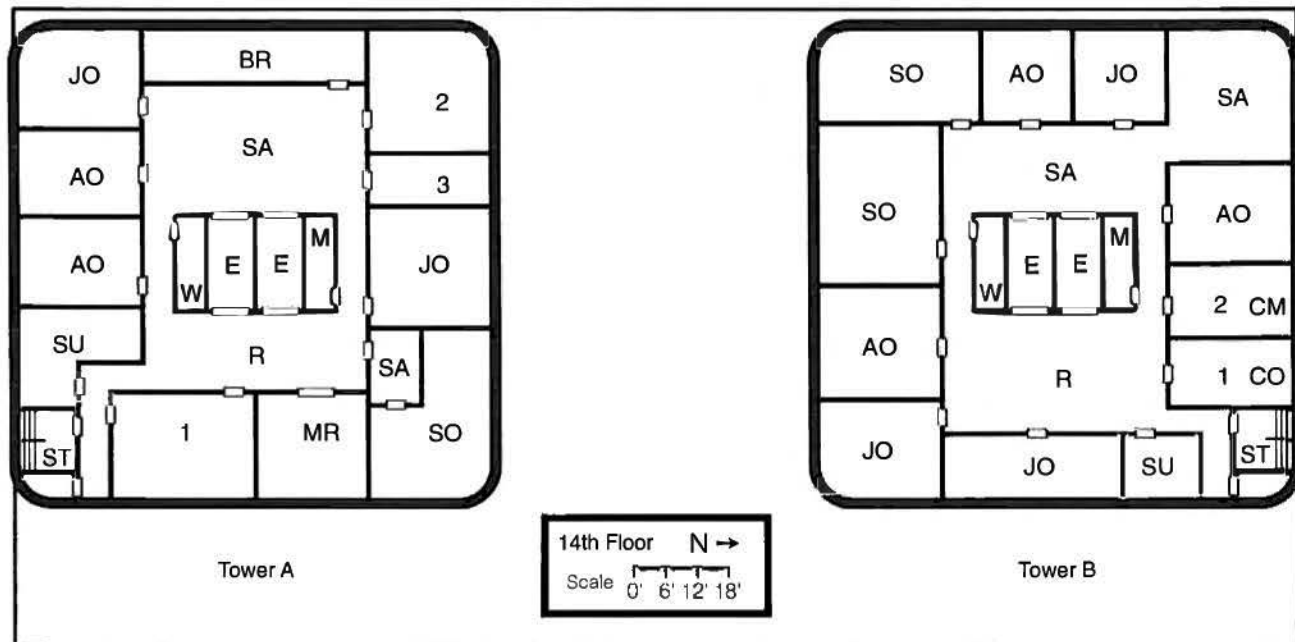
**FLOOR THIRTEEN**

**Tower A**

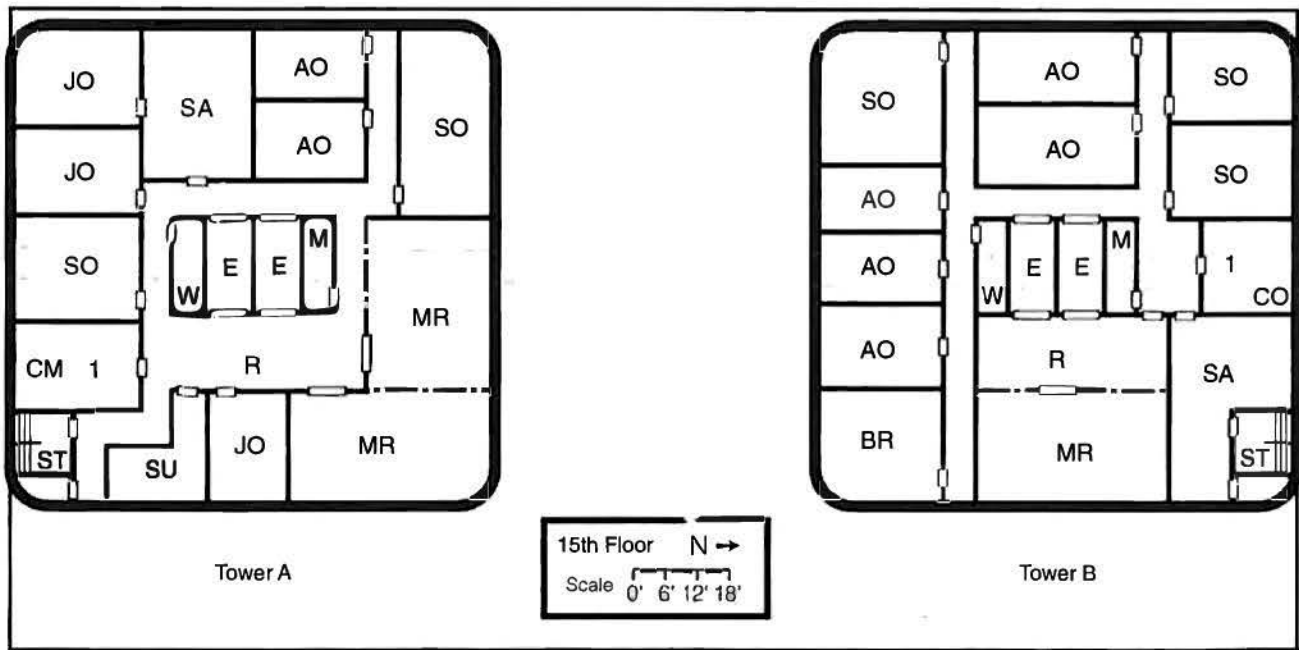
This is the second floor of the offices of California Financial And Trust Associates.

1) **Accounting Department:** This room is the office for the firm's accountants and payroll clerks.

2) **Computer Room:** These computers can be used for word processing or can access various financial databases.







**Tower B**

This floor is the offices of Arthurs, Craven, & Sneed, a small law firm. AC&S is a "boutique" firm specializing in litigation, especially in the areas of high-powered criminal defense and superhuman law. Player characters who can break into the AC&S databases (which are heavily secured) might be able to learn some interesting things about the firm's criminal clients.

1) **Library:** The firm's law library. It is similar to the one on Floor Five, but is smaller and contains a lot of specialty material relating to trial procedure and superhuman law.

2) **Copy Room**

**FLOOR FOURTEEN**

**Tower A**

Floor Fourteen-A is occupied by Callahan Gem Importers, a small firm which imports and sells high-quality gemstones. Even though the firm is small, its founder and guiding light, Robert Callahan, is a genius in the gem-trading field, and his expertise keeps the business extremely profitable.

1) **Orders Room:** This room is the "office" for five employees whose job is to call gem dealers to negotiate sales. They also deal with Callahan's lesser clients, and clients who buy lower-quality gemstones in bulk. Better-quality stones and more important customers are left to Callahan's hand-picked associate gem dealers. The room is furnished with little more than several desks with telephones and computers.

2) **Display Room:** This room is used to display gemstones to potential purchasers. It contains two long, velvet-covered tables on which stones are displayed.

3) **Vault:** This small vault, whose walls and door are DEF 12, BODY 12, holds the firm's stock of gems. The door can only be opened by three employees (Robert Callahan and two others) who each have a special card-key and know a special code which must be punched in after the card-keys are inserted (-4 to Lockpicking roll to get into the vault). The vault also has an alarm directly linked to Security Headquarters, the police department, and an elite private security agency (-2 to Security Systems roll to avoid this alarm). The vault's contents could easily be the target of greedy criminals.

**Tower B**

Bartoch and Blaine, Accountants, have their offices here.

1) **Copy Room**

2) **Computer Room**

**FLOOR FIFTEEN**

**Tower A**

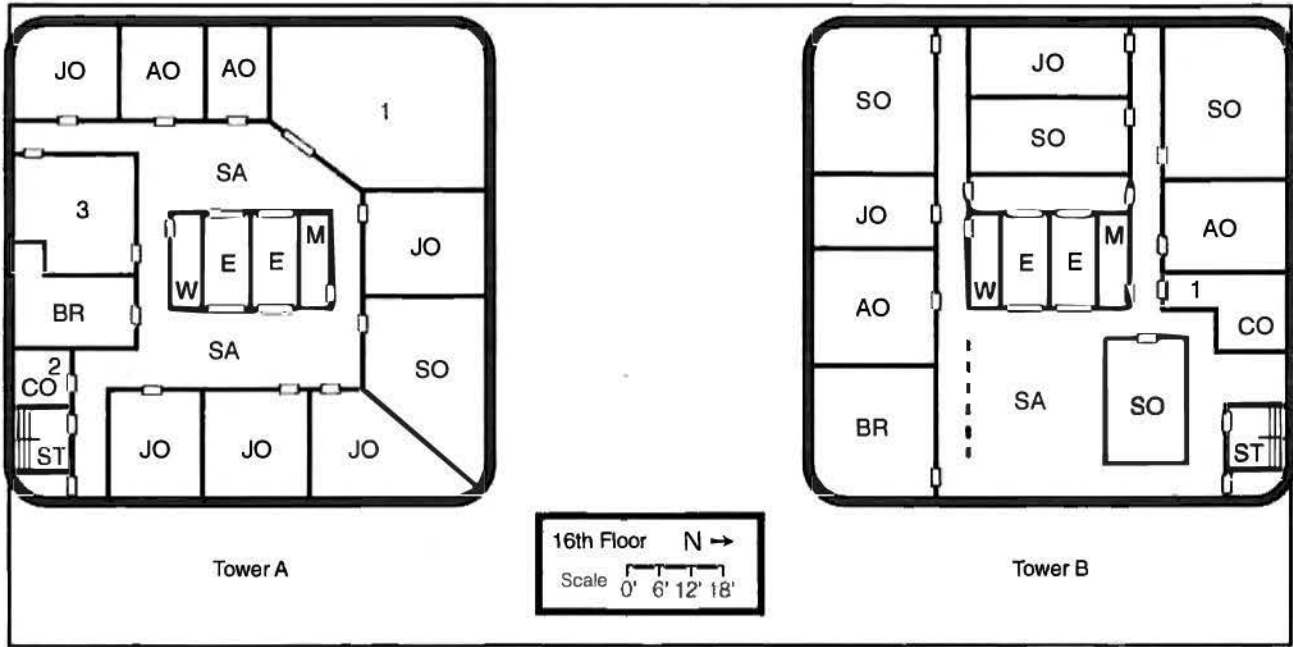
This is the first floor of the offices of Harlan, Fiske, & Stone, attorneys at law. The firm specializes in corporate law, securities law, and bankruptcy.

1) **Computer Room**

**Tower B**

Smithewicke & Sons, a financial consulting firm, occupies this floor and the one above it. S&S provides consulting services and financial advice to companies all over the world, and they have a high reputation for the quality of their work. Many of the firm's employees speak Japanese, German, or French.

1) **Copy Room**



**FLOOR SIXTEEN**

**Tower A**

This is the second floor of Harlan, Fiske, & Stone.

- 1) **Library:** HF&S's law library, similar to those described above.
- 2) **Copy Room**
- 3) **Accounting Department:** Four accountants work here, keeping track of the firm's billables and receivables and payroll.

**Tower B**

The second floor of Smithewicke & Sons.

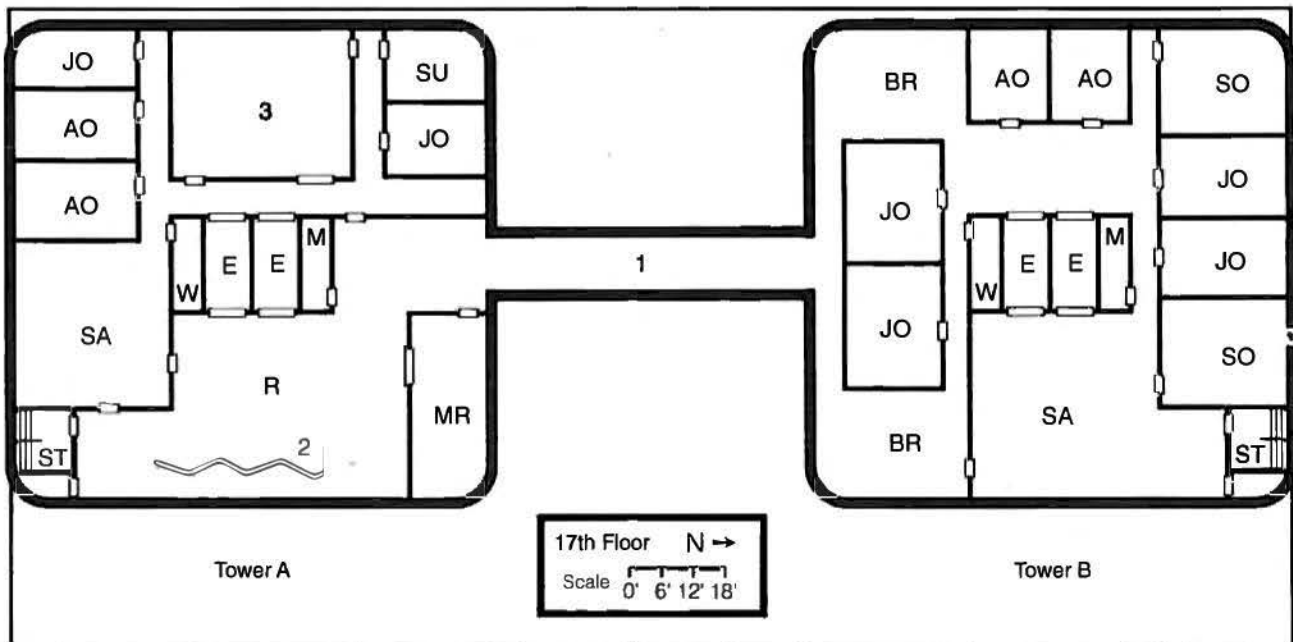
- 1) **Copy Room**

**FLOOR SEVENTEEN**

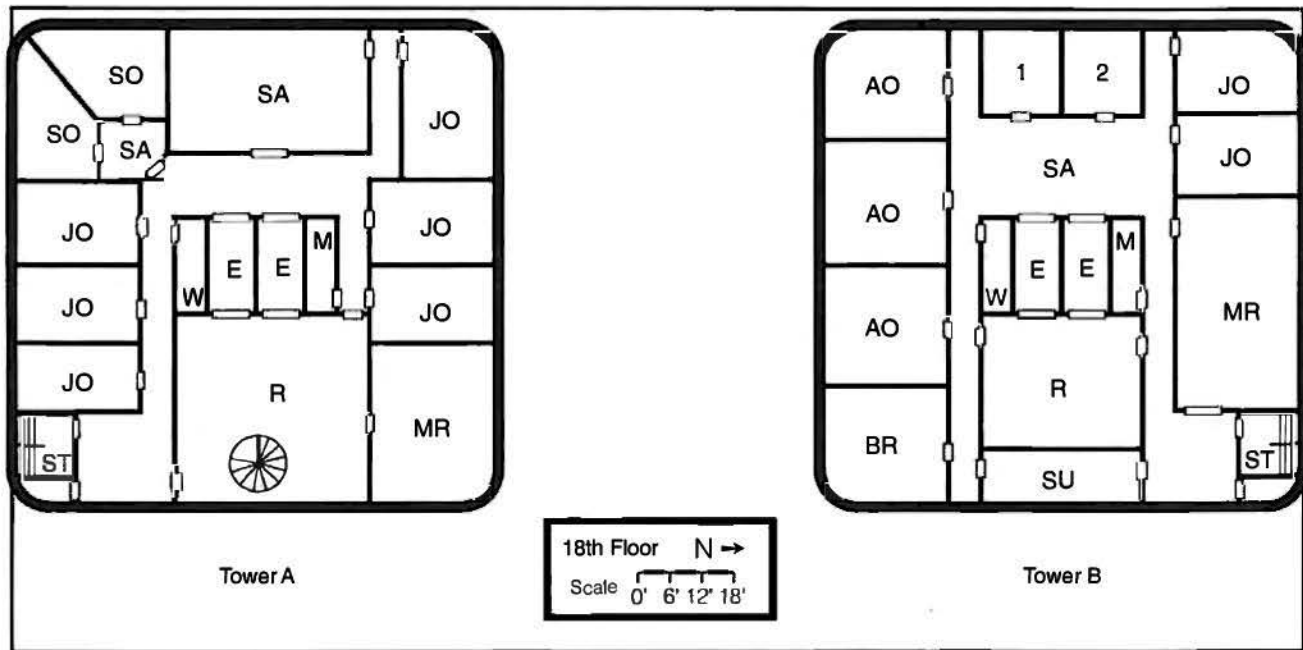
**Towers A and B**

Floor Seventeen on both towers is occupied by Saunders & Arpell, an advertising firm which often does work for Harpcor. The two towers are linked at this floor by a "Skybridge." The Skybridge is 2" wide, and is built from the same materials as the rest of the building. The top half of the Skybridge is glass, so that users can enjoy the view.

- 1) **The Skybridge**
- 2) **Display Boards:** This series of standing display boards showcase the materials from some of the firm's most successful advertising campaigns. The boards could provide cover, but offer only DEF 1, BODY 1 protection.
- 3) **Art Department:** Twelve skilled artists and designers work here. The room is similar in most respects to the description of the Harpcor art department on Floor Seven.







**FLOOR EIGHTEEN**

**Tower A**

Floor Eighteen-A is the first floor of the offices of Addickes And Cress, a stock brokerage. The firm has built a spiral staircase between their two floors, so that the employees can move easily around the office.

**Tower B**

This floor is the office of Parker, Sturgis, Carlyle & Spooner, a law firm.

1) **Library:** This is the firm's small law library. If the library does not have the materials the attorneys need, they borrow them from another firm in the building.

2) **Accounting Department**

**FLOOR NINETEEN**

**Tower A**

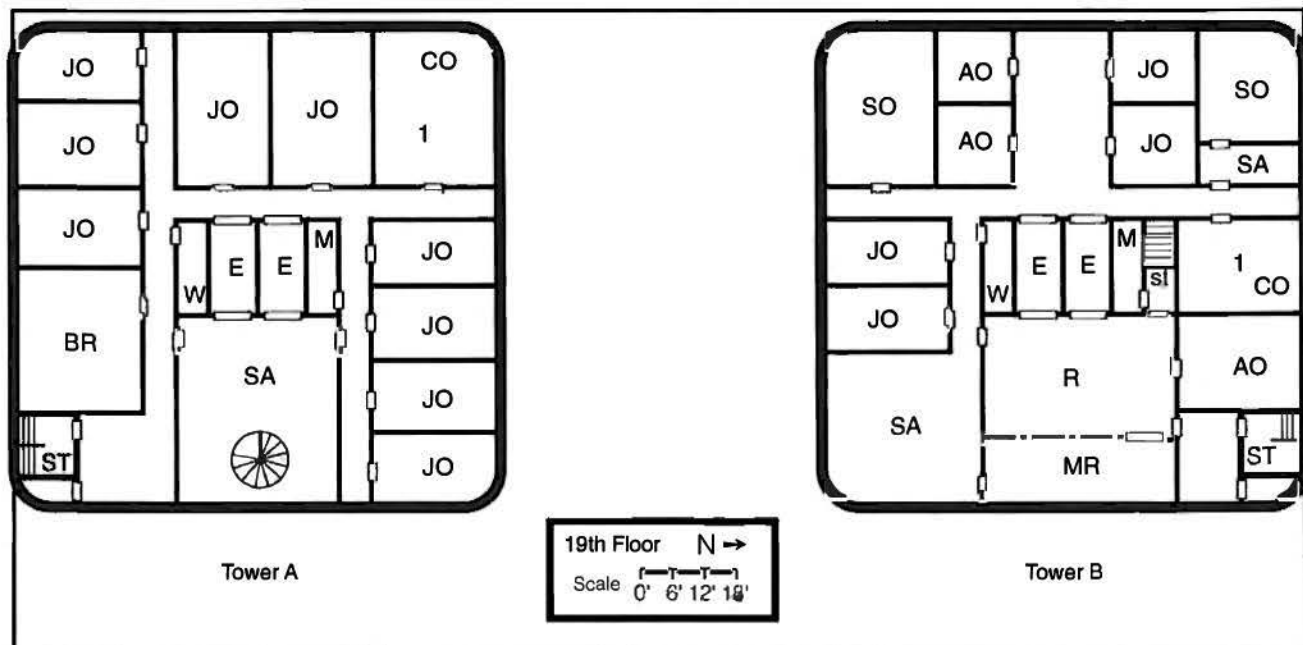
This is the second floor of Addickes And Cress.

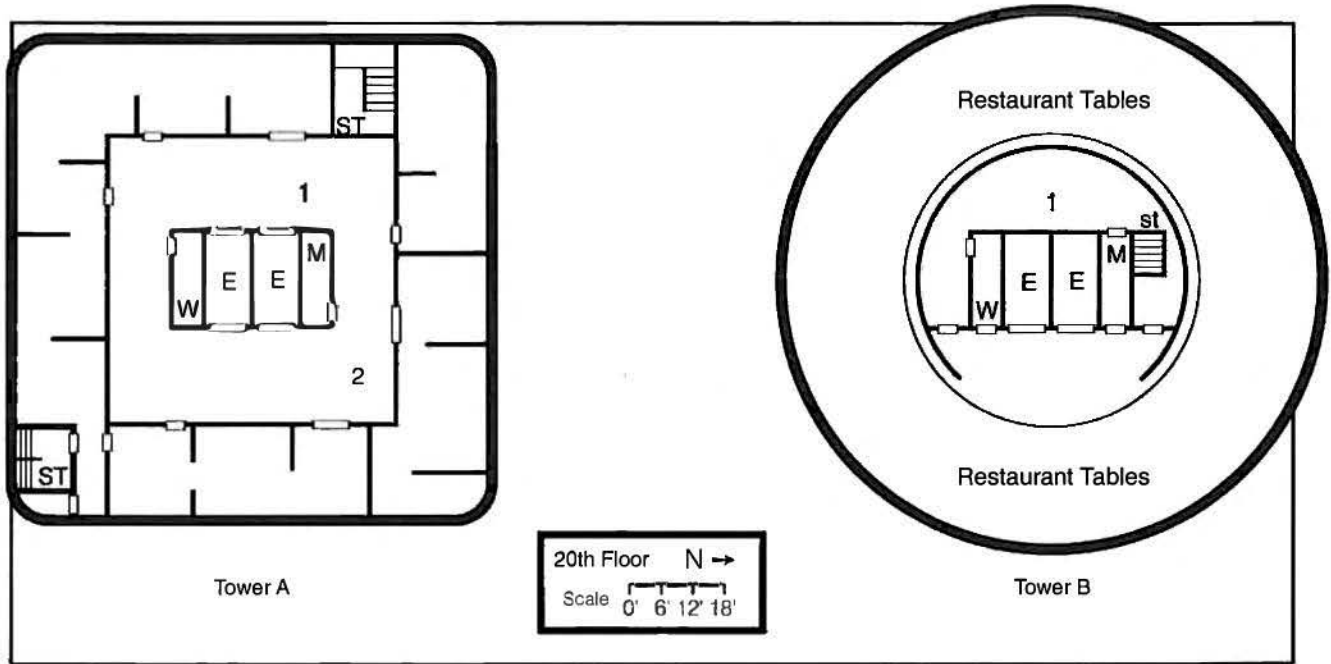
1) **Copy Room**

**Tower B**

Giddings Financial Consultants has its offices on this floor. This firm offers personal financial planning services, mainly to wealthy individuals.

1) **Copy Room**





**FLOOR TWENTY**

**Tower A**

Floor Twenty-A is used partly as a place for helicopter pilots to wait for their passengers, and partly as a place to store helicopter parts (just repair parts, not enough to build a whole helicopter). The lounge sections are in the inner portions, near the elevator; the outer "ring" is nothing more than a series of small rooms filled with boxes of parts, other miscellaneous items from other floors which are stored here, and some ventilation equipment.

**1) Passenger Waiting Area:** Passengers can rest here and spruce themselves up after their helicopter rides. There are several tables for them to sit at.

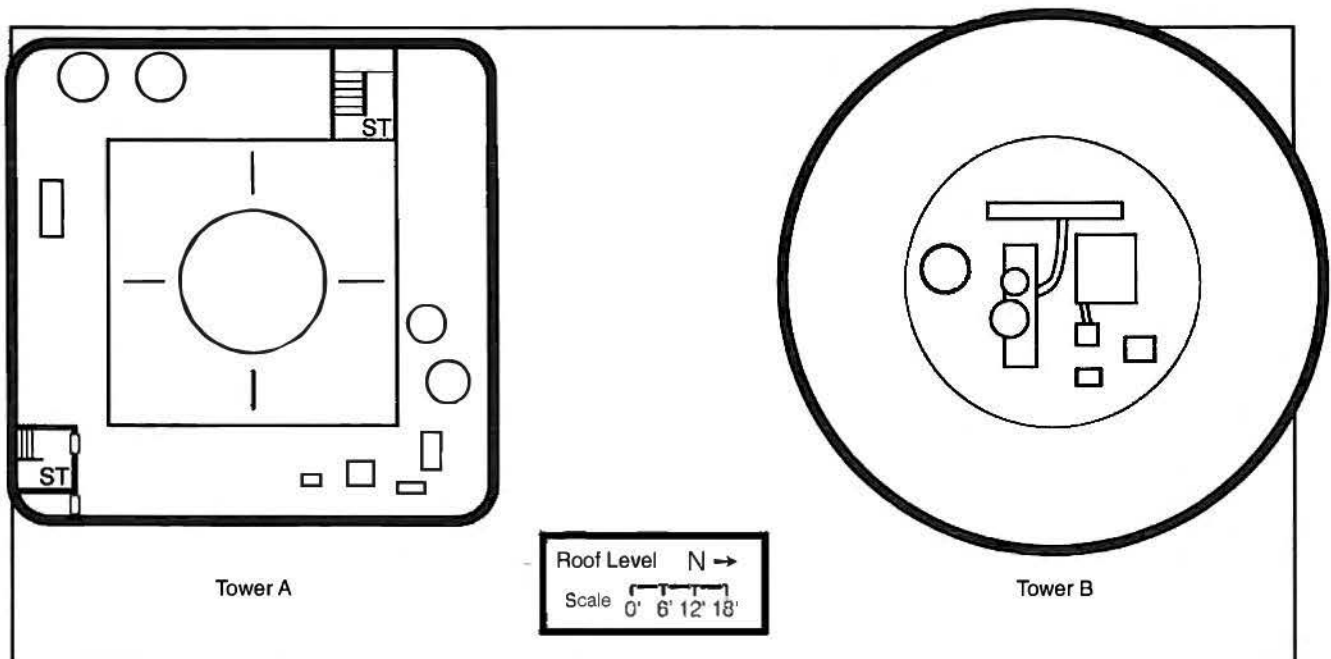
**2) Pilot's Lounge:** Pilots waiting for their passengers to come back from meetings in the building wait here. There are only a few tables, some vending machines, and a small color TV.

**Tower B**

Twenty-B is occupied by the fabulous Spinning Diamond restaurant, an elegant location for a scenic candlelight dinner. The restaurant rotates around a central hub, giving its customers an ever-changing view of the city. It takes the restaurant five minutes to make a complete rotation.

After patrons exit the elevator, they are greeted by a maitre d' who checks their reservation and then seats them. The tables in the restaurant are fairly close together, but the food and the charming location more than make up for it.

**1) Kitchen:** This is the Diamond's kitchen. It is the section of the floor which does not rotate. It is crowded with stoves, ovens, and kitchen implements. GMs should note that there is a door from the kitchen into the bathrooms, offering characters an alternate exit from the kitchen.





## ROOF

### Tower A

The roof of Tower A is a helipad. The pad is square, with bright red beacon lights at each corner. At the western corner of the building is a set of stairs leading down to Floor Twenty. The roof is covered by a rotating security camera.

The pad is elevated about six feet (1") above the rest of the roof, so that it resembles a sort of island. The space around the pad is filled with ventilation equipment.

### Tower B

The only thing on the roof of Tower B is ventilation equipment. This equipment is all crowded into the central circle (the part of Floor Twenty-B that does not rotate).

## SCENARIOS

### HOSTAGE CRISIS

In this scenario, Harpcor Towers becomes the site of a terrorist incident. Terrorists take over the building one evening, holding everyone in it hostage and threatening to kill them unless their demands are met. When properly run, this adventure should be full of excitement, tension, and thrills. The GM should tailor the adventure to his players and player characters, so that it is as exciting as possible. Anything that can be done to heighten the tension and adventurous suspense should be done.

#### The Terrorists

Who are these terrorists, and what are their goals? This detail is left up to the GM, since the needs of each campaign are different. If one or more player characters have an association with some political cause, perhaps the terrorists are their arch-enemies or Hunteds. Maybe it is a brand-new terrorist group determined to make its first definite statement to the world; on the other hand, it may be an old, established group that the PCs have encountered before.

Similarly, the precise composition and size of the terrorist team is left up to the GM, since it should be tailored to match the player characters' capabilities. Most of the villains described earlier in this Sourcebook might be a part of the group (one of them might even be the group's leader). The villain Jihad is especially appropriate for this adventure. For the standard terrorist, the GM can use the write-up for a Competent Normal (*Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*, p. 134) or the write-up for a low-powered agent of Dr. Destroyer (*Classic Enemies*, p. 41). The terrorists will usually be armed with submachineguns or assault rifles in addition to a handgun and a knife; some may also have a shotgun or a couple of grenades. The terrorist leader, whoever he is, will of course be more skilled and better armed than his underlings. All terrorists will be wearing Armor (6 PD & ED; OIF); they also have gas masks (LS: Self-Contained Breathing and 5 points of Sight Flash Defense on an OAF) in case the police try to use tear gas on them.

The terrorists' goals should be something appropriately terroristic: freeing imprisoned comrades, for example. This scenario would be a perfect adventure for a group of PCs that recently encountered, defeated, and captured some members of a terrorist group. Although the terrorists are not adverse to getting whatever money they can out of this escapade (in the form of ransoms, stolen objects, and so forth), their primary goal should not involve making money.

#### Getting The Heroes Involved

There are two ways to bring the PCs into this scenario. The first is to have them on the scene when the terrorists initially take control. The PCs (in their Secret Identities, of course) might be eating at the Sunset Café or the Spinning Diamond or attending a class in one of the auditoriums. If a PC is wealthy, he might be associated with Harpcor in some way and be in the building for a business meeting. Once the attack takes place, each PC has to figure out how to slip away from the terrorists (and maybe from his or her date for the evening!) and begin a counterattack. This approach works best if the PCs are initially separated, each thinking that he is on his own.

The other way is for the PCs to come to the rescue after they hear of the attack on the radio or television. This means that they are going to have to sneak into the building (and avoid the police cordon as well, if they are on poor terms with the police). The terrorists will be carefully monitoring all security cameras and alarms, so getting inside will not be easy. For this method, it doesn't usually matter whether the PCs are working together or not.

#### The Attack Begins

The terrorists have planned this operation with great care and ruthlessness. The attack begins at 10:00 PM on a weeknight evening. Rather than simply crashing into the building, the terrorists are going to approach subtly in separate groups. They will maintain communication throughout the scenario by means of walkie-talkies which are on a coded frequency (characters with one of the walkie-talkies can listen in, and a character with Systems Operation and any radio can make a skill roll to tune in). The terrorists may not speak English—for example, if Jihad is leading this mission, the terrorists will probably speak Arabic.

The terrorists have three different teams in place. The first team is in a large caterer's van which will drive into the parking garage and park near the south stairwell. The van actually holds several terrorists, as well as equipment, extra weapons, and ammunition. A terrorist team armed with silenced weapons will jump out and run up to the basement level. From there they will run at top speed up the inner staircase (marked #6 on the Basement map), crash into Security Headquarters, and murder all of the guards there. They will use the equipment in Security Headquarters to seal off the building entirely (locking all doors and activating all security systems); they will also find out where all the other guards are, and dispatch men to kill them as soon as the rest of the terrorists are in place. When the building has been secured, they will set up an M60 machine gun with 2500 rounds of ammunition in the lobby in front of the security desk; the gun is on a swivel mount so that it covers not only the front door, but the northern half of the building. They will also barricade the front door with furniture; a bomb (10d6 EB Explosion) will be hidden among the furniture, triggered to go off if it is moved or jostled.

The second team is split into two parts. The first part is disguised as food deliverymen with a delivery for the Floor One kitchen (deliveries at night are not unusual). Their van holds weapons, body armor, and other equipment. As soon as they are let in, they will draw guns and keep the kitchen staff as quiet as possible. Then they will join the second part of the team, who entered the building half an hour ago and took seats at the Sunset Café. They are disguised as businessmen and have their guns hidden in briefcases. They will attack the Security Headquarters if the first team failed; otherwise, they will help move the Café's patrons into the kitchen, where they can more easily guard them. Some team members will bring equipment into the building.

Team three is approaching in a helicopter. If for some reason they reach the building before Security Headquarters is taken over, they will radio that they are "in distress" and must land at once. The pilot, one of the terrorists, will contrive to "accidentally" smash into the roof's security camera, rendering it useless. Team three will then run downstairs to Floor Seventeen, taking hostages as they go. At Floor Seventeen, they will leave some men (at least four) to guard the Skybridge, then head across and take the elevator up to the Spinning Diamond. All customers at the Spinning Diamond will be taken hostage. Two customers are terrorists in disguise; whether or not they reveal themselves at this time is up to the GM (they could be kept "in reserve" for a sneak attack on any rescuers).

Once all teams are in place, and the primary targets have been occupied, squads of terrorists will be sent throughout the building to round up all occupants and take them to four central locations where they can more easily be watched.

These locations are as follows:

Floors	Location of hostages
1-5	Sunset Café kitchen
6-10	Floor Ten meeting room
Tower A	Floor Sixteen library (room 1)
Tower B	The Spinning Diamond

The following suggestions are made for the initial placement of the hostages. The GM should feel free to alter this scheme if it will make the adventure run more smoothly.

Location	Number of Hostages
Floor 1, Sunset Café (#10)	22 customers
Floor 4, auditorium (#3)	1 lecturer and 12 salesman trainees
Floor 4, general	2 secretaries working on the final draft of a report
Floor 5, law library (#1)	1 associate working on a legal brief
Floor 7, art dept. (#1)	2 artists working on an ad campaign
Floor 10, meeting room	16 executives and key shareholders having a top-secret meeting
Floor 12-A, eastern corner	1 financial planner and 1 secretary finishing up a financial report for a client
Floor 13-B, law library (#1)	3 associates working on various documents
Floor 16-B, western corner	1 executive double-checking his personal stock portfolio
Floor 17-A, art dept. (#3)	3 artists having a party
Floor 20-A	30 customers

#### What Next?

After the building has been completely explored, all the guards have been killed, and the hostages have been taken to the proper locations, the terrorists will broadcast their demands to the city and the world. They will do this by calling TV and radio stations, so that reporters will come out to listen to their message. Naturally, this will also alert the police, who will arrive en masse and cordon off the building. Once the crowd is assembled, the terrorists will smash out a fourth-floor window and throw a list of demands down to the police, pinned to a dead guard. If their demands are not met within an hour after the media arrives, they will begin to kill the hostages, one every five minutes or so. However, they will not kill more than half of the hostages, so that they will still have something to bargain with.





All the heroes have to do is deal with this situation. The police cannot simply assault the place, since the hostages would be killed and the police themselves would be shot to bits (remember, the terrorists can use the outside security cameras to see what the police are doing). Possible actions for the police include: shutting off the building's power; trying to flood the building's ventilation system with knockout gas; a frontal attack; or an aerial assault using military helicopters.

The terrorists' goal is to maintain control of the building until their demands are met; this includes repulsing any assaults and eliminating the PCs. If the heroes are well-known, the terrorists will be prepared for them (for example, they might have a weapon designed to take advantage of a character's known vulnerabilities). As long as they have control of the building, the terrorists will keep the elevators operating; if the heroes begin to foul up the operation too much, they will shut them off (preferably trapping a hero or two inside).

The main problem for the GM at this point is keeping track of what everyone is doing (especially if the PCs are split up). The terrorists, the police, the heroes, and maybe even some of the hostages will all be trying to do things. The GM should make a chart with all of the main actors (PCs, the police, terrorists, villains, and so forth) listed in columns across the top. Actions should be listed one at a time, with actions on the same row taking place at the same time. In order to make timekeeping easier, the GM should keep track of Phases as much as possible.

### Escape

Eventually, either because their demands are met or because they are beginning to lose, the terrorists will decide to cut their losses and flee. The escape has been planned, just like the rest of the operation.

Several routes are open to the terrorists. One is the helicopter on the roof of Tower A. This will be left to most of the regular terrorists, since the police are likely to have helicopters present, making it a risky escape route. However, the pilot is good (Combat Piloting 14-), and the helicopter is armed (use the Combat Helicopter from the Sourcebook). This might give the GM the chance to run an airborne chase/battle.

Another route is the sewer system. The chief terrorists, including any villains the GM uses, plan to take this route. They will slip through the building's waste disposal system (man-sized grates are located in the parking garage) and into the sewers, using inflatable rubber rafts to paddle to freedom.

Two other routes are somewhat riskier. First, if the PCs are known to the terrorists, some of the terrorists might try to disguise themselves as the PCs and slip away. They can use their walkie-talkies to send the police fake messages from the PCs, and then eventually throw themselves out of a first- or fourth-story window, looking badly injured. An ambulance will carry them to freedom. A similar plan would be to try to blend in with the hostages and escape that way. Second, a terrorist or two might try to find a hiding place (for example, in an ventilation duct or workway crawlspace) and await a chance to escape in a few days when things have calmed down.

### Aftermath

Even after the hostages are rescued, there will be some mysteries left unsolved. Who funded this operation and assisted with the planning? The terrorists obviously had blueprints of the building. Perhaps an executive who wants to take over the company fed them information in exchange for having his boss murdered under cover of the terrorist operation. The GM might be able to create several adventures out of a quest to find the terrorists' backer. Similarly, the PCs will probably be eager to track down any escaped terrorists. This will not be easy, since any surviving terrorists are smart enough to scatter to the four corners of the globe and make themselves scarce. Finding them and bringing them to justice could take a long time.

Lastly, the GM should note that the meeting being held on Floor Ten is "top-secret." What is the purpose of this meeting? Who is in attendance? Does it have any connection to the terrorist attack? The PCs may want to answer these questions, especially if they have some ties to Harpcor and realize that the meeting is not strictly on the up-and-up.

## OTHER SCENARIO IDEAS

### Sniper!

Carl Watson, former Green Beret and sniper, lost his wife, his daughter, and his job at Harpcor Towers in the last two weeks. He has decided to end his miserable life "in style" by getting revenge on Harpcor for the way they treated him.

Carl will enter the building at approximately 11:50 AM from the Floor One entrance and take the elevators up to the seventeenth floor. He will be carrying two large suitcases, which looks odd, but since the guards know him and trust him they will believe his story that he is "making a delivery." Once he gets to the Floor Seventeen, he will pull a pistol out of his jacket pocket and shoot as many Saunders & Arpell employees as he can. After things calm down, he will barricade the stairway doors with strong furniture (requiring a total of 50 STR points to open) and jam the tower elevators by ripping off an access panel and shorting out the electrical system which powers them.

Then he will set up some furniture on the Skybridge as a barricade and unpack the suitcases. They contain several guns, including a powerful sniper rifle (for example, a Walther WA-2000 or a Barrett .50). Carl has timed his attack to coincide with the lunch hour, so that his targets will be walking to their cars in the parking lot to go out to eat. He will begin firing at anyone he can see; he can kill most normal humans with one well-placed shot. Carl is DEX 16, SPD 3, +2 OCV with his sniping rifle, and +2 Range Levels with all guns. Otherwise, he is a Competent Normal (see page 134 of the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*; give him military skills and the Commando Training martial art).

The PCs have two tasks. First, they have to get to Carl somehow, since he has blocked all of the normal access routes; second, they have to stop him. They may be able to do this by sniping at him in return, but this will prove difficult, since he set up some cover for himself; additionally, he is firing from behind mirrored glass, making it hard to determine exactly how his body is placed. Don't forget that the glass offers him an extra DEF 3, BODY 3 of protection in addition to his barricade.



**Holdup**

A Vietnamese youth gang decided that the fancy stores on Floor One of the building would make good targets for a robbery. Armed to the teeth, they burst into the building, killed three security guards and four civilians, and began to loot and rob.

Unfortunately for them, complications have arisen: the PCs. Somehow, they find out about the attack (perhaps they are in the building when it occurs, or maybe they heard about it on the police radio or were called in by the cops). By the time the PCs get there, the police have entered the building and are holding the murderous teenagers at bay. The gang is holed up in Monique Thierry Clothing (#1) and the candy and gift store (#2). Although the police have them outnumbered and surrounded, the gangsters have more firepower—they are carrying assault rifles, submachineguns, and combat shotguns, and they have plenty of ammo. (At the GM's option, the gang may also have several hostages.) Presently, a Mexican standoff exists.

The PCs have to break the stalemate. How they do this is up to them. The accessway behind the stores is one possibility, but the Vietnamese know about it (and may try to use it as an escape route). Getting on top of the stores and crashing into them is another way to attack, but is just as dangerous. Good luck...

**Showdown**

Of course, Harpcor Towers can be used as a setting for battles between superpowered characters just as easily as it can for heroic-level characters. One such scenario is the "showdown," in which a group of villains challenges the PCs to a running battle through the building. The PCs have to try to save the employees, and the villains get a chance to publicly humiliate their worst enemies.

**Inferno!**

Harpcor Towers is also a good setting for disaster adventures. The PCs' task in such a scenario is to rescue the employees. Perhaps the most obvious type of disaster for a high-rise office building is a massive fire (whether accidental or set by an arsonist) (see *Challenges For Champions*, Scenario #9, "Fire And Ice," for suggestions on running an inferno adventure). Other disasters which might affect the building include earthquakes, hurricanes (if the campaign city is right on the coast), tornadoes, blizzards, riots, and even the outbreak of war. If the disaster strikes during the day, the GM can assume that almost all of the offices and desks are occupied, meaning that there are hundreds of employees to rescue. If the disaster strikes at night, the GM can use the list of building occupants provided in the Hostage Crisis scenario as a guide to how many persons should be in the building.

**GANG WAR**

Wars between different gangs are a common staple of street-level comic books. There are two types of gang wars: the war between different gangs for the "rulership" of the city's underworld; and the gang "civil war," in which different factions of the same gang contend for control of the gang. A sample of both types of scenario is presented here.

**THE SCATUCCI-TORCCONE WAR**

This scenario is a sample of the first type of gang war. It depicts an ongoing conflict between the Scatucci and Torccone Mafia families. Each family is pulling out all stops in an effort to win the war. The fighting is bringing a lot of heat down on both families, and on the Mafia in general, but the hatred between them is so strong that neither family cares. Not even the Commission has been able to bring the War to a halt.

**RUNNING THE SCATUCCI-TORCCONE WAR**

Unlike the Harpcor Towers scenarios, this scenario is not designed to be run all in one evening. Instead, the events described here should be worked into the campaign one at a time, to simulate the ongoing development of the conflict. The GM should inform his players of what has happened in the War each game session; if the GM has a handout or "events list" that he gives the players, events in the War should be included on that list.

The seven events described below are described in chronological order. They should be accepted as guidelines, not as a rigid, unchangeable history. The main reason for this is the player characters. As they react to the events of the War, taking actions designed to stop it or inflame it, they will alter the course of events and force the GM to redefine the War as it exists in his campaign. In addition, each GM should come up with his own end for the War: each campaign will change the War in different ways, so no set ending is given here. This way each GM can also customize the ending to set up later adventures in the campaign.

If the GM wants to add some encounters of his own to the War, he needs to make sure that all of them endanger innocent people in some way. If it's just a matter of gangsters fighting gangsters, the natural tendency on the part of some PCs will be to let them keep fighting—why waste your own ammunition when the criminals are willing to shoot each other up? By putting a few helpless citizens in the middle of things, all PCs will have a very good reason to get involved in some way.

**HISTORY OF THE WAR**

The Scatucci-Torccone War (or "the War," as it is usually called) began just over a year ago. The Scatuccis and Torccones had never been particularly friendly with each other; in fact, they had a brief war in the late 1960s which ended in a "draw." The event which touched off the War was the murder of Joseph "Little Joey" Scatucci, a Scatucci caporegima, by Devlin Armstrong, a freelance hitman. The Scatuccis learned that Armstrong was hired by the Torccones. They retaliated by hitting a Torccone caporegima, Carmine DeRangella, and burning his grocery store to the ground.



Both families immediately "hit the mattresses" (a Mafia slang term which means that gangsters began to hide out in sparsely-furnished apartments with mattresses placed on the floor so that they can sleep safely). For approximately the next three months, the War was quiet as each family tried to hold out against the tension and boredom longer than the other. Eventually, a Scatucci caporegima, Fred "Uptown Freddie" Uffizi, decided he couldn't take it anymore and began to live a public life again. The Torccones got word of this and sent a squad of hitmen out to deal with Uffizi and his men. One by one, Uffizi's soldiers were tracked down and murdered; two of them have not been seen since that time. The Scatuccis then began to send their own men after the Torccone killers. Two weeks later, the Torccone men were cornered at a truck stop just outside of the city, and a bloody gunbattle ensued. When the smoke cleared, four Torccones and three Scatuccis were dead, along with one innocent bystander.

After this spurt of bloody violence, the character of the War changed. The police began to crack down on both sides, forcing them to change their tactics from assassination to economic attacks: in short, they began to rob each other. This was an effective strategy, since each side needed lots of cash to pay its men and hire outside help. No Scatucci- or Torccone-owned business, legal or illegal, was immune. There have been several deaths during these robberies, but not nearly as many as there would have been had the indiscriminate killing gone on. This period of relative calm has lasted up until the present, with only occasional outbreaks of minor violence. However, that's all about to change...

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE WAR

### Incident One: Massacre At Montori's Pizzeria

At this point, after several months of simply robbing the Scatuccis, "Hacksaw" Torccone has decided it's time to heat things up again. He has ordered an attack on Montori's Pizzeria, a known Scatucci hangout which is owned by several Scatucci family members and is used to launder illegal profits.

Getting the PCs involved is easy. A character might be there with a date, enjoying the good food and atmosphere. Or, he might be there in disguise, hoping to gather crucial underworld information from a contact. A group of PCs might be casing the place for an assault of their own. In any event, the PCs are in the vicinity when the attack begins.

Ten men armed with shotguns, submachine guns, and automatic pistols walk into Montori's at 9:00 PM. Once inside the doors, they will take cover and try to shoot as many Scatuccis as they can. They will do their best not to kill innocent citizens, but they will shoot at innocents rather than let a Scatucci escape. The Scatuccis will fight back, but there are only about six Scatucci men in the pizzeria, armed with pistols and knives. Their best hope is to run whenever there is an opening.

What the PCs do is up to them. They will probably try to stop the fighting to keep innocents from getting injured or killed. This means putting themselves in the middle of a deadly gunfight, or possibly looking as if they are siding with one family or another. In order to make the fight exciting and long-lasting, make sure that none of the PCs are carrying grenades, tear gas, or other weapons which could end the fight quickly. Unless the PCs completely turn the tables in the battle, the Scatuccis are going to be badly hurt. At least five of them will be killed; whereas the Torccones will escape with only injuries (and will be able to steal some laundered money).

For Montori's Pizzeria, use the map of the bank on page 210 of the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*. The teller's area is the kitchen, with the vault being two large pizza ovens. The rest of the area is filled with tables and booths. The GM should assume that there is a back door out of the kitchen.

### Incident Two: Kidnapping

Naturally, the Scatuccis will be enraged by this vicious sneak attack. Don Carlo will be especially furious, and will order appropriate retaliation. Since the Torccones are now prepared for a similar attack, he will decide on something different: kidnapping "Bobby Red" Finelli, the Torccone consiglieri. Bobby Red is an attractive target because he is predictable: every Tuesday he goes to visit his mother at the Shady Oaks Rest Home. He usually goes alone, or with only one or two "friends." Five Scatuccis, armed only with handguns, will be assigned to do the job. The Scatuccis will jump Finelli when he leaves the home and try to hustle him into a van.

Whether or not the PCs get involved, the GM should try to arrange matters so that the kidnapping fails. The best method is, of course, to have some PCs stop it (they might have relatives in Shady Oaks, do volunteer work there, or simply be in the vicinity). In the end, though, the Scatuccis should be killed, arrested, or chased off.

After this failure, the Scatuccis will be perceived to be losing the War. Other Mafia interests may begin to lean towards supporting the Torccones (or, on the other hand, they may offer a little behind-the-scenes support to the underdog). The Scatuccis need a victory, and soon.

### Incident Three: Regaining Ground

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. The next Scatucci tactic, thought up by one of the caporegimas, is to hit Vito "Watchmaker" Torccone, his family's underboss. A team of hitmen armed with handguns and shotguns will drive by Vito's house early in the morning when he steps out to get his paper and blow him away. Unlike the last attempt, this one should succeed: Vito will be killed (and maybe a couple of innocent citizens out jogging or walking their dogs will be as well). The PCs should probably not be involved in this one, they should just read about it in the papers. Of course, if they have a good reason to be there (they tell the GM that they are planning to keep an eye on Torccone top men, or they get a tip-off from a Scatucci contact), they can take whatever actions they wish.

This incident will put the public in an even greater uproar than they were before. The police are not doing their jobs, and the streets are getting too dangerous. Something must be done!



#### Incident Four: Play Acting

Fortunately for the police, they will now get a big break: three of the Scatucci hitmen who killed Vito Torconcione will be arrested. How the police receive the tip on where to find these three is up to the GM. A nice touch would be to have a PC find out the information; maybe he can even subdue the three assassins before the police arrive. Another option is that the Scatuccis planned the whole thing to take the heat off themselves.

The hitmen will be thrown into a jail cell. A couple of days later they are to be transferred to a more secure facility. However, the Torconciones have other ideas. Four Torconcione men, wearing stolen police uniforms, have snuck on board the prison bus before it got to the jail and have convinced the driver to keep his mouth shut by sticking a gun in his ribs. They will present the driver's papers to the jailers and, if nothing goes wrong, obtain custody of the three Scatucci hitmen. These three men will never be seen alive again.

However, something could go wrong. If a PC is present at the transfer, give him a PER Roll at -1 to spot something wrong with one of the Torconciones' uniforms. KS: The Law Enforcement World or PS: Policeman will act as complementary skills to the PER Roll. If they are "made," the Torconciones will attempt to grab the Scatuccis and flee in the bus. They have handguns, two shotguns, and two submachine guns.

Regardless of the final outcome, this event will shock the public. Many people will call for a complete evaluation of the police system and its procedures. These critics will be enough of a problem for the department that its ability to stop the War (and other crimes) will be hampered as it spends time defending itself from the press and answering to public opinion.

#### Incident Five: Floater

As described in the "History" section, two of Fred Uffizi's men were taken away by Torconcione gangsters and never seen alive again. Eventually, one of their corpses will come loose from the chains it was wrapped in and float to the top of the river, where it will be recovered. Like Incident Three, the PCs do not necessarily have to be involved with the discovery or analysis of the body. If they don't have any contacts in the police department or the FBI, they may not find out anything about the body other than what appears in the papers.

However, the GM could use this incident to give the PCs a tip on finding a Torconcione hideout. The body is that of Gerald "Brooklyn Jerry" Florentio, a Scatucci soldier. The Torconciones threw him into the river wrapped in chains and he died by drowning. The police labs found traces of cement dust underneath his fingernails. A successful Streetwise or KS: Mafia roll lets the PCs know that a Torconcione captain, "Iggy" Scafodi, used to own a cement plant in the industrial section of the city (it is currently abandoned).



The plant looks deserted from the outside. After a little reconnaissance and a PER Roll, the PCs may spot two cars hidden inside an abandoned shack. Inside the plant itself are a Torccone captain, Al "Nails" Amatuna, and enough soldiers to give the PCs a good fight. They are armed with handguns, rifles, and shotguns. Al and his boys are the ones who actually killed Florentio; they have been hiding out here ever since.

If the PCs don't learn about this hideout, then the GM should have the police ambush and arrest these men.

#### **Incident Six: Changing Gears**

The Scatuccis have now decided to shift back to economic crimes. This will set off a new wave of hijackings and robberies of Torccone businesses. The Scatuccis will concentrate on robbing businesses which the Torccones do not own *per se* but which pay them "protection money." This will not only further embarrass the Torccones, it will reduce their income. Torccone gambling setups will also be a favorite target.

The GM can have the PCs stop a few of these crimes. A good way to do this is to use a robbery as an "opening scene" for a game session (see Chapter One).

#### **Incident Seven: The Big Heist**

The Torccones are now in need of a lot of money to make payoffs and hire new help, so they will plan a major bank robbery. They plan to rob the First National Commerce Bank. First National Commerce is more of an investment bank than a consumer lending bank, so the target of the robbery is financial papers such as stock certificates, bearer bonds, and the like.

Whether or not this robbery succeeds is up to the PCs. At least one of the PCs should receive information that will lead him to suspect that a robbery is taking place (perhaps from a Torccone contact). As a last resort, the PC can simply spot the robbers heading in to the bank with guns drawn. The robbers will be led by Paul "Big Paul" Fratianno, a Torccone caporegima (the exact number of men with him depends on how many PCs are involved in the scenario; about one to two men per PC are needed). They are armed with submachine guns and sawed-off shotguns. For the bank, use the map on page 210 of the *Champions 4th Edition Rulesbook*.

If the PCs are able to stop the robbery and/or capture the Torccone men, then the Torccone family will pretty much have lost the War. Its leaders will try to hold out for a few more weeks, but will then have to flee for their lives unless they can form an alliance with another family. However, if the robbery succeeds, the Torccones will get a new lease on life. They can use the money to finance more profitable crimes (for example, they can buy heroin from a Chinese tong to sell on the street). They may even try to go after Don Carlo himself.

## **THE END OF THE WAR AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

It is up to each GM and his players to determine the exact outcome of the War. At this point, the Scatuccis have the upper hand, but a few well-placed bullets could change that—there are plenty of options for the GM if he wishes to complicate matters. The most obvious is the entry of third parties into the War. Another Mafia family may decide to try to take valuable territory away from either family (the Veronese family is the best candidate for this). A non-Mafia group might get involved: a Colombian drug cartel or the Mexican Mafia might see the War as an opportunity to enlarge the scope of their criminal dealings.

A related issue is what the Commission is doing about the War. If the Commission in your campaign includes Carlo Scatucci and Luigi Torccone, it may stay out of the matter entirely rather than pressure its own members and possibly cause a schism in the ranks. On the other hand, the other members may view this sort of war as more trouble than it's worth, and crack down on both families regardless of what the two capos think about it. If the Commission does not include the Scatucci and Torccone leaders, then it will certainly act to stop the War. It will send members of the Killing Syndicate to deal with the two dons if they don't toe the line. This could destroy relations between the two families and the Commission, possibly giving the PCs or the police a chance to make great inroads against the Mafia.

The actions of the police and other law enforcement agencies are another thing for the GM to consider. If you don't feel like worrying about it, the police can easily be ignored—some of them have been bribed to look the other way, and the rest need not arrive at the scene of an encounter until after the PCs have dealt with the problem. However, it will be more realistic to have law enforcement involved at least some of the time. Perhaps the police can deal with one or two of the "incidents" while the PCs are doing something else.

## **THE CHOY SING CIVIL WAR**

This scenario describes the other type of gang war—the "civil war" in which different gang factions attempt to take control of the entire gang. The organization used for this particular scenario is the Choy Sing tong, but any criminal gang would work just as well. This civil war, like many of them, is motivated by differences in views and opinions between the older and younger members of the gang. The older, more worldly gangsters tend to prefer a calm, cautious approach to the group's criminal dealings whenever possible, with the chain of command and personal respect being emphasized. Newer, younger gangsters tend to be more violent and quick to act, and are less bound to the organization's traditions and protocols than their elders.

Because many of the incidents described in the Scatucci-Torccone War will fit well in the "civil war" context, this scenario will describe only three "incidents." If more incidents are needed (and they probably will be), GMs should adapt other incidents to fit this particular conflict or should make up the extra incidents on their own.

## HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT

Han Fei, the street secretary of the Choy Sing tong, has been dissatisfied with the leadership of his Dragon Head, Charles Zhou, for some time now. Han Fei is a relatively young man who worked his way up in the ranks from the tong's street gang, and he feels that Zhou's slow and deliberate methods ("old-fashioned ways," as Han Fei calls them) are not suited to the modern criminal world, where violence and daring should rule. He spent the past several years trying to gain support for his views, and finally recruited enough followers that he felt he could demand some concessions from Zhou. His followers include the Emerald Door street gang which is run by the tong.

When he went to Charles Zhou with his proposals, he was angrily rebuffed and thrown out of the tong. This action split the tong in two, and now both sides are preparing to fight. Han Fei's goal is not to destroy the tong, but to re-organize it so that he and his faction has greater power and a greater say in tong activities. Charles Zhou and his allies are determined to destroy the rebels and re-assert their control of the tong.

### Incident One: Lead Poisoning

Han Fei needs to do two things at this point: get money to supply his forces, and make a definite statement to the tong leaders that he is deadly serious. The opportunity to do both has arisen. He has learned that Yip Tao, the tong's English secretary, will be meeting with a man from Hong Kong to discuss a large heroin deal. At the meeting, Yip Tao will pay the man a large sum of money to get the heroin pipeline set up. The meeting is to take place at the Singing Phoenix restaurant in Chinatown at 11:00 PM, when the restaurant will still be relatively crowded. Han Fei will send "Jackie Duck" Hsiao, leader of the Emerald Door gang, and three of his men to the restaurant to murder Yip Tao and the man from Hong Kong and take the money. The four thugs will be armed with shotguns, submachine guns, and handguns.

The GM has two options. First, he can let the killing go on as scheduled without interference from the PCs. If this happens, Han Fei's men will succeed, but the operation will be a massacre: the Emerald Doors will also kill six innocent customers and wound twelve more. Second, he can give the PCs a chance to interfere. This option works best if one or more of the PCs has some connection to Chinatown and would have ways to get wind of a top-secret heroin deal like this one. This gives them a good reason to be at the Singing Phoenix that evening.

If one or more PCs are in the restaurant when the gangsters walk in with guns at the ready, their best bet to avoid a great deal of bloodshed is to fire first and distract the Emerald Doors. This will keep them from firing at Yip Tao and the other customers, since they will try to take out the PCs first. Another tactic might be to use smoke grenades or tear gas, but this would also affect the customers, and might cause the Emerald Doors to begin firing at random.

### Incident Two: Night Of The Axes

Regardless of the outcome of the attack at the Singing Phoenix, Charles Zhou will be furious. This sort of assault on his men and his authority cannot go unanswered, and he has decided on a "traditional" response: he will send assassins armed with hatchets to kill all of the Emerald Doors who participated in the attack (if none of them are still alive, the targets will be the rest of the Emerald Doors). This will be a quiet, carefully-planned operation, to illustrate the value of caution and circumspection to Han Fei.

The assassins will be hired from a Triad in Hong Kong which is in league with the Choy Sing (the same Triad which sent the man from Hong Kong to meet with Yip Tao). They have the same basic skills as a ninja (use the Ninja Package Deal on pages 54-55 of *Ninja Hero*); they use Chinese Axes (1d6 HKA, Usable At Range) as weapons.

The GM should allow the PCs to witness some of the attacks and have a chance to stop them. If the PCs are unlikely to try to prevent one criminal from killing another, make the Emerald Door victim someone that the PCs would want to save (a contact, a source of needed information on Han Fei's plans, and so forth). By and large, though, the hatchet-men should be successful, killing at least a third of the gang's members. As Charles Zhou intended, this will cause no loss of innocent life and will attract much less attention from the press and the authorities than Han Fei's violent, haphazard attack did.

### Incident Three: Peace Summit

Huang Zhu, the arbitrator of Chinatown, will now take steps to peacefully resolve this conflict. He will send messages to Charles Zhou and Han Fei to meet him at an abandoned warehouse which he frequently uses for his negotiations. Because of the respect which his age and accomplishments demand, both men and their retinues will attend (Han Fei will be late, just to show that he's not completely caving in to the old man).

Both sides will also be backed up by heavily armed guards, and will be on the lookout for treachery. Han Fei in fact plans such treachery; Charles Zhou, who favors the use of negotiations to settle tong disputes, will not. Han Fei is going to have his men surround the building and then sneak in, in the hopes of killing Zhou and all of his chief followers. His men are armed with silenced pistols (for taking out Zhou's guards) and assault rifles.

However, Han Fei has forgotten to account for one factor: the player characters. If they get word of the conference, they will probably be trying to do the exact same thing that Han Fei's men are. Han Fei's carefully-planned assault is likely to turn into a three-way gunfight between the PCs, his men, and Zhou's men. Once gunfire is heard, the guards in the arbitration room will also begin to fight; Han Fei will try to attack Zhou personally.

Whether or not the PCs do get word of this conference is up to the GM. If this is to be the final episode in the civil war, then the PCs should certainly be there. Perhaps a tong contact passed information about the conference on to them, or maybe they dragged it out of somebody with Interrogation. If this peace meeting is not the end of the fighting, then the presence of the PCs is less important.



# THE BOGEYMAN

This scenario details the activities of a psychopath called the Bogeyman. A series of six murders provide the clues that can lead to his capture.

## THE BOGEYMAN

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
20	STR	10	<b>OCV: 7</b> <b>DCV: 7</b> <b>ECV: 4</b> <b>Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12</b>  <b>Costs</b>  <b>Char: 136    Base: 100</b> <b>          +            +</b> <b>Powers: 159    Disads: 195</b> <b>          =            =</b> <b>Totals: 295        295</b>
18	DEX	24	
25	CON	30	
20	BODY	20	
13	INT	3	
12	EGO	4	
15	PRE	5	
10	COM	0	
10	PD	6	
10	ED	5	
4	SPD	12	
14	REC	10	
50	END	0	
50	STUN	7	

Cost	Powers	END
7	1d6 HKA (2d6 with STR); OAF (Knife #1, -1), No KB (-1/4)	1
11	1½d6 HKA (2½d6 with STR); OAF (Knife #2, -1), No KB (-1/4)	2
13	2d6 HKA (3d6 with STR); OAF (Butcher's knife, -1), No KB (-1/4)	3
60	½ Damage Reduction, Physical and Energy, resistant	0

Skills and Talents		
3	Combat Sense 12-	
3	Lightsleep	
3	Breakfall 13-	
3	Climbing 13-	
3	Contortionist 13-	
1	Paramedic 8-	
9	Shadowing 14-	
9	Stealth 16-	
4	WF: Small Arms, Knives, Off Hand	
3	Weaponsmith 11- (Knives)	
5	KS: Medical Literature 14-	
2	CK: campaign city 11-	
5	AK: University Medical Library 14-	
2	PS: Librarian 11-	
1	SC: Human Biology and Anatomy 8-	
12	+4 with his three knives	

100+ Disadvantages		
25	Psychological Limitation: Psychopath	
20	Reputation: serial killer 14-	
30	Hunted: Police, 14- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)	
25	Hunted: FBI, 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)	
15	Secret Identity	
80	Villain Bonus	

**Background:** Matthew Brierly is the son of a domineering father and an apathetic mother. From the time he was five, he was abused by his father. His mother knew about it, but did nothing to stop it. As a result, Matt's life was filled with suffering, and he withdrew into himself. However, he still loved his father, and thought of him as the greatest thing in his life; on the other hand, subconsciously he developed an intense hatred for his mother, who never did anything to save him from the pain.

Matt discovered that he could make up for his own pain by hating and hurting others. He started setting small fires; he also began to catch, torture, and kill neighborhood pets and small animals. He became a strange, cruel child who was shunned by his peers and by adults as well. As he grew older, Matt continued to idolize his father and despise his mother. These dysfunctional feelings manifested themselves in several ways. He began to dream about becoming a famous surgeon, like his father; when he could, he snuck into his father's library to read the medical books and look at the pictures in them. He found himself unable to relate to women in any normal way.

His parents were killed in a car accident when he was seventeen. The loss of his father sent him into a deep depression, but he was secretly pleased that his mother was dead. And now he had his father's library all to himself! He began spending more and more time in there, understanding only a little of what he read but enjoying himself nonetheless. He began to see people as nothing more than the medical diagrams and illustrations in his father's books. When he was nineteen, Matt used some of his inheritance to enroll in the local university. He only lasted a year and half. He was expelled in his sophomore year for assaulting a female student. He tried to get into medical school, but no medical school would take him.

Finally, Matt found a job as a book shelver in the medical library at the university. Gradually, he worked his way up the ladder until he was able to work at the reference desk and do office work. He has kept the job ever since, because it gives him access to medical books and periodicals and to the hospital itself. The only drawback to it is that his boss, Yolanda Brooks, is a woman; he hates having to work so closely with women. Although he has a reputation for pestering the doctors and students with strange medical questions, and for being curt and rude to female students, his in-depth knowledge of the library and its contents has made him an invaluable asset, someone whose minor problems will be ignored.

**Personality/Motivation:** As his background and history make clear, Matt Brierly is a psychopath, a vicious, evil man with no regard for human life. His psychopathy drives him to kill for two reasons. First, he suffers from the delusion that humanity is meant to be his personal research tool. He sees people not as human beings, but as guinea pigs, tools for his learning and twisted "medical experiments." Second, his hatred of women, derived from his hatred of his mother, manifests itself in his desire to hurt them; he can relate to women only through violence.

**Quote:** "Ever seen a human heart?"



**Powers/Tactics:** Most of Brierly's abilities are skills he has taught himself. His one "Power," Damage Reduction, is included to give the character a "cinematic" feel of being able to recover from horrible wounds and keep attacking.

The Bogeyman uses knives as his weapons because they are terrifying to his victims, and because he can use them for "dissections." He usually carries three types of knives: one with a long, slender blade; one with a shorter, thicker, more rounded blade; and one which resembles a butcher's knife (for hacking through bones). He fights with a knife in each hand (to get a +1 DCV from his WF: Off Hand skill). He will only attack from surprise, and will flee rather than be drawn into a fight with an armed opponent. If he feels that things are hopeless and that his murderous activities have been uncovered for good, he will try to get to Yolanda Brooks and kill her in the most bloody, horrible way he can think of.

**Appearance:** Matt Brierly is now about 30 years old. He usually dresses in button-down shirts and jeans. He appears somewhat dishevelled and unkempt most of the time.

**Record:** Matt Brierly has no criminal record.

## ABOUT THE MURDERS

This scenario consists of descriptions of six of Brierly's murders and the clues that can be gained from them. One characteristic Brierly looks for is hair: his mother had long strawberry-blond hair, so he subconsciously prefers victims who are blondes or redheads with long hair. For similar reasons, Brierly also prefers thin women. Besides the basic crime statistics, personal information about each victim is provided to give the PCs leads to check out as they investigate the killings. The victims each came to the University Medical Center for some reason in the recent past; Brierly picked them from women he saw at the hospital or whose files he managed to sneak a look at. The GM is encouraged to make up more details about each victim.

Each of The Bogeyman's murders involves a "medical experiment" which Brierly is conducting. He gets his ideas for experiments from articles in medical journals which have been published in the past year or so. If the PCs think to investigate recent medical literature, they may gain important insight into one of the reasons why Brierly kills and be closer to catching him.

Brierly now lives in a fifth-floor apartment in the city. His building has a large courtyard with a garden where he likes to take strolls; if his home is located, he may try to hide from his pursuers in the garden. His apartment is stuffed full of medical books and journals. He also has some bladesmithing equipment and a large freezer. The freezer is used to preserve the body parts he takes from his victims, so that the stench of decaying flesh will not alert his neighbors. When he is done cutting his "prizes" up, he stuffs the remains in several garbage bags and sends them down the trash chute to the building's dumpster. He does not bring home any body parts which are too large to be hidden underneath his overcoat or in a briefcase. When he goes out to "stalk," Brierly wears the same red flannel shirt every time (he washes it after he gets home). He never wears this shirt anywhere else, it is his "killing clothes."

The police, FBI, and an FBI forensic science team will investigate all of The Bogeyman's crimes after the first, which will only be investigated by the police.

## RUNNING THE BOGEYMAN

The Bogeyman's killings are meant to be introduced one at a time over the course of a campaign until the characters accumulate enough evidence to find him. However, if the GM wishes, The Bogeyman can be the sole focus of an evening's adventure. Rather than announcing the killings at a slow pace, the GM can cover them in a quick sequence by simply skipping over the intervening time when the characters are not investigating the killings.

Besides using forensic evidence to track The Bogeyman down, the PCs might try patrolling the city to watch for him, or might even try to decoy him. Unless the PCs are acting with a little knowledge of what The Bogeyman is doing, they will not have much chance of finding him this way. For example, if the characters figure out enough to make sure that their decoy has long blonde hair, or if they begin watching people who leave the University Medical Center, their chances will improve a little. Otherwise, their only way to succeed with these methods is to roll at least two or three levels of Luck.

Eventually, the characters will figure out the "medical" connection to The Bogeyman's killings. At that point, they are very close to catching him. They will probably come after him in one of three places: his home, his job, or just before he attacks another victim. Once confronted, Brierly will know that he cannot hope to escape completely, but he will try to kill at least one more person before he is taken: Yolanda Brooks, his hated boss. If he is approached at work, he will immediately head for Brooks' office and kill her with a pair of scissors, a letter opener, or some other convenient weapon. If approached at home, he will try to escape (he will leap out his window if necessary) and get to Brooks (either at her home, which he has "cased" before, or at work). If the heroes come after him while he is stalking a victim, he may try to use the victim as a hostage, but will eventually break and run, trying to get to Brooks before he is caught.

### FIRST MURDER

**Name:** Kimberly Ann Bickford Hair: Blonde; long Eyes: Blue Height: 5'7" Weight: 126 lbs. Race: White Age: 27 Job: Secretary, Allied Mutual Insurance Company

**Wounds:** Bruises and signs of beating on the face and head; deep stab wound in right side; two-inch deep cut across stomach; throat slit (cause of death). Time of death approximately 11:00 PM last night.

**Scene Of The Crime:** The body was found twenty feet inside an alley next to a sewer grating. The victim was shoved into the alleyway and thrown to the ground. There were only a few blood splatters, but there was a large pool of blood indicating that the victim bled to death from a slit throat; she was blood type O+. There was also a square-shaped bloody smear (type O+) on the side of the alley away from where the victim was found which the police have not been able to explain.



**Police Reconstruction; Evidence Recovered:** The police believe that Miss Bickford was walking home from a date with Greg Hassel, her current boyfriend, when she was attacked from behind (she was walking by herself because they had a fight that evening). The attacker stabbed her in the right side with a knife with a wide, slightly rounded blade (i.e., Knife #2, though the police of course don't call it that), then shoved her into the alleyway and threw her to the ground. Then he hit her several times in the head, perhaps to keep her quiet. The attacker then slit her throat and, as she bled to death, made the cut across her abdomen for unknown reasons.

Saliva and hair samples from the attacker were obtained. The attacker is not a secretor, so his blood type cannot be ascertained from his saliva, although it will prove useful for DNA typing if and when he is captured. The only fingerprints that were found were too smeared to be identifiable.

**Additional Victim Data:** Her hobbies were needlepoint and watching old movies; she had four boyfriends in the two years before meeting Greg Hassel; her father died three weeks ago (of old age); she always ate at the same café for lunch each day; her sign of the zodiac was Pisces; she liked to wear gaudy jewelry.

**Notes:** The police reconstruction of the crime is accurate. The squarish blood smear is from where he threw his knife to the side after he stabbed her—it skidded along the ground and smeared her blood along the pavement. The cut across the stomach was made to allow Brierly to look at her intestines. He picked her as a victim when she visited her ailing father in the hospital.

Brierly did in fact leave a couple of usable fingerprints. All but one were left on the pavement, and were completely obliterated by the spreading pool of blood. However, when Brierly stood up, he touched the underside of a sewer grating that he used to pull himself to his feet. He left one print there which the police did not find. A PER Roll at -6 or a Criminology roll at -4 will allow a character to find this print, and a Criminology roll at +2 is required to properly preserve it. However, the blood is dried and tainted, so a Criminology roll at -5 will be required to analyze it and determine that it is O+ blood—the victim's type, and the most common blood type. Brierly will wear gloves at all of the killings from now on, and will leave no prints unless noted otherwise.

Information which can be gained from this crime:

- 1) The killer is white (serial killers tend to stick to their own racial group).
- 2) The killer is probably right-handed (the victim was stabbed from behind in the right side).

## SECOND MURDER

**Name:** Monica Beverly Garrison Hair: Blonde; short Eyes: Green Height: 5'9" Weight: 130 lbs. Race: White Age: 32 Job: Advertising accounts manager; The Boyles Agency

**Wounds:** Multiple stab wounds in the breasts, chest, and stomach (cause of death), left arm hacked off halfway up the humerus (upper arm bone); she was blood type O+. Carved on the rear of the lower right thigh is the word "Bogeyman." Time of death approximately 10:45 PM last night.

**Scene Of The Crime:** The body was found inside a thicket in Bankhurst Park; a passerby saw a piece of red clothing and found the body when he investigated. A sock (not one of the victim's) was stuffed in her mouth. Prints from sneakers and gloves are visible in the moist earth. About thirty feet away there are signs of a scuffle, indicating where she was probably tackled.

**Police Reconstruction; Evidence Recovered:** The victim was assaulted last night while she was jogging. According to her fiance, Ted Parker, the two of them normally went jogging in the Park every evening at about 10:00 PM, but he was sick that night so she went by herself. The murderer tackled her as she was jogging, stunned her, and then dragged her into the thicket. After stuffing a sock into her mouth to silence her, he stabbed her repeatedly (using the knife he used on the last victim, plus a second one which is longer and narrower). Then he used a butcher's knife or an axe to chop off one of her arms; after that, he used the long, narrow-bladed knife to carve the word "Bogeyman" into her right rear thigh, apparently to give himself a name; the letters were carved neatly, without any tearing or jagged edges. The arm has not been located; either the killer kept it or a dog took it.

The sock had no fingerprints on it. It is a standard style of sock, available in hundreds of stores. The only evidence here besides the stab wound data are the shoe and glove prints left at the scene. The gloves are unremarkable. The shoes are Nikes, and there is a distinctive slash on the bottom of the left shoe which will aid identification if the shoes are found.

**Additional Victim Data:** Miss Garrison was a Democrat and feminist who was heavily involved in environmentalist causes; her hobbies included hiking, scuba diving, and billiards; she played the violin and liked classical music; she collected wine; she recently ran in a marathon and did well; her advertising clients were mainly restaurants and nightclubs; she was a Cancer.

**Notes:** The crime occurred just like the police think it did. Brierly picked this victim because she was in the hospital some months ago for minor plastic surgery. He stunned her with a couple of punches to the stomach, which left no bruises; the lack of bruises may lead overly suspicious players to think that the killer has some martial arts skills. He used his butcher's knife (Knife #3 on his character write-up) to sever Garrison's arm; he will keep the arm for about a week and a half for dissection purposes. He carved his name into her leg to heighten fear of himself in the city and to give the media a catchy name to use for him.

Information which can be gained from this crime:

- 1) The Bogeyman is going to continue to kill, and thinks that he is unstoppable—he was brazen enough to give himself a name. He may try other "publicity stunts" (such as sending letters to newspapers) in the future. The letters were so well-carved that he is probably used to handling a knife.
- 2) He is strong enough and/or stealthy enough to tackle a young, physically fit woman and drag her into a thicket without causing a disturbance.

**THIRD MURDER**

**Name:** Karen Wilson McGregor Hair: Redhead; long Eyes: Green Height: 5'6" Weight: 125 lbs. Race: White Age: 29  
Job: Accountant; self-employed

**Wounds:** Bruise on left side of face, both arms broken, long bone-deep cut in both thighs made while victim still alive, 56 stab wound all over the body (one wound in the heart region from the back was the cause of death); her blood type was AB+. Time of death approximately 9:45 PM last night.

**Scene Of The Crime:** The victim was killed in her first-floor apartment. All windows were locked, but the door was open. A few endtables and lamps were knocked over, indicating that there was a struggle of some sort. Blood splatters and smears were found in the kitchen, den, hallway, and bedroom and bed.

**Police Reconstruction; Evidence Recovered:** The victim came home and accidentally left her door open. The Bogeyman must have been in the neighborhood looking for a victim and came inside to try doors. He found that this one was open and went inside. He surprised Miss McGregor in her den area. She screamed; a neighbor reported hearing a scream at about 9:20 PM, but thought that it was just someone's television. After a brief chase or struggle, The Bogeyman trapped her in the kitchen and began to stab her. Defensive wounds on the victim's arms and hands indicate that she tried to fend off the blows, with no success. Bloody sneaker prints matching the ones found in Bankhurst Park were found in the apartment.

After the first stabbings, the killer dragged Miss McGregor to the bedroom, leaving bloody smears on the carpet from the kitchen to the bedroom. In the bedroom, she tried to fight back (she knew karate), and so in a fit of rage he broke both of her arms. Then he used his longer, narrower knife to cut both of her thighs from the hip joint to one inch above the knee. The cuts run to the bone; she was still alive when he made them. After making these cuts, he stabbed her some more, finally killing her.

The killer's knife left some tiny chips of metal in the victim's thighbones. The knife is made of stainless steel. Additionally, during the fight, she managed to claw at him with her fingernails, where traces of his skin and blood were found. He is blood type AB+, a relatively rare blood type.

An alternate police theory is that The Bogeyman is someone who knew McGregor. This would allow him to gain access to her apartment without her becoming suspicious—hence, the unlocked door. McGregor had a large circle of friends, and it will take the police four days to investigate them all. At the GM's option, one or two of them may be promising leads for a little while, but within a couple of weeks their innocence will have become plain.

**Additional Victim Data:** Miss McGregor was a friendly, outgoing woman who dated many men, her last two boyfriends were a doctor and a veterinarian; she had taken karate for many years, and often competed in tournaments; and she delivered meals to shut-ins for a Meals On Wheels program; most of her business involved auditing and payroll work for small businesses; she owned a sophisticated personal computer system; she was a Leo.

**Notes:** The police reconstruction of this crime is only accurate from the point where the victim sees The Bogeyman in her apartment and screams. Brierly was in the neighborhood looking for a victim. Miss McGregor fit the bill perfectly, but made it to her apartment building before he could attack her. He walked away, but then spotted the light come on in her first-floor apartment. He crept up and watched until her back was turned. The window was unlocked, so he climbed in; when he shut the window, she looked up and screamed. Events after that point follow the police version of events, except that he broke her arms in the kitchen when she tried to fend off his blows. When he left, he locked the window.

Characters who investigate the crime scene on their own may think to check the windows more carefully than the FBI and police did. If a character makes a Criminology roll at -2 he will find scratches in the windowsill where Brierly used his knives to quietly raise the sash. Outside, they will be able to see which handholds he might have used to hold himself up to see in her window. Additionally, if a PER Roll is made, a small scrap of red flannel cloth which tore off of Brierly's shirtsleeve will be found.

Information that can be gained from this murder:

- 1) The Bogeyman is very strong: he broke both of his victim's arms and then dragged her across the apartment (and according to the police theory, she would still have been struggling against him). Furthermore, The Bogeyman can either take a lot of punishment, or is a very good fighter, since he broke both of the victim's arms even though she knew karate.
- 2) Based on the handholds outside, The Bogeyman is between 5'10" and 6'3" tall.

By now, The Bogeyman has the city absolutely paralyzed with fear. Many women refuse to go anywhere at night, escorted or otherwise, and many businesses are closing early because of the drop-off in business at night.

**FOURTH MURDER**

**Name:** Melissa Louisa Warnowski Hair: Blonde; long Eyes: Hazel Height: 6'0" Weight: 165 lbs. Race: White Age: 23  
Job: Student at local university

**Wounds:** 36 stab wounds to the face, throat, breasts, chest, stomach, and thighs (one wound in the throat was the cause of death), defensive wounds on the hands and arms, right leg hacked off immediately below the knee; her blood type was A+. Time of death was approximately 1:00 AM last night.

**Scene Of The Crime:** The body was found in a wooded area off of a bike trail at the University. Her clothing was not disturbed. One of her own socks was stuffed in her mouth. Her bike, a ten-speed, was found nearby, as was a backpack of books and notes which enabled the police to identify her.



**Police Reconstruction; Evidence Recovered:** The police believe that the victim was returning home after a night of studying. Her roommate and boyfriend both state that she was working on "a big biology paper," but do not know where she went to study that evening. As she was biking home, The Bogeyman stopped her, and threatened her with one of his knives to get her to come with him quietly. He took her to a location just a few feet from the bike trail and began to stab her, despite her efforts to fend off the blows. After he stabbed her enough that she stopped struggling, he used his butcher's knife to hack off her leg.

Miss Warnowski's bike was located about fifteen feet away from the victim; no fingerprints were found on it. Her backpack was lying next to it, and had no fingerprints; when The Bogeyman threw it to the side the papers and books fell out and scattered around the area. The subject of the paper was genetics.

Footprints at the scene of the crime match The Bogeyman's shoeprint and confirm the estimates of his height. His weight is estimated at between 180 and 200 pounds. Additionally, the police have recovered what they believe to be some of his head hairs; he is blonde, with short hair.

**Additional Victim Data:** Miss Warnowski was a senior honors student in biology and planned to go to medical school; her parents are divorced and she lived with her mother in a nearby town; she was on the woman's tennis team; she was a member of a sorority; she was a Capricorn; she was an excellent cook; she was a somewhat prudish and repressed individual.

**Notes:** Miss Warnowski had some advanced research to do for her paper, and came to the University Medical Library just as Brierly was getting off work. He was captivated by her and hung around surreptitiously, watching her. When she left, he followed her. He saw that she was going to be riding a bike, so he ran ahead to a point on the bike trail where the woods were thickest. Once there, he laid down in the path as if he were injured. When she rode up, she saw his prostrate figure and stopped to help him. When she bent over him, he grabbed her throat to keep her from screaming and pulled a knife on her. He had her pick up the bike and walk with him into the woods; after that, the crime proceeded as the police think. However, her books and papers were deliberately scattered by Brierly as he looked through her notes to remove those which she had made that evening. He took these notes because they might lead the police to the Medical Library and then to him.

If the PCs have a chance to conduct their own examination of the body, they may find a fingerprint that the police missed. Because this murder was "impromptu," Brierly did not have his gloves with him and had to use a pair of rubber surgical gloves which he filched from the Medical Center (a Criminology roll at -3 will tell a PC that the gloves used for this killing were different from the gloves used at all the others). During Miss Warnowski's struggles, one of the gloves was ripped. Despite his efforts to be as careful as possible, Brierly did leave one fingerprint: on the bottom of the victim's left big toe as he removed her sock. The police missed it because it blended with her "toeprint." If a PC can make a Criminology roll at -4, he will find the fingerprint. Brierly's fingerprints are not on record in any database, so the print will only be useful to identify him after he is captured.

At this point, a tabloid newspaper, the National Mirror, will advance the theory that "He's building a Frankenstein's Monster!". It will quote an "expert," Dr. Jason Chalker, whose theory is that The Bogeyman will keep killing until he gets all of the parts he needs to build himself an entire person. Victims from whom no parts were taken were found to be "unfit," according to Chalker's theory. If the PCs talk to Chalker, who lives in the city, they will find that he is a doctor whose license was revoked two years ago. He is also a lunatic, but he has carefully studied all of the published data on the killings. He has no useful information.

However, the GM might try to play up the idea that Chalker is The Bogeyman—how could anyone know so much about The Bogeyman's motivations? The Bogeyman has tried to get publicity before, maybe he's doing it again as his real self. Many serial killers collect reports of their activities; Chalker's elaborate serapbooks filled with articles on The Bogeyman might make the PCs suspicious. To top it all off, Chalker often walks around at night for hours. He does this in the hopes of finding The Bogeyman in the act, so that he can "interview" the killer—but the PCs don't know that.

## FIFTH MURDER

**Name:** Belinda Ann Fitzgerald Hair: Brown; long Eyes: Hazel Height: 5'8" Weight: 195 lbs. Race: White Age: 30 Job: Waitress, Silver City Bar & Grill (a country & western club)

**Wounds:** Four stab wounds to throat (cause of death), both arms mutilated, several bruises on the face; her blood type was B-. Time of death approximately 2:30 AM last night.

**Scene Of The Crime:** The victim was found in the back room of her place of work, lying on her back in a pool of blood.

**Police Reconstruction; Evidence Recovered:** According to her boss, Gerald Barnes, the victim had stayed late to clean up the bar a little and lock up. The back door was accidentally left unlocked, and that is how The Bogeyman entered. He ambushed her, hit her several times, and then stabbed her several times in the throat. As she struggled for air, The Bogeyman used one of his knives to make numerous deep cuts on both of her arms, mutilating them. The cuts on her arms are random, seemingly without pattern. A blond hair sample was recovered.

**Additional Victim Data:** Mrs. Fitzgerald was a married mother of two; she worked at Silver City all of her adult life; she was a skilled seamstress; she suffered from varicose veins because of her job; she was a Libra and believed in astrology; she loved to play bingo.

**Notes:** This was not one of Brierly's killings. This victim was killed by a "copycat," a deranged individual named Ned Givens. Givens patronized the bar several times, and picked Fitzgerald as his victim. He waited until everyone else had left, then stood by the door until she came out. He forced her back in at knife-point, then stabbed her and cut her arms, in imitation of The Bogeyman. The knife he used was similar to the longer, narrower blade The Bogeyman uses.

It will take several days for the analysis of the knife wounds to reveal that this is not the same killer (the hair samples of course cannot be individually typed, though they are blond like the Bogeyman's; DNA analysis of the hair will take as long as analysis of the knife wounds). In the meantime, the police (and maybe the PCs) will be proceeding on the theory that this is The Bogeyman's work. If a PC can figure out on his own that this is a copycat killing, he should get 1 Experience Point for a non-combat deduction. Possible clues include:

- 1) The victim is a brunette, unlike most previous victims.
- 2) There are fewer stab wounds than on other victims, and they are confined to one area of the body.
- 3) The cuts on the arms are, on examination, more crudely done than is usual for The Bogeyman; they are also too irregular. Furthermore, he already chopped an arm off of one victim—he has never mutilated the same body part twice in this fashion.
- 4) This victim is slightly overweight, and all of the previous victims were slender.

Once the PCs or the police figure out that this is not The Bogeyman, catching Ned Givens will be relatively easy. In his past visits to Silver City, he made a notable nuisance of himself and frequently made crude comments to or about Mrs. Fitzgerald. He will claim to be The Bogeyman, but forensic evidence will quickly prove him wrong.

#### SIXTH MURDER

**Name:** Lisa June Meyers Hair: Redhead; short Eyes: Grey Height: 5'7" Weight: 130 lbs. Race: White Age: 28 Job: High school teacher, Central High School

**Wounds:** Ten stab wounds in the stomach, chest, and breasts (one of the stomach wounds was the cause of death), contusion to the back of the head, both hands chopped off; her blood type was O+. Time of death approximately 1:15 AM last night.

**Scene Of The Crime:** The victim was found in her bed in her small house. She was killed while asleep. There were no blood spatters beyond the bed. A baby two doors down the hall was not disturbed, but a small drop of blood was left on her forehead.

**Police Reconstruction; Evidence Recovered:** The Bogeyman entered Mrs. Meyers' house through an open window in the kitchen. He quietly proceeded to her bedroom, where he killed her by slowing and deliberately stabbing and cutting her (hence the lack of blood splatters); she probably woke up only briefly, if at all. When she was dead, he cut off her hands with his butcher knife. For some reason, he did not kill the child, but left a drop of blood on her to taunt the police. No new evidence was recovered; none of the neighbors saw anything.

**Additional Victim Data:** Mrs. Meyers is a single mother, her daughter is three months old and her husband was killed in a car accident five weeks ago; she was a Scorpio; she taught high school history and art and hired a babysitter to care for her daughter; she had three pet cats, all declawed; she was a Republican; her parents are wealthy.

**Notes:** This killing occurred pretty much just as the police believe. Brierly picked Mrs. Meyers as a victim when she had her baby at the Medical Center three months ago. The once piece of information that the PCs might gather here is that The Bogeyman, whoever he is, is very stealthy—he was able to sneak into a residential neighborhood and into a house without disturbing a young mother, a baby, or three cats.

#### CONCLUDING NOTES

If the PCs have still not found the connection to the Medical Center, the GM should come up with more murders until they catch the killer. Brierly will continue in the same pattern until he is caught. He will begin to shift to a pattern of attacking victims in their homes, where he can take his time with his "work." His assaults will become more vicious, and his dissections more elaborate. He will begin to bring his "notes" and journals with him and do the dissection right there at the scene of the crime. If the PCs are totally baffled, have him forgetfully leave a medical journal behind. If this still isn't enough of a clue, have him attack a University Medical Center employee. Other employees can tell the PCs that Brierly was seen staring at the victim for several days before her murder.



# BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FILMOGRAPHY

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

These books and films proved very useful as research material and/or inspiration for *Dark Champions*. Readers who want more information on any of the subjects discussed in this book should refer to these sources. Your local library should also have books on many of these subjects.

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 —. *Death Wish*.  
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 —. *The Silence Of The Lambs*.

### Comic Books

The following is a short (and not necessarily complete) list of street-level comic books. This list represents some of the author's favorites in the field.

- Batman* and related titles; DC Comics  
*Captain America, Daredevil*; Marvel Comics  
*Deathstroke The Terminator*; DC Comics  
*Ghost Rider*; Marvel Comics  
*Green Arrow*; DC Comics  
*Moon Knight, Nomad*; Marvel Comics  
*The Punisher* and related titles; Marvel Comics  
*The Question*; DC Comics  
*Silver Sable*; Marvel Comics  
*Vigilante, The Watchmen*; DC Comics

## FILMS

A complete listing of all "action" films would be impossible. Instead, this is a list of some of the author's favorites, the movies which most influenced this book. Virtually all of them depict "pure" street-level campaigns. Some of them verge into science fiction or espionage, but all of them have strong "action" elements as well. No "martial arts" films are included, since there is a comprehensive list of martial arts movies in *Ninja Hero*, pp. 115-16. All of the movies listed here can be found at video rental stores.

- Batman*, starring Michael Keaton and Jack Nicholson.  
*Batman Returns*, starring Michael Keaton, Danny DeVito, and Michelle Pfeiffer  
*Black Rain*, starring Michael Douglas.  
*Commando*, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger.  
*Death Wish I, II, III, and IV*, starring Charles Bronson.  
*Die Hard I and II*, starring Bruce Willis.  
 The "Dirty Harry" movies, starring Clint Eastwood: *Dirty Harry, The Enforcer, Magnum Force, Sudden Impact, and The Dead Pool*.  
*Lethal Weapon I, II, and III*, starring Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.  
*License To Kill*, starring Timothy Dalton.  
*Predator I and II*, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger (I) and Danny Glover (II).  
*Robocop I and II*, starring Peter Weller.  
*The Silence Of The Lambs*, starring Jodie Foster and Anthony Hopkins.  
*Tango And Cash*, starring Kurt Russell and Sylvester Stallone.  
*Terminator I and II*, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Linda Hamilton.  
*The Yakuza*, starring Robert Mitchum and Takakura Ken.

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## #6050 – **Shadow World™** **Master Atlas, 2nd Ed.** \$24.00

**Shadow World**, a whole new realm of adventure! The planet **Kulthea™** forms the **Shadow World**, a unique fantasy gaming environment supported by comprehensive stats for **Rolemaster**. The **Shadow World** is a vast planet of scattered isles and lost realms, each land isolated by forces both tangible and supernatural. Not only is it a rich fantasy world unto itself, but it allows the GM to insert it into his **Rolemaster** campaign whole or in part. It is also usable with most major fantasy role playing systems.

## #9050 – **Space Master: RPG™ Book** \$26.00 #9010 – **Star Strike™** \$30.00

Adventure in deep space on alien worlds with ICE's Science Fiction Role Playing Game system! Completely compatible with **Rolemaster**, **Space Master** covers professions, races, cultures, settings, and much more. The range of technologies stretches from tomorrow to the far future. Now the cornerstone of this exciting system is a pair of boxed games; **The Role Playing Game** and **Star Strike**. Each stands alone for hours of enjoyment; while together they form a massive sci-fi environment.

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Set in the gritty near future where Megacorporation repression collides with Sprawl street warfare, **Cyberspace** is fully compatible with **Space Master & Rolemaster**. Musclegrafted Punks and Netheads crawl out of the gutters to scrap Media Stars and Cybernetic Mercenaries, a conflict beyond the stature of Good and Evil. From depraved polluted cities to the surreal beauty of Earth's global computer matrix, this is the world of **Cyberspace!**

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The Bladelands are a wild, chaotic area shrouded within a mantle of ferocious magical gales called Bladestorms. Here, a little battle can decide the fate of a budding tribe or nation.

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The Role Playing system perfect for novices as well as experienced gamers! Based on *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings™*, **Middle-earth Role Playing™ (MERP™)** provides the structure and framework for Role Playing in the greatest fantasy setting of all time... J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth! **MERP** is supported by a wide variety of Game aids, modules, Adventure supplements, and Ready-to-Run adventures.

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## #450 – **Champions®** **the Super Role Playing Game** \$26.00

Don't just read comic books, live them! With the easy-to-use character design system, your only limit is your imagination. **Champions** is based on the **Hero System**, the rules system of all Hero products. Because of this common thread, all **Hero Games** are compatible. Learn one **Hero Game** and you can easily play them all. **Champions** has just undergone an extensive revision, but all previous **Champions** material is still compatible.

## #500 – **HERO System Rulesbook™** **(Included inside Champions)** \$20.00

The award-winning **HERO system** lets you role play any time, any place, any technology, and any power level. The unique character design rules allow creation of any character, whether he comes from a movie, a book, or your own imagination. Play fantasy fighters, modern spies, power-armor troopers, or even superheroes—it's all here! This jam-packed 224 page tome includes a complete superhero team provided for instant fun. The revised **HERO system** is cleaner, better integrated, and more streamlined than ever before.

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This 256 page campaign book shows you how to run a fantasy campaign using the **HERO system**. Inside are extensive guidelines for designing fantasy characters, setting up a magic system, simulating fantasy combat, and setting up a fantasy campaign. Dozens of fantasy weapons, hundreds of spells, quick character design templates, and new ready-to-run scenario ideas are also included.

## **Adventurers Club™ Magazine** \$4.00

The magazine for Hero Gamers! The articles and columns are dedicated to expanding and improving the already fine line of **Hero Games**. The **AC** answers your questions and keeps you informed on upcoming releases. And there's a complete ready-to-play adventure in every issue!

These fine products are sold at better retail outlets worldwide. Available at better game stores — or order from ICE, Inc. P.O. Box 1605 Charlottesville Va 22902, USA. Prices are subject to alteration without prior notice. VISA & MASTERCARD orders (and catalog requests) call (800) 325-0479. Va residents, Canadians and overseas customers call (804) 295-3917. Please make phone orders during business hours: 9am-5pm, E.S.T., M-F. Call or Write for a free catalog!



# HEROES ASSEMBLE!

We want to hear from you. Please take a minute to photocopy this page (or tear it out), answer the questions and mail it to us. We're interested in providing the best role-playing supplements to you, so we need your feedback. When you speak, we listen.

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# Superhero Shopping List

Look for these heroic products at your favorite game, book, comic, or hobby shop..

## The Hero System

The *HERO System* is the original and best universal role playing system. Extensively revised and improved, the HERO System is intended to be intuitive — that is, all the rules follow from a few simple guidelines. It is generic in that it can be used to play in any role playing setting.

**HERO System Rulesbook™** **\$20.00**

(Included in *Champions* hardcover) The award-winning HERO System lets you role play any time, any place, any technology, and any power level.

**HERO Bestiary™** **\$18.00**

Every creature, every genre—the HERO System strikes again—a host of animals, monsters, dinosaurs, and other beasts.

**Adventurers Club™ (AC)**

The magazine for Hero Gamers! The articles and columns are dedicated to expanding and improving the already fine line of Hero Games. \$4.00 per issue. Subscriptions are available for (U.S.) \$12.00 for four issues to the U.S. or Canada; \$20.00 for overseas subscriptions.

## Campaign Books

Campaign books are designed to complement the *HERO System*. Each book deals with a specific genre and provides enough information for complete roleplaying in that genre. The most successful example of a Campaign Book is *Champions* which has spawned its own sub-series of support materials.

**Champions®** **\$26.00**

(contains the HERO System rulesbook) Play your favorite comic book hero, or create your own! The character generation system lets you design your heroes the way you want them. The combat system is easy to learn and play. Also covered are skills, powers, disadvantages, weapons, and guidelines on campaigning.

**Fantasy Hero™** **\$20.00**

This full-fledged 256 page campaign book shows you how to run a fantasy campaign using the HERO System.

**Fantasy Hero Companion™** **\$15.00**

**Fantasy Hero Companion II™** **\$16.00**

These products have everything you would want to make your *Fantasy Hero* campaigns even better.

**Western Hero™** **\$20.00**

*Western Hero* is the definitive campaign book for adventures in the Wild West using the universal HERO System.

These fine products are sold at better retail outlets worldwide. Available at better game stores — or order from ICE, Inc. P.O. Box 1605 Charlottesville Va 22902, USA. **Prices are subject to alteration without prior notice.** VISA & MASTERCARD orders (and catalog requests) call (800) 325-0479. Va residents, Canadians and overseas customers call (804) 295-3917. Please make phone orders during business hours: 9am-5pm, Eastern Standard Time, Mon-Fri. **Call or Write for a free catalog!**

## Supplements for Champions

**Champions GM Screen & Accessories™** **\$12.00**

Designed to make a GM's life easier and to speed up play, it includes a screen with all important tables, maps, 60 full color stand-up playing pieces, additional character sheets, and more.

**Mind Games™** **\$8.00**

Mentalists in Champions! This supplement highlights the rules for mental combat and the villainous organization, P.S.I..

**Classic Enemies™** **\$13.00**

Over 80 of the best villains from *Enemies I, II, and III!*

**Challenges for Champions™** **\$9.00**

Ten short scenarios, 17 new villains, scenario ideas, and suggestions for designing your own scenarios.

**Mystic Masters™** **\$13.00**

Allows players to simulate the sorcery of magical comic books—a must for fans of super-magic.

**The Zodiac Conspiracy™** **\$11.00**

An organization of villains for adventures or as recurring foes.

**Invasions: Target Earth™** **\$8.00**

Learn how to run invasions, meet the different types of invading forces. Also included is an entire, ready-to-run invasion.

**Day of the Destroyer™** **\$7.00**

"I have become Death, the shatterer of worlds..."—Dr. Destroyer, the greatest and most evil mind ever, upon his return.

**Invaders from Below™** **\$10.00**

Provides a complete description of the kingdom of Subterra and its inhabitants.

**Kingdom of Champions™** **\$18.00**

A campaign sourcebookset in Her Majesty's United Kingdom.

**Champions in 3-D™** **\$16.00**

This huge 144 page sourcebook has extensive guidelines for running extra-dimensional *Champions* adventures.

**Demons Rule™** **\$7.00**

A new gang of punks — The Demons — have hit town. *Demons Rule* is a 32 page adventure for *Champions*.

**Alien Enemies™** **\$12.00**

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The 2nd arrival of *The Olympians*, a 48-p organization book.

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Face Road Kill, a heavy metal rock band whose members are not only Super Stars but are also Super Villains!

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This 192 page book takes your favorite organizations including PRIMUS and DEMON, Red Doom, CLOWN, and Neutral Ground and not only reorganizes them, but updates them as well.

**European Enemies™** **\$13.00**

Included within these 96 pages are over thirty-five all new never-before-seen villains, all from various parts of Europe.

**Champions Presents #1™** **\$14.00**

This is an anthology of three hard-hitting, foe-smashing adventures. Each adventure can be played separately, or the three can be intertwined to form a comic book-style campaign.

**Champions of the North™** **\$14.00**

A campaign sourcebook for *Champions* set in the great white north, our neighbor to the north, Canada.

**Normals Unbound™** **\$13.00**

This *Champions* sourcebook for the "normal" NPCs that make up the majority of John Q. Public in any campaign.

**High Tech Enemies™** **\$13.00**

This is the definitive sourcebook for high-tech villainy: powered armor, robots, gadgets, androids, huge machines, cyborgs—the list goes on and on.



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**PLAYERS:** This is an incredible sourcebook for any streetwise superhero. It's the ideal way to give more oomph to your detective, martial artist or vigilante. Surprise your friends and amaze the villains!

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- New suggestions and variations on Powers, Limitations, & Advantages
- New gun design rules
- New combat modifiers and maneuvers

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- New campaign styles and backgrounds, at several power levels
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