



An Adventure for
Champions® and *Dark Champions*™

AG3500

DYSTOPIA



CHAMPIONS
THE SUPER-HERO
ROLE-PLAYING GAME

by Chris Avellone

DYSTOPIA

A *Champions*® Adventure Resource
by Chris Avellone



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The editor would like to recommend the general-interest gaming APA, *Alarums & Excursions*, to all readers of this product. Many interesting people, including Spike Y. Jones, John Nephew, and Nicole Lindroos Frein, appear pretty regularly in this APA. For a sample copy, send \$3.05 (which includes Book Rate postage within the U.S.) to: Lee Gold, 3965 Alla Road, Los Angeles, California, 90066.

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THE COALITION

The Coalition is a paranormal team masquerading as mercenaries to protect its true patrons, Allied Automation Industries (A.A.I.) and Terrence Bridge. Wherever Bridge is engaged in illegal activities, the Coalition isn't far behind.

MEMBERSHIP: Dart (leader), Ultraviolet, Diamond, Piledriver, Hammerhand, Fire & Ice. Other mercenary villains sometimes join this core for individual jobs. Possible temporary members (past and future) include: Pulsar, Powerhouse, Cheshire Cat, Shrinker (all from the *Champions Sourcebook*), Blowtorch, Utility, Mechassassin, Ankylosaur, Bulldozer, and Black Diamond, Gremlin and Black Claw (from *Classic Enemies*), the last three as members of GRAB, hired as

backup, and to muddy the waters around the Coalition. Bridge is hesitant to hire any psis, however, as he sees them as threats.

ORIGIN: When an unethical executive in an A.A.I. subsidiary hired Piledriver (a victim of VIPER experimentation) to destroy a rival's computer storage facility, sending the rival into bankruptcy, and other A.A.I. division-chiefs began hiring their own super-mercenaries (including Sledge, Cheshire Cat, and Armadillo) to solve their own profit problems, Terrence Bridge's interest was piqued. He asked for a report on the cost-effectiveness of these operations and, impressed both with the success and the low cost of the assignments, made plans for building a super-powered security force under his command. Sledge (another VIPER victim) and Piledriver became the first members of the Coalition, and served Bridge well, along with a number of other villains who came and went.

The Coalition would have remained small if Darrell McGavin, then a Security Director for A.A.I., had not revealed his secret identity to Bridge. McGavin had formerly gone by the name Dart, as a super-strong member of the Geodesics, a supervillain group formed by Dr. Lirby Koo while he was consolidating his power base in North America. Along with Dart, the group had included an energy-emitting woman going by the name Ultraviolet (who eventually became Dart's wife), and a mysterious teleporter called Diamond. The villain team was moderately successful for some months, until UNTIL discovered the group's base and attacked. In the aftermath Koo disappeared, and while the remaining Geodesics eventually picked up a fourth member, the psychotic light-manipulator Orb, the group didn't stay together long after the loss of their founder.

It was a year before they discovered that Koo had left them a virus to remember him by.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Avellone is a native of Alexandria, Virginia, doing time as a English major at the College of William and Mary. On the verge of graduation at 22, he hopes to be able to hold a writing career full-time...in thirty or forty years, after all his noble aspirations of youth have been shattered by the hammer of reality.

When not writing for DRAGON® Magazine or Atlas Games he spends time apologizing for his *Dark Champions™* book, *Underworld Enemies™*, and explaining that whatever people liked about it was something the editors did. *Dystopia* is his second game supplement.

McGavin offered his (fading) powers and skills to A.A.I. if Bridge would use his company's resources to cure his wife. Bridge agreed, after forcing Dart to include Ultraviolet's services in the bargain and obtaining the name and whereabouts of his other Geodesic ally, Diamond (Orb had since been killed by UNTIL). Diamond was tracked down by A.A.I. investigators, and Bridge offered the stoic paranormal sustenance and a safe haven if he joined the Coalition.

The five paranormals were brought together in a briefing room in A.A.I.'s corporate building and presented with contracts. They would serve as official employees and draw large, steady paychecks for their work, in addition to fringe benefits already discussed with the members privately (Diamond's access to precious minerals, a cure for Dart and Ultraviolet, the maintenance of a high lifestyle for Piledriver, and drugs for Sledge). Shortly afterward, the Coalition made its debut in the criminal underworld, claiming to be an independent mercenary organization, although its activities always indirectly aided A.A.I.

The Coalition experienced a momentary setback when Sledge was set up and killed by VIPER, but it was only a matter of weeks before a replacement was recruited from within A.A.I.'s own ranks. Wearing a cybernetic hand that had been under development for Sledge, "Hammerhand" joined the group.

UNTIL, during this time, was not blind to A.A.I.'s activities and was looking for ways to expose Bridge's violations of international law. To this end, it decided to place a plant within the Coalition. Researching possible double agents, UNTIL apprehended Fire & Ice and offered to cure him in exchange for uncovering incriminating evidence about Bridge and A.A.I. Fire & Ice applied for a job in the Coalition and was accepted.

ORGANIZATION: Because A.A.I. is in the practice of using armored construction workers, and workers drugged with methamphetamines in Third World countries, it was necessary to create a paranormal security team for the company. The Coalition settles internal breaches of security according to A.A.I. company policy (through black-



mail, threats, or killing the offender). Police are never involved in (or even aware of) most crimes taking place within A.A.I.

The Coalition is an extension of Bridge's ambitions to dominate the global economy. It frequently comes into conflict with corporations or organizations that try to slow A.A.I.'s advance. Bridge's aims are political and financial, including fights for corporate deregulation, tax reductions on Big Business, increases in import taxes on products from foreign countries, *etc.* A.A.I. has several senators in its pockets through liberal use of PACs and illegal campaign contributions.

A.A.I. also engages in price-fixing, stock and securities fraud, military procurement abuses, computer theft, arms smuggling, kickbacks for various civil service projects, extortion, and corporate blackmail. In the past, relief efforts by humanitarian organizations, such as Prometheus, have been redirected through corrupt officials to provide profits for A.A.I. In addition, A.A.I. is notorious for its neglect of safety regulations: compensating families for injuries and deaths is considered more cost efficient than installing adequate safety precautions in its factories and vehicles.

A.A.I.'s crimes are carried out by skilled economic tacticians, and the Coalition is only used to help matters along when resistance is met, or when trickery and financial attacks fail to achieve successful ends. A.A.I. hires teleporters, desolid villains, and those who can control machines to infiltrate rival organizations and steal sensitive information.

TACTICS: Bridge is a businessman, not a tactician. He assumes too much about the workings of a "successful" paranormal group and as a result, the team has no maneuvers and no discipline; they are used to dealing with normal humans and destroying property, and an attack by skilled heroes may catch them off guard. If the GM wishes, the Geodesics can fall back on old code words and training maneuvers they used years ago, but overall, the Coalition should be played as a group of paranormal bullies unused to heavy opposition.

There is one guiding principle behind Coalition operations; the members are expected to act as a team of non-affiliated mercenaries, hiring

themselves out to other organizations (the profits go to A.A.I.) and using their new jobs to strengthen A.A.I.'s position (covertly stealing information on military computer designs, destroying a rival corporation while engaged in battle with a superhero group, *etc.*). The Coalition should always carry itself as hired muscle, not as personal enforcers of A.A.I. (or whomever). Observant PCs, however, may pick up on the connection.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

Because of A.A.I.'s global holdings, it comes into contact with most other large corporations, and major organizations, both local and world-spanning. Fighting against A.A.I. can take place almost anywhere on Earth, from its South African holdings to ruthless trade wars in Japan, industrial espionage in Germany and conflicts in Great Britain and Europe, as well as encounters in the U.S. The GM may want to create other Coalition teams composed of European villains, African villains, *etc.*

THE RAIDERS: The Coalition has earned its share of foes, the most prominent being Bullet and the Raiders (see *Classic Enemies*). The Coalition has crossed paths with the Raiders many times, and it has only been the numerical superiority of the Coalition that has kept Bullet from capturing any of the core members.

VIPER: A.A.I. maintains a fragile alliance with VIPER, exchanging high-tech and other goods to their mutual benefit. Recently, Bridge has threatened to reveal a number of VIPER nests to the Justice Department if VIPER does not deliver equipment and drugs ordered by the Coalition months ago. The fact that most of the Coalition's members have had bad experiences with VIPER in the past has not helped matters any.

GENOCIDE: Relations with this organization are good. Bridge has donated large funds to Genocide in exchange for information on their mutant research, and in the hopes Genocide will exterminate a number of mutant heroes for him. Genocide is also a computer and weapons customer, ordering expensive components for the Minuteman Mark VII robots.



UNTIL: The problem with UNTIL began when Bridge started distributing "productivity drugs" to workers in South Africa. In so doing, he killed 12% of the workers who took the drug. However, because productivity increased by a larger amount, the drug was adopted by the white minority in South Africa for both population control and higher profits. UNTIL sought to bring down Bridge for this crime, but Bridge's vast influence halted its prosecution efforts; the media was blinded to the drug-use despite UNTIL efforts. The Coalition occasionally undertakes missions to undermine UNTIL communications and logistics, especially when UNTIL gets too close to A.A.I.'s international interests. They have hesitated, however, to make threats against the organization; Bridge wants a more secure power base before he considers attacking UNTIL directly. UNTIL has managed to infiltrate the Coalition with Fire & Ice, and a major confrontation seems destined.

PRIMUS: The Coalition does not regard PRIMUS as a threat, as Bridge's government contacts keep him safe from their influence. If PRIMUS became aware of the Coalition's A.A.I. ties, the situation would change drastically.

THE COALITION IN *DARK CHAMPIONS*

Terrence Bridge, A.A.I., and most of the adventures to follow, have the right "corrupt corporation uses drugs, violence, and money" theme to fit in well with a *Dark Champions* campaign. The current membership of the Coalition would have to be changed, but the Berserks from *DC* could easily take the place of the central members of the group (with Odin taking Dart's role, Loki as Fire & Ice, Tyr as Piledriver, Thor as Hammerhand, etc.), with Haywire and Gunmetal Silk from *Underworld Enemies*, or a small detachment from the Arsenal in *Justice, Not Law™* serving as occasional hirees in much the same way as Shrinker, Armadillo, etc., do here.

Of course, some minor details of the adventures have to be changed (such as removing the C-Assist Frames from the *Dystopia* scenario, replacing them with construction workers drugged with hypermetrazine), and some minor plot complications (like Fire & Ice's nature as a double-agent) have to be sacrificed, but these won't detract from the adventures materially.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The following sample scenarios can be used at any time during a campaign involving A.A.I. and the Coalition. They appear in no particular order, but it is best that none of these adventures take place between those events described in the Short Scenarios and the *Dystopia* scenario itself. Many of these adventures can employ less than the full Coalition, which makes them excellent choices for game sessions when all of your players cannot attend, or even for solo adventures.

Biting the Bullet

After some undercover research, Bullet captures Ultraviolet's and Dart's children and threatens to kill them if the Coalition does not turn itself in. The Coalition responds by kidnapping

Bullet's kid brother (see *Normals Unbound*[™]), forcing Bullet into combat where it can deal with him. The PCs are caught in the crossfire.

Political Persuasion

A corrupt governor is willing to grant favors to Bridge if he uses the Coalition against the PCs. The governor believes (correctly or not) that the PCs have uncovered his illegal actions.

Mutant-Bashing

While Genocide will have nothing to do with most of the Coalition, the two non-mutated members (Piledriver and Hammerhand) are just the sort of punks they'd hire to beat up a clutch of almost-defenseless mutants, such as a Project: Lifeline safehouse. This needn't directly serve



Bridge's goals, as it both cements his relationship with Genocide, and helps to establish the Coalition as something other than A.A.I.'s private villains.

The Cure

The ex-Geodesics take some time off to search through Dr. Lirby Koo's old haunts, hoping to find more information about their deteriorating conditions. While none of the three intend to harm anyone in this quest (Dart and Ultraviolet are hoping to find a cure for the virus, while Diamond hopes to find some means of accelerating it), they aren't about to let anything stand in their way, either.

Koo Rang?

Dr. Lirby Koo returns to "chastise" the Geodesics for joining the Coalition. Koo tricks the PCs into attacking the Coalition to wear down the strength of both groups, remaining behind the scenes, ready to take advantage of any situation that develops. Koo is surprised that his virus did not kill the Geodesics and wants to study them to see what went wrong.

Smokescreen

Unknown to Bridge, Fire & Ice is an UNTIL plant. Unknown to UNTIL, Fire & Ice has concluded that he can trust Bridge, and tells the executive that he's a double agent in the hope that Bridge's scientists can provide a better, quicker cure than UNTIL. The PCs must rescue Fire & Ice before the Coalition kills him for his treachery.

The Invention

Bridge is introducing an invention that will collapse the economy of a Third World nation he wishes to subjugate. The invention is so sophisticated and affordable it can destroy any developing economic rivals. Legally, Bridge is doing nothing wrong, but will damage the nation, leaving its citizens literal wage slaves to A.A.I.

The Clinic

A new hospital in the PCs' area is being built by A.A.I. as a public service project to help the poor. Could the hospital be a front for more human research? The PCs may have to weigh their dislike for A.A.I. against the need of the poor for better medical services. It could also be a ploy by Bridge and Dart to draw the PCs into attacking a beneficial project. (This adventure would work especially well after playing *Dystopia*.)

Character Targeting

A.A.I. may need a hero to test a new invention. For example, A.A.I. may want to study Quantum in order to design a quantum field energy source, Defender's armor may become a source of interest for the Coalition, *etc.*

Other scenario ideas include oil spills, dumping of toxic waste, or A.A.I. operatives kidnapping people and selling them to VIPER for research in its medical division. A.A.I. may target a PC's company as ripe for takeover, and the PC has to wage a financial war against A.A.I. to stop it (possibly having to face threats from Coalition members if he becomes too recalcitrant).

SHORT SCENARIOS

The following is a series of adventures introducing the Coalition and setting the stage for *Dystopia*. These scenarios *gradually* indicate a greater plan at work. They should be run in order, although there should be non-Coalition adventures inserted between them in order to better hide the nature of the Coalition. The true plot does not come out until *Dystopia* nears and the players suspect something is strange with the pattern of the Coalition's activities.

The Coalition should have little presence as a group in the Campaign City before these adventures begin. This sudden appearance of the Coalition is intended to make the PCs wonder

where it came from and why it is in the campaign city; sure, it's a mercenary group, but why hasn't it popped up in the city before? PCs with access to criminal databanks or police records should easily be able to learn more about the Coalition's public image.

The short scenarios assume that the crime rate in the campaign city is high, and that new facilities are needed to prevent further prison overcrowding and premature release of criminals onto the street. Prelude adventures *Idle Hands* and *Jailbreak* create an appropriate political climate for A.A.I. to offer to build a new prison.



IDLE HANDS

Introduction: A Regional Manager for Vinland Engineering (a moderately large electronics concern, hit hard by the Recession), under pressure from his superiors to invigorate business in the area, found himself with a dilemma. Attempting to set up a new production facility, he contacted several local real estate holders and found an ideal plot of land...cheap, located next to a large commuter community in a municipality which offered considerable tax breaks for new investors. The only problem was a trailer park located there. While the land's owner was willing to sell, the residents were protesting the sale; moving a trailer costs thousands of dollars, which many of the park's residents didn't have. As negative publicity mounted, the Manager contacted the Coalition to scare or remove the trailer park residents from the area.

Dart (and secretly, Bridge) accepted the contract and put Fire & Ice on the job. In addition to clearing the trailer park residents away from the land Vinland Engineering wanted, Bridge also decided that this was an opportunity for A.A.I. to finally pick up some land that Bridge had had his eye on for some time. Thus, Fire & Ice was ordered to start his arson with some government-subsidised housing a short distance away from the trailer park (which would be bought by Bridge later to get a foothold in the Campaign City), before torching the park. This whole operation is seen as a win-win situation by Bridge. Vinland Engineering is a sometime-competitor of A.A.I., and if the plan is foiled, the Regional Manager (and Vinland Engineering) can be used as a fall guy. If the plan succeeds, Bridge gains a useful piece of information to use against Vinland in some future blackmail scheme. Moreover, Bridge gets his own plot of burned-out land in the bargain.

Idle Hands is a straightforward adventure; the local news draws attention to the arson occurring in the city, and investigation by the PCs

reveals that Fire & Ice is responsible. Fire & Ice is the only member of the Coalition involved in this adventure, as a result, combating the fires he creates is the main challenge. This adventure can be used as a one-night stand or spread out across the campaign, with one incident occurring every gaming session as a backdrop to the main adventure. If the PCs seem uninterested in dealing with simple arson cases, a DNPC or a street contact can be threatened by the arson attempts as an incentive.

Prelude: The adventure starts with news reports of low-income housing in the Campaign City being burned to the ground. Four people were killed and many others injured; the police suspect arson. If the PCs interview the displaced residents of the apartment complex, some claim to have seen a "flaming figure" fleeing the building before the blaze occurred. The official story is that this must have been one of the fire's victims, but the locations of the sightings don't match those of any of the bodies.

First Contact: Days later, a fire occurs in another housing project in the same area. This time, the characters can intervene, either being close by or monitoring the fire-fighter's band when the fire starts. Fire & Ice has set fire to the stairwells in the complex and torched the ventilation shafts to speed the spread of flames to the upper portions of the building. Two children and a young mother are trapped in an apartment on the third floor of the burning building; GMs can use the *Apartment Map* on p. C43 of the *Champions Rule Book* for this episode. During this scene, the PCs should see Fire & Ice and perhaps have a chance to confront him. The villain should escape; if necessary, draw the characters away with more trapped families elsewhere in the building. If the PCs research Fire & Ice's activities afterwards they discover that he

is suspected of working with the Coalition, a mercenary group specializing in property crimes, often at the command of somewhat sleazy companies. This information may cause the characters to research corporations in the area, small businesses, and slum lords.

The Trailer Park: His other missions completed, Fire & Ice moves to finish the job by torching the trailer park. This scene takes place late at night, making a horrendous spectacle as he goes from trailer to trailer setting fire to the wooden pilings below each one. As this is the conclusion to his mission, Fire & Ice feels no obligation to be subtle; he torches cars, freezes family pets in the streets, sets fire to trees and other wooden objects in the area, and performs other senseless acts of violence. When the characters arrive, the trailer park is ablaze, and Fire & Ice is watching the chaos spread. The GM can again use the *Apartment Map* in the *Champions Rule Book* for the trailers, each of which has one family living in it.

Again, Fire & Ice *should* escape for the moment, and this adventure can continue with the Junkyard scene below. If the PCs are about to capture Fire & Ice, the following incidents can be included to hamper them, although resourceful characters who use the fire truck's hose, pour oil over him, or use high winds to capture Fire & Ice should be successful.

- Fire & Ice has just torched a trailer, and its occupant, a father of two young boys, has dragged out his .22 rifle to fire at the paranormal. Fire & Ice hurls a sheet of flame at the man, who dies if not rescued by the PCs.

- Two police cars arrive, each with a police officer. One calls for back-up ("We've got the arsonist; paranormal, looks like") while the other orders Fire & Ice to "freeze". Laughing, Fire & Ice freezes the two officers to their cars and then ruptures one of the gas tanks, allowing a rivulet of gasoline to run towards the burning debris littering the park. Again, these victims die unless the PCs break off their chase to free the police officers or put out the nearby flames.

The Junkyard: The characters track Fire & Ice down to the local junkyard (see *Junkyard Map* in the *Champions Rule Book*, p. C48), where he rests until the Vinland Engineering Regional Manager shows up to pay him. If the PCs were not able to follow, street contacts (perhaps kids at the trailer park or the housing projects) call the police and say they spotted a "flaming man" in the junkyard, and the police ask the characters for help.

The PCs arrive a minute before the Regional Manager (let the characters spot his car arriving). The car skids to a stop in front of the office, and the Manager, frightened and nervous, shouts for Fire & Ice. Fire & Ice steps out from the office and asks for the money but the Manager refuses to pay; although he withdrew the money from the bank earlier today, the massacre at the trailer park was too much for him. The two argue, and PCs can eavesdrop on the conversation, until Fire & Ice threatens the Manager. If the PCs do not intervene at this point, Fire & Ice dismissively torches him (characters have a chance to react before he "fires"). As soon as the heroes appear, Fire & Ice and the Manager both flee. Run the chase as a cat-and-mouse through the junkyard, and play up the darkness and the unfamiliar footing for maximum effect. If necessary, the rest of the Coalition can show up to match the foes, but the characters should get a chance to punch out Fire & Ice first.

Conclusion: A cursory examination of the Regional Manager's background reveals a motive, and Fire & Ice sings if captured. It is no secret that Vinland has been interested in purchasing the trailer park, which confirms Fire & Ice's story. If the characters took the time to gather evidence in the junkyard by taping the Regional Manager's conversation, they should be rewarded with a conviction. A.A.I. steps in *quietly* after the trial and rebuilds all the burned-out areas. PCs who follow this story to the end may be astounded to hear that Fire & Ice is quietly released from custody after the furor has died down; UNTIL still has need of him in the Coalition.

JAILBREAK

Introduction: The Coalition crime spree doesn't stop with the trailer park incident. Things get worse, as Piledriver and Hammerhand commit "classic" crimes throughout the city. Bridge orders them to hit a number of suburban banks, steal as much as they can before the police can respond, then leave the scene as quickly as possible. The money stolen is of secondary importance; the primary purpose of these robberies is to increase the sense of "escalating crime rates" throughout the city ("It's even happening in the suburbs, now!"). The players won't be able to stop all these crimes, but should eventually get lucky enough to be near one of them when a later robbery occurs (for which the GM can use the bank map on p. C47 of the *Champions Rule Book*). If the heroes show up, Piledriver is instructed to allow himself to be defeated and hauled in for questioning, while Hammerhand flees.

The Set-Up: Piledriver is setting himself up to be captured. Bridge has reviewed how criminals are processed in the Campaign City and knows that Piledriver will be deprived of his prosthesis and taken to the local prison, leading to an opportunity for a prison break-out.

The Jailbreak: Once Piledriver is taken to the local prison, he remains there for twenty-four hours. During the daylight hours, Ultraviolet en-

ters the prison invisibly, establishes where Piledriver is, attacks the police vault and returns Piledriver's prosthesis to him. Piledriver then demolishes the prison as he escapes. Hammerhand, Diamond, and Dart are nearby to aid his escape, and many prisoners are likely to make their way to freedom. The GM can either run this jailbreak as a combat, or simply mention it on the nightly news for the characters, but the time delay before the PCs can reach the scene should allow Piledriver to go free, leaving the PCs to round up the remaining escaped criminals.

Conclusion: Bridge hoped this would prompt the local government to consider construction of a new prison, and in a few months, a proposal is put forth to the city to construct a new prison (the GM should run other adventures during this time). Unfortunately, when the bid for the new prison comes up, a local construction company, 4WARD Construction, is awarded the contract. This company won the contract for the new prison for three reasons: it had an impressive proposal, it had done other projects for the city, and the company is a front for the underworld, who have insider information and many contacts in the city government. If A.A.I. successfully sabotages 4WARD's prison building efforts, the underworld becomes involved (see *Feint* and *The Fugitive*, below).

FEINT

Introduction: Bridge, angry at losing the contract to the local company and having his plans for establishing Utopia ruined, orders Dart to sabotage 4WARD's Construction plans. During a party to celebrate 4WARD's successful bid for the new prison the Coalition seizes a trade tower (or other business building) in the Campaign City. Many prominent citizens, including the Mayor, the Police Commissioner, and the head of 4WARD Construction, attend, along with the Warden of the local prison that experienced the breakout in *Jailbreak*. The real targets, however, are the 4WARD offices on another level of the tower. While a highly visible villain team holds the hostages, another team steals information from 4WARD's computers. Bridge, once his analysts pour through the 4WARD files, intends to sabotage its efforts to build the new prison until the city government revokes the 4WARD contract and awards it to A.A.I.

If the GM has *Dark Champions*, the Harpcor Towers building can provide maps for this adventure, with the Spinning Diamond restaurant on the 20th floor (p. 190) holding the celebration while the 4WARD offices are located on the sixth floor (p. 183). If not, the GM can use the first floor of the Champions household (p. C11 in the *Champions Rule Book*) as the map of the party, and the second floor of the Milford Mansion (p. C51) as the 4WARD office floor.

The Party: The blatant primary team of Armadillo (hired just for this mission), Piledriver and Hammerhand storm the building, destroy the elevators and block the stairwells to seal off the upper floors. They demand the release of some villain (Powerhouse in the *Champions Rule Book* will do) from the local prison or the hostages will be harmed. Only Armadillo thinks the plan is for real. The villains need to hold the building for two hours while Dart and the secondary team burglarize the

offices. The primary team makes blustery threats against the Warden, then trashes the restaurant in revenge for him slamming one of their "buddies" in jail. They make their escape by helicopter once Dart is finished, whether the city gave in to their demands or not.

4WARD's Offices: Dart, disguised as a civilian who attended the party, slips upstairs. Shrinker (on a hiatus from the Crusher Gang) has already flown into the upper level ventilation shaft, and knocked the security guard unconscious. She unlocks all the office doors to help Dart enter the room containing the 4WARD computer files, and then stands hidden guard outside. Unfortunately, Shrinker ruins this plan; as soon as she sees heroes, she tries to embarrass them and calls attention to herself. This may lead the characters to search the 4WARD offices and discover Dart downloading files.

Ultraviolet floats outside the building as fire support, waiting to disable any air support that might interfere with the Coalition's escape. Piledriver and Hammerhand have been ordered to sacrifice themselves if necessary to ensure that Dart escapes.

Conclusion: If the Coalition primary team is captured, they admit nothing and take their chances with the law. If the secondary team is in danger of being captured, Ultraviolet causes a catastrophe somewhere else in the building to slow up heroes. If Dart escapes with the 4WARD plans, 4WARD Construction is plagued with shipping delays, shipment thefts, and as the crowning blow, its construction site is blown up as it nears completion. The city government seeks a new bid, and A.A.I. (this time more prepared to deal with the city government) wins. A.A.I. begins to issue press releases for the "The Utopia Project" prison (see the brochure on p. 23).

THE FUGITIVE

Introduction: 4WARD Construction isn't stupid. It has engaged in shady dealings before and knows that A.A.I. somehow discredited it (although it does not suspect the tie to the Coalition). Shortly after the construction of Utopia begins, one of 4WARD's underworld stockholders arranges to hijack an A.A.I. shipment and sell its cargo elsewhere in the city. The hijacked truck, however, doesn't contain what its inventory said it would; it is actually loaded with two C-Assist frames (see p. 25), expensive medical equipment, and a case of the drug, hypermetrazine (see p. 19). A.A.I. is desperate to get the shipment back. It cannot contact the police, as this would raise unwanted questions; while the C-Assist Frames and medical gear are legitimate company

property, hypermetrazine is an illegal drug, and if discovered, would expose A.A.I.'s entire scheme. Bridge orders the Coalition to recover the shipment quietly. The PCs should learn about the hijacking, and they may wish to investigate; they should be interested in 4WARD and suspicious of A.A.I. by now.

The Hijacker: Rudimentary questioning at the trucking company A.A.I. used for the shipment reveals the name and address of the driver, but PCs checking the address discover that it was a false address. If the PCs check the trucker's work history, they find that he was a shipper for the 4WARD Construction Company (which is tight-lipped and hostile about the incident), before



quitting his job and hiring-on with the trucking company A.A.I. was known to use. In fact, the trucker owed some favors to his underworld bosses in 4WARD, and they ordered him to change jobs and perform the hijacking. If the characters stake out 4WARD's offices, they eventually catch the fugitive trucker in the area (either in the shipping area or hanging out with 4WARD friends in local bars). He runs if approached by heroes in costume, but if they approach cautiously, they can surround him before he escapes. He is frightened, and tries to put up a brave front, but PRE attacks make him break down and reveal where the shipment was taken: a warehouse within the city. The trucker has been hiding out in the city, waiting for his bosses to arrange a new job for him.

The Preliminary Battle: The Coalition attacks shortly before the characters finish speaking to the driver. They were waiting for a safe opportunity to question him, but the PCs forced their hand. The GM should make the fight even-sided, introducing just enough of the Coalition to make the fight challenging, starting with the ex-Geodesics, and adding Piledriver, Hammerhand, and Fire & Ice as necessary. The Coalition tries to kidnap the trucker, then scatters, planning to interrogate him and recover the shipment later.

The Warehouse: The A.A.I. supplies taken from the truck are stored here (the GM can use the generic warehouse map on page 75 of *Justice, Not Law*, or design his own). If the PCs rush to the warehouse after the Coalition attack, they arrive first. The warehouse is guarded by a half-dozen toughs, but they flee rather than fight if the heroes

arrive in force. In one of the back offices, the PCs find several open crates, with their contents dumped on the floor. There is sensitive medical equipment in many of them, the C-Assist frames, and one opened box filled with a styrofoam-like material with an odd smell to it (this is a packing material that keeps the hypermetrazine fresh for transport). If the foam is cleared away, the heroes find cases of a translucent substance in carefully sealed plastic bags. Characters with Pharmacology or Toxicology can identify hypermetrazine with a successful roll; characters without these skills should find the shipment suspicious. The PCs should have enough time to study the shipment before the Coalition arrives.

The Main Event: Soon after the heroes' arrival, the Coalition surrounds the warehouse, hoping to subdue the heroes and reclaim the crate of hypermetrazine before the heroes or the police discover its contents. If they were badly beaten during the last fight, the Coalition gathered more members before deploying.

If there is no way to beat the characters and escape with the evidence, Ultraviolet sets fire to the building, and the rest of the Coalition destroy the evidence of hypermetrazine and the medical equipment. Because the PCs have seen it, however, it may have raised some questions and should lead them to examine the Utopia prison for more answers (leading to *Dystopia*). In addition, the Coalition's role in this adventure is suspicious, and characters who have carefully followed their activities, may now suspect who they really work for. If beaten, the Coalition may retaliate against the heroes in *Clean Slate*.

CLEAN SLATE

Introduction: Vinland Engineering has not been doing well of late. Even if it didn't suffer economic and public relations setbacks in *Idle Hands*, it still hasn't managed to recover its pre-Recession position in the marketplace. In a barely-concealed act of gloating, Terrence Bridge offered to buy one of Vinland's largest assets, the company's headquarters building, located a few blocks from the Campaign City's banking district. Despite its financial situation, Vinland turned him down, as much out of spite as from a hope that it would eventually spring back, no longer needing his "help". Now, Bridge intends to destroy the building, knowing that Vinland won't be able to rebuild from such a catastrophe, and that he can then buy the site at a greatly reduced price. In its place, Bridge intends to build "Bridge Towers", a chrome-covered tribute to his ruthlessness.

Deciding to take care of another annoyance at the same time, Bridge ordered Dart to involve an annoying local superhero team (the PCs) in the destruction of the Vinland offices. Dart decided to stage the theft of some electrical generator plans being stored at the Vinland offices. The theft, though, was meant to be a ruse; something to force the heroes into action. In the resultant battle, the building would be razed, the heroes would be beaten, and hopefully, their reputations would be badly tarnished.

Clean Slate is a combat-oriented adventure, and can be run at various points in this series of scenarios. It is placed here to be run soon after *The Fugitive*, but if the PCs have been seriously disrupting the activities of A.A.I. or the Coalition (especially if the GM ran other Coalition adventures of his own design in addition to these short scenarios), the GM may run this adventure earlier. If the GM didn't use the previous scenarios, or if there was no single group of PC heroes that incurred Bridge's wrath, *Clean Slate* can be modified to serve as a part of Bridge's revenge and rebuilding campaign after *Dystopia* is run.

Ground Zero: The Vinland Engineering building is a seven-story affair, with no features that distinguish it from any other normal small office complex. If the GM has *Dark Champions*, he could use Harpcor Towers (pp. 188-189) as a source for the floor plans, with floor 16 of Tower B as the ground floor (converting the secretarial area into the lobby with a security/reception desk, some large potted plants and a couple of models of Vinland inventions in glass display cases), and Tower A and B floors 17 through 19 (stacked appropriately) as the remaining levels. The building also has one nondescript basement level. Otherwise, the GM is encouraged to just make up a floor plan; since the whole thing is likely to be destroyed in a short while, details aren't going to be overly important.

The surrounding streets are in a typical downtown grid pattern. Many cars are parked on the street, and others pass by every few turns, just long enough to be grabbed by Diamond or Hammerhand, and used to pound a character through the pavement. Further, there is a gas station on the opposite corner, several stores with large front windows, and an assortment of mailboxes, trashcans, and other potential weapons close at hand.

In the first stage of this operation, Dart snuck into the building's basement through its sewer system, and set up explosives linked to radio-controlled detonators. Not only can he use these bombs during the upcoming fight to target the PCs, but afterwards he detonates any remaining explosives to intensify the damage done in the fight, hoping that the PCs will get blamed for the destruction. The exact location under the floor of these bombs is left to the GM, but there should be only a handful of them (1d6), and Dart triggers them whenever a PC or group of PCs is standing over one, with no Coalition members nearby. Damage from the bombs is 5d6 EX, and Dart has to roll against his Demolitions skill in order to time the explosion correctly, and to have set-up the bomb properly.

Ambush: The heroes are summoned to the scene by the usual means: police radio reports of a robbery nearby, happening to be in the right place at the right time, or even a mysterious anonymous tip. From the street, the building looks normal, but the fact that the front door is unlocked and no guards are visible is strange this late at night.

When they actually enter the Vinland Engineering building, they notice the security guards lying behind the reception desk. Before the PCs arrived, the guards were subdued and tied up, and Dart, disguised as a tied and gagged guard (with his armor underneath) joined them, situated in such a way that he'd be able to see the battle, give directions through the radio microphone hidden in his gag, and control his bombs with a transmitter worked into his belt-buckle (he offers direct fire-support only if the Coalition is being badly beaten, or if his disguise is penetrated). He is the only 'guard' conscious, and when the heroes move to untie him, the ambush begins.

At first, it appears that Piledriver and Hammerhand are the only attackers, but it soon becomes evident that Diamond is also involved. He stands in the background staring at the walls fixedly, using his Sensory abilities to point out structural weaknesses in the building that he directs his comrades towards; Piledriver and Hammerhand direct their attacks so that any missed punches, or Knocked Back heroes cause maximum damage to their surroundings (see the *Champions Rule Book*, p. 166). Fire & Ice follows the other three a few turns later, setting fire to the lobby gleefully, preparing a grand act of arson to raze the building to the ground; if the GM wants, the fool may be attacked by the building's sprinkler system. Diamond joins in the free-for-all if attacked, or if the others need his help.

Ultraviolet is invisible, hovering over the battle scene, waiting for orders from Dart, or to strike a surprise attack at just the right moment. If necessary to prevent the Coalition from being captured, she attacks the gas station across the street. As long as Dart and Ultraviolet are surveying the scene, it is difficult for the heroes to perform surprise attacks on the Coalition. Additionally, the Coalition members know exactly where all the bombs are placed, and try to maneuver the he-

ros into position to be bombed.

Conclusion: Because they are willing to destroy the building and the surrounding area to cover their retreat, it is likely that the Coalition escapes, whether they manage to do serious damage to the heroes or not. If they are captured, they try to pretend that the whole thing was a simple robbery gone bad, but characters who were paying attention quickly see the holes in this story. If any Coalition members escape capture, they assemble a rescue team (using other mercenary supervillains to boost their numbers), and try to free their teammates as soon as possible.

Characters who investigate the crime afterwards recall the link between Vinland Engineering and the Coalition in *Idle Hands*, and if they keep tabs on this site for a few months, they may realize the link between those two groups and A.A.I. when Bridge quietly buys the ruined building, and loudly trumpets the construction of Bridge Towers months later.

Alternate Victims: If the GM did not run *Idle Hands* or if he wants to link it to other *Champions* adventures and sourcebooks, there are some interesting alternatives to Vinland Engineering to use as Bridge's target.

Along with any number of mundane corporations, there are some which Bridge would be better off leaving alone, but which he may attack anyway, out of ignorance, overconfidence, or avarice. Bridge probably doesn't know about the links between Duchess Industries and VIPER, and the Coalition would be a bit surprised to run into a VIPER nest when they attempt to set up their ambush for the PC heroes in an office used by a Duchess Industries subsidiary. An even more dangerous option is an attack on Montgomery International (*High-Tech Enemies*[™], pp. 24-31), which would invite rapid retribution from Master Control, his personal troops, and his own mercenary team, The Destruction Company.

In a *Dark Champions* campaign, the most interesting target is the computer company Gablessoft (from *Justice, Not Law*, p. 30), because of its ties to Duchess Industries and VIPER or Raven.

DYSTOPIA

"Fear not your enemies, for they can only kill you; fear not your friends, for they can only betray you. Fear only the indifferent, who permit the killers and betrayers to safely walk the Earth."

— Edward Yashinsky

SETTING THE STAGE

Stafford wished he was dead.

Thoughts of flight ran through his mind as he sat across from the President of A.A.I. and waited for him to say something. He glanced quickly at the heavily muscled man behind Bridge; A.A.I.'s Security Director, Darrell McGavin.

"I want to know how it happened." Terrence Bridge lit a cigarette. The smoke drifted lazily across the desk. Stafford shifted uncomfortably in his seat.

"Mr. Bridge, we believe Dr. Sinclair...one of the scientists...decided, well, he couldn't deal with what was going on at the project..." Stafford's voice trailed off as Bridge's face turned red, "I didn't think he would be a problem...uh, but now we know, and we're working on tracking him down. Of course, we'll need time..."

"Don't come in here and puke excuses all over my desk!" Lowering his voice, he glared at Stafford. "Do you think I'm stupid?"

"No." Stafford said, shaking his head.

"You were supposed to *inform* me if any of them had qualms about what they were doing. You were supposed to hire them because they didn't *care*. That was the requirement, wasn't it? That was what I *told* you to do, wasn't it?"

"Mr. Bridge, I..."

"SHUT YOUR MOUTH UNTIL I'M FINISHED!" With a sudden backhand, Bridge smashed the phone off his desk; Stafford cringed. Bridge looked ready to strike him as well, but at the last moment, he regained control, lowered his hand and crushed his cigarette in the ashtray.

"You put me in a difficult position, Stafford. A very difficult position." Bridge's eyes narrowed. "What do you think I should do with you?"

"I can take care of it, Mr. Bridge. I can get the information back..." Stafford's voice died as Bridge laughed.

"You've already screwed-up once, and there's no way in *hell* I'd trust you to straighten this out." Bridge reached across the desk and grabbed Stafford by the coat, "If it turns out that I'm inconvenienced by this little problem in any way, Stafford, you'll suffer for it." Bridge snarled, his teeth inches from Stafford's sweating face. "You have a son, Stafford, don't you? A nice home? An attractive wife, I've heard." Bridge smiled. "I can take care of all those things if you fail me again. Understand?"

Stafford nodded frantically. "Mr. Bridge, I did the best..."

Bridge's fist smashed into Stafford's jaw and sent him sprawling. Face to face with the carpet, Stafford tenderly felt his lip and drew his fingers back covered with blood. Bridge's eyes were locked on him. "Get out," Bridge said coldly, "Your life depends on how quickly you do it." Stafford saw McGavin tense; Stafford knew, at a word from Bridge, McGavin would kill him. Stafford staggered to his feet and fled the room as quickly as he could without running. Behind him, Bridge lit up a new cigarette.

"I don't think he's shown the information to anyone else," McGavin said roughly. "He may be planning to blackmail us. He's a security risk until the documents are secure; but once we have them back, we can begin to undermine his credibility..."

"I DON'T WANT TO UNDERMINE HIS GODDAMN CREDIBILITY!" Bridge lowered his voice, "I want him dead. I want him to know who did it, then I want every trace of his existence wiped out." Bridge blew a stream of smoke onto

the Security Director. "I want that information he stole back. *Understand?*" McGavin nodded. Bridge grunted and turned away, adjusting his tie.

INTRODUCTION

A scientist's death draws the characters into A.A.I.'s scheme to build a private prison, Utopia, as a cover for a testing center for a lethal human productivity drug. The PCs have to uncover Utopia's secret before A.A.I. buries evidence of its activities.

BACKGROUND

Criminal punishment is a profitable enterprise. With the growing prison population, state administrators have become so beleaguered by overcrowding, bureaucratic delays, and money shortages that they have turned to private enterprise to help fulfill the demand for institutions. A.A.I. recently participated in a bid for the construction and management of a prison in the PCs' area and was awarded the contract after undermining the competition. They have publicized their success by building a "Utopia" prison, dedicated to turning the prisoners into productive members of society.

If it doesn't kill them first.

A.A.I. actually intends to use Utopia to test hypermetrazine, a lethal methamphetamine. Utopia prisoners will be secretly fed hypermetrazine through their food and be put to work in an A.A.I. industrial plant within the walls of the prison. The workers' progress will be monitored, and the drug's effects gauged by doctors in Utopia's medical lab.

Dr. Sinclair, a chemist, worked for A.A.I. for years and knows hypermetrazine's effects on the human body. When Sinclair learned that the latest version was to be given to the Utopia prisoners, he raised his concerns with Utopia's manager, Charles Stafford. Despite being confronted with data showing hypermetrazine's detrimental effects on human physiology, Stafford played down the immorality of using criminals as test subjects and warned Sinclair that he wanted to hear no more on the matter.

Sinclair wrestled with his conscience and realized that hypermetrazine would be used in Utopia despite his objections; further protests would just result in him being fired, and A.A.I. destroying his reputation and credibility in the chemical field. Sinclair knew that other scientists who fought A.A.I. died under mysterious circumstances, and he had no desire to end up as they did. As a result, he opted to keep quiet while collecting evidence on A.A.I.'s plans. Sinclair collected a month's worth of incriminating data on the drug and smuggled it past A.A.I. security under the guise of a courier. A week ago, Sinclair believed he had gathered enough information to take to an official investigating agency. Convinced he had done the right thing, he resigned.

It was a mistake. Utopia's manager did not feel Sinclair was a security risk...until Sinclair resigned. Becoming suspicious, Stafford questioned the security personnel and discovered that Sinclair's role as a researcher and courier between labs may have enabled him to secure evidence on the drug production. Stafford tried to deal with the situation himself, but a security officer at Utopia reported the leak to A.A.I.'s Security Director, Darrell McGavin (Dart), who reported this directly to Bridge. After learning the damage Sinclair could do, Bridge ordered Dart to kill the scientist and retrieve the stolen information.

Hypermetrazine: Hypermetrazine is a methamphetamine with lethal side effects that has been used, in diluted form, in South Africa. The drug's effects last 13-16 hours, during which time the subject needs to perform constant activity to prevent stress build-up (making it useful as a "productivity enhancer"). After that duration, the subject drops from exhaustion.

Hypermetrazine causes cardiac arrest after sustained use. If taken for several weeks, the chance of a heart attack is 30% or more in patients with no heart problems prior to taking the drug. Cardiac arrest is only one symptom; there may be other side effects, which is why A.A.I. is using Utopia as a testing ground.

Hypermetrazine: 1D6 Aid, to all physical stats (+1), Fade Rate is five points per day (+1 1/4), Gestures: "Pop the Pill" (-1/4), OAF: Drug (-1), INT

and EGO drops by 1D6 after three days of sustained use (-1/4), addictive (-1/4), chance for a heart attack increases by 3% for every day after the fifth (-1/4). Active Points: 16, Real Cost: 5 points.

INVOLVING THE CHARACTERS

The adventure begins when the PCs come into contact with Sinclair, either meeting him or seeing him murdered by the Coalition. There are many ways to get the player characters into this storyline, depending on the characters themselves and their prior activities.

If the PCs are public figures, Sinclair writes them a letter about what he has discovered, urging them to check out Utopia. He visits them personally if they have a public address. If Sinclair does either of these things, he is spotted by Dart's undercover agents, and Dart assumes that the PCs have to be silenced to protect Utopia. To do this, he may frame the PCs for Sinclair's murder.

Dr. Sinclair can be an old friend of one of the PCs (perhaps they went to college together, or

worked as teaching assistants at a university years ago), and run across the character the day after resigning from Utopia. Sinclair invites the PC to a bar or a restaurant, and as they reminisce about old times Sinclair confides that he just resigned from his job, and that he's ready to blow the whistle on the people at the plant. Sinclair doesn't say where he worked as he has no wish to drag the character into the matter.

If the heroes have been keeping an eye on A.A.I. or Utopia as a result of the events in the Short Scenarios, the murder of any A.A.I. ex-employee may be enough to make them investigate further.

If the PCs are vigilantes, they see Sinclair assassinated as they are undertaking another mission. This draws them into the adventure as they try to find a motive for Sinclair's murder and track down the killer, perhaps breaking into Utopia or the hypermetrazine chemical processing factory looking for clues.

Or Sinclair's murder could have happened months ago, and Utopia may already be finished with the hypermetrazine being used. A prisoner



could escape from the Utopia Project (by faking a work injury and refusing to eat the drugged food; he'll then take advantage of the lax security to make a break for it). The escapee, wounded by a gun shot, runs to the PCs and dies in their headquarters as he coughs out the horrors taking place at the 'model prison.'

For PCs who haven't been involved with A.A.I. in the past, their first encounter with the Utopia Project could be on the dark streets of the campaign city, where a greedy prison guard or other worker is selling a new drug (called "Utopia") to supplement his income. The drug gives users a boost of vitality similar to Angel Dust, but with a faster burn-out rate. Back-tracking the drug's supply line, they eventually come across the larger evil of the Utopia Prison.

MURDEROUS INTENTIONS

Sinclair's murderer can be an A.A.I. security agent or a member of the Coalition, preferably Ultraviolet or Dart. The GM should choose an assassin appropriate for the campaign.

Ultraviolet: If Ultraviolet is the assassin, she turns invisible and follows Sinclair, waiting for a convenient opportunity to kill him (preferably without witnesses). Sinclair is left at the murder scene with the flesh charred from his body. The bizarre nature of his death may draw the PCs into the adventure; if the murder takes place while they are nearby, they see Sinclair, his flesh smoking, crying for help. He collapses to the ground, a blackened corpse, as Ultraviolet flees.

Dart: If Dart is the assassin, he doesn't blatantly murder Sinclair (*e.g.* shoot him in the middle of a crowd) unless all other options are denied him; he prefers 'accidental' murders. Dart sneaks into Sinclair's home and poisons him with one of a variety of chemicals that simulate cardiac arrest, cause brain tumors, *etc.*

Normal Agent: If Dart delegates the assassination to a security agent (use the Guard template on p. 25), the following methods may be employed:

1) Sinclair is struck by a car while crossing

a street near his home at night. Neither the car nor the driver could be identified.

2) Sinclair is 'mugged' and killed.

3) Sinclair falls from a building after a suicide note is forged by the A.A.I. Security Division. Any PC who talked with Sinclair before his murder should be suspicious; Sinclair did not seem to be a suicidal type.

4) Sinclair's home is broken into, and the assassin injects him with an overdose of drugs: cocaine, speed, or heroin. The body is left for the neighbors to find. A.A.I. says that they fired Sinclair because of drug abuse.

Sinclair's death notice appears in the obituaries of the local newspaper the day after it occurs. PCs thumbing through the paper notice it, especially those keeping an eye on A.A.I.

A.A.I.'s statements concerning Sinclair claim that he showed difficulty adjusting to the environment at the facility; he was asked to have a medical check-up which he refused to take, and his symptoms were believed to be caused by drug use. These symptoms intensified to the extent that they began to endanger personnel. A.A.I. states that Sinclair was once an excellent researcher, but his work in the past year was poor and disruptive. They are saddened by his death and express their condolences, but refuse to answer any questions that might incriminate A.A.I.

SINCLAIR'S DATA

Sinclair had all the incriminating evidence on Utopia hidden at his home; he didn't expect A.A.I. to be so quick in retaliating for his theft and didn't put the evidence in a secure location. Sinclair lives in a comfortably furnished two-story house in a quiet suburban community. He was unmarried and wasn't well known by his neighbors. (GMs can use the maps for Homestead on pages C11 and C12 of the *Champions Rule Book* for Sinclair's house; use only the left-hand half of each map, dividing along the wall to the right of the stairs, converting extra bedrooms to storage areas and a den, and adjusting hallways accordingly.)

At some point after Sinclair's death, the Coalition breaks into his house to recover the

stolen evidence. This provides an opportunity for the PCs to intercept the Coalition if they know Sinclair kept the evidence at his home. Unless they have reason to expect the PCs to be on the scene, only Dart and Ultraviolet are present; if trouble is expected, Diamond and possibly Piledriver are also here. They arrive at the house at night dressed as common burglars and try to make the break-in look like a common burglary, taking money and small items of value. While searching for the incriminating evidence, they miss the following items:

1) The Utopia Project brochure (p. 23) is in the house. Sinclair was using it as a bookmark in a pharmacology text.

2) Sinclair's parking permit for the Utopia Project is hanging from the mirror in his car. An address for the hypermetrazine chemical plant and the Utopia Project is on the permit. In the glove compartment is Sinclair's Red Clearance security badge.

3) Somewhere in the house is a manila envelope with pictures of Utopia in all its incom-

plete glory. The picture was taken in bright sunlight, and the effect is quite stunning. The security building is the focus of the picture, and PCs examining it notice the armored guards and construction crews working in the picture. The uniforms of the workers may be traced to A.A.I. No address is on the picture.

4) Many books in Sinclair's house deal with chemistry and pharmaceutical studies. PCs may conclude Sinclair was a chemist.

5) If the GM wants to give the PCs a major hint, a (second) vial of hypermetrazine can be carefully hidden in the house.

THE UTOPIA PRISON

The Utopia construction site can be found easily with a little research. It's in a rural area outside the Campaign City and is still under construction. Provided on page 23 is a brochure on Utopia (a combination of empty rhetoric and scare tactics); PCs may have a chance to read it during the adventure.



The PCs should investigate the construction site. Once there, they can discover the secret research taking place in the project and confront Coalition members stationed there. The activities of the personnel at the facility depend on when the PCs arrive at the site. Twenty workers, nine C-Assist workers (see p. 25), and a full guard shift (including six armored guards) are always at the site; only the number of technicians and researchers varies.

Night: At night, Utopia resembles a military encampment, as armored forms work around the clock to meet the completion deadline. The compound is lit by huge searchlights that wash brilliant white light over the stark buildings. There are only two technicians at the site, and the lab is closed. Dart and at least one other Coalition member are here (undercover) for security. If Dart previously observed Sinclair talking to a PC known to be a member of a large group, he has enough Coalition members at the site to repel the PCs (choosing Piledriver, Hammerhand, Diamond, Ultraviolet, and Fire & Ice, in that order). They stay in the security building until needed.

Day: During the day, there is a standard shift of workers, and all personnel mentioned in the descriptions are at their assigned places. In addition to Dart, Stafford is on the day shift.

TOURS

If the PCs (in their secret identities) ask for a tour of Utopia, they are allowed to do so if they agree to a search (any confiscated weapons are returned after an uneventful tour), and to be accompanied by Stafford and Utopia security personnel. Photographers and journalists are welcome if they promise to give Utopia a "fair" (good) report; hostile reporters and muckrakers are not allowed within the walls. Stafford tries to convince PCs that nothing is wrong; he does *not* allow them in the security building or near the construction and security armor ("I'm sorry, but that's a secure area and contains sensitive information about the workings of the company. I wish I could show you, but the rules are designed to protect both you and us.").

A.A.I.

Serving the public — promoting order, rehabilitation, and safety.

UTOPIA

In today's day and age, violent crime has risen dramatically, with the government displaying a growing inability to deal with it. City streets have turned into war zones, with citizens plagued by urban gangs, and drug wars. The government has tried imprisoning offenders as a solution, but the current prison system is notoriously overcrowded, with sentences reduced, even for repeat offenders such as murderers and rapists. Time after time they are let back on the streets after serving only days or months out of their sentences.

Overcrowding has turned current prisons into dens of violence. To make matters worse, psychological counseling services are poor to non-existent, health care is substandard, even primitive, and there is a lack of an outlet for energy; prisoners are confined without providing any constructive means of reimbursing the community for the crimes they have committed. It costs an average of \$23,000 a year to keep a criminal in prison. And when the prisoners return to the streets, there is nothing to prevent them from killing and raping again. This is blatant government irresponsibility.

Utopia is designed to rehabilitate the common street criminal. It is set up to help offenders and heal the wrongs that have been done to society. We provide a humane living environment, along with effective security measures that protect the outside world from escapees. Health care and counseling services are state of the art. In addition, the cost of each prisoner to the taxpayer has been substantially reduced.

Constructed with the latest technology, Utopia is the first in a series of easily-constructed institutions designed by A.A.I. to meet the growing demands of the American criminal justice system.

If asked, Stafford and other executives freely admit that they are using the facility to make money, but if they can do some good while doing it, all the better. "Some prisoners really need help," Stafford adds, "If we can help them and make a profit while saving the taxpayer some money, it sounds like everyone is getting a good deal."

If the PCs arrive at Utopia in hero ID, McGavin questions them and orders the security guards to watch them carefully. Stafford welcomes the PCs (characters with the Psychology skill notice that he is nervous) and takes publicity shots with the PCs, using the photos to associate them with Utopia. If the PCs attack the project in the future, these pictures are used against them, saying the PCs endorsed the project before they attacked it, showing their ambiguous feelings and their unreliability as witnesses.

If the Coalition has encountered these heroes before, especially during the murder of Dr. Sinclair, McGavin might try to set up an ambush for the PCs; trying to convince them to leave some

of their more powerful and obvious weapons at the gate ("For security reasons.") to make them more vulnerable to an attack by the rest of the team.

DIRECT ASSAULT

If the PCs charge into Utopia, the Security forces defend as best they can. McGavin calls in the Coalition only if the PCs are close to discovering Utopia's secret (McGavin has them hold back in case the security forces defeat the PCs; if this occurs, A.A.I. can take them to court and the Coalition never has to enter the picture). If they fail to repel the intruders, the PCs have free rein of the base. Afterwards, A.A.I. sues the PCs for trespassing (and wins) and starts a smear campaign against them, dredging up any events in their past that would make the PCs' activities look questionable. A.A.I.'s publicity attack is overwhelming, and the PCs have a difficult time protecting themselves from the flurry of media questioning that results (see "Success," p. 29).



UTOPIA STAFF

Stafford: Charles Stafford is Utopia's manager, but he must obey the orders of (Security Director) Darrell McGavin, who has been transferred to the project to prevent more security leaks like Sinclair. If Stafford becomes a problem, McGavin disposes of him.

Security Guards: These solemn individuals are dressed in white shirts with dark blue pants; radios, revolvers, and billy clubs hang from their belts. They watch all visitors suspiciously.

Guards: [20] Skilled Normals, PS: Security Guard 11-, KS: (Weapon skill) 11-, KS: A.A.I. Security Protocol 11-, Familiarity with Small Arms and Billy Club. Have one of three skills: Security Armor Use 11-, Combat Driving: A.A.I. Security Jeep 11-, or A.A.I. Heavy Weapons Training 11-. The guards carry .38 revolvers, billy clubs, and radios on their belts.

Armored Guards: [6] Use the Turtle™ armor on p. S43 of the *Champions Rulebook* with the armor's STR upgraded to 30, and the agent statistics listed there. The movement power is Flight, +5 PD (or Infrared Vision for night workers) is the special power, with Autofire, 12D6 EB, 8D6 AP EB and Entanglers as typical weapons. There is one armored guard for every three C-Assist Frames (see below) used by the workers. The GM should add more armored guards if the PCs are extremely tough. Each armored guard has a radio tuned to the base frequency.

Workers: These men are typical construction workers. They will lose their jobs if they talk to people not cleared by A.A.I. Security (e.g. the PCs), so they ignore any PC unless she is an attractive female. The workers are overseen by armored guards, a fact that the workers resent, and they grumble and complain if given the opportunity. All the workers wear white hard hats and blue uniforms with the "A.A.I." insignia on the sleeves and pockets. If attacked, workers can pick up jack-

hammers, wrenches, shovels, etc. to fight with (+3D6 HTH Attack; varies according to weapon). A Presence attack scatters them.

Workers: [20] Normal Humans, PS: Construction Worker 11-, Familiarity with A.A.I. Engineering Equipment. Each construction worker has one of the following skill: Combat Driving: C-Assist Frame 11-, KS: Operate Construction Equipment (not armor) 11-, or a specialized skill (bricklayer, concrete mixer, demolitions, etc.) at 11-.

C-Assist Frames: [9] +30 STR, 300 END Reserve (no REC), OIF: Metal Exoskeletons (-1/2), Bulky (-1/2), Active Points: 60, Real Cost: 30 points. These frames have batteries that last for three hours before needing to be recharged. They are not intended for combat, and no worker has Combat Skill with them. They can be employed in combat, but are clumsy; a worker may score a lucky hit.

Technicians: These standoffish types monitor the construction equipment and are found wherever the C-Assist Frames are used, or in the recharging chamber in the security building. The workers hate the technicians. The technicians hate the workers.

Technicians: [7] Skilled Normals, INT 12, PS: Technician 11-, with skill in either Electronics 11-, Mechanics 11-, or C-Assist Frame Maintenance 11-.

Researchers: The researchers are only seen if the PCs enter the security building and the lower level. They wear white lab coats and spend their time experimenting with hypermetrazine and surveying the lab construction. If the researchers are seen outside the security building catching a bite to eat, PCs might wonder where they came from.

Researchers: [6] Skilled Normals, INT 13, PS: Drug Researcher 11- or Doctor 11-, Paramedic 11- for doctors, and one Scientist skill (SC: Pharmacology or Chemistry).



SECURITY

Clearance Cards: Utopia staff have three classifications: Red, White, and Blue. Each staff member carries an ID badge with a color insignia showing his clearance. Red Clearance staff are allowed into the drug-testing labs; this includes the scientists and McGavin. White Clearance staff members are security guards and technicians; they are permitted anywhere in the project except the lower level. White Clearance workers are unaware of the drug-testing program. Blue Clearance designates construction workers, and their movement in Utopia is restricted to construction areas.

Alarms: A klaxon is installed in the compound. If Utopia is attacked, the alarm sounds, and guards move to defend the complex. Workers take refuge in the finished dormitory as the security guards and the armored guards confront intruders.

Cameras: Cameras cover the complex, including the interior of buildings; McGavin has two guards

in the security building keeping a close eye on the cameras. A camera failure causes two security guards to investigate.

Unorthodox Entry: The security guards cannot detect tunneling, and they don't spot teleporting, invisible, or dimensional-shifting characters unless they suddenly appear in front of a camera within the complex. Shapeshifting characters with a stolen ID badge have little difficulty entering the project.

THE UTOPIA KEY

Everything in Utopia is pristine white; almost sterilized. The facility is state of the art and spotlessly clean, right down to the bathrooms and cell space. There are two levels to the project: the ground level prison, and the guarded underlevel containing the drug-testing labs. (See maps on p. 28.)

1. **The Perimeter:** A 12-foot fence topped with barbed wire surrounds the compound. A concrete

wall is being built to block sight into the prison, but isn't finished yet. A large sign is displayed at the entrance:



The checkpoint at the entrance is manned by a stern guard. He has a visitor list hanging on the wall near the desk, and reports any strangers loitering outside the site. A security team arrives shortly after a report to usher strangers away. If the strangers are heroes in costume, McGavin (with his Dart costume under his street clothes) is part of the security team.

2. The Dormitories: These are large cell blocks; Block A; Block B, *etc.* Each dormitory meets state standards for prison housing, although the rooms are spartan; A.A.I. does not expect the prisoners to care what their rooms look like while they are drugged. Each cell is painted a blinding white and is waiting to hold an occupant. Three of the dormitories are still under construction, but one, Block A, is finished, acting as a sample dormitory for visiting dignitaries and criminologists studying the new facility. Each dormitory can hold two hundred prisoners. One (probably D) will hold the 'control group' for the drug-testing, while the other three will be test groups. The researchers will have the inmates eat in shifts, and drug the three test groups with different doses of hypermetrazine. The guard stations for the prison personnel in the dormitories are smaller than one would expect; along with the hypermetrazine, Bridge intends to use a variety of other drugs to ensure the docility of all the prisoners (including the control group).

3. The Yard: Politicians visiting the prison expect to see an open exercise area so it is here, but Bridge actually intends to have the inmates work off their drug-induced tension in the Industry Building.

4. The Industry Building: The industrial section promises to be quite large. A sign near the con-

struction area proclaims: "A.A.I.: Building a Better Tomorrow." The industrial complex will turn out farm machine parts and have a metal shop and processing factory. Amidst the new construction is a hulking C-Assist Frame worker moving cinder blocks for the foundation.

5. The Cafeteria: The cafeteria isn't finished, and construction here is a low priority.

6. The Deli Trailer: This parked trailer offers sandwiches and drinks at a modest price. During lunch break, the workers lounge around and grumble amongst themselves; if a reporter or journalist approaches them, they quiet down and glare suspiciously at the stranger.

7. The Security Building: This is where the scientists plot drug distribution and the expected results on worker productivity. Aside from Cell Block A, it is the only completed building on the site.

A. Lobby: A secretary sits at a desk here and correlates all information on the project. She is a crotchety old woman who is rude to visitors. A computer is on her desk, and a file cabinet along the wall holds construction and finance records (that mention the lower level and its lab equipment). A photocopier is in one corner, next to a water-cooler, and a scaled-down model of Utopia is on the wall, with future expansions shown in red. "A.A.I." is highlighted beneath the model.

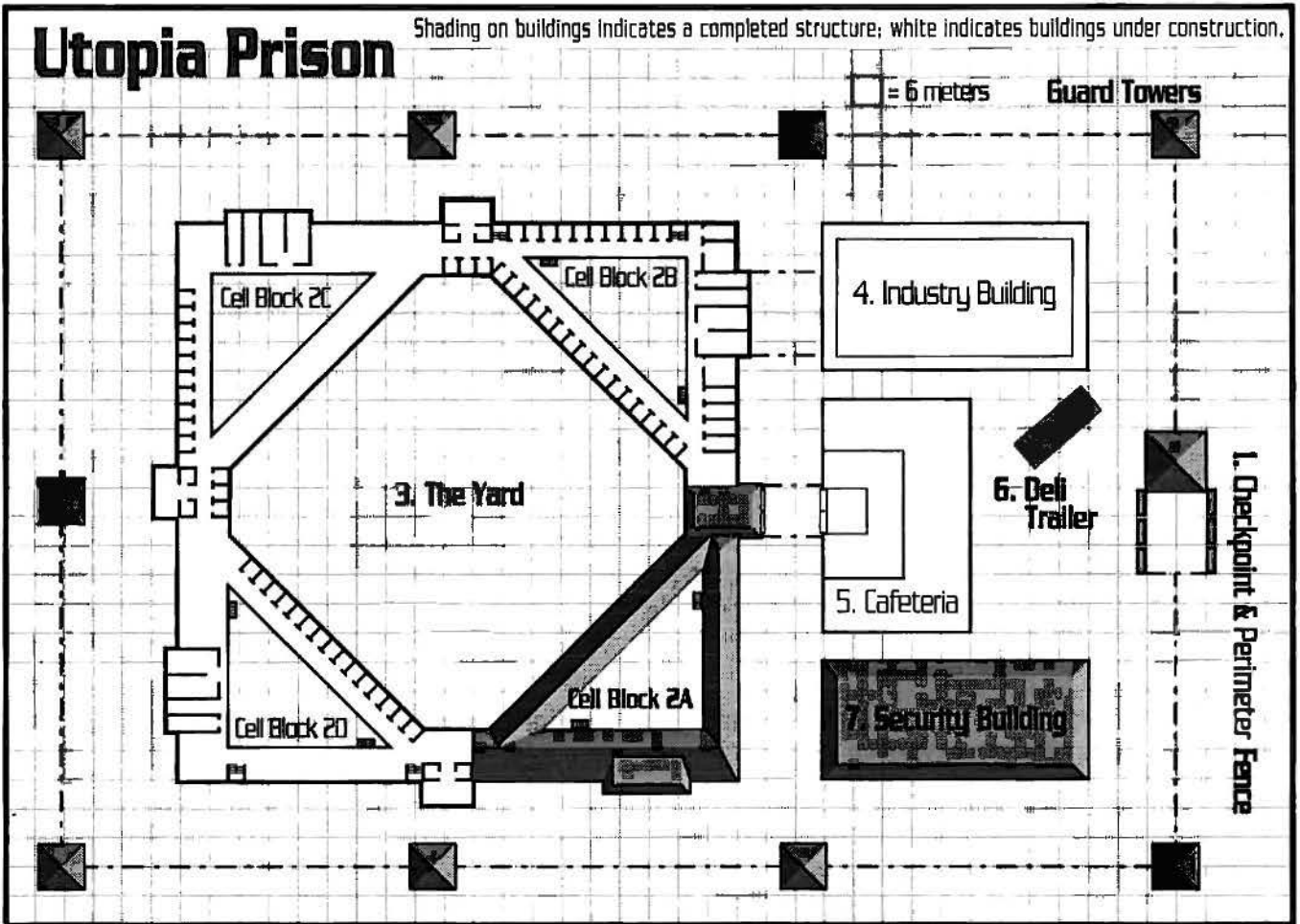
B. Lounge: This cramped room has a small TV mounted on the wall. A table dominates the room, and only sits three or four people comfortably. The secretary watches soap operas here during lunch.

C. Stafford's Office: Stafford's office is comfortable, and family pictures are displayed on the walls. His desk contains files and blueprints, along with requisition forms for new equipment and drugs. A melted icepack lies on the desk.

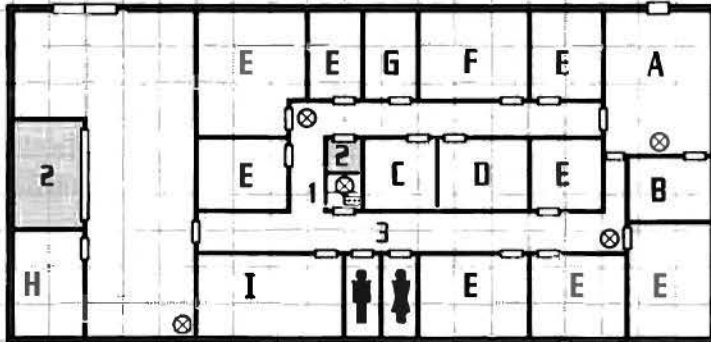
D. McGavin's Office: This room is locked when McGavin is out. When out of the office, Dart keeps his armored costume in a briefcase hidden behind the file cabinet, but he wears his gadget belt and

Utopia Prison

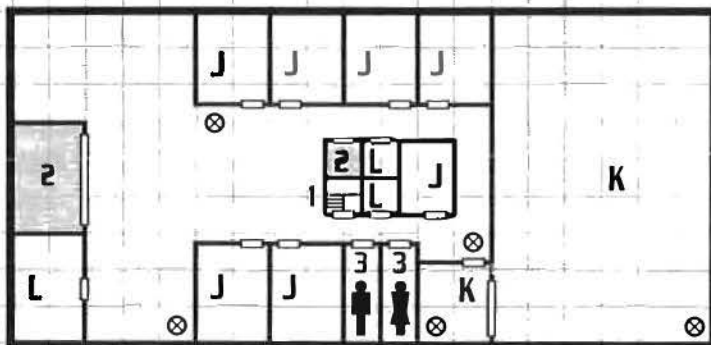
Shading on buildings indicates a completed structure; white indicates buildings under construction.



Ground Level



Basement



Security Building

- A Lobby
 - B Lounge
 - C Stafford's Office
 - D McGavin's Office
 - E Offices
 - F Monitor Room
 - G Weapons Room
 - H C-Assist Frame Recharge Chamber
 - 1 Conference Room
 - J Temporary Housing
 - K Medical Lab
 - L Storage
- 1 Stairs
2 Elevator
3 Bathrooms
- ⊗ Security Camera

The Utopia Project

dart-pistol. McGavin has no other incriminating evidence in his office. Posted on his door are duty schedules for the guards.

E. Other Offices: The offices of the foreman and technicians each have a desk (with a phone and a small computer or typewriter), a chair and a few personal effects.

F. Monitor Room: A large computer panel oversees Utopia and displays breaches in the perimeter fence. Two guards are always on duty here, drinking coffee as they watch the monitors. A base alarm can be sounded from here when an intruder is detected, and a radio in the room enables communication with all guards on the base.

G. Weapons Room: This armory is locked, and only Stafford and McGavin have keys. Within the room are .38 pistols and one of each of the Armored Guard special weapons.

H. C-Assist Frame Recharge Chamber: This room contains C-Assist Frame recharge harnesses. There are no suits here unless they are being recharged.

I. Conference Room: This room has a large central table surrounded by comfortable chairs, and a sophisticated suite of visual display devices built into one wall.

J. Temporary Housing: Coalition members may be sleeping in these rooms, ready to defend Utopia when necessary.

K. Medical Lab: Two guards monitor this area at all times. No one is allowed past the antechamber unless they have Red Clearance. The lab is shielded with force fields and lined with a variety of substances (including lead and *Seradium*) to block N-ray vision. This lab is where the preliminary hypermetrazine experimentation takes place. The drug is being tested on caged animals, and the dosages are modified to get a range of 'acceptable parameters' for human consumption. Characters familiar with medicine (PS: Doctor, Paramedic, *etc.*) notice that the lab equipment surpasses standard hospital technology. All evi-

dence necessary to incriminate A.A.I. is here; there are samples of hypermetrazine, the address of the plant that delivers the chemical components of the drug, and documentation suggesting 'proper' dosages for the Utopia prisoners.

L. Storage: These rooms contain cleaning and office supplies, not sensitive or incriminating documentation.

OPTIONS

If the PCs were slow to investigate Sinclair's murder, Utopia could be complete and under operation. While the C-Assist Frames and the construction workers would be gone, a fight here could now involve up to 500 inmates with their physical characteristics boosted by hypermetrazine and their wills firmly controlled by the armed A.A.I. prison guards.

SUCCESS

Even if the heroes are successful in this adventure, the Coalition and Bridge may never be brought to trial. If faced with an investigation, Bridge can easily remove all incriminating evidence from the project. In addition, Bridge can lean on the local government to stall the investigation, dismiss the case, or have the PCs arrested for trespassing. This should characterize A.A.I. adventures; the corporation sacrifices lower-level executives to save itself and covers up evidence to prevent higher-level arrests.

Any Coalition members arrested raise bail, and A.A.I.'s lawyers ensure that they either plead guilty to a lesser offense or are acquitted. A fine or a short incarceration at a luxurious prison is the most serious penalty a Coalition member faces. While the PCs are fuming over this, Bridge orders the PCs ground into dust.

Dart sets up a Covert Operations Division to investigate each PC and delivers a warning if they continue to oppose A.A.I. Government officials under Bridge's control start to harass characters, for example, denying them privileges normally allowed in their role as protectors. If the PCs are vigilantes, the police step up attempts to

capture them. Villains who had no previous contact with the PCs (including members of the Coalition not encountered during this adventure) attack them without warning. If the PCs' secret identities are known, they have their credit ratings slashed, are fired from their jobs, *etc.*

PCs who uphold the law may not be able to confront A.A.I. on equal terms. Vigilantes may be more suited to attacking Bridge and his cohorts, but this invites retaliation far more vicious than would be given to other heroes; vigilantes can only wage a secret war against Bridge, and Bridge can use their reputations against them.

FAILURE

If, on the other hand, the Coalition wins their fight, two things may happen. First, A.A.I. sues the PCs for trespassing, vandalism, assault and battery; whatever charges it can bring against them. The A.A.I. Legal Services Branch is an old hand at discrediting witnesses; at the least, a restraining order is brought against the characters. If the PCs face A.A.I. in court, they lose. Or A.A.I. may kidnap and exploit the defeated PCs, dissecting powered armor, examining or using mutants and aliens for special projects, *etc.* An adventure may have to be staged where the PCs escape from A.A.I.'s researchers.

If the PCs don't manage to stop the construction of Utopia, Bridge expands his operation after the testing here is completed. He builds more Utopia prisons across the United States as the first step in a plan to use criminals as slaves towards its goal of economic domination. More Utopias will then be constructed in Third World countries, with Bridge finding corrupt government allies in Central America, the Caribbean, South America, and Africa.

Once the hypermetrazine testing is completed, Bridge has his researchers write-up the data in faked studies (that downplay side effects and hide the prison connection), hoping to sell some variant of the drug to the U.S. Army for use by normal soldiers on the battlefield. He might even approve use of the drug by his own security forces (including the Coalition) when they are forced to confront superheroes.

TERRENCE BRIDGE

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats	
15	STR	5	OCV:	6
13	DEX	9	DCV:	6
15	CON	10	ECV:	6
11	BODY	2	Phases: 4, 8, 12	
15	INT	5		
18	EGO	16	Costs	
20	PRE	10		
12	COM	1	Char:	66
3	PD	0		Base: 100
3	ED	0		+
3	SPD	7	Powers:	173
6	REC	0		Disad: 139
30	END	0		=
28	STUN	1	Totals:	238
				238
Cost		Powers		END
7	High Range Radio Hearing, Invisible to Bugging Devices (+1/2), OAF: PCN Phone (-1)			
5	A.A.I. Intelligence, Portable Handheld Computer System (V-I-P ii)			
	Val	Characteristics	Cost	
	20	INT	10	
	10	DEX	0	
	2	SPD	0	
	Skills 1			
3	KS: Background of a Target Character 13- (includes criminal record, insurance company, family, place of residence, net worth, and financial status)			
3	KS: Background of Target Company 13- (Holdings and Value of Stock)			
3	KS: Wall Street Report 13-			
3	KS: Bridge's Personal Schedule 13-			
	Skills			
5	Perk: Head of A.A.I.			
15	Perk: Billionaire			
40	Perk: Bases (Guarded Residences; 200 points)			
30	Perk: Vehicles (High Tech Personal Shuttles and Ground Vehicles; 150 points)			
25	Perk: 8 Followers (50 pt. Competent Normal Bodyguards)			

Skills	
4	PS: Head Executive of A.A.I. (INT) 13-
3	High Society 13-
3	Bureaucratics 13-
3	Persuasion 13-
3	Trading 13-
3	Bribery 13-
3	Skill-Enhancer: Business Scholar
1	(1) KS: Rival Corporations 11-
1	(2) KS: Criminal Underworld 11-
1	(3) KS: Tax Evasion 11-
1	(4) KS: International by-laws 11-
1	(5) KS: High Finance 11-
3	Skill Enhancer: Well-Connected
1	(1) Local Senator 11-
1	(2) Local Representative 11-
1	(3) Customs Official 11-
1	(4) VIPER Nest Leader 11-
1	(5) Industrial Spy 11-
3	6 Favors (GM Discretion)
1	Familiarity with Conversation 8-
2	+1 Combat Level with Pistol
4	+2 Combat Levels with Punch
100+ Disadvantages	
15	Enraged if Physically Attacked or Challenged 11-, 11-
10	Enraged if Orders Questioned 11-, 11-
20	Psychological Limitation: Amoral
20	Psychological Limitation: Hateful
10	Psychological Limitation: Greedy
5	Physical Limitation: Addicted to Nicotine
10	Reputation: Head of A.A.I., 11-
10	DNPC: "Trophy Wife" (Norm), 8-
25	Hunted: UNTIL (As Pow, NCI) 14-
10	Public ID: Terrence Bridge
3	Villain Bonus/Experience

BACKGROUND: Bridge was born to wealth and power, raised to uphold the beliefs of his father, Miles Bridge, the aging leader of Allied Automation Industries. Hailing back to the years before World War II, A.A.I. gained prominence through new weapon developments and mass-production of armaments for the United States and nations around the world. Terrence's father was cold and emotionless and saw business as a source of power over the world and life itself. "Let nothing

hold you back," Miles Bridge told his son, "Let nothing keep you from your aspirations."

At 29, Terrence murdered his father and usurped control of A.A.I. The company, once under the direction of an intolerant, stubborn old man, yielded to a darker age of recklessness, with brutal seizures of fledgling corporations and a dramatic rise in white-collar crime. Meanwhile, conditions for employees grew to reflect A.A.I.'s exterior policies. A.A.I. construction sites resembled *gulags*, with armored guards walking the perimeters, keeping a silent watch on the workers, and the security surrounding white-collar workers was no less intense, if less obvious.

To cross A.A.I. is to invite severe retaliation. Bridge, in the United States, is invulnerable to attack; he owns police and politicians, and blackmails, threatens, and kills those beyond bribery. Bridge maintains a full staff of lawyers and lobbyists who apprise him of government bills detrimental to his plans, and who are his first line of defense in the unlikely event he is brought to trial.

The members of the Coalition are resources to Bridge, nothing more; he has no intention of curing them of their disabilities, although research teams are studying their powers to create super-human agents for profit.

QUOTE: "There's senseless, cold-blooded murder, and then there's good business."

PERSONALITY: Terrence Bridge is dedicated to the accumulation of power and sees business and the privatizing of land and human services as ways to achieve this end. For Bridge, *everything* has a price.

Bridge's greatest weakness is his temper; he lashes out at anyone who challenges him. PCs may be able to draw Bridge into a trap before he thinks a situation through; he doesn't listen to his advisors when he is angry and may order massive retaliations that leave him vulnerable to waiting agencies.

POWERS/TACTICS: Terrence Bridge is a vicious, amoral predator; his crimes against humanity would take teams of researchers years to

analyze. He, more than almost any businessman in history, has resorted to brutality and murder to establish his supremacy in the business world.

Bridge typically acts through intermediaries, and it is not uncommon for him to dispatch his subordinates and be halfway around the world while they carry out his orders. He has large security and espionage divisions at his command that keep him constantly informed on the progress of the opposition, and has access to the latest technology, even weapon prototypes PCs may not know exist. The GM should surprise players by having Bridge's agents employ futuristic (and unstable) weaponry and devices. And, of course, there is the Coalition.

Bridge does not believe in tactics. He believes in superior firepower, and is subtle only to the point of protecting himself from the law. If he controls the police and politicians in a section of the world, the PCs can expect blatant cover-ups to protect Bridge. In addition, they may be arrested or denounced by the media.

APPEARANCE: Terrence Bridge stands 6'2" with a weightlifter's frame barely contained within his business suit. He is ruggedly handsome with a strong face and intense eyes. His face is filled with cold disdain that can explode into a fiery rage at the slightest provocation.

DART

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
30	STR	20	OCV: 8
23	DEX	39	DCV: 8
25	CON	30	ECV: 4
13	BODY	6	Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
15	INT	5	
13	EGO	6	Costs
13	PRE	3	
10	COM	0	Char: 135 Base: 100
8	PD	2	+
8	ED	3	Powers: 255 Disad: 292
5	SPD	17	=
11	REC	0	Totals: 392 392
50	END	0	
45	STUN	4	

Cost	Powers	END
20	Martial Arts - A.A.I. Security Training	
	Maneuver OCV DCV Notes	
	Martial Strike 0 +2 9D6 Strike	
	Choke Hold -2 0 Grab, 2 1/2D6 NND	
	Martial Block +2 +2 Block, Abort	
	Martial Disarm -1 +1 Disarm, 45 STR	
	Clinch -1 -1 45 STR Grab	
1	Can use Billy Club with A.A.I. Security Training	
5	+1 DC w/Martial Arts (already added in)	
33	Weapon Multipower (67 Active Points), OAF: Dart-Pistol (-1)	
6m	9D6 Physical EB, Armor-Piercing (+1/2), 2 Clips of 9 Flechettes (+0)	
6m	9D6 Physical EB, Explosive (+1/2), 2 Clips of 9 Explosive Darts (+0)	
6m	5D6 EB NND (+1, rPD Protects), 2 Clips of 20 Hypodermic Darts (+1/2)	
9m	3D6+1 RKA, +1 STUN Multiplier (+1/2), No KB (-1/4), 2 Clips of 9 Flechettes (0)	
6m	+3 Combat Levels with Dart-Pistol, OAF: (Laser Sight, -1)	
2m	+3 to Offset Range Penalties, OAF: (Tracking Scope, -1)	
6	+3D6 HTH, 0 END (+1/2), No KB (-1/4), OAF (Billy Club, -1)	
36	18PD/18ED Armor, OIF (Duralloy Weave Battlesuit, -1/2)	
5	Helmet Multipower (10 Active Points), OAF (-1)	
1m	Mental Defense (Alpha Wave Interference Generator), 10 points	
1m	Camera (Eidetic Memory), Visual Images only (-1/2)	
1m	High Range Radio Hearing	
1m	Telescopic Vision, 2 Levels	
1m	IR Vision	
1m	UV Vision	
1m	Flash Defense, 10 points	
1m	+2 to Hearing PER rolls	
2	+2 Levels with Lockpicking, OAF (Electronic Lockpicks, -1)	
2	+2 Levels with Climbing, OAF (Climbing Cord, Grapple Hook, -1)	

Skills	
4	Perk: Head of Security for A.A.I.
4	PS: Head of Security for A.A.I. (INT) 13-
5	Perk: Well Off
3	Skill-Enhancer: Corporate Scholar
1	(1) KS: Computer Hacking 11-
1	(2) KS: Criminal Underworld 11-
1	(3) KS: Industrial Espionage 11-
1	(4) KS: Rival Corporations 11-
1	(5) KS: A.A.I. Security Mandates 11-
1	(6) KS: A.A.I. Power Armor Operation 11-
3	AK: San Antonio 11-
3	Acrobatics 14-
3	Breakfall 14-
3	Bugging 12-
3	Climbing 15-
3	Combat Driving 14-
3	Criminology 12-
3	Demolitions 11-
3	Interrogation 12-
3	Lockpicking 14-
3	Paramedic 12-
3	Security Systems 12-
3	Shadowing 11-
3	Sleight of Hand 14-
3	Stealth 14-
3	Systems Operations 12-
3	Tactics 12-
4	TF: All Ground Vehicles, Helicopters and A.A.I. Combat Rigs
4	WF: Small Arms and Uncommon Weapons
10	+2 Combat Levels with HTH
16	+2 Overall Combat Levels
100+	Disadvantages
10	Enraged if Ultraviolet wounded 11-, 11-
20	Physical Limitation: Terminally Ill
10	DNPCs: 2 Daughters (Incompetent), 8-
30	Hunted: UNTIL (Mo Pow, NCI) 14-
20	Hunted: Bullet and the Raiders (Mo Pow) 11-
20	Psychological Limitation: Afraid of Death
15	Psychological Limitation: Protective of Family
10	Psychological Limitation: Marriage Trouble
15	Secret ID: Darrell McGavin
142	Villain Bonus/Experience

BACKGROUND: A thin, uncomfortable and terribly shy young man, Darrell McGavin was an easy target for his co-workers at Dart Couriers. Darrell's boss hated the sniveling Darrell and gave him the assignments other workers refused to take.

One day Big Eddie told Darrell to deliver a package of chemicals to a research plant outside L.A. At the plant, he quickly became lost among the vats. Spotting a foreman up on a catwalk, Darrell waved his arms and shouted to get his attention. The foreman beckoned the young man onto the catwalk to talk to him. Climbing onto the unstable platform, Darrell let the package slip from his hand, and as he tried to catch it, he followed it into one of the chemical vats.

After being rescued and rushed to the hospital, the doctors could find nothing wrong with him; in fact, Darrell seemed healthier than ever and was released to go home.

It took time for Darrell to discover that he was changing; it hit him one morning when he discovered that his reflection in the mirror was different, and his shirts had become noticeably tighter. In barely a week, Darrell underwent a growth spurt that added fifty pounds of muscle to his frame. Although pleased with his strength, he couldn't decide what to do with it. His first decision was to play "getting even" with the employees of Dart Couriers, especially Big Eddie, and to "liberate" the contents of the company safe while there.

An hour or two after the ensuing fight, however, Darrell's insecurity resurfaced. He started worrying that his powers might fade, and had to make sure they were permanent in case Big Eddie and the rest of the couriers caught up with him. Dressed in a black bodysuit, Darrell drove to the chemical plant late that night and broke into the executive offices. As he was nervously removing files in the darkness, a beautiful woman materialized next to him and touched his arm. Darrell screamed and punched her.

The two fought until a group of VIPER guards burst into the room, at which point Darrell and Ultraviolet teamed up to defeat the attackers. Catching their breath after the battle, they apologized to each other, and when asked, Darrell told Ultraviolet that he was "er...the amazing...Dart."

Martha invited him to return with her to Koo's base, and Darrell, who had never had a girl ask him *anything* while he had been delivering packages, accompanied her. Having defeated the VIPER agents and interested this beautiful supervillain, Darrell found a new feeling stir in his consciousness: confidence.

Koo trained Dart in disarming security systems and the art of electronic warfare, and Dart and Ultraviolet performed several missions together. As time progressed, they grew closer, spending their off-duty hours with each other. Darrell proposed to Martha shortly after Diamond joined the team. Ultraviolet accepted and eventually the couple produced a pair of healthy twin girls.

When the Geodesics broke up months later, Darrell and Martha settled in San Antonio where he got a job with A.A.I., becoming a supervisor for the armored work crews A.A.I. used in construction projects. As the year wore on, however, Darrell noticed his muscles becoming stiff and painful, and when his wife began to have skin problems his concerns more than doubled.

When Martha underwent her change, Darrell was horrified. His wife had become a *thing*, and he found it difficult to be in the same room with her. He frantically looked for a way to help her, contacting paraphysiology labs throughout the U.S., but only empty theories met his pleas for assistance. After an extensive search, he decided to turn to his employer, Terrence Bridge. He knew Bridge's financial power and A.A.I.'s research in biotechnology might be able to help his wife. Darrell revealed his secret identity to Bridge and offered to pay Bridge whatever he desired if he would help Martha. Amused by Darrell's nobility but sensing weakness, Bridge changed the terms of the offer; if Darrell and his wife would join A.A.I.'s 'special operatives' division *and* provide the whereabouts of Diamond, Bridge would do his best to help Martha. Darrell agreed and became the leader of the Coalition.

Darrell has recently discovered that the pains he is feeling are the result of Koo's virus, which is causing muscular decay throughout his body. A.A.I. doctors have informed him that he has only a few years left to live. Darrell kept this knowledge to himself for almost a month before

he broke down, and told Martha what the virus was doing to his body. Martha fought with him about not telling her, and the two have kept their distance since. They are both having difficulty staying around each other for any length of time, and their work relationship is unfriendly and accusatory during the best of situations.

Unknown to Martha, Darrell has begun looking for foster parents for the children.

PERSONALITY: Darrell is bitter, depressed, and terrified that he will die before his daughters are grown; Martha's suspicion that their daughters carry the virus has only increased his feeling of helplessness. Darrell and Martha argue almost constantly now, and Bridge is taking fiendish delight in watching their marriage crumble. Darrell is trying his best to deal with his shameful feelings about his decay, the disgust he feels for his wife, and his fears for his children, but he's certain things can only get worse.

QUOTE: "Look, friend, you're about to make a big mistake."

POWERS/TACTICS: Darrell used to benchpress six tons regularly. Now he can barely lift a ton above his head for more than a second before fatigue forces him to drop the weight crashing to the ground. His endurance and resistance to damage have also dropped proportionally, his formerly healthy skin becoming sunken and pale, sagging noticeably around the arms and chest.

In his position as A.A.I.'s Security Director, Darrell has modified a suit of armor to compensate for his fading strength. The armor is a flexible *Duralloy* mesh and holds a microcomputer in its helm including Perspex Lenses that provide Infrared, Ultraviolet and Telescopic Vision as well as a miniature camera and radio. His helmet also has an alpha wave interference field built into the fore section that protects him from psionic attacks. His utility belt contains several gadgets: a thin climbing cord, collapsible grappling hook, miniature binoculars, lockpicks, and an electronic safe cracker, and Dart occasionally carries other equipment he deems necessary for missions, such as anti-security countermeasures and EMP bombs to destroy electronic equipment.

During combat, Dart remains out of sight, using cover to keep a safe distance between him and his foes. He has no desire to enter physical combat and is afraid his condition will worsen if he exerts himself too much. He prefers firing his dart-pistol at a distance. The pistol has a variety of flechettes, and Dart uses his most appropriate form of attack against opponents: armor-piercers for bricks, exploding shells for martial artists, and hypodermic darts for psionics.

APPEARANCE: Darrell McGavin stands 5'11", and weighs 230 lbs., with thick black hair and dull blue eyes. His complexion is pale and his skin sags around the arms and chest. When on missions, Dart wears an armored black bodysuit with a belt of gadgets, and his pistol fits snugly in a holster strapped to his belt. Ammunition hangs on bandoleers across his chest.

ULTRAVIOLET

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
0	STR	-10	OCV: 9
27	DEX	51	DCV: 9
30	CON	40	ECV: 3
10	BODY	0	Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
18	INT	8	
9	EGO	-2	Costs
15	PRE	5	
8	COM	-1	Char: 134 Base: 100
10	PD	10	+ +
20	ED	14	Powers: 208 Disad: 242
5	SPD	13	= =
6	REC	0	Totals: 342 342
60	END	0	
31	STUN	5	

Cost	Powers	END
90	Ultraviolet Radiation Multipower (90 Active Points)	
9μ	12D6 EB, Invisible to Sight (+1/2) (Active: 90)	9
7μ	6D6 EB NND (+1, UV Vision or Power Defense protects), Invisible to Sight (+1/2) (Active: 75)	7
5μ	25" Flight	5
2μ	Invisibility to Normal Sight, No Fringe	2

Cost	Powers	END
53	Desolidification, 0 END Persistent (+1), still affected by Radiation Attacks, cannot attack while Desolid, cannot move through objects that block ultraviolet radiation (-1/2)*	0
20	Full Life Support, Linked to Desolid (-1/2)	
5	UV Vision	

Skills		
5	Perk: Well Off	
3	Security Systems 13-	
2	AK: San Antonio 11-	
1	Familiarity with Paranormal Science 8-	
6	+2 Combat Levels with Energy Blast	

100+ Disadvantages		
20	Psychological Limitation: Desperate for a Cure	
10	Psychological Limitation: Marriage Difficulties	
25	Physical Limitation: Ultraviolet Form (Fully, All the Time)	
20	Distinctive Features: Ultraviolet Form (Notconc, Maj)	
10	DNPC: Daughters (Incompetent), 8-	
30	Hunted: UNTIL (Mo Pow, NCI) 14-	
20	Hunted: Bullet and the Raiders (Mo Pow) 11-	
15	Secret ID: Martha Bradshaw	
92	Villain Bonus/Experience	

BACKGROUND: When Martha heard the car pull up outside, she got off the bed, grabbed her bags, and crept down the stairs, avoiding the living room. She had everything she needed: her clothes, pictures of her friends, and even the strange bracelets she had found in the fields nearby when she was eight. They were a little thick and weighty, but they were pleasant to look at.

Martha and Paul had been making plans to run away for a long time; their main problem had been money. Paul had finally found a job in San Antonio, however he was evasive about the specifics. Only when they arrived in San Antonio did Martha realize what "job" Paul had accepted; his "friends" wanted to rob a bank. They claimed it

was an easy hit and that they only needed Paul as driver for the getaway car.

The robbery didn't go as planned. The police arrived as the group was leaving the bank and when one of Paul's accomplices opened fire, the police responded in kind. Martha and Paul tried to escape, but Paul was hit by a stray bullet and killed. Martha, enraged, wished she could kill the police...and watched in surprise as the flesh of one of the officers started smoking, and then burned away, leaving him screaming on the ground outside the bank. Martha began to focus her rage on other officers, and their flesh burst into flame. And as she channeled energy through her hands, Martha felt her wrists grow hot and then, before she could stop, she felt her alien bracelets painfully graft themselves to her wrists.

During the pained flight from the police (who coined the name Ultraviolet to describe her powers) that ensued, Martha was found and befriended by an elderly gentleman who gave her sanctuary from her pursuers. The man was Dr. Lirby Koo, who gave her food, shelter, and train-

ing. When she went on her first mission for him, to attack a VIPER chemical plant in Los Angeles, Martha discovered Dart. Panicked at her sudden appearance, he attacked her, and the two fought until VIPER guards arrived. Facing a common foe, they united to defeat them, and after the battle Martha brought Dart back to Koo's base.

As the months went by, Ultraviolet and Dart fell in love. Eventually, they were married, had twins, moved to a quiet suburb in San Antonio when the Geodesics broke up, and agreed to discontinue their criminal activities. Darrell took a job with A.A.I., and Martha remained at home, immersing herself in caring for her children.

A year after the dissolution of the Geodesics, Koo's parting gift to Ultraviolet revealed itself. Martha began to be plagued with a severe rash; her skin turned red and tender, itching in places, and flaking off painfully when she scratched. The rash slowly spread over her body, and Martha became bedridden, falling in and out of consciousness as the disease ate at her flesh. Weeks later, Martha awoke to discover herself



floating above her bed; her skin had flaked off entirely, and the bracelets, now decayed, had crumbled into dust on the bedspread.

It soon became apparent that she could no longer control her body's UV radiation emissions, and she had to be confined in a shielded section of the house to protect her children. Seeking a means to cure her, Darrell turned to his employer, Terrence Bridge, and offered their services as Dart and Ultraviolet if Bridge would help them.

Every day she is in the Coalition, Martha regrets her husband's choice and worries that Bridge is securing a tighter control over her and her family. She fears for her daughters and has begun to argue with Darrell about their future.

QUOTE: "Enough, already! Let's *do* something."

PERSONALITY: Martha's inability to be near her children has been difficult on her, and her suspicions that her daughters may also be infected with Koo's virus have only magnified her frustration. She checks on her daughters every chance she gets and has hired a personal physician to provide constant reports on their health. She worries about them constantly, and it interferes with her work in the Coalition, irritating Bridge.

Since her transformation, Martha has been afraid that she will never be human again, and is willing to do anything just to become normal.

POWERS/TACTICS: Martha's body has been transformed into living ultraviolet radiation. By concentrating, she can alter her body's refractive index and fade into the ultraviolet spectrum, turning herself invisible (she is usually visible as a shimmering outline in the air). In combat, Ultraviolet prefers to become invisible, take cover, and then bathe a target with ultraviolet rays (EB, Invisible Effects) while remaining in hiding. PCs attacking Dart are normally her first targets, but if any characters seem to be able to sense her, she attacks them first to protect herself. Ultraviolet does not like to melee with foes; she prefers to attack from a distance, and if directly threatened she will become desolid, retreat a safe distance, and then resolidify to renew her ranged attacks.

APPEARANCE: Martha is a vague female outline fluctuating at the fringe of the visible spectrum (indigo to violet), occasionally fading into complete invisibility.

DIAMOND

Val	Char	Cost	Combat	Stats
50	STR	*20	OCV:	6
18	DEX	24	DCV:	6
30	CON	40	ECV:	5
20	BODY	20	Phases:	3, 6, 9, 12
20	INT	10		
15	EGO	10	Costs	
20	PRE	10		
8	COM	-1	Char:	172 Base: 100
15	PD	*7		+ +
15	ED	*5	Powers:	217 Disad: 289
4	SPD	12		= =
10	REC	0	Totals:	389 389
60	END	0		
60	STUN	15		
* Statistics for Density Increase Added In				
Cost	Powers	END		
27	Density Increase (4 Levels), 0 END (+1/2), Persistent (+1/2), Always On (-1/2), -4" KB			
45	Armor (10PD/20ED)			
15	Damage Resistance (15PD/15ED)			
30	Full Life Support			
15	Sense Minerals at Range, Discriminatory			
5	Enhanced Sense: Ultrasound (New Power)			
Skills				
35	Talent: Find Weakness (All Attacks) 12-			
10	Talent: Eidetic Memory			
7	SC: Mineralogy (INT) 15-			
3	SC: Geology 13-			
3	SC: Inorganic Chemistry 13-			
3	SC: Molecular Biology 13-			
2	KS: Structural Integrity 11-			
2	KS: Architecture 11-			
15	+3 Combat Levels with HTH			
100+ Disadvantages				
20	Psychological Limitation: Logical			
10	Psychological Limitation: Arrogant			

100+ Disadvantages

10	Psychological Limitation: Condescending to Organic Life
15	Physical Limitation: Needs to Eat Minerals to Survive (Dependency: Minerals every 24 Hours or takes 1D6 STUN. Diamond cannot regain STUN or BODY if he does not consume minerals on a regular basis.)
10	Physical Limitation: Addicted to Minerals
25	Distinctive Features: Diamond Body (Not Concealable, Extreme Reaction)
30	Hunted: UNTIL (Mo Pow, NCI) 14-
20	Hunted: Bullet and the Raiders (Mo Pow) 11-
149	Villain Bonus/Experience

BACKGROUND: Charlie Horton had been a bum. One night, while walking hurriedly away from the railroad yard, he spotted a light in the fields. Believing it to be a group of hobo friends, Charlie approached and discovered that the light was coming from a translucent crystal the size of a house. Spotting an opening in the side, Charlie greedily ducked inside to explore.

Eventually blundering to the center of the crystal maze, Charlie found a large open space with loose, multi-colored diamonds littering the floor. Bending down, he began gathering them up. Unknown to Charlie, he was removing the equivalent of program chips from the ship's information and energy transference system. The fifth diamond he pulled out was the main memory storage crystal. The crystal, attributing its removal as a signal for a data core dump, downloaded its information into Charlie, rewriting his brain tissue into a crystalline lattice in the process. Overwhelmed by the transfer, Charlie was stunned for days, and had no recollection of leaving the ship. Still, when he later returned to the site, no remnant of the ship remained.

Each 'diamond' Charlie took gave him a different power. The ship's transmat crystal could 'decode' Charlie's molecular structure and rebuild it in a nearby location (teleport), the defense crystal could erect a force field, the propulsion crystal allowed him to affect an object's kinetic energy (Missile Deflection and Entangle), and the solar converter gathered light and focused it into



an energy beam. These crystals worked only as long as Charlie was conscious and in physical contact with them, so he held onto them jealously. After a few weeks of easy bank jobs, Charlie was wealthy and learning to appreciate the life he'd been denied for so long. Charlie, however, discovered that he had an addiction to precious metals; he had a fierce craving for jewelry and always kept it close to his body. At home, he even took to sleeping in a vault of precious metals, losing himself in their pleasant vibrations.

Diamond met Ultraviolet and Dart as he was hijacking a gold shipment. Impressed with his powers, the two invited him to join them. After the Geodesics broke up, Diamond continued his own thefts, but a month later, a painful teleport during one of his robberies left Charlie dizzy and ill, and his transmat crystal disappeared. He began to have recurrent headaches, pressure in his muscles, and pain in his joints, and discovered that he could no longer remove the other crystals from his skin. He was forced to restrict his crimes without the transmat crystal; meanwhile, his pain increased. Three weeks later, the other three diamonds burrowed beneath his skin, and his flesh started peeling off in long strips, revealing a hard silicon body underneath. When he had shed all of his skin, Diamond found that his entire body had transformed into crystal. Rather than becoming angry or frightened, he was pleased; his organic body had been so limited.

He did not suspect that a virus was involved until he was contacted by Dart on behalf of A.A.I. After Dart explained the situation to him, Diamond told him about his own transformation, and Dart offered Diamond a job with the Coalition. Diamond refused, but changed his mind after Bridge contacted him and showed him A.A.I.'s mineralogical research; Bridge offered Diamond a constant supply of minerals and precious metals in return for becoming Bridge's fifth recruit. Diamond agreed and has not been disappointed.

Diamond suspects that the loss of the transmat crystal, combined with Koo's virus, is responsible for his change. He considers the process fascinating and spends his free time examining himself and researching scientific data on his condition.

QUOTE: "Humanity...such a fragile concept."

PERSONALITY: Before his recent transformation, Charlie was a remarkably stupid, dull man. After his transformation, his intelligence increased dramatically, and Diamond (he no longer answers to Charlie) realized how pathetically emotion-driven he'd been. Now, he is condescending to those he sees as once being like him (*i.e.* humans). He knows he would be unwelcome and treated with suspicion elsewhere in society.

Diamond is addicted to minerals and needs them to sustain himself. He consumes minerals by 'decoding' them and integrating them into his body to add to his structure and replace fractures.

POWERS/TACTICS: Since his transformation, Diamond has gained the ability to emit ultrasonic waves, with which he can determine the thickness and quality of nearby minerals, and also analyze weaknesses in the bodies of opponents, but he has lost the ability to teleport, to use focused light as an attack, and to erect forcefields.

Diamond's skin is resistant to all forms of attack, and his body density gives him phenomenal strength. In combat, he holds back until his teammates have chosen targets, then strides into the enemy ranks, dealing blows of incredible force to a single target as quickly as possible. Diamond always presses his attack against an opponent until he falls, and attacks the weakest PCs first, preferably from surprise. Diamond never pulls punches; he believes he is doing organic foes a favor if he terminates their existence.

Diamond is grace under pressure and reacts coolly and logically to all situations. He fulfills orders to the best of his ability, and Bridge considers him a valuable asset despite the cost of keeping him in the Coalition.

APPEARANCE: Diamond is a crystalline humanoid, standing 6'5" and weighing over a ton. Despite his appearance, he has not forsaken civilized attire and is usually dressed in fashionable three-piece suits, even on missions. He speaks forcefully and has a commanding presence. Dart has learned to listen to his advice and evaluations, although the rest of the Coalition regard him with jealousy and suspicion.

PILEDRIVER

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
25	STR	15	OCV: 7
20	DEX	30	DCV: 7
20	CON	20	ECV: 3
12	BODY	4	Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
11	INT	1	
8	EGO	-4	Costs
13	PRE	3	
8	COM	-1	Char: 109 Base: 100
15	PD	10	+
10	ED	6	Powers: 144 Disad: 153
5	SPD	20	=
9	REC	0	Totals: 253
40	END	0	
40	STUN	5	
Cost Powers			END
50	Piledriver Multipower (75 Active Points), OIF: Piledriver (-1/2)		
9m	+8D6 HTH damage, Double KB (+3/4), Armor-Piercing vs. Inorganic Structures (+1/4), Area of Effect: 6" Cone (+1)		7
7m	+8D6 HTH damage, Double KB (+3/4), Armor-Piercing vs. Inorganic Structures (+1/4)		5
13m	10" Tunneling, 10 DEF		2
10	100 END Reserve with 5 REC, for Piledriver, OIF (Piledriver Battery, -1/2)		
24	12PD/12ED Armor, OIF: Costume (-1/2)		
6	+3" Running (9" Total)		1
Skills			
5	Perk: Well Off		
5	Demolitions 12-		
5	Security Systems 12-		
3	Mechanics 11-		
1	Familiarity with Electronics 8-		
6	+2 Combat Levels with Piledriver		
100+ Disadvantages			
10	Vulnerability: x2 STUN from Magnetic Attacks (Reinforced Metal Skeleton)		
15	Distinctive Features: Piledriver (Major, Concealable)		

100+ Disadvantages

15	Distinctive Features: Suture Scars (Major, Concealable)
10	Reputation: "Demolitions Man of the Underworld" 11-
30	Hunted: UNTIL (Mo Pow, NCI) 14-
20	Hunted: VIPER (Mo Pow) 11-
20	Hunted: Bullet and the Raiders (Mo Pow) 11-
5	Rivalry: The Geodesics
15	Secret ID: Richard Donaldson
13	Villain Bonus/Experience

BACKGROUND: Richard Donaldson was driving home on a mountain road late one night when he was run off the road by a large, fast-moving truck. The truck skidded to a stop, and three VIPER agents emerged to survey the scene. Examining the wreckage, they discovered that Donaldson was still alive. The agents placed Richard in their truck and then, from the road, blew up his car with their weapons.

When they arrived at the lab, their commander, a Dr. Desault, eagerly set to work on Donaldson. The lab was well-equipped, and Dr. Desault was able to save Donaldson's life. His left hand had been crushed in the accident, however, and had to be amputated. When Richard's condition stabilized, Dr. Desault grafted a pneumatic piston to his arm's stump.

Donaldson awoke one night after a lab assistant forgot to administer his sedative. Disoriented, and aching from the scars that covered his body, he tried to prop himself up on the bed and discovered that his left hand had been replaced with an ugly piece of machinery. Surprised at his disfigurement, he yelled for the doctor; three VIPER agents responded instead. Using his weapon for the first time, Richard pounded the agents through the wall of the lab and sped off in a stolen van. Dr. Desault decided to cut his losses and ordered his staff to sedate the three wounded agents so he could operate on them.

Resting miles away in the van, Richard pondered his situation. He'd been disfigured and declared legally dead, had no possessions beyond the stolen van, and was now on the run from VIPER. Then it occurred to him that, as long as the

authorities thought he was dead, he had the perfect alibi if he wanted to use his new weapon to steal some money. Just to tide him over for a little while, until he could get back on his feet, of course. Besides, *someone* had to pay for what had been done to him. That night, Richard trashed a local bank wearing a ski mask and made off with several thousand dollars. Piledriver's criminal career began, and he quickly established himself as the demolitions expert of the underworld.

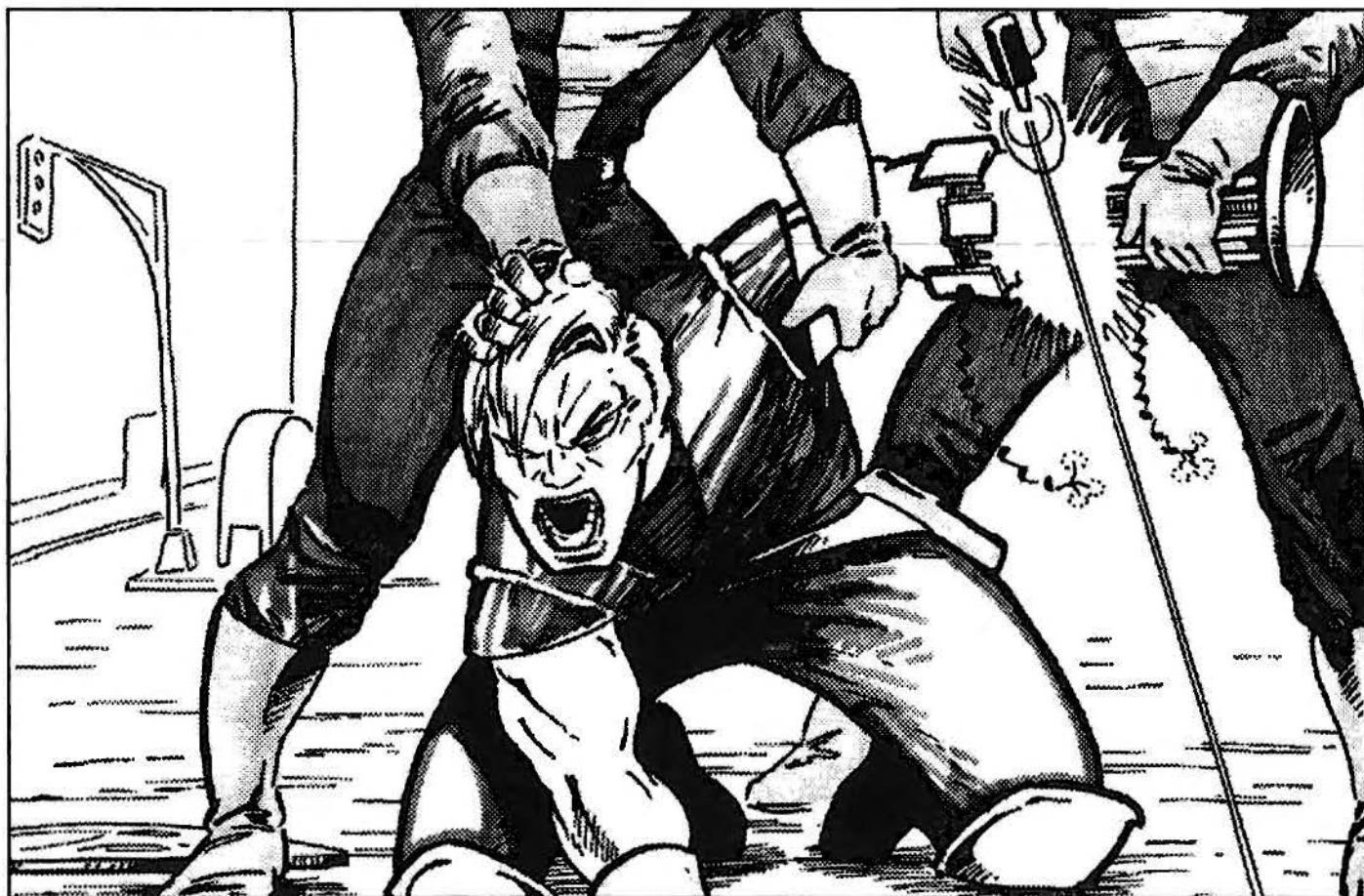
As a demolitions expert, he eventually attracted the attention of A.A.I. and, after a number of freelance assignments, was asked to become a member of the Coalition. When Bridge hinted that he might be able to help Piledriver with his disfigurement, Richard did not take him seriously, but a steady paycheck was enough for him.

VIPER, however, was still looking for Richard; although they had long since rebuilt the stolen weapon, they wanted to punish him for his "defection". Piledriver received several threats (which he viewed with mild amusement), but nothing happened until he and his Coalition partner

Sledge were hired to rob a bank in Dallas by a mysterious employer. When they arrived, VIPER Mauler teams with flight belts opened fire on the two paranormals, killing Sledge and wounding Piledriver. As he lay barely conscious, the VIPER agents cut his weapon from his arm, leaving him screaming on the ground, clutching his bloody stump. Their mission completed, the VIPER agents left, and Richard was rescued by other members of the Coalition. A few weeks later, Richard was back in action with a new prosthesis designed by A.A.I., eager for a chance to meet VIPER again.

QUOTE: "Yeah, yeah, flex a little more, underwear boy. Now go home and tell your momma what a big man you are."

PERSONALITY: Richard has a good thing going in the Coalition, and anyone attempting to undermine the organization becomes his enemy. He doesn't see Ultraviolet and Dart as devoted enough to A.A.I. to be trustworthy, and thinks they're a little too pushy in trying to get a cure from Bridge.



They should be patient like he was before being given his new arm. Diamond treats Piledriver flippantly and is condescending of his 'weak powers', while Richard sees Diamond as an arrogant jerk. Even more infuriating is the fact the ex-Geodesics outnumber him, and Richard must be careful not to insult any of them, even if they deserve it. Hammerhand and Piledriver often complain about this while they're drinking and dream about what the Coalition would be like if *they* were in charge.

Richard cares only about maintaining his lifestyle. He is not stupid or easily tricked; he can guess when people are trying to pull one over on him and should be roleplayed as a loyal follower with some common sense.

POWERS/TACTICS: Piledriver's new force cannon, developed by A.A.I., grants him his offensive powers. Modified from its original clumsy form, the device can sunder objects with incredible force; with a repeated set of blows, Piledriver can collapse walls, buildings, and other structures, leaving only piles of smoking rubble. Skeletal grafts and hydraulic musculature give him above average strength, endurance and running speed.

In combat, Piledriver attacks the nearest ground opponent. If his foe is stronger than he is, Piledriver uses his force cannon to collapse walls, ceilings, and floors on him. If this fails, he retreats, takes a hostage, or calls for help from his allies. In combat, Piledriver tries to ignore his prejudice against the Geodesics and gives them assistance when necessary. He avoids opponents with ranged attack, trying to maneuver them into enclosed places where they lose their advantage. Hammerhand and Piledriver usually support each other in combat.

APPEARANCE: Richard has dirty blond hair, green eyes, and a boyish, lop-sided grin. He always wears somber colors to avoid attention, and when not in the field, A.A.I. has built a prosthetic hand to conceal his disfigurement (his piledriver is usually kept close by, however). Beneath his clothes, Richard still has ugly scars from the procedure that modified his skeleton.

HAMMERHAND

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats	
50	STR	40	OCV:	8
23	DEX	39	DCV:	8
28	CON	36	ECV:	3
15	BODY	10	Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12	
10	INT	0		
10	EGO	0	Costs	
15	PRE	5		
10	COM	0	Char:	179 Base: 100
25	PD	15	+	+
15	ED	9	Powers: 103	Disad: 182
5	SPD	17	=	=
16	REC	0	Totals: 282	282
60	END	2		
60	STUN	6		
Cost Powers			END	
6	+2D6 HTH Damage, 0 END (+1/2), OIF ("Hammerhand," -1/2)			0
8	+20 STR "Hammerlock," for Grab only (-1), OIF ("Hammerhand," -1/2)			2
20	1/2 END Cost for STR (This does not include Hammerlock)			
20	25PD/15ED Damage Resistance			
10	+5" Running (11" Total)			1
Skills				
5	Perk: Well Off			
2	PS: A.A.I. Security Guard, 11-			
3	Climbing 14-			
3	Security Systems 11-			
3	Stealth 14-			
1	Familiarity with Demolitions 8-			
1	Familiarity with Gambling 8-			
6	+2 Combat Levels with Pistols			
15	+3 Combat Levels with HTH			
100+ Disadvantages				
15	Enraged if Appearance is Made Fun of, 14-, 8-			
15	Psychological Limitation: Lazy			
10	Physical Limitation: Addicted to Anabolic Steroids			
15	Distinctive Features: Hammerhand (Major Concealable)			
30	Hunted: UNTIL (Mo Pow, NCI) 14-			
20	Hunted: Bullet and the Raiders (Mo Pow) 11-			

100+ Disadvantages

5	Rivalry: "The Geodesics"
15	Secret ID: Roscoe Pound
57	Villain Bonus/Experience

BACKGROUND: "Never heard of him." Without moving from the chair, Roscoe casually tossed the photo back on the desk. "Any reason I should have?"

"He was killed in Dallas a few weeks ago," Darrell McGavin said, keeping his voice matter-of-fact. "Unfortunately, Sledge had not finished his contractual obligations..."

"You still haven't told me what you called me in for."

McGavin pulled a manila folder from his desk and held it just out of Roscoe's reach. "Mr. Pound, A.A.I. was working on a new attachment for Sledge. A prosthesis that would be more effective." McGavin slipped a glossy photograph from the folder and laid it in front of Roscoe. "This."

Roscoe glanced at this photo, then leaned forward and picked it up. The photograph was of a mechanical arm. Roscoe frowned, then slowly looked up at the pale-faced man across from him. "What about it?"

"We no longer have its recipient."

Roscoe let the photo fall onto the desk. "What does this have to do with me?" His eyes narrowed. "I'm not going to wear it."

McGavin held up a finger. "Mr. Pound, you haven't heard me out." His fingers pulled forth a carefully-worded document. "A.A.I. is prepared to give you a promotion with a substantial increase in salary for volunteering to accept the prosthesis and join our special projects division."

"Are you kidding?!" Roscoe's glare turned disbelieving. "Cut off my arm for a few thousand extra per year? Aw, I've heard enough." He got up, his finger pointed accusingly at McGavin. "Look, get some other dumb..."

"Sit down, Mr. Pound." McGavin was calm. "I anticipated some resistance, but you have your facts confused. First, the salary increase comes to several thousand dollars per *month*. And second, certain information I have in my possession can insure that you spend the rest of your life in jail." Roscoe froze. "Without getting into the em-

barrassing specifics, we have months of documentation on your drug abuse, theft of company property, and bribery related to matters of A.A.I. security." McGavin looked sorrowful. "Fortunately, I have chosen to be lenient with you. Primarily because I understand your situation; A.A.I. guards certainly are not paid as much as your lifestyle demands. I need a replacement for Sledge. You, Mr. Pound, need to avoid litigation. If you walk out that door, you are walking into a long sentence at the state penitentiary. Agree to this generous proposal and you can enhance your status and income tremendously."

Roscoe slowly sat down, helplessness clouding his features.

"You'll find," McGavin continued, "that the arm will function even better than the one you have now..."

"Hold on," Roscoe said, sweat on his brow. "I haven't said I'll do it."

"Of course you haven't." McGavin said gently.

PERSONALITY: The loss of his arm aside, Roscoe has made the transition from A.A.I. security guard to a member of the Coalition with few regrets. However, he resists going out of his way on many assignments; not only does he refuse to exert himself, he also complains incessantly about *everything*. Even when things are going his way, he finds something negative about the situation and makes sure everyone hears about it. He resents the Geodesics (primarily for their condescending attitude and because he blames Dart for getting him involved with the Coalition in the first place) and doesn't help them if they are in trouble. His only friend in the group is Piledriver, who has many of the same hobbies, such as high-living and griping about the Geodesics.

QUOTE: "Haw! Didja see that? Nailed 'em!"

POWERS/TACTICS: Roscoe was subjected to steroid derivatives that made him superhumanly strong; he can lift almost thirty tons above his head. Roscoe's "Hammerhand" is a cybernetic *Duralloy* fist that can punch through brick walls. By grabbing an opponent with it, he can lock the

hand's motors and perform a "Hammerlock" to prevent his foe from escaping. The Hammerlock has a crushing strength of over 200 tons; he enjoys grabbing opponents' throats and constricting. Hammerhand is brash, and overconfident, believing he can win any fight with the persistent application of his cybernetic fist. In combat, he attacks the toughest-looking PC first. He aids Piledriver if necessary but doesn't like others to help him out of tough situations.

APPEARANCE: Hammerhand is a large black man, standing 6'5", and weighing 370 lbs. A mechanical fist is grafted to his right arm. When not on missions, Roscoe wears a flesh-colored prosthesis that, while strong, does not add to his damage in combat. Roscoe likes to wear shades, sports a heavy jacket and gloves, and keeps his hair cut in a flat top.

FIRE & ICE

Val	Char	Cost	Combat	Stats
20	STR	10	OCV:	8
23	DEX	39	DCV:	8
23	CON	26	ECV:	4
15	BODY	10	Phases:	2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
9	INT	-1		
10	EGO	0	Costs	
20	PRE	10		
8	COM	-1	Char:	151 Base: 100
15	PD	11		+ +
20	ED	15	Powers:	216 Disad: 250
6	SPD	27		= =
9	REC	0	Totals:	367 367
50	END	2		
40	STUN	3		

Cost	Powers	END
96	Thermal Multipower (120 Active Points), does not work under water (-1/4)	
19m	12D6 EB, either Fire or Cold (+1/4), 1/2 END (+1/4), Damage Shield (+1/2)	6
18m	2 1/2D6 RKA Flames, 1/2 END (+1/4), Uncontrollable (+1/2), Continuous (+1)	5

Cost	Powers	END
7m	6D6 Ice Entangle, 1/2 END (+1/4), No Range (-1/2), Entangle takes x2 Damage from Heat Attacks (-1/4)	
2m	Missile Deflection (Bullets and Shrapnel)	2
36	12PD/12ED Armor	
5	IR Vision	
5	Life Support: Does not need to eat, sleep, or excrete	
5	Lack of Weakness (5 pts.)	
Skills		
3	PS: Former Gas Station Attendant (INT) 11-	
2	PS: Arsonist 11-	
3	Mechanics 11- (Difficult to use in current form)	
15	+3 Combat Levels with Multipower	
100+ Disadvantages		
10	Vulnerability: x2 STUN from Water Attacks	
20	Psychological Limitation: Desperate to Become Human Again	
15	Psychological Limitation: Gullible	
20	Physical Limitation: Unstable Form (Fully, Frequently)	
25	3D6 per Turn when doused with flammable chemicals (Gas, Alcohol, Oil) or immersed in water while on fire, OR 6D6 Entangle per Turn when immersed in water while covered with ice	
20	Distinctive Features: Unstable Form (Not Concealable, Major)	
15	Watched: UNTIL (Mo Pow, NCI) 14-	
20	Hunted: Bullet and the Raiders (Mo Pow) 11-	
10	2D6 Unluck	
15	Secret ID: James Nasmith	
97	Villain Bonus/Experience	

BACKGROUND: James Nasmith sat stiffly in the wooden chair, the harsh light burning down from above causing beads of sweat to run down his forehead. Dazed, he nodded absently as the monotone voice of the shadowy figure sitting across from him rolled off crimes James had committed. Not all his crimes, James noted, but most of them. It wasn't important. The only thing that occupied his mind was the fact that he wasn't shifting. He was *stable*. He had almost forgotten what he looked like.

UNTIL had caught him on the East Coast; James had been down on his luck, trying to melt a bank vault in a seedy section of town when they had stormed the building and doused him with fire hoses. He couldn't remember why he had decided to rob the bank; it had been years since he had been able to enjoy the ordinary things that money could buy.

And now he was being offered normalcy. Forever.

"Are you listening to me, Mr. Nasmith?" James nodded, smiling weakly, looking at his hands. They were *normal*. Fingernails. He curled his fingers into a fist. "Your condition can be made permanent. The French Government can provide details of X-53's effects. We can arrange a new life for you." James looked at the shadowy figure of the UNTIL interrogator. "All you have to do is secure evidence of A.A.I.'s exploitation in the United States and South Africa. If the evidence is solid, we will make every attempt to cure you."

James looked up sharply. "This isn't permanent?" The shadowy form did not reply. "But...how are you...?"

"We're channeling your power into thermal sinks located in rooms nearby. In fact, they *are* the rooms nearby. But we digress. Do you agree to the terms?"

"Yes! Yes, I'll do it...please, just cure me. I can't live like this any more. You don't know what it's like to..."

"I'm really not interested," the figure said harshly. "The least we can do is take away your power; we'll be doing both of us a favor. You have thirteen minutes of *normalcy* left before the medical team comes for you. Enjoy it while you can." The interrogator opened the door and left the room.

"...live like this."

James had been a gas station attendant in New Jersey. On a cold night in January, a huge tanker pulled into the station and started pumping gas into the tanks beneath the ground. Some guy entered the garage, claiming that he needed help pulling his car out of a ditch. The man spoke with a foreign accent, and had a briefcase in his hand, black and obviously very heavy, that he never set down, not for a moment. James' boss, frowning at

the visitor, was about to tell him that the tow truck was unavailable when the man pulled a gun and demanded all the money in the station.

His boss refused. It was his station; he owned it, and wasn't willing to give the man the few lousy bucks in the register. There was a gunshot, and James watched his boss fall to the ground, blood seeping from his forehead. Without blinking, the man repeated the request, but James didn't hear him. He took off running, his boots slipping on the snow outside the station. The man, cursing, screamed something, then started firing his pistol. James was halfway across the parking lot when the tanker exploded.

James survived, but his life ended as surely as if he'd been shot. He crawled from the burning wreckage, his flesh shifting from a nimbus of flames to chilling ice, screaming as the wind ripped at his body. Racked with pain, fled into the night, never to return to a normal life.

UNTIL eventually figured out what had happened. The man's briefcase had held several canisters of the unstable chemical X-53 (which created the supervillain Feur under similar circumstances); before being consumed in the fire it had reacted with the intense cold and James' physiology to create yet another tragic supervillain. Forced by his circumstances into desperate acts, he had sunk to new lows to survive: robbing, fighting, and even killing. It had all become so routine, so easy.

But now it was all over. James leaned back in the chair. The clock showed twelve minutes left. He wrapped his arms around himself, feeling skin on skin for the first time in years.

He closed his eyes, hoping that if he held himself long enough, he would stay this way forever.

QUOTE: "Don't you *dare* tell me you know how I feel!"

PERSONALITY: James is selfish, stupid, and gullible; combined with his paranormal powers, he's a perfect tool. Currently, he's UNTIL's tool, but if a better offer were to come along (with a cure being the only thing that James would be interested in), he could probably be turned easily.

James resents his powers; he has accidentally set fire to fifteen structures while trying to rob them and was once driven from a building by a berserk sprinkler system. In the past, he has held hundreds of thousands of dollars in his hand, only to have it turn to ash. He is desperately looking for a way to stabilize his form so he can live a normal life. The key to controlling his form is most likely himself, but whether James will ever realize it is doubtful.

POWERS/TACTICS: The unstable chemical known as X-53 transformed James Nasmith into a shifting creature of flame and cold. In seconds, Fire & Ice can plunge the temperature of his 'skin' to subzero temperatures, then raise it high enough to ignite the air around his body. The transformation has also sensitized him to temperature extremes, and he can track foes in total darkness (his IR Vision). He has no skeletal structure, internal organs, or muscle tissue (what happened in the UNTIL base when James became "human" is a matter of speculation); the only thing holding James together may be himself.

In combat, Fire & Ice is reckless and overconfident. He knows from experience that oppo-

nents like to keep their distance from him, and that shooting him is useless; his body temperature melts bullets before they penetrate his 'skin,' or freezes them solid in the air before they impact. As a result, he enjoys mixing it up with foes, using flame blasts and sub-zero ice shards to wreak havoc in the area. Unrestricted combat is his only source of pleasure, and James is pleased that he can cause as much damage as he wants while working undercover for UNTIL.

When James is on fire, strong winds, water, and fire extinguishers can douse his flames. If he is sprayed with a flammable substance (such as oil or gasoline) it attacks his 'skin,' causing him intense pain. If Fire & Ice is immersed in water when in his ice form, his body temperature freezes the water around him; as long as he is in ice-form, he cannot free himself. If he changes to fire-form, the quickly melting ice changes into super-hot steam which then douses his flames, leaving him powerless in the water.

APPEARANCE: Fire & Ice's appearance varies; he is alternately surrounded by flames and encased in a shell of somewhat flexible ice, with both forms playing across his body erratically.



Once Upon a Time™

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by Richard Lambert, Andrew Rilstone and James Wallis

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Once Upon a Time is a game in which players create a story together, using cards that show important elements from fairy tales. One player is the Storyteller and creates a story using the ingredients on her cards, trying to guide the plot towards her own ending. The other players try to use cards to interrupt her and become the new Storyteller. The winner is the first player to play out all her cards, ending with the "Happy Ever After" card.

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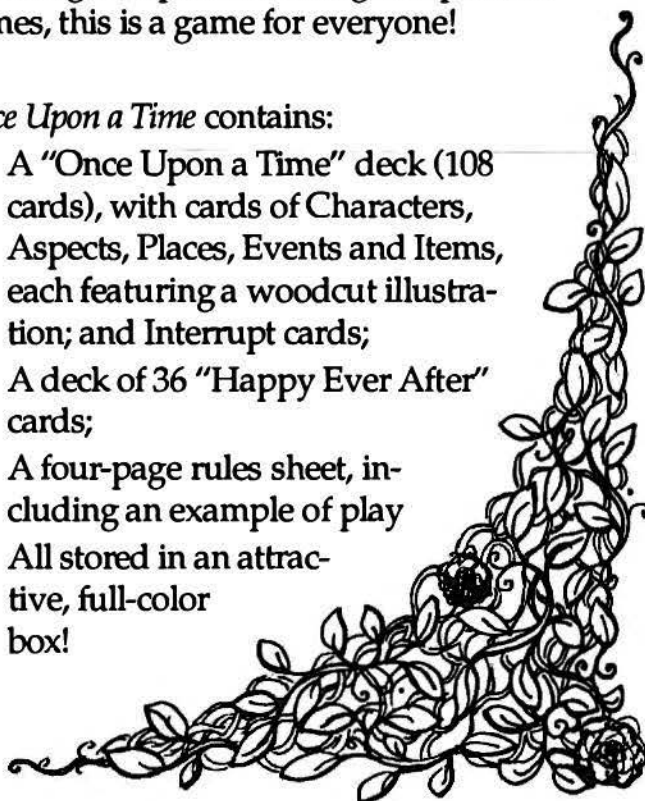
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Asha Rayhar

Double Agent

1



3

Human, Hermetic, Gladstein, Cloak

She thinks she's working for the Hermetics but is fooling them into thinking that she's fooling the Gladsteins into thinking she works for them.

Mole

Whammy



Cloak

Target Character is not blocked by active Characters when attacking a Character with which it shares at least one trait. Play any time.

With friends like these...

Ever feel like you're being watched?

If you're on Al Amarja, that strange Mediterranean island, odds are you're right. One of the figures they don't brag about in the tourist brochures is the world's highest per capita population of spies and secret agents. This is according to *Shadow Government Digest* (vol. 30, no. 4/Autumn 1993; no, it's

not in your local library's periodicals room). Don't bother asking how they came up with their figures. "They" have ways of knowing.

You may be one of "them," if you play *On the Edge*™. In this trading card game you assume the role of an arch-conspirator, and many of the island's "cloaks" (local slang for secret agents) are

Cyanide Capsule



1

Cloak

Character may be popped, no Save, rather than Controlled, at its player's option.

Death before disobedience.

in your service. The tools of their trade, from blackmail to sabotage, are at your service.

They may think they're serving other powers — perhaps the enigmatic Hermetic Movers, or the ancient and inhuman Pharaohs — while you secretly pull their strings.

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A game for two or more players.



card back by C. Brent Ferguson

COMING IN OCTOBER



DYSTOPIA

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