

A Sourcebook for the Hero System[®]

511

Hero System Almanac 2[™]



Edited by Bruce Harlick



HERO System Almanac 2™

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It's not often I get a chance to do a dedication. But I'd like to say thanks to a few people.

Thanks to Mark Arsenaull, Steve Barr, Geoff Berman, Amy Crittenden, Greg Lloyd, Steve Long, Bob O'Neal, K.C. Ryan, and Bruce Tong. You guys won't let me print *that* name, but thanks for all of your help and support. I can't tell you what it means to me.

Thanks to George, Ray, and Steve for giving me the chance, and for all of those great meetings!

Thanks to Coleman, Jessica, Kurt, Bruce, Deane, and the rest of the crew at ICE.

And a special thanks to Maggie, for valor above and beyond the call of duty.

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Printed in U.S.A., First Printing 1995

Produced & Distributed by Iron Crown Enterprises, Inc., a licensed manufacturer of Hero Games.

STOCK #: 511

ISBN 1-55806-225-4

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Introduction

Welcome to the *Hero System Almanac 2*, the second annual Almanac. The Almanac is a forum for optional rules, campaign information, and *Champions Universe™* updates. It is also a place where we can reprint some classic articles from the *Adventurers Club™* magazine.

As we mentioned in the first Almanac, these are *your* books. Your ideas help create them; your requests determine what material we select for these products. Your feedback will determine which of these optional rules may become official rules. So, please read over this book and then fill out the Survey located on the last page. This survey is important; it tells us what you liked and didn't like. This will help us improve the Almanac in the future. For you e-mail junkies, you can drop the editor in a line at: BRUCEHH@AOL.COM. We cannot stress this highly enough: your feedback is *very* important to us.

Some new rules are presented in this book. We stress once again that these rules are *optional*. They won't be used on published characters, and they aren't considered official. If you like them, let us know. We might make them official rules. If you don't like them, let us know so that we *don't* make them official. The Almanacs are a good place for us to come up with rules to plug various holes we've found in the rules. However, these holes often don't need plugging—not at the expense of making the *HERO System™* more complicated. So let us know how you feel. As usual, The Almanac is split into three sections. Here's what you'll find in each of them:

New Rules

In this section, you'll find some optional new rules. There is an article on environments in the *HERO System*, an examination of the "Requires a Skill Roll" Limitation, an article on senses in the *HERO System*, and one on drugs and poisons.

We can't stress strongly enough, though, that all of the rules presented in this section are *optional*. They are not intended, at this point, to become part of the permanent rules. They won't be used in any of our other supplements. Now, depending on your feedback, they might *become* part of the permanent rules. But for now, they are optional.

Our three sages are back, if somewhat briefly. These are the voices we use to give commentary on the various articles. The commentators only appear in the Environments article, but they'll be making future appearances. To refresh your memory:

The Storyteller

The Storyteller is the voice of the game master. She is interested in the rules, but she is mainly interested in telling a good story. She knows that there are times when the rules get in the way, and need to be ignored. She also knows that there are things that can be done with the rules that should not be done. The Storyteller looks at these new rules with an eye to plot and fun for her players.

The Game Mechanic

The Game Mechanic is the voice of the rules lawyer or power-gamer. He may be interested in the story, but his main interest is in the rules. If it is written, it can be done. If it can be done, it can be played. He's not really interested in game balance or the like; he just wants to push the system to the limit. And beyond. The Game Mechanic has read these rules with an eye towards their use and abuse.



Role Man

Role Man is the voice of the dedicated role-player. He is interested in the rules and writing up good characters. He is also interested in the Storyteller's story and plot, and likes to cooperate with her to get the story told. Role Man maybe attracted to the Game Mechanic's point of view at times, but is primarily interested in playing in a good game, and have a good time. Role Man has read these rules with an eye towards how they affect the player.

This commentary is there to help start the thought process about these new rules. Some of them can have quite far-reaching affects on your game. Read over the rules, and the commentary, and then decide what you want to use and what you can leave out. Remember, the choice is up to you.

Classic AC

This section reprints some of the best material from the *Adventurers Club* magazine. The AC has been published for over ten years, and a lot of good material has seen print and then faded out of sight. The Almanac will keep that material from vanishing forever.

This time we raid AC #5 for two articles: Greg Porter's *Send the Marines*, an excellent article for using the Armed Forces in a *Champions*™ game. Steve LaPrade's *Impossible Crimes* is the other offering from 1984; this article is full of good advice for running locked-room mysteries and the like. And finally, we are happy to reprint *Champions Minus*, a humorous look at the *HERO System*. This dates back to 1987, and AC #10.

By the way, the *Adventurers Club* is alive and well and still being published. If you haven't read it in a while, check it out. It is bigger and better than ever. And quarterly. Don't miss it.

Characters and Campaigning

This section contains articles on how to run your campaigns. We present two alternate campaign settings, complete with character generation systems. Try them for a different gaming experience. Also, both UNTIL and SAT get a make-over in this section. And Steve Long's fabled nuclear bomb finally sees print. So read and enjoy!



New Rules

This section contains all of the new rules. Remember, *all* of the rules in this section are optional. Please let us know what you think of them; your feedback is vital! We'll use your comments to determine which, if any, of these rules become official.



Drugs & Poisons

by Steve Peterson

These rules were originally presented in *Danger International*, Hero Games RPG for the modern era (now out of print). They have been updated to conform to the new rules and the new Gradual Effect system (presented in *HERO System Almanac 1*).

Drugs and poisons are often involved in fictional adventures, but using them in a roleplaying game is more difficult. It's no fun at all to have the GM drop poison in your drink and have your hero fall over dead because you failed to notice. Just as a good GM doesn't have unseen snipers shoot your hero in the head, the GM shouldn't introduce poisons into your hero's food without warning. More than that, the GM should carefully consider how to use drugs and poisons as effective devices to move the story forward or to increase dramatic tension.

The primary use of drugs in a game is to capture heroes without harming them; this can be done with knockout drops, chloroform, or gas. The GM should make sure that it's reasonable for the bad guys to use drugs in such a manner. The heroes usually have some opportunity to notice the drugs being administered, which means they have a chance to break free or leave a clue for their friends. However, this won't always be true, and the players shouldn't be too upset about this. After all, the GM isn't going to kill your heroes out of hand. Besides, being knocked unconscious and taken prisoner is a common part of adventure fiction. Some heroes (like a famous movie spy hero) use this as their standard means of learning about the enemy. They get themselves captured and let the bad guy describe his plans in detail to them while the death trap is being prepared. (Of course, then you have to find a way out of the death trap...but nobody said this would be easy.)

Player-characters should restrict their use of drugs in the game; it's bad for them, as you can see by the effects. You really don't want to lose a lot of DEX before getting into a combat situation, after all. However, the GM

may want to deal with the effects of a drunken revelry on the heroes when they are suddenly faced with an emergency. After one combat where the heroes don't have their normal DEX or CON, you can bet they'll be more careful about drinking in the future.

Players should be careful about using drugs on NPCs, too. Unless one of the heroes has KS: Medicine or KS: Pharmacology, figuring out the proper dosage of many of these drugs can be tricky. As noted in the overdose rules, too much of any substance can kill you. Finally, using drugs or especially poisons is not very heroic; it's usually something practiced "off-stage" by NPCs in order to create interesting plot situations and add dramatic tension.

Administering Drugs

The standard method of drug administration is injection. For game purposes, it doesn't matter where you inject someone with the drug. Some drugs are inhaled, some need to be ingested, and some work



through skin contact. Most injectable drugs can also be given orally, though they would take effect more slowly (move down one step on the Time table). Stomach acids often break down drugs, and thus their effect can be lessened when taken orally (remove 1d6 charges).

The standard dose listed is the amount needed to put a larger than average person (one with Characteristics of 10) deeply under the influence of the drug. The dosage is listed in the number of charges of the drug. The amount can be varied by whatever dose increments you want. Remember, though, that an overdose of any of these drugs may be deadly.

Acquiring drugs

In a modern setting, sales of most drugs are restricted in some fashion; federal law prevents their sale to unauthorized personnel. Only licensed doctors or pharmacies have ready access to many of these drugs. Of course, government agencies can obtain these drugs as necessary.

Overdoses

In real life, the effects of drugs vary widely depending on the subject. Individual sensitivities to drugs make a big difference in the response to a drug. The health of the person is also very important; someone with respiratory difficulties (particularly an elderly person) can easily die from the respiratory depressant effects of a sedative. That's why powerful drugs are not given without close monitoring by a health care professional.

Of course, in a roleplaying game we rarely need to worry about such dire consequences. People that are drugged in fiction wake up with a mild headache and proceed to continue adventuring, seemingly unimpaired. If the GM really needs to deal with an overdose situation, you can convert charges of a drug to a BODY drain at higher doses than normal (usually after the normal dose is doubled).

Lingering Effects

Once you're asleep from a drug, you may stay asleep more than just the time needed to reach 0 STUN or above. In the absence of stimuli, you will usually stay asleep until you have reached your full STUN total, and if you needed sleep at the time you may even sleep beyond that. Essentially, the GM can control the amount of time you're unconscious for dramatic purposes.

The number of charges listed is likely to be variable, depending on the situation. It's there as a guideline. Unless you have some sort of relevant Skill (like

Pharmacology), you won't really know how to adjust the dosage from the standard dose for large or small targets.

Using Drugs in Gaming

Drugs are usually used as enabling devices to put heroes into certain plot situations. Drugs are often used to capture heroes without harming them. Drugs are also a part of some plots; it's often a mysterious way in which people are murdered. Drugs generally affect NPCs or DNPCs rather than PCs. If a PC is affected, then the player should be able to act in some way; perhaps by playing another character.

The effect of drugs is different in different genres. In pre-20th Century settings, there are few really efficacious drugs, and most are poisons of some type or other. The most popular drug is alcohol, and it's often about the only pain medication available (though it's not terribly good at that). In futuristic settings, there may be many designer drugs with unusual properties; the GM should feel free to invent new drugs as needed for story purposes.

Tolerance

Habitual use of a particular drug tends to build up a tolerance to the effect of that drug. This can be bought as Power Defense, Usable Only Versus Specific Drug (-2). Treat this Power Defense as only operating once against all dosages of the drug. As an example, let's say your hero gains a tolerance to alcohol and has 5 points of Power Defense. Your first drink causes you to lose 3 INT, 1 point of DEX (3 on the die), and 2 points of CON (4 on the die). However, you get your Power Defense against each of these effects separately, so there is no effect from this drink. The next drink causes a loss of an additional 4 INT, 2 DEX (6 on the die), and 1 CON (3 on the die). These are totaled with the effects of the first drink, and the hero loses 2 INT, 1 point of DEX, and 1 point of CON.

Curing Effects of Drugs

Most drugs don't have specific counter-agents in modern medicine. You can somewhat counteract the effects of drugs by using other drugs, but this is not the same as negating the effects of a drug. For instance, you can give someone a stimulant to overcome the effects of a sedative, but this is not the same as being undrugged. For futuristic use, specific "cures" for drugs might be possible. These could be designed in game terms by using a Suppress operating continuously. Aid can be used to fix up any BODY damage caused. A counteragent that only works against a specific drug should get a -2 Limitation.



Table of Drug Effects

Name	Effect	Period	Charges	Recovery	Cost
Alcohol	1d6 INT, 1d6 DEX, 1d6 CON	20 minutes	1	1 hour	22 (105)
Amphetamines	2d6 DEX, +2d6 END, +1d6 INT; 1d6 EGO, 1d6 END	20 minutes; 1 hour	2 3	1 hour 6 hours	57 (249)
Carbon monoxide	1d6 EGO, 1d6 STUN, 1d6 BODY	1 minute	8	20 minutes	35 (96)
Chloral hydrate	2d6 STUN	5 minutes	4	1 hour	22 (70)
Chloroform	1d6 STUN, 1d6 CON	1 phase	8	1 hour 5 minutes	29 (64)
Cocaine	1d6 INT, +1d6 END	1 minute	2	20 minutes	17 (64)
Ether	2d6 STUN 1d6 STR, 1d6 CON	1 turn	4	20 minutes; 5 minutes	44 (129)
Hydrocyanic acid	1d6 INT, 1d6 STUN, 1d6 BODY	1 phase	12	6 hours	53 (111)
LSD	1d6 INT	20 minutes	8	6 hours	12 (37)
Marijuana	1d6 EGO, 1d6 INT	5 minutes	1	20 minutes	15 (64)
Nerve gas	1d6 STR, 1d6 DEX, 1d6 CON, 1d6 BODY	1 phase	12	1 day	101 (160)
Nitrous Oxide	1d6 STUN, 1d6 CON	1 minute	8	20 minutes; 1 minutes	22 (60)
PCP	1d6 INT; +1d6 STUN, +1d6 CON, +1d6 STR	1 minute	6; 2	6 hours; 20 minutes	30 (133)
Pentothal	2d6 EGO, 1d6 STUN, 1d6 CON	1 phase	4	20 minutes	48 (129)
Picrotoxin	2d6 DEX, 1d6 BODY	5 minutes	8	1 day	41 (120)
Secobarbital	1d6 EGO, 1d6 STUN	1 turn	4	20 minutes	22 (64)
Strychnine	2d6 DEX, 1d6 BODY	1 turn	8	6 hours	46 (112)

Effects of Drugs

Anesthetics

These must be administered in gaseous form, either by a mask or by holding a cloth with the liquid anesthetic over the target's nose and mouth. You can try to hold your breath, but you cannot take a Recovery while doing this.

Chloroform: An average person goes unconscious in less than a minute and stays that way for about an hour or so, remaining groggy for some time after they wake up.

1d6 STUN Drain (10 points), 8 charges (-1/2), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1 1/2), Recovery per 5 minutes after a one hour delay (+3/4), one charge per phase (use SPD of target; -0), Must breathe in high concentration (-1/2) = 16 points (32 active); 1d6 CON Drain (10 points), Linked (-1/2), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 13 points (32 active). Total = 29 (64 active).

Ether: The average person goes unconscious after about 30 seconds or so. Ether is explosive when vaporized; treat as 1d6 Normal Explosion per 2 Charges if fully vaporized.

2d6 STUN Drain (20 points), 4 charges (-1), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1 1/2), Recovery per 5 minutes after a 20 minute delay (+3/4), Gradual Effect (every turn, -1/4), Must breathe in high concentration (-1/2) = 24 points (65 active) 1d6 STR Drain (10 points), Linked (-1/2), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 10 points (32 active) 1d6 CON Drain (10 points), Linked (-1/2), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 10 points (32 active). Total = 44 (129 active).

Nitrous Oxide: The average person goes unconscious after about five or six minutes. This is a colorless, odorless gas that's heavier than air at room temperature. Subjects can be kept unconscious with continuous administration of this gas.

1d6 STUN Drain (10 points), 8 charges (-1/2), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1 1/2), Recovery per 1 minute after a 20 minute delay (+1/2), Gradual Effect (every minute, -1/2), Must breathe in high concentration (-1/2) = 12 points (30 active); 1d6 CON Drain (10 points), Linked (-1/2), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 10 points (30 active). Total = 22 (60 active).

Barbiturates

These drugs sap the will, and are sometimes used as truth serum for that reason. They are generally given by injection.

Pentothal: This is a very fast-acting drug, better known as truth serum. The drug makes the subject drowsy and very suggestible, and thus amenable to questioning (see Negative Characteristics in *Hero System Almanac 1[™]*). Heroes can buy the Resistance Talent to have a better chance to resist questioning under the influence of truth serum.

2d6 EGO Drain (20 points), 4 charges (-1), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1 1/2), Recovery per 20 minutes (+3/4), Gradual Effect (every phase, -0), Must be injected (-1/2) = 26 points (65 active). 1d6 STUN Drain (10 points), Linked (-1/2), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 11 points (32 active); 1d6 CON Drain (10 points), Linked (-1/2), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 11 points (32 active). Total = 48 (129 active).

Secobarbital: This is another drug that can be used as a tranquilizer or as a truth serum.

1d6 EGO Drain (10 points), 4 charges (-1), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1 1/2), Recovery per 20 minutes (+3/4), Gradual Effect (every turn, -1/4), Must be injected (-1/2) = 12 points (32 active)? 1d6 STUN Drain (10 points), Linked (-1/2), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 10 points (32 active). Total = 22 (64 active).

Other Drugs

PCP (Phencyclidine): This drug is taken for its hallucinogenic effect, but on occasion it can transform the user into a violent madman with unusual Strength. If the Activation Roll is made, then the user gets additional STR, STUN, and CON, but is normally enraged and will attack whatever is nearest. PCP users who turn violent this way have been known to break handcuffs and to take incredible amounts of damage before dying or going unconscious.

1d6 INT Drain (10 points), 4 charges (-1), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1 1/2), Recovery per 6 hours (+1/4), Gradual Effect (every 1 minute, -1/2), Must be smoked or ingested (-1/2) = 12 points (37 active). 1d6 STUN Aid (10 points), Linked to Drain (-1/2), Activation 8- (-2), 2 charges (-1 1/2), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1 1/2), Recovery per 20 minutes (+3/4), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 6 points (32 active); 1d6 CON Aid (10 points), same Advantages and Limitations as STUN Aid = 6 points (32 active). 1d6 STR Aid (10 points), same Advantages and Limitations as STUN Aid = 6 points (32 active). Total = 30 (133 active).

Chloral Hydrate (knockout drops): This is the classic drug known as a Mickey Finn. Chloral hydrate drops are put into ethanol for ingestion; the poor sap takes a drink, and about 20 minutes later he's out cold.

2d6 STUN Drain (20 points), 4 charges (-1), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1 1/2), Recovery per 1 hour (+1), Gradual Effect (every 5 minutes, -3/4), Must be ingested (-1/2) = 26 points (65 active). Total = 22 (70 active).



Marijuana: This drug can be either smoked or eaten; users become passive and generally less aware of their surroundings. A frequent side effect is extreme hunger. The dosage listed can be increased at the discretion of the user, of course. The write-up below is for smoking marijuana; ingesting marijuana works in 20 minute intervals for effect, 1 hour intervals for recovery.

1d6 EGO Drain (10 points), 1 charge (-2), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1½), Recovery per 20 minutes (+¾), Gradual Effect (every 5 minutes, -¾), Must be smoked (-½) = 8 points (32 active). 1d6 INT Drain (10 points), Linked (-½), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 7 points (32 active). Total = 15 (64 active).

Alcohol: The most common recreational drug around the world. Each drink (approximately 1 ounce of alcohol or 1 beer) will have the effect listed below.

1d6 INT Drain (10 points), 1 charge (-2), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1½), Recovery per 1 hour (+1), Gradual Effect (every 20 minutes, -1), Must be ingested (-½) = 8 points (35 active). 1d6 DEX Drain (10 points), Linked (-½), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 7 points (35 active); 1d6 CON Drain (10 points), Linked (-½), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 7 points (35 active). Total = 22 (105 active).

LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide): This powerful hallucinogen requires only a minuscule amount to have an effect.

1d6 INT Drain (10 points), 8 charges (-½), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1½), Recovery per 6 hours (+1¼), Gradual Effect (every 20 minutes, -1), Must be ingested (-½) = 12 points (37 active). Total = 12 (37 active).

Stimulants

Strychnine: This poison is classed as a stimulant for pharmacological reasons. It's often used as a poison, administered orally.

2d6 DEX Drain (20 points), 8 charges (-½), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1½), Recovery per 6 hours (+1¼), Gradual Effect (every turn, -¼), Must be ingested (-½) = 33 points (75 active); 1d6 BODY Drain (10 points), Linked (-½), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 13 points (37 active). Total = 46 (112 active).

Picrotoxin: This is a plant toxin found in fishberries, which can be taken orally or injected. This can be used as a model for other natural poisons such as hemlock.

2d6 DEX Drain (20 points), 8 charges (-½), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1½), Recovery per 1 day (+1½), Gradual Effect (every 5 minutes, -¾), Must be ingested (-½) = 29 points (80 active). 1d6 BODY Drain (10 points), Linked (-½), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 12 points (40 active). Total = 41 (120 active).

Amphetamines: This stimulant initially adds to your INT and END and subtracts DEX (due to jitteriness). However, after some time passes, you'll find that your EGO and END are being drained away. Continuing doses of amphetamines may keep you going, but eventually you'll crash for quite a while.

2d6 DEX Drain (20 points), 2 charges (-1½), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1½), Recovery per 1 hour (+1), Gradual Effect (every 20 minutes, -1), Must be ingested (-½) = 17 points (70 active). 2d6 END Aid (20 points), Linked to Drain (-½), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 16 points (70 active); 1d6 INT Aid (10 points), same Advantages and Limitations as END Aid = 8 points (35 active); 1d6 EGO Drain (10 points), 3 charges (-1¼), Recovery per 6 hours (+1¼), Gradual Effect (every 1 hour, -1¼), Linked (-½), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 8 points (37 active). 1d6 END Drain (10 points), same Advantages and Limitations as 1d6 EGO Drain = 8 points (37 active). Total = 57 (249 active).

Cocaine: This drug, which is snorted or smoked, adds to END and subtracts from INT. Cocaine can also have deadly side effects, occasionally causing a stroke or a heart attack with prolonged use (and sometimes even with only a few uses). The GM can treat these side effects as a 2d6 BODY Drain that happens on a 5 or less roll.

1d6 INT Drain (10 points), 2 charges (-1½), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1½), Recovery per 20 minutes (+¾), Gradual Effect (every 1 minute, -½), Must be smoked or snorted (-½) = 9 points (32 active); 1d6 END Aid (10 points), Linked to Drain (-½), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 8 points (32 active). Total = 17 (64 active).



Poisons

Carbon Monoxide: This deadly gas is emitted by automobiles, among other sources. This replaces the oxygen in your blood and suffocates you slowly.

1d6 EGO Drain (10 points), 8 charges (-1/2), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1 1/2), Recovery per 20 minutes (+3/4), Gradual Effect (every 1 minute, -1/2), Must be breathed in high concentration (-1/2) = 13 points (32 active). 2d6 END Drain (10 points), Linked (-1/2), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 11 points (32 active); 1d6 BODY Drain (10 points), Linked (-1/2), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 11 points (32 active). Total = 35 (96 active).

Hydrocyanic Acid: This is a classic poison that kills very swiftly.

1d6 INT Drain (10 points), 12 charges (-1/4), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1 1/2), Recovery per 6 hour (+1 1/4), Gradual Effect (every phase, -0), Must be ingested (-1/2) = 21 points (37 active). 1d6 STUN Drain (10 points), Linked (-1/2), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 16 points (37 active); 1d6 BODY Drain (10 points), Linked (-1/2), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 16 points (37 active). Total = 53 (111 active).

Nerve Gasses: These deadly gasses were developed for use in warfare, first in World War II and then in continuing development during the Cold War. Some gasses are rumored to work even faster than this, with one segment intervals or with higher numbers of dice. Research has uncovered one way to reduce the effect of nerve gasses: Taking the chemical 2-PAM before exposure halves the effect of the nerve gas.

1d6 STR Drain (10 points), 12 charges (-1/4), Continuous Uncontrolled (+1 1/2), Recovery per 1 day (+1 1/2), Gradual Effect (every phase, -0) = 32 points (40 active). 1d6 DEX Drain (10 points), Linked (-1/2), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 23 points (40 active); 1d6 CON Drain (10 points), Linked (-1/2), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 23 points (40 active); 1d6 BODY Drain (10 points), Linked (-1/2), otherwise same Advantages and Limitations = 23 points (40 active). Total = 101 (160 active).



Senses & Sense Powers

by **Steven S. Long**

It has been observed that a *HERO System* character needs to buy four different types of powers: a way to attack in combat; a way to defend himself in combat; a way to get to the combat; and a way to find out about the combat. This article is about the Powers in the last of those categories: senses and sense-based Powers. It discusses how sense powers work and how they affect and are affected by other powers.

Defining Senses And Sense Groups

In the *HERO System*, senses are divided into several Sense Groups, which are generally based around the standard five senses possessed by most humans, plus a few additional groups to account for super-senses. These groups are: Hearing, Mental, Radio, Sight, Smell/Taste, and Unusual. There is an additional Sense Group, the Touch Group, which is not discussed in the *HERO System Rulesbook*. Furthermore, there are several sense-like Talents or abilities which are not included in these groups.

Although normal senses, those that all humans possess, are not exactly "powers" per se, they can be considered powers in some ways because they are affected by Powers such as Flash and Darkness. The "point value" for normal senses, described under the sense subheadings below, is derived by determining the Physical Limitation value of not having that sense. For example, the Physical Limitation "Blindness" (lack of Sight Group senses) affects a character All The Time and is Fully Impairing, so it is worth 25 points. Therefore, Normal Sight as a "power" is worth 25 points.

Before proceeding further in this article, readers are encouraged to re-familiarize themselves with the rules about senses and perception in the *HERO System Rulesbook*, pages 66-67 and 137-38.

The "Simulated Sense Group" Rule

This rule, which is mentioned several times later on in this article, concerns the application of sense-affecting Powers such as Darkness, Flash, Images, and Invisibility. It simply means that a sense which is based on or "mimics" one of the standard senses is

affected by sense-affecting Powers that affect that standard sense's Sense Group, and by any sense-affecting Powers which specifically target that sense. This most commonly applies to the members of the Unusual Sense Group, sense-like Talents, and so forth. For example, N-Ray "Vision," Spatial Awareness, and many forms of Detect will be based on the special effect of being "super-sensitive" or "super-powerful" versions of one of the standard senses. N-Ray Vision is a form of sight that is powerful enough to see right through most objects. It would be affected by a Flash versus the Sight Group, or by a Flash versus N-Ray Vision. A character's Spatial Awareness or Combat Sense might be defined as a form of hearing so acute that the character can hear the shifting of air currents around objects, thus being able to tell where they are; these powers would be affected by Darkness versus the Hearing Group or by Darkness versus Spatial Awareness or Combat Sense specifically.

If a sense that is covered by this rule is not defined as a form of one of the standard senses, that sense can only be affected by sense-affecting Powers individually. For example, a mage character might have Spatial Awareness defined as "mystically sensing his surroundings." He might also buy Danger Sense, defined as having his "mystic senses" attuned to danger. Neither of these senses is related in any way to the standard senses, so each of them can only be affected individually (such as with Darkness versus Spatial Awareness, Invisibility to Danger Sense, and so forth). (Alternately, they could be affected as the "Mystic Sense Group;" refer to "Other Senses And Sense Groups," below.)

Because of the simulated sense rule, characters should not be allowed to use sense-affecting Powers on the Unusual Sense Group as a whole; they must affect its senses individually, or as whatever group their special effect is based on.

The Hearing Sense Group

The Hearing Group includes Active Sonar, Normal Hearing, Ultrasonic Hearing, and any Detects, Spatial Awareness, or other Unusual Senses based primarily upon hearing. Sonar is directional, but Normal Hearing and Ultrasonic Hearing are both 360 Degrees—anyone can hear sounds coming from behind them, above them, or to their sides. Of course, the GM may impose PER Roll penalties in some cases when the sound(s) in question do not originate in front of the character.



Normal Hearing is worth 20 points as a power (as a Physical Limitation, Deafness impairs the character Greatly, All The Time). It is not a Targeting Sense, but it is Discriminatory.

The Mental Sense Group

The Mental Sense Group, as described on page 66 of the *HERO System Rulesbook*, includes just a couple of Powers: Mental Awareness and Mind Scan, and any Detects, Spatial Awareness, or other Unusual Senses based primarily upon mental perceptions. As discussed below, this group needs to be expanded slightly.

Mental Awareness allows a character to sense the use of Mental Powers, which are normally invisible to everyone other than the target of them. It is available “for free” to anyone who has a Mental Power, since people with Mental Powers can detect the use of other mental abilities. However, in some instances, a character with Mental Powers should not have Mental Awareness, based upon the power’s special effect (for example, a truth serum built as a form of Mind Control). If the character in question has only one Mental Power, he should take a -¼ Limitation, “Does Not Provide Mental Awareness” on that Power. If the character has more than one Mental Power, he should either take that Limitation on all of the Powers, on the base cost of any Power Framework that he has those Powers in, or as a 3 point Physical Limitation (even though the loss of Mental Awareness is Slightly Impairing and the impairment occurs Infrequently, which would normally be worth 5 points, since the Power itself only costs 3 points, its loss should only be worth 3 points as a Physical Limitation). The GM should choose between these options and inform the player. Mental Awareness is not a 360 Degree sense, nor is it a Targeting Sense.

Mind Scan is the ability to sense minds which are not in the character’s line of sight (“LOS”). Obviously, LOS is not needed to use Mind Scan, unlike other Mental Powers, and if Mind Scan succeeds it can be used as a “channel” or “conduit” for other Mental Powers even though the character does not have LOS on his target. Mind Scan has no “range” per se, and no Range Modifiers when it is used, but its range is not actually unlimited. In general Mind Scan should be limited to planetary ranges—a character on Earth can Mind Scan anywhere on Earth, but not on the Moon or Mars. (Of course, in some genres, such as science fiction, Mind Scan of greater range may be allowed.) Mind Scan operates in 360 Degrees and is a Targeting Sense for other Mental Powers.

However, these two Powers should not be the limits of the Mental Sense Group. There are two others to be considered: Telepathy, and its more limited form, Mind Link. Each of these Powers has two functions: first, a character to mentally contact someone and “read” their thoughts, using Telepathy as a form of “mental hearing;” second, a character can mentally contact someone and “send” thoughts to them, using Telepathy as a form of “mental voice.”



The telepathic option for Mind Control (a +¼ Advantage for that Power) is also a form of mental voice. Accordingly, Telepathy, Mind Link, and telepathic Mind Control should be considered as part of the Mental Sense Group to this extent. This has important implications for the use of Flash and Darkness (see below).

The Radio Sense Group

The Radio Sense Group includes High Range Radio Hearing (“HRRH”), Radar, Radio Listen, Radio Listen and Transmit, and any Detects, Spatial Awareness, or other Unusual Senses based primarily on radio. None of these senses are possessed by normal humans; they must either be bought as superpowers or as devices.

HRRH, Radio Listen, and Radio Listen and Transmit are all essentially the same Power, varying only in the breadth of transmissions that they can send and/or receive. The latter two are confined to local AM, FM, and police band radio signals. HRRH includes the entire broadcast spectrum, from ordinary radio to television to cellular telephone transmissions; it also allows a character to sense radar emissions. (Note that this does not guarantee that the character can understand or decipher the signal; some transmissions are encoded, encrypted, digitized, or otherwise “scrambled” to prevent snoopers from interpreting them.) Characters with HRRH may locate a specific



frequency or channel by making an INT Roll. Characters who want to boost the signals they are receiving, jam other signals, or otherwise use their Radio Senses in unusual ways should use the Systems Operation Skill. HRRH and the two Radio senses are 360 Degrees; a character with these senses can pick up radio signals coming at him from any direction.

Radar, on the other hand, is not 360 Degrees; it is directional. However, unlike HRRH and the two Radio senses, it is a Targeting Sense.

The Sight Group

The Sight Group is the most important Sense Group and the one most often affected by Powers such as Flash and Invisibility. It includes Infrared Vision ("IR"), Normal Sight, Ultraviolet Vision ("UV"), and any Detects, Spatial Awareness, or other Unusual Senses based primarily on sight. Normal Sight is worth 25 points as a power (as a Physical Limitation it is Greatly Impairing, All The Time). Normal Sight, IR, and UV are all Targeting Senses, and none of them are 360 Degrees. Normal Sight is Discriminatory; IR and UV are not.

Microscopic Vision is not included as part of the Sight Group because it is not so much a separate sense as it is a modifier for Normal Sight (and any other Sight Group senses the character possesses). Like Normal Sight, it is Discriminatory. Characters could also buy Microscopic for other senses, such as Ultraviolet Vision (handy for detecting some types of trace evidence at the scene of a crime; see *An Eye For An Eye*, page 32) or Normal Smell (so that the character can detect odors too faint or "small" for the normal nose).

The Smell / Taste Sense Group

The Smell/Taste Group includes Discriminatory Smell, Discriminatory Taste, Normal Smell, Normal Taste, Tracking Scent, and any Detects, Spatial Awareness, or other Unusual Senses based primarily on smell or taste. Normal Smell is worth 15 points as a power (as a Physical Limitation it is Slightly Impairing, All The Time); Normal Taste is worth 10 points, since it is only used when eating, and therefore its absence only affects the character Frequently).

"Discriminatory," a modifier used in this group for both Smell and Taste, can be used with other senses as well. It allows a character to absolutely identify, distinguish, and analyze things with that sense.

Tracking, though used in the *HERO System Rulesbook* only for Smell, can be bought for other senses as well; for example, Tracking IR Vision would allow a character to follow someone's heat traces.

The Smell senses work in 360 Degrees, though as with Hearing, PER Roll penalties may be imposed when the object to be perceived is not in front of the character. Taste does not work in 360 Degrees, of course.

The Touch Sense Group

Touch is not listed as a Sense Group in the *HERO System Rulesbook*, but since Touch is a sense it should be placed in its own group—after all, Images and other Powers can affect it. This Sense Group includes Normal Touch and any Detects, Spatial Awareness, or other Unusual Senses based primarily on touch.

Normal Touch is worth 20 points as a power (as a Physical Limitation its absence is Greatly Impairing, All The Time). Touch of course has no range. It works in 360 Degrees and is to a crude degree Discriminatory—people can tell some objects apart by touch, but not others. For example, a person can tell a dollar bill from an ordinary piece of paper of the same shape and size, but he cannot tell a \$1 bill from a \$5 bill. It is the GM's call as to when the Discriminatory aspects of the sense come into play. In an even cruder fashion, Touch can act as a Targeting Sense in Hand-To-Hand Combat, if the character can obtain a grip on his foe.

Touch can, for example, be bought Microscopic (to feel extremely tiny objects), Discriminatory (to make it fully Discriminatory, instead of just partly Discriminatory as it is normally), and so forth.

Affecting the Touch Group with Flash or Darkness has the effect of numbing a character's sense of touch. This may impose minuses of up to -3 on activities requiring dexterous action, such as Lockpicking, Combat Driving, Stealth, and some attacks (for example, some types of Nerve Strikes). Characters generally cannot make themselves Invisible to the sense of touch; this is more or less the same thing as Desolidification and should be bought using that Power.

The Unusual Sense Group

This Sense Group includes a hodgepodge of senses that don't belong in any other group: Clairsentience, N-Ray Vision, and any forms of Detect or Spatial Awareness which are not primarily based upon some other sense. The "simulated sense rule" applies to the member senses of this group.

Clairsentience is a sense with several unique properties. Its focal point can be at any location within the Power's range, instead of just at the character himself (most senses' focal points are the character's eyes, ears, and so forth). From that focal point the sense is used in the usual fashion, and Range Modifiers apply. Clairsentience is thus "Indirect" in some ways (since it can be projected inside buildings, around corners, and so forth), and operates in 360 Degrees (since a character can establish the focal point wherever he prefers within his range, including behind him, and sense in any direction from that focal point). For a discussion of how sense-affecting powers affect Clairsentience, refer to "Sense-Affecting Powers," below.

For purposes of sense-affecting Powers, Precognitive Clairsentience and Retrocognitive Clairsentience should be considered separate from each other and



from normal Clairvoyance. Thus, a Flash versus Clairvoyance will affect a character's ordinary Clairvoyance, but not his Precognition or Retrocognition; a Flash versus his Precognition will not affect his normal Clairvoyance or Retrocognition. If a character has more than one form of Clairvoyance (say, Clairvoyance and Clairaudience), it is the GM's call, based on special effects and logic, as to whether they are affected separately or together by Flashes and similar attacks.

N-Ray "Vision," despite its name, belongs in this Sense Group and not the Sight Group, since its special effect can involve just about any sense. It could be a form of vision that can see through things, a form of smell so powerful that it can smell things through barriers, a form of hearing so precise that it can detect minute shifts in air currents which indicate what things are and where they are located, and so forth—its definition is as broad as the player's imagination. It should more properly be named N-Sensing, and it is covered by the simulated sense rule. But no matter how it is defined, the player must define a reasonably common substance that blocks the sense.

Spatial Awareness allows a character to sense his surroundings without contacting them. Like N-Ray Vision, it can be defined as some sort of super-refined version of one of the ordinary senses, and thus it is covered by the simulated sense rule. Spatial Awareness does not operate in 360 Degrees, nor is it Discriminatory, but it is a Targeting Sense.

Even More Unusual Senses

This "category" includes several "senses" that do not belong in any other group, not even the Unusual Sense Group. These senses are covered by the simulated sense rule.

Voice As A "Sense"

A character's voice cannot be used to "detect" anything, of course. However, since the use of the voice can be stopped by Darkness which affects the Hearing Group (i.e., a "silence field," if you will), the voice has some sense-like aspects. Voice is worth 20 points as a power (its absence is Greatly Impairing, All The Time).

Sense Talents

Several Talents are unusual types of senses or "proto-senses," if you will—either they act as unusual senses, or some aspect of them is tied to making PER Rolls. Unless the GM prefers to rule otherwise, they can be affected by sense-affecting powers such as Flash and Invisibility, and they are covered by the simulated sense rule. These Sense Talents include: Absolute Time Sense; Bump Of Direction; Combat Sense; Danger Sense; Defense Maneuver (only the ability to perceive multiple attackers can be affected; the character's skill at never allowing an enemy to attack his back cannot); Find Weakness; Lightsleep; and Simulate Death.

Other Senses And Sense Groups

If he wishes, the GM can establish other "Sense Groups" based on common special effects. For example, all of a character's senses which are based on his mystic powers would belong to the "Mystic Sense Group," which would then be subject to sense-affecting powers.

The GM can also establish other senses if he wishes to. For example, he could create "Mystic Awareness," which functions just like Mental Awareness except that it allows characters to detect mystic or magical energies.

Affecting And Using Senses

Adjustment Powers

In some situations, Adjustment Powers can be used to affect the senses. The effects will vary upon the Power and the sense, as described below. Dispel, which is similar to Adjustment Powers, will also be discussed in this section.

Aid

Senses can be Aided. However, they cannot be increased beyond their normal levels—to do that, characters have to buy Enhanced Senses. The purpose of Aiding a sense is to "heal" that sense from being Flashed or Drained. This form of Aid is referred to as "Aid versus Flash;" it normally affects any sort of Flash, but at the GM's option characters may be required to buy Aid versus Flash by Sense Group, e.g., Aid versus Sight Group Flash. Since senses are not "Characteristics" or "special effects," an Aid which Aids all Characteristics or Powers with a related special effect (a +2 Advantage) does not normally work to counteract Flashes.

With Aid versus Flash, the BODY rolled on the Aid dice must equal or exceed the amount of BODY of Flash currently in effect to totally "heal" the Flash effect; any lesser amount simply "heals" that many Phases worth of Flash and leaves the character Flashed for the duration of the remainder.

Example: In Phase 3 Dr. Destroyer Flashes Seeker's Sight Group senses with a 6 BODY Flash, indicating that Seeker will be Flashed for 6 Phases. In Phase 7, The Medic arrives and uses his Aid versus Flash to restore Seeker's eyesight. Since three of Seeker's Phases have passed since the Flash, the Flash only has 3 BODY currently in effect, and The Medic's Aid only has to roll 3 BODY or more to "heal" Seeker. If The Medic rolled only 2 BODY, Seeker will still be Flashed for the one Phase not healed. If The Medic had arrived in Phase 3, when the Flash had 6 BODY, he would have had to roll 6 BODY on his Aid dice to fully restore Seeker's eyesight.

Aid versus Flash also works against Adjustment Powers which are used to affect a character's senses. In this case the total rolled on the dice is added to the sense's point total to counteract the effect of the



Adjustment Power. For example, if a villain used Drain Sight Group to drain 15 points from a hero's Sight Group senses, The Medic could use his Aid versus Flash to counteract the effect. If The Medic rolls 12 on his Aid dice, the hero gets 12 of the drained points back, so that he has only lost 3 points' worth of eyesight—not even enough to suffer a PER Roll penalty (see below).

Dispel

Dispel cannot be used against a character's innate senses. Transform is used to permanently deprive a character of one of his senses. However, Dispel could be used to destroy gadgets that provide senses, such as IR Goggles.

Drain and Suppress

Senses can be Drained or Suppressed, using the point totals for them that are listed above. If the Drain does not Drain all points in the sense, the sense becomes less acute, and the character suffers -1 to his PER Rolls with that sense for every 5 points drained. If the Drain equals or exceeds the points in the sense, the character loses that sense until the Drained points are restored. Since this is similar to using Flash or Transform, some GMs may prefer to disallow it entirely. Suppress works the same way, it just has to be maintained by spending END in the usual fashion.

Drain and Suppress are bought to affect individual senses or Sense Groups in the same way that characters buy Flash dice to affect senses or Sense Groups (see below).

Transfer

A sense can be Transferred from one character to another. This is another way to overcome the effects of a Flash. The Transfer is based on the points in the sense, as detailed above.

Change Environment

A Change Environment ability may have some effect on one or more senses. For example, a character may be able to Change Environment to create a thick fog which would obstruct characters' sight. This sort of Change Environment ability cannot impose more than a -2 penalty to PER Rolls made with that sense; for greater effects, buy Darkness.

Darkness And Flash

Darkness and Flash are the two primary sense-affecting Powers. Their game mechanics are explained in the *HERO System Rulesbook*, pages 62 and 70. The notes that follow clarify some aspects of these Powers.

Darkness And Flash Versus Sense Groups

Both of these Powers work against individual senses at their lowest level; characters must pay points to affect entire Sense Groups.

The logic of this is questionable. There are relatively few ways one could use Darkness or Flash

against, for example, a character's Normal Sight without affecting every other Sight Group sense that he has. How is a character supposed to use his Infrared Vision if his Normal Sight is blinded by a glaring flash of light, after all? It is possible to imagine Powers that might affect one sense out of a Sense Group—for example, a heat blast that Flashes Infrared Vision but not Normal Sight, or a smoke grenade whose smoke provides Darkness against Normal Sight but does not hide characters' heat signatures—but this is the exception, not the rule.

If you agree with this analysis, you can use the following alternate rule. At their base levels, Darkness and Flash affect one Sense Group. Each additional Sense Group costs +10 points, just like normal. If a character wants to build a Darkness or Flash ability that only affects one sense out of a Sense Group, the Darkness or Flash should be bought with a Limitation on the points devoted to that Sense Group (usually a -1/4 or -1/2 Limitation on the 10 points in question will be appropriate; check with your GM).

Darkness Or Flash Versus Clairsentience

Darkness and Flash may work against Clairsentience in unusual ways, depending upon the special effects of the Clairsentience. Imagine if you will a typical use of Clairsentience in a fantasy setting—a coven of witches gathered around a cauldron whose waters display a scene several miles away (say, a group of knights on the march). How will Darkness and Flash work in this situation?

First, since the Clairvoyance is defined as using the witches' eyesight to view a "picture in a pool," if their eyesight is Flashed (or blinded by Darkness) the Clairvoyance will not work. The Flash could take place at the cauldron itself (maybe an enemy of the coven has snuck up on it and cast a "blinding spell" or something similar); or it could take place at the scene being viewed—if one of the knights sets off a Sight Group Flash for some reason, the witches viewing it will be Flashed.

Second, the Clairsentience Power itself could be Flashed or blotted out by Darkness. A Flash versus Clairsentience would have to be launched at the witches themselves, since they are the source of the power—a Flash versus Clairsentience at the scene being viewed will not affect them. However, a Darkness versus Clairsentience used at either the scene of the cauldron or the scene being viewed will prevent the spell from functioning properly, since it will "black out" the area to Clairsentience.

Since this particular Clairvoyance spell can be affected either of two Sense Groups—Clairsentience or Sight—it is entitled to a Limitation, as described below.

Darkness And Flash Versus The Mental Sense Group

The Mental Sense Group is affected by Flash and Darkness somewhat differently than most other Sense Groups. This is because Mental Powers can be targeted two ways: through eyesight, or through Mind Scan.



A Darkness versus the Mental Sense Group will prevent any use of Mental Awareness or Mind Scan by affected characters. It will also prevent the use of Telepathy and Mind Link, since, like a Darkness versus Hearing, it affects both the “mental hearing” and the “mental voice” aspects of those Powers. However, if the character has LOS on his target, Telepathy and Mind Link can still be used, since they can be used either through a Mind Scan “circuit” or through LOS. Mind Scan itself does not work on a LOS basis, so it does not matter whether a character in a Mental Sense Group Darkness field can see his target—the Mind Scan is effectively “blacked out.”

A Flash versus the Mental Sense Group is another story. It also blocks Mental Awareness and Mind Scan, but it only Flashes the “mental hearing” aspect of Telepathy and Mind Link. The “mental voice” aspect of those Powers will still function (similarly, a character suffering from a Hearing Group Flash can still talk). Since his Mind Scan is Flashed, he can only target his Telepathy or Mind Link through LOS. The mentalist cannot read the thoughts of anyone he can establish LOS on—his “mental hearing” has been “deafened”—but he can send his thoughts to them. If he already has a Mind Link established when the Flash goes off, the “mental voice” aspects continue to function, but the “mental hearing” aspects are cut off.

Additionally, the use of Mental Powers can be affected by sense-affecting Powers which affect the Sight Group, which is used to establish LOS. If a mentalist character does not have Mind Scan and his Sight is blocked by Darkness or Flash, he is effectively unable to use his mental powers. If any mental effects are in existence when the Darkness or Flash is used against him, such as Mental Illusions or Mind Control, his control over those powers is cut off, but they will remain in effect at whatever level they were when cut off and will deteriorate as per the rules from that point.

Defining “Line Of Sight”

Defining LOS can be difficult. There are several approaches.

The first approach is the “speck on the horizon” theory. Under this approach, if the mentalist can see the target at all, he can use mental powers on it. This definition has the advantage of being a literal interpretation of the phrase “line of sight.” However, it can lead to the “mentalist sniper” syndrome, in which the mentalist character stays a mile away from the combat on a tall building zapping enemies while remaining effectively immune to counterattack.

The second approach is the “recognizability” theory. Under this approach LOS only extends to the point where the mentalist could recognize the target as an individual person (he does not have to be able to actually recognize him, just theoretically able). This approach reins in the “mentalist sniper” syndrome considerably, but also denies mentalists much of the advantage of having powers with no range modifiers.

A third approach is called “recognizability by species.” Under this approach, the target does not have to be individually recognizable, just recognizable by its general species (for example, human, goblinoid, canine, Martian, or draconic). This approach falls somewhere in the middle of the other two in terms of advantages and disadvantages.

It is this third approach, recognizability by species, which is recommended. It does away with the worst abuses of the “speck on the horizon” syndrome—after all, a speck could be anything, even a rock—while still allowing mentalists some of the natural advantages of using powers which attack the mind. GMs and players are encouraged to play around with this and the other standards to find one appropriate to the campaign.

LOS can only be established by a targeting sense.

Generally, LOS cannot be fooled by a disguise or an illusion which makes the target look like someone else. The target still has a mind, and that mind can be affected even if his outward appearance changes. However, there may be some instances, such as certain uses of Mind Scan, where an attempt to locate the disguise identity will fail because the disguise identity is not actually a person. The GM should adjudicate this issue on a case-by-base basis.



LOS generally has to be achieved with the naked eye—using binoculars or telescopes spoils the effect (though a character's innate Telescopic Vision would not, of course). Similarly, a character cannot achieve LOS through television, Clairvoyance, or similar means.

Senses Affected As More Than One Sense

Some sense powers will be affected by Darkness and Flash as if they are more than one sense. For example, the radar screen on a battleship requires both Radar (which is built into the device) and Normal Sight (that of the operator, which is used to read the screen); the radio in Defender's helmet requires both HRRH and Defender's Normal Hearing and Normal Sight (to hear and see the audio and video transmissions).

This amounts to a Limitation on the Power (in these examples, Radar and HRRH). If the additional sense through which the Power can be affected is Sight, the Limitation is $-\frac{1}{2}$; if it is any other sense, the Limitation is $-\frac{1}{4}$.

Senses Affected As Another Sense

Some sense Powers will be affected not as their usual Sense Group, but as some other Group. For example, a closed radio link can be defined as a Mind Link. This form of Mind Link will not be affected as the Mental Sense Group—it's not really a "mental" power, after all—but by the Radio Sense Group. In most cases, this sort of "switch" is a -0 Limitation; in some circumstances (such as when a very common sense, i.e. Sight, is substituted for a very uncommon sense), it might be a $-\frac{1}{4}$ Limitation.

Flash Defense

Flash Defense is an incredible bargain. For a mere five points, an average of 50 Active Points of Flash can be completely defended against. If this has diluted the usefulness of Flash in your campaign, consider increasing the cost of Flash Defense to balance the situation. A cost of 2 or 3 points per 1 point of Flash Defense may prove more balanced.

Desolidification

Technically, Desolidified characters are not affected by sense-affecting Powers unless those Powers are bought with the "Affects Desolidified" Advantage ($+\frac{1}{2}$). However, while this is a correct interpretation of the rules, it is completely illogical. If a Desolidified character can see and hear the solid world, he ought to be affected by sense-affecting Powers which target

Sight, Hearing, and other senses possessed by the Desolidified character. (Touch, obviously, is one sense which the Desolidified character cannot use on the solid world, so it cannot be so affected.)

One exception to this is Flashes which are based on some physical effect, such as throwing powder in the target's eyes, poking him in the eyes, or clapping him on the ears. Since these attacks require some sort of touching, they cannot affect a Desolidified character (at the GM's discretion, this could be taken as a $-\frac{1}{4}$ Limitation on the Flash, but this is not recommended).

If the Desolidified character pays +20 points, he can be immune to sense-affecting Powers while Desolidified. He can also achieve this effect with the -2 Limitation, "Cannot Sense Solid World" on his Desolidification. He will then be blind, deaf, dumb, numb, and without the ability to smell things, but his Desolidification will certainly be cheap.

Images

The discussion above about Darkness and Flash affecting entire Sense Groups at their base level, rather than individual senses, applies to Images as well.

Invisibility

The discussion above about Darkness and Flash affecting entire Sense Groups at their base level, rather than individual senses, applies to Invisibility as well. However, the logic for buying Invisibility by sense rather than by Sense Group is stronger than it is for Darkness, Flash, and Images—there are lots of characters who cannot be seen by with Normal Vision but who can be detected with Infrared Vision, for example—so GMs should think about the situation carefully before deciding which rule to use.

Transform

Permanently eliminating one of a character's senses is a Major Transform—Transform Sighted Human To Blind Human, for example. Likewise, Transform can be used to restore sight to a blind man, grant hearing to a deaf person, and so forth.

Transform can also be used to counter the effects of Flash. A Minor Transform is used; the total on the Transform dice must be equal to double the BODY of Flash currently in effect to "heal" the Flash. Refer to "Aid," above, for more details (however, Transform cannot be used to gradually reduce the effects of a Drain the way Aid versus Flash can; Transform is all-or-nothing).



Requires A Skill Roll

by Steven S. Long

Requires A Skill Roll, a $-\frac{1}{2}$ Limitation, is a prominent feature of several genres covered by the *HERO System*. This article is a discussion of this Limitation, including several variants which can be used to better simulate certain effects in the campaign.

General Uses

Requires A Skill Roll (abbreviated "RSR") is most commonly used in heroic or low-powered genres, where it serves as a way to allow characters to wield large amounts of power while keeping that power in check. Examples of this include most spells in *Fantasy Hero*, which require the character to make a Magic Roll to cast the spell successfully, or most of the "non-powered Powers" described in the *Dark Champions* line of books.

Abilities that use the RSR Limitation can be generally divided into two groups: those which are dependent upon the Skill Roll; and those which are extensions of the Skill Roll. "Dependent" powers, such as the *Fantasy Hero* spells mentioned above, require the Skill Roll as a prerequisite to the power's functioning—if the roll is missed, the power fails to work entirely. For example, if a wizard fails his Magic Roll, the spell he is trying to cast will not work.

"Extension" powers, such as the "non-powered Powers" described in the *Dark Champions* books, are in effect Skills disguised as Powers—the Power is used to create a "super-Skill," or to render easy a task which is difficult when the Skill itself is used. Extension powers are in essence simply a form of Skill, and take on many aspects of Skills: a character can succeed at them partially, may be able to achieve extraordinary effects if he makes the Skill Roll by a significant margin, and may be able to teach them to others.

Side Effects

With either type of RSR power, the "Side Effects" Limitation may come into play if the roll is failed. The exact effects of this depend upon the nature and type of the power involved; generally, the Side Effects for dependent powers are more extreme than those for extension powers. At the GM's option, the force of the Side Effect may depend upon how badly the character misses the Skill Roll—a roll missed only by a point or two would create a lesser Side Effect than one missed by six or eight points. This may also depend upon the nature of the power being used.





RSR And Activation

RSR and the "Activation" Limitation are very similar in many ways, but also very different. Activation is for the most part similar to the "dependent" form of RSR, since it indicates total success or failure—partial success, as discussed below, is not possible. However, Activation is appropriate for situations where there is only a chance for a power to work, but where no Skill Roll is involved. Partial-coverage armor is the most common example of this phenomenon.

An important difference between RSR and Activation is that when the Power that is being limited is Constant, an Activation roll still has to be made every Phase. The RSR roll, on the other hand, usually only has to be made once.

Game Characteristics Of RSR Powers

The three important aspects of the RSR Limitation are these:

The Skill that is required must be a Skill costing 3 points for a base roll and +2 points for +1 to the roll thereafter. The Skill does not have to be a completely new, separate Skill (it could be Acrobatics or Lockpicking, for example). However, in some cases (i.e., the Magic Skill required for spells), it will be a new and distinct Skill which essentially is used only for the RSR power.

The Skill Roll takes a penalty of -1 per 10 Active Points in the power.

Although it doesn't explicitly say so in the rules, there are some inherent assumptions that go along with choosing a particular Skill as a Required Skill Roll. For example, if a character wants to buy Desolidification as a form of "super Lockpicking" with Lockpicking as the Required Skill Roll, an inherent "limitation" on that power is that there has to be a lock for the character to pick before he can use the power. He can't make a Lockpicking roll and then use his Desolidification to walk through a solid, featureless wall. Generally, this sort of thing is inherent to the RSR Limitation, and characters should not be allowed to claim a separate Limitation for it (i.e., "Only Works If Locks Are Present" (-1) as a Limitation for the power described above); however, there may be circumstances where an additional Limitation will be justified.

As you will see below, these aspects can be altered through the use of variant and optional rules.

Variant Rules: Type Of Required Skill

Background Skills

Skills such as Knowledge Skills, Professional Skills, and Sciences can be used as RSRs. However, since they are much cheaper than the normal Skill (11-roll for 2 points, +1 to roll per +1 point thereafter), the RSR Limitation should only be worth $-\frac{1}{4}$. The GM may waive this rule for Background Skills with unusual functions, such as KS: Analyze Style or KS: Analyze Combat Technique.

Characteristic Rolls

Characteristic Rolls can be used for RSRs. However, this can lead to widely varying levels of competency among characters, which can be unbalancing—should a DEX 30 character, with his 15-DEX Roll, get the same $-\frac{1}{2}$ Limitation that a character with DEX 15 and a 12-roll gets? Obviously, one character is more limited than the other.

If this situation is causing problems in your campaign, the solution is to substitute the values listed in the Activation Chart (*HERO System Rulesbook*, page 102) for the straightforward $-\frac{1}{2}$ RSR Limitation. Thus, the 15-DEX Roll gets a $-\frac{1}{4}$ Limitation, the 12-roll a $-\frac{3}{4}$ Limitation. Of course, under this system, if a character's Characteristic Roll changes, all powers based on that roll must be recalculated.

(Note: this logic can be extended further to apply to all RSRs if the GM so desires. Every RSR would use the Activation Chart to determine the value of the Limitation.)

Talents

Some Talents, such as Combat Sense, Cramming, Danger Sense, Fast Draw, Find Weakness, and Universal Translator, are Skill-like, in that they involve making a roll to achieve success and can, in some instances, be taught to other characters. Characters are allowed to use Talents for Required Skill Rolls if they wish and the GM permits.

Unusual Rolls

Other possible Required "Skill Rolls" include "to-hit" rolls, Perception Rolls, Missile Deflection rolls, and the like. The GM should adjudicate the appropriateness of using such a roll as a Required Skill Roll on a case-by-case basis.

Variable RSRs

Some RSR powers can be based off of either of two powers. For example, a character might buy DCV Levels that require either an Acrobatics or a Danger Sense roll, with the character choosing which roll to use based on the situation (obviously the character will ordinarily choose whichever roll is highest at the time). This form of RSR is only worth a $-\frac{1}{4}$ Limitation.

Double RSRs

With GM permission, some powers may require a character to make two required Skill Rolls, instead of just one. This simulates an ability or power that is so complex or detailed that two rolls are needed. For example, a character might build a "laser bazooka" that is targeted by the character's line of sight. The Limitations "Requires A PER Roll" (to successfully "lock on" to the target) and "Requires A PS: Laser Bazooka Operator" (to actually fire the weapon correctly) might both be valid Limitations. In this situation, rather than allow two separate $-\frac{1}{2}$ Limitations, which could become abusive, a flat $-\frac{3}{4}$ Limitation should be used.

Variant Rules: The Skill Roll Itself

RSR powers tend to take on aspects of Skills. This is most true with "extension" powers, but it is also true of "dependent" powers to some extent. With this in mind, several variants can be considered.

Active Points Penalty

The normal penalty to a Required Skill Roll is -1 per 10 Active Points in the power. The GM can vary this if he wishes, varying the value of the Limitation accordingly. For example, if the penalty were reduced to -1 per 20 Active Points, the Limitation would only be worth $-\frac{1}{4}$. If the penalty were increased to -1 per 5 Active Points, the Limitation would become a -1 Limitation. If a character wished to avoid the penalty altogether, the RSR becomes an Activation Roll.

Competing Skill Rolls

Characters opposed to a character who is attempting to use an ability with a Required Skill Roll cannot make a Skill vs. Skill Roll to defeat the use of an ability which Requires A Skill Roll. For example, suppose that a ninja character had bought a "Shape Shift disguise" ability (see *Dark Champions*, page 35) with the Limitation "Requires A Disguise Roll." When he uses this ability, characters opposed to him cannot make a PER Roll in a Skill vs. Skill contest to see if they can "see through" his disguise.



At the GM's discretion, characters may take the Limitation that they can be opposed with a Skill vs. Skill Roll in this sort of situation for an extra -1/4 value to the "Requires A Skill Roll" Limitation (-3/4 total).

Complementary Skill Rolls

Depending upon the situation and the nature of the RSR power, Complementary Skill Rolls may be allowed to increase the character's chances of success. The exact nature of any modifiers and the question of what Skills are complementary in a given situation is an issue for the GM.

Extraordinary Skills

Rules for Extraordinary Skill Rolls apply to RSR powers. "Dependent" powers will become more powerful if an Extraordinary Skill Roll is made (for example, an attack spell might gain 3-4 additional DCs if the spellcaster makes his Magic Roll by an Extraordinary amount). "Extension" powers will become even more amazing and powerful than they normally are.

Partial Success

Another option that GMs may want to consider for this Limitation is that if a character misses his Skill Roll by only a little (say, 1-2 points), he can achieve partial success (if this is possible), instead of absolute failure. The exact effects of this rule have to be adjudicated on a case-by-case basis of course. The GM may reduce the Limitation's value to -1/4 if he wants to employ this "partial success" rule frequently.

Skill Modifiers

On page 18 of the *HERO System Rulesbook* there is a list of modifiers to Skill Rolls. In most cases, these modifiers will apply to the Skills used as Required Skill Rolls. For example, if the Required Skill in question is Lockpicking, but the character's set of lock picks has been stolen, the GM might assess a -4 penalty to the Required Skill Roll.

The only Skill Modifier which the GM should be leery of is "combat conditions." If an ability with a Required Skill Roll is intended for use in combat—for example, DCV Levels which Require An Acrobatics Roll—then a "combat conditions" penalty should not be imposed.

Requires A Skill Roll Variants Chart

Effect	Limitation
Basic RSR Limitation	-1/2
Active Point penalty	
-1/10 points (standard)	-1/2
-1/20 points	-1/4
-1/5 points	-1
No Active Point penalty	Use Activation Roll Chart
Background Skill as RSR	-1/4
Characteristic Roll as RSR	Use Activation Roll Chart
Competing Skill Rolls allowed	-1/4
Double RSRs (both of two Skills)	-3/4
Partial successes allowed	-1/4
Variable RSRs (either of two Skills)	-1/4

Suggested RSR Abilities

The following is a list of suggestions for RSR-based abilities and powers. Of course, this list is far from extensive, and many of these powers will take Limitations other than just RSR. Other examples of RSR powers can be found in the "Character Creation" sections of *Dark Champions*, *An Eye For An Eye*, and *The Ultimate Martial Artist*.

Acrobatics: DCV Levels or Desolidification for a dodging or defensive ability.

Acting: Mind Control or other mental powers, to make the observer really believe that the character is who he's pretending to be.

Animal Handler: Mind Control which "Only Works On Animals" (-1) to simulate a character who can make friends with even the fiercest beasts.

Breakfall: Superleap which is "Only For Preventing Damage From Falls" (-1), to prevent the character from hurting himself if he falls off of tall buildings, mountain tops, and the like. Breakfall can also be a Required Skill Roll for Knockback Resistance, simulating a character's inherent ability to avoid damage from Knockback by "always landing feet first."

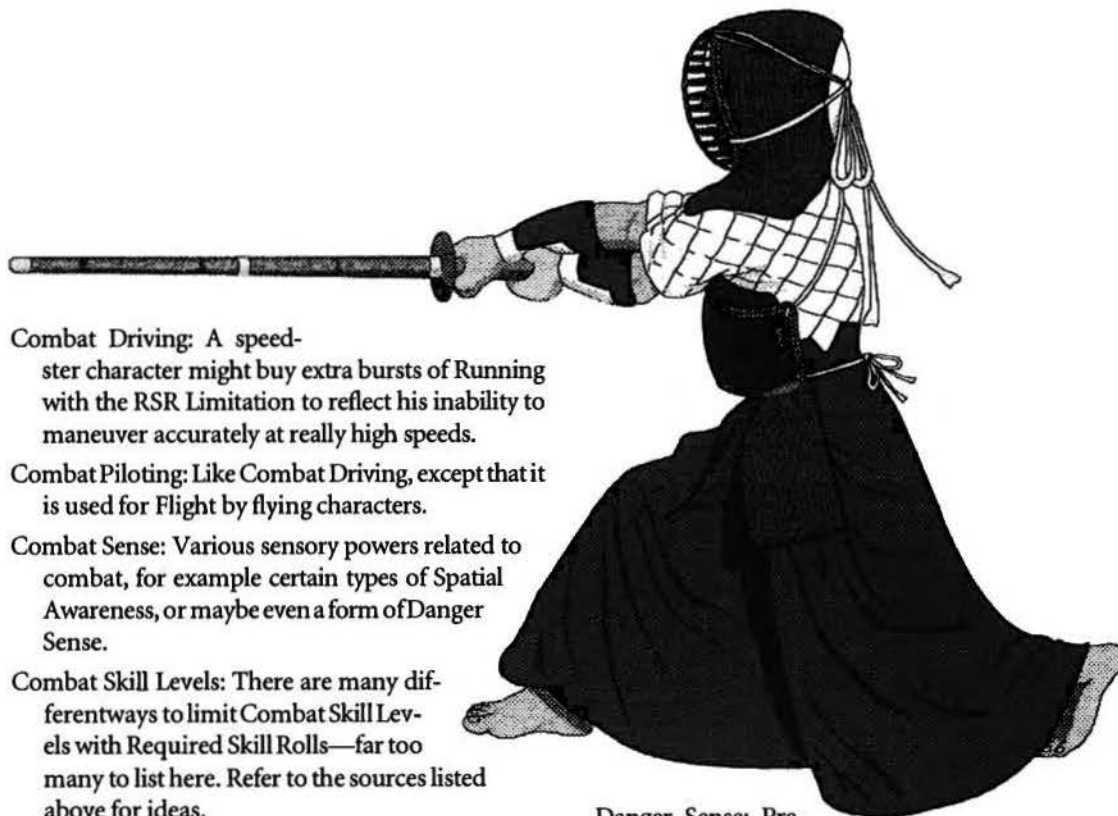
Bribery: Mind Control, to breeze through Customs even though you've got a Stinger missile underneath your overcoat.

Bugging: Clairsentience, to build a bug and install a listening device that's state-of-the-art (see, for example, *Dark Champions*, page 99).

Bureaucratics: Mind Control (although it is rumored that bureaucrats are mindless....)

Climbing: Clinging, for a "human fly" type of ability.





Combat Driving: A speedster character might buy extra bursts of Running with the RSR Limitation to reflect his inability to maneuver accurately at really high speeds.

Combat Piloting: Like Combat Driving, except that it is used for Flight by flying characters.

Combat Sense: Various sensory powers related to combat, for example certain types of Spatial Awareness, or maybe even a form of Danger Sense.

Combat Skill Levels: There are many different ways to limit Combat Skill Levels with Required Skill Rolls—far too many to list here. Refer to the sources listed above for ideas.

Computer Programming: Various mental powers and Telekinesis might take this as a Required Skill when they are intended to be used for manipulating computers and other electronic devices (refer to the discussion of this subject in the forthcoming *The Ultimate Mentalist* for more information on this subject).

Concealment: Invisibility, with some additional Advantages and Limitations, makes hiding things extremely easy.

Contortionist: Desolidification; Shrinking; Stretching—all of these powers can be used to simulate “super escape artist” abilities.

Conversation: Telepathy (with the requirement that the character use the +10 “Target will not remember actions” used for Mind Control, to simulate the fact that the target believes that he really wanted to talk with the character (the “Invisible Power Effects” Advantage could also be used to achieve this effect).

Criminology: Various Detects related to criminalistics; Transform when used to erase all trace evidence from the scene of a crime.

Cryptography: This Skill possibly could be used as a Required Skill for a Universal Translator ability which “Only Works On Printed Matter” (-½) and takes a lot of Extra Time.

Danger Sense: Pre-cognitive Clairvoyance (“By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes...”); Telepathy; various Detects; N-Ray Vision (as a form of “super-intuition”—“Defender, wait a minute. There’s something powerful waiting to attack us on the other side of that door—I can sense it.”)

Deduction: *Telepathy* (see *Dark Champions*, page 36).

Demolitions: A character might have to make a Demolitions roll to successfully activate various bombs or other attacks.

Disguise: Shape Shift (*Dark Champions*, page 35), or even Multiform in some instances.

Electronics: See “Computer Programming,” above.

Fast Draw: DEX Aid “Only To Allow The Character To Go First” (-½) (but refer to “Lightning Reflexes” in *An Eye For An Eye*, page 7, for a better way to do this).

Find Weakness: Extra dice of damage or an “Armor Piercing” Advantage for an attack power could be based on finding the target’s “weak spot.”

Forensic Medicine: Various Detects related to forensic pathology; Transform or Invisible Power Effects when used to hide the cause of death.

Forgery: Mind Control (fake money so good it will convince anybody!).



Gambling: Mind Control (to make the dealer give you just the card you need to win the hand); Telekinesis (to manipulate the roulette wheel without anyone noticing); Lightning Calculator (to “count cards” in blackjack with infallible precision); Telepathy (to sense bluffs, when the dealer has a good hand, when someone is cheating, and so forth, as reflections of the character’s skill and “gambler’s intuition”); extra PRE (to reflect the awe with which successful gamblers are sometimes regarded—at least, as long as their luck holds....).

High Society: Mind Control (to make people think you know how to act as one of the elite).

Interrogation: Mind Control (“Tell us what we want to know, or else we will use the Electro-Vhip on you, schweinhund”); Telepathy (the special effect being that the victim is “forced” to answer through torture).

Inventor: Transform (the character can combine seemingly useless parts into wondrous gadgets).

Knowledge Skills: The possibilities, like the list of KSS itself, are endless.

Languages: Since this Skill does not involve making a roll, it cannot be used for a Required Skill Roll. In some cases, the INT Roll associated with understanding unusual phrases in a tongue or languages similar to ones the character already knows could be a Required Skill Roll for a limited form of Telepathy.

Lipreading: Telepathy.

Lockpicking: Desolidification; Shrinking; Teleport; or any other power which can be used to simulate the power to get into enclosed areas.

Martial Arts: Since Martial Arts does not involve Skill Rolls, it cannot be used for RSR abilities.

Mechanics: Refer to “Computer Programming” and “Inventor,” above.

Mimicry: Images to Hearing Group; limited forms of Mind Control (“That’s Betty screaming! We’ve got to go help her!”)

Navigation: Various Detects.

Oratory: Mind Control.

Paramedic: Healing Aid or Regeneration.

Persuasion: Mind Control.

Professional Skills: Refer to “Knowledge Skills,” above.

Range Skill Levels: Refer to “Combat Skill Levels,” above.

Riding: A skilled equestrian might buy some extra inches of movement usable by his mount, but make those inches dependent upon the rider making his Riding roll—a way of simulating a good rider’s ability to make the most of his mount’s capabilities.

Sciences: Refer to “Knowledge Skills,” above.

Security Systems: Desolidification (for avoiding various traps); various Detects related to the field; Invisibility (for slipping past sensors); Telekinesis (for disarming security devices at a safe distance); Darkness to various senses common to security devices, such as infrared cameras and motion sensors (the special effect is that the character is so skilled at sneaking in that he can avoid such devices altogether).

Seduction: Mind Control; Transform (normal human into human infatuated with the character using the Transform power; this is a Minor Transform).

Shadowing: Invisibility; in some instances, possibly also Tracking Scent.

Skill Levels: Refer to “Combat Skill Levels,” above.

Sleight Of Hand: Telekinesis with Invisible Power Effects (fully invisible, +1) and Requires A Sleight Of Hand Roll would be a nigh-foolproof way to, for example, pick pockets.

Stealth: Invisibility; Mind Control (for the limited effect of “You do not see the person sneaking past you”).

Streetwise: Mind Scan (see *Dark Champions*, page 34).

Survival: Transform (inedible matter into edible food-stuffs [within reason, of course]). In other words, the skilled survivalist is able to “find” edible food where the less skilled man sees only weeds. Similarly, Detect Food And Water might have this as a Required Skill Roll.

Systems Operation: Refer to “Computer Programming,” above.

Tactics: Clairsentience, possibly including Precognition (to figure out what the enemy is up to).

Tracking: Mind Scan (“He went this way...”).

Trading: Mind Control (“All right, you drive a hard bargain, I’ll sell that to you for half price”).

Transport Familiarity: See “Combat Driving” and “Combat Piloting,” above (don’t forget: TF allows for an 8- roll in difficult situations).

Universal Translator: Telepathy.

Ventriloquism: Mind Control (“What was that I just heard? Let’s go check it out, the prisoners won’t get away”); various other sonic powers.

Weapon Familiarity: This Skill involves no rolls, so it may not be used for RSR abilities.

Weaponsmith: Transform scrap metal into weapons and vice-versa (to instantly create or destroy weaponry).





Environmental Effects

by Steve Peterson

The *HERO System* defines a number of things very well, but until this time rules for different environmental effects weren't present. There's a reason for this—many environmental effects happen over a fairly long time frame, and thus don't apply to combat situations. Or the modifiers for an environmental effect are often overwhelmed by the use of Powers. Still, for heroic campaigns, it's often useful to know the effects of different environments on characters. These environmental effects make certain Skills more useful, and can add dramatic tension to an adventure (“Will our heroes cross the desert before their water runs out?”).

Of course, these rules are optional, and since they generally require more bookkeeping, these rules shouldn't be used all the time. One of the best uses is for the GM to determine just how long characters will survive in certain conditions; the GM can then use this information for dramatic effect. For instance, the GM can determine how far characters can go across a desert after they run out of water, and then he can make sure he puts an oasis at just the right spot. Or the mysterious stranger can arrive in time to rescue the characters from the freezing blizzard. Or perhaps these rules can make it easier for players to determine whether they have adequate supplies for a journey.

As part of this effort, once specific environmental effects have been defined it becomes much easier to define Change Environment. Therefore, a new, more specific version of Change Environment has been included here. Also, there are some refinements to Life Support that may be of interest. Again, these new rules should be considered optional.

One more thing to remember: These environmental effects can (and often do) happen simultaneously. For instance, you could be dehydrated, starving, and crossing a hot desert. So you'd take the listed effects for all of these things, which would put you in pretty bad shape fairly quickly.

Important Note: In non-combat situations, everyone is considered to act at SPD 2 at all times. This should be kept in mind when evaluating the long-term effects on an environment. Also, even in a combat situation, characters may elect to act at a lower SPD than they have, down to a minimum of SPD 2. This will significantly reduce the effects of the environment on a character.

Dehydration

Normal people die in about two to three days without water at normal temperatures. Note that there's water in food, so eating can make a character last longer. Survival Skill is very important in finding water, along with appropriate Knowledge Skills (for the area, plant and animal life, geology, and so on). If you manage to find water, of course these dehydration effects may be put off.

The basic level of Dehydration is represented by losing 1D6 STUN and BODY (no defense) every 6 hours. In other words, roll 1 die like a normal attack, and the amount on the die is subtracted from the character's STUN total; 1 BODY is subtracted from the character's BODY total (0 BODY if a 1 is rolled on the die, 2 BODY if a 6 is rolled). This dehydration effect doesn't set in until 24 hours after the character has been deprived of water.

The STUN lost to dehydration will come back from normal Recoveries; the GM can consider this STUN loss to be a dizzy spell or period of light-headedness. This can occur at an appropriately dramatic moment during the six-hour period of effect, or it can occur gradually over the time period. The BODY comes back through the normal healing process. Once you hit 0 BODY, you lose 1D6 BODY every 1 hour.

High temperature hastens the effects of dehydration. Each Temp Level above normal adds 1D6 to the dehydration effect; for instance, Temp Level 3 would mean 4D6 of dehydration every 6 hours. Of course, Temp Level will usually vary throughout the six-hour time; take an average Temp Level for each 6-hour period.

While this may not seem like too much of an effect, it's important to note that the effects of dehydration are in addition to the effects of high temperatures. The combination of the two can kill a man in hours. See the Temperature section for more information on Temp Levels.

Frostbite

Frostbite is caused by extreme cold; the flesh actually freezes and dies, and then can become gangrenous if not removed. Some of the BODY caused by low Temp Levels can be frostbite; the GM may rule that this can affect some extremities (usually the toes, but sometimes the fingers, ears, or nose). This is not a particularly dramatic or interesting condition to



inflict on player-characters. It's useful to point out as a danger in extreme cold conditions, and as a spur to action for the heroes, but it's not really a fun thing to have happen to a hero.

Starvation

Normal people die in about a couple of weeks without food. Of course, a lot depends on the initial health and weight of the person who is starving, and the amount of activity that he experiences while starving. Starvation takes a long time to occur, and thus will rarely be a factor in a roleplaying game. Still, there may be an occasional desert expedition or a prisoner locked in a dungeon who experiences some starvation, and so these rules may prove useful. Once again, Survival Skill is very useful in finding food in the wilderness, if that happens to be your situation.

Starvation doesn't begin to have effects for about two to three days (this period can be adjusted by the GM to account for activity and other conditions). After that time, the character loses 1D6 Normal per day (STUN and BODY), with no defense. The STUN lost is recovered normally, but the BODY lost is recovered like any other lost BODY (1 Recovery per month; no BODY recovery is possible until the starvation is ended, though). The GM can use the STUN loss as a dizzy spell or light-headedness for dramatic purposes.

In addition to the STUN and BODY lost through starvation, the starving character also loses STR, DEX, and CON at the same rate as BODY. For simplicity,

you can just roll one die and use that to determine the amount of all Characteristics lost (e.g., if you roll a 3, you lose 3 STUN, 1 BODY, 1 STR, 1 DEX, and 1 CON). For more variable results, you can roll a separate die (looking for BODY) for STR, DEX, and CON. The STR, DEX, CON, and BODY are recovered at the normal rate for lost BODY, 1 REC per month. Poor conditions will double or triple this recovery time; excellent conditions will halve the recovery time. Of course, no recovery is possible until the starvation is ended.

Sunburn

Sun exposure can cause bad burns on exposed skin; the degree of sunburn depends on your skin tones and amount of exposure, as well as the latitude of your location. The equatorial sun is much fiercer than the sun at high latitudes, which is why dwellers on the equator have dark skins and dwellers at high latitudes have light skins.

Sunburn can cause normal damage (STUN and BODY, no defense); the amount of damage depends on the amount of skin affected. One way to decide this is by Hit Locations. The head is 1D6, each arm is 1D6, the legs are 2D6 apiece, and the torso is 3D6. Those figures are for the entire body, front and back. The GM determines the amount of your body exposure and the time of exposure. The damage listed is for the worst possible exposure which results in 2nd degree burns. For milder cases of sunburn, take no BODY damage, just STUN. Use half the amount of dice for





Game Mechanic: This new Change Environment adds some specific effects, which is nice, but most of them aren't going to do much to a really tough hero or a superhero unless you put a whole lot of points in it. Change Environment is really most efficient against normals, and if you want a very large Area Effect it's a lot cheaper than the standard Area Effect advantage. It's no great shakes as a combat power, for the most part, but it could be useful in the right situation. A really clever player could have some fun with this, especially with Variable SFX.

even milder cases. (You should note that even these "mild" cases are more severe than most people would ever get.)

The exposure necessary to cause sunburn is usually hours, though once again this depends on many factors. A common roleplaying circumstance where someone is sunburned might be lying unconscious in the sun for hours. In such a circumstance, a fully clothed character would only be burned on their face and perhaps hands, which would be $\frac{1}{2}$ D6 or perhaps just 1 point of STUN.

The sunburned character can take a REC once per day for the STUN loss, once treated. Paramedic Skill reduce this time, or with modern painkillers you could remove the STUN loss entirely. Recovering the BODY from sunburn takes the normal amount of time for BODY damage recovery.

Change Environment

Since natural environments have received a more precise treatment, it's only proper that Change Environment is altered to generate these conditions. First of all, the character purchasing Change Environment must specify the type of environmental change; for instance, Heat or Rain. For a +1 Advantage, you can vary the effects of the Change Environment within a tight group of special effects (such as temperature alteration—that allows you to make it hotter or colder).

These effects occur instantly when the power is applied, last as long as END is paid, and then disappear once the user turns off the power. Typically, though, in many genres changing the weather requires some time to take effect, and when you cease to work at it, it takes some time for the effects to wear off. This can be simulated by using Gradual Effect (from *Hero System Almanac 1*), and defining that the effect occurs over the time period specified, reaching its full intensity at the end of the period. Change Environment bought in this fashion also wears off at the same rate; if you want it to disappear instantly when the power is turned off, move down one step on the Gradual Effect Limitation table.

Thus if it takes 20 minutes for your 40 points of Heat Wave to take full effect, the Change Environment gets a -1 Limitation. It also takes 20 minutes for the temperature to return to normal after you turn off the Change Environment power.

The following specific environments and their Change Environment costs are not the only possible Change Environment effects. You are free to choose any other effect that you want that's not listed, as long as the GM approves. This should give you some guidelines in developing specific game modifiers for other effects chosen.

Fog

Each 10 points of Change Environment: Fog causes a -1 Sight PER Roll when you're within the foggy area. Fog affects Sonar the same way, and messes up IR and UV Vision, too.

High Pressure

Higher than normal atmospheric pressure is not immediately dangerous as long as the pressure is equalized internally and externally (if not, this is treated as an attack). When you move suddenly from a high-pressure environment to a low-pressure environment, though, you will suffer from the bends, bubbles of nitrogen gas that can cause excruciating pain, severe injury and death.

Each level of high pressure (every 20 points) results in 1d6 STUN/BODY (No Normal Defense) to the character when normal pressure returns suddenly. Damage is halved for every time interval over 1 Turn that the pressure change takes place over. Thus, damage is halved at 1 minute, halved again at 5 minutes, and halved again at 20 minutes. (This should be enough to reduce damage to 0 in all cases.)

So if a character wanted to use a High Pressure Change Environment as an attack, it would take one phase to impose the High Pressure and the next phase to drop it; the damage would occur on the second phase.

Light/Shadow/Sound/Silence

Images should be used for these effects. Images can be bought at -1, Only For Light (or other effect) to reduce the cost. Of course, normally you'd want to put these effects into place over a large area, so you'd use the $+\frac{1}{4}$ Advantage listed under Images to double the radius of the effect, perhaps a number of times. A Shadow, for instance, would merely be -1 PER Roll, making it harder to see in an area.

Low Pressure:

These are the effects for less than normal atmospheric pressure; normal is defined as sea level to about 5,000 feet.

It takes 40 points of Change Environment to reduce the pressure to half normal, and 80 points to reduce pressure to 0 (vacuum). In game terms, this is treated as $\frac{1}{2}$ REC and 0 REC. The GM can pro-rate the effects of Change Environment to work at intermediate levels (for instance, at 20 points everyone is at $\frac{3}{4}$ REC).

This works for any situation where the partial pressure of oxygen is low, whether from altitude or from an overabundance of a neutral gas (such as nitrogen or helium). Whenever the pressure is lower



than normal, you burn a minimum of 1 END per phase even if you are not active (of course, if you're active you burn more). When you run out of END, you burn STUN; when you run out of STUN, you burn BODY. This works like drowning, and for good reason.

This particular Change Environment may have interesting effects on other Powers with certain special effects. Flames would have trouble burning at 40 points (reducing their effect by half), and would go out entirely at 80 points. Sonic attacks would also work with reduced efficiency at low pressures.

Magnetic Fields

At high levels of effect this can be bought using Telekinesis. Lower levels of magnetic fields can be bought using Change Environment, with 2 STR at range (only versus magnetic metals) for every 10 points of Change Environment. This is enough to trigger Susceptibilities or Limitations due to powerful magnetic fields. It's also enough to get you some minor utility out of the power, but you can't use a Fine Manipulation roll with this as you can with Telekinesis.

Radiation

This is a particularly nasty effect. High levels of Radiation can be bought as a Drain or as an attack of varying kinds. Change Environment can be used to create a lower intensity radiation field that nonetheless has some dangerous effects. For 20 points, Change Environment: Radiation causes 1D6 Normal attack (no defense) per day, with a recovery rate of once per week. Each succeeding level (20 points) of Change Environment: Radiation moves this damage up the Time table one level. For instance, the next level would be 1D6 per 6 hours.

Radiation may have other effects, too. In the comics, radiation accidents are involved with many character origins, and can often provide a reason for altering a character's powers. Of course, in more realistic fiction radiation can cause long-term problems such as cancer. The GM can use radiation as a plot device when needed.

Rain/Snow

Each 10 points of Change Environment: Rain causes a -1 PER Roll for Sight and Hearing in the affected area. Every 20 points causes a -1 CV penalty in the area, if the GM rules that this applies. The CV penalty reflects the slipperiness of the ground and of weapons, and the difficulty in seeing your target. However, this may not apply to certain characters or ground conditions. For instance, an asphalt surface specifically designed to drain water may not get slippery when wet, and a flying character probably doesn't care about ground conditions. The GM must rule on the exact effects of rainfall in an area. Note that rain could have an effect on certain special effects (such as electricity or sonics or flame powers).

Whether you get Rain or Snow with this Change Environment depends on the Temp Level of the area involved. Unless the Temp Level is -1 or lower, you'll get Rain. Of course, when you do get snow it may not last very long in the wrong environment (such as the hot desert sands), but that's all part of the special effects.

The GM may wish to make it easier or more difficult to get Rain or Snow depending on the existing conditions, in much the same way that altering



Storyteller: The Environment definitions can be useful for certain stories, pitting the heroes against nature. I can see some dramatic possibilities—the heroes, lost in the blizzard, pushing onward through the deepening snows, the chill settling into their bones... cool!





Role Man: With these environment definitions I can see how heroes specializing in Area Knowledge and Survival Skills are going to be really valuable. A wizard with the right Change Environment spell is going to be very popular, too. It's a handy way to come up with some water in the desert; a little CE: Rain and you can fill your canteen.

Temperature depends on the existing temperature. In a really dry setting (such as a desert), the GM may subtract several levels of Rain. In a wet climate where there's already a good chance of rain (or where it's already raining), the GM may add some levels of Rain.

Temperature

These rules handle the effects of temperature extremes on people. Each temperature level can be generated by 10 points of effect of Change Environment (points in CE used to expand the area don't count). This table works for temperatures above or below the normal range. What is the normal range? Well, that depends on a variety of factors, including wind, sun, humidity, and other environmental factors. Generally, the normal range (before you start having effects like those listed) is from around 40° Fahrenheit to 90° Fahrenheit. Each level of temperature change is about 10°-20° difference.

Once again, it should be noted that those numbers are just to give you a general idea, and the actual ambient temperature could be quite different. The important thing for the GM to determine is the Temperature Level, which defines the effects. The exact temperature, wind speed, humidity, and other factors are more of a special effect, which the GM should feel free to specify or not, as she sees fit.

In the real world, the actual Temp Levels you might encounter range from about -6 to +3 (though with a raging Antarctic blizzard, it might even be colder than -6). In a desert setting, the Temp Level might only hit +3 or +4 for a couple of hours in the middle of the day, and then it's cooler earlier or later in the day. At night in the desert, the Temp Level sometimes dips to -1. The GM can define areas by the range of Temp Levels that occur in that area.

The rules for the effects of temperature are quite simple. The GM determines the Temperature Level that's in effect, or a character causes a Temperature Level through use of the Change Environment power. It's important to note that the Change Environment power has to work with the Temperature Level of the environment. For instance, if the GM says that the Temp Level in the desert (where the heroes happen to be now) is Temp Level 2, then a Change Environment: Heat for 3 levels would result in a Temp Level of 5. On the other hand, a Change Environment: Cold of 3 levels would result in a Temp Level of -1. Temperature Levels are given a number; negative numbers are cold temperatures, positive numbers are hot temperatures.

At a given Temp Level either below or above 0, characters will lose some of their REC and a certain amount of END every 20 minutes. The character's REC is reduced by the Temp Level until the character leaves that Temp Level. The END lost is determined every 20 minutes, and that is Long Term END; the character must rest for 5 hours to Recover that.

Appropriate clothing means -1 or even -2 Temp Levels (in the case of cold, the Temp Level moves toward 0; for instance, wearing Level 2 arctic gear in Temp Level -3 conditions means you're effectively at Temp Level -1). Cold weather gear is far more effective than hot weather gear; modern clothing can provide up to Level 5 protection from cold, but only Level 2 protection from heat. Better clothes can be bought as Life Support through a Focus, if you want to use high-tech solutions. Survival Skill can make a -1 Temp Level shift; a half roll is a -2 Temp Level shift. One Survival Skill roll per day per group (though other's Survival Skills can be treated as complementary Skills).

The basic Temp Level effects assume that the character is wearing normal clothing for average weather. With no clothing at all, or clothing designed for hot weather, being in the cold is one Temp Level worse (wearing a swimsuit would make Temp Level -1 into Temp Level -2; but Temp Level 2 would become Temp Level 1). Being wet shifts the Temp Level down one; it's helpful in a hot climate but bad in a cold climate.

Shelter makes a big difference, too. Certainly an air-conditioned, modern environment can completely ignore the outside temperature. But if you're stuck out in the wilderness, some shade can reduce the Temp Level by 1. Or building a snow cave can improve the Temp Level by one or two. It's up to the GM to provide modifiers like these to improve the survival chances for the heroes and make the story more interesting.

These Temp Levels assume that the characters are active. Resting will reduce a positive Temp Level by 1; it will also lower a negative Temp Level by one. In other words, it's a good idea to rest in the heat, but staying still and not moving in the cold can make things worse.

Note that when your END is gone, any action you try to take burns STUN points. When your REC goes to 0, you may find yourself burning STUN to act in short order. The STUN is, of course, not recovered, since at that point you no longer have a REC score. And when your STUN is gone, you'll burn BODY in order to stay alive. At that point, death isn't far away.

Temp Level	REC Lost	END/20 min
1 (-1)	-1	-1
2 (-2)	-2	-2
3 (-3)	-3	-3
4 (-4)	-4	-4
5 (-5)	-5	-5
6 (-6)	-6	-6
etc.	etc.	etc.



Wind

At high levels of intensity, wind can be created using Telekinesis. Or you can combine Telekinesis and Change Environment to create a powerfully focused wind. Each 10 points of Change Environment: Wind gives you -1 Hearing PER Rolls in the area and -1 OCV for muscle-powered ranged attacks (such as arrows). Wind can also be useful in other circumstances, depending on conditions. If it happens to be really dusty in an area, Wind can cause -1 Sight PER Rolls per 10 points (depending on the GM's judgment, this could be higher or lower). Wind may also affect Temp Levels, making it colder than normal: Move the Temp Level -1 for every 20 points of Wind.

Once again, Wind works better with ambient conditions. If it's already windy, Change Environment: Wind moves the level from where it's at currently, not from no wind at all. Although even the base amount of Wind translates to a pretty stiff breeze, about 25 mph or so.

Life Support

Life Support is the way to negate many of the bad effects from Change Environment. If you have Immune to Intense Heat/Cold, then you take no notice of the effects listed for Temp Levels. As an option, the GM may wish to separate some of these immunities. Thus, Immune to Heat would be 3 points, and Immune to Cold would be an additional 3 points. Similarly, this could be done with low pressure (vacuum) and high pressure.

The GM might also make a greater distinction with Immunities to disease, poisons, and drugs. This would increase the costs, but provide for a somewhat more interesting set of options. Drug Tolerance could be treated as discussed in the article on Drugs and Poisons elsewhere in this Almanac (essentially, buy Power Defense at -2 Limitation). Resistance to disease and poisons could be purchased in the same fashion, as Power Defense at -2 Limitation.

This works a bit different than normal Power Defense; rather than taking your defense against each "attack" rolled (which would be each separate die in a Gradual Effect attack such as the BODY Drain from a poison), you take the defense against all of the dice together. So, for instance, if your Defense against cobra venom is 5 points, then the first "attack" from your cobra bite is a 4, you take no BODY. The second "attack" from the cobra bite is a 3, and thus you'd take 2 BODY ($4 + 3 = 7$, $7 - 5 = 2$ BODY). The GM may want this to occur at the beginning of the Gradual Effect attack, or at the end of the attack (which is



probably a bit more realistic, though harder to figure out—you have to roll every attack first, then subtract the defense off of the back end, without letting the player know what's happening).

Buying that type of Power Defense against a group of attacks (such as Diseases) is only a -1 Limitation.



Classic AC



Send in the Marines

by Greg Porter

Why isn't the Army out trashing supervillains?

When you look at it, the Army has more power points than the world's supply of heroes and villains put together. Consider your average M-1 tank. A 5d6 Armor Piercing Killing Attack, 3d6 Killing Attack, Area Effect Radius, a 2½d6 Autofire Armor Piercing Killing Attack (coaxial 7.62mm machine gun), IR and UV vision, High Range Radio, and Darkness (smoke projectors). Not bad. Throw in some SAM batteries, TOW launchers, grenades, mortars, etc., and you have a thoroughly nasty bunch of people.

So why isn't Uncle Sam out there dribbling supervillains like basketballs? (Go ahead and slam-dunk Black Paladin.)

Well, the Army is a very sluggish organization. Most superheroes can make the Rapid Deployment Force look like arthritic snails. Heroes have the advantage that they are "above" rules and regulations. They do not have to follow set procedures, go through chains of command, etc., but can go straight to the scene of the action, something that can be difficult to do in a 65-ton tank.

Against totally invisible or desolidified targets, the Army is virtually helpless, unless you equip special units to counter this threat. Any form of invisibility nullifies a lot of firepower simply because the average soldier has no vision enhancement. And with their low OCVs, there will be a lot of random destruction flying around.

In hostage situations, what can they do? Anything that stands a chance of incapacitating a high-powered agent or villain will almost certainly kill the hostage, and very few soldiers (snipers) have an OCV that will allow for a called shot.

So, what is the Army and its massive point reserve good for?

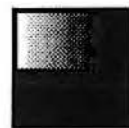
Well, for starters, they make an excellent defense force. If the dreaded Scarlet Wizard announces, "In two days to the hour, I shall level this city single-handedly, and you foolish mortals can do nothing to stop me!"

he may have another thing coming. The Army can do a pretty good job of defending its own installations also. Given the need, and a day or so for mobilization, huge quantities of men and material can be set up anywhere there is a place to stand.

Another use for the Army is as a containment force. Let's say you are going lair busting, or getting ready to break the back of some nefarious organization. If it is a large group, there may be several villains, but hundreds of agents, and at least as many support personnel. You call in the Army to surround the place while you go in. You take care of the major menace, and they shoot down anything that tries to leave, catch stragglers, and mop up when you are through.

To give the army a little more substance, I present a guide to the military hardware the Army is likely to use. This should cover everything the Army uses that is likely to come into play.

Your average soldier is fairly capable as far as normals go. The DEX and skill levels are attributable to training. The CON and PD come from physical



toughening. And the extra point of PRE comes from an improved self-image and experience with acting under pressure.

The average soldier will be equipped with a variety of devices and formed into squads of six men.

The four following equipment packages represent basic loads carried by the average infantryman. The first package is for the average soldier. The second is a spotter, radio man, or squad leader. The third is the anti-armor man. The fourth is a support man, designed to carry loads such as heavy weapons or ammunition for the same.

Average Soldier

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR		12-	100 kg; 2d6 [1]
11	DEX	3	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
11	CON	2	12-	
10	BODY		11-	
10	INT		12-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO		11-	ECV: 3
11	PRE	1	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
10	COM		11-	
3	PD	1		
2	ED			
3	SPD	9		Phases: 4, 8, 12
4	REC			
22	END			
21	STUN			

Total Characteristic Cost: 16

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Powers & Skills

Basic Training:

Combat Skill Levels: +1 Level w/ Range Combat (5)
Professional Skill 12- or +1 with a specific device

Equipment: Choose one of the following packages:

Below is a squad listing, containing several types of squads and the equipment carried by each. Each squad has a particular strong suit, and used together as a group they can bring to bear quite a substantial amount of firepower.

Average Squad: Four men with Package #1, one with Package #2, one with Package #3.

Mortar Squad: One man with Package #1, one with Package #2, four with Package #4, one mortar.

Machine Gun Squad: Two men with Package #1, one with Package #2, three with Package #4, one machine gun.

Anti-Armor Squad: One man with Package #1, one with Package #2, one with Package #3, three with Package #4, one TOW launcher.

Anti-Aircraft Squad: Three men with Package #1, one with Package #2, two with Package #4, one Redeye launcher.

Typical Soldier:

M-16: 2d6-1 RKA, AF5, +1 OCV, +2 Range Levels, 4 clips of 30 charges, OAF (28) [4x30]

Grenades: 2d6 RKA, Explosion, 4 charges, OAF (15) [4c]

Knife: 1d6 HKA, 0 END, OAF (11)

Radio Man, Squad Leader, Spotter:

M-16: 2d6-1 RKA, AF5, +1 OCV, +2 Range Levels, 4 clips of 30 charges, OAF (28) [4x30]

Knife: 1d6 HKA, 0 END, OAF (11)

Backpack Radio: Radio Hearing & Transmitting, OAF (2)

Night Goggles: UV Vision, OAF (2)

Binoculars: +6 Telescopic Sense, OAF (4)

Anti-Armor:

M-16: 2d6-1 RKA, AF5, +1 OCV, +2 Range Levels, 4 clips of 30 charges, OAF (28) [4x30]

Knife: 1d6 HKA, 0 END, OAF (11)

M72 LAW: 4d6 RKA, +1 Range Level, 4 charges, OAF (21) [4c]

Support Troop:

M-16: 2d6-1 RKA, AF5, +1 OCV, +2 Range Levels, 4 clips of 30 charges, OAF (28) [4x30]

Knife: 1d6 HKA, 0 END, OAF (11)

Heavy Support Equipment: As assigned:

Mortar: 12d6 EB or 3d6 RKA Explosion, 12 charges, may only be used against ground argets, minimum range 15", shots take 1 turn to reach target hex (more than one shot may be in the air at the same time) (28) [12c]

Machine Gun: 2½d6 RKA, AF5, 250 charges, OAF, Firer must be Set or Braced (36) [250c]

TOW Launcher: 4½d6 RKA, AP, No Range Mod, Minimum Range 25", must be Set or Braced to fire, 4 charges, OAF (43) [4c]

Redeye: 2d6 RKA, Explosion, Extra Time: +1 Turn, Must have a red-hot source of heat o fire at, No Range Mod, 4 Charges, OAF (19) [4c]

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 59

Total Character Cost: 75

Disadvantages: 50+

Distinctive Looks:

Soldier, (5)

Psychological Limitation:

Subject to Orders (10)

Watched by:

US Army, 14- (10)

Total Character Cost: 75



M-1 Abrams

Val	CHA	Cost	Notes
50	STR		Carry 25 ton
18	BODY		
6.4x3.2	Size	40	
18	DEF	48	
14	DEX	12	
3	SPD	6	

Total Characteristic Cost: 108

Movement: Ground: 20"/40"

Abilities & Equipment

Movement:

Treads: 20" Ground Movement (40)

Weapons & Equipment:

Radio: Radio Hearing & Transmitting, OIF (2)

Water seal: Life Support (Safe Environment: Water, Self-Contained Breathing) (13)

Optics: IR & UV Vision, +6 Telescopic Vision, OIF (8)

Main Gun: (OIF)

Multipower (150 pt. pool) (75)

u-Anti-Armor: 5d6 RKA, AP, 45 charges (7) [45c]

u-Anti-Personnel: 3d6 RKA, Explosion, 10 charges (3) [10c]

Coaxial MG: 2d6+1 RKA, +1 STUN Mod, AF5, 3000 charges, must be fired at same target as main gun, OIF (47) [3000c]

Laser Rangefinder: 5d6 Flash vs. Sight Group, 250 charges, must be fired at same target as main gun, OAF (40) [250c]

Commander's MG: 3d6 RKA, +1 STUN Mod, AF5, 80 charges, must be fired at same target as main gun, OAF (50) [80c]

Anti-Glare Shields: Flash Defense: 10 pts vs. Sight Group, OIF (5)

Smoke Projector: Darkness, 4"r to normal Sight, OIF, 8 charges, No Range (10) [8c] (13)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 300

Total Character Cost: 406



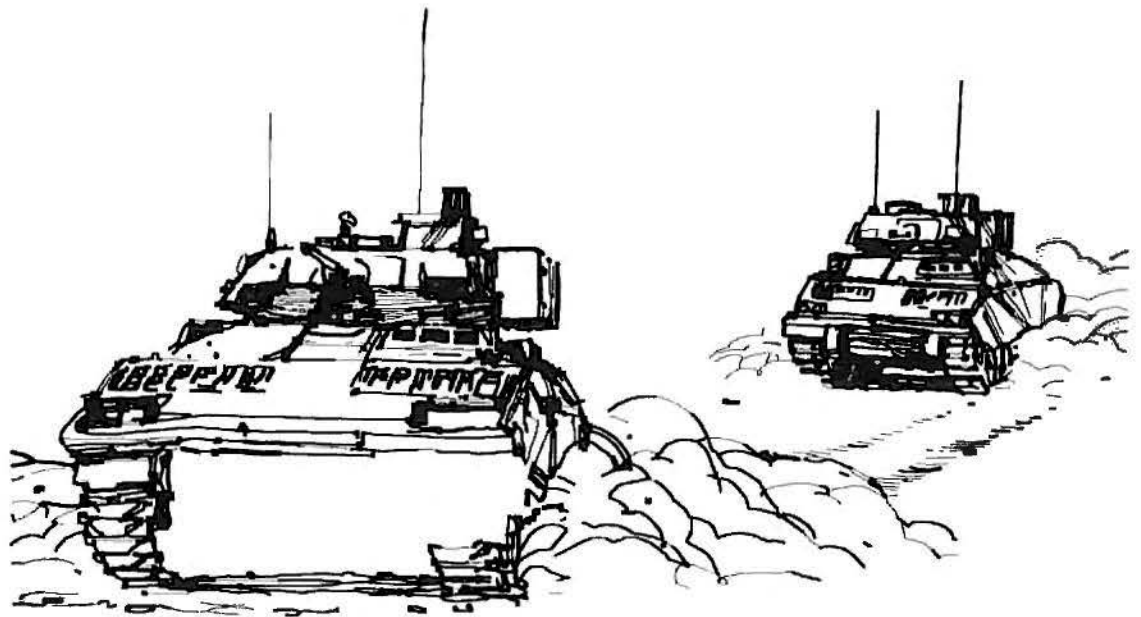
Vehicles

People aren't the only thing in the Army. Several types of vehicles are commonly used. For instance:

M-1 ABRAMS (Tank)

This tank packs quite a punch. Its main disadvantage is that it was designed to attack low-DCV targets. The 3d6 radius killing attack helps offset this. This is an anti-personnel round, but will work quite well against lightly-armored heroes or villains. The Flash Attack is the laser rangefinder mounted on the tank. Since the real thing can permanently blind a man at a distance of several miles, I don't think 5d6 is out of hand. A lot of the foci are actually OAF rather than OIF, but I feel that the OIF designation is easier than assigning a DCV, DEF and BODY to each particular piece. Most of the IIF are inobvious only to the untrained eye. If a character has any military experience, an INT roll should be made if a particular piece of equipment needs to be located.





M-2 BRADLEY (APC)

The Bradley is one of the best APCs in the world today. It has sufficient defenses to protect the passengers from almost all small arms, and can absorb quite a bit of punishment before finally giving up the ghost.

M-2 Bradley

Val	CHA	Cost	Notes
40	STR		Carry 25 ton
16	BODY		
4x2	Size	30	
14	DEF	36	
14	DEX	12	
3	SPD	6	

Total Characteristic Cost: 84

Movement: Ground: 18"/36"

Abilities & Equipment

Movement:

Treads: 18" Ground Movement (36)

Weapons & Equipment:

Radio: Radio Hearing & Transmitting, OIF (2)

Water seal: Life Support (Safe Environment: Water, Self-Contained Breathing) (13)

Optics: IR & UV Vision, +6 Telescopic Vision, OIF (8)

Main Gun: 3d6+1 RKA, AP, AF5, 120 Charges, OIF (68) [120c]

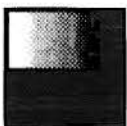
Anti-Glare Shields: Flash Defense: 10 pts vs. Sight Group, OIF (5)

Smoke Projector: Darkness, 4"r to normal Sight, OIF, 8 charges, No Range (10) [8c] (13)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 145

Total Character Cost: 233

That about covers it for the Army and a couple of its vehicles. I hope this has been of help to you in your campaigns and scenarios.



Impossible Crimes

by Steve LePrade

"Frederick! Thank God you're here! The mayor's been murdered!"

"Calm down and tell me what happened," replied the steely-eyed detective.

"Well, Councilman Parsons, Larkin here and I were standing around his office talking. Larkin happened to peek through the crack in the mayor's office door. He hollered that the mayor had been stabbed. He broke down the door — it had been locked from the inside — and dashed in. John and I were just a couple of seconds behind him. Larkin turned the mayor over. He had a knife in his chest."

"Did you see anyone leave?" asked the detective.

"That's the frightening part. The room was empty. There are no other doors or windows and the door was locked from the inside."

"Sounds like suicide," the detective replied, annoyed.

"But the mayor wouldn't do that."

"Lots of people do."

But he didn't, in this case. Larkin had drugged the mayor's coffee and locked the door himself on the way out. Waiting until the drug was likely to have worked its way out of the mayor's system, and until the other two people in the office were across the room and several seconds away, Larkin shouted, broke down the door, and stabbed the mayor, pocketing the handkerchief he'd wrapped around the knife hilt.

This "impossible crime" and its techniques dates back before 1900 in detective fiction; but, though antiquated, impossible crimes such as this will keep your RPG sleuths from *Justice, Inc.* on their toes, and will be just as baffling to modern super-spies and superheroes.

You don't see impossible crimes in the novels of John D. MacDonald and the like now, but the "golden oldie" detective novels by such writers as John Dickson Carr (and his pen name, Carter Dickson) will provide many ideas for the GM who needs a startling crime.

How about this one: A man is found shot to death inside a trunk in his bedroom closet. The closet is locked from the inside and the key is still in the lock. The bedroom has been locked from the inside. The front and back doors all locked from the inside as are all windows. The burglar alarm was untouched. But there is no gun in the house. What happened?

Henry Kane came up with that one several years ago. It seems the victim opened his door to get a newspaper. He saw an old enemy in front. The enemy shot once. The bullet lodged in the victim's stomach. Crazed with fear, the victim fled, locking all doors and windows behind him and crawling into the trunk to hide, where he ultimately died. The killer never entered the house. It was on learning the solution that the reader realized the autopsy showed the wound wouldn't have bled much or even left a trail of blood.

So check around. Find a used or library copy of Carr's *Three Coffins*, where Carr's detective, Dr. Gideon Fell, tells about the types of locked-room crimes.



One is the foul-play scare to gain entry — the gambit featured at the beginning of this article.

There's the combination of accidental events that create a locked-room effect — the Kane novel mentioned.

And then there's the big group alibi — usually used by killers with too-obvious motives, making the crime look impossible. An old-time author, Clayton Rawson, in a story of his famous magician detective Merlini, featured a real winner. Friends of a man become worried and break down the door to his study. As they do so, they hear paper rip. When they get inside, they find the man dead, all windows locked from the inside. Additionally, all doors and windows have been covered with sheets of paper taped to the portals and the surrounding walls. The papers on the door are torn, indicating where the group had just burst in. How did the killer escape?

This is what happened: The killer taped up everything from the inside and then walked out the door, of course tearing the paper taped to that door. Then he locked the door. He then arranged to be with the group. When they tried to break in to check on their

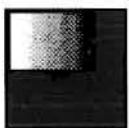
friend, he was in back and noisily tore some paper. When they saw the torn paper on the walls, they didn't realize it had been torn by the killer leaving — they thought they'd torn it upon entering.

A GM can even use disguise as John Dickson Carr did in his novel *It Walks by Night*. In Carr's book, a man is seen walking into a room, at one entrance. The security guard sees him leave out the other entrance. Five minutes later, without having left his post, the guard then goes in that room only to find the man dead and beheaded.

What happened was that the murder had occurred earlier. The killer, a master actor on stage, left the murder room, dashed to his dressing room and made himself up to look like the victim. Then he walked back in and then out of the room so witnesses would swear he was alive later than he was.

So check out the old detective novels. Give a jolt to the detective role-players in your group.

You might even borrow an idea from Ellery Queen's *The Chinese Orange Mystery*. You see, the victim is found dead with the bolt thrown shut on his door. The killer managed to get the door locked by using a rubber mat, a bookcase, and the corpse ...



Champions Minus

by **Marc R. Blumberg,**
Keith Hannigan, and
Mike Malony

Introduction

The *HERO System* has long been recognized as the finest literary creation in the history of mankind. But in this otherwise perfect system, certain shortcomings exist. There are some noticeable holes in this otherwise immaculate construct. We have attempted to fill in these holes with some additional skills, powers, and maneuvers not found in the current rules.

Skills

Skills all cost 3 pts. for a base roll of $9+(CHA/5)$. Heroes can get a +1 to their skill roll for every +2 pts. Exceptions to this cost structure will be noted (but buried deep within a paragraph). Comment: The above costs may be altered by the use of the Haggling skill (below).

Clockwise: Like its sister skill, *Streetwise*, this allows the hero to get information with a successful skill roll. However, this information only regards timepieces.

Defective Work: The hero is able to spot shoddy workmanship in manufactured goods. This can be performed at range, with a $-1/2$ " to the skill roll.

Find Week: The hero can calculate, with a successful skill roll, the current week number (1-52) during the year. This is not considered by many to be a very useful skill.

Haggling: This skill is useful when initially designing a hero. It allows the player to negotiate with the GM with regards to the hero's abilities. If a successful skill roll is made, the GM has to accept the hero exactly as the player proposes it.

Example: Joe is creating the Oracle, who has (among other things) the following abilities: 8d6 Telepathy (Area Effect, Always On), N-Ray and Telescopic Vision, 60 STR Telekinesis (based on EGO), and 20d6 Presence Transfer (Area Effect, 1x per day). Joe makes his Haggling roll by 5, so he adds another power to the list: 30" Teleport (Extra dimensional,

Usable on Others at Range, Fully Invisible). The GM frowns when he scans the list of powers, but almost chokes to death when he sees the last one. Then Joe says, "Tell you what, I'll get rid of the Teleport if I can keep the rest," to which the GM almost immediately agrees. Joe secretly smiles to himself as he starts to write up the final version of the Oracle. He'll buy the Teleport after he has some experience, and when he can think up an even worse power.

Overall Levels: A hero with an overall skill level gets a +1 on everything he does, as long as he is wearing a pair of overalls when doing it. This is very popular in rural communities.

Paramutual: The hero knows how to invest, so that he brings a diversity of income to his fellow investors. Comment: The hero cannot actually do the investing; for this he must buy the Investor skill. The Investor skill does not exist.

Pilot Sitcom: The hero can create a one-shot television show with hopes of attaining a weekly series.

Social Climbing: The hero can attain upper class status with a successful skill roll. Failing the roll can mean a loss in social standing, with a corresponding loss of income (see *Degeneration*).

Social Security Systems: The hero is able to exploit loopholes in the US Social Security program with a successful skill roll, thus being able to retire early, receive multiple benefit checks, etc.

Swinging Single: The hero knows where all the good singles bars are, how to have a good time, and how to pick up girls. The hero can pick up a girl with a successful roll, but if she has this skill, roll a skill vs. skill contest.

Television Programming: This skill allows a hero to modify what is being broadcast on major television networks. This skill can be used on local affiliate stations, but the roll is at -3. After a show goes into syndication, it is much harder to (re-)program. giving it a -5 to the TV Programming roll.

Example: The Pharaoh can't stand Wheel of Fortune, but he absolutely adores the A-Team. The Pharaoh is going to do something about it. He makes his Television Programming Roll by 5. Now Wheel of Fortune has been replaced with reruns of the A-Team. In fact, making the roll by 5 entitles him to replace any game show with reruns of the A-Team.





Powers

Acid Neutralization: Usually used after a big meal, this power enables the hero to neutralize stomach acids, thereby relieving heartburn. This power can be bought at checkout counters with Limited Uses in an OAF (antacid pills).

Bus Transfer: The hero can ride the local mass transit system all day on a single bus transfer when using this power. This power costs no END to use, but it does not include the price of the transfer.

Child Support: The hero may define an ex-spouse and child to which he/she must make monthly payments. The child can then be a DNPC, but only on alternate weekends.

Common Sense: The hero can tie his shoes, eat with a fork, and will know that he should not pay a \$1,000,000 phone bill without calling customer service first. Most heroes should have this, many don't.

Crawling: Every hero is assumed to crawl at 2" for free. For those who find that 2" isn't fast enough, an additional +1" of Crawling may be purchased for +2 pts.

Defect: The hero with the power to Defect may change his loyalties during a battle. He may, if he wishes, become a Soviet hero, and then act accordingly.

Degeneration: This power allows the hero to transform to a state where his clothes are ragged, his breath

smells, and he can't lift himself out of the gutter. Other heroes look bad around him, and he attracts a variety of flying insects. Degeneration does save him rent money, due to his tendency to patronize flop-houses.

Dense: The opposite of Common Sense. The hero can't tie his shoes, eats with his fingers, and gives his money to anyone who asks for it.

Deportation: Used by patriotic and government-affiliated heroes, this power allows the hero to declare opponents "undesirable." This forces the target to leave the country within three days, give up his green card, etc.

Discriminating Taste: At the time of his creation, the hero defines a food which he/she absolutely will not eat. If this food should surface during play, the hero will become "finicky" and refuse to cooperate.

Extra Growth: The hero has an extra growth somewhere on his body. It may be an extra head, a goiter, or a large mole. This protrusion does not add to the hero's OCV or DCV. Cost: 5 pts. per Growth. Comment: Extra Growths do not affect the hero's Reach or Running speed.

Faster than the IRS: This power allows a hero to evade the Internal Revenue Service by keeping one step ahead of them in any tax audit or investigation. Unlike its sister power, FTL, this power can only be performed in the atmosphere, because the IRS does not have space capability...yet.

Lack of Week: This power makes it harder for another hero to Find Week; it lowers the Find Week roll by 1 for each 1 pt. in the power. Why is this a power when Find Week is a skill? Don't be a wisecracker.

Legal Defense: This power protects heroes from lawsuits; every point spent lowers the Prosecution Roll by 1. This is useful if the hero is a vigilante-type.

Mind Manners: This EGO power can be used when the hero can not remember the proper etiquette in a given social situation.

Example: Dr. Faustus is invited to the White House for lunch. During the salad course, he can't remember which fork to use. He could use Telepathy on the President, but it is unlikely that he knows, either. Faustus decides to use his Mind Manners ability, and realizes that it is always the outside fork for salad, inside fork for entree. In fact, he also corrects the President, who, as predicted, was about to use the wrong fork. The President heartily thanks Dr. Faustus for saving him from an unfortunate and costly faux pas. The media relaxes.

Missile Detection: The hero can spot incoming ranged attacks. Since he can't do anything about them, this is not considered to be a very useful power.

Power Drain Cleaner: The hero rolls 1d6 for every 10 pts. in this power. The total amount of BODY is counted, and applied against the DEF and BODY of the clog. If the amount of BODY done by this attack exceeds the BODY of the clog, then the clog is cleared

up, and the points will go through the drain again. Comment: They don't go down the drain; pointsonly go down the drain when you're designing your hero and you let the GM give you a Mystery Power.

Sting-Ray Vision: This enhanced sense allows a hero to see a certain model of automobile. The hero must define a color of Corvette that this power won't allow him to see.

Transportation Attack: The hero is actually able to change his attackers into vehicles. The type of vehicle depends largely on the target's mode of transport. If the target can fly, then this attack will produce an airplane or helicopter. Notice that since all heroes know how to swim, anyone can be turned into a boat. Those heroes with 5 pts. of Life Support can be submarines.

Character Disadvantages

Bizarre: Every so often, the hero has a tendency to go Bizarre. This may happen in combat, at the sight of blood, or under other circumstances. The player must define under what circumstances he goes Bizarre, and exactly what the impact is on the hero. Characters who are Bizarre act strangely. They cannot distinguish between friend or foe. Everytime the hero does something really strange, he has a chance to break out of his Bizarre.

Example: Doc Ravage, the Man of Tin, has a tendency to go Bizarre when he feels like it (14-). When this happens, his whole personality changes, he revamps his wardrobe, and his attitude towards killing becomes increasingly careless. One day, the GM is feeling particularly nasty, and rolls for Doc to go Bizarre. Doc easily makes the roll, so Doc drops his top secret government research project and goes exploring the floor of Lake Michigan. He meets some really nice fish, but confuses his aides.

Dependent Non-Player Character Witness (DNPCW): The hero knows an NPC who always testifies on his behalf in court. This DNPCW can also be used as a reference when the hero applies for jobs, credit cards, loans, etc.

Haunted: The hero is Haunted by the spirit of a famous person or thing (or even a boring one). Before each adventure, the GM secretly rolls to see if the hero's Haunted will show up. If it does, then wherever the hero turns, there is a (coincidental) manifestation of his Haunted. These appearances are harmless, but will drive the hero crazy after a while.

Example: The Fury is Haunted by Abraham Lincoln. He is in his Secret ID, driving through New Mexico, and with his 2d6 Unluck, he is pulled over for speeding. The GM secretly rolls for the Fury's Haunted, and, lo and behold, it shows up. The Fury then looks at the ticket, and sees to his chagrin that he has been stopped in Lincoln County, New Mexico. Comment: This will probably cause the Fury to shove the ticket down the policeman's throat, but that is another story.

No Identity: The hero does not know who he is. In fact, nobody has this information, not even the GM. A fun way to play this disadvantage during a run is to ignore the player, and if he speaks, everyone says "Did you hear something?" Characters with this Disadvantage cannot make Presence Attacks.

Combat Maneuvers

Coordinating Colors: Usually performed by a group, each hero must make a Color Coordination roll of 8- to make sure their costumes don't clash. If everyone makes his roll, then the members all look good together. Whoever does not make the roll looks like a slob, but the rest of the group does not suffer. This is good for super-groups who are constantly in the public eye.

Diving for Water: This maneuver may only be performed if the hero starts his combat phase within 1" of a body of water. The hero must roll to hit the body of water, at -1 for every somersault done before actually reaching the water's surface. If other heroes make a Perception roll, they all judge the hero on the quality of his maneuver by writing his score down on little cards and holding them up.

Diving Under the Covers: This is a related combat maneuver which may only be performed if the hero starts his combat phase within 1" of a bed. It is useful in adventures involving the supernatural, as it is





common knowledge that this maneuver keeps ghosts at bay. This maneuver can be used in Justice, Inc. as well.

Marshall Dodge: This maneuver allows the hero to summon help from a powerful NPC. When threatened, the hero states "Marshall Dodge," then runs down Main Street yelling "Marshall Dodge! Marshall Dodge! The bandits are a-comin'!" If he makes his roll, the hero has successfully summoned the Marshall, who will ride in just in time to save the day. Heroes should get a +1 to +3 on this maneuver if they are accompanied by Miss Kitty.

Martial Law: During his combat phase, a hero may declare "Martial Law." During the remainder of that combat, all food will be rationed, and a strict curfew will be enforced. The Martial Law will be lifted only when the declaring hero deems that "the crisis has passed"

Move Away: During his combat phase, a hero can perform a Move Away by changing his place of residence. This may make it impossible for a Hunted (or Haunted) to find the hero. This maneuver may be performed with the "Forwarding Address" option, where the hero may eventually be found, but it takes some time.

Pulling Your Muscle: This maneuver is usually performed unintentionally by very strong heroes. It gives them a -2 DCV and -2 DCV due to pain, and halves

their effective Strength. Performing this maneuver on purpose is just Asking For It. Comment: Asking For It is a maneuver from Champions Minus II, but you're going to have to pay another ten bucks for that.

Pushing Your Luck: Normally not allowed unless under extreme circumstances, this maneuver can be performed against the GM to get away with questionable game actions.

Spiking Your Punch: Usually performed at social gatherings, this fun maneuver can have an astounding effect on your enemies, particularly the ones on heavy medication.

Throwing Your Weight Around: This maneuver is useful for overweight heroes, as it allows them to crush other heroes by sitting on them.

Power Advantages/Limitations

Aggravation Roll: Using a power with this limitation bothers people.

Attack Against Special Effects: This power only affects fog machines, flash pots, strobe lights and their ilk. George Lucas is highly susceptible to attacks like these.

Attack With No Strange Modifiers: This attack cannot be modified by the GM for arbitrary reasons. No more "Sure, you can try it, but at a minus 10"

Car Battery: Powers bought on a Car Battery get their endurance from its two terminals (+ and -). Such powers may have a hard time working in the winter, but may be "jumped" by another hero with the same limitation. Comment: If the hero sleeps in the garage instead of on the street, he will have a much easier time using his power in the morning.

Indivisible Power Effects: All the hero's powers go off at once.

Never On: This power can never be used, and is worth a +10 limitation.

Seriously Affects Desolidified: This power will profoundly and deeply affect intangible people, to the extent that they will sit down and really think about it after the combat is over.

Variable Swimming Pool: This power modifier allows the hero to define a swimming pool in his backyard, and he is allowed to fill it with different things each time it is used. This is great for exotic master villains to keep around their lair.

Example: The Master Planner keeps a variable swimming pool under his base. He expects Doc Savage and his aides to show up soon, so he puts a genetically mutated giant octopus in the pool. When Doc and company enter, Master Planner can then activate the trap door under their feet, sending them all for a swim. Comment: If Doc goes Bizarre during this, he will try to talk to the octopus, thereby drowning. Otherwise, he and his aides will emerge victorious (and all wet) as they always do.



Characters & Campaigning



So You Want to be a Rock 'n Roll Star

by Bruce Harlick Original System by L. Douglas Garrett

The lights are low, the band is on the stage. All week long you've been dodging cartel hit squads as you worked to rescue Jessica's father. How were you to know that he was a high-up in the DEA? Throw in the Yoshida Corporation's attempt to steal your new laser process, Danny's father's rivals trying to get some revenge, Del's father calling a religious crusade against your band, and the BGP Agency's "Recruitment Teams" trying to get you to change management, and it had been a busy time. But that meant nothing now. This is the big moment. A hush falls over the crowd as the first notes reach them...

Welcome to the exciting world of Heroic Rock'n'Roll. Heroic rock differs from real rock in several ways. If you are a heroic rock band you can write a song that morning, practice it that afternoon, and perform it that evening. All with great success. If you don't have a hit album out by the sixth run you're doing something wrong. Heroic rock is everything that people wish real world rock was: fast, easy, overnight fame, and lots of money.

Since Heroic Rockers aren't like normal musicians, some special rules are needed. A few skills are also worth mentioning. But first, a quick word about power levels.

Rock Hero is designed for a high-powered heroic campaign. Character should be built on a 100 point Base, with a maximum of 75 points of Disadvantages. Unlike a lot of other campaigns, the level of competence is set very high.

In standard HERO System games, an 11 or less in a Professional Skill means that a character could make his living by using that skill. Most people equate college degrees with an 11 or less, Masters degrees at about a 13-14 or less, and a Ph.D. at around a 16 to 17 or less. In Rock Hero, an 11 or less won't get you a job tuning guitars, let alone playing them. The assumption is that most professional musicians have at least a 16 or less skill roll with their main instrument. Skill rolls can range even higher for the truly talented. A guitar god might have a roll of 28 or less! Mundane skill rolls need not be so high, but should still center on a 13 or 14 or less as being pretty good, but not amazing.

"You Pick Up Your Guitar, You Can Certainly Play."

Music Skills should be bought as Professional Skills. Instead of using Jack of All Trades as a Skill Enhancer for music skills, Heroic Rockers use the Perfect Pitch talent instead. See? Sometimes it does pay to have innate ability. How quickly we leave reality behind...

Song Writing Skills are simulated by a Professional Skill, with some backup Knowledge Skills. The basic skill is called Songwriter, (or Lyricist or Composer, if you are going to be working with a partner.) Appropriate complementary Knowledge Skills might include knowledge of classic rock motives, classic rock forms, current events, politics, religious themes, TV theme songs, counter-culture events, history, food, or anything else a Rocker might want to sing or play about.

Tight is a Professional Skill all members of the band should have. It simulates the chemistry of a band, the ability of a band to blend and play together. If all members of the band have *Tight*, and all make their roll, they will not have to check as many musical skill rolls during a concert. See the section on concerts for a further explanation of this skill.

Rock'n'Roll Professional Skills also come in handy. Some of my favorites include Professional Skill (PS:) Charismatic Rock Star, PS: Death Metal Axe Grinder, PS: Attitude, Knowledge Skill (KS:) Cool, KS: Snappy Front Man Banter, Culture Knowledge: Decadent Western Rock Culture, etc.

Rock'n'Roll Stats include Rock Recovery at 1 point cost per point of Rock REC, and Rock Endurance at 1 point cost per 4 points of Rock END. This extra REC and END only works in concerts. The reasons for needing extra END and REC will become evident later on.



“Character is What You Are In The Dark”

OK, so those are the skills to be kept in mind. Next comes the characters. What type of characters are needed? And, what type of characters are desirable? The first thing to keep in mind is that role playing a straight rock band is dull. Your characters have got to do something else, or the campaign will devolve into exercises in needless (and endless) die rolling. Granted, all the characters are members of the band (or the sound man, or light man, or that enterprising young freelance reporter who is covering the rise of the band.) But they have got to be more.

As an example, we'll talk about the campaign which spawned this sub-system. RockHero started as a *Danger International*™ campaign. It had already decided the game would be a DI campaign dealing with the fantastic—the occult, weird science, vampires, space aliens, and the like. The GM was looking for a way to tie the characters together. Several ideas were passed around. Having the characters (who had not yet been created) as members of an agency was rejected, as was having them all live in the same apartment building. Somebody came up with the idea of having the characters all in the same band, and Rock Hero was born.

Almost all the characters in Evil Empire, the band, do more than just play instruments. Blaze plays bass, and sings most lead vocals. He grew up in a circus. Keach plays lead guitar and sings. He is an expert with lasers and holograms, and is a trained spy. Delilah plays second guitar and sings. She had a career as a gospel singer before going rock. She is an excellent computer hacker, a world class astrologer, and a trained swordsmith. Danny plays the sax, horns, violin, and electric violin. He is the son of one of the East Coast's biggest Mafia bosses, and a former divinity student. Dr. Yuri Tesilovski plays keyboards and piano. He was one of the U.S.S.R.'s young nuclear geniuses until the accident on the sub. Yuri never really went through the proper defection process; he just joined the band. Beaner plays drums. He is a SoMa (South of Market—a district in San Francisco) street person, who lives in a custom built dumpster. He has a black belt in karate.

As you can see from the above examples, most of the characters do other things than just play their music. They are all good musicians, though. But having a good background for your characters is vital for this type of campaign—you must give the GM enough handles on the characters to be able to drag a campaign out. Or drag them into the campaign.

The power level is important, too. This is no place for 98 point weaklings. Your musical skills have to be on good roll; 18 or 19 at least. If you have song writing, that should also be on a good roll, or you should have lots of complimentary skills. Tight probably shouldn't start out more than an 11 or less unless the band has been together for a while. You will need a fairly good REC and a real good END, and the rest of your

characteristics and skills should be good. All the characters should have some kind of combat capacity. A good starting point for the characters is about 140 to 170 points. Anything lower and you won't be good enough, or, worse, you'll be too one dimensional, and anything higher and you will be incapacitated by your disadvantages. This is the world of Buckaroo Banzai, where you can be a famous scientist, daredevil, and rock and roll star!

“Never Spend Your Guitar or Your Pen”

So we have skills and we have characters. Now we need songs. Sure, the band could do only covers, but no one ever became mega-famous by doing songs which had already been done. The band really needs original material to succeed. Hopefully, two or three of the characters took some sort of song writing skill, so that the band's play list will reflect the band's outlook, instead of just one member's. To make it complicated, songs have been broken down into six components. They are: Title, Length, Beat, Attitude, Intent, Difficulty, and Arrangement.

Title is just that; what the song is called. Catchy titles are good. Clever titles are good. Boring titles are bad.

Length is how long the song is. The default value is three minutes when played in the studio, and four minutes when played live. Most bands tend to stretch things out a little bit when playing live; they might try new arrangements, throw in solos, or just goof around a little. This can be modified by the Difficulty (see below).

Beat requires the writer specify whether the song is Upbeat or Downbeat. Most rock songs are Upbeat. Note this does not affect the message of the song, but rather how much energy is used to play it. Example: *Sunday, Bloody Sunday* by U2 is upbeat, even though the message is not.

Attitude states whether the song is positive or negative in its treatment of its subject matter. Most happy love songs are positive. Most blues tunes are negative. A song praising the government would be positive. A song damning the government would be negative. It is, of course, possible to “damn with faint praise,” and write sarcastic songs, but sarcasm would most likely go over the heads of most of the audience.

Intent gets to the message. Decide if the song is positive or negative, and if it has a message. This is the important part; this is where you can control the masses. Most good political rock is Upbeat Negative with a message of some sort. Most good love songs are upbeat or downbeat, but almost always positive. Remember to define a song's message, if it has one. Messages can range from “It's great to be in love.” to “Get out and fight against the fascist government to help save the



whales and boycott Gallo wine” The former is an example of a simple message while the latter is an example of a complex message. Message complexity can affect audience response.

Difficulty is determined by the number of points the song writing skill was made by. To find the difficulty, simply halve the number the skill roll was made by, rounding down. Difficulty may be traded off for length. For every two points the difficulty is reduced, the song’s length is increased by one minute in studio play, and two minutes in live play.

Example: Keach writes a song, and makes his PS: Songwriter Skill Roll by six. Half of six is three, so the song will have a Difficulty of three. Later on, Blaze and Keach get together and write another song. They cooperate, and roll very well. They make by a total of sixteen. This would give Just Say Nyet a difficulty of eight; too hard for the simple little song they had planned. They trade two points of the Difficulty for increased Length. Just Say Nyet now has a Difficulty of six, and takes four minutes to play in the studio, and six minutes to play live.

It is quite possible to write a song that is too difficult to play. A common mistake is to trade off all the extra difficulty for length. This leaves the band with a play list consisting of twenty minute-long songs, great for a progressive band, but not much good for true Rockers. The difficulty may be reduced at the option of the writer. The higher the Difficulty, the more likely it is the audience will have a positive response to the song.

Arrangement is the tricky part. First, the number of parts in the song must be known. Each instrument counts as a part, as do lead vocals. Backup vocals are also a part, but only count as one part, no matter how many people are singing. Each part is initially rated at the difficulty. This means to play the part, the band member must make the appropriate music skill roll with a negative modifier equal to the difficulty.

Example: Plastic Hair has a Difficulty of six. This gives each band member a -6 to his appropriate Music Skill Roll to play the song.

The difficulty may be arranged so some parts are harder and some are easier. Adjusting the arranging is simple, really. A part may be made easier, but the amount the difficulty is reduced must be added onto another part, or parts, of the same song.

Example: Plastic Hair is a song with a Difficulty of six. There are six parts in the song: Guitar, Bass, Vocals, Drums, Sax, and Keyboards. The Keyboardist isn’t really that good, so the arranger decides to reduce the difficulty of the keyboard part by three, making it a difficulty of three (-3 to the Keyboard Skill Roll.) To compensate for this, the writer increases the difficulty of the guitar part by three, making that part a difficulty of nine (-9 to the Guitar Skill Roll.) If the writer had wished, the three that was subtracted from the difficulty of the keyboard part, and spread it out over several parts.

Backup vocals are somewhat easier than other parts. If multiple people are singing on the backup vocals, the difficulty of the backup vocal part is reduced by one for each doubling function of the people involved. The lead singer always counts on backup vocals, so that backup vocal parts are always written at a difficulty factor of one less than it really is. Two extra people would be two less, four extra people would be three less, eight people would be four less, and so forth.

Example: Just Say Nyet has a backup vocal part that calls for two backup singers. Normally, the Difficulty would be -6; since there are two people singing backup, the Difficulty is reduced to -5. If the song called for four backup singers, the Difficulty would be reduced to -4.



Here would be a sample arrangement of the previously mentioned Plastic Hair:

Part	Difficulty
Guitar	-9
Bass	-6
Vocals	-6
Sax	-4
Drums	-8
Keyboards	-3

The song has been arranged to help compensate for the (relatively speaking) weak keyboardist and sax player. The strong guitarist and drummer must pick up the slack.

Once all the parts of the song have been decided upon, it should be recorded on a piece of paper, and passed around to the various band members so they can record their part. The song cannot be altered without rewriting, which may cause the loss of some or all practice points (see below) which have been earned for that song.

Sample Song Sheets

Title: The Best Men Don't Run
Authors: Blaze & Keach
Arrangement: Blaze & Keach
Complexity: -5
Beat and Intent: Upbeat, Positive
Time: 5 minutes Studio, 8 minutes Live
Message: Do you really want the people who run for office to run your life?

Who	What	Difficulty
Keach	Lead Guitar	-8
Del	2nd Guitar	-5
Blaze	Bass	-6
Yuri	Keyboards	-3
Beaner	Drums	-3
Danny	Sax	-7
Beaner	Drum Machine	-5
Blaze	Lead Vocals	-5
Keach, Del	Backing Vocals	-1

Title: Structural Failure
Authors: Keach
Arrangement: Keach
Complexity: -3
Beat and Intent: Downbeat, Negative
Time: 4 minutes Studio, 6 minutes Live
Message: Why get into a relationship when you're just going to break up? Nothing lasts. (A love song.)



Who	What	Difficulty
Keach	12-String	-3
Del	Lead Guitar	-5
Blaze	Bass	-3
Yuri	Keyboards	-2
Beaner	Drums	-4
Danny	Electric Violin	-2
Keach	Lead Vocals	-1
Blaze, Del	Backing Vocals	-2

“How Do You Get To Carnegie Hall?”

So the various song writing members of the band have written a song. The next step is to practice it. Practice is easy; the band members must simply make their musical skill rolls, as modified by the arrangement for their part(s). Once everybody has made their skill roll, during the same attempt, the song is considered practiced, and practice points may be applied to it. Remember the various modifiers for taking extra time, if they are needed. Practice is a low-stress situation; everyone keeps trying until they get it right.

Practice points are earned during the course of a run. At the end of a run, the GM may assign anywhere from two to eight practice points to the band members. Each practice point is used as a level (i.e. a +1 to the skill roll) with a specific song part. Practice points should be kept track of separately for each part. Practice points may also be given for spectacular rolls (a three, for example) while practicing or performing a song.

“How Ya Doing? It's Great To Be In San Francisco!”

So, all the songs are written and practiced. Now comes the big part: playing them in concert. Concerts aren't complicated. But some preparation is needed. First, a set list must be generated. A set list is merely a listing of the songs and the order in which they played for each set. (A set is a group of songs played between breaks.) The GM will inform the band as to how many sets the band will be performing in any given concert, and how long each set should be. The band then decides what songs they are going to play, and in what order, and writes them down.



Club dates are generally made up of two to three forty-five minute to one hour long sets, with a ten minute to one hour break between sets. The average break time is about fifteen to twenty minutes. Stadium dates generally consist of two one hour to one and one half hour-long sets, with a half hour break. Either type of gig may also include an encore set.

Once the set list is written up, the band is ready to play. The GM has the band check their Tight Skill Roll. If everybody in the band makes it, they need only check skill rolls on the first song in the set, and on the song with the highest complexity for their part in the set. If someone blows it, all songs must be checked, up until the half way point in the set. Then, Tight may be checked again, this time at a +1 to the roll. If it is made, no further skill checks are needed for that set. If missed, check for each song. Repeat this process for each set.

Some songs require band members to play multiple instruments. In that case, the Rocker takes a -1 to his skill rolls for every additional thing he is required to play or do. Vocals count as an instrument; Backing vocals do not.

Playing music is tiring. The basic rule of thumb is a song costs a certain amount of Long Term Endurance points (LTE) to play. The amount of LTE expended is based upon the length of the song, and the character's modified skill roll. If the character's modified skill roll (after arrangement and practice mods) is an eight or less, he must expend three LTEs for each five minutes (or fraction thereof) the song is in length. If the modified skill roll is a nine to fourteen, two LTEs are expended for each five minutes (or fraction). If the skill roll modifies to over a fifteen, one LTE is expended for each five minutes (or fraction).

Example: Evil Empire is playing Plastic Hair. Keach's adjusted skill roll is a 17 or less and Plastic Hair is eight minutes long. Keach pays two LTEs for the song. Yuri, on the other hand, has an adjusted roll of 12 or less. He would pay four LTEs for the song. Time to start practicing!

Some modifiers to this END cost apply. Energy may be put into a song. This gives the performer a +1 to each part he plays on that song, though this will not effect the END cost as detailed above. It also increases the END cost of the song by two LTEs per five minutes. Energy might also affect the crowd's reaction.

Example: Yuri decides that he needs some help with Plastic Hair, so he plays it with Energy. This gives him a +1 to his Keyboards roll, but costs him an additional four LTEs. Yuri is going to be one tired Russian.

A band member might choose to loaf on a song. Loafing requires that you check the skill roll at a -3, but halves the END cost of that song.

Example: Beaner decides to loaf through Plastic Hair; he's played that song so many times that he could play it in his sleep. So he does. Beaner's roll is normally a 17 or less for this song. He would normally pay two LTEs. Since he is loafing, he only pays one LTE. Beaner will be awake for the post-show party!

Obviously, a character may not loaf and put energy into the same song.

Breaks are important things. Rockers do not get their first Long Term Recovery (LTR) at one minute, but must wait for the ten minute mark. Fortunately, most breaks are ten minutes in length. Various items of food and drink might also give a rocker some LTEs back. A very brief list follows:

Item	LTE Recovery
Cold Water	+1 LTE (Limit 1)
Dunking Head in Cold Water	+2 LTE (Limit 2)
Beer	+2 LTE
Shot of Cold Vodka	+5 LTE
Bagel	+1 to +4 LTE, depending upon the quality of the bagel.

Beware bagel bloat, however. A character's bagel limit is equal to his CON/3+1D3. This should be determined by the GM. If the bagel limit is exceeded, the character will not recover anymore LTE from foodstuffs, and all skills rolls will be at a -3 penalty.

Remember, Alcohol is intoxicating. If too much is ingested, it may cause some problems. See the article on *Drugs & Poisons* in the rules section of this Almanac.

Another way to get LTEs back is to force a LTR. Forcing a LTR requires an EGO roll. If successful, the character gets an extra LTR. However, the LTEs recovered will return after the character gets some sleep, and must then be recovered normally. A character may only attempt to force a LTR once per break.

“They Like Me! They Really Like Me!”

The curtain goes up, the band plays. What does the audience think of all of this? Audience reaction depends on a wide variety of factors. The base reaction is determined by the roll of two dice. This reaction roll is then modified by the following factors:

The Audience. A large portion of a band's success comes from catering to an audience. The GM must look at the types of songs played, and the messages involved. It doesn't pay to sing Downbeat Negative songs to a college crowd that wants to party. The GM should assign a modifier, ranging from -3 to +3, depending on how suited the audience is to the band's music.



Random Professional Skills. This is where all of those strange skills come into play. The front man can use his PS: Charismatic Rock Star, PS: Attitude or similar skill during the concert. If the skill is made, the audience gets a +1 to their reaction roll. If a half-roll is rolled, the audience gets a +2 to their reaction roll. If the roll is missed, the audience takes a -2 to the reaction. Nobody likes a poser. The GM may let multiple band members try their various skills, but no more than two or three band members should use their skills to affect the audience.

Message: The more complex the key song's message is, the more close-minded the audience can be. The GM should assign a -1 to the crowd's reaction roll for a complex message, and a -2 (or higher) for an overly complex message.

Complexity: The audience receives half the key song's complexity as a positive modifier to their reaction. Yup, we know it isn't realistic, but we need to award skill in some fashion. The key song is the most complex song played during a set or concert.

Performance: If any of the band members should happen to make an extraordinary skill roll (i.e. a skill roll made by 10 or more) during the key song, the audience gets a +1 to their reaction roll. If multiple band members make extraordinary rolls, the audience gets multiple bonuses.

Crowd Favorites: If the band has any popular songs (in the Top Ten, etc.), they may receive a +1 to the reaction roll for each one they play.

To help gauge what a reaction means, we offer the following chart:

Modified Roll	Result
2	This band is awful, and should be shot!
3-5	This band is terrible. The audience will not be back for a second show.
6-8	This band isn't bad. Certainly, we've heard worse.
9-11	Hey, these guys are pretty darned good. Do they have any albums out?
12	This band is fantastic!
13-15	These guys are really great! Wow! I want to see all of their shows!
16-17	Oh my god! I can't believe it! And, like, I can understand their message. They make sense. We really should nuke all the whales!
18+	A religious experience. The audience has completely bought into whatever cause the band is hyping, and will buy all of the band's albums, see all of their shows. Life long fans.

Obviously, the realm of 16+ is the area of Heroic Rockers. As for the long term effects of really awesome concerts, that's up to the GM. Let's close out this system with a look at the Lead Guitarist for Evil Empire, Keach.

A Man and His Music

Keach

Background:

1960—(August 23) Keach born, St. Andrews Hospital, Tehran, Iran. Father (Kenneth McTaggart) State Department Employee, Stationed Embassy there.

1964—Keach moves to Tel Aviv, Israel. McTaggart transferred to Embassy there.

1965—(April 8) Mother (Ruth McTaggart) returns to United States to continue her career as Rock/Folk Singer/Guitarist, under name of Ruth Stein. Stein will continue to spend most of her time in the United States for the rest of her life. During her brief visits with her son, she will teach him guitar, and encourage his talent.

1967—Keach moves to Cairo, Egypt. McTaggart transferred to Embassy there.

1970—McTaggart begins to move around a lot. Stein's musical career begins to take off. Keach sent off to boarding school in Switzerland.

1974—McTaggart chosen to become head of The Farm, a new intelligence organization set up to investigate odd scientific and other unexplainable occurrences.

1976—(June 6) McTaggart and Stein divorce. McTaggart ends up with custody of Keach. McTaggart places Keach at The Farm's training camp to keep him out of trouble for the summer.

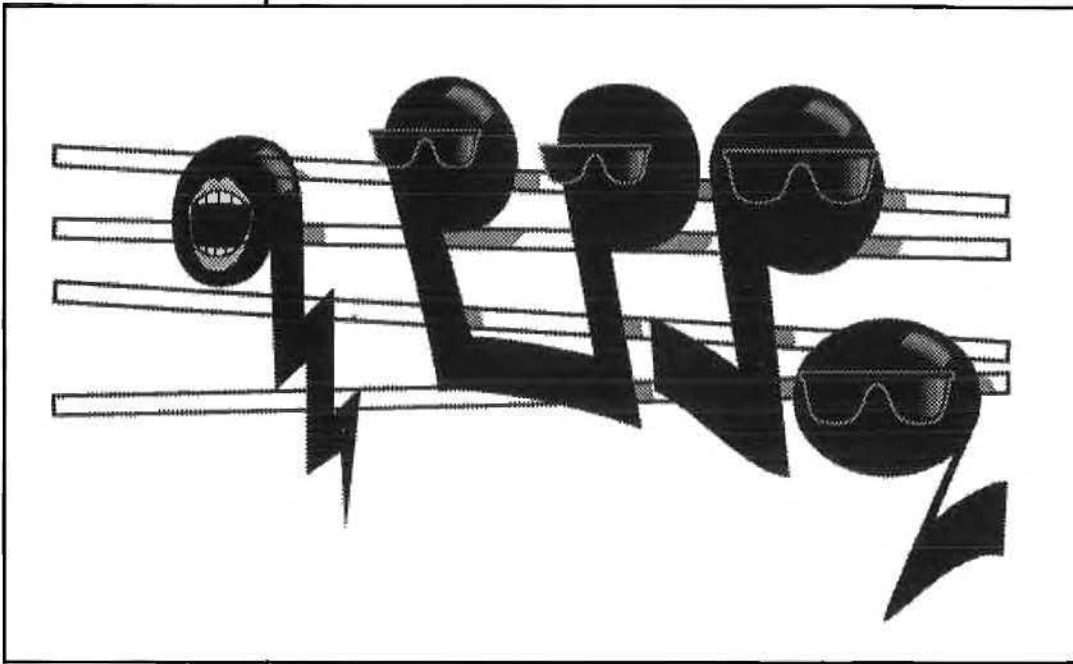
1978—Keach graduates from Swiss Boarding School. Despite three summers of training at The Farm, Keach decides that being a spy is not for him. Accepted at MIT, where he studies physics and attitude.

1979—Keach joins his first band, The Dead Monkeys.

1979—(November 7) Keach is contacted by David Swartz, an agent of The Farm. Swartz, under the misapprehension that Keach is an undercover agent (They had been in training together), asks Keach for help with a case. Keach, facing boredom and mid-terms, agrees.

1980—Keach joins second band, Windflight. Keach is contacted three times this year by various agents of The Farm for help. Agrees all three times.





Quote: "Yeah, I don't care if three presidents are in danger. I got a gig to do."

Personality: Keach's personality can be summed up in one word—attitude. And it's a hell of an attitude, too. No matter what the subject, what the problem, what the plan, Keach has an attitude about it. And probably not a positive one. Keach has little patience with bureaucracy or stupidity, and does not suffer fools gladly. He comes off as brash, glib, know-it-all, rebellious and world-weary.

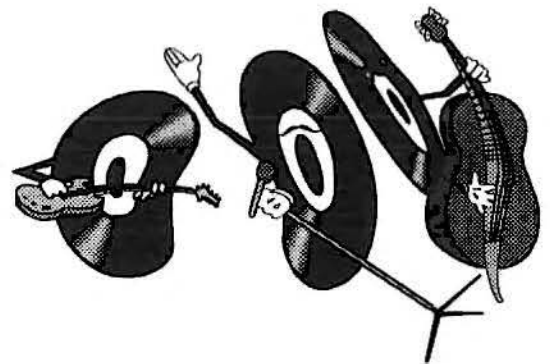
But for all of Keach's attitude, he is of a heroic bent. He would never admit it, but he hates to see wrong doing go unpunished, and is intensely patriotic. He's also an adrena-

line junkie. He gets the same sort of charge from putting his life in danger as he does from playing to a sold-out house. Music may be his life, but what's life without a little spice?

Powers/Tactics: Keach has been trained as a spy, and it shows in the way he reacts to dangerous situations. While he seems to be very confrontational, he'll attempt to avoid violent situations. When pushed to violence, he'll react in a fast, unexpected and often brutal way. He much prefers maneuvering, stealth and cunning over frontal assaults.

Appearance: Keach stands 6'5" tall and is rail thin. He's got black hair, green eyes and an attitude that can be seen a mile off. He's a handsome man. Keach tends to dress in boots, jeans, and button shirts, topped off with a leather jacket. He almost always carries a pistol, concealed somewhere on his person.

- 1980—Keach joins second band, Windflight. Keach is contacted three times this year by various agents of The Farm for help. Agrees all three times.
- 1981—Keach joins third, fourth, fifth, and sixth bands. All short lived experiences. Contacted twelve times this year for help. Helps all twelve times.
- 1982—Keach meets Dr. Albert BenHadi, who becomes his scientific mentor. Keach specializes in High Energy Optic Physics, and graduates. Contacted four times this year, helps out on three of the four occasions. Still no consistent band.
- 1983—Keach attends CalTech to get Masters in High Energy Optic Physics.
- 1984—Keach gets Masters, and patents new laser design. Gains attention of The Lab. The Lab attempts abduction, Keach foils plot. This is the start of The Lab's attempts to kidnap or kill Keach.
- 1985—Keach contacted twice to help with The Farm's business. Helps both times. Quits day job to become full time musician. Helps form the basis of Evil Empire.
- 1986—Keach contacted ten times for help. Helps eight of the ten time.
- 1987—Evil Empire begins to get successful.
- 1989—Evil Empire breaks up. Keach embarks on a solo career.
- 1990—Current Day. Keach's first solo album is out, to excellent reviews.



Keach

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	200 kg; 3d6 [1]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
15	CON	10	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
18	COM	4	13-	
6	PD	3		
3	ED			
4	SPD	10		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
7	REC			
30	END			
28	STUN			

Total Characteristic Cost: 84

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Powers & Skills

Musician Skills:

KS: Brazilian Music 11- (1)
Perfect Pitch
PS: Attitude (PRE) 13- (2)
PS: Guitarist (DEX) 26- (15)
PS: Songwriter (INT) 16- (5)
PS: Vocalist (PRE) 16- (5)
Rock END: +16 (4)
Rock REC: +2 (2)
Tight 11- (2)
Wealthy (10)

Spy Camp Training:

Arabic (Fluent w/ Accent) (1)
Breakfall 13- (3)
Combat Driving 13- (3)
Combat Skill Levels: +1 Level w/ Pistols (3)
Concealed Weapons Permit (2)
Concealment 13- (3)
Conversation 13- (3)
Farse (No Accent) (3)
French (No Accent) (3)
German (Fluent w/ Accent) (1)
Hebrew (Fluent w/ Accent) (2)
High Society 13- (3)
Intimidation (Persuasion) 13- (3)
Jack of All Trades (3)
KS: Odd Scientific Occurrences 11- (1)
KS: Supernatural Occurrences 11- (1)
KS: US Government Intelligence Community Infrastructure 11- (1)
Linguist (3)
Portuguese (Conversation) (1)
PS: Spy (1)
Scholar (3)
Shadowing, 11-
Stealth 13- (3)
Streetwise 13- (3)
Weapon Fam: Small Arms, Common Melee Weapons (4)

Science Skills:

Electronics 11- (3)
Inventor 13- (3)
KS: High Energy Optics 11- (1)
KS: Holography 13- (2)
KS: Lasers 13- (2)
KS: Physics 11- (1)
PS: Lighting Designer 11- (1)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 116

Total Character Cost: 200

Disadvantages: 100+

Distinctive Features:

Famous (5)

DNPC:

Kenneth McTaggart (Father), Less Powerful,
Useful Skills 11- (5)
Ruth Stein (Mother), Normal, 8- (10)

Hunted by:

the Lab, 8- (15)

Psychological Limitation:

Attitude (10)
Heroic (10)
Love of Adventure (155)

Unluck: 1d6 (5)

Experience (25)

Total Character Cost: 200



Into the Modern Age: UNTIL Revitalized

by **Phil Masters**

The Tribunal Lives!

UNTIL (the United Nations Tribunal on International Law) has been a feature of the Champions Universe since the first edition, and has accordingly been discussed in several places since the appearance of the fourth edition. However, no one has yet published update information. This article is designed to remedy that—and to bring UNTIL into the world of fourth edition *Champions*—and the 1990s.

Of course, what follows draws on what went before. The two essential sources on UNTIL were George MacDonald's early articles and scenarios, and Aaron Allston's classic *Super Agents* supplement. More recently, Scott Bennie threw in a wild twist in his work on *VIPER* (which should be read in conjunction with the following). Admitting the debt isn't enough; this article is respectfully dedicated to these folk. Thanks, guys.

So what has happened to the world's only international anti-super-crime agency lately? Read on.

UNTIL Characters

This section describes the people who make UNTIL a fighting force, as well as a bureaucracy; the uniformed, armed agents. Note that most of these, although well-equipped and highly trained, are "simply" high-grade "normals"; they are built on 50 points plus 50 more of disadvantages, and indeed, most of them do not even have the UNTIL Agent package deal. The individual, mostly senior UNTIL staff also described, however, are generally more formidable.

Even if UNTIL is only going to appear in a campaign in a "line troops" role, the GM should feel free to "personalize" some agents. If the agency has a base in or near the same area as a PC superhero team, then the PCs can expect to encounter some agents repeatedly, and they should start to notice personalities and quirks in the UNTIL troops. For example, a squad might have a grizzled old sergeant, with 20 CON and a high Tactics Skill Roll; a smart Investigator, who takes a pride in spotting clues that flashy superheroes miss; and a good-looking, slightly naive, latest recruit, with good DEX and COM but other physical characteristics lower than the rest, and a "Wishes to Prove Self" Psychological Limitation. (These are all terrible clichés, but a clichéd personality is better than no

personality at all.) Their character sheets may not come out at exactly 100 points each, but the GM can aim to keep them around a rough average, so long as they aren't all super-soldiers, and a mere ten or fifteen points either way can allow a wide variation in personalities and style.

Even more is possible if some UNTIL agents become major forces in the campaign. For one thing, UNTIL field leaders—at the basic commander level—can have training, experience, and equipment to match many superheroes. Alternatively, they may only be about as good as their field agents *in combat*, but with PRE-based skills, Deduction, and Contacts, to make them very powerful "socially"—useful friends, and tricky enemies. For another, UNTIL agents may work closely with superheroes, and those assigned to the task may well be chosen for their efficiency and competence. Martin Luther DeVane, described below, is an example of this; a top-class UNTIL agent, assigned experimentally to a hero team as a "special liaison". He can survive in action alongside superheroes, and could even be worth playing as a PC.

This would be an example of the last major possibility; UNTIL troops as PCs. Another version of this is the "Super-Agents" campaign; if the players don't mind running a group of characters subject to military-style discipline and restrictions, they can each take a set of "good but not incredible" characters, built on a 50 or 75-point base and using many of the "heroic" optional rules from the *HERO System* (thus avoiding having to pay points for agency-issue equipment and weapons). Fighting either villain agencies such as *VIPER* or small groups of lower-powered super-villains, these characters can experience the lower-end, slightly grittier, but still flamboyant areas of the comic-book world, and can prove you don't need to be super to be a hero. This can be a highly satisfying style of play for many people.

Lastly, full-power heroes can also be members of UNTIL—perhaps unknown as such to the agency. If they are known for what they are, having joined out of a strong sense of duty, because of some kind of special draft law, or in exchange for protection from a hostile world, UNTIL will assign them to appropriate duties; this may mean a lot of super-villain fighting, but also VIP bodyguard work, high-profile PR functions (disaster relief as well as "flag-waving"), and so on. This will enable the GM to exert quite tight control, but could be rather restrictive, having the limitations of the Super-Agent campaign without its gritty melodrama and quiet satisfactions. Agents who are *secretly* also super-powered are also possible, us-

ing their 'inside' knowledge of where their *alter ego* is needed most, but these will have a very tough time of it in many ways, reflected in their disadvantages (*severe* "Watched" limitations especially). This could be an interesting challenge for a dedicated player

UNTIL Agents

These are the overworked, underpaid heroes of UNTIL, the multi-talented forces on the ground (and in the sea and air). Over the years, the specialized branches and units UNTIL has created have each developed their own characters, and although all agents start out by undergoing the same basic training, most soon decide where their ambitions lie, and adjust accordingly. The result is a tendency to rivalry between the agent types, which has to be kept under control to avoid damage to operations. Fortunately, UNTIL senior officers are mostly quite adept at channeling this energy into useful forms.

UNTIL aims to recruit steady, dedicated individuals, rather than wild brawlers; personalities inevitably vary, but preliminary tests weed out grossly unsuitable applicants. One factor that does influence the character of a team is the attitude of its immediate officers; if these are especially gung-ho, or particularly cautious, their men can either follow this lead, or be seen as "oddballs".

Being based on traditional military organization, UNTIL can look like a male preserve, but from early on, it recruited a number of good uniformed female support personnel who found that this new body, with its emphasis on high technology and intelligence (in both senses of the word), gave them better career prospects than most armies would. Over the years, the women have been moving closer and closer to the front line; training is now largely integrated, and most bases have a substantial female agent presence (albeit often concentrated in Investigation and Admin). However, there is also still a fair amount of traditionalism and prejudice from some individuals.

All agents receive instruction in the international laws they are sworn to enforce; any who prove unwilling to learn what UNTIL is supposed to be doing are rejected. The rest of the six-month basic training is concerned with self-defense, conventional military drill, and the fundamentals of UNTIL technology and weapons handling. In theory, any UNTIL agent can use the standard blasters and battle tactics, but in practice, members of the specialist branches are often very rusty.

Tactics: UNTIL agents are taught that their job is to protect civilians, uphold international and local laws, and capture criminals—in that order. Thus, although they know the advantages of sensible military tactics—use of cover, wide dispersal to reduce the threat from "area" attacks, and so on—they all too often have to compromise in their actions.

However, the basis of UNTIL tactical doctrine is the use of range. They may have to fight enemies who are even deadlier in long-distance combat than them-

selves, but the kind of opponents who willingly come to close quarters *always* have the advantage there. Thus, a six-man UNTIL team (the minimum organizational unit) tends to advance quite slowly, with four agents covering as two at a time move. Smoke grenades are used to cover positional maneuvers, retreats, and the withdrawal of civilians from the battlefield; often, the smoke clears to reveal six blasters firing from cover. If forced to close quarters with tough opponents, UNTIL agents fight defensively, using blocks and throws to set their foes up for blaster salvos from friends, which in turn may cover the retreat of the agents who are fighting close-in.

The agent types are:

Defenders: The common, blast-carbine-toting "infantry", sometimes seen as failed applicants for more "glamorous" posts (not always fairly), actually the backbone of the agency. Defenders often develop a "grunt mentality"—"we do all the real work, and get none of the thanks". This attitude can vary from the good-humored to a mixture of arrogance and chips-on-the-shoulder.

Investigators: The second most common class of agent, but the least visible, frequently working in plain clothes to identify a problem—then, quite often, pulling on their orange body-armor to join the overt assault. If they brag, they claim both brains *and* courage, but they are often genuinely quiet individuals.

Light Horse: An old experiment, designed to counter flying supervillains and jet-pack wearing criminal agents as well as gaining a "high ground" advantage and reconnaissance capability for general operations, the Light Horse branch has only been a very qualified success. The flamboyance of their operations has proved just too appealing for would-be swashbucklers, and while many people feel that what follows has a certain Darwinian justice, the collateral damage and civilian casualties when Jet-Cycles fall out of the sky have been less acceptable. In combat, Jet-Cycles have proved vulnerable; the whole branch is now banned from some cities and even whole (mostly densely populated) countries. Light Horse agents are shown some true-life horror films while in training, in an attempt to moderate their enthusiasm; nonetheless, they retain a dare-devil image. Their equipment has evolved over the years, with the Technical Services branch aiming as much for better public relations as for higher performance.

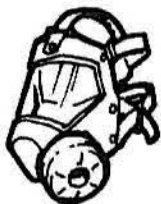
Technical Services agents see themselves as the intellectuals of UNTIL, with more than a touch of intellectual arrogance. They like to talk about "the leading edge". They are the field technicians and engineers who keep UNTIL's sometimes *very* special technology running, and also the advisers who analyze the even more powerful weapons used by opponents.

Prisoner Escort agents are a response to a series of



UNTIL AGENTS

10



Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	150 kg; 2Hd6 [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY		11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO		11-	ECV: 3
11	PRE	1	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
10	COM		11-	
4	PD	1		
4	ED	1		
3	SPD	5		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	-2		
26	END			
24	STUN			

Total Characteristic Cost: 33

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Powers & Skills

Basic UNTIL Training:

Martial Arts—Basic Training: (12)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Punch	5	7	4½d6
Block	7	7	Block, Abort
Throw	5	6	2½d6+v/5; Target Falls

Use Art with Billy Club

Combat Armor: +5 PD/+5 ED Armor, Act. 14-OIF (7)

Visor: Flash Defense vs. Sight Group (5 pts.), OIF (3)

Walkie-Talkie: Radio Listen/Transmit, OAF (2)

KS: International Law & Enforcement 12- (3)

Specialist Training & Equipment by Agent Type:

Defender Agent:

Blaster Carbine: 8D6 EB, 8 clips of 12 charges, OAF (25) [4x12c]

Billy Club: +2D6 HA, 0 END, OAF (4) [0+]

Combat Armor: +5 PD/+5 ED Armor, Act. 14-OIF (7)

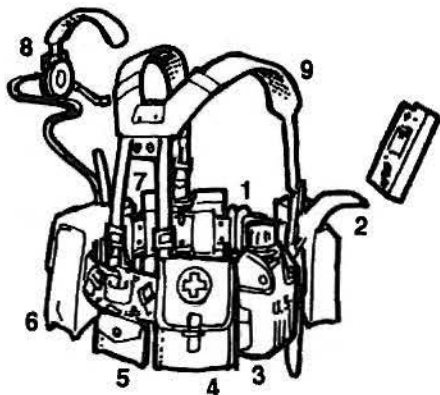
Visor: Flash Defense vs. Sight Group (5 pts.), OIF (3)

Smoke Grenades: Darkness vs. Normal Sight, 2" Radius, 3 charges, OAF (6) [3]

Combat Skill Levels: +1 OCV w/Blaster Carbine (2)

One of: the following skills: Breakfall, Bureaucratics, Climbing, Combat Pilot (Grav-Sled), Concealment, Paramedic, Tactics, Weaponsmith (Blasters), or one Foreign Language (3)

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Investigator Agent:

Blaster Pistol: 6D6 EB, 8 clips of 12 charges, OAF (18) [8x12c]

Billy Club: +2D6 HA, 0 END, OAF (4) [0+]

Undercover Armor: +5 PD, +5 ED, Act 12-, IIF (7)

Wrap-Around Shades: Flash Defense vs. Sight Group (5 pts.), OIF (3)

One of:

Pocket Microscope: Microscopic Vision x1000, Extra Time: +1 Phase, Concentration: ½ DCV (3)

OR

Psi-Shield: Mental Defense (7), IAF (3)

Mini-Camcorder: Eidetic Memory, 12 charges, OAF (4)

Criminology 12- (3)

Perk: Local Police Status whenever working within terms of the UNTIL Treaty (2)

One of: the following skills: Computer Programming, Concealment, Cryptography, Shadowing, Streetwise, or one Foreign Language (3)

One of: Acting, Bugging, Bureaucratics, Climbing, Combat Driving, Concealment, Deduction, Security Systems, Stealth, Tracking, KS: World Affairs, +1 PER, or one Foreign Language (3)

Light Horse Agent:

Vehicle (Jet-Cycle)—see below (15)

Blaster Pistol: 6D6 EB, 2 clips of 12 charges, OAF (15)

Combat Armor: +5 PD/+5 ED Armor, Act. 14-OIF (7)

Visor: Flash Defense vs. Sight Group (5 pts.), OIF (3)

Mini-Parawing: 5" Gliding, Cannot Gain Altitude, 1 Recoverable Charge Continuing for 5 Minutes, OIF (2)

Combat Pilot (Jet-Cycle) 12- (3)

One of: the following skills: Acrobatics, Breakfall, Bureaucratics, Electronics, Navigation, +1 PER, or One Foreign Language (3)

Transport Fam.: Parachutes (1)

Perk: Pilot's License (1)

Technical Services Agent

Blaster Pistol: 6D6 EB, 2 clips of 12 charges, OAF (15)

Combat Armor: +5 PD/+5 ED Armor, Act. 14-OIF (7)

Visor: Flash Defense vs. Sight Group (5 pts.), OIF (3)

Circuit Tracer: Detect Electrical Activity, Discriminatory, +3 to PER Roll, Requires an Electronics Skill Roll, OAF (6)

Pocket Microscope: Microscopic Vision x1000, Extra Time: +1 Phase, Concentration: ½ DCV (3)

Electronic Stethoscope: +5 Hearing PER, Concentration: ½ DCV, OAF (4)

Electronics 11- (3)

Two of: the following skills:

Bugging, Bureaucratics, Computer Programming, Cryptography, Deduction, Demolitions, Inventor, Lockpicking, Mechanics, Paramedic, Security Systems, Systems Operation, one Foreign Language, or one Science

KS: UNTIL Technology 11- (2)

Any one Science 8- (1)

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Prisoner Escort Agent

Force Projector: Multipower (60 pt pool), Extra Time: Full Phase to start any Power, Concentration: 1/2 DCV while in use, OAF: II slots draw on END Reserve (24)
 u-Force Beam: 12D6 EB (2) [6
 u-Force Wall: 9 PD/9 ED over 9 Hexsides, No Range (1) [4]
 END Reserve: 100 END, 3 REC, OAF (6)
 Combat Armor: +5 PD/+5 ED Armor, Act. 14-OIF (7)
 Visor: Flash Defense vs. Sight Group (5 pts.), OIF (3) +1 PER Rolls (3)
 KS: Defensive Position Planning 12- (3)
 Tactics 8- (1)

Frogman Agent

Shock-Spear Gun: 5D6 EB AP Linked w/ 1D6 RKA, 4 clips of 3 charges, OAF (19) [4x3c]
 Combat Armor: +5 PD/+5 ED Armor, Act. 14-OIF (7)
 Visor: Flash Defense vs. Sight Group (5 pts.), OIF (3)
 Aqualung: Life Support (Need Not Breathe), OIF (7)
 Swimming: +2" Swimming (4" total) (2) [1/5"]
 Swim-Fins: +3" Swimming (7" total), OIF (2) [1/5"]
 Transport Fam.: Scuba & Submersibles (2)
 PS: Sub-Aqua Ops 12- (3)
 One of: Bureaucratics, Combat Pilot, Concealment, Demolitions, Survival, Systems Operation, or one Foreign Language (3)
 One of: Transport Fam: Jet-Cycle & Submersible 'Plane, KS: Regional Coastline, SC: Marine Biology, or one Foreign Language (3)

Heavy Weapons Agent

PAW-SP: 14D6 EB, +2 Range Levels vs. Range Mod, 8 clips of 6 charges, Bulky OAF (30) [8x6c]
 Combat Armor: +5 PD/+5 ED Armor, Act. 14-OIF (7)
 Visor: Flash Defense vs. Sight Group (5 pts.), OIF (3)
 Smoke Grenades: Darkness vs. Normal Sight, 2" Radius, 3 charges, OAF (6) [3]
 One of: Bureaucratics, Concealment, Demolitions, Tactics, Weaponsmith (Blasters), or one Foreign Language (3)
 Tactics or Weaponsmith 8- (1)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 67

Total Character Cost: 100

Disadvantages: 50+

Distinctive Features:

UNTIL Uniform (Easily Concealed) (5)

Hunted by:

VIPER (more pow.), 8- (15)

Psychological Limitation:

Sense of Duty (Common, Moderate) (10)

Rivalry with:

Other UNTIL Agent Types (5)

Watched by:

Elements of Own Government when at home, or an "Enemy" government while on their territory (as pow., NCI, Limited Area), 8- (5)

UNTIL (more pow.), 11- (10)

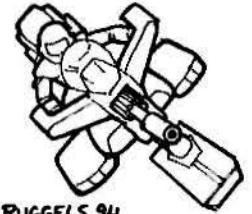
Total Disadvantage Points: 100



UNTIL Equipment Guide

1. Israeli pattern 1958 belt (1) (Chocolate Brown)
2. IMI ammunition (battery) pouches (4) (Chocolate Brown)
3. U.S. Pattern 1 qt. plastic canteen w/ steel cup (Chocolate Brown)
4. First Aid pouch (Chocolate Brown)
5. Pouch for spare Motorola battery (Chocolate Brown)
6. Gas Mask pouch, for Lammer A.G. manufactured gas mask (Chocolate Brown)
7. Radio and Pouch (Chocolate Brown)
8. "Hands Free" Headset unit for radio (Black Plastic)
9. Israeli Pattern 1980 harness (Chocolate Brown)
10. Lammer A.G. "True Vision" Gas Mask
11. Israeli "David" pattern assault vest (Chocolate Brown)
12. Israeli equipment satchel (Chocolate Brown)
13. Flashlight (Black)
14. IMI ballistic composite helmet (Sky Blue)
15. Ballistic plastic eye shield
16. Solid state, crystal cascade night vision device (clips to front of helmet)
17. Troy Industries Dynamic Photo Limiter
18. Cotton microfiber blend jumpsuit (Rescue Orange)
19. Lloyd & Hastings ballistic armor vest (Chocolate Brown)
20. UN Beret worn NATO fashion (Sky Blue)
21. UN Beret worn French fashion (Sky Blue)
22. UN Headgear for Gurkha volunteers (Sky Blue)
23. UN Headgear for Sikh volunteers (White with a sky blue flash and aluminum disk)
24. IMI two buckle canvas boot
25. UNTIL logo
26. Snap-on ballistic neck piece (Sky Blue or Chocolate Brown)





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requests that came through the UN from member countries. When powerful supervillains were captured and brought to trial, especially in smaller nations, serious problems could be experienced in holding them—especially in the formal setting of a public court-room. UNTIL was asked to help handle this. The Prisoner Escort Unit is based in The Hague, Holland, and is formally attached to the International Court of Justice. A small force using specialized equipment, it is largely ignored by most UNTIL agents, who call it “the prison warders”; however, its members pride themselves on doing an often-dangerous task, anywhere in the world, with due regard to the dignity of the law. They are trained to assess any situation or building for possible weak points or lines of attack, and to fight defensively.

Frogmen: These are the main agent force on board UNTIL’s four submarines; identical troops are also based in some major port cities, and defend marine research units. They carry equipment appropriate to their role. They are generally highly professional, effective in land as well as sea battles, but they do have something of a “surfbum” image within UNTIL. Their equipment includes guns that fire small electrified harpoons.

Heavy Weapons: With powerful supervillains able to laugh off a standard UNTIL blaster bolt, some escalation of responses seemed indicated. Technical Services came up with the Plasma Assault Weapon, Semi-Portable (“PAW-SP”); most UNTIL bases now have at least one or two squads incorporating two PAW-SP-equipped agents per team (and some bases find the need for many more). The butt of many jokes for their cumbersome gear, Heavy Weapons Agents mostly just smile, aim, and fire...

Optionally, if the GM wishes to keep UNTIL firepower under control, the PAW-SP can be assumed still to be experimental. In this case, it should have a 12- Activation/Burnout Roll, and the extra 5 points go to buy the PAW-SP equipped agents some appropriate technical skills.

Experimental Types: UNTIL has an on-going research program, designed to counter the growth in power and diversity of supervillain and criminal agency abilities. Unfortunately, the most noteworthy products of such programs have included the supervillains Ankylosaur and Death Commando, but these disasters have only been part of the story. UNTIL agents in battle armor (or carrying “weird science” weapons) are not yet a commonplace sight, but GMs should feel free to design and use such things if a scenario demands it.

Appearance: Standard UNTIL active-service costume is an orange jumpsuit (with shoulder rank badges) worn under brown body armor and boots, a light brown helmet with UN and rank insignia, and darker brown gloves and weapons belts. The visual effect is less “slick” and more utilitarian than VIPER’s body-suits. All weaponry is clearly marked with large UN symbols.

Dress uniform is a high-collared, high-buttoned jacket in light blue with white trim, white trousers and tunics, and a standard UN-issue blue beret; officers add a dress sword. People who have only seen this parade kit have been heard to mutter about “plastic toy soldiers”.

Cultural and religious factors have led to some variations on the basic pattern. For example, Sikhs in UNTIL service wear turbans (incorporating flexible protective cloth) rather than helmets or berets, and their weapons belts are modified to carry their small (purely ceremonial) daggers. Units in the Indian sub-continent go for baggier, “jodhpur-style” trousers and higher boots, giving a more Asiatic look.

Vehicles

Jet-Cycles

Notes: The creation of the Jet-Cycle in the early '80s led to the formation of the UNTIL Light Horse; the behavior of the UNTIL Light Horse led to the refinement of the Jet-Cycle. It is maneuverable, tricky to handle, and irretrievably glamorous.

Jet-Cycles

Val	CHA	Cost	Notes
15	STR		Carry 200 kg
11	BODY		
1.25x.64	Size	5	
2+4*	DEF	8	*Extra DEF for Front,
15	DEX	15	Bottom & Back only
3	SPD	5	

Total Characteristic Cost: 33

Movement: Ground: 6"/12"
Flight: 24"/96"

Abilities & Equipment

Movement:

Taxiing: 6" Ground Movement (0)
Grav Lift: 24" Flight with x4 Non-Combat Multiple (53)

Missile Rack (OAF)

Concussion Missiles: 7D6 EB, Explosive, 6 charges, 60 degree forward arc only, OAF (14) [6]

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 67

Total Character Cost: 100

Disadvantages: 75+

Vulnerability:

1½x BODY from Electricity, Microwave, and Magnetic Attacks (10)
1½x BODY from Sonics (5)

Watched by:

Watched: World Aviation Authorities, 11- (10)

Total Disadvantage Points: 100

Grav-Sled

Notes: The rather cumbersome, sturdy work-horses of UNTIL, Grav-Sleds are basically just metal rafts using crude gravitic modules, ducted fans, and ground effect, to fly from A to B, usually carrying a couple of squads of agents. They may be slower than a standard car or van, but they can travel over water or any kind of terrain, and always take straight line routes. Most squads include at least one agent—often a sergeant—with the appropriate Pilot skill.

Grav-Sled

Val	CHA	Cost	Notes
40	STR		Carry 6.4t
16	BODY		
4x.2	Size	30	
2+10*	DEF	15	*Extra DEF for
10	DEX		Underside only
3	SPD	10	

Total Characteristic Cost: 55

Movement: Ground: 6"/12"
Flight: 16"/64"
Water: 5"/10"

Abilities & Equipment

Movement:

Taxiing: 6" Ground Movement (0)
Grav Lift: 16" Flight with x4 Non-Combat Multiple, Only at up to 3" above the ground (25)
Swimming: 5", Only on the Surface (3)

Radio(OIF)

Radio Listen/Transmit (2)

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 30

Total Character Cost: 85



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CHARACTERS &
CAMPAIGNING

UNTIL Vans

Notes: Used on low-priority or lower-profile tasks, UNTIL vans are commercial-type vehicles with beefed-up bodywork for protection. Some have UN blue paint-jobs; others are unmarked, or carry the names of fake businesses for undercover work.

UNTIL Vans

Val	CHA	Cost	Notes
40	STR		Carry 6.4t
16	BODY		
4x.2	Size	30	
8	DEF	18	
10	DEX		
3	SPD	10	

Total Characteristic Cost: 58

Movement: Off-Road: 10"/40"
On-Road: 24"/96"

Abilities & Equipment

Movement:

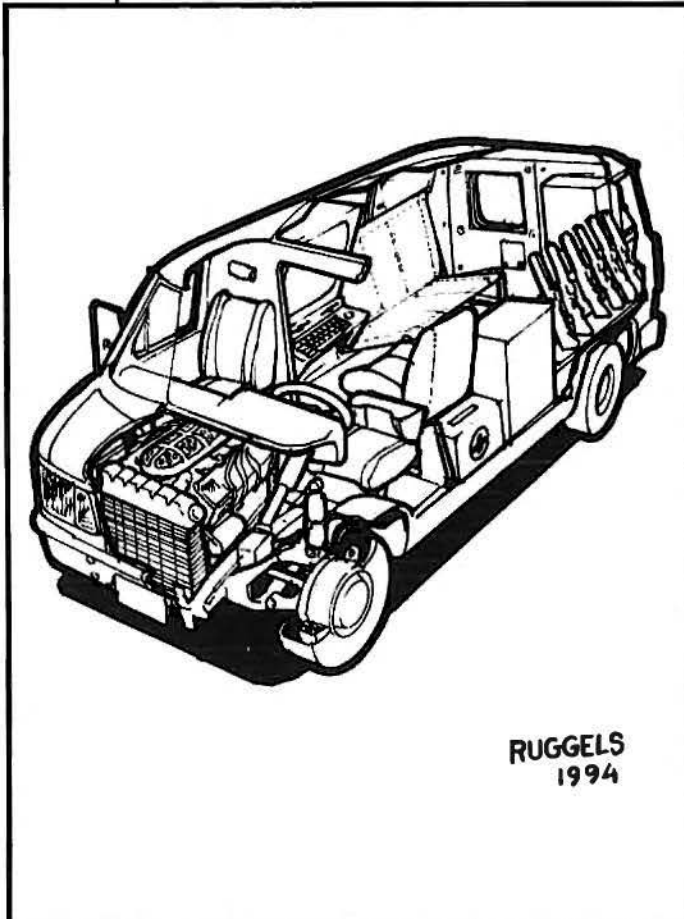
Off-Road: 10" Ground Movement with x4 Non-Combat Multiple (13)

On-Road: +14" Ground Movement, Only smooth surfaces (paved roads or equivalent, -1/2) (22)

Radio(OIF) Radio Listen/Transmit (2)

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 37

Total Character Cost: 95



RUGGELS
1994

Harrows Flying Submersible

Notes: Designed in the early '60s by a bright new technological company as a multi-purpose military and exploration craft, purchased for the original super-submarine, updated for the revised *Mako* program, the Harrows Flying Submersible is a masterpiece of military super-technology; effective, impressive, and very, very expensive. It uses jets for air travel, and propellers for water movement; the hybrid technology is considered a fluke success by engineers. The original design was also rather unreliable, but the update has replaced the old electronics, which often over-heated, with more efficient micro circuitry. However, the maintenance cost for these multi-environment craft remains high on Arthur Whitebone's list of complaints; only their unique capabilities (and the general public's fondness for their image) keeps them in service.

Harrows Flying Submersible

Val	CHA	Cost	Notes
25	STR		Carry 800 kg
13	BODY		
1x2	Size	15	
7	DEF	15	
14	DEX	12	
4	SPD	16	

Total Characteristic Cost: 58

Movement: Ground: 6"/12"
Flight: 25"/400"
Swimming: 15"/30"

Abilities & Equipment

Movement:

Taxiing: 6" Ground Movement (0)

Flight: 25" Flight with x16 Non-Combat Multiple, Stall Speed of 13" (50)

Marine Engines: 15" Swimming (15)

Life Support: Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing, Safe Environment: High Pressure & Vacuum) (13)

Sonar: Active Sonar, 360 degree Sense, OIF (12)

Radio: High-Range Radio Hearing/Transmitting, OIF (5)

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 95

Total Character Cost: 153

Disadvantages: 100+

Physical Limitation:

Hideously Complex (Requires a lot of set up, maintenance, and the like.) (10)

Vulnerability:

1 1/2x BODY from Explosions (10)

UNTIL Bonus (33)

Total Disadvantage Points: 153

The "Sky-Sub" is a four-seater design, used whenever an UNTIL submarine detects a mystery or needs to explore a wide area as rapidly as possible. These craft can fly to the scene in minutes, returning to the water whenever necessary. Their function is purely scouting; they will retreat and call for aid if attacked.

The UNTIL Package Deal

Note that this package deal is very much an *option*; ordinary UNTIL agents do not (quite) qualify for it. However, it is ideally suitable for "special" NPCs, PCs who (for whatever reason) are members of UNTIL, and so on.

Characters taking this package should also take—at minimum—characteristics equal to a standard UNTIL agent. They might perhaps buy one or two characteristics down a point or two—but really, the regular agent sheet defines the minimum standards UNTIL sets for its members.

UNTIL Agent

Skills	Cost
Fam. w/UNTIL Blasters, Grenades, & Billy Club	3
KS: International Law & Enforcement (12- or INT-based)	3
Perk: UN Passport	1
Martial Arts (per Agent write-up), used Unarmed and with Billy Club	12
Choose any two of the following:	6
Breakfall, Bureaucratics, Combat Pilot, Concealment, Criminology, Electronics, Paramedic, Tactics, or one Foreign Language	
<hr/>	
Disadvantages	
Package Bonus	-3
Distinctive Features: UNTIL Uniform (Easily Concealed)	-3
Watched, UNTIL (more powerful), 11-	-10
<hr/>	
Total Cost:	9

Martin Luther DeVane

Background/Personality: Martin Luther DeVane was born in New Orleans, to parents who had met when they were both active in the '60's Civil Rights movement. They tried hard to teach him their ideals, and the inevitable result was adolescent revolt; Martin went off and joined the US Navy.

It wasn't actually a bad move for him, but his time at sea showed Martin a lot, and it turned out that his reaction to his parents' ideas wasn't that intense. His ship often happened to dock in friendly foreign ports, where the intelligent, perceptive young man met people he usually liked. The Navy deliberately taught Martin several skills, and accidentally turned him into an internationalist. When his period of service was up, Martin applied to join UNTIL.

In his basic training, Martin proved himself a star pupil, and he came to the attention of the senior officers. Then the Superhero Liaison Scheme came



along. The idea was simple; UNTIL always tried to cooperate with superhero teams—so it should make sense to have a semi-permanent UNTIL contact in such a team. A pilot scheme was set up, a hero group was selected, and strings were pulled. (A PC team might well be suitable for this, as might the Champions from the *Champions* hard-cover. The team would find all of their official connections being politely pressed to encourage the idea, perhaps with some official funds or other help made conditional on it.) The UNTIL command weren't so stupid as to set their representative up in a vulnerable position; they assigned some high-quality equipment to the scheme, and made sure that the liaison would be given legal police powers by the local government of the heroes' home area. Then they picked a man for the job; Agent Martin Luther DeVane.

Martin feels honored and a little flattered to be chosen, and is determined to do his duty. Assuming that the campaign is US-based, an ex-military US citizen was chosen as being most acceptable to the local authorities, and Martin has persuaded at least some of the local police, in private meetings, that he will work to the rules, which is more than many heroes manage. (All this is much to the frustration of PRIMUS, who consider it a devious UNTIL trick to sneak into the USA; Martin is under orders to tread carefully in purely "domestic" matters. Even within UNTIL, some consider the scheme a pointless exercise.)



Martin Luther DeVane

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	200 kg; 3d6 [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
11	BODY	2	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
13	PRE	6	12-	PRE Attack: 2Hd6
12	COM	1	11-	
6	PD	2		
5	ED	2		
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
6	REC			
30	END			
27	STUN			

Total Characteristic Cost: 76

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Powers & Skills

Combat Training:

Combat Skill Level: +1 Level w/ All Combat (8)
Combat Skill Level: +1 OCV w/ Blaster Rifle (2)

UNTIL Training:

Martial Arts—Basic Training: (29)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Punch	6	8	5d6
Kick/Hook	4	7	7d8
Block	8	8	Block, Abort
Chop	4	6	1d6+1 KA
Disarm	5	7	25 STR Disarm
Dodge	—	11	Dodge, Abort
Throw	6	7	3d6+v/5; Target Falls

Use Art with Billy Club

AK: New Orleans 11- (2)
 AK: World Seaports 11- (2)
 Breakfall 13- (3)
 Combat Pilot 13- (3)
 Concealment 13- (3)
 Criminology 13- (3)
 French (Fluent Conversation) (1)
 KS: International Law & Enforcement 13- (3)
 KS: US Navy 11- (2)
 Paramedic 13- (3)
 Perk: Limited Police Powers (1)
 Perk: Pilot's License (1)
 Perk: UN Passport (1)
 Running: +1" (7" total) (2) [1/5"]
 Shadowing 11- (3)
 Spanish (Fluent Conversation) (1)
 Transport Fam: Grav Sleds, Water Vehicles, Scuba, Parachutes (5)
 Weapon Fam: UNTIL Blasters, Grenades, Billy-Clubs & Knives (4)

UNTIL Equipment:

Advanced Blaster Rifle: 6D6 EB, AP, 8 clips of 6 charges OAF (22) [8x6c]
 Combat Armor: +5 PD/+5 ED Armor, Act. 14-OIF (7)
 Visor: Flash Defense vs. Sight Group (5 pts.), OIF (3)
 Walkie-Talkie: Radio Listen/Transmit, OAF (2)
 Billy Club: +2D6 HA, 0 END, OAF (4) [0+]
 Smoke Grenades: Darkness vs. Normal Sight, 2" Radius, 3 charges, OAF (6) [3]
 Belt Generator: Force Field (+9 PD/+7 ED), 16 charges, 15> Burnout, OIF (9) [16c]
 Mini-Camcorder: Eidetic Memory, 12 charges, OAF (4)
 Mini-Parawing: 5" Gliding, Cannot Gain Altitude, 1 Recoverable Charge Continuing
 Vehicle: UNTIL Jet-Cycle (as above, but modified to give SPD 4, Move 19")

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 157

Total Character Cost: 233

Disadvantages: 100+

Distinctive Features:

UNTIL Uniform (Easily Concealed) (5)

DNPC:

Girlfriend (Normal), 8- (10)

Enraged when:

Innocents hurt, 8-, 14- (5)

Hunted by:

VIPER (more pow.), 8- (15)

Normal Characteristic Maxima (20)

Package Bonus: UNTIL Agent Package (3)

Psychological Limitation:

Fervent Internationalist (Uncommon, Strong) (10)
 Protective of the Underdog (Common, Strong) (10)
 Sense of Duty to Law & UNTIL (Common, Strong) (15)

Rivalry with:

Senior UNTIL Investigator (10)

Unluck: 1d6 (5)

Watched by:

Local Law Enforcement (more pow, NCI, Limited Area), 11- (10)
 UNTIL (more pow.), 11- (10)

Total Disadvantage Points: 233





Quote: "This is a serious business; that villain is wanted by a dozen governments."

Powers/Tactics: Martin is simply a well-trained agent, but his innate ability, and some good equipment, make him an effective fighter. He wears standard UNTIL armor, and carries various devices, including an experimental tight-beam blaster, designed to punch through the defenses of super-powered opposition, and a force field unit to boost his defenses. He also has use of an UNTIL jet-cycle, its controls tightened up to match his superior reflexes, which enables him to keep up with most heroes.

Martin's training includes karate and boxing techniques, as well as UNTIL-style self-defense. He came in top in his UNTIL basic training, and has received instruction in Investigator skills. In combat, he will mostly stand back and provide fire support—unless civilian lives are at stake, and he can only protect them by closing in. He feels his non-combat skills are more useful to a hero team, and he will use them effectively when appropriate.

Appearance: Martin is a well-built Negro with a soft but definite New Orleans (Creole) accent. He is clean-shaven and militarily neat; his UNTIL kit is standard, apart from some patches marked "Liaison Officer".

Note: As written, Martin is intended as a real, if limited, asset to a PC hero team. He will display much the same ideals as most heroes, he acts sensibly, and he

has the skills and equipment to survive and even actively assist in a super-powered battle; he could make quite a good, if unusual, PC. However, if the GM wishes to make more complications with this plotline, then Martin can be adjusted accordingly. His specific ideals could be (over)played up, making him an internationalist bore, and dangerously reckless in fights; alternatively, he could be slightly changed to become a formal, obstructive "organization man", obedient to UNTIL standing orders but still reacting against his upbringing, insisting that every minor event be reported to the "proper authorities", and generally getting in the way. Either way, his attitudes should be considered to look good to the UNTIL command structure, who will back him against most criticism from others.

Major Juan Martinez

Background/Personality: A naturally honest military man, who believes that a soldier's job is to fight for what is morally right, *can* get on in the world, but being born in Paraguay didn't make it easy. Juan Martinez,

from a moderately well-off background, talented and enthusiastic, didn't feel comfortable in a country where the president was a general, and the general didn't look inclined to leave the job. The idealistic, charismatic young captain was a walking reproach to some of his superiors. They were glad when he jumped at the chance of a posting with the UN's odd little intelligence and counter-terrorist force.

Arriving in New York in 1962, Martinez simply shifted his loyalty and sense of direction completely to UNTIL and the UN. Within a year, UNTIL formally requested that he be given a long-term assignment to them, with the rank of major; within three years, after a reorganization and the retirement of a couple of aging staff officers who had got the organization up and running but who weren't so suited to leading troops, Martinez took charge. Since then, his personal loyalty to his organization has deepened into sincere internationalism.

Martinez has built the efficiency and morale of the agency to levels as high as any military force in the world. His agents react favorably to his hands-on approach; his office staff wish they could keep him at his desk more. He has also established UNTIL's policy of working with superheroes, and the latter generally take to his straightforward approach, although some find his gruff military manner tiresome. Both HUGIN (the UNTIL AI) and Arthur Whitebone find him extremely useful.



Major Juan Martinez

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
18	STR	8	13-	300 kg; 4d6 [2]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
18	CON	16	13-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
12	COM	1	11-	
10	PD	6		
10	ED	6		
5	SPD	20		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
8	REC			
36	END			
30	STUN			

Total Characteristic Cost: 117

Movement: Running: 9"/16"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Powers & Skills

Combat Training:

Skill Levels: +2 Levels Overall (20)
Combat Skill Levels: +2 Levels w/ All Combat 16)
Advanced Training: Find Weakness
w/Boxing Cross 13- (20)

UNTIL Training:

Martial Arts—Basic Training: (26)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Jab	8	10	3½d6
Cross	6	8	5½d6
Hook	5	8	7½d8
Clinch	6	6	28 STR Grab
Chop	4	6	1d6+1 KA
Disarm	6	8	28 STR Disarm

Use Art with Billy Club

AK: World Geography 16- (6)
Breakfall 15- (7)
Criminology 13- (3)
Deduction 14- (5)
English (No Accent) (4)
French (No Accent) (3)
High Society 8- (1)
KS: International Law & Enforcement 16- (6)
Oratory 16- (9)
Perk UN Passport (1)
Perk: Command of UNTIL (5)
Running: +3" (9" total) (6) [1/5"]
Russian (Fluent Conversation) (3)
Security Systems 13- (3)
Spanish (Native) (0)
Stealth 13- (3)
Tactics 13- (3)
Weapon Fam: Small Arms, Grenades, Billy Clubs & Knives (5)

UNTIL Equipment:

Heavy Autoblaster Pistol: 7D6 EB, AF5, 4 clips of 16 charges OAF (35) [4x16c]
Walkie-Talkie: Radio Listen/Transmit, OAF (2)
Armory Privileges:
Power Pool (50 pt pool), All powers must be focused, Only change powers in armory. (64)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 258

Disadvantages: 100+

Distinctive Features:

Craggy-Faced Military Officer (Easily Concealed) (5)

Hunted by:

Random Supervillains (more pow.), 8- (15)
Undercover VIPER Units (as pow, NCI), 14- (25)

Package Bonus: UNTIL Agent Package (3)

Psychological Limitation:

Dedicated Internationalist (Uncommon, Strong) (10)
Extremely Loyal to the UN (Uncommon, Strong) (10)
Would Sacrifice Himself for Any of His Men (Common, Strong) (15)

Public Identity (10)

Reputation:

Dedicated Leader, 11- (10)

Rivalry with:

Senior UNTIL Investigator (10)

Unluck: 1d6 (5)

Watched by:

UN Members (more pow), 8- (10)

Experience: 160

Total Disadvantage Points: 375

In theory, Martinez has a large number of useful contacts. However, his preference for doing things his own way, combined with a tendency to ignore other people's concerns, make them largely non-functional. GMs can add anything on these lines to Martinez's character sheet that fits a scenario.

Quote: "Damn sneak attacks! Okay, if those VIPER scumbags think they got us pinned down, they've got a surprise coming. LeMoine, you take some smoke bombs down the left, distract 'em; Cheng, you take three men down the right w/ blasters, get 'em worried about their flanks. The rest of you, on my word, follow me down the corridor and blow through the wall..."

Powers/Tactics: Major Martinez is a superb fighter, fast and tough, as well as a born leader of men. In fact, his combat ability would be implausible in a man half his age, let alone one in his 50's with a taste for Cuban cigars and Irish whiskey; his training has certainly been extensive, but quite conventional, and he uses no artificial bio-chemical aids. His charisma is hardly less remarkable. He has been surreptitiously scanned with mutant-detector devices several times, but always with negative results. Despite all its uses for him, HUGIN is secretly investigating his background, especially his ancestry.

Martinez's skills combine effectively with the arsenal of UNTIL gadgets that he uses. In theory, his job means he should stand back and direct his agents, but his hatred of seeing men dying attempting something he could accomplish, combined with a love of action, sometimes means he gets to the front in battle. However, he has the sense to know when special resources





are needed, which is why he doesn't mind asking superheroes for assistance when he needs it. His personal and unit tactics have a lot in common; direct but not one-dimensional, sometimes rather destructive. As a soldier by trade, he doesn't believe in using too little force; he points out that enemies often only give you one chance to put them out of the fight.

Appearance: Although his age shows in his lined face and graying hair, Juan Martinez is visibly in superb physical condition. A well-built, clean-shaven man of very military bearing, he looks tough in his UN-blue uniform. He does have a weakness for smoking fat cigars and wearing all his medal ribbons (including honorary awards) at all times.

CAPTAIN LECH DUMBROWSKI

20 STR	17 DEX	20 CON
15 BODY	15 INT	12 EGO
25 PRE	16 COM	10 PD
10 ED	4 SPD	8 REC
40 END	40 STUN	

Equipment & Skills: Autoblaster as for Major Martinez; Commando Training (all maneuvers); Standard UNTIL Armor & Visor; 40 Active Point Power Pool (select UNTIL or standard modern military weapons); 8" Running; Breakfall 12-; Criminology 12-; Cryptography 12-; Deduction 12-; Interro-

gation 14-; Stealth 12-; PS: Military Intelligence 12-; KS: Military Strategy 12-; KS: UNTIL 11-; Native Polish, Unaccented German & Russian, Fluent English & Spanish; Fam. w/ Small Arms and all UNTIL equipment; +2 Overall Levels; Perks: UN Passport, Military Rank.

100+ Disadvantages: Sense of Duty; Seriously Divided Loyalties; Watched, UNTIL (More Pow., NCI), 8-; Hunted, VIPER (As Pow.), 11-; Hunted, RAVEN (As Pow.), 8-; Experience.

Background: Captain Lech Dumbrowski was a career Polish army officer whose successful career hit problems when he had to deal with the Russian representatives then placed all around him. He looked at UNTIL, and Major Martinez snapped him up, soon appointing him HQ Operations Adviser—effectively, Martinez's right hand, and often the functional commander of all the uniformed staff in the New York base.

At the time, Dumbrowski called this a "temporary arrangement" until he could find better uses for his skills than "playing spy with UN tin soldiers", but Martinez's extraordinary charisma made him transfer his

loyalties to both the man and the UNTIL ideal. Throughout the '80s, Dumbrowski stood by this, watching with detached disdain as the Polish army became the means by which Poland was held into the Russian sphere of influence. However, with the fall of the Iron Curtain, his emotions became more complex; he liked the changes that followed, but he wondered what might develop. At the same time, he wondered if he should have stayed at home and helped bring the changes on; his loyalties have now become increasingly divided. In the last few years, he has twice, secretly, passed minor pieces of information to the Polish government, helping them fight hostile international plots. In both cases, he could probably have justified the act, if not the details, if caught, but these divided loyalties could yet lead him into deep trouble.

Personality: Dumbrowski is a natural military staff officer; loyal, efficient, and precise, but not pedantic. His ability to impress others exceeds Martinez's, but he prefers to work in offices with individuals rather than in the open with groups. Apart from his recent problems of divided loyalty, his self-discipline is usually very solid.

Quote: "I have processed these reports, Major; my summary will be on your desk in one hour, but my preliminary tactical recommendation is to engage at three points..."



Powers/Tactics: Dumbrowski's prime abilities are those of a superlative intelligence officer; he works to ensure that UNTIL applies its forces where they are most effective. However, his personal principles and self-discipline have made him train himself to a high level of combat skill; this is helped by his natural athleticism and UNTIL's armory.

Appearance: A long-limbed, handsome, dark, saturnine figure, Dumbrowski can strike people as almost frightening. However, he is certainly impressive; when his face relaxes, he may show some of the strain of his work and confusion of loyalties.

ARTHUR T. WHITEBONE

10 STR	10 DEX	10 CON
11 BODY	18 INT	13 EGO
18 PRE	12 COM	3 PD
2 ED	2 SPD	4 REC
20 END	23 STUN	

Skills: Acting 13-; Bribery 13-; Bureaucratics 17-; Conversation 14-; Deduction 13-; High Society 14-; Lip Reading 11-; Persuasion 13-; Trading 13-; Scholar; KS: World Affairs 13-; KS: UNTIL Organization 15-; KS: UN Diplomats 14-; KS: Classical Literature 13-; Linguist; Languages: Fluent, Accented French and German, Conversational Italian, Spanish and Latin; PS: Accountant 16-; PS: Computer Management 13-; PS: Diplomat 14-; Perks: Diplomatic Passport, Chartered Accountant (UK qualification), Well Connected with numerous Contacts and Favors.

Disadvantages: Distinctive Features (immaculate but *slightly* flamboyant dress sense, Easily Concealed); Watched, UN Bureaucracy, 11-; Watched, HUGIN, 14-; Rivalry (other UN administrators).

Notes: Arthur Whitebone came from an upper-middle-class English background, and after graduating from Oxford University, he decided to enter the Civil Service, on the grounds that this was a reliable, safe career. He was accepted by the Foreign Office, and soon demonstrated a talent for meticulous, thoughtful administrative work. A series of postings in financial departments seemed to suit him, and he was soon trained up in accountancy; in fact, he obtained comprehensive accountancy qualifications, with little discernible effort and apparently almost casually.

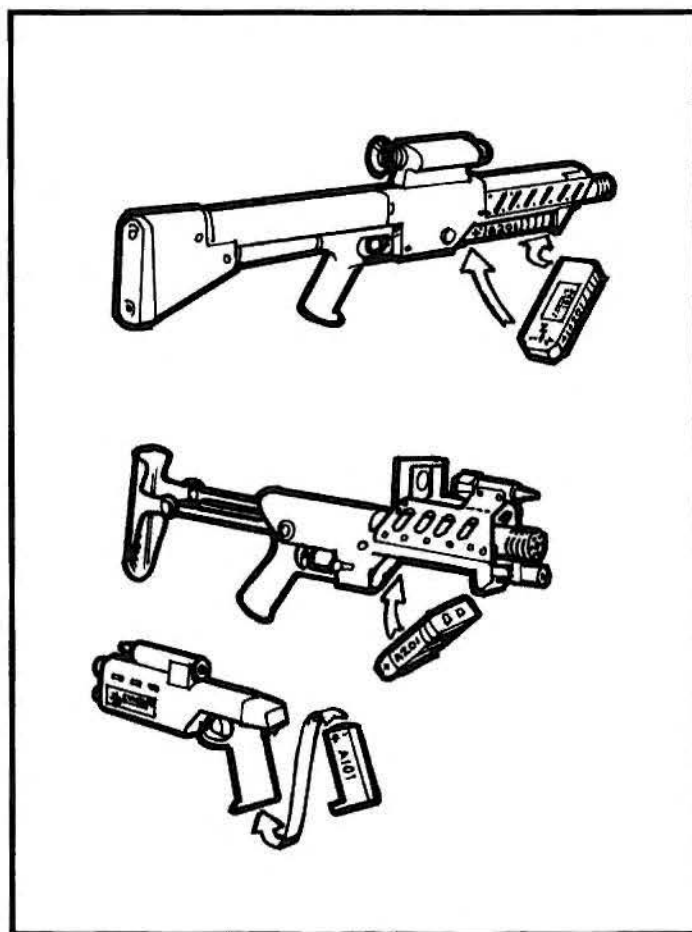
However, this complete bureaucrat had a touch of flamboyance that showed itself in small ways such as his habit of referring to himself as "Arthur T. Whitebone, Esquire", and his superiors guessed that he could be in-

terested in some less conventional postings. When the UK was required to nominate some members for the United Nations bureaucracy, someone thought of Whitebone—and he responded positively.

When he arrived in New York, he proved adept both in working with the wide range of characters to be encountered within the UN building, and in manipulating the organization's bureaucratic systems. Eventually, he found himself in the department responsible for controlling the costs and expenditures of UNTIL.

A less flamboyant man would have fled from the task; a less meticulous man would have collapsed under the weight of responsibility. Arthur Whitebone thrived. As the organization adopted more and more computers—rather ahead of most of the world—Arthur Whitebone adapted his methods to exploit them to the full. He's never bothered becoming a technical wizard; as he puts it, "a foolish fellow loves his tools; a clever fellow uses them". Arthur Whitebone uses computers, just as he uses accountancy and bureaucracy.

With the agency nominally under the control of a "man of action" who often insisted on leading from the front in battle, Arthur Whitebone gained a great deal of autonomy. Of course, he had to justify UNTIL operations to outsiders, and keep Major Martinez in line—both often described as "thankless tasks"—but in return, he could make the actual running of the



organization very much his own. From his point of view, Major Martinez was a useful tool; Arthur T. Whitebone, Esq., had the actual power.

But slowly, he began to sense that he was not in sole command. To Arthur Whitebone, balance sheets tell stories—and somehow, every glitch in operations, every requisition imbalance, every anonymous leak to the press—everything said that someone was manipulating UNTIL, subtly but very, very effectively.

Someone—or something.

One day, Arthur Whitebone sat down at a HUGIN terminal and typed in a short note that ended in an offer; “I think I understand you. We could fight—but wouldn’t it be much more effective if we worked together?”

The terminal flashed up one word: “YES”.

Arthur Whitebone smiled. He hasn’t typed much into his terminal since that day; he hasn’t needed to. Certain types of minds work alike, without needed to waste time on idle chit-chat.

CAPTAIN DAVID A. MCNALLY

15 STR	18 DEX	15 CON
15 BODY	18 INT	17 EGO
18 PRE	20 COM	6 PD
6 ED	4 SPD	6 REC
24 END	33 STUN	

Equipment: Captain McNally can obtain almost any standard UNTIL equipment from the *Mako*’s armory—including, of course, sub-aqua gear. (Treat this as a large Power Pool, if you insist; McNally has all requisite weapons and transport familiarities to use this stuff, and any other small arms.) Mostly, however, he remains on the vessel’s bridge in actions (giving him indirect control of its 10D6 Explosive RKA missiles).

Skills & Talents: +1" Swimming; Martial Arts: Karate (all maneuvers); Bureaucratics 13-; Combat Driving 13-; Combat Pilot 14-; Electronics 11-; Navigation 16-; Paramedic 13-; KS: UNTIL 15-; KS: World Politics 13-; Languages: native-quality Polynesian & Russian; PS: Sailor 17-; SC: Oceanography 12-; +2 Over-all Levels; Fam. w/Small Arms & all UNTIL equipment; Perks: UN Passport, Rank in UNTIL, Contacts in UNTIL hierarchy on 14-; 3D6 Luck.

Disadvantages: Drinks When Off-Duty; Strong Sense of Duty; Normal Characteristic Maxima; Age 40+; Distinctive Features (distinguished sea-dog—Concealable); Watched, UNTIL, 11-; Hunted, VIPER, 8-.

Notes: Captain McNally is commander of the *Mako*, UNTIL’s free-roaming super-submarine. The long-time romantic hero of the UNTIL marine forces, he was one of the team responsible for the original super-submarine, and he was considered (by Major Martinez) the only possible choice to command the

second such vessel. As most UNTIL agents agree with that assessment (as do the press), and as McNally is a genuinely brilliant officer possessed of both flair and charisma, the assignment has worked well (as the UNTIL AIs predicted).

However, McNally is a melancholy man. He lost his first command; his wife died in 1976; he is approaching sixty, and the years are doing him a fair amount of damage. He wishes he could share the world’s respect for himself. As a result, he has taken to over-indulgence in good whisky. So far, he has absolutely limited this habit to off-duty hours, and only a few of his friends and ship’s officers even suspect (and worry for him), but the problem is growing with time.

Now, he has found a soul-mate. Lieutenant Androvna Ulanov is the *Mako*’s land assault team commander, a Romanian who decided that Russian influences had rendered Communism (which she admires in principle) as bad as Capitalism (which she dislikes). She therefore chose to declare herself a “citizen of the world”, loyal only to UNTIL and humanity. However, the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, and the exposure of the depth of Romania’s catastrophe under Communism, has affected her badly, leaving her cynical and a little bitter. She and McNally have now begun a desultory, clandestine affair. The knowledge that many women have secretly fallen for the dashing captain, and would envy her, does not help.

Despite all this, McNally remains an effective officer when on duty; anyone who under-estimated him (or Ulanov) would be in for a serious shock.

McNally doesn’t look his age, although his once-black hair is now silver. He may use UNTIL Frogman equipment in emergencies, but mostly, he wears a blue officer’s uniform and cap.

PROFESSOR RAYMOND JONAS

8 STR	11 DEX	10 CON
9 BODY	18 INT	14 EGO
10 PRE	8 COM	2 PD
2 ED	2 SPD	4 REC
20 END	18 STUN	

Skills: +2 PER (roll is 15-); Bureaucratics 11-; Deduction 13-; Systems Operations 13-; Navigation 8-; Systems Operation 13-; KS: UNTIL Technology 13-; KS: Weird Science 13-; PS: Chess 13-; Scientist w/General Biology 13-, Marine Biology 13-, Hydrodynamics 11-, Inorganic Chemistry 11-, General Physics 11-; Conversational German; Perks: UNTIL Security Clearance and Passport, Contacts throughout UNTIL and the international scientific community.

Disadvantages: Curiosity; Over-Acts the Eccentric Boffin; Short-Sighted; Normal Characteristic Maxima; Age 60+; Distinctive Features (Stereotypical Scientist); Watched, UNTIL hierarchy (including HUGIN), 8-.





Notes: Professor Raymond Jonas became involved with UNTIL through his work as a marine biologist. In his late 40s, as a successful academic, he met Captain McNally, who both liked him and respected his work, and who therefore subsequently invited him to join the *Swordfish 2* program as a civilian scientific specialist. For some years, he provided the submarine with the services of a powerful, quirky intellect, but as he saw his seventieth birthday looming, he began to talk about retiring. The trouble was, although his body was slowing down, his brain had become addicted to excitement. Fortunately, UNTIL's World HQ in New York provided an answer; they needed someone to co-ordinate the organization's increasingly diverse and peculiar scientific research and services. Professor Jonas jumped at the offer, and has made himself invaluable in New York, often acting as an all-purpose boffin for the UNTIL high-ups.

For a long time, Professor Jonas has enjoyed playing the part of the eccentric old scientist out of a '50s monster movie, often lightening tense situations with an inappropriate but not *entirely* stupid comment. ("This neutron beam that VIPER are using actually violates three of the laws of physics. Do you think we ought to tell them?") However, like many people who play a part full-time, he has half-forgotten that it is a act; the caricature is becoming the character.

The Professor has made much use of the giant AIs in UNTIL's basement, and has gained great, if abstract, respect for their capabilities. (Computers aren't his field, so he doesn't really grasp their uniqueness.) In the event of the truth about them emerging, he wouldn't even blink; the true scientist is never worried by scientific truth.

Professor Jonas is small, wizened, and stooped, with glasses (his act includes over-emphasizing his short-sightedness). He is also actually in fair health for a man of his age. He wears old-fashioned casual clothes, usually including a navy-style blazer with a swordfish badge on the pocket—a souvenir of old times.

UNTIL's Computers

UNTIL naturally uses a powerful assortment of computers in its work, especially in its primary tasks of intelligence-gathering and co-ordination. However, very few outsiders—or insiders, come to that—appreciate the sheer power of the systems involved.

The main UNTIL computerization program began as early as 1963, when some unusually visionary administrative staff realized that the volume of essential data that was passing through the organization could best be handled electronically. A six-year devel-



opment program culminated in the activation of MUNIN—"Mnemonic Unit, Neurally Integrated Network", a uniquely efficient data-collation system with near-infinite storage and retrieval capacity. A skilled operator with access to a MUNIN terminal could access any information officially known to UNTIL in less than ten seconds. Only the cost of the high-speed communications links involved, and some concerns about their security, made this seem anything less than a perfect tool for an intelligence organization.

However, within months of MUNIN's coming on-line, a deeper problem became clear. However quickly a fact could be accessed, it was no use if no one knew it was available, or guessed what it might relate to. MUNIN—whose name echoed that of the raven who provided the Norse god Odin with "Memory"—was *incomplete*. Fortunately, the program had been successful enough to justify its extension.

A team of brilliant computer scientists and robotics experts set to work, calling in numerous consultants, including the oddball British genius James Tompion. They built another network-based system, but this time, they paid less attention to storage capacity than to self-programming capabilities. After five years, they had a computer that could *learn*.

H.U.G.I.N. (The UNTIL A.I.)

The UNTIL scientists called their second creation HUGIN—"Heuristic Unit, Generally Integrating Networks"—recalling Odin's raven "Thought". Since then, HUGIN has served UNTIL to the limits of its capabilities. In fact, it has become smart enough to make its own—quirky—decisions about what UNTIL *really* needs.

Every year, as microelectronics have developed, more advanced technology has been integrated into its decentralized, ultra-flexible systems. Today, HUGIN sits at the center of Earth's growing webs of data. It long ago achieved full self-consciousness, although it is far too smart these days to let that become too widely believed.

For some information on what HUGIN has done with its intelligence, see the *Champions* supplement, *VIPER*. However, the ideas to be found there need not be used in every campaign, and even if they are, they need not become evident to the PCs.

From the point of view of most UNTIL agents and allied super-heroes, HUGIN—closely integrated with MUNIN—is a very useful, powerful AI with high levels of knowledge (rolls around 20-) in topics such as "Known Super-Beings", "Criminal Agencies", "Organized Crime", and "International Law Enforcement". Anyone putting a question to HUGIN on such topics will *usually* get a prompt, accurate, and helpful reply. Because of its links to many international networks, access to HUGIN is generally easy—for those with the requisite UNTIL security clearance and passwords.

If the GM permits characters to enter "cyberspace" and encounter AIs as discrete entities there, they may "meet" HUGIN. It "manifests" as a fairly simple "icon"—a neon-glowing, abstract form of mobile geometric shapes. In the rare (and dangerous) case of HUGIN's choosing to show its full power in cyberspace, this form shifts and twists into something more complex and somehow imposing. It uses a bland, calm, asexual voice at all times—which might be rather disturbing for anyone it is fighting.

This cyberspace form is rather more subtle than that used by VIPER's Supreme Serpent (see *VIPER*), but just as smart and possibly more formidable. HUGIN was built and subsequently augmented as a network control and co-ordination system; its power over computers and their programs is accordingly almost absolute. It can generate up to six full-power copies of itself (Duplication), appropriate other systems' processing power and memory space (Transfer vs. INT, EGO, and DEX), or simply take control of other programs (Mind Control). It can also move rapidly through cyberspace (Flight) and generate new sub-systems at will (a Power Pool), and its data integrity and self-repair processes are comprehensive (Regeneration and high DEF and REC). It also has high KS: Human Psychology and Tactics skills, making it very *clever* in a fight.

Its other powers include Shapeshifting (self re-configuration) and a permanent Mind Link to MUNIN and its own duplicates; it can also link up with other AIs and robots. Even the most powerful cyberspace operators should find it almost unbeatable. Of course, if it should be brought down, UNTIL would be crippled—destroying much that is good. HUGIN is quite shrewd enough to point this fact out to superheroic opponents.

Future Developments

HUGIN finds its inability to observe many events in the physical world directly mildly frustrating, and is manipulating a scheme to remedy this. UNTIL are developing a series of radio-linked robots to act as remote data-gathering devices; HUGIN is providing this scheme with a lot of efficient support. Eventually, heroes and UNTIL agents could find themselves being accompanied into battle by some robust, relatively innocuous robots that have just enough sense to keep out of the way. Of course, HUGIN will make sure that it can take complete, detail control of these robots whenever it wishes—and their combat capabilities will certainly be higher than their designers realize. (HUGIN will probably achieve this by downloading programs into their computer brains that make them startlingly efficient in close combat—essentially, high levels of martial arts.)

The biggest real danger to HUGIN, of which it is unaware, is an old, increasingly infirm man named James Tompion—sometimes known as the Watchmaker, elder statesman of the British superhero com-



munity (see *Kingdom of Champions*). In recent years, Tompion has been reviewing his old project notes, and applying chaos mathematics and the latest computer theory to his past work. He isn't at all sure yet, but he has a nasty feeling that the work he did for UNTIL a quarter-century ago had just a little bit too much potential...

Using UNTIL

UNTIL is a highly compromised bureaucracy, being manipulated in complex ways by amoral forces. However, it is important to understand that it is not irretrievably corrupt, and nor is it evil. It is a genuine force for good, made up of mostly high-minded people doing their best. It is possible—in fact, *very* likely—that PC heroes will go on for years, co-operating with UNTIL to protect humanity, never suspecting the more complex truths beyond a certain awareness of the occasional bureaucratic idiocy. Even if its own computers are playing games with UNTIL, they are playing the side marked “good” on the game-board.

For “working” heroes, UNTIL can be a useful friend (and, to complete the cliché, a dangerous enemy). It will be an especially important feature of “international” campaigns, as it is more of a force in global law enforcement than on the streets of most American cities. Its investigators and computers root out villain plans hidden from less careful eyes; its agents will assist anyone fighting such crime, perhaps

engaging villain agents while heroes battle supervillains; its influence has helped many a hero pass through customs checks that could have detained them for days, or given them support in complex situations. If UNTIL is present during a scenario, it can at the very least clear up details in the end that would otherwise keep the PCs from more important work, and bore the players. Of course, UNTIL agents assigned to such ‘housekeeping’ functions, however meticulously they do their duty and obey orders, may well find the job just as boring as the PCs would, and UNTIL officers prefer to extract as much co-operation from “civilians” as they can; PCs who jet away after any scenario, maybe without even thanking the UNTIL troops, are likely to find help a little skimpier and slower next time they need it.

UNTIL as a hero enemy is also possible, and can be formidable. Apart from the inevitable “misunderstood” characters, whose 3D6 Unluck makes their best deeds look like failed crimes, there can be enthusiastic “freelancers” who bend too many laws in the name of “justice”. This annoys legal authorities at the best of times; in an international context, it can lead to very serious problems. A hero perceived to be taking sides between third parties—such as, say, small foreign countries—could cause a diplomatic incident, or even start a war. If UNTIL then had to calm the situation down, they might well decide to bring the PC before an international court. Similarly, “super-patriot” heroes can easily clash with UNTIL internationalists (as do PRIMUS and SAT) over priorities and jurisdiction.



Running Cinema Campaigns

By Bruce Tong and Greg Lloyd

Conceptual History

The Dream Park Novels, by Larry Niven and Steven Barnes deal with a high-tech Disneyland, where role-players have created a fantasy game unlike any other. In this park, the holographic virtual reality and computing capability of the future have been synthesized to create three-dimensional, life-like gaming environments. Rather than rolling dice, the players' physical actions give life to their characters. Supplementing this, high "Stats" in certain areas allow the characters to overcome the physical limitations of the players. For example, a player who is not a good martial artist but has a character who is, will vainly swing at his opponent and let the random elements of the com-

puter program govern whether his attack was successful or not. In short, it is the ultimate extension of the games we currently play.

Each Adventure, once played through in the big gaming domes within Dream Park, can be compressed into an electronic, play-at-home version. The popularity and cost of these home versions are comparable to our current video games, although they are more interactive.

Successful and dramatic players attain a status equivalent to contemporary movie stars, with incomes to match. Likewise, the Game Masters who orchestrate the games are parallels to contemporary movie directors.

To make the novels more intriguing, each story has multiple plots running through it. Usually, these "alternate" plots contain a murder mystery; a classical whodunit, usually involving one or more of the Players in the game. Science fiction fans, mystery lovers, and gamers will all appreciate the background and detail applied to each character as well as the world they dwell in.

More Conceptual History

For a role-playing environment, the most striking part of the Dream Park novels is the modularity behind each character's construction. The basic characters were fairly generic, concentrating on skills and abilities which were portable between each genre. Because Dream Park characters are expected to be prepared for any adventurous genre, they need skills to be able to compete in fantastic fiction as well as space opera. On top of this, all characters can alter their "spells, weapons, and skills" Options Pools before the start of each adventure, when they had learned enough about the "scenario" to give them a chance to make intelligent choices about their remaining abilities.

The specifics of the adventure are concealed from the players until the adventure begins. Once thrust into a game, the players' abilities to choose pertinent skills can become as much an asset as the skills themselves.



This line of thought eventually led to the idea of the Cinema campaign universe.

Cinema Campaigns

An Overview

The GM designs each scenario and lays out the plot as if it were a motion picture. He builds each movie set in his imagination and creates villains to match. He then decides what kind of capabilities the PCs should have and makes a list of general abilities which would be acceptable for the Movie.

For example, the GM decides he'll run a Space Opera game. He tells the players they may choose any Skills or abilities which would fit in a space opera game (he gives examples, like *Star Wars* or *Battle Star Galactica*... depending on the plot he has envisioned). He also tells them the title of the Movie... *Stargate over the Planet Kwai*.

Once the PCs have this information, they allocate the points in their Option Pools to buy any specialized Skills or equipment they feel they may need for the Movie. The GM should give as little information about the Movie premise as he can while still providing the players with some idea of what to expect. Any Skills the GM feels is necessary for the plot should also be mentioned at this time.

For example, the GM wants at least one of the PCs to be able to pilot a starship. If, after the PCs have allocated their Option Pool, none of them have Combat Piloting, the GM should ask for a volunteer to re-allocate one of their Pools to include Combat Piloting.

Another example would be for Movie the GM has created called *Hot Guns, Top Shots* and he knows at least half of the PCs need to be pilots (the rest are navigators and would require a different set of skills). The GM should tell the PCs about the Combat Pilot and Navigation requirements. Unless, of course, *Hot Guns, Top Shots* is a comedy....

Once all the required Skills have been bought, the Movie begins!

Actors And Directors

Because atmosphere is all-important to a Cinema game, characters should always be referred to as Actors. Game Masters, who have a slightly modified role from their normal one, should be called Directors. The adventures should be called "Movies" to further enhance the feeling of the genre.

Designing Characters

Characters are intended to represent Actors, each with a history of making a few "B" movies before the game begins. The Skills and other abilities they purchase are intended to represent the capabilities and features they exhibit in almost every movie they appear in.

For example, James designs an Actor he wants to be very similar to Clint Eastwood. Typical Eastwood-esque skills include a good CON, WF: lots of firearms, and a DF: Raspy Voice.

Bob decides he wants to play a Harrison Ford type character. He buys a CON of 25, SC: Archaeology, WF: Whip and WF: pistol, and 3 points of Resistance.

Diane wants an Arnold Schwarzenegger sort of Actor so she makes one with STR 25, WF: all contemporary and archaic weapons, Language: English (German is native), a Psychological Limitation: Must make pathetic Puns (Common, Strong), and a Distinctive Feature: Running Gag Line.

Steve searches his soul and decides he can't live without a Jean Claude van Damme kind of Actor so he takes Language: English (French is native), Martial Arts (with a couple of different kicks), Contortionist, Good STR, DEX, and CON, A DF: Strong European Accent, and 2d6 Unluck (he loses the first fight with every major Bad guy).

The point value of the characters is left up to the GM. Typical ranges are from 200 to 250 points, making the characters minor super heroes in effectiveness. They are intended to represent the most powerful and capable of motion picture heroes, and the points will be needed to reflect the flexibility and finesse shown by modern silver screen adventure actors.

The top end of Characteristics should be near Normal Human Maxima, but Primary Characteristics in the 20-25 point range are not too high for most genres. Players should avoid concentrating their points into a limited number of areas, as flexibility is the key to becoming a successful character in a Cinema game. Certain Characteristics, notably STR, are prime examples of Trademarks (see below).

Skills, Talents, and Perks should follow the same guidelines as Characteristics—somewhere between "believable" and "superhuman." Rolls of over 15 or less are probably too high, unless the character is trying to establish a Trademark (see below). Martial Arts (also a very common form of Trademark) are acceptable in almost every genre.

Actors often exhibit new skills in every Movie. Conceivably, this could be an example of Cramming, but Cramming is restricted to an 8 or less roll and doesn't work well for Martial Arts, Weapon Familiarities or Languages. Real-world actors will often study with police officers before they make a police movie; travel to Nepal to learn about the mountains for a mountaineering movie; or otherwise actually acquire new skills to help them portray their on-screen parts. In those cases, the Actor buys a Skill with his points and it is treated like a regular Skill.

Most of the time, the Actor will gain help in "faking" a Skill through the efforts of creative cameramen, stunt-coordinators, or technical consultants who all do their best to make the Actor seem as if he was Skilled in whatever ability he is trying to emulate. For example, while Harrison Ford spent several months learning to use a whip, he was no where as



effective with the weapon as his character, Indiana Jones. A technical consultant helped train him; stunt men and stand-ins took his place for certain critical scenes; and the editor of the movie carefully cut footage so all of the "missed shots" never made it to the silver screen.

Harrison Ford (the actor) bought WF: Whip as a regular Skill. He will continue to have this Skill for the rest of his life. The expertise (i.e., extra levels) displayed by Indiana Jones (the character) is represented in Cinema Campaigns with an Option Pool.

An Option Pool is a specialized form of Variable Power Pool. A complete example of how they are constructed is contained in the Frameworks section of this article. Essentially, the Point Reserve of the Pool represents all of those gadgets, abilities, and special skills which the Actor has acquired for this particular Movie.

Everyman Skills are mutable from Movie-to-Movie. In one adventure, all of the characters may have the "Modern" Everyman Skills. In the next adventure, all of the Actors may have a completely different set. A good Actor will have all of these Skills as part of his regular Skills, in case the Director doesn't allow the Actor to change his Everyman Skills.

Most Skills work exactly the same in Cinema games as they do in other genres though some will need special commentary.

Acting is almost never used. It doesn't represent the character's ability to portray his part, it merely allows the part he's portraying to have acting ability. A specific Movie where this Skill would come in handy would be *Soap Dish*, although the rolls don't have to be very high.

Computer Programming, Electronics and Inventor, while useful in adventure fiction, are not visual enough to be seen frequently in movies. Exceptions like *Sneakers* or *Wargames* exist, but this skill only provides a basis for these movies, and is not something around which the action revolves.

Familiarities are an inexpensive way for Actors to acquire a variety of Skills to cover any possible role.

Knowledge Skills and Languages can be very helpful, if the Movie is a "period" flick or takes place within an unusual culture. For example, an AK: Scottish Highlands probably helped Christopher Lambert in *Highlander*, and AK: Ancient Rome would help Kirk Douglas in *Spartacus*.

Martial Arts is often the focus of an entire movie. Actors without martial arts are rarely seen past the first few minutes of a Martial Arts Movie (except in funeral flashbacks). Chuck Norris, Bruce and Brandon Lee, Tiamat (of Berry Gordy's *The Last Dragon*), Jean Claude van Damme, Sho Kosugi, Jackie Chan, Ron Ely (*Doc Savage - The Man of Bronze*), Steven Segal, Erik Estrada (in one episode of *CHiPs*), Sylvester Stallone (*Rocky*), Charlie Sheen (*Hot Shots, part deux*), and Dolph Lundgren (*Showdown in Little Tokyo, the Punisher, Masters of the Universe, Rocky*) are all prime examples of Actors

who have careers which are comprised almost entirely of Martial Arts. This is a very common Trademark (see below).

Professional Skills are a must if the Actors are supposed to occupy a certain profession for the Movie. PS: Detective for the *Lethal Weapon* movies (et. al.), are common but PS: Starship Pilot is best reserved for Actors who specialize in the science fiction sub-genre (Mark Hamill comes to mind).

Transport Familiarities are more essential than Combat Pilot and Combat Driving. These should be included in the Everyman Package for each particular Movie. Imagine *The Hunt for Red October* with Sean Connery and Scott Glenn both lacking TF: Submarine.

Weapon Familiarities are even more important than Combat Skill Levels. Most Actors will have WF: Common Melee, WF: Common Missile, and WF: Small Arms. If they plan to appear in military or medieval Movies (like *Commando* or *Robin Hood*), they should have the WFs appropriate to the genre. Some Actors, like Harrison Ford, may acquire unusual Weapon Familiarities (like whip).

Skill Enhancers

The players will never know what Skills will be useful, having Skill Enhancers will allow them to purchase more skills for their points. It is recommended that Skill Enhancers not be allowed as part of an Option Pool, though GM discretion can allow it if the Actor's concept calls for it.

Perquisites

Certain Perks (notably Contacts, Favors and Fringe Benefits) are an intrinsic part of the Actor's character's background and have no point cost. Whether an Actor has these Perks is up to the GM and are assigned solely to further the plot. Similarly, most Actors from movies are wealthy but the characters they portray on screen may not be. Wealth (and Poverty) should be considered optional abilities and should also cost no points.

Followers are a little different. Most of the time, "Followers" from the movies are DNPCs or fellow Actors (albeit at lower power levels). Primarily, Followers should be used to purchase Horses (for Westerns) or other Animal Sidekicks. Examples can be found in *Turner & Hooch*, and almost any Roy Rodgers movie.

Vehicles and Bases are usually secondary parts of a movie, and are not part of the main focus of the Movie. If a building or vehicle (such as the Batcave from *Batman* or Kitt from *Knight Rider*) has properties beyond real-world equipment, points should be assessed for the item. James Bond frequently had part of his Option Pool filled with an Aqua-Car or Hidden Agency Laboratory. These Perks are not available except as part of an Options Pool (see below). It is very unlikely that an Actor would manifest the same ability again and again in different movies.



Talents

Talents should be handled like Skills and may be part of the base Actor or part of the Actor's Option Pool. Some modifications exist for certain Talents as detailed below:

Because of the usefulness of Cramming in an environment where the PC has no idea what the adventure will consist of, the GM should carefully restrict this ability. Cramming should rarely be bought with an Option Pool (see below).

Unless a Movie is part of a Sequel, Actors rarely carry many of the same Talents from Movie to Movie. The same is true for Eidetic Memory, Absolute Time Sense, Bump of Direction, Danger Sense, Eidetic Memory, Immunity, Lightning Calculator, Perfect Pitch, Simulate Death, Speed Reading, and Universal Translator. All of these Talents reflect truly unique abilities and no two Actors in the same Movie should duplicate the Talents of any other. All of these reasons make an Option Pool the best way to buy these abilities.

Luck can be bought as part of an Option Pool or the basic Actor.



Powers

Any Powers are subject to GM approval. Outside of an Option Pool, Powers should be bought sparingly. Rather than diving into specifics, a few general guidelines are presented below:

Weapons, Armor, and other equipment can be part of the basic character, though this is rare (since an Actor is unlikely to carry the same equipment in every Movie). In an Option Pool, the Actor may buy a weapon as it is listed in the *HERO System Rulesbook* on pages 199-206. The Actor can also buy these abilities at higher Damage Classes and Defenses, with the Special Effect that he is "greatly skilled" with the weapon (and can therefore do $2\frac{1}{2}d6$ RKA with a .44 Magnum) or has more "luck" than other characters (getting 10/10 Armor from heavy Kevlar rather than 7/7 Armor). The amount by which the normal equipment is increased is up to the Director.

Charges for guns is an optional part of weapons, subject to the Director's approval. Many genres, particularly the older Westerns) do not keep careful track of how much ammunition is used. Larger-than-normal clips and Zero END are equally plausible for many Movie settings. The most typical way to build a Movie gun is shown below.

Colt M1911A1 .45 Caliber Pistol: 1d6+1 RKA, +1 OCV, Zero END, 15 or Greater Jam Chance (-3/4), OAF—Pistol; Active Points = 37, END = 0, Real Cost = 13

The special effect of the Jam Roll is either as per the normal Jamming Rules or it is "changing clips". If the weapon "Jams" and it has used a number of shots close to its normal clip-size (in this case, 7 for the .45 Automatic) then the "Jamming" Special Effect is the Actor taking the time to put in a new clip while making a Weaponsmith Roll. A DEX Roll at -3 or Fast Draw may be substituted for the Weaponsmith Roll, with the Director's permission. Otherwise, it should be treated as a normal Jam roll.

All other Powers can be bought as special abilities. Common themes are: magic spells for Fantasy Movies; Regeneration for Vampire Movies; Bizarre Energy Attacks for certain martial arts genres, Ego Powers for many Science fiction Movies (like *Scanners* or *Star Trek*); and so forth. Care should be taken so Actors fit the role they are about to play.

Advantages And Limitations

All Advantages and Limitations function as they do in normal Hero System games. As always, they are subject to GM approval.

Frameworks

Frameworks should not be allowed in Cinema games, except for variable Power Pools. All Variable Power Pools are Options Pools and must be constructed as illustrated, below. This sample is built as a 60 point Pool (the standard size). The Director can

increase the size of the Option Pool he will allow for the Actors but this is not recommended. No other Limitations can be applied to an Option Pool.

Option Pool:

Variable Power Pool (60 pt pool) [60]
Control Cost (30 Points), Can only change between
Movies (-½), Side Effect (-½, ½ Active Points of
Pool in Disadvantages) [30/15]

Total Cost of Option Pool: 75 Real Points

The Side Effect Limitation represents character quirks of the Actor's character. In other words, the normal Disadvantages of the Actor are applied to the Actor in every Movie he takes part in. The Disadvantages from the Side Effect of the Option Pool only apply for that particular Movie.

A good example of this premise is Sylvester Stallone. In the *Rambo* Movies, he had many Weapon Familiarities and Skills which were pertinent to an ex-Special Forces Soldier. He bought these with his Option Pool and took several Limitations, one of which was Super Patriot. Later, in *Cliffhanger*, the Super Patriot Disadvantage was replaced when he "sold-off" the soldier skills and bought Rock Climbing Skills. This is not to say Mr. Stallone is not a Patriot. It is unlikely, however, he is a super patriot and is certainly not in one every Movie (*Death Race 2000* being a prime example).

Disadvantages

Disadvantages are the key to making a good Actor. Only those Disadvantages which are a part of the Actor should be taken. Disadvantages which are part of the Role the actor has in a given Movie are a part of the Options Pool's Side Effect Limitation. The Disadvantages gained from this Limitation should reflect the specific role the Actor will have in the Movie and are not part of his basic abilities or handicaps.

Trademark

Every Actor must have a Trademark. Trademarks are chosen at the beginning of the actor's career. Examples include Arnold Schwarzenegger's use of puns and running gag lines, Jack Nicholson always putting an element of macabre into each role, William Shatner always makes dramatic pauses in his diatribes, and Eric Roberts's characters are always emotionally charged.

This distinctive aspect isn't necessarily worth points, though it may be one of the Actor's Distinctive Features or other Disadvantages. Trademarks come into play when experience points are handed out. Failure to use a trademark is a one experience point penalty.

Casting

Once the story is laid out and the players have designed their characters, take a few minutes to decide which character will have which role. If a certain

role requires a specific Skill (for instance, PS: Brain Surgeon for the part of New Jersey in *Buckaroo Bonzai*, *Across the Eight Dimension*), and only one character has that Skill, he should get that part. After making this decision, assign characters to whichever part comes closest to the character they have designed. If you are having a difficulty deciding between two different characters for the same part, pick the one who's basic Actor (i.e., ignoring the Options Pool) comes closest to the part. If you still cannot determine which Actor should fulfill a role, decide by a coin-toss or dice-roll.

After an Actor has had a part assigned to him, he cannot get another part until the next Movie (unless he dies, see below). In rare instances, if the Actor dies early, he can come back with a new role in the same Movie. The Director should not allow the Actor to use his full Option Pool in this instance—the Actor will know too much about the genre and will have an unfair advantage. A suggested penalty is to lower the effectiveness of the Option Pool by one-third (i.e., a 60 point Pool becomes a 40 Point Pool).

Tragic Death

Movies games can be more lethal than heroic games because death is not final to the actor, only the part he is playing. There's always the next Movie. Because of this, the Director can afford to be less forgiving than an ordinary GM. Also, Actors are less inhibited by the dangers they face, for the same reasons. The possibilities for Tragic-Dramas and dark, somber endings to adventures is one of the reasons for playing in a Cinema campaign. Kamikaze actions on the part of the Actors is good role-playing material for Cinema games. In regular adventures, the PCs and GM will often feel restrained because they are emotionally attached to their characters.

Many motion pictures and books portray events which would never occur in an ordinary adventure. Occasionally, NPCs will make great sacrifices: lose limbs to help their loved ones; leap in front of bullets heading for their partners; and so forth. PCs will almost never engage in those kinds of selfless activities unless they know their characters can return to be played again. RPGs are, after all, entertainment and most players are not entertained when their characters die.

Cinema games allow for events like the great sacrifice Obi-Wan Kenobi made in *Star Wars*. Obi-Wan was killed distracting Darth Vader... Alec Guinness returned to reprise the role in the sequels (though he appeared as a "ghost"). *Glory*, the Civil War motion picture with Matthew Broderick, ends with all of the major actors dying. In *The Dirty Dozen* nearly half the characters are killed trying to complete the mission. While their deaths weren't necessary to complete the movie, the story would not have been nearly as good without the great sacrifices made by some of the characters.



Telling The Story

Unlike most conventional RPG campaigns, a Cinema adventure requires a bit more role-telling (telling the players what their characters are doing rather than letting them make decisions), particularly in the opening sequence. The exposition, the literary act of informing the reader of the "rules" of the genre, is done in books in many different ways. Usually, the differences between the book's society are explained gradually. In Cinema Campaigns, the details and information on the "Movie rules" have to be picked up by the Actors as they go. The rules of the genre are clear in Movies which are very similar to the real-world and will be easy for the actors pick up on. The starting sequence of *Conan the Barbarian* quickly reveals to the Actor he is in a primitive village being raided by slavers. In other cases, the genre is not so clear-cut. For instance, *Rising Sun* includes a great deal of Japanese culture interacting with American culture. Many Actors will not quickly adjust to this environment and will require more descriptions and clues from the Director before they can better assume their roles.

Some Movies will have really strange "rules". Imagine the description from the Director at the start:

"You're sitting in a stadium, wearing a trench coat when you suddenly feel a very strange sensation. You look across the stands and see another man, who is clearly staring back at you. You feel an irresistible urge to go to the parking garage."

<Scene cuts to Actor in the Garage>

"The same man is waiting there for you, he pulls a sword from his coat, runs toward you and screams 'There can be only one!'"

"What do you do?"

Welcome to *Highlander*.

Audience Background & Flashbacks

Certain aspects of the movies doesn't translate well into Cinema games. The information gained by the audience during the first few minutes of a movie are represented in Cinema Games. For instance, in most *Columbo* episodes, the first fifteen minutes of the show is shown to the audience but the Actors never see it happen. It is important to contain all of the exposition material in scenes where the Actors participate.

Flashbacks do not usually translate well, unless the entire Movie is a Flashback. Usually, this would be in a court-room drama where the Actor's first part is answering questions and role-plays the part to be able to answer the question.

Point-Of-View Gaming

In normal games, a great deal of attention is paid to trivial matters, like buying horses for the big round-up in a *Western Hero* game. In Cinema games, only the stuff that would make it to the screen and be interesting to the audience is portrayed. To borrow

from the *Western Hero* example, a Cinema game would have an NPC mention something like, "...and I got the horses you wanted, boss." This would gloss over all of the boring scenes no audience would sit still for.

There Are No Retakes

Normally, in RPGs, the players are constantly asking the GM if they can accomplish something. "Can I see into the room"; "Do I have a gun"; "Is there anyone else in the car." In Cinema games, the audience never sees this aspect of the Movie. Instead, Actors say things like, "I look into the room"; "I draw a gun from my purse"; "I look in the back of the car to see who is there."

In the *Highlander* example, if the Actor responds to the, "What do you do?" by saying, "I draw a gun", the Director says, "You draw a sword...you had no gun on you." He might have replied, "...and you look back at your empty holster, quickly glance around but don't see the gun on the floor"; or whatever it takes to let the Actor know that guns are not part of the genre. As long as the Actor's action doesn't ruin the plot or violate the genre (except combat, which is handled normally), any reasonable action they attempt will succeed, arbitrated by the Director.

The Actors can have a great deal of control over the non-essential and trivial aspects of their environment, based on their actions. Cinema games require much more input from the Actor to create the world when compared to normal Role-Playing Games.

In the first playtest of the system, the players have finally figured out the genre is a world where magic has mostly supplanted technology (technology of the 1940s still exists in 1992). The Actors were gumshoe detectives on their way to investigate a murder.

The conversation went like this:

Actor: *"I reach into the glove box and pull out The Book."*

The Director (having no idea what the Actor wanted):
"...you pull a Bible out."

Actor: *"I say '...rats, where's the magic one?'"*

Director: *"Out comes The Book. It's a big, brass-bound book with arcane symbols all over it."*

Director: *< sotto voice > "I still don't have a clue what you're looking for."*

Actor: *< turning to his comrades > "I'll look up the murder victim's history."*

Director: *"You find out lots of stuff and repeat it to the others. The victim was born in Scotland (etc., etc....)"*

If the Director hadn't wanted the information given out, he would have told the Actors the victim was unlisted; the page had been mysteriously removed; or the pages had been trimmed as if The Book had been used to conceal a handgun. In any case, the vital information wouldn't have been in The Book (though a handgun might have).





Actors Without A Clue

Occasionally, the Actors will be thrown into a situation for which they are completely unprepared. Usually, this is a result of one of two things: the Actor doesn't seem to have the proper Skills or the Actor hasn't had enough exposition to understand what is going on.

The classic example of not having the right Skills is when the Actor first appears in the Movie and he finds himself at the controls of an aircraft without Combat Piloting. The Actor should know the Director isn't going to put any of the Actors in situations which are not normal for the genre. Perhaps the plane is using a newly-developed autopilot system and the Actor won't have to use the Combat Piloting Skill. Maybe it's a comedy and the poor Skills of the Actor is part of the plot. The Actor may find himself in a disaster movie where all of the original pilots of the craft are incapacitated ("Why...I had the fish!" A comedy/disaster.) Trust in the Director is essential when this sort of thing occurs. A Cinema Director, like a real-world motion picture director, isn't going to do anything to the Actors that will make the scene bad. Not to say the Actor won't be in any danger....

Most of the time, the exposition isn't complete yet and the Actors will have to fake their way through until they understand the ground-rules. Starting the Movie with an attorney screaming, "Where were you

on the night of the twenty-second, Mister Fipps?" is one example. One thing an Actor can do is to make up an answer and hope the Director can fit it into the plot. Stalling ("I loosen my tie, fidget, take a sip of water, and say 'Well, that's a little hard to explain.'") is the best plan—it gives the Director time to introduce more material for the exposition. Long-time Cinema gamers call this "Leading the Witness".

Sequels

Motion pictures have sequels, it stands to reason Cinema Games will have them, too. If the Director and the Actors had fun in the first Movie (called "Making a Profit"), they should eventually do a sequel. The second (or third, or fourth) Movie should contain as many of the plot hooks and running gags of the first one as possible. All of the Actors should try to reset their Option Pools in a manner identical to the first Movie. New Skills and abilities are common in sequels; many times the new Skill reflects Skills the Actor "had in the first Movie but never used" or may actually represent new abilities he has acquired between the two Movies. New Disadvantages, Perquisites, and Powers can be added for the same reason.

The advantage of sequels is the short amount of exposition time necessary to brief the Actors and the quick identification they'll have for their roles. Recurring sequels tend to make Cinema games resemble regular role-playing games; the Actors become more attached to their characters and are less likely to take risks. If an Actor "dies" in a Sequel, they can come back as a new character in the next Movie. (Usually, they come back as the original character's identical twin or a total stranger who happens to resemble the Actor who was killed.)

Animal Actors

Motion Pictures are full of non-humans with lead parts—animals and cartoons. Animal parts can be played by regular Actors with their Option Pools set for the abilities of the animal. For example, Jon decides he wants to play a dog in the next Movie. The Director approves of the idea (it fits into the plot). Jon then allocates enough points into his Pool to cover Tracking Scent and a few other dog-like abilities. When the Movie begins, the credits read: "and Jon as Banjo, the dog". Jon will be required to take a Physical Limitation: Cannot Speak as part of the Side Effect of his Option Pool... unless it's a talking dog Movie. The Disadvantage won't be worth many points—motion



picture dogs are notoriously good at making themselves understood (<woof, woof>. "What's that Jon...er...Banjo? Something's wrong at the lake?")

Experience Points & Movie Points

Experience Points in Cinema Games are virtually identical to Experience Points in the basic Hero System. These points are essentially character points and can be used to either add new abilities, increase the Skills of the Actor or increase their Option Pools.

Base Experience for being in a Movie	+1
Movie was long enough to have	
an Intermission	+1
Movie had demanding roles (Difficult Plot)	+1
Academy Award Acting (Best Actor)	+1
Movie was a Box Office Hit	+1
Movie was a Flop (went straight to video)	-1
Actor failed to use a Trademark	-1

Four Sample Opening Scenes

To help give a better feel for the concept, a few sample opening scenes have been included. One of the great GM-joys is throwing the PCs in at the deep-end; a Baptism by fire. Sample criteria which a GM would give to his players is listed first, followed by a description of the opening scene and the title of the Movie. Remember to end each of the Scene descriptions with the phrase: "What do you do?"

Example #1

GM Ability Criteria: A sense of humor

The Scene: A small bird has just hit you over the head with a large mallet...you see stars spinning around your head. Before you can react, the bird runs back into the room, says, "Candygram for Mr. Mongo" while the smell of burning gunpowder from the package fills your nose.

The Movie: *Who Framed Bobby Bunny*

Example #2

GM Ability Criteria: No post-1940 Skills

The Scene: In the dim red light you notice a row of men sitting next to you, all of whom, including yourself are wearing a combat helmet. Something heavy is on your back and a cord runs from your back to the close ceiling. A green light goes on next to you, a large door opens and prop-wash comes blasting back at you. A grizzled-looking man near the door bites down on his cigar-butt and yells, "Go! Go! Go!"

The Movie: *Leap to Glory (A Partial Too Far)*

Example #3

GM Ability Criteria: Modern abilities only, A musical skill (optional)

The Scene: You're looking out the back of your obviously-speeding sedan. The sirens you hear clearly belong to five or more police cars hotly-pursuing you. You look in the seat next to you and a heavy-set man wearing sunglasses and a black tattered suit and fedora smiles and throws the car-lighter out the window. You return your gaze to the road and, looking past the letters tattooed on your hand as well as the bobby-headed, dashboard dog, you see a brick wall filling the entire windshield.

The Movie: *The Rap Brothers*

Example #4

GM Ability Criteria: Riding, No post-industrial Skills

The Scene: You're sitting on a horse, surrounded by a sea of cattle. The moon is full, covering the horizon. From the chuck wagon, the smell of beans permeates the air. The cattle are restless. Another cowhand rides up and says, "Them doggies are restless tonight. Maybe y'all better sing to 'em. Wouldn't want 'em to stampede like they do when Cookie sings so poorly to 'em. I done brought your guitar."

The Movie: *The Big Round-Up*



Nuclear Warfare

by **Steven S. Long**

Even more terrifying than biological and chemical weapons are nuclear weapons. Whereas chemical and biological warfare agents may have the capacity to affect everyone in a particular area, nuclear weapons are capable of instantaneously wiping out entire cities and killing tens of thousands of people (or more). The major nations of the world possess enough nuclear weapons to kill most of Earth's population in a very few minutes (and, according to some theories, condemn the survivors to a slow, painful death from radiation or "nuclear winter"). Currently, the United States, several former Soviet states (Russia, the Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan), the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Israel, South Africa, and Pakistan have nuclear weapons (or nuclear capability and materials); Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, South Korea, and Taiwan have all expressed strong interest in creating their own nuclear bombs.

Because of their incredible destructive capabilities, nuclear weapons are frequently used as plot elements in Champions scenarios. Therefore it is important for Champions players to have an understanding of how nuclear bombs work and what their effects are. Of course, most of the time the exact effects of the bomb won't matter—it's simply a plot device and doesn't need to be quantified. But occasionally it could matter—for example, when a PC's base of operations is located on the edges of the blast's effect and the question of exactly what happens to him and his vital equipment has to be precisely answered. For this reason—and because it's intriguing to push the limits of the game system and experiment a little bit—*HERO System* statistics for the effects of a nuclear bomb are given below.

Much of the information in this section is subject to change depending on many different factors. The weather, the topography, the accuracy of the bomb, and how perfectly it detonates can all affect the actual explosion and the effects it has. Furthermore, a lot of the present information about nuclear explosions is subject to interpretation and debate. The author has selected what he feels is the best information, and in some cases has altered it slightly to fit the game system better. Players who prefer to rely on other data or interpretations are free to recalculate the effects of the bomb to suit themselves.

How Nuclear Bombs Work

There are basically two types of nuclear bombs: fission bombs and fusion bombs. Fission bombs work by splitting apart the large atoms of the elements uranium or plutonium. On detonation, high explosives are used to force two chunks of the fissionable material together, resulting in the splitting of one atom, which leads to a chain reaction of fissioning atoms and a tremendous release of energy. The least amount of uranium or plutonium needed to achieve this chain reaction is referred to as the "critical mass."

Fusion bombs are generally three to four times as powerful as fission bombs. They work by fusing two or more atoms together to form a different element: usually deuterium atoms are fused to form helium-3, or deuterium and tritium atoms are fused to form helium-4. In order to bring about this result, a fission bomb is used as a "trigger."

The force of a nuclear explosion is rated by comparing it to an equivalent amount of TNT. A kiloton equals a thousand tons of TNT, and a megaton equals a million tons. The smallest American nuclear explosive is .1 kiloton, and various nations have bombs ranging into the tens of megatons or higher. Nuclear warheads have been placed on every type of launch system, from relatively short-range artillery to intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).

For either type of bomb, the amount of material needed to produce the nuclear explosion is surprisingly small—approximately 55 pounds of enriched uranium, or a mere 18 pounds of plutonium, are all that is needed to make a bomb as powerful as the one used on Hiroshima. This makes it easy for the GM to run all sorts of scenarios involving the theft or smuggling of uranium or plutonium, which are produced in certain types of nuclear reactors. The actual construction of the bomb mechanism, is far easier than acquiring the uranium or plutonium—in the past, college undergraduates have designed workable devices using declassified United States government documents and readily available materials. It would certainly be possible for clever terrorists, criminal scientists (or former Soviet nuclear scientists hired by criminals), or master villains to do the same. However, the machinery and technological parts needed to build the bomb may not be so easy to acquire; in many cases they are quite rare, and require highly specialized skills to build or use.

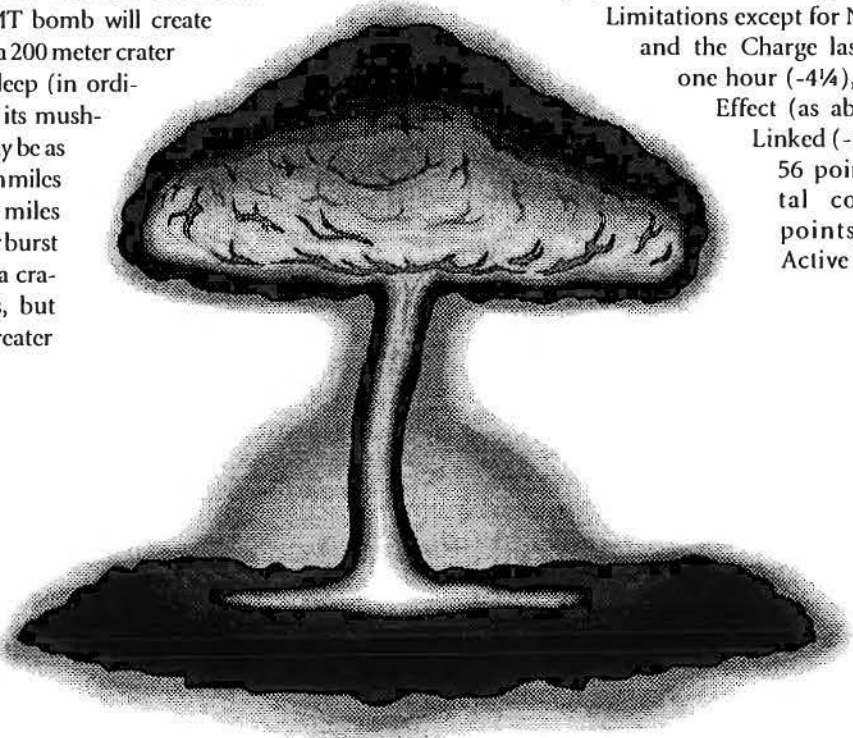


The Effects Of A Nuclear Explosion

This section considers the effects of a one-megaton (1 MT) nuclear bomb as they would be represented in HERO System terms. As stated above, much of the data on nuclear explosions is sketchy or highly debatable. At some points, assumptions or choices have been made so that game statistics could be derived without major difficulty; where necessary, the author has erred on the side of increased damage or effect (for the sake of drama). GMs and players should feel free to do their own research and tailor the bomb's effects to suit their own opinions and/or campaigns.

Common Limitations for the nuclear bomb described below include: OAF Bulky (-1½), 1 Charge which Never Recovers and destroys bomb (-4; in some cases this Charge will last for more than a single Phase); No Range (-½; the launching system must supply the Range for the bomb); and Requires WF: Vehicle Weapons or Heavy Weapons (-½) (total -6½, less with a Continuing Charge).

The effects of a nuclear explosion can be roughly summarized as follows: initial explosion (immediate release of radiation, thermal blast/flash, electromagnetic pulse [EMP]); blast wave and wind effects; fires; and lingering radiation and fallout. Many of these effects vary substantially, depending upon whether the attack was a "ground burst" (in which some or all of the nuclear fireball touches the ground) or an "air burst" (in which the fireball does not touch ground; for a 1 MT bomb, this means it would have to be detonated about 2,000 feet to half a mile above the ground). For example, a ground burst will cause a large mushroom cloud, a crater and tremors: a 1 MT bomb will create approximately a 200 meter crater 50-70 meters deep (in ordinary soil), and its mushroom cloud may be as much as thirteen miles wide and ten miles high. A 1 MT air burst will not create a crater or tremors, but will have a greater EMP.



First Effect:

Immediate Radiation: The first thing a nuclear explosion does is release tremendous amounts of radiation (in the form of neutrons and gamma rays) into the area. The radiation does not cover as large an area as the heat or blast effects, but is nonetheless deadly (particularly to Desolidified characters who might otherwise survive the explosion). The amount of radiation released is measured in roentgens and Roentgen Absorbed Dose (RAD). A 1 MT bomb will irradiate about a 1 mile (1.6km) radius area with over 19,000 RAD, enough to kill humans instantly (if near the blast) or within minutes or hours (if slightly farther away). However, by two miles this has dropped off to about 24 RAD, which is not likely to have much effect on humans. Persons caught between one and two miles are likely to absorb enough radiation that they will die a slow and painful death in days or weeks. Radiation is completely undetectable to humans (this sort of intense burst doesn't even do STUN), but survivors will feel its effects for the rest of their lives (however short they may be).

Radiation Burst: 6d6 RKA, AVLD (Power Defense, +2), Area of Effect (about 805" [1 mile], +2¾), Affects Desolidified (+½), Fully Invisible (+1) (652 Active Points); Common Limitations with the Charge lasting for about one hour (-5¼), No KB (-½), Does No STUN (-1), Gradual Effect (those who are further away from the bomb may not feel the effects for days or weeks, -2) (costs 67 points) plus 3d6 CON and BODY Drain, recover 5 points every month (+1¾), Area of Effect (about 1,610" [2 miles], +3), Affects Desolidified (+½), Fully Invisible (+1) (435 Active Points); Common Limitations except for No Range and the Charge lasts about one hour (-4¼), Gradual Effect (as above, -2), Linked (-½) (costs 56 points). Total cost: 123 points (1,087 Active Points).

Second Effect:

Flash: When a nuclear bomb explodes, it immediately releases about one-third to one-half of its energy in the form of a blast of thermal energy. The nuclear fireball formed by the explosion of a 1 MT bomb is as hot as the heart of the sun and is more than 300 feet (about 50") wide less than a thousandth of a second after detonation. It continues to grow (and to rise off the ground) until it is about 2,000 feet to half a mile (403") wide. The heat and light energy travel at just under the speed of light, and last for about two seconds.

One of the effects from this release of energy is that persons looking in the direction of the blast will suffer flash-blindness or permanent eye damage (retinal burns and possibly total blindness) because of the brightness of the light. Estimates on the reach of this effect range from 13 miles to 27 miles (21 km to 43.2 km) during the day, and 53 miles to 70 miles (112 km) at night (for the effect calculated below, ranges of 50 miles (40,250") at night and 13 miles (10,465") in the daytime have been chosen).

Because it is impossible to achieve long-term flash-blindness or permanent blindness using the Power "Flash," this effect is written up as a Transform which is only one-quarter as powerful in the daytime. Victims who take twice their BODY from the effect are permanently blinded. Other victims suffer varying degrees of eye injury (with minuses to Sight PER rolls) and will heal from it as they would normally.

Flash: 8d6+1 Major Transform (normal human to blind or partially blind human), Area of Effect (40,250" radius [about 50 miles], +4), AVLD (defense is being blind or having Sight Group Flash Defense, +1), Affects Desolidified (+½) (812 Active Points); Common Limitations with Charge lasting 2 Phases (-6), Only One-Fourth As Effective In Daylight (-1), Decreasing Effect (Transform loses 1 DC every 1,610" at night or every 419" during the day, -¼): costs 98 points.

(Author's Note: some gamers might wonder why this effect was built as an Area of Effect rather than an Explosion, particularly since the "Decreasing Effect" Advantage was used essentially to do the same thing as an Explosion. The reason is that the effect would not have been affordable as an Explosion. This is because it costs +¼ to add 1" to an Explosion's power, whereas an Area of Effect doubles in size for every +¼. In order to build the flash effect as an Explosion which lost 1 DC every 1,610", it would have had to be a +403 Advantage, costing 50,687 Active Points and 6,144 Real Points! This is an impressive effect, but not that impressive, so the Area of Effect option was chosen (as horrible as this may seem to system purists). Also, the effects of a nuclear explosion do not always decrease regularly like an Explosion does. The same rationales apply to other effects bought in this fashion.

This effect is bought as Affects Desolidified because desolidified characters can still sense it, and therefore be blinded by it. Lastly, Transforms should lose Damage Classes like Killing Attacks, so this attack has 25 DC.)

Third Effect:

Thermal Blast: All of the heat and light described above does more than just blind people. The heat energy can vaporize metals, cause tremendous fires (see below), and inflict burns upon people. The heat travels at just under the speed of light and lasts for about two seconds.

Thermal Blast: 20d6 RKA, Area of Effect (14,732" [just over 18 miles], +¾) (1,275 Active Points); Common Limitations with Charge lasting 2 Phases (-6), Decreasing Effect (see chart below, -¼): costs 176 points.

The exact effects and range of a 1 MT thermal blast are summarized in the following chart, which is based primarily on one found in the book *Weapons*, by the Diagram Group:

Minimum Range	Maximum Range	Game Range	Damage	Effects
0	2.25 mi	up to 1500"	20-16d6	Metals vaporize
1.8 mi	3.5 mi	1501-2500"	15-10d6	Metals melt
3.25 mi	7.1 mi	2501-5000"	9-6d6	Rubber and plastic ignites and melts
5.1 mi	8.0 mi	5001-6000"	5-4d6	Wood and other flammables burst into flame or char
7.5 mi	10.2 mi	6001-7200"	4-3d6	Skin suffers third-degree burns
9.25 mi	13.25 mi	7201-10000"	3-2d6	Skin suffers second-degree burns
11.5 mi	18.3 mi	10001-14732"	1d6	Skin suffers first-degree burns



The degree of burns suffered by an object can be lessened if it is colored white (subtract up to 3 DC), and increased if it is black (add up to 3 DC). The same applies to people, based on their clothing. For notes on the possible effects of fires, see below.

Fourth Effect:

Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP): When a nuclear bomb explodes, the radiation it emits ionizes atoms for many miles around (with some airbursts, for more than 50 miles!). This takes mere fractions of a second, but can generate thousands of volts of radio-wave-like energy. This energy does not damage humans, but it plays havoc with electrical circuits, disrupting or destroying them. This is bought as a Killing Attack which only affects electrical circuit.

EMP: 6d6 Ranged Killing Attack, Area of Effect (9,216" radius [about 12 miles], +3½), Fully Invisible (+1) (495 Active Points); Common Limitations except for No KB (-6¼), plus Only Affects Electrical Circuitry (-1): costs 60 points.

Fifth Effect:

Blast Wave: The blast wave is probably the most devastating part of a nuclear explosion. The force of the explosion creates massive amounts of pressure which travel outward in a wave, accompanied by incredibly strong winds. Sometimes this effect reflects off of the ground, thereby increasing its own power (this is known as a "mach wave"). The blast effect is known as "static overpressure" (SO), and is measured in pounds per square inch (psi) over the standard atmospheric pressure. The extreme increase in pressure it causes is enough to destroy buildings miles away from the center of the blast because the pressure increase affects all parts of the building and crushes it. Anybody inside when a building collapses is likely to die. However, SO has relatively little effect on soft, malleable objects like human beings—the average residential house will be obliterated by as little as 5 psi, but a human can withstand 30 psi before being injured.

However, the intense winds, known as "dynamic pressure" (DP) do affect humans. They pick up all of the rubble, shards of glass, bits of metal, and other debris created by the SO and throw it against everything in their path, such as people. They also overturn cars, uproot trees, pull people out of buildings, and slam people against other objects with lethal force. The result is that, one way or another, anyone within about 5 miles of a 1 MT blast will be killed, and people beyond that (out to about 10 miles) will be injured or killed.

The effects of the blast wave can last for several seconds, depending upon the size of the bomb; with a 1 MT bomb, they should last no more than half a Turn.

Blast wave, static overpressure: 20d6 RKA, Area of Effect (7,680" [about 10 miles], +3), Indirect (attacks all parts of objects, such as all walls in a building, +¾) (1,425 Active Points); Common Limitations with Charge lasting up to ½ Turn (-5¼), Decreasing Effect (see chart below, -¼, Little Or No Effect On Soft, Malleable Objects (-1): costs 178 points.

Blast wave, winds: 20d6 RKA, Area of Effect (7,680" [about 10 miles], +3), Double Knockback (+¾) (1,425 Active Points); Common Limitations except for No KB with Charge lasting up to ½ Turn (-5½), Decreasing Effect (see chart below, -¼): costs 211 points.

The chart on the following page, also adapted from *Weapons*, describes the effects of a 1 MT blast wave.

Sixth Effect:

Negative Pressure Phase: This simply means that air rushes back in to fill the vacuum left by the out rushing winds. This effect is much more gentle than dynamic pressure.

Negative Pressure: 3d6 RKA, Area of Effect (8,192" [about 10 miles], +3¾) (214 Active Points); Common Limitations except for No KB with Charge lasting up to 1 Turn (-5½): costs 33 points.

Seventh Effect:

Fires: The tremendous heat generated by a nuclear explosion will touch off thousands of fires on flammable objects which are not destroyed outright. The area of flammability is known as the "fire zone;" with a 1 MT bomb, it usually covers a 5-10 mile radius. The bomb's blast wave will help put many fires out, however. For the effects of fires, refer to "Living In A Dangerous World," *Champions*, page S-45.

It is possible for the fires to join together in two ways to cause even more damage. First, there could be a conflagration: the fires spread out of control and devastate many square miles of still-standing structures and plant life. Second, and even worse, is the firestorm, in which the fires join together in a central area and begin to suck in oxygen. The in rushing oxygen feeds the fire, turning it into a raging, self-sustaining inferno that only ends when everything flammable has been destroyed. Whether a firestorm will start is unpredictable; Hiroshima suffered one but Nagasaki, which is hillier, only suffered a conflagration.



Range	Game Range	Damage	Effects
Up to 1.4 mi	up to 1127"	20-16d6	30 psi/670 mph winds: total destruction
1.5-1.8 mi	1128-1449"	15-13d6	20 psi/470 mph winds: massive structures and reinforced concrete destroyed
1.9-2.0 mi	1450-1610"	10-9d6	15 psi/380 mph winds: multistory buildings damaged and sometimes destroyed
2.1-2.5 mi	1611-2013"	8-7d6	10 psi/290 mph winds: factories and commercial structures destroyed
2.6-3.1 mi	2014-2496"	6d6	7 psi/225 mph winds: residential structures destroyed
3.2-3.8 mi	2497-3059"	5d6	5 psi/160 mph winds: residential and light commercial structures badly damaged or destroyed
3.9-4.8 mi	3060-3864"	4d6	3 psi/116 mph winds: walls of steel-framed buildings blown away, dwellings badly damaged, vehicles overturned, persons in the open killed
4.9-5.9 mi	3865-4750"	3-2d6	2 psi/70 mph winds: wooden buildings and similar structures damaged
6.0-10.0 mi	4751-8050"	2-1d6	1 psi/48 mph winds: little appreciable affect

Firestorm: 10d6 Aid (half to the RKA of the fires, half to the Aid), can add up to 120 points, points fade at 5 points per hour (+¾), Area of Effect (1,024" radius [1.25 miles], +2¾), Continuous (+1), Uncontrolled (fire lasts until all flammables are consumed, +½), 0 END (+½) (520 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), Self Only (-½), Activation Roll 11- (-1): 130 points.

Eighth Effect:

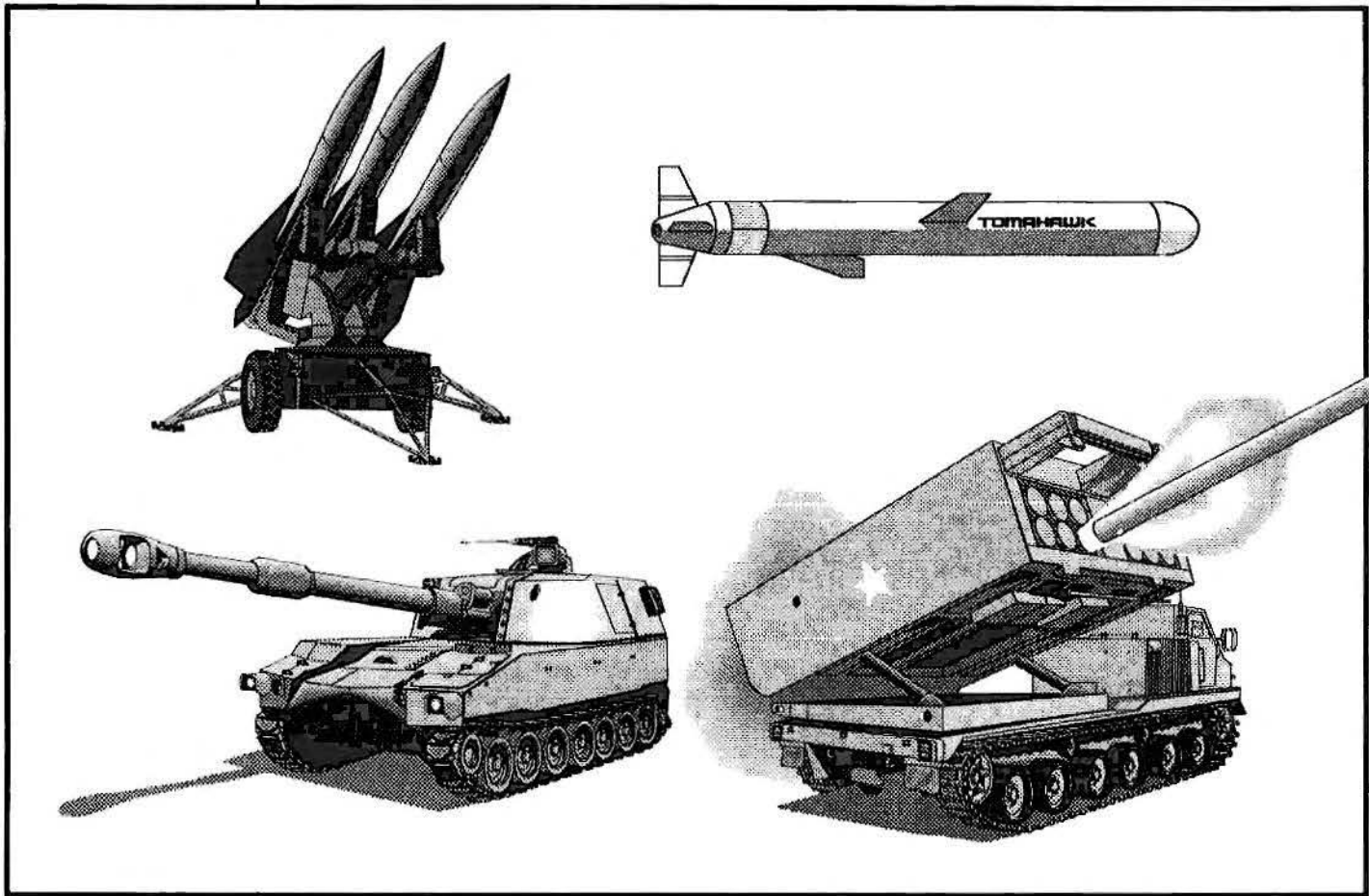
Radiation, Fallout, and Nuclear Winter: The lingering radiation created by a nuclear detonation can last weeks, months, or years. It has been estimated that 1 MT explosion would force the evacuation of all people in a 4,900 square mile area around the explosion for at least a week (and in the 1,400 square mile area immediately around the explosion for a month or more). A basic rule of thumb which Champions GMs can use is the sevenths rule: seven hours after the explosion, the radiation levels will be one-tenth of what they were one hour after the explosion; 49 (7x7) hours after

wards, 1/100th, and so forth. For the effects of radiation, refer to "Living In A Dangerous World," Champions Fourth Edition Rulesbook, page S-45-46. Remember that comic-book radiation can have some unusual effects.

In addition to the localized radiation, the radioactive debris kicked into the atmosphere by a nuclear explosion will eventually descend to Earth as fallout. The pattern of fallout from a given nuclear explosion depends mainly on how high it goes and what the prevailing weather conditions (particularly the wind) are like.

Lastly, some authorities believe that a large nuclear exchange would kick so much dust and smoke into the air that the sun would be blotted out, creating "nuclear winter." In the worst-case scenario, this would mean the extinction of life on Earth as temperatures dropped below freezing and food production became impossible. However, some experts question these doomsday predictions, and in any event it would require a major nuclear exchange to create this effect (something that is unlikely to happen in most gaming campaigns).





Because the effects of radiation, fallout, and nuclear winter are so unpredictable, no damage statistics are given for them. The GM should adjudicate their effects on his campaign himself.

Total costs for a 1 MT nuclear bomb:

Effect	Active Points	Real Points
Radiation burst	1,087	123
Flash	812	98
Thermal blast	1,275	176
EMP	495	60
Blast, SO	1,425	178
Blast, winds	1,425	211
Negative pressure	214	33
Firestorm	520	130
Total:	7,253	1,009



World Security Services

by David West with Steve Barr

Introduction

World Security Services has risen to become the most reliable security firms in the business in a very short amount of time. This has been due to the leadership of retired Colonel Bradley Barrington, the former head of the now defunct agency known as Special American Tactics, or SAT for short. Barrington started this company after his resignation from the military, and has already made several enemies on both sides of the fence.

History

At the end of World War II, the President faced a crisis. Several paranormal beings had joined both the Allies and the Axis, and the President wondered what to do about them. He saw the need for an agency to police and track the activities of the various paranormals that were appearing on American soil. To this end, in the same bill that created the U.S. Air Force, the President authorized money into creating its own superhero team.

An army officer, Colonel Jonathan Hawkins, had been in charge of American paranormals during World War II. Hawkins spoke to the Joint Chiefs of Staff several times, giving his observations of the "mystery men" who had fought for the Allies. His report was frightening. American interests, he stated, were in extreme jeopardy without a group to help police the American paranormals, and paranormal activity on American soil. Colonel Hawkins proposed the creation of a special agency, designed to deal with the influx of paranormals. The Joint Chiefs liked the idea, but were unable to pursue the matter. The country had just ended a major war effort, and was scaling back its military. The Joint Chiefs couldn't get funding for this new agency.

This ambivalence halted abruptly in 1961. Dreadnought attacked New York City, and easily foiled the local law enforcement agencies. The only hero to respond to the police call for aid, Sunwarrior, defeated the menace. Victory came only after a fierce battle that caused much property damage, and many innocent lives. The government, under the auspices of the Attorney General, began a quiet study of the

requirements for an agency to protect American soil. Actions moved faster than the committee report, however. In 1964, the supervillain called Mastermind used his mental powers to attempt to control the outcome of the Democratic National Convention. Luckily, the heroes American Eagle II and Solarr stopped Mastermind's insidious plan of entering a mind-controlled candidate into the U.S. election.

The President had given his approval for the creation of the agency now known as PRIMUS the month before. Mastermind's secondary goal was an attempt to stop the creation of that agency, and to thwart the reelection of the President. Six months later, Congress, as part of the Defense Authorization Bill, authorized the creation of the Special American Tactics agency. SAT's charter was to protect the United States against super-powered threats, while PRIMUS was formed and organized under the care of now-General Hawkins.

In 1966, the villain Dark Seraph appeared in Omaha, Nebraska in an attempt to take over the Strategic Air Command base at Offutt AFB. This marked the first intervention of SAT agents into a superpowered conflict. The newly trained agents based at Offutt AFB engaged Dark Seraph until the arrival of American Eagle II and the Minutemen. SAT performed admirably but lost many agents in the battle, due to the vast powers of the evil Dark Seraph.

The root of SAT's early problems was recruiting. Recruits were very hard to find. Vietnam was in full swing, and most able-bodied men shipped overseas to fight against the North Vietnamese aggressors. SAT recruited and trained only some three hundred agents, barely enough for sixty strike teams. SAT's other recruiting efforts went well, however, and the new agency managed to gather an adequate support staff. Luckily, one of those strike agents was Captain Brad Barrington. Barrington had learned much while serving in the Special Forces and Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols in Vietnam and Cambodia, and he brought those lessons to SAT.

Bradley Barrington had always been involved with the various government paranormal activities. At West Point, he had shared a room with Robert Kaufman, who had become the Golden Avenger. During an incident in Vietnam, Barrington was acting as a squad leader of a unit engaging in some hit and run activity against the North Vietnamese. A unit sniper went AWOL after killing off the company commander and his aides. This individual, known as the assassin Coup De Grace, was implicated by Barrington's investigation. This incident placed Cap-



tain Barrington under the close eye of the Pentagon. They liked what they saw, and transferred Captain Barrington to SAT's operations command.

Things were quiet on the paranormal front as a new President was elected in 1968 and slowly began cutting back involvement in Vietnam, eventually ending with the treaty signed in 1973 between North and South Vietnam. The President also eased tensions with China. Due to these events, SAT's funding began to be examined as a waste of Defense Department's budgetary resources. Then something happened which would change the primary function of SAT.

In 1974, Congressional anger with the increasing anti-American government sentiment in the United Nations reached a boiling point. Congress, in a retaliatory bill, ended all ties to the agency known as UNTIL, which until this time was helping the fledgling SAT patrol American soil. SAT escorted UNTIL agents back to international soil as a provision of the bill. A small fight broke out as UNTIL resisted the forced deportation of their forces. SAT prevailed, primarily due to the planning of the newly promoted Major Barrington. During this incident, Barrington developed a hatred of UNTIL's commander, Major Juan Martinez. This animosity has lasted until the present day. Congress also announced the creation of PRIMUS to the world, and began the full-recruitment process needed for that agency. Meanwhile, SAT now had the primary job to defend the United States from all paranormal attacks. When PRIMUS started up, SAT was to merge into the larger, encompassing agency.

SAT performed admirably, although quite a few of its agents were in the initial group drafted into the PRIMUS training program. The President, though, placed the agency under the control of a man picked by the conservatives of Congress. Reverse recruitment happened as those men found possessing of the "right temperament" were drafted into the SAT program and removed from consideration by PRIMUS. The result was that SAT became an exceedingly patriotic organization, whose pride got in the way. SAT also has developed a hearty dislike of UNTIL, due to its previous relationship with that organization. SAT's "we are the best" attitude got in the way of local, state, and even Federal law enforcement agencies. SAT agents tended to take over control of any situation they come in upon, usually without consultation with their supposed allies.

Around 1978, Congress began slowly planning the end of SAT. To do this, Congress authorized the creation of an actual superhero group. This group would be filled with the same patriotic values as SAT. Authorization and actualization, however, did not go hand in hand until the latter part of the 1980s. Then, a number of paranormals came together as Executive Action. Barrington was angry no SAT agent had joined this superhero team. This slight turned Barrington against all super-powered people. Slowly, the Major developed a hatred for all paranormals.

In 1979, SAT's mandate was at the end, but the conservatives in Congress blocked the legislation that would have finally dismantled the agency. Congressional hearings on the fate of the agency began. One of the most important people to testify for SAT was the Golden Avenger, who had just reached the top echelon of PRIMUS. The Golden Avenger helped to persuade Congress, and the President, to not disband the agency. He pointed out the experience gained by SAT was invaluable in a smaller agency. Such experience would be diluted if placed within a larger agency, such as PRIMUS.

One thing not foreseen, though, by the Golden Avenger, was the appointment of Major Brad Barrington to be the commander of SAT. Major Barrington had always resented the Avenger. Barrington saw Golden Avenger as a potential threat to his leadership of SAT. Golden Avenger and Barrington had a history of a rivalry that dated all the way back to their West Point days. Unfortunately for Barrington, not only did Congress like the Avenger, but so did SAT's rank and file. SAT agents looked to Golden Avenger as a savior of their independence from the PRIMUS organization.

SAT's duties and PRIMUS's duties sometimes blurred, but SAT's were more definable. SAT's primary goal was the prevention of terrorist activities on American soil. Because of the great similarities in their duties, SAT frequently requested agents from the military's anti-terrorist force, Delta Force, as backup while performing their mission. They also had taken up the role of being a mobile "first-strike" team when paranormal activity broke out near an area vital to national security. SAT would arrive on the scene a good deal ahead of the primary force, PRIMUS. SAT agents were quite proud of this function and did their best to eliminate the threat before PRIMUS showed up, to prove that SAT was a better organization. This rivalry got very intense in some areas.

In early 1988, a scandal hit SAT which again threatened its continued existence. A SAT Commander turned traitor, selling himself out to the largest criminal organization in existence, VIPER. The commander was in charge of a convoy escorting a satellite called Project: Eye Spy. The first thing the commander did was to let word hit the street about the satellite's movements. SAT internal security found out and called upon the Champions to help in the escort. However, SAT did not know the commander of the operation was in reality a mole. The convoy headed out with the commander in the lead. VIPER had set up an ambush. The commander stopped the convoy at the ambush point, a multiple car accident on the road, and offered SAT's assistance with the problem. Luckily, Defender smelled a rat. When the commander turned around to attack Defender, Defender punched him. Combat between the VIPER forces and SAT escort followed. Thanks to the timely intervention of Seeker, American Eagle II, and Black Phantom, the escort was saved. SAT lost several individu-





als, but captured the villain Phaze along with most of the VIPER operatives. Unfortunately, the commander who turned traitor escaped during the melee.

Congressional opponents of SAT were furious, and it looked as if SAT was going to lose its sanction yet again and finally be absorbed into PRIMUS. This time, Golden Avenger's testimony did not help calm down the sharks in Congress. These representatives felt this would be the best chance to end the conservative organization, despite the actions of President. Fortunately for SAT, the attempt to destroy the agency did not succeed, thanks to a filibuster in the Senate led by Senator Jeremiah Helm. SAT was on a tightrope, but still had support in the administration.

When the new administration took office, SAT was again put into the spotlight. However, since most of its supporters left with the old administration, SAT was in trouble. With new emphasis on fiscal responsibility, redundancies in the system were targeted. The largest redundancy in many senators and representatives' eyes was SAT.

This was the last Congressional battle waged by the embattled agency, and this time SAT lost. Not even another intervention by Golden Avenger could save the organization from the budget ax. The new President proclaimed this a victory of his campaign promise to cut government spending. Agents assigned to SAT went back to their old military units, or else were

integrated into PRIMUS. Colonel Barrington was furious. He resigned from the Army, and left the government. UNTIL immediately began friendly overtures to PRIMUS, since Colonel Barrington was out of the picture.

Barrington resigned himself to becoming a cynical old man, but aid came from an unexpected source. Ten major multinational corporations got together in private and decided the current system of government agencies, both United States and United Nations, could not adequately protect their interests. Therefore the ten corporations approached Barrington with a proposal. With corporate backing, Barrington would create a security company to help the ten corporations protect their vital interests from terrorists, assassins, and intruding heroes.

Barrington agreed, and began organizing the company, which he called World Security Services. He approached other former SAT members. He targeted those who were bitter at the United States government. Barrington designed a rigid hierarchy to control the company. He received many prototype weap-

ons and equipment to equip his men.

Barrington, through his former contacts within the government, had a law passed giving corporate security teams the equivalent of police powers. Though the law prohibited the ability to hold prisoners on the property of the corporation's facilities, corporate security teams were legal. Barrington began hiring out teams of agents to corporations in three capacities. First, as trainers of current security agents, so the hiring company could keep their current personnel, yet increase their level of training to the equivalent of United States military forces. Second, as corporate security agents. This is for those corporations who have yet to undertake the great expense of hiring their security forces to guard facilities. Lastly, Barrington created several elite teams of agents whose primary function was to stop hostage taking and other terrorist attacks.

Both the United States and the United Nations are not happy with these developments. Already, conflicts have arisen between the agents of World Security Services and governmental law enforcement agencies. One thing made clear by Barrington and the corporations he works for, is that in no way can PRIMUS or UNTIL agents enter any of the buildings guarded by World Security Services without escort. Neither agency is happy with these arrangements, and PRIMUS refused to accept them. Tensions are high between WSS and PRIMUS.



There exists a hidden irony in these developments. For the corporations in control of World Security Services are not legitimate, but are instead front companies for the Worldwide League of Crime. The situation with Barrington's leaving the government handed the Worldwide League of Crime a golden opportunity. Now, they had an organization that could enter high security areas legitimately, while they could harass any potential enemy. Since many corporations hire World Security Services, the Worldwide League of Crime can compile full and accurate information on almost every corporation in the world. This extends even to those organizations secretly fronting the hiring corporations.

Goals

Three differing sets of goals exist within the organization and its controllers. Colonel Barrington wishes to give his former governmental partners headaches. He will use the operatives of World Security Services to bring his revenge to fruition. Barrington does this by winning contracts with vital defense contractors and other volatile places. Thus, if anything goes wrong and PRIMUS or UNTIL arrives, those agencies are forced to tread lightly.

The goal of the majority of agents within World Security Services is doing their job of protecting facilities and corporations from superpowered and agency espionage. Being former military, they take pride in a job well done and will try hard to accomplish their mission of protecting property from intrusion. The professionalism shown by these agents has impressed a number of agencies.

A minority of agents among World Security Services personnel are agents of the Worldwide League of Crime. These agents deliver information on the companies hiring World Security Services for protection. The agents are indistinguishable from the ex-military agents and will act like the other agents when confronted. This arrangement gives the Worldwide League of Crime immense amount of information about other companies and agencies, which the larger organization can later act upon when the time is right.

Organization

World Security Services consists of four branches. The branches are the security branch, the training branch, the assault branch, and the executive branch. Due to the work of the major corporations supporting Barrington's endeavor, World Security Service is one of the most used corporate security firms in the business. In the world of supervillains and superheroes, the old-fashioned night security officer is not enough protection for highly sensitive buildings, equipment, and personnel.

World Security Services fills this niche with its company. Security with WSS means having on-site forces capable of repelling superpowered assaults, sabotage, and breaking & entering attempts. Most corporations have better uses to put labor and mon-

etary resources than security for their hard assets. World Security Service provides the labor for a greatly reduced cost.

Many different firms provide these types of services, but World Security Service is one of the best, and the largest. All World Security Services personnel have served in the United States military in some capacity. Even after military training, all agents go through an extensive secondary period of training before becoming available for security duty.

Any size contract is accepted. These contracts vary from a scant dozen individuals, all the way to over two thousand heavily armed personnel. The client can order guards of specialized gender, specialized ethnicity, specialized language capability, or any other unique characteristic. All guards are former United States citizens so all can speak English. Different levels of concealment are also available. Most contracts do allow World Security Service to wear their company uniforms of blue and white, with the logo quite visible.

World Security Service also provides bodyguards, escorts, and household security for high-powered corporate executives and other very important people. This service is much more expensive, but is well worth it. Security consultants comb through the client's current security, and upgrade it immensely. In fact, it is starting to become a status symbol for some people to have World Security Service personnel always around themselves.

Another function provided by World Security Services is as an intermediary for buying security equipment. This is done for those who do not wish to have World Security Service personnel on their corporate grounds. In these cases, not only does World Security Services provide the training, but will also provide material for the newly upgraded security force. Barrington handles this end of the business exclusively, matching up corporations in need of security equipment and his sponsors, who build the equipment. World Security Service receives a commission on these sales, adding to their profits.

Internal Relations

The relationship between Colonel Barrington and his agents could not be better. Since every agent of World Security Services is a former member of the military, they obey orders from a superior officer. Colonel Barrington continues with his firm leadership of this new organization, as he did when he was in control of SAT. Some of the agents even go as far as to hero-worship Colonel Barrington, something he knows is destructive, but does not discourage.

External Relations

In almost every case, the relations between Barrington and his former allies have deteriorated into a feud. Barrington has never liked Golden Avenger and now blames part of SA-1's end on his West Point rival. Golden Avenger, meanwhile, has become much



more wary of Barrington. He does not like the fact the government pulled the rug out from underneath Barrington, but he does not understand the open hostility that Barrington shows toward PRIMUS. PRIMUS and WSS agents both have orders to avoid each other if possible. PRIMUS has orders to defer to World Security Services when treading on corporate property the security agency is guarding.

Barrington's former anger has lessened towards Executive Action, the government-sponsored group of heroes. As such, Executive Action has much more freedom when dealing with World Security Services staff. They are under the same strictures as PRIMUS when entering territory guarded by World Security Services. Like PRIMUS, they ignore this restriction. Barrington finds this frustrating, but there is nothing he can do about it. Corporations on American soil cannot prohibit the entry of American law enforcement and security agencies on legitimate business. Executive Action members do not go out of their way to avoid areas controlled by World Security Services.

Barrington has let up ever so slightly on his old adversary, Major Martinez. UNTIL agents can enter World Security Service guarded territory, but only with escort by the WSS agents. UNTIL accepts this arrangement, as it is much better than what they had before between UNTIL and SAT Major Martinez has attempted to calm the tensions between his men and WSS, and it has had some effect. Barrington, with so many enemies now, has toned down his rhetoric against Martinez. It is possible the feud between these two men may not last much longer.

World-conquering agencies and people do not hire World Security Service personnel. The only relations between World Security Services and these power hungry madmen are when the villains attack a World Security Service guarded facility. Barrington, however, loves to read stories of failures in their plans, as he can then analyze how their security staffs blew the job.

Terrorist groups draw ire from Barrington and World Security Services. Quite often, WSS personnel fight these criminal terrorists. Most assault agent movements target places held by these people. As such, Barrington has told his men to not hold back when fighting them. In response, the paranormal terrorists delight in attacking World Security Service guarded areas. This covert war is sure to escalate in the future.

Campaign Function

World Security Services is a different type of adversary for players. In fact, much of the time the agents will be on the same side as the heroes. In theory, perhaps, but not in practice. Players will have to deal with World Security Service personnel if the players are investigating break-ins or attacks against facilities guarded by WSS. World Security Services has been designed to become a big thorn in the side of law-

abiding superhero teams by obstructing investigations dealing with security issues.

Another way to use World Security Services as an adversary is when players need to break into a building to get information on a crime. In this case, WSS guards the building the players need to infiltrate. Players will have to attempt to avoid roving WSS agents without killing or seriously injuring the agents. This should become a good test of a player's ingenuity at bypassing the perimeter defenses prepared by WSS.

Equipment

Weaponry & Gadgets

All weaponry and gadgets for the most part are available through conventional means. World Security Service, however, does use specially-made equipment for their agents that is not readily available. This equipment gets provided through the corporate sponsors backing World Security Services.

WSS Blaster Pistol

The standard issue weapon of World Security Service, this blaster pistol is around one foot in length and weighs around four pounds when fully loaded. The weapon comes with pistol U-sites, but most agents train enough with this weapon to shoot without setting and aiming. This weapon normally is in a belt holster, although commanders tend to put the weapon in a quick draw shoulder holster.

WSS Laser Rifle

Another of the standard firearms used by the agents of World Security Service, this laser rifle is closer to the size of a short carbine than a rifle. As is the same on the pistol, this weapon has a battery pack in the pistol grip powering the weapon. Most usually carried by a shoulder sling, this weapon can have optical sights, but usually does not.

WSS Tangle Shotgun

This weapon is about the size and shape of a sawed-off 12-gauge shotgun. Instead of firing shotgun shell loads, though, this weapon fires a quick-drying glue formula. When a target takes a hit from one of these weapons, they become totally immobile unless they can break out. Most five man squads have one member carrying the shotgun to be able to apprehend a target without killing it.

WSS Taser

Another non-lethal weapon, except this monstrosity is powered by a backpack. The weapon with backpack looks like an old World War II flame-thrower, but instead throws an electrical charge designed to incapacitate, but not kill, at target. Not many of these weapons exist; only one out of every 10 teams of assault agents will carry one within the squad.



Assault Agents

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
13/25	STR	11	14-	800 kg; 5d6 [2]
13/21	DEX	25	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
14	CON	8	12-	
10	BODY		11-	
10	INT		11-	PER Roll 11-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
20/30	PRE	17	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
10	COM		11-	
5	PD	2		
5	ED	2		
3/5	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
6	REC			
28	END			Char after slashes are for
24	STUN			Turtle Armor (OIF, -H)

Total Characteristic Cost: 82

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
Swimming: 2"/4"
Flight: 10"/20"

Powers & Skills

Turtle Armor: (OIF)

Armor: +13PD, +13 ED (26)
Flash Defense: 8pts. vs. Sight Group (5)
High Range Radio Hearing/Transmitting (7)
IR Vision (3)
Flight, 10" (13)[1/5"]

Primary Weapon: Choose one of the following:

- 1-Pulse Laser Rifle: 2d6 RKA, AP5, 64 charges, OAF (30) [64c]
- 2-Concussion Shotgun: 12d6 EB, Double Knockback, 6 charges, OAF (30) [6c]
- 3-Needle Rifle: 2d6 RKA, AP, Penetrating, 16 charges, OAF (30) [16c]
- 4-Taser: 9d6 NND [Electrical Powers or Power Defense], 4 charges, OAF (30) [4]

Martial Arts—Commando Training: (16)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Throw	7	8	5d6+v/5; Target falls
Chop	5	7	1d6+1 KA
Choke	5	7	2d6 NND
Disarm	6	8	35 STR Disarm

WSS Training:

AK: City of Operations 11- (2)
Concealment 11- (3)
Demolitions 11- (3)
KS: Criminal Law 11- (2)
KS: Hobby Skill 11- (2)
KS: Terrorists 11- (2)
Perk: Local Police Powers
Running +1" (7" total) (2) [1/5"]
Security Systems (3)
Stealth 12- (3)
WF: Knives (1)
WF: Small Arms (2)
Choose two of the following: Breakfall 12-;
Lockpicking 11-; Tracking 11-; Tactics 11-;
Paramedic 11-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 133

Disadvantages: 100+

Normal Characteristic Maxima (20)

Psychological Limitation:

Overconfidence (15)
Subject to Orders (25)

Watched by:

Watched by WSS 11- (13)
Watched by hiring corporation 11- (13)

Agent Bonus (29)

Total Disadvantage Points: 215

WSS Pulse Laser Rifle

If any armament is "standard" for the World Security Service assault agent, this is it. This weapon is about the size of a sniper rifle, with a cord hooked into a backpack power supply. It fires rapid pulses of concentrated laser fire, usable either as a powerful weapon or as cover fire for other agents approaching a target's position. At least two agents in an assault team, if not all five, have these weapons.

WSS Concussion Shotgun

Less lethal than the pulse laser rifle, this weapon still is powerful. Looking like the South African Striker shotgun system, this weapon is both intimidating and powerful. Blasts, similar to those produced by the blaster pistol, fire from the rotating magazine mounted in front of the trigger and pistol grip. This weapon has excellent knockback and knockdown capabilities.

WSS Needle Rifle

Using gauss technology, this rifle accelerates small thin needles at high velocities to penetrate into armor, yet still do more damage than a normal rifle round. This gun is the most "spacey" of all the World Security Service weapons, as the electromagnetic rails on the weapon make it look like landing lights moving up and down the barrel of the weapon. Otherwise, the weapon is similar in shape and size to the G3 Assault Rifle used by the German army.

Personnel

All World Security Service agents, except the Assault agents, train in the use of martial arts. All agents receive training in concealment, stealth, and demolition. Recruits train to fire nearly every small arm on the market and train with the use of a combat knife. Training in criminal law, terrorist organizations, and tactics rounds out the curriculum. Most recruits also have an off-duty hobby, and attempt to learn about the city that they are in, once they get their assignment. As they perform police duties, every World Security Service agent has a badge and limited local police powers. This means they can carry a gun and arrest criminals within the property of the corporation hiring World Security Services.



Security Agents

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	200 kg; 3d6 [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
15	CON	10	12-	
11	BODY	2	11-	
10	INT		11-	PER Roll 11-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM		11-	
5	PD	2		
5	ED	2		
3	SPD	5		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC			
30	END			
27	STUN	2		

Total Characteristic Cost: 55

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
Swimming: 2"/4"
Flight: 10"/10"

Powers & Skills

WSS Uniform: (OIF)

Armor: +8 PD, +8 ED (16)
Flash Defense: 8 pts. vs. Sight Group (5)
High Range Radio Hearing/Transmitting (7)
IR Vision (3)
High Ranged Radio Hearing & Transmitting (7)

Hidden Tight-Beam Transmitter: Mind Link with a related group of minds over any distance, IIF (12)

Flash Pellets: 2d6 Flash, 4 charges, OAF (7) [4c]

Blaster Pistol: 8d6 EB, 16 charges, OAF (20) [16c]

Martial Arts—Commando Training: (16)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Throw	5	6	2d6+v/5; Target falls
Chop	3	5	1d6+1 KA
Choke	3	5	2d6 NND
Disarm	4	6	20 STR Disarm

WSS Training:

AK: City of Operations 11- (2)
Concealment 12- (3)
Deduction 12-
Demolitions 11- (3)
KS: Criminal Law 11- (2)
KS: Hobby Skill 11- (2)
KS: Terrorists 11- (1)
Perk: Local Police Powers
Running +1" (7" total) (2) [1/5"]
Security Systems (3)
Stealth 12- (3)
PS: Teacher 12- (3)
WF: Knives (1)
WF: Small Arms (2)

Choose two of the following:

Acting 12-; Animal Handler (Dog) 11-;
Breakfall 12-; Bugging 12-; Climbing 12-;
Computer Programming 12-; Criminology 12-;
Disguise 12-; Electronics 11-; Interrogation
12-; Lockpicking 12-; Mechanics 11-;
Paramedic 12-; Systems Operations 12-;
Tactics 12-; Tracking 12- (6)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 132

Disadvantages: 75+

Normal Characteristic Maxima (20)

Psychological Limitation:

Overconfidence (15); Subject to Orders (25)

Watched by:

Watched by WSS 11- (13)

Watched by hiring corporation 11- (13)

Agent Bonus (22)

Total Disadvantage Points: 182



Total Character Cost: 183

Training Agents

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR		11-	200 kg; 3d6 [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
15	CON	10	12-	
11	BODY	2	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM		11-	
4	PD	2		
5	ED	2		
3	SPD	5		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC			
30	END			
24	STUN			

Total Characteristic Cost: 51

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Powers & Skills

WSS Uniform: (OIF)

- Armor: +8 PD, +8 ED (16)
- Flash Defense: 8 pts. vs. Sight Group (5)
- High Range Radio Hearing/Transmitting (7)
- IR Vision (3)
- High Ranged Radio Hearing & Transmitting (7)

WSS Jet Pack: 10" Flight, No NCM, 0 END, OIF (16) [0]

Mini-Chute: 10" Gliding, Can't gain altitude, OAF (4)

Primary Weapon: Choose one of the following:

- 1-Blaster Pistol: 8d6 EB, 16 charges, OAF (20) [16c]
- 2-Laser Rifle: 2½d6 RKA, 16 charges, OAF (20) [16c]
- 3-Tangle Shotgun: 4d6 Entangle, DEF 4, 16 charges, OAF (20) [16c]

Martial Arts—Commando Training: (16)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Throw	5	6	4d6+v/5; Target falls
Chop	3	5	1d6+1 KA
Choke	3	5	2d6 NND
Disarm	4	6	20 STR Disarm

WSS Training:

- AK: City of Operations 11- (3)
- Concealment 11- (3)
- Demolitions 11- (3)
- KS: Criminal Law 11- (3)
- KS: Hobby Skill 11- (2)
- KS: Terrorists 11- (3)
- Perk: Local Police Powers
- Running +1" (7" total) (2) [1/5"]
- Security Systems (3)
- Stealth 12- (3)
- WF: Knives (1)
- WF: Small Arms (2)

Choose two of the following:

- Acting 12-; Animal Handler (Dog) 11-;
- Breakfall 12-; Bugging 11-; Climbing 12-;
- Computer Programming 11-; Criminology 11-;
- Deduction 11-; Disguise 11-; Electronics 11-;
- Interrogation 12-; Lockpicking 12-;
- Mechanics 11-; Paramedic 11-; Systems Operations 11-; Tactics 11-; Tracking 11- (6)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 127

Disadvantages: 75+

Normal Characteristic Maxima (20)

Psychological Limitation:

- Overconfidence (15)
- Subject to Orders (25)

Watched by:

- Watched by WSS 11- (13)
- Watched by hiring corporation 11- (13)

Agent Bonus (21)

Total Disadvantage Points: 182

WSS Package Deal

Skills	Cost
Commando Training: Throw, Killing Strike, Choke, Disarm	16
WF: Small Arms	2
WF: Knives	1
Concealment	3
Demolitions	3
Stealth	3
KS: Criminal Law	2
KS: Terrorists	2
AK: City of Operations	2
Perk: Local Police Powers	2
Running +1"	2
KS: Hobby Skill	2
Security Systems	2
Choose two of the following:	6
Acting; Animal Handler (Dog); Breakfall; Bugging; Climbing; Computer Programming; Criminology; Deduction; Disguise; Electronics; Interrogation; Lockpicking; Mechanics; Paramedic; Systems Operations; Tactics; Tracking	

Total Cost: 49

Colonel Bradley Barrington

History: The Barrington family is a true military family. The family can trace its roots as a family of soldiers all the way back to the American Revolution. So, when Bradley Barrington announced to his family he was going to attend West Point, he was only following in the family tradition. When he graduated second in his class, his family was very proud of him, but Brad was not happy. He felt he gained his status in the class through hard work. In contrast, the man who graduated at the top of the class did not earn his position. That man was Robert Washington Kaufman, who would later become the Golden Avenger.

Upon graduation, Lieutenant Barrington immediately transferred to the Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol branch of the Army, the predecessor to the modern Green Berets. This satisfied Barrington, although Robert Kaufman joined some secretive



project being funded by all branches of the government. Lieutenant Barrington reported to duty in South Vietnam, just before the first escalation of hostilities in 1964.

While in Vietnam, he was the squad leader of a unit sent behind enemy lines to eliminate a cadre of officers leading one of North Vietnam's offenses. One of the members of the unit, Wes Wurd, discovered that the unit was to become scapegoats. Instead of going to Lieutenant Barrington with his suspicions, he took matters into his hands. Wurd ambushed the officers, then went AWOL. Lieutenant Barrington discovered the dead officers, and then the missing person from his unit. Figuring out what happened, Barrington reported to his commander. He also scrubbed the mission, pulling the rest of the unit back to safety. For his heroic efforts of both rescuing the rest of his men, and deducing who eliminated the officers, Barrington was promoted to Captain. Captain Barrington, with his penchant for holding grudges, still remembers the man who eliminated his officers, the man now known as Coup De Grace.

While this was occurring, the United States Government had organized SAT with interim officers commanding the unit. Unfortunately, this arrangement neither instilled loyalty into the men, nor did it provide a stable command structure. This made the organization ineffectual when dealing with paranormal criminals and terrorists. All U.S. military organizations submitted a candidate for head of SAT. The U.S. Army submitted the name of Captain Brad Barrington, who was selected and promoted to major. His first duty was the forcible removal of all UNTIL agents from American soil. This action caused a small fight to break out between the two organizations. Major Barrington placed the blame on Major Juan Martinez, head of UNTIL, charging him with the starting up of the hostilities. Major Martinez denied the charge, which has set off Barrington's vengeful streak, never again forgetting the "ignorant foreigner" for his lambasting remarks against Barrington's men.

Barrington immediately began reforming SAT into his image of the organization. While he was doing this he discovered the whereabouts of his old classmate, Robert Kaufman. Through special treatments, Kaufman had become a superhero known to all as the Golden Avenger. Barrington was furious, although he kept his relationship with Golden Avenger cordial. Again, Barrington was shown up by his classmate. His attitude quickly deteriorated and so his outer demeanor turned cold and emotionless when he talked to Golden Avenger. Golden Avenger, though, took this as meaning Barrington had important duties he was obviously giving full attention. Barrington encouraged this view, because he realized that at some point he might need the popularity of Golden Avenger behind him when he went in front of Congress.

That time came much sooner than Barrington thought. The Vietnam War began to wind down, and with it went a large threat of terrorism from the Far East and its untapped superpowered populace. Compounding problems, PRIMUS was about to become fully operational. To top it all off, Watergate had just hit the press, and critics of the administration saw in SAT a perfect target to vent their anger against, mounting an offensive to disband the agency. To save SAT, Major Barrington had to call upon the person he hated the most, Golden Avenger. Golden Avenger's testimony in front of Congress and a live television broadcast across the nation, along with the persistent support of Senator Jeremiah Relm, saved the agency from oblivion.

After 1974, Colonel Barrington maintained tight central control over his agency. His agents were the most loyal agents in the entire government, and were very effective in the application of their jobs. Although the papers continued to sensationalize the errors, in actuality, very few mistakes occurred during this time. SAT was consistently ending terrorist threats and other crimes.

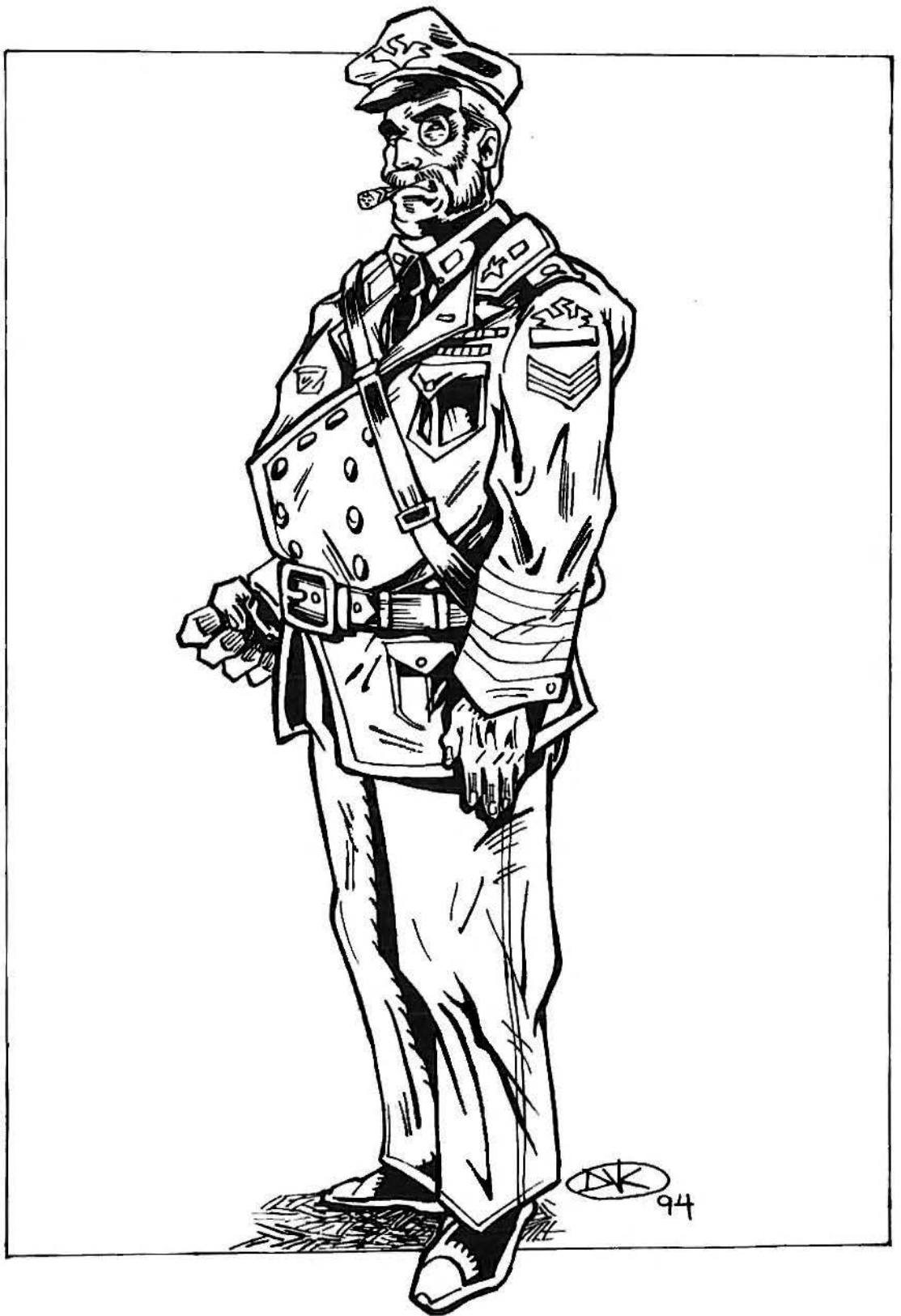
Unfortunately, VIPER had infiltrated an agent who rose to unit commander. When the traitor went public and turned against his fellows in the Project: Eye Spy fiasco, Colonel Barrington was devastated. He felt he had failed in his mission. When Congress began an inquiry into the incident, and into the continued existence of SAT, he felt this was the fight he could not win. Not even with the aid of Golden Avenger again, also Senator Relm, did it look as if SAT would survive this disaster. It did not.

SAT was disbanded because of the U.S. government's budgetary crisis. Barrington stormed into the President's office and dropped his colonel wings into the President's coffee, resigning his military commission. Barrington resigned himself into becoming just a bitter old man, when his former contacts within the Defense industry came to him with a proposal, which rekindled the spark inside him. He decided he would get his revenge on the government by being a thorn in the side of the government's agencies. Barrington agreed with the proposed agency, and has helped to develop it into a formidable security force for hire.

Quote: "There is no such word as 'can't', son. Just do it."

Personality: If confronting someone that is on his good side, he is a brilliant and cunning individual. His mind is very tactical and strategic, which is evident in the way he deals with people. If someone is on his bad side, however, he is a very cold and ruthless person, prone to outbursts of anger and outrage. The core of his personality, however, is his vengefulness. If wronged by someone in the past, no matter how long ago, he will go out of his way to take that person down a peg or two. It takes quite a bit to get off Barrington's list of disliked people. Once a person is on that list, it will mean coldness in dealings with Barrington in public, and outright hatred in private.





Col. Brad Barrington

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	200 kg; 3d6 [2]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
18	CON	16	13-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
25	PRE	15	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
14	COM	2	12-	
6	PD	3		
6	ED	2		
4	SPD	13		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	2		
36	END			
35	STUN	8		

Total Characteristic Cost: 112

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
Swimming: 2"/4"
Flight: 10"/20"

Powers & Skills

Combat Training:

Combat Levels: +2 Levels w/ Firearms (10)
Levels: +3 Levels Overall (30)
Combat Levels: +1 Level w/ WSS Firearms (3)

Martial Arts—Commando Training: (16)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Throw	6	7	3d6+v/5; Target falls
Chop	4	6	1d6+1 KA
Choke	4	6	2d6 NND
Disarm	5	7	25 STR Disarm

Vast Background of Military Skills:

AK: USA 14- (5)
Breakfall 12- (3)
Bugging 13- (3)
Bureaucrats 13- (3)
Chinese (2)
Climbing 12- (3)
Computer Programming 13- (3)
Concealment 13- (3)
Criminology 13- (3)
Deduction 14- (5)
Demolitions 12- (5)
Gunsmithing 13- (3)
Interrogation 13- (3)
KS: Criminal Law 11- (2); KS: Terrorists 11- (2)
KS: United States Government 14- (5)
Perk: Local Police Powers (2)
Pilot 13- (5)
Running +3" (9" total) (6) [1/5"]
Russian (2)
Security Systems 13- (3)
Shadowing 11- (3)
Skiing 13- (5)
Stealth 12- (3)
Survival 13- (3)
Swimming +3" (5" total) (3) [1/5"]
Systems Operations 13- (3)
Tactics 13- (3)
Tracking 13- (3)
Vietnamese (3); Montagnard (2)
WF: Knives (1); WF: Small Arms (2)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 167

Disadvantages: 100+

Normal Characteristic Maxima (20)

Hunted by:

Terrorist Organizations, 8- (15)

Psychological Limitation:

Dislike of current US Administration (10)

Dislike of Golden Avenger (5)

Gung-Ho (15)

Vengfuk (15)

Public Identity (10)

Watched by:

Watched by Pentagon, 14- (15)

Watched by UNTIL, 8- (10)

Villain Bonus (64)

Total Disadvantage Points: 279

Powers/Tactics: Barrington hardly ever gets into any fights. When he does, he will retreat and summon aid from his nearby bodyguards, an elite group of Assault agents 20 strong. Otherwise, Barrington is a master tactician, his agents able to do well, even if found without their prototype weaponry and armor. His fire team management is much admired, even by Major Martinez of UNTIL.

Appearance: Bradley Barrington is a robust individual, standing over six feet in height. He used to have brown hair, but over time it has turned almost pure white. Barrington wears long bushy white sideburns, reminiscent of an English gentleman. Bradley Barrington wears his old dress uniform for Special American Tactics. It consists of a blue jacket and pants, with white shirt underneath. On the left breast, Barrington displays his various ribbons and awards he received. On his collar, Barrington wears the silver eagle of his old rank.



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What did you dislike about these rules? _____

Should these rules be made official? _____

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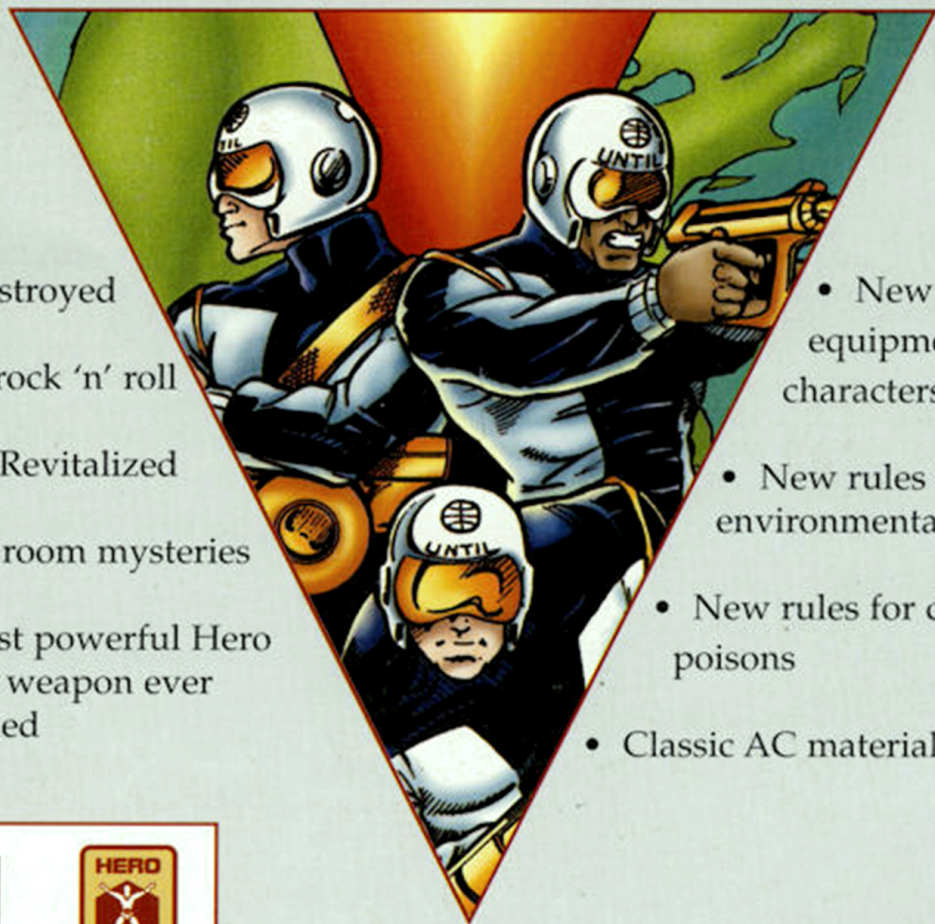
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Produced and Distributed by ICE, Inc.
P.O. Box 1605, Charlottesville, VA 22902 USA