

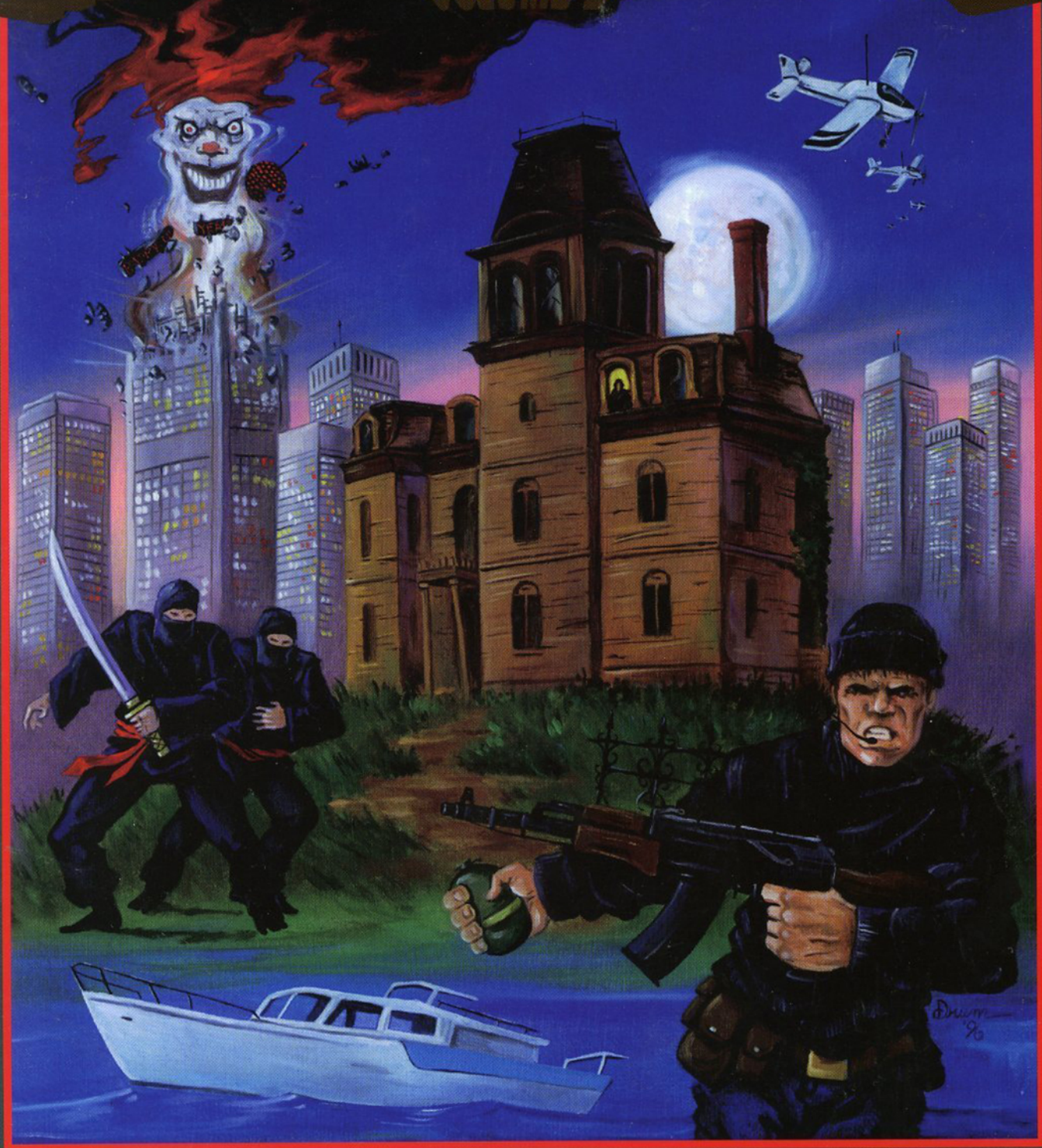


SIX ADVENTURES FOR USE WITH

**DARK CHAMPIONS™**  
HEROES OF VENGEANCE

# HEROIC ADVENTURES™

## VOLUME 2



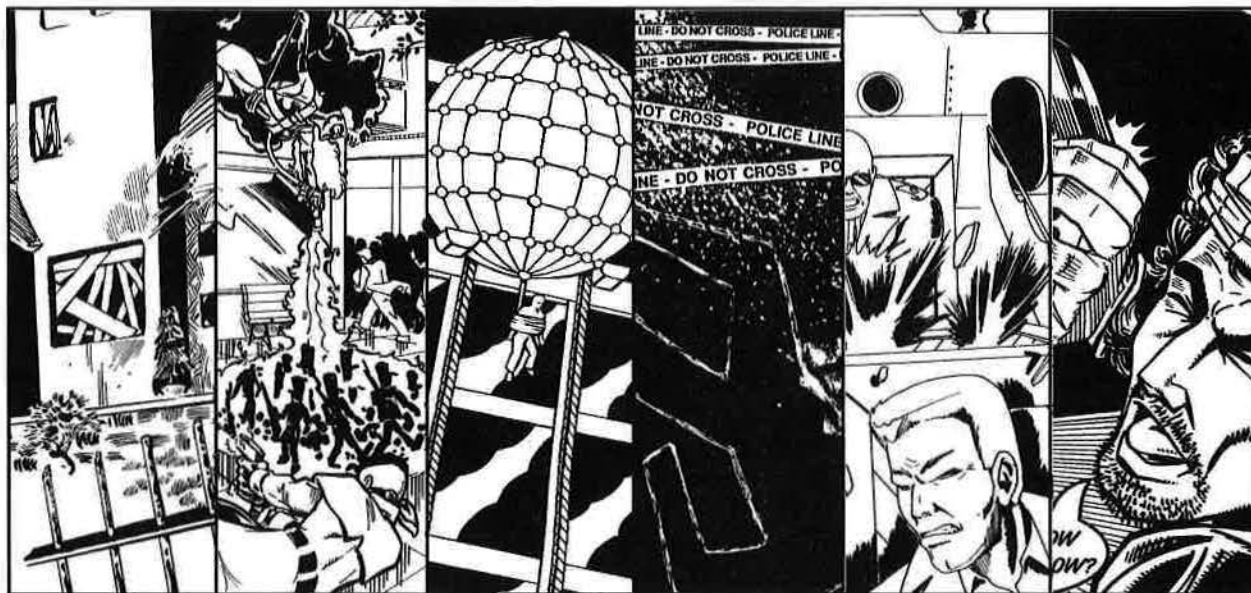
AVELLONE LONG CARMEN CRITTENDEN LLOYD CROCKER

# HEROIC ADVENTURES™

## VOLUME 2

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# THE THING IN RADLEY MANOR



"C'mon, Kennie, I dare you!" the kid said.  
"Yeah, I *double* dare ya!" sneered the one standing next to him.

The smaller child standing across from them looked nervous and afraid. He twisted around on his bike and looked at the mansion, still and quiet under the moonlight. Suddenly there was a brief flicker of light from one of the upstairs windows. Startled, he nearly fell off of his bike. "No way," he said, turning back to face the other two.

"Geez, Gardner, what are you, some kinda baby? All ya gotta do is run up there, touch the house, and come back. You're 'fraid to do *that*?"

Kennie looked at him, lip quivering slightly, but not so much that the big kid could see it in the dark. He looked back at the mansion again, but there were no more lights. "What do I get if I do it?" he asked.

The big kid grinned. "Like I *told* you, Gardner, you touch Radley Manor, and you can join our club. Me 'n' Johnnie'll tell you the password, let you hang out with us, all kinds of stuff."

"Okay, Harry, I'll do it," Kennie said after only a few more seconds' hesitation. "Watch my bike, okay?"

"Sure," the big kid said.

Kennie got off his bike and laid it on the grass off the curb. Quickly, before he lost his nerve, he dashed across the street to the driveway to Radley Manor. One of the big wrought-iron gates lay on the ground where it fell off its hinges years ago. He hesitated for a second, clenching his fists nervously, then dashed inside the grounds, running as hard as he could to get to the big beech tree in the yard. Reaching it, he stopped and hid behind it, hoping that no one — no *Thing* — in the Manor had seen him. He peeked out around the tree at the house, but didn't see anything, so he started running towards it.

Forty feet. Twenty. Ten. Suddenly he was there, right next to it! He slapped the side of the house, ready to run again, but something made him stop. Over the sound of his breathing, the house was quiet. The *Thing* hadn't seen him! This was his chance to *really* impress Harry and Johnnie. Slowly, quietly, he crept down the side of the house until he reached an old coal chute. Climbing up on it, he stood on his tiptoes to peek in one of the windows.

*None* of the kids had ever done *this!* he thought to himself exultantly.

**Author**  
Steven S. Long

**Illustrations**  
Storn Cook

"...tense for the action, long hair in the wind, beards and bandanas flapping, earrings, armpits, chain whips, swastikas and stripped down Harleys flashing chrome as traffic on 101 moves over, nervous, to let the formation pass like a burst of dirty thunder..."

— Hell's Angels

Then the rotten wood of the coal chute doors gave way beneath his weight, and with a yelp he fell down into the basement of the Manor, fear once again overriding his desire to impress the older boys.

Back at the street, Harry and Johnnie jumped when they saw Kennie fall in. Then they heard the screams. Leaving Kennie's bike behind, they rode away as fast as they could.

## INTRODUCTION

For nearly a century it has stood alone, aloof from the houses surrounding it, empty of life — but not empty. The children of Starmount Estates have long known that Radley Manor is haunted, possessed of the spirit of old Avery Radley, last surviving member of the Radley clan — a man so mean-spirited and greedy that he refuses to give anything up, even in death. Tales told on warm summer nights as fireflies flickered overhead have confirmed his existence with each generation, so that only the bravest of children have dared to pass the rusted gates and touch the walls of the Manor. And none have ever had the courage to actually go inside; the Thing *eats* children who trespass in his house....

Or so they say. In truth, Radley Manor is simply an old mansion become decrepit through years of neglect. But now a neighborhood child grown old, if not wise, has returned to his former haunts to turn Radley Manor into something far more frightening than any image ever conjured by a child's tale.

*The Thing In Radley Manor* is an adventure for *Dark Champions*. It works best with characters who are "heroic normals," that is, char-

acters built on about 150-200 points with Normal Characteristic Maxima and Equipment Allowances. Characters should have Combat Values and Damage Classes averaging in the range of 6-9 at the most; if their abilities are higher than that, or if the group tends toward a high average in those categories, the GM should increase either the number or abilities of the criminals the PCs will face. This adventure can also be used with higher-powered characters, or even characters with low-level superpowers, provided that the GM reworks the NPCs so that they are able to face the PCs and give them a good fight. However, no character who has powers that would spoil the central mystery of the adventure (such as mind-reading or the ability to see through walls) should be allowed to take part in this scenario.

In this scenario, the PCs will be given the task of tracking down a new source of potent "ice" (crystal methamphetamine) that is turning up in their home city (whether that be Hudson City, San Angelo or some other campaign setting). Eventually they will track the drugs back to a peaceful suburban neighborhood, Starmount Estates, which is many miles outside the city. There they will have to fall back on the only source of information available to them — the neighborhood children — to pinpoint Radley Manor as the criminals' hide-out.

The GM should be sure to set this adventure during the summer months, so that the children will be out of school and readily available for the PCs to talk to. Since Hero Games's epic scenario *Hudson City Blues*, by Edward J. Carmien, is also set during the summer, the GM may wish to use *The Thing In Radley Manor* as a "filler story" during the events depicted in that book.

## Police Continue Search For Missing Boy

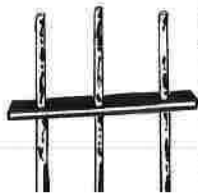
By Danica Easley  
City News Staff Writer

Authorities are continuing their search for an eight year old Starmount Estates boy, reported missing earlier this week. Members of the Hudson City Police Department's Missing Persons Bureau and canine officers, along with local volunteers, have been combing the parks and fields in and around Starmount Estates, a middle class suburban neighborhood near Hudson City.

So far, police say they have no leads in the disappearance of little Kennie Gardner, and that they have not ruled out foul play. "It's certainly possible that he was kidnapped," said police Sergeant Marcus Weber. "However, we have reason to believe that he is still in the local area."

"Kennie," as he was known by friends, was reported missing after he failed to return home, according to his Aunt, Angela Gardner, speaking on behalf of Kennie's parents. "It's so unlike him," Ms. Gardner said. "He's never run away before. His parents are just sick with worry. You know, you hope for the best but I'm afraid something really bad has happened. There are a lot of sick people out there."

The Police Department will soon have the advantage of high-tech, as the newly refitted H.C.P.D. "Aero 5" helicopter, equipped with Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) equipment, is scheduled to reenter service for the first time since last month. The FLIR system is capable of picking up heat patterns.



## GOINGS-ON ABOUT TOWN

The player characters, whatever their roles in the war against crime, should first become aware of the existence of a new player in the underworld because of the existence of a new form of "ice," or crystal methamphetamine, a smokeable drug which provides quick, intense, long-lasting highs. Users often become violent and reckless, and may hallucinate. (For more information on ice, the reader should refer to Hero Games's *An Eye For An Eye*, page 33.)

Typically, ice sells for about \$50 per "paper," which is a penny-sized cellophane or plastic baggie holding one hit. However, the ice being sold on the streets by this new group sells for only half that, \$25 per hit, and is exceptionally pure. This has led to more episodes of violent behavior and more deaths due to overdose and overuse. It has also led to greater use of ice; the cheap price and greater availability has allowed many people, including children, to try ice for the first time. New markets are opening up.

For maximum effect, the GM should build up to this scenario by providing the PCs with evidence of an increase in ice distribution and use in the city over the course of several game sessions. Some suggestions:

- a PC sees dealers (outlaw motorcycle gang members) selling to kids near a school
- one or more PCs have to deal with various crimes committed by users high on ice (violent assaults, rapes, robberies, incredibly reckless driving)
- one or more PCs have to cope with a user who is suffering from hallucinations that are making him dangerous and violent
- someone tries to give or sell some ice to a character's DNPC

These episodes could be used as "opening vignettes" for an evening's game session, as solo adventures, or as distractions when the GM wants the PCs to be occupied so that the main villain of a particular scenario can do something without their interference.

After a few episodes such as these, the PCs should be interested in tracking down the source of this new ice. The police certainly are, but so far they have had no luck developing any leads.

Player characters with the appropriate resources should be able to find out that the scum dealing this drug are almost always outlaw motorcycle gang members, though not from any particular gang. It's as if several different gangs have formed a joint venture to market the "new ice." However, PCs who gather data carefully



will discover that each biker gang seems to have its own "sales territory" — the Speed Demons have the western half of the south side of town, the Road Warriors have the wharf district, Satan's Seraphim sell in the Hispanic ghetto, and so forth. The gangs are careful not to stray into one another's territory.

Further digging should lead the PCs to the information that these gangs aren't working together to create and sell the new ice; they are simply the "retail outlet" for whoever is manufacturing it. The maker brings the stuff to various biker bars in and around town where it sells it to the gangs, who then package it and sell it.

If the characters capture and interrogate a dealer or two, they will learn that there is more than one person who delivers the stuff to the bars — they will get varying descriptions of the person who makes the drop-off, so varying that they are obviously different people. In other words, the maker is an organization, not an individual.

Sooner or later the player characters should realize that the only way to find the source of the new ice is to stake out one of the biker bars where deliveries and then follow the deliveryman.

If the PCs decide to watch the bar from the outside, the GM should have them make PER Rolls or Streetwise rolls to spot the right biker.

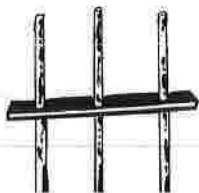


*"We're the one percenters, man — the one percent that don't fit and don't care. So don't talk to me about your doctor bills and your traffic warrants — I mean you get your woman and your bike and...I mean you're on your way. We've punched our way out of a hundred rumbles, stayed alive with our boots and our fists. We're royalty among motorcycle outlaws, baby."*

— anonymous  
Hell's Angel

*"All Angels wear [the '1%-er'] patch, as do most other outlaws, and all it means is that they are proud to be part of the alleged one percent of bike riders whom the American Motorcycle Association refuses to claim."*

— Hell's Angels



The deliveryman will look more or less like a biker, but will somehow seem more "clean-cut" and polished. For example, he might wear leathers, but they will be much nicer leathers than the typical biker wears, and he probably won't display any "colors." However, no one will hassle him because of this. If the PCs decide to watch the bar from the inside by infiltrating it in disguise, they will also have to make PER Rolls or Streetwise rolls to spot their quarry, but they will also have to deal with the chance of having their disguises blown or the regulars not taking a shine to "newcomers." This could easily lead to a barfight, which would definitely scare the deliveryman away. Any mention of the "new ice," or any attempt to try to find out how they can "get in on" selling it, is sure to invite unwanted (and possibly fatal) attention for the PCs, since the bikers involved with the scheme know that no one else is supposed to find out about the plan or get involved with it.

## Behind The Scenes

The influx of new ice is due to the work of Keith Gainey, a biker who grew up in Starmount Estates and has discovered a way to turn his old neighborhood into a base of operations. Gainey ran away from home when he was in his late teens and got involved with outlaw motorcycle gangs. He drifted from one to another, never settling with any one of them permanently. Being intelligent and quick on the uptake, he worked his way into the gangs' drug-manufacturing operation and soon learned and how to make the drugs himself. Eventually he developed a faster, easier process for manufacturing or "cooking" ice. Rather than give it to the gang he was in at the time, he left, taking some members with him. He set up his own gang, the Wolfpack. Using his contacts in the biker gangs, he set up a "distributorship" arrangement in which he makes the drugs and sells them in bulk to gangs who then sell them on the street. This way he keeps the profits for himself and avoid the dangers of street-level sales.

Gainey realized early on that he would need a large, secure place to set up his ice lab. He didn't want to put it in the city; that made him too vulnerable to other gangs, organized crime groups, and tough city cops — not to mention vigilantes. He finally thought of Radley Manor, the "haunted house" in his childhood neighborhood, and realized that it would be perfect. Working in the dead of night, he and the Wolfpack moved their drug-manufacturing equipment into Radley Manor and arranged the place to hide their activities as much as possible. They even had their motorcycles specially silenced so that they could transport drugs out

at night and not disturb anyone.

Gainey's operation is an ideal one for him. He has a hiding place that no one would ever think to check for a drug lab, provided that he keeps quiet and does most of the work at night. That way any smoke that his equipment gives off is unlikely to be noticed; the Wolfpack just has to be careful about the lights. They have painted over many windows, and keep the others firmly shuttered and covered with their old, tattered curtains. Most of their operation is set up in the basement, where they are the least likely to be noticed; however, certain final stages of manufacturing and the packaging process take place in the kitchen on the first floor. The bikers sleep in the bedrooms on the second floor. None of the adults in Starmount Estates have a clue about what Gainey's doing.

But he didn't count on the kids in the neighborhood....

## THE BLOCK

### Radley Manor

For many years, the kids of Starmount Estates have told stories about Radley Manor. The Manor was built before the turn of the century, long before the Estates were, when the area was still virtually rural. As the nearby city grew, suburbs and bedroom communities sprang up around it.

Starmount Estates, which was first developed in the late 1940s, is one such suburb. By the time families were moving in there and having children, Radley Manor had already been abandoned, the victim of Avery Radley's death and his quarrelsome heirs (Radley's will is unclear about who was supposed to get the house; his heirs fought over it for years, and after that fight was settled the house began to pass under other persons' wills as the heirs themselves died, leaving still other people to fight over ownership of the Manor, what should be done with it, and so forth. For whatever reason, it has simply remained abandoned and empty since Avery Radley's death. Figuring out exactly who is the current owner should be a long, tough, expensive process involving at least one lawsuit.)

Over the years the children who have lived in the Estates have created many stories and superstitions about Radley Manor. The main one is that the "Thing," the ghost of Avery Radley, haunts the house and grounds. Neighborhood children tell stories about seeing the ghost, and about what the ghost does to those who trespass on its land or disturb it. The kids never

loiter in front of the house; when they have to walk or ride their bikes in front of it, they go as fast as they can, for fear that the Thing will catch the slowest child and eat him.

Another prominent story is that Old Man Radley once got so angry at one of his servants that he dragged her outside and hung her from a tree in the front yard. She has become a ghost, too. Some kids say that the "Hanging Tree Ghost" lives in that tree and comes out to throw rocks at the Manor and save children from the Thing.

One of the most dangerous "dares" that the kids give to one another is to run up, touch the Manor, and run back. (Years ago one of the wrought-iron gates collapsed, giving them an easy way to get inside the grounds.) A kid who can do this becomes a "big shot" in the eyes of his friends — especially if he dares to touch the Manor at night!

Lately (over the past couple of months) the kids have noticed some strange lights in the Manor. They've seen strange lights before — or so they think — but these are more distinct and "weirder" to them, somehow. Some of them have noticed other things, too. They haven't told any adults, since they know that grown-ups think that Radley Manor is just an old, abandoned house. If asked properly, they might tell what they know.

The other notable event of the summer is the disappearance of eight-year-old Kennie Gardner. Two older kids, Harry Conner and Johnnie Portaro, dared him to go up and touch Radley Manor one night. Kennie, wanting to be accepted by the older kids, did it. Unfortunately, he became *too* bold and dared to stand on the doors to the old coal chute and try to look in one of the windows. The wooden doors, old and rotten after decades of exposure to the elements, gave way, causing Kennie to fall into the basement — right in the middle of the drug lab. To keep their secret safe, the Wolfpack killed him.

GMs who are running "kinder, gentler" *Dark Champions* campaigns may prefer to have the Wolfpack hold Kennie prisoner, so that the PCs can rescue him.

Harry and Johnnie, who think that the Thing killed and ate Kennie, have kept what happened that night a secret, even from the other kids — they even went back early the next day, recovered Kennie's bike, and threw it in a creek in a wooded area near Starmount Estates. They are afraid that they will somehow be blamed for Kennie's death, and they won't say a thing about what happened if they can help it.



## The Kids On The Block

There are many children living in Starmount Estates; although the neighborhood itself is several decades old, over the years it has had a high residential turnaround, and it tends to appeal to younger families. The kids tend to hang around together, often in the park or on its playground, but of course they do tend to segregate themselves a little depending on age and gender. It will be up to the PCs to find out which of the kids described below have useful information.

The description of each child includes his age (in parentheses) and a few details about him (including siblings, who may or may not have their own descriptions). The GM should supplement these descriptions if it would improve the game. He should also feel free to create more neighborhood kids if he so desires.

### Boys

**Mark Armstrong (10):** Mark is an average-sized boy with dark hair. He likes sports, especially baseball, and in the summer he will usually have his mitt with him in case someone wants to get up a game. He loves donuts and will do just about anything to get some.

He has a 10 month old baby brother, Albert.





*"I've seen it — twice. I ain't afraid, though. I mean, it's like this light, right? Twinkly kinda. Yeah, it's spooky but... The other kids is scared, but not me.*

*"I ate a worm once."  
— Freddie Averill*

Mark has seen the strange lights in the Manor recently, but nothing else.

**Freddie Averill (9):** Freddie is a short, slender boy with curly black hair. He is kind of "weird," and most of the other kids don't like him very much; his parents take him to a therapist once every two weeks. Freddie is something of a daredevil. He'll take just about any dare (within reason), and has run up and touched Radley Manor *twice*. This earns him some measure of respect in the other kids' eyes. He has been seen leaning against the Manor gates, staring at the house — something no other kid would dare to do. Freddie also claims to be able to see the Hanging Tree Ghost.

Freddie is an only child.

Freddie thinks he actually saw the Thing moving in one of the upstairs windows a couple of weeks ago. He hasn't told the other kids, since he knows they won't believe him. What he saw looked like an old man with a big, bushy, grey beard. What he actually saw was one of the bikers, who has a blonde beard, standing guard in an upstairs window; he saw Freddie hanging around near the gates, so he called off that evening's delivery.

**Harry Conner (11):** Harry is one of the biggest, oldest kids in the neighborhood, and is something of a bully. If he doesn't get what he wants, he is likely to start shoving people, and he often gets in fights. He also picks on younger or smaller kids. If forcefully confronted, though, he's likely to back down. Around adults he tends to be surly, sullen, and sarcastic.

Harry is accompanied everywhere he goes by his friend Johnnie Portaro, another neighborhood ne'er-do-well. The two of them often commit petty acts of vandalism, especially around Halloween. They have a treehouse in one of the wooded areas in the neighborhood which they call their "club."

Harry has a sister, Judy, age 11, who is as nice as he is mean.

As revealed above (in the *Introduction*), Harry and Johnny started the events which led to Kennie Gardner's death. They egged him on to run up and touch the Manor. When Kennie stood on the coal chute, he fell into the basement, where he was caught and killed by the Wolfpack. Harry and Johnnie figure that if anyone finds out what they did, they will be blamed for Kennie's death at the hands of the Thing. So, they have not told anyone what happened, and they will do their best to keep it a secret.

Harry knows what happened to Kennie, and he has seen the lights in the Manor at night. Beyond that he doesn't know anything. PCs who try to get information out of him will find it hard not to smack him because of his big mouth and rotten attitude. The PCs may be allowed to

make a PER Roll or Interrogation roll to realize that Harry is nervous and seems to be hiding something.

**George Donaldson (10):** George is slightly chubby, with red hair and a round, friendly face. He is good at telling jokes, and is the best video-game player in the gang. He is also good with computers (for a ten-year-old, that is). He always tries to be polite to adults.

George has two younger siblings, Catherine and Allen, age five, who are twins.

George has seen the lights in the Manor at night, but that is all he knows. He wonders if the lights might be a computer screen or a TV.

**Patrick Faison (9):** Patrick is an average-sized boy with dark hair. Although he is not a "star athlete," he is good at sports; he is also good at video games. He has dared to run up and touch the Manor before.

Patrick has a sister, Cheryl, age 6.

Patrick has seen the lights in the Manor a few times, but nothing else.

**Ray Green (9):** Ray is a short, slender boy with sandy blonde hair. He likes games, puzzles, and riddles; he can beat any of the other kids at chess (not that most of them care about chess), and at most other board games as well.

Ray is an only child.

A few weeks ago, on a night when he stayed out later than he was supposed to with Brucie Harrison, Ray saw a man on a motorcycle near the Manor. He thinks it might have come out of the Manor's driveway, but he can't say for sure. He also noticed that the motorcycle was unusually quiet. He told some of the other kids about this, but all of them have forgotten it by now.

**Brucie Harrison (9):** Bruce, a largish boy with dark hair and a friendly face, is a good friend of Ray Green's. The two of them often spend all afternoon playing board games or computer games, or exploring the woods.

Brucie has an older sister, Lynn, age 11. The two of them do not get along well and typically ignore each other when they are together with their friends.

Brucie was with Ray the night they saw the man on the motorcycle. (They stayed outside late finishing a chess game on Brucie's portable chess set.) He has seen the lights in the Manor.

**John Lawson (12):** John is a big boy with blonde hair. Because of his size and strength, he is the best football player in the group. Despite his size, however, he is kind and gentle; he often stands up to Harry Conner for the younger kids, since even Harry would hesitate to take John on in a fight. Like George Donaldson, John is always polite to adults.

John is an only child.

John has seen the lights in the Manor, but nothing else.



**Eric Litchfield (10):** Eric is a normalized boy with curly brown hair. He is in the Cub Scouts and knows how to start a fire without a match! He spends a lot of time exploring the wooded lots in Starmount Estates; he has seen what he thinks is a bike in a deep pool in one of the creeks, but he cannot say for sure, so he has not told any adults.

Eric has a brother, Allen, age 7.

Eric has seen the lights in the Manor, but nothing else.

**Stevie Peterman (10):** Stevie is an average-sized boy with sandy blonde hair. He is a marketing genius in the making. Every morning he has a paper route, and most summer afternoons he can be found running a lemonade stand on one of the busier streets in the neighborhood. He'll be glad to tell the PCs what he knows, if they're willing to give him a dollar — or better yet, five dollars.

Stevie has two younger brothers, Alex (age 5) and Gregory (age 3).

Stevie has seen the lights in the Manor several times. He also knows what the other kids know. One fact that he will be extremely reluctant to reveal is that a few days ago he found a fifty dollar bill on the ground near the Manor's gates! (One of the motorcycle couriers dropped it on his way in.) This bill, which he has carefully folded up and hidden in his desk at home, has the fingerprints of one of the members of the Wolfpack on it (these prints are on file with the local police, the D.E.A., and the F.B.I.). Stevie is afraid that if he tells anyone, they will take the money away from him; if the PCs want the bill, they will have to buy it from him for at least its face value, and probably more if Stevie realizes how important it is to them.

**Johnnie Portaro (10):** Johnnie is a short, ill-favored, surly-looking sort of boy with dark hair. He hangs around with Harry Conner all the time, and is sort of Harry's sidekick and lackey. He is willing to do anything Harry does.

Johnnie is an only child.

Johnnie knows what Harry knows about the Manor.

**Greg Schmidt (10):** Greg is a short boy with short blonde hair. Despite his stature he is strong and quick, good at sports like football and soccer. His father used to be in the Army, so he has a fascination for toy soldiers, toy guns, and other child's militaria.

He is a pretty good artist, and often sits by himself, drawing tanks and planes. He is sweet on Denise Gibbs, but wouldn't dare tell anyone. He would come to her defense if he thought she was being threatened, though.

Greg has two brothers, Paul (age 7) and Steve (age 5).

Greg has seen the lights in the Manor sev-

eral times. He also saw what he thinks might be smoke coming out of one of the vents one night, but he is not sure.

## Girls

**Sheila Andrews (11):** Sheila is a short, plump girl with dark hair and an infectious smile. Though she is usually quiet and shy, sometimes she will surprise everyone by telling a funny joke or taking the lead in group games. Inside her lurks an active imagination and a quick sense of humor.

Sheila is an only child.

Sheila has seen the lights in the Manor at night, but that is all she knows.

**Maggie Bach (9):** Maggie is a short girl with long blonde hair tied back in a ponytail. She looks several years older than she is. She is active and energetic, preferring sports or games to playing with dolls. She has dared to run up and touch the Manor one time.

Maggie has two younger siblings, a brother, Leon, age 6, and a sister, Sarah, 4.

Maggie has seen the lights in the Manor on several occasions. One time when she rode her bike by the Manor, she smelled something "funny," but she doesn't know what it was (one of the Wolfpack had opened a window for a couple seconds to ventilate the room after spilling some chemicals).

**Judy Conner (11):** Judy Conner, a thin girl with long black hair, is almost the exact opposite of her older brother Harry. Where he's mean, spiteful, and sarcastic, she is just about as kind and sweet as a little girl can be. Adults and other children instinctively like her. She's pretty, too; several of the boys have crushes on her.

Judy has never seen the lights in the Manor at night, but she has heard the other children talk about them.

**Amy Creighton (10):** Amy is a tall girl with short sandy blonde hair. She can play video games almost as good as some of the boys, and knows a lot about computers. She has dared to run up and touch the Manor once.

Amy has a younger brother, Alex, age 5.

Amy has seen the lights in the Manor at night, and once saw a motorcyclist in the neighborhood late at night as she was looking out her bedroom window. She doesn't think that it was all that strange, and she was not around when Ray and Brucie told about seeing a motorcycle near the Manor one night. If she ever hears their story, she will recognize that motorcycle as being similar to the one she saw — and she will remember that it made almost no noise.

**Kelly Dinopolous (8):** Kelly is a sweet girl with honey-blonde hair and blue eyes. Her parents run a Greek restaurant in the city. She

*"Um, I don't know where Kennie went. I'm not a criminal or something. I mean, so what. So we rode bikes sometimes. It's not like I made him do anything. Why don't you go do something important, like chasing bank robbers or something?"*

— Harry Conner



"It's a veeeeery spooky place, all covered with cobwebs and dust. And there's ghosts that live inside. Well, okay, just one ghost. No, wait! Two. There's two ghosts. But they're not mean ghosts, even though everyone thinks they are because they're just chickens. Anyway, It's veeeeery spooky..."

— Katie Remington

knows more about dinosaurs than any of the other kids, and wants to be a paleontologist when she grows up.

Kelly has two younger sisters, Kerry (age 5) and Vanessa (age 3).

Kelly has seen the lights in the Manor at night, but that's all.

**Missy Fanelli (10):** Missy is a short girl with long, dark hair and big brown eyes. She is playful and fun, always joking and laughing. Together with her half-sister, Cindy Kirk, she has the biggest collection of *Barbie* dolls in the group. She usually has at least one of the dolls with her, and will begin to cry if it is taken away.

Missy has seen the lights in the Manor at night. She likes to pretend that a handsome prince transformed into a monster lives in the house, a la "Beauty and the Beast."

**Janie Forrest (9):** Janie is a short girl with short, curly dark hair. She has the second biggest collection of *Barbie* dolls in the group; she and Missy and Cindy often get together to play with their dolls. Janie also likes soap operas; in the afternoons she will often be found indoors with her mother, watching *The Young and the Restless* and other favorites.

Janie is an only child.

Janie has never seen the lights in the Manor.

**Denise Gibbs (11):** Despite the fact that she's one of the prettiest little girls in the neighborhood, with her long blonde hair and green eyes, Denise is an unstoppable tomboy. She loves sports and games, and has gotten into fights on more than one occasion (and usually won). She has dared to run up and touch the Manor one time. She is good friends with Mitchie Knight, and has a sort of crush on Greg Schmidt, though she'd never admit it.

Denise has a brother, Jerome, age 6.

Denise has seen the lights in the Manor at night several times. Once she and Mitchie Knight, actually dared to sneak into the yard at night and watch them. She saw them flicker and waver a time or two; they are sure it was the Thing. If pressed, they would agree that it *might* have been someone walking back and forth in front of the window, but they're not sure.

**Mary Jane Goodson (9):** "MJ" is a short girl with strawberry-blonde hair and a few freckles. She's rambunctious and free-spirited, but in a good way; she does her best to stay out of trouble. She likes some sports, like kickball, but isn't really a tomboy. Both of her parents are lawyers; she wants to be one someday, too.

MJ has a younger brother, Chris, age 3.

MJ has seen the lights in the Manor at night, but nothing else.

**Lynn Harrison (11):** Lynn is a short, overweight girl with long sandy blonde hair and braces. She is Brucie Harrison's sister. The two

of them do *not* get along, and never play together. Lynn is something of a tattle-tale, and is not very popular with the other kids.

Lynn has never seen the lights in the Manor, or anything else.

**Cindy Kirk (9):** Cindy is about the same size as her half-sister, Missy Fanelli, but with blonde hair instead of black. The two of them are almost inseparable. Besides her passion for collecting *Barbie* dolls, Cindy also has a big sweet tooth. She particularly loves ice cream.

Cindy has two siblings, Daniel (age 5) and Laura (age 2).

Cindy has seen the lights in the Manor at night, but nothing else.

**Michaela "Mitchie" Knight (11):** Mitchie, as she prefers to be called, is a tall girl with long, straight blonde hair. Like her best friend Denise, she's a tomboy, good at sports, climbing trees, and racing bikes. She has dared to run up and touch the Manor once, and one time she also ran across the lawn to touch the Hanging Tree.

Mitchie is an only child.

Mitchie has seen the lights in the Manor at night, and was along with Denise the night they saw "the Thing" walking back and forth in front of the window.

**Katie Remington (9):** Katie is a short girl with impish good looks, big dimples, and long brown hair tied back in a ponytail. She is a born actress. She writes her own plays and harangues some of the other kids into taking parts so she can put the plays on for the rest of the gang. She knows that one day she's going to be a star! Her flair for the dramatic also makes her a great storyteller.

Katie has one brother, Geoff, age 4.

Katie has seen the lights in the Manor at night. She's thinking of writing a play about the Thing and how it's actually a *nice* ghost — just misunderstood.

**Lisa Shelton (10):** Lisa is a short girl, very pretty, with short, curly auburn hair. Her family is from Newark, New Jersey; they moved to the neighborhood about a year ago. She has become good friends with MJ Goodson; the two of them often hang around together. Lisa's big interest is horses; her room is covered with pictures of them, and she desperately wants a pony of her very own.

Lisa is an only child.

Lisa has seen the nighttime lights in the Manor once. When her family was first looking at the neighborhood, they drove up the Manor driveway a little to take a look at the "old mansion." Lisa noticed that there was a big padlock on the garage door. A couple of months ago, she noticed that the padlock was gone. She has not mentioned this to anyone yet.



# THE NEIGHBORHOOD

GMs should refer to the map of Starmount Estates when reviewing the following description of the neighborhood. If the PCs take the time to scout out the neighborhood and learn its layout, the GM should give them a copy of the map.

1. This is the neighborhood park. Many of the children play here; it is a popular site for team sports like soccer, kickball, football, and baseball.

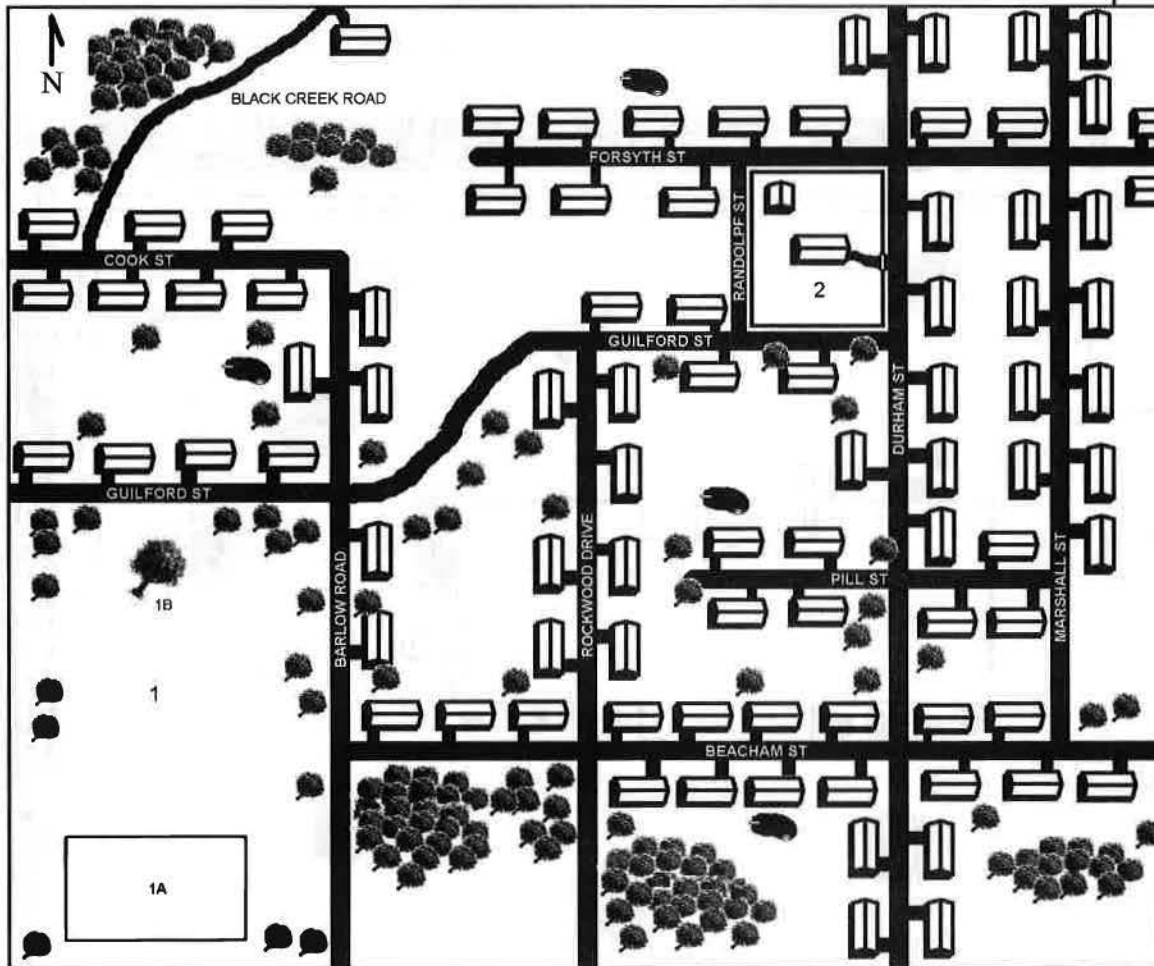
1A. This is the part of the park where the playground equipment is located: a slide, swings, monkey bars, and so forth.

1B. This is an enormous old black oak tree, not particularly tall but with an extremely broad

trunk and thick branches that provide cool shade on hot summer days. It is a favorite place for the boys to play with toy cars, tanks, and soldiers. The tree is registered in a national registry of old and historic trees.

2. This is Radley Manor. It is surrounded on all sides by inhabited houses.

Although not numbered on the map, there are several forested areas in the neighborhood. The children often play in the woods, climbing trees, exploring, building treehouses, fishing for crawfish in the little creeks and streams, and so forth. These areas are often hilly or are otherwise unsuitable for building houses. On the other hand, they might be good places for a group of vigilantes who are reconnoitering the neighborhood to establish a temporary hide-out....



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# RADLEY MANOR

## The Manor Grounds

GMs should refer to the map of the Manor grounds when reading the following description. After the PCs have had a chance to look at the grounds for a while, give them a copy of the map.

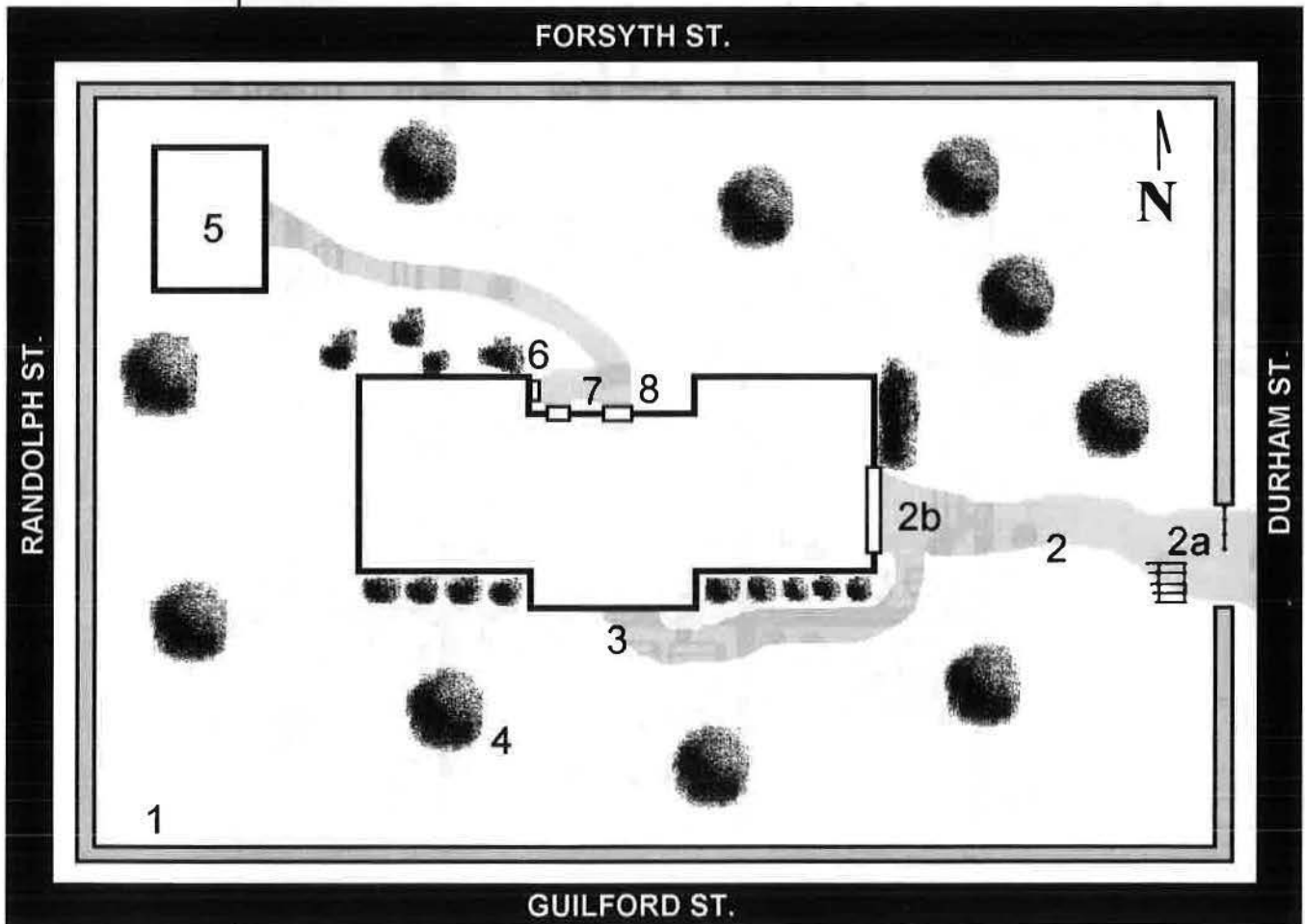
1. This is the stone wall around the Manor. It is about five feet tall (less in some places on the interior, where soil has built up over the years) and half a foot thick. Along the top are wrought-iron bars six inches tall. Each hex worth of the wall has DEF 7, BODY 7. There are no broken or cracked places in it; it has withstood the elements very well.

2. This is a gravel driveway running from the gate to the garage. It does not show signs of excessive recent use; characters with Tracking may make rolls at -4 to determine that it has, in fact, seen *some* use recently.

2A. This is the gate, which is made of wrought iron bars. This is where the kids come to look at the house, since most of them cannot see over the stone wall. Some years ago, one of the gates rusted off its hinges and fell onto the grass, making it possible for them (or anyone else) to easily enter the grounds.

2B. This is where the garage is located. An old wooden door swings out to allow vehicles to go in and out of the garage. Characters who get close to this door, or who examine it from the gate with powerful binoculars, will notice two things if they make PER Rolls: first, there is no padlock on the gate, though there is a latch for one; second, the hinges appear to have been recently greased and/or oiled.

3. The front porch and front door. On the second floor, this becomes a balcony with a wrought-iron rail and some rusted old patio furniture. The front door itself is an impressive-looking oak door with a big brass knocker; both door and knocker are still in good shape since they have been subjected to very little weathering. The door has DEF 4, BODY 4.



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4. This is the Hanging Tree, a big oak tree. It is said that Avery Radley once got so angry at one of his servants that he dragged her out here and hung her from this tree. Now her ghost haunts the Tree and throws rocks at the Manor to annoy his ghost.

5. This building was the servants' quarters. It is a one-story building divided in half by a wall running along its long axis — one side for women, one for men. Each side features a large, dormitory-style bedroom with rows of rusted, rotten bedframes, and a large washroom.

6. The coal chute. The wooden door on top of it is broken (because Kennie Gardner fell through it); the chute itself leads to the small basement room where the furnace is located.

7. This is a small door which opens onto a small (one person wide) staircase which leads down into the main room in the basement. The lock and hinges are rusted (-4 to Lockpicking to open, -4 to Stealth to open quietly).

8. This is the main backdoor; it opens into the kitchen. It is as rusted as the door leading to the basement stairs, and similar modifiers apply to attempts to open it.

## Wolfpack Security

The Wolfpack is not relying just on the abandoned nature of the Manor to keep their operation safe; they have taken a few elementary security precautions as well. First, at almost all times, there is at least one gang member “standing watch.” Usually the guard stays upstairs and looks through the French doors that lead onto the balcony (but he stands far enough back from the doors that he cannot be seen — or he tries to). However, the guard or guards is responsible for watching over the entire house, so he usually walks around (at least a little) and looks out other windows. Lazy guards simply wander back and forth from the French doors to a window at the back of the house on the second floor, from which they can see the back yard. This leaves them with significant “blind spots” on both sides of the house.

## The Interior of the Manor

Unfortunately, considerations of space prevent the inclusion of maps of the interior of the Manor. If he so desires, the GM can create his own maps of the Manor based on the following description.

## General Notes

Radley Manor is a two-story mansion built some time before the turn of the century, making it over 100 years old. It also has a basement

and a small attic, giving it effectively four floors. It is built partially into the hill on which it stands, so that the garage is on the same level with the basement (people driving into the garage walk up a staircase to get to the first floor).

The Manor has been uninhabited and untended for decades. Although the exterior has handled the years fairly well, the interior is shabby-looking. It still has most of its furnishings (many of which would be valuable antiques if properly cleaned and restored). Everything is worn, rusty, and covered with a thick coating of dust. Some hanging items (chandeliers, curtains, paintings, cabinet doors) have fallen. The electricity and running water do not work (the Wolfpack has set up a few small generators and uses a lot of bottled water). The droppings and occasional depredations of creatures like rats, roaches, and moths are evident. The whole place has a very “spooky” feeling, and the GM should play this up as much as possible. (One suggestion: when the characters are in the Manor, shut off the lights wherever you're playing, and make the players use flashlights to see one another.)

## The Basement

The basement located beneath the Manor is large and reasonably dry. It consists of one large room, plus two smaller rooms and several closets; the Manor's garage is also on this level (the Wolfpack has parked their motorcycles and van here). The garage itself is on the east end of the house, the basement proper on the west end. The Manor's coal-powered furnace (which hasn't worked for decades) is located in one of the smaller rooms off of the main room; the coal chute that Kennie Gardner fell through leads into the furnace room.

The basement is where the Wolfpack does most of their drug manufacturing. They have filled the rooms with cheap tables containing chemical equipment, barrels and other containers of precursor chemicals, and so forth. If guns are fired in the basement area, or a flame is lit, there is a 1 in 6 chance that the chemicals will ignite and explode, doing 3d6 KA to everyone in the basement area and 1½d6 KA to anyone in the garage. The use of grenades or explosives in the basement will automatically cause an explosion to occur. If there is an explosion, there is a 3 in 6 chance that the Manor itself will collapse, likely killing anyone in the basement or garage (characters may make Contortionist rolls at -3 to wedge themselves into a “safe area” amid the debris. Further Contortionist rolls can be made to get out, but the rest of the house may come down on the character if the rolls are failed; also, characters trapped underneath the collapsed house may run out of breathable air in a few hours.)



If Kennie Gardner has been killed, the PCs will find his body in one corner of one of the smaller basement rooms, where gang members dug up part of the cement floor and buried him in the earth (characters may make PER Rolls at +2 to spot the gravesite). If Kennie is being held prisoner by the Wolfpack, then he will be kept in one of the closets in the basement.

Characters can get into the basement four ways: through the garage; via the stairs from the first floor; through the coal chute, or via a small set of stairs that leads from the main basement room to the back yard. These stairs have a stout locked door at the top, and the lock and hinges are both very rusty (-4 to Lockpicking, -4 to Stealth to open the door quietly). The Wolfpack has never used this door, though they are aware of it. The entranceway from the basement to these stairs is blocked by a card table holding plastic jugs of chemicals.

### The First Floor

The first floor of the Manor contains the main entrances into the house (the front and back doors) and several rooms. In the front (southern) part of the house, there is the foyer, with its grand staircase leading up to the second floor; the sitting room/library, with a large fireplace with a portrait of Avery Radley over it; and the ballroom, a room with solid hardwood floors where parties and dances were often held when Avery Radley was alive. In the back (northern) part of the house are the kitchen, where the characters will find both the back door (rusted and locked, just like the door leading into the basement) and the stairs leading down to the basement and garage; the dining room, with a long oak table and beautiful crystal chandeliers (one of which has fallen from the ceiling); a cloakroom; and a bathroom.

Characters may make PER Rolls (+2 on the roll if the character also has Tracking) to determine that the dust on the floor has been disturbed recently. This is most evident in the foyer and going up the staircase to the second floor.

The Wolfpack has made sure that the curtains on all the first floor windows are drawn, and they have even gone to the trouble to paint the insides of some of the windows a dull black to keep light from escaping. This has not worked perfectly — some lights still shine through, to be witnessed by the neighborhood children — but it does help. The only room the Wolfpack makes much use of on this floor is the kitchen, where they have several tables set up to finish manufacturing the ice and then package it for transportation into the city.

There are five ways to get into the first floor: via the stairs from the basement; the front door (which leads into the foyer, of course); the back

door; the stairs down from the second floor; and the windows (all of which still have glass in them, though that glass is often cracked or broken).

### The Second Floor

The second floor is constructed in an elegant fashion. The grand staircase leads up to a mezzanine-like area in which there are a few settees and chairs for guests to sit in, talk, and look at people on the first floor. There is also a balcony off of the south side of the mezzanine (i.e., above the front door), with French doors leading onto it. Opposite the French doors is a large window which overlooks the back yard. Off of the rest of the mezzanine are the master bedroom (where Avery Radley used to sleep), half a dozen other bedrooms (for his guests), and a large bathroom. There is also a small set of stairs leading up to the attic, with a closed (but unlocked) door shielding them from view.

The members of the Wolfpack have been sleeping in these bedrooms. Characters will be able to tell that the second floor is being occupied as soon as they come upstairs or look in any of the bedrooms. The dust has been disturbed everywhere, and the beds have obviously been slept in.

There are four ways onto the second floor: down the stairs from the attic; up the grand staircase from the first floor; through the windows (assuming the characters climbed up to them); and from the balcony (again, assuming the characters climbed onto it).

### The Attic

For such a large house, Radley Manor has a very small attic. It is crammed full of old (mostly broken) furniture, boxes of old books, and similar items. The Wolfpack is not using this part of the house at all. If the characters can get onto the roof of the Manor, there are weak parts of the roof (at which it only has 2 DEF, 3 BODY) where they could break through and get inside.



# THE WOLFPACK

## Wolfpack Member

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
12	STR	2	11-	100 kg; 2½d6 [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
13	CON	6	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	3		
4	ED	1		
3	SPD	5		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	2		
26	END	0		
28	STUN	3		

**Total Characteristic Cost: 44**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"

### Powers & Skills:

#### Combat Skills:

Combat Skill Levels: +1 w/ firearm of choice (2)

#### Martial Arts — Dirty Infighting (21)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Eye Gouge	-1	-1	2d6 Sight Group Flash
Kidney Blow	-2	+0	½d6 HKA (1d6 with STR)
Low Blow	-1	+1	2d6 NND (3 [groin])
Punch	+0	+2	4½d6 Strike
Roundhouse	-2	+1	6½d6 Strike

#### Biker Skills:

Combat Driving 12- (3)

Mechanics 11- (3)

PS: Methamphetamine Manufacturing 11- (2)

Shadowing 11- (3)

Streetwise 12- (3)

WF: Small Arms, Knives, Street Weapons (5)

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 42**

**Total Character Cost: 86**

#### 50+ Disadvantages:

**Hunted:** Hudson City Police Department, 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture) (20)

#### Psychological Limitation:

Amoral Criminal (15)

**Villain Bonus** (1)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 36**



The Wolfpack is an outlaw motorcycle gang led by Keith Gainey, who is known to his gang as "Ox" because of his big size. Despite the fact that he looks kind of like a big, dumb palooka, Gainey is quick-witted and intelligent. He not only developed a new, cheap way to make ice, but he has had the foresight to train his gang in skills needed to run the operation successfully: knowledge of the neighborhood, combat motorcycling, the ability to spot a tail, chemistry, and so forth. Members of the Wolfpack are a cut above most outlaw motorcycle gangsters.

**Notes:** This writeup represents an "average" member of the Wolfpack; some members are better at some things than others (Gainey, the leader, is better at just about all of the Skills listed on the sheet, especially PS: Methamphetamine Manufacturing).

The members of the Wolfpack typically carry at least one gun each, plus a knife of some kind. The guns are usually handguns, but there is a submachine gun or two kept in the Manor for use by those who favor such weapons. If the GM desires, they may also have a few grenades or other heavy weapons. They may even have some kevlar vests (4 PD Armor, covers Hit Locations 9-13).

*"Some of them are pure animals. They'd be animals in any society. These guys are outlaw types who should have been born a hundred years ago — then they would have been gun-fighters."*

—Birney Jarvis, *Hell's Angels* charter member who later became a San Francisco Chronicle police reporter





# SCENARIOS

## The Basic Scenario

The basic scenario for use with Radley Manor is seemingly straightforward: the characters find out about the drug lab being operated out of the Manor, destroy it, and kill or arrest the members of the Wolfpack. However, that isn't as simple a job as it may first seem.

First of all, how are the characters going to find out where the lab is located? The most obvious way is for them to capture and interrogate one of the members of the Wolfpack when he delivers the ice to the gang's buyers. If they do this, the biker will talk, but only if drugs are used or if he is threatened with the most severe forms of injury (and he believes the threats). He will go to jail rather than squeal.

A more dramatic and exciting method is to follow one of the members of the Wolfpack as they return from delivering drugs. The PCs could follow him by means of a ground tail, an aerial tail, or a tracking device. But to lead the characters directly to the Manor this way detracts from the fun of the adventure. Instead, it is suggested that the characters be able to follow the biker as far as the general neighborhood, but that they then lose him somehow. Remember that the biker will know the neighborhood far better than the PCs, so he should have no problem losing a ground tail. He can hide from an aerial tail in a wooded area somewhere (or other complications, such as a potential collision with another vehicle, can stop the characters in the air from following the biker); tracking devices should "short out" or "experience interference" at some point.

This will force the characters to find other methods to locate the lab exactly. One such method is to simply drive around and look; characters who spot the Manor are likely to suspect that it is the gang's hideout almost at once. But they will be unable to watch the Manor without drawing suspicion. Remember that Radley Manor is located right in the middle of a residential neighborhood. Houses surround it on all four sides, and all of them are occupied (there are *no* houses in the neighborhood for sale or for rent at present). Characters who think they can park their cars on the side of the road and watch the Manor will be in for a rude awakening; a suspicious resident will call the police on them pretty quickly. For that matter, the neighborhood children, who are observant enough to spot the lights in the Manor, would likely spot any strangers hanging around the

neighborhood as well. This is true even if the characters only operate at night — not only is this summer, when daylight lasts longer, but since it is warm the kids are likely to stay out late, or sneak out of their houses when they're supposed to be asleep (whether it's to try to run up and touch the Manor, to do something else, or simply for the fun of staying up later than they're supposed to). Only characters who wait until after midnight can be certain of avoiding the children — and even then, there is a good chance that some nosy adult will spot them and call the police.

If the police are called, a single patrol car will arrive behind the PCs' vehicle(s). The officer will contact the PCs and ask them for identification as well as their reason for being in the area. Once he has their IDs or driver's licenses in hand, he will run a warrant check. If the PCs give a believable story (or even tell the truth) and the check doesn't turn up any warrants (i.e., none of the PCs are Hunted by police), the officer will tell them to move on and leave it at that. If any of the PCs are Hunted by the police, however, he will radio for backup and arrest them once backup arrives.

The best way for the PCs to find out about the Manor is to talk to the children. Since this may not be obvious at first, the GM may need to point the PCs in the right direction. The GM can emphasize how many children there are in the neighborhood by having the characters see them everywhere when they drive around. Maybe some of the PCs witness one of the kids daring to run up and touch the side of the Manor. But however it is done, it is crucial that the GM arrange for the player characters to "talk to" the children if the scenario is to be run to best effect.

How the PCs will interact with the children is important. All of the kids know that they shouldn't talk to strangers or take anything from them. They are already likely to be at least a little bit scared of strangers — and the fact that these particular strangers are toting big guns (and maybe wearing funny costumes) will only make it *more* difficult for the PCs to get information out of them! The GM should play up this scene for maximum effect and laughs.

If one of the PCs has a reputation that some of the kids might know about, it may make their job easier (or harder). PCs with "nice" reputations — true-blue heroic types, for example — may be able to inspire feelings of friendliness and helpfulness in the kids, particularly if the PC in question has a high PRE and is good-looking. "Friendly" PRE Attacks by such characters may be gain +5, +10, or more on the roll.



On the other hand, characters known to have “bad” reputations — as criminals or killers — will get little or no cooperation from the kids, who will likely run screaming to tell their parents about the “bad men.” Characters with “intense” Psychological Limitations, such as “Devoted To Justice,” “Obsession with Crimefighting,” “Vigilante Mentality,” or “Casual Killer,” may need to make EGO Rolls to “damp down” their Limitations and present themselves to the kids as normal, friendly grown-ups. Characters with any of these problems will have problems if they try Presence Attacks; these should be at -10 to the roll at the very least, unless the character making the Presence Attack is trying to scare the kids, in which case he should get +10 or more to his roll.

Of course, it will also help if the PCs put away or conceal their weapons; characters carrying big, scary-looking guns and knives will not get any cooperation from the kids.

It’s up to the characters to win the trust of the children; if they don’t, the whole adventure becomes not only harder for them, but a lot less fun for everyone playing. If necessary, the GM may be able to stage an occurrence that will prove that the PCs are good people. For example, one of the kids may get trapped in a tree, fall into the deep part of a creek, or almost get run over by a speeding car, and the PCs save them. Any event like that is sure to convince the kids that the PCs are the “good guys.”

After winning the kids’ trust, the PCs will need to gather information from them and figure out what it means. The PCs aren’t likely to find all the kids together at once; rather, they will have to go through a gradual process of meeting a few kids, finding out what they know, then getting introductions to some more kids so they can find out what they know, and so on. Eventually, the PCs should have a pretty clear picture that *something* is going on inside the Manor. Now all they have to do is get inside and fight it out.

And don’t forget that some of the kids, especially the more adventurous ones, may want to “tag along” with the PCs — whether the PCs want them to or not...

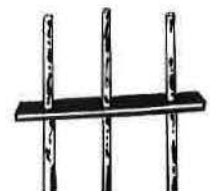
A few more cautionary notes about the scenario. First, the PCs should be warned, if they don’t realize it on their own, that starting a major gun battle in a residential neighborhood creates a high risk of collateral casualties. In other words, they need to be careful not to injure anyone living nearby. If the PCs are reckless or careless, the GM should begin rolling to see if anyone living in a nearby house is hit by a stray bullet or piece of shrapnel.

Second, remember that people living near the Manor are likely to notice anything unusual



— gunfire, explosions, low-flying combat helicopters, that sort of thing — and to respond by calling the police. If the PCs are not careful, they are likely to emerge triumphant from Radley Manor — only to find the place surrounded by a police cordon. They had better take care of their business and get out quickly.

Third, one of the most exciting ways to end this scenario is with a car chase of some sort. However, smart PCs are going to think about disabling the gang’s motorcycles and van, especially if they enter the Manor through the garage. If the GM wants to stage a car chase, the PCs cannot be allowed to do this. The GM can best handle this situation by giving the Wolfpack a good chance to discover the PCs when they start to puncture tires or rip out ignition wires. Perhaps the PCs will cause noise, either by accident or as a side effect of disabling the vehicles, that will bring the gang running. Maybe there are some gang members in the garage working on their bikes when the PCs approach the mansion, making it impossible for them to get to the vehicles. Maybe whatever steps the PCs take to disable the vehicles simply fail for some reason. Regardless of the reason, though, the PCs cannot be allowed to prevent a car chase if the GM wants to end the scenario that way.



## Alternate Scenarios

A straightforward assault is not the only way to run *The Thing In Radley Manor*. Here are some other options.

First, the PCs might try to join or infiltrate the Wolfpack. This would be *extremely* difficult, since it's a small, tight-knit group that keeps to itself, but if the PCs come up with a good way to get in with the gang, this may be the safest way for them to deal with the situation.

Second, consider taking a break from the usual routine and having the players play the neighborhood children rather than their normal PCs. The kids realize that something funny is going on in Radley Manor and decide to check things out! *Home Alone* meets *Die Hard*.... If the GM decides to run this scenario, there is one cardinal rule to follow: the kids cannot use guns against the bikers. As long as the kids don't pick up guns and try to use them, the bikers'

shots will always miss. As soon as any kid picks up a gun, start rolling to hit him normally. The kids should use their wits, not their opponents' guns, to beat the bikers.

Third, in *Dark Champions* campaigns with an emphasis on the paranormal, or *Horror Hero* campaigns, maybe the ghosts that are said to inhabit Radley Manor actually exist! The ghost of Avery Radley, and of the servant he killed, may try to help or hinder the PCs. Avery's ghost is most likely to be found in the master bedroom or the sitting room/library; the servant's ghost is linked to the Hanging Tree itself, and cannot leave its vicinity (but it has poltergeist-like powers and can throw rocks and cause other effects). For an even more interesting twist, if there are only two players, perhaps they could take the part of the ghosts!

If the GM needs statistics for the ghost of Avery Radley, he can use those for Haunt in *Creatures of the Night: Horror Enemies*, pages 64-65.



# GAMES PEOPLE PLAY



## Dedication

Mark Arsenault for continuing to put out Hero products while Hero is in transition. Floyd Grubb for letting me borrow *Kingdom of Champions* because I was too cheap to get my own. Jeff O'Hare who brought Punchinello into the fold. Steve Long for *Dark Champions* in general and marbles.

## SETTING THE STAGE

Playtime gingerly put the finishing touches on the toy soldier with the ragged, paint-stained brush, then murmuring satisfactorily to himself, he dipped the brush into the murky jar of water by his hand. Strange colors swirled in the jar, the excess paint set in motion by the sudden stabbing motion of the brush.

The soldier's colorful red and white exterior gleamed in the dim light of the halogen lamp, the sole source of illumination in the cluttered workshop. With a grunt, Playtime leaned

back from the work table and straightened his back, listening to it snap along its length. He was beginning to develop a slight hunch and with it, no small degree of back pain that required a steady diet of aspirin in order for him to sleep at night.

Sighing, Playtime removed his thick glasses and wiped them hurriedly on his lab coat as he surveyed his handiwork with a squint. His lips peeled up slightly at the corners as his eyes darted around the soldier's exterior, then whistled dryly as he held the glasses up to the light to check for any spots he had missed.

Politely put, Playtime's workshop had character. It was rank with age and sweat, a steady accumulation of smell that had built up over several years of labor. The rickety chair with the squeaking, stubborn wheels that needed oiling seemed to serve as a throne for the hunched scientist. All these years, the only change in Playtime's workshop was that it had gotten smaller as he brought home more scrap to make sure his toys functioned perfectly. The ever-growing bits and pieces of broken creations seemed to enforce the workshop's archaic feel and sagging lack of success.

**Author**  
Chris Avellone

**Artist**  
Greg Smith

*"Why should I bother with made-up games when there are so many real ones going on?"*

— Dr. Felix Hoenikker,  
Cat's Cradle

"I thoroughly disapprove of duels. If a man should challenge me, I would kindly take him by the hand and lead him to a quiet place and kill him."

— Mark Twain

Although Playtime was loath to admit it, the feel of the workshop wore on him. There had been no great criminal triumphs, no crimes that had made him wealthy beyond belief. Nothing to show for his work, for his diligence.

This time, however, would be different. This time it was not a question of money — it was one of revenge; during his occasional morning showers, he had been debating with himself recently that his motivation may have been the reason for his failings all along.

Playtime rolled away from the table in the squeaky chair and picked up the newspaper that lay on the shelf nearby. The paper had been carefully folded so that a certain article was brought to his attention. The article on the page told of an Italian villain; a monster, a hunched, decrepit toy-chiseling nutcase called PUNCHINELLO. This man had been quoted, repeatedly, that he was the best inventor of deadly toys in the world.

Playtime would have passed it off, had the fool's boastful quotes not extended to the reference to other 'shams, imitators, shadows, fools' across the world who emulated his successes in mixing toy-making and crime. Playtime smiled at the article clutched in his bony hands. He would show the hunched fool who was the *real* fool. Oh, yes.

The whole world would know who was the undisputed toymaker. A game, a conflict of interest, was required — and if Playtime's sources were reliable, America would ideal for providing a game board to play upon. His reputation was on the line. If this went well, it would be the crowning achievement of his career. Glory and respect, too long denied. No more.

On the table, the toy soldier stood at attention.

## Disclaimer And Stuff

*Games People Play* is an adventure for one to four *Dark Champions* characters (whether police officers, vigilantes, or low-powered paranormal heroes) between 150 and 200 points. If the Power Pools of the two villains of the piece are jacked up to compensate, this adventure could be used for any number of PCs of any power level.

Some things before the games begin:

1. *Games People Play* is geared for a *Dark Champions: The Animated Series* style of play...the violence is somewhat sanitized, and while the villains are a little nutty, they tend more toward being four color ego signature foes than psychotic mass murderers.

2. This is intended as a one-night scenario, worth a few hours of game play at best. Pull it out, play, then put it away. While the adventure

can have ramifications in the campaign beyond what is printed here, it serves just as well as a self-contained piece.

3. As scripted, this adventure is set in the fictional city of Fell's Point, a *Dark Champions* city south of Hudson City and on the opposite side of the U.S. from San Angelo (that is, if you use both cities in your campaign). Do not be alarmed. "Fell's Point" could just as well read San Angelo, Hudson City, New York, San Francisco, or the GM's own campaign city. Care has been taken to insure that the name of the city never appears in any handouts or descriptions in the text that are given or read to the players.

4. While the versions of PUNCHINELLO and Playtime (both introduced in earlier Hero products) included in this adventure are intended to be the "*Dark Champions* skewers" of the original *Champions* characters, they can be used in any universe with little or no problem.

## So What's Going On, Anyway? What's The Big Deal?

This adventure is a grudge match between Playtime, the British tinkerer from *Kingdom of Champions*, and PUNCHINELLO, the vengeful Italian toymaker from *Villains: The International File*. (Purchasing these two books is not necessary to run this adventure; the villains' statistics are included at the end of the adventure.) Playtime believes he has been slighted by the Italian and ambushes PUNCHINELLO while the other tries to pull off a kidnapping attempt at the grand opening of the Coliseum Mall in Fell's Point.

PUNCHINELLO and Playtime's Power Pools have not been strictly adhered to in this adventure. It is assumed both criminals will have to confront several heroes in this scenario, and their Power Pools have been increased accordingly. If only one or two heroes are involved in the adventure, the number of toys should be scaled down.

## How Did All Of This Start?

This adventure is a result of EGOs. Playtime wants to prove he is the best toymaker in the world; PUNCHINELLO, as soon as he realizes what is taking place (this will not take long) will try



to pull off the kidnapping, defeat Playtime and humiliate any heroes to add to his reputation. The two villains are willing to do whatever is necessary to win, and neither combatant cares overmuch if the shoppers in the mall are hurt.

Playtime entered the mall first and delivered a note to the mall's manager saying the area will become a battleground at Noon on Saturday; the note warns the manager to remove all personnel from the premises, lest they be hurt — or killed. Playtime hopes this warning will call the American police to the scene, and their presence will foil Punchinello's kidnapping attempt and perhaps even force them into shooting the hunchbacked Italian monstrosity. Playtime, a month before the scenario, secretly planted a radio beacon in Punchinello's arsenal of toys and has been tracking the Italian's movements internationally. Playtime thought this would give him an edge when the battle in the mall begins. He is wrong.

Punchinello discovered the beacon three days ago when he was upgrading one of his toys for the kidnapping. Suspecting it had been planted by the American authorities (or perhaps by the PCs), he built three replicas of the beacon, disarmed the original and decided to outfox the "stupid Americans" by putting the three modified beacons at different areas in the mall to distract the police from his real target. The false beacons are cheap transistor radios that Punchinello can activate by remote control as needed.

## So How Do The PCs Get Involved?

In a four-color *Dark Champions* campaign where the PCs are heroic and well-respected (and have a Code vs. Killing), the manager of the Coliseum Mall informs the player characters (or, informs the police, who in turn, informs the PCs) that there *may* be a potential problem during the grand opening. From what the manager has deciphered from the note (see *The Threat*, below), it may be a bomb threat. To be safe, perhaps the PCs should stop by to check things out (the manager hopes the appearance of the heroes will be good for publicity; she secretly believes her mall security guards can handle any problems). The manager will pay the characters a modest sum to stop by; if the heroes are celebrities, this payment can be increased by whatever amount the GM sees fit. The grand opening is centered around the huge toy store, *Toysaurus*, in the middle of the mall; it is the largest toy store *Toysaurus* has opened

on this coast. Mikey Mars, the star of the popular Saturday morning action show *Danger Boy*, will be at the opening of the new store, and the manager is loath to cancel such an event because of Playtime's note. ("It's probably some nut, anyway," the manager will remark offhandedly.)

If the PCs do not have the luxury of being well-respected public heroes, they can be shopping at the mall when the chaos ensues; the panic and threat to the children should spur them to action. Also, as the battle begins, the incident will be broadcast over the news (one news crew will be at the scene filming the opening of the *Toysaurus* store when trouble breaks out) and the police band; characters monitoring the news and the police radio will hear the broadcasts and can respond. A child DNPC may also be at the mall to see the Senile Sociopathic Samurai Shrews and the Amazing Danger Boy and be caught up in the violence.

There is another means by which not-so-popular *Dark Champions* characters could be alerted to the battle about to take place at the mall. No matter what campaign city the adventure is taking place in, the PCs may be tipped off that Playtime is in town by the Toymaker (*Justice, Not Law*, p.124) especially if the GM is running this adventure in Hudson City. The Toymaker is a kindly, grandfatherly gentleman who runs a toy store, and on the side, supplies ego signature gadgets and weapons to the criminal underworld. (His stats are not necessary for this adventure.)

Now, while the Toymaker is not in the business of becoming personally involved in the activities of other criminals, Playtime's maliciousness toward children (as well as his caustic egocentricity and his incessant bragging of his "brilliant" toy-making skills in the criminal circles and on selected sites on the Internet will cause the Toymaker to intervene and tip off the characters as to what is about to take place in the mall. He hopes that Playtime will be arrested and locked away where he can do no more harm (and at the same time, remove some of the Toymaker's competition in the underworld market, both in the States and overseas — Playtime commands a small, but profitable, slice of the underworld market who have the tolerance to deal with him).

As it stands, the Toymaker is unaware of Punchinello's presence in the States — if he came across the information, he would most likely warn the PCs of the Italian's presence as well, as Punchinello's plan will be placing children in jeopardy.

Subject: Re: Skill  
From: playtime@toy.org  
Date: 4 May 1996  
04:02:58

*Don't presume to know my capabilities. Talent is a strange thing; difficult to recognize until it is utilized. Suffice it to say that I exude talent.*

*Every toy I create surpasses expectations - my own, and that of my competitors.*

*By competitors I do not mean those American shams, who are mere imitators of my work, shadows of greatness.*

*Americans are fools. They wouldn't know talent if it jumped up and bit them in the bum.*

— Toymaker



It is not inconceivable that either the Toymaker or the Hanged Man (*Underworld Enemies*, p.40) is responsible for this entire adventure. Playtime, holed up in his workshop reading about new breeds of capacitors, may have never heard of Punchinello's boasting in the newspapers had the Toymaker or the Hanged Man mailed the article to him to try and start a fight. The Hanged Man would want the two criminals to kill each other, while the Toymaker would simply want his two competitors locked up (ending their threat to his business and their threat to children world-wide).

## The Threat

The note Playtime sent to the manager is pasted together from newspaper letters, and reads as follows:

### At tention:

**On Saturday, 12 Noon**, there will be a conflict of *interest* taking place with in your mall. Please take care to insure that all valuables **are** removed from the premises, as the conflict is extremely likely to turn violent. We will not be to blame if innocents are caught in the crossfire.

Thank You for Your Cooperation.

Little information can be obtained by examining the note (there are no fingerprints, and all forensic data gathered from the note will turn up nothing). Even though the manager suspects the note might be a bomb threat, she will not admit it to the characters. The manager will politely listen to any safety measures the PCs suggest, then discount them and suggest the PCs instead attend the *Toysaurus* grand opening, mingling with the crowd and saying hello to the kids so that they can be there should trouble arise (and if the heroes are popular figures, help generate a larger turnout). The manager does not want to take the threat seriously and doesn't want the PCs to, either.

# SETTING UP SHOP

The adventure begins Friday afternoon, the day before the grand opening. A timeline of events is provided below. If the PCs are contacted by the manager (above) to look into the matter, they will be contacted after Playtime has already entered the mall and prepared the battle scene to his liking (see *Timeline*, below).

The newly-constructed Coliseum Plaza and Shopping Mall is the scene of the battle; the wide-open space serves as a perfect "No Man's Land" for the toys. The mall has over a hundred stores and has the latest lines of clothes, music, movies and department stores. If the GM wishes, they could use the mall maps from either *Scourge of the Deep* or *Target Hero* as a setting for the battle. This adventure works best, however, if the GM uses a mall in their area as a template for the Coliseum (as long as areas are set aside for the toy store, fountains and the site under construction).

If the GM wishes, Playtime can have his van and mini-copter standing by (the van on the parking deck, and the mini-copter concealed in a garage or an empty field somewhere nearby). For their stats, see his character sheet at the end of the adventure.

## Playtime's Tactics

Playtime prefers quantity to quality and has scores of toys soldiers, enameled tin model aircraft and tracking plush dogs (with Chemosensor noses attuned to Punchinello's face paint) scattered throughout the mall. Playtime believes his homing beacon is his "ace in the hole" and will attack as soon as he detects the beacon in the mall.

## Playtime's Theater of Operations

Playtime has set up his base in an area of the mall that is still under construction. It is sealed off from the rest of the mall by large plaster walls with signs that read "Coming Soon: Monster Burger." Playtime has used the electrical wiring in the area to give his command



center power and has tapped into the mall's security system, allowing him access to all the cameras in the mall and monitor all radio communications between the security guards.

Playtime's base has the following features:

**Silent Alarm:** Carefully concealed infrared beams surround the perimeter of Playtime's base (characters who punch through the floor, walls or ceiling, or have Shrinking or some other body control power may be able to avoid detection). If one of these beams is broken, a wristwatch Playtime is wearing will beep, and he will check the mall cameras set up just outside the area. If he sees heroes or security guards coming towards the construction area, he will try to distract them using his reserve toys, threatening children and shoppers nearby. If this does not work, he will cover his equipment with sheets and hide in a closet (the crude wooden door with a knothole Playtime can look out of). If the PCs look under the sheets and discover the computer console, Playtime will detonate it by remote control (a 4D6 Killing Attack, No Range, Exploding). In the resultant destruction, Playtime will slip out of the area and make his way towards the toy store, remote control in hand, to stop Punchinello personally.

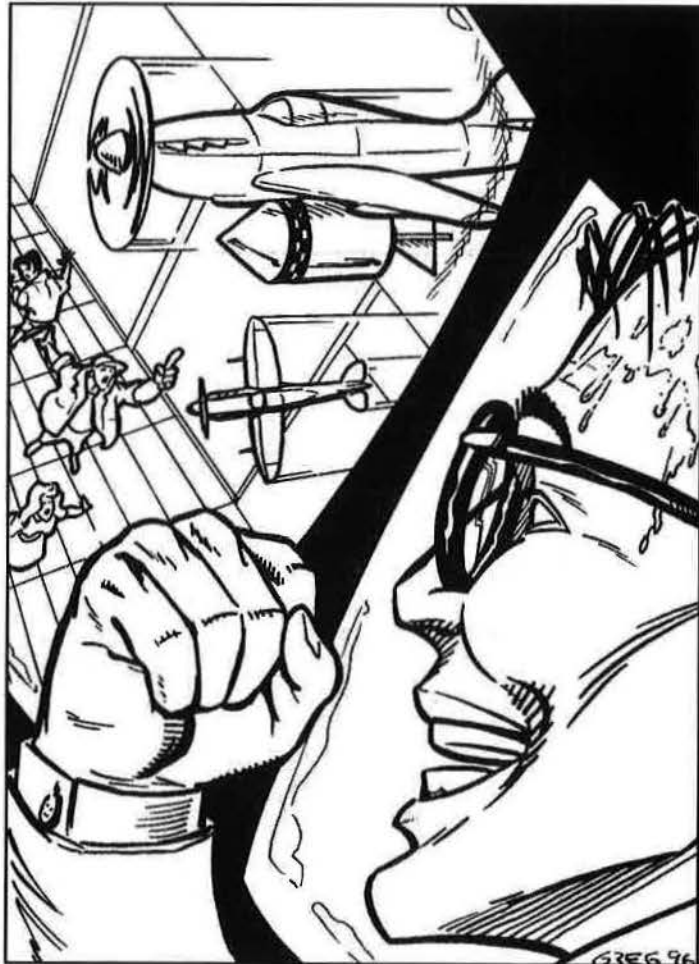
**The Console:** Playtime's computer console monitors the mall's security systems and allows Playtime to employ his toys by remote control. Playtime still has a hand-held radio remote control device as a back-up if the console is destroyed, but there may be several Phases where the toys run amok until Playtime re-establishes control.

## Punchinello's Tactics

Punchinello is unaware he is walking into an ambush. He has five trusted followers with him (the GM should add more if the PCs are a large group), and they are dressed up according to the part they will play in the kidnapping. They are fiercely loyal to Punchinello and are well aware of the consequences if they fail in their duties.

## Punchinello's Troupe

Punchinello's followers are Competent Normals (see the *Hero System Rulebook*, p. 134) and possess the Dirty Infighting martial arts package with all its maneuvers. Italian is their native language, and PCs monitoring their conversation may not understand what is being said.



### Beadle

13 STR	14 DEX	13 CON	10 BODY
11 INT	11 EGO	13 PRE	10 COM
5 PD	4 ED	3 SPD	
6 REC	30 END	25 STUN	

**Ingram MAC-10:** +1 OCV, 1D6+1 RKA, Autofire (5 Shots), +1 STUN Multiplier. Beadle carries 4 Clips of 32 Bullets each.

**Combat Knife:** 1D6 HKA (2D6 HKA with STR), Armor-Piercing, Blade Limitations (-¼; see DC, p.82),

**Beretta M34 Semiauto Pistol:** 1D6 RKA, 7 Shots. Beadle carries one extra magazine for the pistol.

**Armored Vest:** 8PD/8ED Armor, Activation 14 or less, OIF.

**Martial Arts:** Punch (+2 DCV, 5D6), Roundhouse (-2 OCV, +1 DCV, 7D6), Low Blow (-1 OCV, +1 DCV, 2D6 NND, rPD in Vitals protects), and Kidney Blow (-2 OCV, 1D6 HKA).

**Radio:** Radio Transmit and Receive, OAF.

**Skills:** Combat Driving (Truck) 11-, +2 Levels with Firearms, and +1 Level with HTH Combat.

**25+ Disadvantages:** Enraged if takes damage (Common) 11-, recover on an 11 or less.





**Background:** Beadle is Punchinello's driver. He carries an Ingram MAC-10, a knife in an ankle sheath, a miniature radio, and he wears a bulletproof vest under his dark blue driver's uniform. Beadle reacts to threats calmly, but once worked up, he is a bloodthirsty fighter.

### Toby the Dog/Joey the Clown

13 STR 13 DEX 13 CON 11 BODY  
11 INT 10 EGO 13 PRE 10 COM  
5 PD 4 ED 3 SPD  
6 REC 30 END 30 STUN

**Ingram MAC-10:** +1 OCV, 1D6+1 RKA, Autofire (5 Shots), +1 STUN Multiplier. Toby and Joey both carry 4 Clips of 32 Bullets each.

**Seltzer Bottles:** 8D6 Mind Control, Mental Powers based on CON, No Verbal Command, 6 Charges, Area Effect: 1 Hex, One Command: "Laugh at Everything" (Paralysis or ½ DCV, whichever the GM decides). Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing and Force Fields will protect characters from the gas as part of its Special Effect.

**Armored Costume:** 8PD/8ED Armor, OIF.

**Martial Arts:** (Note that Joey and Toby have -1 to OCV to their Martial Arts attacks when they're in costume.) Punch (+2 DCV, 5D6), Roundhouse (-2 OCV, +1 DCV, 7D6), Low Blow (-1 OCV, +1 DCV, 2D6 NND, rPD in Vitals protects), and Kidney Blow (-2 OCV, 1D6 KA).

**Gas Mask:** Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing, IAF (Dog Nose/Clown Nose).

**Radio:** Radio Transmit and Receive, OAF.

**Skills:** +2 Levels with Firearms, and +1 Level with HTH Combat.

**25+ Disadvantages:** Berserk in Combat (Vry Com) 11-, recover on an 11 or less (Toby), Psych Lim: Snide and Backstabbing (Com, Mod) (Joey).

**Background:** Toby and Joey carry MAC-10s in underarm holsters (their costumes are constructed so that they have easy access to them once a firefight starts), miniature radios, and wear ballistic mesh armor (8PD/8ED) beneath their bulky costumes. They carry large bags of deadly promotional toys which they will give to the children before the battle starts (see *The March of the Toy Soldiers*, below). Toby is dressed as a big, smiling cartoon dog, while Joey is a clown; both are wearing gas masks (the gas masks are disguised as Toby's dog nose and Joey's bulbous red clown nose). In addition to their guns and toys, each carries a seltzer bottle filled with six charges of Happy Gas (see Punchinello's weapon list, below). In combat, Toby is a snarling berserker, while Joey is more snide and back-stabbing, preferring to ambush opponents. (Joey will take children hostage and be the first to flee if the battle looks in doubt.)

### Scaramouche

10 STR 14 DEX 13 CON 10 BODY  
15 INT 11 EGO 13 PRE 10 COM  
5 PD 4 ED 3 SPD  
6 REC 26 END 25 STUN

**Browning 9mm:** 1D6+1 RKA, 20 Shots. Scaramouche carries 2 extra magazines.

**Steel Baton:** +2D6 HA (4D6 w/STR), OAF.

**Martial Arts:** Punch (+2 DCV, 4D6), Low Blow (-1 OCV, +1 DCV, 2D6 NND, rPD in Vitals protects), and Kidney Blow (-2 OCV, 1D6-1 HKA).

**Radio:** Radio Transmit and Receive, OAF.

**Skills:** Bugging, Computer Science (Hacking), Electronics, and Security Systems, all at 12-. He also has +1 Combat Level with Firearms and Clubs (his baton).

**"Scaramouche," Coordinator in the Truck:** Scaramouche is the communications link between the members of the troupe. He carries a High-Powered Browning Pistol, a steel baton and is dressed in a gray paramilitary uniform. Scaramouche is Toby's older brother, and they look out for one another.

### Jack Ketch

15 STR 15 DEX 15 CON 12 BODY  
8 INT 10 EGO 15 PRE 10 COM  
5 PD 4 ED 3 SPD  
6 REC 36 END 36 STUN

**Sniper Rifle:** +1 OCV, +2 to Offset Range Penalties, 2D6+1 RKA, +1 STUN Multiplier, Invisible Effects (Hearing). The rifle holds 8 bullets, and Jack has 2 extra magazines in case of an emergency.

**Garrote:** 2D6 NND (not vs. rPD neck protection), No Range, OAF.

**Martial Arts:** (Jack has 2 Damage Classes with MA). Martial Block (+2 OCV, +2 DCV), Punch (+2 DCV, 7D6), Roundhouse (-2 OCV, +1 DCV, 9D6), Low Blow (-1 OCV, +1 DCV, 3D6 NND, rPD in Vitals protects), and Kidney Blow (-2 OCV, 2D6 HKA).

**Gas Mask:** Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing, OAF (Clown Nose).

**Radio:** High Range Radio Hearing, OAF.

**Skills:** Stealth 12-, +2 Combat Levels with All Combat.

**"Jack Ketch," the Sniper:** Jack has a sniper rifle with 8 shots, a radio headset and a bulbous red clown nose gas filter (10 pts of Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing). In addition to his sniper rifle, Jack has a steel garrote he can wrap around an opponent's neck to choke him (his NND). Despite his array of combat skills, Ketch is stupid and easily tricked.



# Punchinello's Theater of Operations

Punchinello's command center is concealed in the *Toysaurus* truck parked outside the mall. The truck's cargo area has been turned into a communications center with a radio link to all Punchinello's agents and a layout of the mall. The radio is tuned to the local police and mall security bands (if PCs are in the area and are obviously using radios to communicate, Punchinello will order Scaramouche to look for the PCs' radio frequency). The original driver of the truck is unconscious in the back, to be used as a hostage. He has a large bright-red firecracker jammed in his mouth that Punchinello can light by clapping his hands. It will kill the driver if it goes off (its fuse is three Phases long).

**The Toysaurus Truck:** Length 6.4 hexes, Width of 3.2 hexes, 20 Area, mass of 25 tons, DCV: -5, STR 50, KB -8", BODY 18.

**Modifications:** A concealed camera monitors the outside of the truck (functions as Clairvoyance for Sight only), and a second (more powerful) radio antenna has been attached on the top of the cab. Beadle will be in the cab of the truck for most of the adventure. The back of the truck is sealed with a lock (3 DEF/3 BODY), and the interior holds a communications center (High Range Radio Hearing) manned by Scaramouche.

## Timeline

### Friday!

**5:05 PM:** Playtime enters the mall just as the construction crews are leaving. He is carrying two large shopping bags (*Veronica's Secrets™*) containing his remote control equipment. The workers and mall directors are calling it a day and pay no attention to the serious looking old man, assuming he is either one of the store owners or a foreman. Playtime proceeds to the construction area on the second level (see *Playtime's Theater of Operations*, above), enters through a service door and constructs his temporary base. He will set up perimeter alarms, lock the entrance door and secure his position.

**5:35 PM:** The doors to the mall are locked, and the three security guards in the mall begin their patrols.

**7:00 PM:** Playtime finishes tapping into the mall's security system and installing a remote station for controlling his army (the security guards will notice their security computers are

acting funny for a while as Playtime taps in, but the guards will not say anything about it unless asked. When the "glitches" disappear at 7:00 p.m., they will forget about them). Playtime now has complete access to the mall's cameras, security radio, and can turn off the mall computer and alarms if necessary (he laughs gleefully in expectation of Punchinello's defeat). After checking the position of the guards and scanning the mall, he arms his robots for the next phase.

**9:00 PM:** Playtime waits until the three guards are separated in the mall. He then winds up three British toy land rovers with small headlights, cameras and tiny rocket launchers filled with sleep gas and sends them through the ventilation shafts (if the PCs are familiar with Dr. Goldwing from *Kingdom of Champions*, these rovers look like his land rover; for details of the Land Rovers statistics, see *Playtime's Toys* below). One whirs quietly along the ventilation shafts until it reaches the main security room. Once there, it fires the invisible sleep gas into the room, putting the guard on duty to sleep. The second rover zooms to the bathroom, where the other guard is taking care of personal business, and hits him with the gas; the third rover is sent to intercept the last guard who is patrolling the mall. Playtime waits until all three of the security guards are separated before he disables them; he does not want them to realize they all fell asleep at the same time.

If any PCs enter the mall at this point or before (which will be protested by the security director and the manager), Playtime will panic a bit, but then make arrangements to divide and subdue the characters. He will quickly rig as many aerial drones as necessary for each character, with either a gas pellet or a tranquilizer needle (NND) if the PC has obvious Life Support. He will then use Helicopters and small Land Rovers to make noises in various portions of the complex to cause the PCs to split up, then gas each one until they are all unconscious.

Playtime then leaves his base and places his arsenal of toys in various sections of the mall: the Chemosensor dogs in the men's bathroom on level one, the planes on top of the light fixtures on level two, the fortress near the toy store and the galleons in the pool. He will finish this before the guards (and the PCs) wake up.

**9:23 AM:** Playtime returns to his base in the construction area; the guards wake up a short time later. Each one resumes their duties and will not reveal their negligence to their companions, thinking it went unnoticed. Playtime sets up a rough cot and catches some Zs. He oversleeps, despite setting his alarm clock.



## Saturday!

**9:00 AM:** People file into the mall, checking out the new stores. The large crowds make it difficult to follow and watch specific people.

**11:00 AM:** The grand opening of the toy store (set for noon) takes shape as hordes of children (and their less enthusiastic parents) wait for the red ribbon to be cut so they can rampage through the store just like "Timmy Toysaurus" would. The store manager will be there, along with the vice-president of the *Toysaurus* company (playing up the media publicity). At least one news crew is there, amidst the mobs of kids, interviewing some of them. There is a lot of yelling and screaming, but there is no sign of the Senile Sociopathic Samurai Shrews or Danger Boy. The kids are looking around anxiously for them to arrive, and things look pretty tense. Any heroes that appear will be mobbed.

**11:17 AM:** A *Toysaurus* Truck pulls up outside the mall, at the loading entrance to the toy store. This is PUNCHINELLO's command center for the operation (see *Punchinello's Theater of Operations*). Beadle will get out and greet the foreman at the entrance to the warehouse (the foreman will look puzzled; he was expecting another driver, who is lying unconscious in the back of the truck). The two of them will go into the storeroom, where Beadle will beat up the foreman, gag him and stuff him in a toy crate. Beadle goes back outside, and Toby, Joey and Ketch (Toby and Joey dressed in work clothes, Jack in civilian garb) will emerge from the back of the truck. Ketch enters the mall from the main entrance as Toby and Joey will move large, heavy boxes into the warehouse. The heavy boxes hold PUNCHINELLO's deadly toys (the original shipment of toys were dropped off at the Fell's Point Asylum, many miles away), and one box holds PUNCHINELLO himself. It is placed on the stage where the speakers will address the crowd.

**11:18 AM:** Ketch, carrying a large shopping bag (holding his disassembled sniper rifle) enters the mall through the main entrance. Checking to make sure no one is following him, he walks through the mall and surreptitiously drops three transistor radios (the false beacons) at selected locations throughout the mall. He then walks to the service entrance leading up to the dome of the mall to get in a good sniping position. Ketch enters a maintenance corridor (if he meets one of the janitors, he will beat the unfortunate worker up, gag and tie them, and lock them in a closet), moves up to the dome and assembles his rifle. He will remain there until needed; his instructions are not to draw attention to himself unless PUNCHINELLO orders him to. He will lock the service door behind

him and scan the area for any suspicious people (guards and obvious heroes). He will relay any information he sees to Scaramouche in the truck.

**11:27 AM:** The unloading of the toys is complete. Beadle gets back in the cab of the truck, where he will remain (with his Ingram under the seat) until called. Toby and Joey remain in the warehouse section and put on their costumes (SMGs tucked underneath in underarm holsters), grab the bags of deadly promotional toys and prepare to enter the crowds of children.

**12:00 PM:** Danger Boy has not arrived, and neither have the Senile Shrews; they have been caught in traffic. The children become agitated, as do the promotional managers.

**12:15 PM:** Danger Boy's limousine pulls up outside the mall and he gets out, with his chauffeur/bodyguard in tow. Danger Boy looks irritated. At the same time, the radio signal from the first false transistor beacon is triggered, and the sound causes Playtime to jump up in shock in his control base (he will be puzzled as how PUNCHINELLO penetrated the mall without being detected). He monitors the security cameras in the area where the beacon is coming from, and deploys his first assault force.

*Attack:* Three Chemosensor Toy Dogs (plus one dog for every hero over two), yapping loudly, emerge from a men's bathroom on the first level. (The statistics for the dogs are listed in *Playtime's Brigade*, below.) Their chemosensors will track PUNCHINELLO's face paint in the area where the beacon is originating. People will laugh and point as the yapping toy dogs, noses to the ground, circle the area erratically. The dogs are unable to locate PUNCHINELLO's face paint, but by chance, they do detect make-up of similar composition in a nearby cosmetics store. The dogs (in six Phases) will home in on the store as people watch, amused. When the first dog reaches the store, it will pause, give a loud bark and detonate in a fiery explosion. People will start to scream (they will suffer minor injuries from the explosion, but no deaths). This explosion will be heard all over the mall, and people will run as the other two (or more) dogs home in on the store (The noise of the children will prevent the crowd in front of the toy store from dispersing. Heroes may hear the explosion, however, and respond). If the PCs do not arrive to stop them in time, the two dogs, still yapping mechanically, will explode, injuring more of the shoppers. Playtime, raving in his control area, will try and recall the dogs as soon as he realizes they have been drawn into the cosmetic store.

**12:16 PM:** Two security guards rush towards the explosions. PUNCHINELLO, still in the box, will be surprised by the explosion in the



area of the beacon. He has no idea what occurred; he will suspect the police tried to blow up the area to get him, or to scare him into revealing himself. When he hears of “exploding dogs” in the area via his radio link, he will not know what to make of it.

**12:20 PM:** Danger Boy walks into the mall, bodyguard in tow (use the stats for Punchinello’s goons, but the bodyguard carries no firearms). Cheers roll out from the crowd, and Danger Boy walks up to the tired-looking promotional directors, who begin to make their speeches on this “monumental day.” Halfway through the director’s speech, the Senile Shrews (having arrived on the other side of the mall) storm into the crowd, and the director’s words are drowned by the cheering and screaming of the kids (and the alarm of the parents: see the description of the Senile Shrews, below). Toby and Joey will silently enter the crowd at this time and pass out toys to the eager children.

*The Senile Sociopathic Samurai Shrews:* The men in the costumes are Incompetent Normals (see *Hero System Rulebook*, p.133). They are dressed to match the four “heroes” of cartoon and movie fame: Lenny (armed with two icepicks), Donny (with a club with nails driven through it), Mikey (chainsaw) and Ralphie (meat cleaver). The quartet of shrews will wave their weapons wildly, to the delight of the children and the distress of the parents.

**12:21 PM:** Punchinello activates the second beacon. Playtime picks up the signal on his computer console and realizes Punchinello used the first one as a diversion. Playtime, angry at being fooled so easily, sends his second wave after the beacon.

With the sound of propellers, six miniature RAF planes (plus one for every PC over three in the adventure) roar through the mall, causing people to look up and point. (The statistics for the planes and their bombs are listed in *Playtime’s Brigade*, below.) When the airplanes reach the radio beacon (this will take six Phases), they will drop one bomb each and circle the area. The bombs are designed to home in on the beacon and will destroy it in the first bombing run...along with injuring shoppers in the area. As soon as the beacon is destroyed, Playtime will scan the bomb site, ordering the planes to circle the area until he sees Punchinello’s body. When he sees nothing after a minute, he realizes he has been tricked *again*, bangs his hands against the console (bruising himself), then recalls the planes to their hangars.

If the planes are stopped by the heroes, Playtime will have three attack the PCs with bombs, and the remainder intercept the radio signal. The planes statistics are detailed below.

**12:22 PM:** All security guards not previously engaged will rush to the second bombing area; this will leave no remaining guards at the grand opening.

Toby and Joey pass out toys to the kids (for details, see below). It will be difficult to notice this activity unless PCs are watching the clown and the dog specifically, and even then, they may not know the toys being passed out are dangerous. To make matters more confusing, there are two other clowns in the crowd along with a “Timmy Toysaurus” in a plastic suit; in addition, Playtime’s dogs and airplanes may have drawn characters away from the area.

Ketch, in the dome, readies his rifle and prepares to fire on Punchinello’s orders.

## The March of the Toy Soldiers

Toby and Joey are passing out the following toys to the children and may use them against the characters if necessary. Many of these toys will place the children in danger, which can be used as additional distractions if there are more than three or four PCs involved in the adventure.

**Kaleidoscope:** These brightly colored cylinders have Mind Control Powers. Any child looking into it will be affected by a 5D6 Mind Control Attack; they will be paralyzed for one Phase, then they will run amok through the crowd, attacking whoever is nearest to them. The Mind Control lasts as long as the GM wishes.

**Kaleidoscope:** 5D6 Mind Control, “Telepathic” (No Verbal Command Necessary, +¼), Single Command (“Stand still for a second or two, then run amok,” -½), 0 END (+½), Continuous (+1), Uncontrolled (+½), Character must look into kaleidoscope and turn it to activate it (-½), OAF (Kaleidoscope, -1), Cost: 81/32 Points.

**Face Crayons and Markers:** These brightly colored items are passed out individually. Toby and Joey will encourage the kids to draw on their own faces and those of others. The Crayons and Markers are contact poison dispensers with a one hour gradual effect. Before the hour is up, however, the crayons and markers induce high levels of hyperactivity in the children.

**Crayons/Markers:** 1D6 HKA, Gradual Effect (1 Hour, -1¾), 16 Charges (+0), No Range (Crayon/paint must be rubbed on exposed skin, -½), No Effect on someone already poisoned by markers/crayons (-½), OAF (Crayons and Markers, -1), Cost: 15/3 Points.



**Dolls:** A variety of dolls are passed out: bears, soldiers, baby dolls and so on. Each one makes a sound when the button on their back is pushed: when a radio signal is given, these dolls will release a flood of Happy Gas (below) into the crowd. The signal will be given after the dolls have been spread throughout the crowd.

**Happy Dolls:** 8D6 Mind Control, Mental Powers based on CON (-1/2), No Verbal Command (+1/4), Area Effect: 6" Radius (+1/2), One Command: "Laugh at Everything" (Paralysis or 1/2 DCV, whichever the GM decides, -1/2), Set Trigger (When receives Punchinello's radio signal, +1/4), 1 Continuous (1 Hour) Charge per Doll (-1/2), Uncontrolled (+1/2), Cost: 70/35 Points. **Note:** Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing and Force Fields will protect characters from the gas as part of its Special Effect.

## The Next Stage

When the radio signal is given and the Laughing Gas spills through the crowd, the children will find everything in sight incredibly funny. The manager and vice-president will be confused for a Phase or two, but when the gas hits them, they will join in the merriment. A Phase later, Punchinello pops out of the box next to Danger Boy, and with a bow, speaks:

Ladies and Gentlemen, pray how do you do? If you all happy, me all happy too. Stop and hear my merry little play. If me make you laugh, me need not make you pay.

He smiles and shows Danger Boy his flower, offering him to sniff it. In his other hand he holds his gas mace (see *Punchinello*). As Danger Boy leans forward to sniff, a spray of goo from the flower covers him and he is encased in a fast-drying rubber entangle. Punchinello turns on the vice-president and the manager and does the same, leaving the three rubber encased human beings on the platform, laughing in their new prisons (the entangles are air-permeable and the victims will not suffocate). Punchinello will then pound them viciously with his mace, to the delight of the crowd.

Toby and Joey, after having passed out the toys, will check the crowd (especially guards in the area and any heroes) for anyone who has not been affected by the gas. If they see someone, they will move to intercept and spray the target with their seltzer bottles. After subduing the crowd, they will approach the stage and help Punchinello carry off the collapsed people. Punchinello, after brutally clubbing his laughing victims, will turn to the crowd, and ask the children to accompany him back to the truck to get "more toys" in his tittering Italian accent

(treat this as a PRE attack; roll 4D6 to see how many children follow him to the truck). Unless stopped, he will kidnap the children.

Meanwhile, Playtime, who was distracted trying to track down Punchinello's radio signal elsewhere in the mall, suddenly notices what is happening at the toy store. With a malicious snicker, he stabs a glowing red button on his console to launch his counterattack. (Playtime is delighted at the turn of events because his forces are concentrated at the *Toysaurus* store, due to the fact his toys could be easily hidden amongst the promotional toys.) His ambush begins as a toy box in the back of the crowd opens, and a small robotic Judy doll walks stiffly out. "Judy" is two feet high, dressed in a peasant costume and holds a small wailing baby robot in her arms. She will grind slowly towards Punchinello (making her way through the children with little difficulty), pause right before the stage and shake her finger accusingly at Punchinello. Punchinello, surprised, will blink for a moment, then leap out of the way as the Judy bot suddenly hurls the crying baby at him.

Any PCs at the scene should be given a chance to abort their next action to try and intercept the baby, which is an 8 DCV (it has 2 Levels of Shrinking, which accounts for the difficulty in intercepting it). If not intercepted, the baby lands in front of the stage and detonates in a 2D6 Explosion (KA). Punchinello will cartwheel out of the way of the explosion, then will angrily get to his feet only to see Playtime's deadly toys converging on him.

Two squads of six soldiers (add an extra squad if there are more than two characters involved in the adventure) march out of Playtime's fortress, firing their tiny pellets into the crowd. The Galleons in the fountain hoist their pirate flags and fire their cannons at Punchinello and the heroes. The Judy robot (treat as a *Wind-up Robot*, below) homes in on Punchinello. Any Toy Dogs and remaining RAF planes will move towards the area; see Playtime's arsenal to see what other threats are conjured forth.

Punchinello may not have a chance to activate his third radio beacon; Playtime will ignore any other radio signals in the mall once he has spotted Punchinello.

## Playtime's Brigade

The following toys are examples, and GMs should integrate whatever personal touches they desire into the toy war. Other possibilities include electrified Entangle slinkies, futuristic rocket ships, unbreakable walls of Silly Putty, and so on. If the PCs are heavily armored against



killing attacks (or if the heroes are all standard 250+ point super heroes), the GM should make all the toys have the Penetrating advantage or a high STUN multiplier.

**Note:** Punchinello's and Playtime's toys have been detailed in case of Dispel, Suppresses, and so on. In addition, if the GM has any (villainous) toy-makers in their campaigns, they should be able to add the gadgets below to the villains' inventory with a minimum of fuss.

### Chemosensor Toy Dogs

0 STR 15 DEX 0 CON 5 BODY  
 2 INT 0 EGO 5 PRE 12 COM\*  
 2 PD 0 ED 3 SPD  
 0 REC 0 END 0 STUN

\* The Chemosensor Plush Toy Dogs are cute and cuddly, which accounts for their high COM.

**Powers and Skills:** Tracking Scent (Punchinello's Face Paint Only, -1, Can Only Move at 3" Running while using Tracking Scent, -¼), Takes No STUN. The Chemosensor Dogs also have 0 END cost for their Running. The dogs have only one attack:

**Final Bark Requiem:** 2D6 RKA, Explosion, Trigger: Whenever it takes BODY damage or if the dog comes into contact with Punchinello's Face Paint, 1 Charge, No Range.

**25+ Disadvantages:** Distinctive Features: Cute, Plush, Exploding Dogs (Not Concealable, Major).

**Notes:** These dogs move at 3" when making PER rolls to find the scent (noses to the ground), and 6" when they pick it up (their barking increases in pitch). If the dogs reach the source, they will give a final bark and detonate in an explosion of stuffing and shrapnel.

### The Royal Air Force

0 STR 15 DEX 0 CON 5 BODY  
 2 INT 0 EGO 5 PRE 0 COM  
 0 PD 0 ED 3 SPD  
 0 REC 0 END 0 STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Shrinking (2 Levels, -4 DCV, +6" KB), 10" Flight (0 END), HRRH (Playtime's beacons only, -½), Takes No STUN. The RAF has two attacks:

**Concussion Bombs:** (lightweight plastic-molded explosives attached beneath each wing of the plane): 6D6 Physical Energy Blast, Exploding, Double KB, STUN only, 2 Charges, OAF.

**Kamikaze:** 2D6 RKA, Explosion, Trigger: Whenever reduced to 0 BODY or if the plane crashes into something, 1 Charge, No Range.

**25+ Disadvantages:** Distinctive Features: Tiny propeller airplanes (Not Conc, Major).

**Notes:** These propeller airplanes fly in groups of six and can strafe an area with their "bombs." The planes resemble to the British Royal Air Force during the late stages of WWII (some are Spitfires). Their bombs (molded so that they appear as cartoonish-looking black bombs) are radio-guided and will home in on radio signals broadcast by the false transmitters. Each plane carries two bombs, and as a final attack, the planes can fly into a target, doing the same damage as the bombs.

### Helicopters

0 STR 15 DEX 0 CON 5 BODY  
 2 INT 0 EGO 5 PRE 0 COM  
 0 PD 0 ED 3 SPD  
 0 REC 0 END 0 STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Shrinking (2 Levels, -4 DCV, +6" KB), 10" Flight (0 END), HRRH (Playtime's beacons only, -½), Takes No STUN. The Helicopter has two attacks:

**Missile Rack:** ½D6 RKA, Autofire (5 Shots), 3 Charges.

**Kamikaze:** 2D6 RKA, Explosion, Trigger: Whenever reduced to 0 BODY or if it crashes into something, 1 Charge, No Range.

**25+ Disadvantages:** DF: Buzzing, Miniature Gold Arrow-Shaped Helicopters (Not Concealable, Major).

**Notes:** These golden helicopters are arrow-shaped and futuristic looking. They hover like large insects, surveying the area before attacking. The helicopters can fire three rounds of missiles; after that, they will crash into targets like the planes mentioned above. Characters familiar with Dr. Goldwing's helicopter in *Kingdom of Champions* will recognize similarities.

### Land Rovers

0 STR 15 DEX 0 CON 5 BODY  
 2 INT 0 EGO 5 PRE 0 COM  
 0 PD 0 ED 3 SPD  
 0 REC 0 END 0 STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Shrinking (2 Levels, -4 DCV, +6" KB), HRRH, Change Environment (Tiny Headlights), +4" Running (10" Total) with no END cost, Takes No STUN. The land rovers have an array of attacks:

**Missile Rack:** +3 OCV (tiny guidance systems), 1D6 RKA, 3 Charges, OR...

**Z-Gas Sleep Rockets:** +3 OCV (tiny guidance systems), 6D6 Mind Control, Mental Powers vs. CON, No Verbal Component, One Command ("Fall Asleep," -½), Area Effect: 1 Hex, 3 Continuing 1 Hour Charges.

**Kamikaze:** 2D6 RKA, Explosion, Trigger: Whenever reduced to 0 BODY or if the rover crashes into something, 1 Charge, No Range.



**25+ Disadvantages:** Distinctive Features: Tiny Gold Land Rovers (Not Conc, Major).

**Notes:** Each rover has three missiles, miniature headlights and tiny cameras for scouting out areas. Characters familiar with Dr. Goldwing's land rover in *Kingdom of Champions* may notice similarities in design.

### Radio-Controlled Cars

0 STR 15 DEX 0 CON 5 BODY  
2 INT 0 EGO 5 PRE 0 COM  
0 PD 0 ED 3 SPD  
0 REC 0 END 0 STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Shrinking (2 Levels, -4 DCV, +6" KB), HRRH, +9" Running (15" Total) with no END cost, Takes No STUN. The land rovers have an array of attacks:

**Kamikaze:** 2D6 RKA, Explosion, Trigger: Whenever reduced to 0 BODY or if the car crashes into something, 1 Charge, No Range.

**25+ Disadvantages:** Distinctive Features: Remote Controlled Cars (Not Concealable, Major).

**Notes:** This swift fleet of cars chase down targets and explode, doing damage as the planes. These cars travel 15" a round. They appear as either Indy-500 racing cars or as old British classics.

### The Fortress

0 STR 0 DEX 0 CON 20 BODY  
2 INT 0 EGO 10 PRE 0 COM  
10 PD 10 ED 2 SPD  
0 REC 0 END 0 STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Armor (10 PD/ED), Hardened, Summon 16 50 Point Automatons (0 END), Takes No STUN. The fortress has the following attacks:

**Three Cannons:** 2D6 RKA, Explosion, 12 Charges, there must be at least two soldiers in the fortress for each cannon to fire (the fortress can hold 6, -1/4).

**25+ Disadvantages:** Distinctive Features: Medieval Fortress (Not Concealable, Major).

**Notes:** A medieval castle is at the far end of the Plaza. It is intended to draw Punchinello's attention (it will) for as long as necessary. Six soldiers always guard the fortress, each manning a cannon similar to the ones the Galleons employ (see below). Twice a Turn (Phases 6 and 12), the Fortress produces six toy soldiers, three planes, and three wind-up robots.

The GM should increase or decrease the amount of toys according to how many heroes are in the vicinity.

### Toy Soldiers

0 STR 15 DEX 0 CON 5 BODY  
2 INT 0 EGO 5 PRE 5 COM  
0 PD 0 ED 3 SPD  
0 REC 0 END 0 STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Shrinking (2 Levels, -4 DCV, +6" KB), HRRH, Takes No STUN, and -3" Running (3" Total). The land rovers have an array of attacks:

**Rifles:** 1/2D6 RKA, 12 Charges.

**25+ Disadvantages:** Distinctive Features: Toy Soldiers (Not Concealable, Major).

**Notes:** They are dressed in red uniforms, bearing a resemblance to British soldiers of the Revolutionary War. One may be a drummer. Every time they fire, they kneel in a row, take aim, then stand and march onwards.

### Wind-Up Robots

0 STR 15 DEX 0 CON 5 BODY  
2 INT 0 EGO 5 PRE 5 COM  
0 PD 0 ED 3 SPD  
0 REC 0 END 0 STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Shrinking (2 Levels, -4 DCV, +6" KB), HRRH, Takes No STUN, and -3" Running (3" Total). The land rovers have an array of attacks:

**Laser Beam Eyes!** 1/2D6 RKA, 12 Charges.

**Electrical Perimeter Defense Field!** 2D6 Electrical Energy Blast, NND (Power Defense or rED protects), Damage Shield, 12 Charges.

**Kamikaze!** 2D6 RKA, Explosion, Trigger: Whenever takes BODY damage or if it comes into contact with a solid object, 1 Charge, No Range.

**25+ Disadvantages:** Distinctive Features: Tiny Whirring Robots (Not Concealable, Major).

**Notes:** These devices march steadfastly out into the battlefield, whirring mechanically, and explode when they reach their destination. Their stubby legs allow them to grind forward at 3" a round. They are equipped with lasers (GMs in plausible *Dark Champions* campaigns should change the attack to something else) which fire from the robots' eyes. For effect, they may be waving their arms and saying in frantic tones, "Danger, Danger, Will Robinson!"

### Spanish Galleons

0 STR 15 DEX 0 CON 10 BODY  
2 INT 0 EGO 10 PRE 0 COM  
0 PD 0 ED 3 SPD  
0 REC 0 END 0 STUN

**Powers and Skills:** The Galleons have no real powers other than Takes No STUN and its two cannons, each one of which is a 2D6 RKA, Explosion, 12 Charges.



**25+ Disadvantages:** Distinctive Features: Replica of Spanish Galleon (Not Concealable, Major).

**Notes:** Three Spanish galleons are floating in the fountain. When activated, their cannons fire with a resounding boom, and Pirate flags are raised on the ships. The cannonballs are a 2D6 RKA with the Exploding Advantage, and each Galleon can fire twice in a segment, reload the next, then fire twice again. Cries of plunder emanate from them. When they are reduced to 0 BODY they will sink with gurgling sounds, smoke and flames traveling across their decks.

## Punchinello's Toys

Punchinello brought toys for the children to play with. These are in addition to all the weapons listed on his character sheet.

**Squirt Flower:** Punchinello has an additional chamber in the flower other than his acid attack; it is a fast-trying, gas-permeable rubber compound (a 5D6 Entangle, 6 Charges; three of them may have been used on Danger Boy and the two *Toysaurus* managers). It blocks vision but allows the target to breath.

**Squirt Flower:** 5D6 Entangle which blocks the Sight Sense Group, Limited Range: 3" (-1/4), 6 Charges (-3/4), OAF (-1), Cost: 60/20 Pts.

**Happy Gas:** This is the gas that blankets the Coliseum plaza. When the gas hits the mall patrons, it won't take long for everyone in the Plaza will find the death-dealing toys incredibly funny. Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing and Force Fields will protect characters.

**Happy Gas:** 8D6 Mind Control, Mental Powers based on CON (-1/2), No Verbal Command (+1/4), Area Effect: 6" Radius (+1/2), One Command: "Laugh at Everything" (Paralysis or 1/2 DCV — GM's discretion, -1/2). Cost: 70/35 Points. **Note:** Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing and Force Fields will protect characters from the gas as part of its Special Effect.

**Bells:** These are attached to Punchinello's cap and have the same effect as the Jacks in his arsenal (see Punchinello's character sheet). He has six exploding bells and may throw them into the crowd to distract heroes.

**Silver Bells:** 3D6 Flash vs. Sight Group, Armor Piercing (+1/2), Range Based on STR (-1/4), 6 Charges (-3/4), OAF (-1), Cost: 60/20 Pts.

**Marbles:** Punchinello carries hundreds of marbles in a bag at his belt. He will pour them out into the plaza if he finds himself set upon by too many heroes. While the GM is free to have the marbles have additional powers (exploding, flash, electrical, magnetic, and so on),



the ones listed below are nothing more than an annoying obstacle to ground movement.

**Marbles:** 20 STR Telekinesis, Area Effect: 3" Radius (+1), Continuous (+1), Uncontrolled (+1/2), IAF (-1/2), Activation Roll 14- (-1/2), 1 Charge (-2), Does No Damage (-1/2), Only to Throw Target to the Ground (-2), Only Affects Characters Moving on the Ground (-1/4), DEX Roll Cancels Effect (-1/4), Cost: 105/15 Points.

**Confetti:** This can of confetti shoots forth a cloud of superadhesive plastic squares when the top is opened. The confetti must be washed off with alcohol in order for the character to be able to see again.

**Can of Confetti:** 5D6 Flash vs. Sight Sense Group, Continuous (+1), Uncontrolled (+1/2), 1 Charge (-2), OAF (-1), Cost: 150/38 Pts.

**Bubbles:** These bubbles act as a 3" radius Darkness; by blowing into a pipe at his belt, Punchinello can flood the area with bubbles. The bubbles employ an unbreakable elastic compound; explosions will not disperse them, although a strong wind (or telekinetic push) will. As an added twist, the bubbles may be fragile but release a paralyzing gas when broken.

**Bubbles:** 3" Darkness to the Sight Sense Group, Range Based on STR (-1/4), 6 Continuing Charges (1 Turn Each, -1/4), OAF (-1), Cost: 40/16 Pts.







has been shot in the leg or cannot move at all, +1), The Area Effect must be in a path that Punchinello can/has traveled in his Phase (-1/2), No Range (-1/2), Cost: 300/48 Points.

## GOALS

Playtime's intention is to thwart Punchinello's plans in the most humiliating manner possible. Following this, he may decide to permanently injure (or in an extreme case, kill) the Italian if Playtime feels that he lost face during the adventure.

Punchinello's goal is to kidnap Danger Boy and any other children in the vicinity and hold them for ransom. Although unprepared for the appearance of Playtime and the heroes, Punchinello will adapt rapidly, attempting to pull off the kidnapping while fending off his foes. He will not waste time trying to find Playtime during this scenario but will undoubtedly seek revenge at a later date once the smoke has cleared and things have settled down a bit.

## RESOLUTION

If either Punchinello or Playtime is defeated, the "game" will cease, and the victor will try to escape from the mall. The toys will continue their rampage until they are defeated, leaving a clean-up job for the PCs to deal with. If both Playtime and Punchinello escape, there will be a rematch; Punchinello, aware Playtime tried to humiliate him, returns the favor as Playtime is targeted by the Italian genius and his gang.

The manager of the Coliseum Mall will be embarrassed by the incident; if any child was hurt, she will pass the buck onto any captured villains or any PCs at the scene. She will state the PCs' presence made security difficult to enforce (she will refuse any payment she originally offered the PCs if any children are hurt and accuse the PCs of recklessness). In addition, parents at the scene will create trouble if they believe the characters were responsible for hurting their children during the battle. PCs may find an organization of angry mothers deadlier than any villains they have ever faced.

If Danger Boy is saved, he will reward the PCs and ask them to appear on his TV show as guests (*Danger Boy* is a kids show where Danger Boy confronts dastardly villains such as Dr. Demeanor, Techanon, and so on). The PCs can accept or decline; the GM can run an adventure where the PCs go to Hollywood, and run into trouble amidst the social circles there.

**Fireworks:** These strings of fireworks act as 4D6 Flash vs. Sight in a 4" Radius. Punchinello has three strings (charges) of firecrackers to hurl into the crowd. They do 2D6 STUN damage to targets they land on.

**Fireworks:** 2D6 Physical Energy Blast, Range Based on STR (-1/4), STUN only (-1/2), 3 Charges (-1/4), [10/3] plus 4D6 Flash vs. Sight Sense Group, Range Based on STR (-1/4), Area Effect: 5" Radius (+1), 3 Charges (-1/4), Linked to Energy Blast (-1/2), OAF (-1), [100/25] Cost: 110/28 Pts.

**Superglue:** This tube of viscous jelly is a 10D6 Entangle; it only has one charge, and Punchinello will use it in an emergency, pouring it over stairs or the floor behind him as he flees. The entangle can be dissolved by alcohol or water, or the player may slip out of his shoes or boots to free himself. A character knocked flat into the glue may not be able to free himself without the help of a demolition team.

**Tube o' Superglue:** 10D6 Entangle, Continuous (+1), Uncontrolled (+1/2), Entangle Takes No Damage From Attack (+1/2), Set Effect: Only Entangles characters travelling on the ground that touch it (i.e., Feet, -1), Cannot make "Walls" (-1/4), 1 Charge (-2), Area Effect: Any Area (9 Hexes: This "Area Effect" is always tied to Punchinello's Running and how fast he can move in a Phase, so it may be reduced if he



# Playtime

*Note: Playtime's original statistics can be found in Kingdom of Champions. The statistics here represent Playtime in the Dark Champions universe. Note that Playtime has aged since his appearance in Kingdom of Champions...he is well over sixty years of age.*

## Playtime

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
5	STR	-5	10-	1d6
8	DEX	-6	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
5	CON	-10	10-	
8	BODY	-4	11-	
23	INT	13	14-	
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
1	PD	0		
1	ED	0		
2	SPD	2		Phases: 6, 12
2	REC	0		
10	END	0		
14	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: -1**

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

### Powers:

**Mastermind:** Power Pool (100 Active Pts; see *Powers/Tactics*, below for suggested Gadgets and Robots)

**Old Reliables:** Common Gadgets

**Ballistic Cloth Lab Coat:** Armor (+7PD/+7ED), Activation 14- (-½), OIF (-½) (10)

**Radio Control:** +4 SPD, OAF, Fragile (-1¼) [4] (18)

**Chin Mike and Head Set:** HRRH, OAF, Fragile (-1¼) (2)

**Investigator's Van** (replace Forensics Lab with Inventor's Lab; DC, p.97) (22)

**Mini-Copter** (Can be piloted by remote control, DC, p.97; it will function only if Playtime's HRRH is working, -½) (21)

### Background Skills:

Demolitions, 13- (7)

Electronics, 13- (7)

Inventor, 13- (3)

Mechanics, 11- (3)

AK: London, 11- (2)

PS: Toymaker, 13- (4)

KS: Arms Dealers Subculture, 8- (1)

KS: London Underworld, 8- (1)

KS: World Criminals, 8- (1)

KS: Telephone, Sewer and Utilities Subsystems (London), 12- (3)



### Scientist Training:

Scientist (3)

SC: Ballistics, 13- (2)

SC: Chemistry, 13- (2)

SC: Computer Programming, 13- (2)

SC: Electrical Engineering, 13- (2)

SC: Laser Technology, 13- (2)

SC: Robotics, 13- (2)

Weaponsmith: Energy Weapons, Muscle-Powered Weapons, Slug-Throwers, 13- (9)

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 199**

**Total Character Cost: 198**

GMs may want to give Playtime additional Science skills depending on the nature of the campaign (high-tech or *Cyber Hero*, for example).



"You know, I've listened to the police psychologists discuss for hours what Playtime's core psychological problems are, including detailed accounts of his childhood, his obvious fixations with his mother and his sister, his 'epic crimes' repeating themselves like a bad record in a desperate attempt to bring some measure of stability to his life..."

"Ask me, Playtime's problem in a nutshell is that he is a raving, opinionated egotist who doesn't play well with others."

— The exhausted NILE Operative Eightball, shortly after stopping Playtime's attempt to lay siege to the Hudson City Elevated Rail System

#### 40+ Disadvantages:

##### Psychological Limitations:

Unwarranted Overconfidence (Com, Str) (15)  
 Detests Children (Com, Str) (15)  
 Ego Signature: Outdated Toys (Com, Mod) (10)  
 Plots crimes like a hack writer plots adventures (Com, Mod) (10)

##### Normal Characteristic Maximum (20)

Age: 60+ (10)

##### Distinctive Features:

Wild-eyed Old Man in Lab Coat (Concealable, Recog) (5)

##### Reputation:

Dangerous Toy-Making Englishman, 11- (10)

Watched by the Toymaker (As Pow, Lim Area: Hudson City), 11- (5)

Unluck 2d6 (10)

Rivalry: The Toymaker (Professional, JNL, p.124) (5)

Mystery ID (15)

Experience (29)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 159**

**Background:** Playtime's been around for a while, an underworld figure that sits in *Dark Champions* like an old trunk in the attic. Criminologists can trace his career all the way back to 1963 when Playtime strode onto the scene with a well-crafted piece of criminal engineering, laying siege to several miles of the London underground railway system for almost a day and a half. Since then, Playtime's career has been marked by a few criminal masterstrokes, but more recently, it has become an increasing string of failures (some of them breathtakingly spectacular). Most of the criminal underworld recognize Playtime's name, but anything after that is usually ignored or lost in background noise.

Playtime's criminal career does not appear due to poverty or a lack of education as much as difficulty in finding a normal career. Despite his Engineering degree, Playtime's attempts to secure a job in Britain and overseas were a dismal failure, most likely due to his abrasive attitude than his technical aptitude.

Playtime has served several terms in prison, but this does not seem to deter him from embarking on new crimes once he's been released on parole (or been busted out by one of his toy creations). He has been known to frequent the city of Fell's Point when he needs to put distance between himself and British authorities. While in the States, Playtime keeps himself busy planning new crimes or prostituting one of his custom-made creations for a quick buck.

**Personality:** Ironically, Playtime has been becoming increasingly child-like and petulant as his criminal career continues, and he has blown many of his recent crimes by becoming

impatient and revealing his hand much too soon (giving heroes ample opportunity to nab him) or wasting energy at critical moments by throwing a tantrum when his personal schedule is disrupted ("No! How did Crusader find his way here?! He'll ruin everything!!!") and proceed to rant, rave, rant, rave, all the while neglecting his plan). His attitude has made it difficult for others to work with him for more than short periods of time, and considering his recent string of failures, his attempts at recruitment usually fail. While Playtime can look back on a number of his past crimes with a sense of pride, his more recent failures have made him push all the harder to pull off his "last, great" master crime. If he succeeds, he will pack his bags and retire to a small island in the Caribbean.

Playtime used to see himself as in the Life for the money...his first crimes (which were quite clever for their time) were lucrative and provided him with enough capital to live comfortably. Nevertheless, not only did he find himself enjoying his criminal activities, he began to nurse a large ego and became extremely proud of his ability to pull a caper on the boys in blue. In all his years and all his successes and failures, his pride has only grown. This has made his recent turn of luck difficult for him to handle. It's been a long time since he's pulled off a successful caper, and he is becoming resentful, quick to blame anyone other than himself for his failures and overconfidence that have allowed many of the local law enforcement officials to bring him in.

Anyone studying Playtime's criminal career will notice that despite his claims of pulling off "epic, world-spanning" capers, Playtime's plots are as tired and old as he is. He prefers to use what he calls "the old reliables," plans that have proven themselves twice or more. As he sticks with these MOs when committing new crimes, the police and local crime-fighters who know his past history know what to expect from him and can react accordingly ("In the Elmhurst robbery he had the money stashed in the vents and shuttled to him via his radio-controlled land rovers...if he's still using the same radio signal, we might be able to take control of the rover and reroute it..." and so on). If the PCs study Playtime's past criminal history, they can bust one of his formulaic jobs wide open.

Playtime has expressed nothing but contempt for current toy product lines, video games in particular.

**Four Color:** Playtime is fine the way he is for four color campaigns; GMs may want to use the statistics presented for Playtime in *Kingdom of Champions*, increasing his INT to 25. If confronting four or more heroes, GMs may want to expand Playtime's power pool to 150



points...if confronting a number of four color heroes in excess of three hundred points, most or all of them with superpowers, the GM should pump up his power pool to 200 or hire him some additional fire support.

**Dark Champions, Paranormal:** Playtime may have an intuitive understanding of robotic technology, allowing him to design and construct toys at a level that far surpasses contemporary technology; include aircraft, robots and other toys with greater maneuverability, better armaments and more innovative designs. As Playtime's power is intuitive in nature, he may no longer need his Inventor skill...although an INT Roll may still be required.

**Dark Champions, Realistic:** Playtime may not be appropriate for realistic *Dark Champions* campaigns; GMs may want to tone down the level of technology he uses, reducing it to what would be considered plausible in the real world (mostly explosives and radio-controlled toys sans lasers).

## Power Notes

**The Investigator's Van:** This van has the same statistics as the one detailed on *Dark Champions*, p.97, except that instead of a Forensics Lab, there is a Mechanics/Weaponsmith Lab Playtime uses as a "quick fix" lab to repair any toys damaged during shoot-outs with PCs, or to put the finishing touches on his arsenal right before the main event. The van's pop-up turret is shaped like a primitive tank barrel and makes the sound like a chain rattling as its being fired. When necessary, Playtime can redecorate the van so that it appears to be an ice cream truck, a telephone repair truck or a floral delivery van.

GMs should keep track of the amount of charges Playtime's turret gun uses during an adventure; chances are he will not have the resources to reload the turret gun until the next adventure. Whenever possible, he prefers to deploy his toys rather than use the turret gun to deal with opponents, whether they are pursuing him by car or on foot.

The van has a launching pad for helicopters and a runway for Playtime's Royal Air Force; there is also a small ramp under the passenger side of the van to deploy his radio-controlled race cars. If chasing Playtime, PCs can delay a phase, wait for Playtime to deploy a race car, then fire a rocket or grenade beneath the van (while the ramp is still open) and do considerable damage to the interior of the vehicle.

**Mini-Copter:** Playtime also has access to a mini-copter he stole from the American military some years ago. He can control it via re-

mote and has used it many times to escape from tight situations. His Robotics knowledge has allowed him to equip the helicopter with a primitive flight computer that he controls with voice commands; characters who tap into his radio frequency and mimic his voice can have a great deal of fun with Playtime if he attempts to make a getaway.

**Mastermind Power Pool:** Playtime's Mastermind Power Pool is a cinematic power pool that allows him access to a variety of resources, whether it be gadgets, bases, followers and vehicles, for pulling off his latest scheme. Most of the time, these items can just be given to Playtime for the purposes of plot, but if the PCs are sticklers for rules, GMs may want to play it safe with a Mastermind Power Pool. Playtime's Mastermind Power Pool has the following Power Limitations: Only change between adventures (-1/2) and Restricted Powers (-1/4).

The "Restricted Powers" Limitation represents the following disadvantage: Playtime cannot give himself biological superpowers (i.e., he could not mutate himself or others into monsters, change his physiology so that he can fire energy beams, and so on), although he can purchase almost any other power, including Perks (Contacts, Favors, Money, Vehicles and Bases), or any Skill, Talent or Power with the Focus Power Limitation.

**Appearance:** Playtime is a wild-eyed old man with thick box-frame glasses and a taste for white lab coats. His pasty skin is drawn sharply across his features, almost to the bone, and his lips curl away from his gums as if peeled back by an *X-acto* knife. His clothes have a rumpled look about them, and the hair on his head has been reduced to a few stubborn strands that refuse to abandon ship.

Playtime's large, bulky radio remote control can be found either clenched tightly in his hands or jammed into one of the deep pockets of his lab coat. When in the middle of his crimes, Playtime becomes quiet and intense, his eyes narrow, and his obsessive stillness is broken only when he pads his forehead with a damp coat sleeve. When his plans are disrupted, however, his face flushes like a kettle coming to boil, his eyes bug out, and then he lashes out in a frenzied tantrum, frequently pounding his fists on the nearest surface (sometimes even the heads of his hired thugs) and jumping up and down while shrieking "No, no, NO!!!" at the top of his lungs. The effect is disturbingly child-like.

Playtime's tour of duty in the "colonies" has not dulled his thick British accent, and it is often difficult for others to understand him. Playtime misinterprets the requests of Americans that he repeat himself as evidence of their monumental Gump-like stupidity.



# PUNCHINELLO

*Note: Punchinello is from Villains: The International File, written by Jeff O'Hare. Though his background is relatively unchanged, the statistics listed here represent his abilities in the world of Dark Champions.*

## Punchinello

Val	CHAR	Cost	Roll	Notes:
15	STR	5	12-	3d6
26	DEX	48	14-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
23	CON	26	14-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
23	INT	13	14-	PER Roll: 14-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
6	COM	-2	10-	
8	PD	5		
5	ED	0		
5	SPD	14		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
8	REC	0		
46	END	0		
46	STUN	15		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 148**

**Movement:**

**Powers & Skills:**

**Mastermind:**

**Power Pool** (100 Active Points; for a list of gadget possibilities, see *Punchinello's Toys*, below) (129)

**Martial Arts: Italian Stage Fighting** (27)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Legsweep	+2	-1	6D6, Target Falls
Disarm	-1	+1	35 STR Disarm
Cartwheel	+0	+5	Dodge, All Attacks, Abort
Low Kick	0	+2	7D6
Hoist N' Heave	0	+1	v/5, Target Falls
High Kick/ Roundhouse	-2	+1	9D6
Jab	-1	+1	3D6 NND (7) (7) Defense is Rigid rPD on Neck

+2 Damage Classes with Italian Stage Fighting (Added In) (8)

Can use Mace (Clubs) with Italian Stage Fighting (1)

**Gas Mace:**

**Mace:** +3D6 HA Damage, 0 END (+½), OAF (-1) [23] (6)

**Mace Gas Attachment:** 5D6 Energy Blast, NND (Defense is LS: Self-Contained Breathing, +1), AE: 5" Radius (+1), 3 Continuous Charges (1 Turn Each, can be "turned off" by dispersing gas cloud, -¾), No Range (-½), OAF (-1)

**Harlequin Costume:** +9PD/+7ED Armor, OIF (-½) (16)

**Harlequin Mask:**

Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing, OIF (-½) (7)

Flash Defense (6 Points), Hardened (+½), OIF (-½) (6)

**Acrobatic Skill:**

+3" Running (9" Total) (6)

+2" Superleap (5" Fwd/4" Up) 1 (2)

**Background Skills:**

Acrobatics 15- (5)

Breakfall 15- (5)

Climbing 15- (5)

Contortionist 15- (5)

CS: +2 Levels with All Combat (16)

Demolitions 15- (11)

Disguise 15- (11)

Forgery 11- (3)

Inventor/Gadgeteering 17- (6)

SC: Chemistry 14- (3)

SC: Physics, 14- (3)

SC: Plastics 14- (3)

Stealth 14- (5)

Streetwise 14- (8 or less while in the United States) (5)

Weaponsmith: Muscle-Powered Weapons, Slug Throwers, 12- (6)

Languages: Italian (Native), English (Fluent w/Accent), French (Fluent Conversation), German (Fluent Conversation) (7)

**Followers** (5 50-Pt Followers; see *Punchinello's Troupe*) (25)

5 International **Contacts** (GM Discretion), all at 11- (10)

WF: Small Arms, Knives (3)

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 345**

**Total Character Cost: 493**

**100+ Disadvantages:**

**Berserk:** if Orders Questioned, 8-, 11- (15)

**Enraged:** if Insulted or Mocked, 14-, 11- (15)

**Distinctive Features:**

Hunchbacked (Concealable, Major) (15)

Harlequin Appearance (EasConc, Major) (10)

**Hunted:**

By the Italian Police (Lim Geo, NCI, As Pow), 11- (15)

By the Mafia (Lim, NCI, MoPow), 8- (15)

By Playtime (As Pow), 11- (15)

**Psychological Limitations:**

Ruthless (Common, Total) (20)

Paranoid Personality Disorder (Com, Str) (15)

**Secret ID:** Paulo Chinelli (15)

**Villain Bonus** (266)



## Punchinello's Toys

Listed here is a selection of some of the toys that Punchinello has used in the past:

1. *Squirt Gun/Flower*: 2D6 RKA, Armor Piercing (+½), 6 charges (-¾), OAF (-1), Cost: 45/14 Points.

2. *Flash Jacks*: 3D6 Flash vs. Sight Group, Armor Piercing (+½), 1 charge (-2), OAF (-1), Cost: 23/11 Points.

3. *Exploding Teddy Bear*: 10D6 Energy Blast, Explosive (+½), 1 Charge (-2), OAF (-1), Cost: 75/14 Points.

4. *Razor-Edged Yo-Yo*: 2D6 RKA, Armor Piercing (+½), 2 Charges (-1), No Range (-½), OAF (-1). Total Cost: 45/18 Points.

5. *Humming Top*: 6D6 Mind Control ("Stand Still"), Area of Effect: 6" Radius (+1¼), 2 Continuous Charges (1 Turn Each, can be "turned off" by smashing top or making enough noise to drown out the humming of the top, -1), No Range (-½), Target must be able to hear Top Humming (-¼), OAF (-1), Cost: 67/18 Points.

6. *Expanding Jack-In-The-Box*: 6D6 Entangle, 1 Hex Area of Effect (+½), 1 Charge (-2), Activate 14- (-½), OAF (-1). Total Cost: 90/20 Points.

**Note:** Punchinello's gas mace was once solely a part of his Power Pool. Over time, however, he developed a preference for it no matter what the crime, so he made a permanent addition to his arsenal.

**Background:** Hunchbacked from birth, Paulo Chinelli was abandoned as a child on the doorstep of a small Italian orphanage. Despised and ridiculed by the other children at the orphanage, Paulo was forced to seek companionship in toys, many of which he built himself from scraps and junk scavenged from the orphanage cellars and from his forays into the city streets.

Paulo was a brilliant child and may have gone far in life as a scientist or inventor, but constant attacks and insults by other children made him increasingly paranoid, defensive and vengeful. Soon it took little to provoke the disfigured youth, and he would often rage into murderous frenzies at the slightest insult. Eventually, others at the orphanage learned to avoid "Paulo the Mad" and would often hurt him indirectly, usually by smashing the toys Paulo had painstakingly built. These attacks planted the seed for the modus operandi Paulo is best known for today; his lethal toy gadgets. As a means of striking back, Paulo built toys that exacted a high price from anyone who attempted to break



them. As he matured, the complexity (and lethality) of his toys matured with him.

Over a period of several years, Paulo trained his misshapen body until it was as agile and strong as his mind. Once he reached his early teens, Paulo decided to escape his hated life in the orphanage and ran away to live on the streets. His inventive abilities and nimbleness quickly brought him to the attention of a local gang and eventually, into the Italian underworld. Over the course of several years, he became one of the most sought after weapon suppliers in Italy, and eventually, the rest of Europe. While Paulo chafed under the restrictive orders (and budget) of his Mafia bosses, he was nonetheless pleased with his success and enjoyed the respect his position commanded.

His career in the Italian underworld came to an end one night when Paulo overheard his bosses making fun of his appearance. Burning with a murderous rage he had not felt since childhood, he quickly used his toy weapons to wipe out his bosses and fled Italy. Taking the name Punchinello, he has since used his gadgets in crimes all over Europe and overseas, and the high overhead for constructing his toys insures that his crimes will continue for some time.



**Personality:** Punchinello blames the world and everyone in it for his suffering, and his criminal activities tend to be acts of vengeance. His tour of duty in the Italian underworld made him develop a taste for the finest things in life (jewels, artworks, and so on) to which he feels entitled.

Punchinello has an extensive criminal record, having been incarcerated at various institutions throughout Europe. Due to his fixations of revenge and preoccupation with toys, he has been judged criminally insane and is most often placed in asylums rather than prisons. His sentences can usually be measured in days or weeks, as his toys often come to bail him out.

Punchinello has committed a few crimes in the United States and will work for any American criminal who treats him with respect and can meet his price. He still supplies tailor-made gadgets on the side, but his market is primarily European.

**Powers/Tactics:** Punchinello is a gifted acrobat and hand to hand combatant. Though perfectly able to defend himself, Punchinello prefers to allow his toys to do the work, and his first assault usually comes in the form of some toy, whether it be an exploding teddy bear, hyp-

notic tops, razor-edged yo-yos, or his gas-filled mace.

For details on what comprises a Mastermind Power Pool, see Playtime's character sheet under *Powers/Tactics*.

**Four Color:** If the majority of characters playing in this adventure have superpowers, GMs may want to add a few points to Punchinello's SPD, 10 to both his PD and ED Armor, 50 points to his Mastermind Power Pool, and give him 15 points of mental Defense.

**Dark Champions, Paranormal:** The writeup for Punchinello is fine as it stands for paranormal *Dark Champions* campaigns. The extent of his toy technology makes him stand out without the need for paranormal powers.

**Dark Champions, Realistic:** Punchinello may not be appropriate for realistic *Dark Champions* campaigns; GMs may want to tone down the level of technology he uses, reducing it to what would be considered plausible in the real world (mostly timed explosives and radio-controlled toys).

**Appearance:** Punchinello dresses in bright harlequin garb, with a ruffled neck and sleeves and bells on his pointed cap and boots. At first glance, his skin appears to be pure white, but this is due to make-up.



# HAVE A HAVOC NEW YEAR



*Special Agent Mariko Tanaka sighed as Regional Director Fiske explained her orders.*

*"It's the busiest night of the year for local law enforcement, Nightsong. This guy is a loose cannon — a genius. And he's crackers. We have no idea what he will do, but we do know he has a history of violence with firearms and explosives. Our profile indicates he'll use his expertise in a big way, and that he didn't just happen to pick tonight to escape.*

*"It's up to you to find him, and bring him back to Saint E's before he hurts anyone."*

*Nightsong groaned. The last thing she wanted to do on New Year's Eve was track down a psychopath "Why me, sir? This isn't my type of investigation. I'm in the middle of cracking that yakuza biker gang case as we speak."*

*"I know, Agent Tanaka. But your, let's say "talents," for special cases gives you the best chance for nabbing Marshall before he can hurt anyone. Consider it a perk of being the only paranormal agent we have.*

*"And there isn't anyone else . . ."*

## Introduction

*Have a Havoc New Year* is an adventure for *Dark Champions* characters with approximately 75 points with 75 points Disadvantages. A deranged former employee of a national arms and explosives manufacturer turns deadly in his quest for revenge.

Samuel Marshall is a fifty-year old former executive of Winston Arms, a leading manufacturer of rifles, handguns, and ammunition. He was in charge of the company's Chemical Division but was forced to retire to make way for the CEO's young son — an MIT grad with new ideas about computer automation.

Sam was told he lacked vision and had failed to keep up with the ever-changing field of chemistry. He was offered a choice: accept a "golden handshake" or face a layoff, or worse — be fired.

Marshall refused to back down, and filed a complaint with the EEOC for age discrimination. The CEO, Hugh Price, however, was able to buy off the bureaucrats and Marshall was fired for insubordination.

**Author**  
Amy Crittenden

**Artist**  
Tonia Walden





*Dr. Marlow nervously lit a cigarette as she looked over Special Agent Tanaka. She wasn't what the doctor expected in an FBI agent: dressed casually in stonewashed jeans, T Shirt, and jean jacket, and hightop leather boots. And the sound of that horrid motorcycle had echoed up to her office from two blocks away.*

*"What I want to know is how he was able to just walk away from this place," Nightsong demanded. "Since you knew about his background, and considering the criminal charges originally filed against him, why wasn't he in maximum security?"*

*(Continued on page 42)*

Something inside Marshall snapped. He is a former Marine, and fiercely patriotic. It was reprehensible for younger Americans, who hadn't made the sacrifices he had, to treat their elders as tools to be used and thrown away. It was time for the young punks to learn the hard way — and he planned to teach the class. Thus, Marshall conceived a sinister, if exotic plan, to hammer the point home.

Marshall intends to get personal revenge and make a political statement. To ensure he has the nation's attention, he plans to be as violent and destructive as possible. It's up to the heroes to stop him before the final ball drops!

Marshall's timing is not coincidental. He has chosen New Year's Eve for symbolic effect as well as the increased publicity such an incident will bring. He is trying to make a point about using people up, and then throwing them away (the fact he is doing the very same thing has escaped him). To Marshall, New Year's Eve symbolizes what is wrong with youngsters in America today. It is a day where the "old" is pitched away for the new in the midst of a drunken orgy. By timing his attack for New Years, and revolving them around "new vs old" issues, he hopes to get his point across.

## Getting the Players Involved

If the PCs are cops, especially investigators, simply assign them the case. Because New Year's Eve is such a busy night for the police, they can't afford to be too choosy about who works on the case as long as the job gets done. If the PCs are vigilantes, then they may hear about Marshall's escape over the radio, in the midst of all the celebratory broadcasting.

## Marshall's Escape

Marshall's mind isn't what it used to be. Shortly after he was fired from Winston Arms, Marshall exhibited symptoms of Manic-Depression (Bi-Polar Disorder). His moods swung violently from one extreme to another. After he used his M-16 to complain to his wife about dinner, he was placed in a local psychiatric facility (St Elizabeth's Hospital) for observation and treatment. The facility was not secured, however, and Marshall simply walked away early in the evening — along with a dozen other delusional patients. His psychiatrist, Dr. Anna Marlow, believes that Marshall is a danger to himself and others, and wants to see him and the other inmates returned to the facility as soon as possible. She realizes that Marshall is the ring-leader of the escape (although it is possible that the PCs may miss this point if the GM introduces the escape to them subtly). PC cops assigned to the case will be instructed by their superior to interview Marlow for background information on the escaped inmates. Vigilantes who hear about the case may decide to visit Marlow after hearing a broadcast plea from Marlow for Marshall to return to the hospital for treatment "before it's too late."

The players will need detailed background information on Marshall if they intend to anticipate his next move. The players will have to out think Marshall in order to stop him. If the players forego talking with Dr. Marlow, then Marshall should have no difficulty in running rings around the players.

## Marlow's Profile

Dr. Marlow has gathered a great deal of psychiatric information on Marshall during his stay at the State Hospital. This includes personal history, a description of his mental illness, reports of his symptoms and behavior, and an account of treatment attempted, including medications and therapies. Once the players obtain

# St. Elizabeth's Psychiatric Hospital

**Date:** May 5, 1995

**Name:** Samuel Adams Marshall

**Alias:** None

**SSN:** 996-34-9373

**Date of Birth:** May 5, 1944

**Height:** 6' 1"

**Weight:** 210 lbs

**Martial Status:** Married

**Emergency Notification:** Elise Marshall, wife.

**Education:** BA Chemistry, Salisbury State College, 1984.

**Employment Status:** U.S. Marine Corps, Retired 1982. Currently Unemployed. Formerly Chief of Chemical Division, Winston Arms and Ammunition Co, Washington DC.

**Military Service:** Marine Corps, 1962-82. Discharge Status: Retired. Discharge Rank: Master Sergeant. Service included three tours in Viet-Nam. Received several commendations, including Good Conduct, Bronze Star, and Silver Star.

**Current Charges:** Assault, Domestic Violence, Assault with a Deadly Weapon, Brandishing a Firearm, Resisting Arrest, Assault on a Peace Officer, Terrorist Threats, Conspiracy to Commit Arson.

**Prior Criminal History:** None

**Prior Mental Illness:** None

**History of Present Illness:** Mr. Marshall was arrested this date for allegedly assaulting his wife with an automatic rifle in a dispute over cooking.

The patient was brought before the Commissioner and charged with Assault and Domestic Violence, and Brandishing a Firearm. The patient was transferred to St. Elizabeth's and placed in maximum security pending completion of psychiatric evaluations, and resolving the patient's competency to stand trial.

The patient reports feelings of anger, grief, frustration, and depression centering around the recent loss of his job as head of the Chemical Division for a large weapons manufacturer. The patient states he was fired because of age discrimination. The patient states he attempted to fight his dismissal with the EEOC, but "that bastard Price bought them off." Denies firing was for cause. "I was the best damn explosives man they ever had. I know everything there is to know. Just because I got my training in the Marines and not at some fancy college doesn't mean I don't know my stuff." Patient focuses much of his anger on his former employer.

At time of admission, Mr. Marshall was extremely violent and uncooperative. He continually screamed curses against, "them" and made references to "you're not going to throw me away." Patient frequently screamed and attempted to attack people who were not present. When alone in cell, patient was observed arguing with former employer, and attempting to attack him, although no one else was in the cell with him. The patient then curled into a ball underneath his bunk, refusing to interact verbally with corrections staff. Patient was noted crying, "Don't throw me away, I'm not old, I'm not broken" Patient became very withdrawn and depressed, and attempted to hang himself. The patient was restrained, and placed on suicide watch for three days. Patient alternated between episodes of extreme depression and violent outbursts. Patient was administered thiorazine, and as he responded to medication, removed from suicide watch and placed on treatment. Initial Diagnosis was Bi-Polar Disorder, severe, with psychotic features, and Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome.

Patient responded well to initial treatment. Once his psychosis was under control, patient agreed to aggressive course of medication and was placed on Lithium 300mg three capsules three times a day for depression, Trilafon 8mg three times a day for his psychosis, Ativan 1 mg every four hours as needed for anxiety, with Benadryl 50mg two times a day to control the side effects. Patient did well with initial medication. Symptoms decreased dramatically over the next few days, and as patient adjusted to new setting, became active in assigned activities and group therapy.

Patient showed some increase in depression following finding by the court of not criminally responsible on August 17, 1995, and indefinite involuntary commitment to this facility. Patient had expressed unrealistic hopes of being released soon after, citing his improvements under medication. However, as patient is still prone to fits of depression and anger, treatment goals had clearly not been met. Patient still has unresolved issues with wife over initial incident of violence, and has refused to accept responsibility for his actions on the date of his arrest.

However, due to patients gradual improvements, and positive attitude, he was removed from maximum security to minimum security, and granted grounds privileges and limited job assignments. He has accepted the limits of the facility well, although he has been placed on unit restriction several times for petty behavior towards staff and other patients over minor slights both real and perceived.

**Appearance:** Patient is middle-aged man, well groomed and polite. He presents as highly intelligent, and well-educated. Has an occasional "rough edge" to his personality from his history of being a Master Sergeant in the Marines.

**Discharge Planning:** Patient still has many unresolved issues relating to his inappropriate use of anger, and inappropriate use of violence to manage his anger. Patient agrees he needs to work on these issues, and has been cooperative with staff since initial admission. His judgment is good. His affect is only occasionally depressed. Patient is not currently delusion or psychotic, however his poor anger management, and ability to nurse grudges, combined with his potential for violence when manic currently makes him a poor candidate for release at this time.

Anna Marlow, Staff Psychiatrist

(Continued from page 40)

*Dr. Marlow sighed. "Sam fooled us all. Oh, we know what to look for when we think a patient is telling us what he thinks we want to hear. But Sam truly seemed to be getting better. He actively participated in all his scheduled events, and in group was aggressive in helping other patients get to the roots of their own problems. He always took his medication, and never got into fights with the staff. He showed insight into his own problems, and used good judgement. There seemed to be no reason not to move him to minimum security, and give him grounds privileges. A mistake, I grant you.*

*"He's seldom what he seems to be, and seems to take delight in catching others by surprise. I've got his complete file here for you — it may give you some insight on how to catch him. And catch him you must — he is very dangerous, more than I ever realized."*

*Terrific, Nightsong thought. How like the psycho-techs to call in law enforcement to clean up the spilled milk . . .*

this, they will be able to understand how Marshall is able to accomplish many of the crimes he intends to commit tonight.

## Start of a New Crime Spree

Marshall has been planning for this night for months. He had made many advance preparations, and taken advantage of lack security at the State Hospital to sneak out to meet with many of his contacts. His plans include several grandiose events, seemingly unconnected, which will culminate in the explosion of 365 "minibombs" planted in revelers gathered to watch the ball drop at the Old Post Office, in the campaign city. The "warm up" events are designed to attract attention, and keep police distracted from his primary goal of setting off the mini-bombs.

Marshall has planned for several events to take place in the early evening hours. The first is a riot at an upscale nightclub in Georgetown called *The Unfettered*. *The Unfettered* is a trendy place frequented by young professionals working for the Federal Government and local businesses. The club is noted for its lavish enter-

tainment, long lines, and exclusivity. The riot will be started by the residents of a local nursing home who have been drugged with a specially prepared variant of PCP.

While the police are distracted at *The Unfettered*, Marshall's band of thugs will then attack a Southeast Street gang notorious for preying on older residents and stealing Social Security checks. Marshall's men will use sleeping gas, nets and other traps to take the gang members alive, dress them in baby clothing, and set them running down South Capitol Street. Unfortunately, their path will take them directly into the path of a rival gang, and a street fight then breaks out — which the heroes must quell.

Marshall then will begin the final phase of his diabolical plan. He will take over a local television station WTTG, and force the news staff to interrupt the New Years broadcasts of all other local stations in favor of a "special report," featuring a speech to the city at large. At this point, Marshall will allude to the bombs planted outside of the Old Post Office — and give the party a timetable for disarming them.

The final crisis is that of disarming the bombs. At this point in the adventure, the GM can run in real time, to heighten the sense of emergency, and draw the adventure to a quick and spectacular conclusion.

## City Ready To Bring In New Year With A Bang

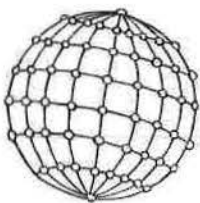
Ollie West, Contributing Writer

Millions of city residents are getting ready to welcome the New Year, complete with a countdown and the city's annual lowering of the New Year's ball atop the old Post Office building. Thousands of revellers are expected to gather in the streets around the downtown Postal building to watch the lowering of the lighted ball, which has become a tradition, modelled after the event held each New Year's Eve in New York City.

The Mayor and several City Councilmembers are also scheduled to attend. Also on hand will be more than 300 uniformed officers from the city police department, including 48 mounted officers riding horses trained in crowd control. When asked if the horses spook easily, one officer said, "These are very well-trained horses. They have to undergo a series of tests before they are considered acceptable for use on the force. Gunshots, loud crowds and music don't phase these animals."

Don't get in their way, either, according to Deputy Chief Baskins of the police Mounted Detail. "The horses are trained in the 'tush push' dance," he stated jokingly, referring to the way the horses walk in side-step fashion, moving people with their large bodies.

Other events scheduled this New Year's Eve include a free fireworks display over LeMastre Park and a benefit concert at the Pierpoint Arena featuring The Solitaires, a popular rock band from the sixties, who will be performing until Midnight.



# THE UNFETTERED

Marshall's opening number has been in the planning stages for months, and was the most difficult for him to set up. To do so, he actually had been sneaking out of his room and off the hospital grounds for several months, to meet with an underground chemist helping him develop a special compound for the night's mischief. That compound is a variant of phencyclidine (PCP).

Originally developed as an anesthetic, PCP soon proved to have dangerous side effects, and is notorious for its effects on the mind and body. Users have been known to suffer incredible hallucinations, while enduring unimaginable pain. Bullets have been known to fail against "dusted" addicts, and a minimum of eight people are usually needed to physically restrain such individuals. Marshall, with his knowledge of bio-chemistry from his days in the military, has been working with an underground chemist in an attempt to develop a new type of PCP, one which will keep the extreme violence and endurance of its users, while making them susceptible to "suggestion." It is his goal to induce a mass hallucination on a group of people, then put them in a position to carry out the first part of his plan to send a "wake up call" to the young snots who displaced him and others like him. Five weeks ago, he succeeded.

If the GM wants to set up a prelude to this adventure, he could run a "short" in which the lab used by Marshall is tracked down and seized by the characters. The GM could easily work in a short shoot out between the "cooks" and the characters, which has the likelihood of erupting into spectacular explosions as the chemicals involved (ether, for one) are rather unstable. At the conclusion, the players can "seize" a small sample of the drug, which under analysis will prove to be something new and totally unknown. If captured, one of the "cooks" might give the PCs a description of the "wacked out dude" who bankrolled and supervised the operation — but was not present during the battle (Marshall is smart enough to stay "locked up" in the State Hospital during the day).

## The Call

The players get an "all units" call from officers on the scene of *The Unfettered* nightclub. *The Unfettered* is a trendy nightclub frequented



by high income young professionals with the Federal Government and local corporate offices. The entertainment, drinks, and locale is lavish, as are the prices. Because the club is upscale and exclusive, disturbance calls are rare (offenders are usually bounced and never let in again — because the club is such a "spot," even the worst drunks are usually reluctant to tangle with the management).

Initially, the situation outside the club is not as bad as it looks. The officers are arresting rioters easily. However, there is concern among the officers present about actually going into the club, where apparently, the riot is at its worst. At this point, PCs who have any authority could contact the lead officer on the scene, and offer to assist in containing the situation. If the PCs have a reputation for "special cases," the officer on the scene might offer to let the PCs take control, either hoping their expertise is just what is needed, or that he hopes to place the blame for a disaster about to happen on *their* shoulders.

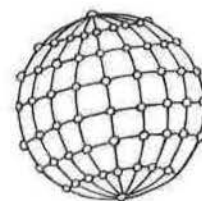
Once the PCs enter *The Unfettered*, an incredible sight will be before them. Struggling with the young yuppie patrons of the bar, is a scene out of *Cocoon*. Approximately 60 men and women, all of whom look to be prime can-

*Nightsong* had barely left Dr. Marlow's office when the 10-99 came over the radio. "All available units, Wisconsin and North 17th. Riot in progress, officers down."

*Nightsong* knew she had to find Marshall as soon as possible. But no one ignored an "officers down" call. She revved the motor of her Harley-Davidson, and sped towards the scene.

She flashed her badge and ID at the officer in riot gear manning the roadblock, and cruised in towards the command post.

(Continued next page)



She saw two old friends, Sergeant Robert "Donut" Martin and Officer Jennifer "Jenny Hen" Hennissey.

"What's the situation?" Nightsong asked.

"Dunno for sure," Jenny replied, lovingly stroking the barrel of her semi-auto 12-gauge.

"I hear the riot started when a gang crashed the party in *The Unfettered*. We're detaining anyone who comes out until we figure out what's going on."

Nightsong looked the club over. "Look. The side-door in that alley looks cracked open. Let's go have a look." Jenny grinned, and followed Nightsong as she crept towards the club, followed by Donut. The three officers gasped at the scene before them: the dance floor crowded with what looked like retirement home refugees, throwing bottles, chairs, tables, and occasionally each other at the yuppies cowering in the corners . . .

didates for the nursing home, are brawling with the young "up and comers." And the geezers are winning.

What the players do at this point could have repercussions for the department as a whole, and the GM should pay careful attention to how the players handle the situation while not pressuring them to take any action over another. However, if the players make any attempt to restrain, arrest, or otherwise break up the fighting, they will be in for a shock: the drugs Marshall has secretly fed to the old-timers has made them incredibly tough and resistant. An all out and out bar fight should break out at this point, with the old folks using any and all weapons at their disposal to fight the "coppers," including but not limited to chairs, tablelegs, bottles, and each other. Play the situation up for laughs. Be inventive. Have fun with it!

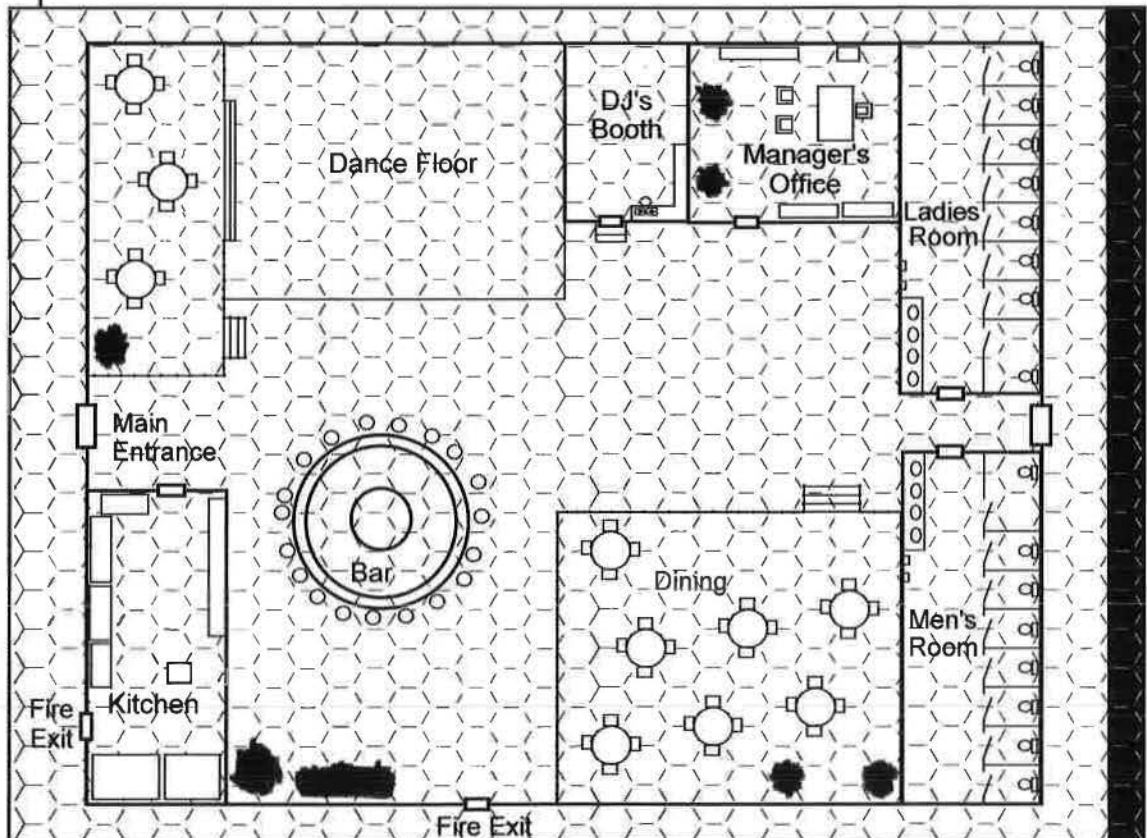
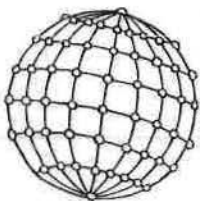
Once the PCs regain control over the situation (assuming they do) the question will inevitably arise: how in the heck did those withered old vegetables manage to get into a fashionable nightclub and start a barroom brawl? Identification bracelets on the elderly combatants will reveal them all to be residents of the *Golden Days* nursing home. A quick check with the nursing staff will reveal that all the residents involved suddenly got up in the middle of their early dinner hour, dressed for an evening out, and paraded out the doors of the facility. Those nurses and aides who attempted to intervene were flung aside like rag dolls. A check

with the 911 operator will confirm a call from the nursing home, which was placed on a lower priority due to the sudden rise in violent crime in the city — unanticipated even for the most jaded veteran of New Year's Eve policing.

If the PCs investigate further into the mysterious behavior of the nursing home residents, they will uncover startling information. A forensic analysis of the supper served that night will reveal traces of a previously unknown chemical compound similar in structure to phen-cyclidine (PCP). Blood samples from the residents will also turn up traces of this compound. The next question will probably be: how did it get there in the first place? If the players check the backgrounds of the staff, they will discover that one of the regular dietary aides has a criminal background, and a history of dealing drugs. Hard questioning of this employee may force him to reveal that he was bribed to plant the drugs in the residents soup.

If the GM created a "short" around the underground chemist who invented this drug, then the dietary employee could be a former runner for the chemist, and have a history with one of the PCs.

The first part of Marshall's scheme is now complete. Local news stations will interrupt coverage of New Year's celebrations and count-downs to comment on the riot at *The Unfettered*. The story will be run for laughs, "Old Timer's Come Out to Bring in the New Year," and similar headlines will be used.



# THE BABY BOOMERS

Once news of the riot at *The Unfettered* breaks out, Marshall puts the second phase of this plan into action. Expecting the riot to keep him free of police intervention, at least for awhile, Marshall's band of crazies lay siege to the headquarters of one of the city's most notorious gangs: the Downtown Rippers. Most of the year, the Rippers content themselves with petty burglaries, drug dealing, and carjackings. Recently, they have been responsible for a string of muggings of senior citizens for their Social Security checks. Their lack of regard for their elders has been yet another ill to incur Marshall's ire.

Many of the rank and file members of the Rippers are already out on the streets, committing their petty crimes for the night. Only the core leadership of the gang remains in their hide-out, a boarded up building on the Southeast side of town. Marshall and his team easily take out the lax watchman, and fire several sleep gas grenades into the Rippers headquarters. Since the Rippers tend to expect bullets rather than grenades, they have no gas masks and are caught completely by surprise.

## The Call

As the players wrap up their investigation of the riot at the nightclub, they get another call to respond to strange events in the city. Local residents in Southeast called to report a gang fight in progress — but the gangbangers involved were wearing diapers, bibs, and bobbins!

Marshall did not waste any time. He redressed the comatose Rippers, gave them an antidote to the sleep gas, and dumped them in a rival gang's territory — the Henderson Street Homeboys — complete with the usual automatic and semi-automatic weapons the gang was accustomed to carrying. Vulnerable, and nearly naked, the Rippers quickly caught the attention of the rival Homeboys and were surrounded on the street and ambushed. Shivering with the cold, the Rippers returned fire, and a full fledged gun battle is in progress when the players arrive on the scene.

If the players think ahead, use strategy and come in behind the gang members from several angles, then they will have little difficulty driving off the Homeboys (if one of the PCs makes a Tactics roll, the GM may suggest this

to them). The Rippers, however, are in unfamiliar territory, and exposed — they will fight long enough buy time for one of their number to steal the first car they see, and lead the players on a high speed chase through the city.

If the PCs manage to arrest any of the Rippers, they will learn only that one moment the Rippers were "chillin' with the homies," then they woke up as they were in the middle of Homeboy territory.

At this point, the PCs should be making some connections between Marshall's escape, the riot at *The Unfettered*, and the gang fight. If the PCs have made a careful study of Marshall's profile, they will know his expertise as a chemist, his military background, and his displacement from Winston Arms in favor of a younger man. This old vs. the young theme should be beginning to emerge to the players at this point. This information will be important to them later on in trying to outguess Marshall's next move.

## Gangbanger

13 STR 14 DEX 13 CON 10 BODY  
10 INT 10 EGO 15 PRE 10 COM  
5 PD 4 ED 3 SPD  
6 REC 26 END 25 STUN

**Powers:** +1" Running (7" Total)

**Martial Arts:** Dirty Infighting

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Killing Strk	-2	+0	½ HKA
Mart Strike	+0	+2	4½d6, Strike
Mart Throw	+0	+1	2½d6 + v/5
Nerve Strike	-1	+1	2d6 NND
Off Strike	-2	+1	6½d6, Strike

Use Art with Weapon: Street Weapons

**Skills:** CS: +1 w/single weapon of choice, +1 w/pistols, CS: +1 w/Martial Arts, AK: Back Alleyways 11-, KS: The System 11-, PS: Drug Dealer 12-, Stealth 12-, Streetwise 13-, WF: Small Arms, Improvised/Street Weapons

**Disadvantages:** Hunted by the Police 8-, Hates Authority (Com, Str)

**Background:** The two gangs in this scenario, the Downtown Rippers and the Henderson Street Homeboys, have a long standing feud with one another over drug distribution "rights." Each claimed to have sole claim to high traffic areas for dealing illegal substances. In recent months there have been several drive-by shootings. Less than a week ago, a Ripper shot and killed a five year old girl while trying to murder a Homeboy (which was retaliation for an assault on a Ripper the day before). The Rippers have also been expanding into other areas of crime, and have been responsible for a wave of terror against senior citizens who live in several assisted living compounds in Ripper territory: seniors have been beaten, robbed, burglarized, and otherwise intimidated.

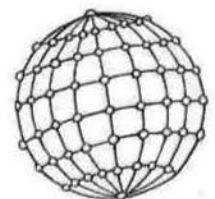
*Nightsong* gritted her teeth in frustration as she responded to the call of gang violence in her sector. Her Harley-Davidson rumbled loudly as she sped down the near-empty streets in response to Donut's call for help, her tiny oriental form doll-like on the huge motorcycle. She cut her engines and coasted down a narrow alley as the rat-tap-tap of semi-automatic gunfire drifted towards her.

She found Donut leaning against his unmarked car, his name sake in crumbs on his shirt. He brushed them away as he turned to greet her. "Sorry to drag you away from your investigation, *Nightsong*. But after what happened at *The Unfettered*, this was just too weird not to pass on. I think it may be related."

"A gang fight? One out of how many that go on every single weekend?" *Nightsong* replied, exasperated.

Donut smiled tightly. "Go look. Then tell me what you think."

*Nightsong* snapped the kickstand down with a loud crack and gently lowered the Harley down. She carefully edged to the entrance to the alley, and looked out on the gang fight. Her anger disappeared with a startled gasp as she watched the roughest and toughest homeboys in the District battling it out with a rival gang — dressed in diapers and bibs on a cold December night.





Marshall cackled gleefully as he faced Nightsong and Donut. "You're too late! Price will pay the price for Price! Hahahahaha! A life for every day of the New Year! You've already dropped the ball on this one!"

Nightsong glanced helplessly at Donut's stern features as Marshall's words sunk in. The loon was planning something else... but what?

**Powers/Tactics:** Neither gang is much on subtlety. When the two meet, bullets fly until one side or the other is dead or fled. The GM should treat them as essentially Enraged at all times, to the point where they will shoot at anything that moves, especially the police. Once everyone is out of bullets, the gangbangers will substitute fists, bottles, chains, or whatever else is handy.

## A High Price to Pay

Marshall is now prepared for the third part of his revenge plan. This time, he not being subtle at all. He is determined to exact a personal price out of the man he sees as responsible for his downfall: Hugh Price, CEO of WinstonArms. In keeping with his "old vs. new" motif, Marshall doesn't plan to strike directly at Price himself, but through the "snot-nosed brat" who took his job away from him — Price's son Mark.

Mark Price himself hasn't a clue as to what is going on, or that his father fired Marshall to make room for him in the company. He is celebrating with friends, going from party to party, and planning to arrive at the Old Post Office in time to watch the Ball drop in with the New

Year. He will never arrive at his destination. Price is waylaid by Marshall on his way to yet another drunken party. Marshall plans to use Mark to bring the culmination of the evening's "fun" home to Price.

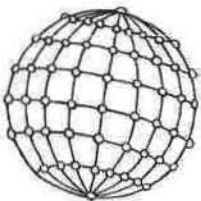
The players should be aware by now of Marshall's connection to Winston Arms CEO Hugh Price. When the call goes out on the radio that someone is attempting to kidnap Mark Price, bells should go off in the players' heads, and motivate them to investigate and possibly stop Marshall.

The players should arrive on the scene to see Marshall and half a dozen men dragging Mark Price into a car. Marshall and Price speed off as the characters arrive. Marshall's men immediately open suppression fire upon the PCs before leaping into one to three more cars (GM's discretion) and following Marshall's car. If the PCs attempt a pursuit, the other cars will run blocking patterns for Marshall, and continue firing at the heroes to keep them distracted while Marshall gets away.

The assumption here is that Marshall will lead the PCs on a high speed chase through the campaign city. (GMs are encouraged to use the car chase rules in *An Eye For An Eye*.) Depending on how clever the players are, it is possible that they'll run Marshall to the ground, capture him and rescue Price. The assumption, of course, is that Marshall gets away to complete his diabolical plans. However, if the PCs stop Marshall here, that doesn't mean the adventure has to end. Because Marshall has been planning his revenge for months, preparations for the mini-bombs are already in place. Marshall, completely manic now, will brag to the players, "You may have cheated me of my revenge, but all the world will know my tragedy on the New Year!"

The PCs shouldn't have too much difficulty figuring out that Marshall has set up some sort of scheme set to happen at midnight. If the players press Marshall, they should get references to "one shall fall for each day of the New Year," and little else — Marshall will alternate between mad laughter and inane gibbering.

If Marshall escapes the PCs at this point, he will first take Price to the Old Post Office, and make the last preparations for his grand finale, before moving to take over a local radio station, WTTG, and forcing the news staff to run a "special report" announcing his plans to the entire city. He will force the staff to override the transmissions of other local stations to gain complete coverage. Marshall will not hurt any of the station personnel unless he is resisted, but he will attempt to use them as living shields to escape once his message is broadcast.



# DON'T DROP THAT BALL!

The pinnacle of Marshall's scheme revolves around the dropping of the New Year's Ball on top of the Old Post Office. Most of the city's revelers are gathered around the building, drinking and dancing the New Year in. Camera crews from all the local stations are on hand to broadcast the event. As the night draws closer to the midnight hour, more and more eyes will be focused on the glowing ball on its tower atop the Old Post Office itself.

Unbeknownst to the crowd, Marshall has planned long in advance to bring in the New Year in a special way, and with a bang . . . .

While researching the chemical which allowed him to turn a group of nursing home residents into mad, partygoing brawlers, Marshall returned to his original trade: the manufacture of explosives. He laboriously created 365 cunning "micro-bombs" — powerful explosive devices of amazingly small size. He then disguised the micro-bombs in or as ordinary objects of the sort used during New Year's celebrations: party hats, whistles, cups, and the like. Calling in some old favors, he arranged to have the micro-bombs distributed to party-goers gathering at the Old Post Office to watch the Ball drop in the New Year.

In addition to their sheer power, the micro-bombs have one other crafty feature: tiny radio receivers built in to accept a single radio frequency. Once the receivers hear a signal over that frequency, they will set off the built-in detonators, and the micro-bombs will explode.

Marshall has built a simple yet ingenious transmitter. It is designed to broadcast a specific signal over a specific frequency to detonate the micro-bombs. Once the transmitter is activated, it sends out the signal, and the micro-bombs explode. (Treat the mini-bombs as 2d6 KA, Explosion.)

The New Year's Ball is affixed to a tower on top of the Old Post Office Building in the campaign city. It is ninety feet tall, and has a service ladder running the full height of it, along with an automated cable system which drops the Ball, much like an elevator. At the bottom of the tower is a cradle designed to catch the Ball when it completes its trip down the tower. Once the Ball lands in the cradle, pressure plates built within the cradle activate the many lights on the Building to signal the New Year has be-



gun. Marshall has hidden additional plates within the cradle to activate the micro-bombs once the Ball has fallen.

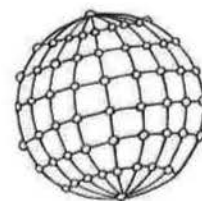
The Ball itself is approximately 25 feet around, and consists of hundreds of colored lights. It will probably occur to the players that to stop the bombs from exploding, all they need do is keep the Ball from falling. If the players simply call the men in charge of activating the Balls descent, they are in for a surprise — they've been knocked out by Marshall's men. They will have to go to the Old Post Office in order to turn the Ball off. Once they get there, they will be in for another surprise: Marshall has sabotaged the cable system so that it cannot be turned off once the Ball begins its descent.

It takes one full minute (5 Turns) for the Ball to descend the entire ninety feet. If the players were unsuccessful in rescuing Mark Price from Marshall, then they will discover his fate here: Price is tied to the bottom of the Ball itself. When the Ball falls into the Cradle, it will simultaneously crush and electrocute him. The players must make their way to the Tower in order to save him!

*Nightsong looked up in horror at the top of the building. Tied below the New Year's Ball was the struggling figure of Mark Price. Struggling to be heard over the noise of the New Year's revelers, she shouted into the radio, "Shut it off! Shut the ball down!"*

*"Who the hell is this," the radio responded. "Look, I've got to flip this switch at midnight, or I'll lose my job."*

*(Continued next page)*





"FBI!" *Nightsong* yelled. "I order you to turn off the New Year's Ball! There's a man tied to it, he'll be killed!" The radio crackled in silence for agonizing seconds before the voice returned. "Damn! I can't turn it off. Someone's messed with my control. ack!" The voice was replaced by giggling. *Nightsong's* blood turned to ice as a new voice started singing into her radio, "When the bough breaks the baby will fall, and into the cradle dies them all!"

In addition to the two men who have taken over control of the Ball's "on switch" in a control room on the ground floor of the Old Post Office, Marshall has had his remaining men (minimum 6) place themselves on the roof of the building in strategic places to make sure no one tries to interfere with the transmitter. They will shoot at anyone attempting to climb the tower, for example, or who try to meddle with the Cradle.

If the players have not taken the time to find out how the Ball and Cradle work, then it is unlikely they will spot the "additions" Marshall placed within. If, during the fight, one of the players takes cover in or around the Cradle, give him a Perception roll at -3 to see if he notices Marshall's handiwork.

### Escaped Mental Patient

13 STR 14 DEX 15 CON 10 BODY  
 10 INT 6 EGO 10 PRE 6 COM  
 3 PD 3 ED 3 SPD  
 6 REC 30 END 25 STUN

**Skills:** Acrobatics 12-, Concealment 11-, Contortionist 12-, Stealth 12-, Sleight Of Hand 12-, Streetwise 11-, PS: Professional Skill of Choice 11-, KS: Skill of Choice 11-, Contact: GM's Choice 11-, CS: +2 w/any single weapon

#### Martial Arts: Unpredictable Rage

*Maneuver OCV DCV Damage*  
 Basic Strike  
 Throw  
 Mart Dodge

**Disadvantages:** Enraged "If things go wrong" (Com, 14-/8-); Phys Lim: Insane (All the time, Greatly)

**Background:** Marshall has collected a dozen or so delusion patients from the mental hospital to help him in his quest. Each has a different reason for joining, and a different mental problem. They are mentally ill cannon fodder, but treat them as if already Enraged when the players encounter them. The GM is encouraged to play up the role of the totally insane if a player attempts to reason with one of Marshall's men.

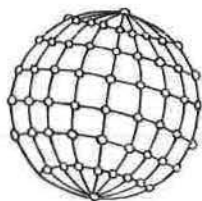
**Appearance:** Each of Marshall's men is dressed in either a hospital uniform or dirty street clothes. Their personal hygiene and appearance is less than acceptable for "normal society."

## If the PCs Win

If they win all is well. The players are cheered as heroes for saving the lives of innocent civilians. Hugh Price will host an awards banquet in honor of the players if Mark survives. If Marshall and any of his men survive and are captured, then they are immediately transferred to a maximum security hospital for the criminally insane. If they escape, then Marshall may begin planning new schemes to revenge himself upon the city, and the players.

## If the PCs Lose

If the Ball drops into the cradle with Mark Price still attached, he will almost certainly be killed instantly, crushed and electrocuted. The micro-bombs will explode on 365 of the revelers in the square below. The GM should decide at this point how lethal the micro-bombs actually are. If the players did a poor job of problem solving, more innocents could die, or be horribly maimed. If the players did well, but just couldn't get the transmitter deactivated in time, the GM could elect to have the bombs "misfire", and only injure the victims rather than kill them. Either way, there will be an Internal Affairs investigation of the players actions, and disciplinary action will likely follow. Happy New Year.



# Samuel Marshall

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	3d6
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER 13-
6	EGO	-8	10-	ECV: 3
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
4	PD	1		PD/rPD: 4/0
3	ED	0		ED/rED: 3/0
3	SPD	3		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
26	STUN	0		

## Characteristics Cost: 48

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
Swimmin: 2"/4"

## Powers:

### Martial Arts: Dirty Fighter (17)

*Maneuver* OCV DCV Damage  
Off Strike  
M Strike  
Mart Escape  
Killing Strk

### Background Skills:

Acrobatics 12- (3)  
CS: 2 Levels w/ Small Arms (6)  
CS: 2 Levels w/ Martial Arts (10)  
Combat Driving 12- (3)  
Demolitions 16- (13)  
Inventor 16- (9)  
SC: Chemistry 15- (4)  
SC: Inorganic Chemistry 13- (2)  
SC: Organic Chemistry 13- (2)  
SC: Pharmacology 11- (1)  
WF: Flamethrowers, Grenade Launchers, Hvy  
MGs, Rocket Launchers, Small Arms,  
Heavy Weapons (8)  
Weaponsmith 11- (3)  
Weaponsmith (Ammunition Making ) 15- (11)  
Contact: Illegal Drug "Cook" 13- (4)  
Money (5)  
Scientist (3)

### Total Powers & Skills Cost: 104

**Total Character Cost: 152**

### 75+ Disadvantages:

#### Enraged:

When called "Old Man" (Com) 8-/Rec 14- (5)

**Hunted:** by Dr. Anna Marlow (MorPow, NCI,  
Lim Geo, Mild) 11- (15)

**Psych Lim:** Hates Hugh Price (Com,Tot) (20)

#### Reputation:

Brilliant Explosives Man, 11- (Extreme) (15)

**Phys Lim:** Psychotic (15)

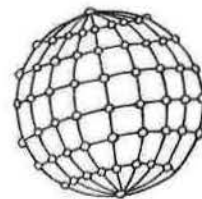
**Experience** (7)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 77**



**Background:** Samuel Marshall is a baby-boomer. Born to World War II parents, Sam was raised in a traditional American household. He believed in God, Liberty, and the Constitution. Following family tradition, he joined the Marines after high-school, and served twenty-years, including three tours in Viet-Nam. He specialized in demolitions in the Marines, and was one of the best explosives men in uniform when he retired. Still a young man, he took a job with Winston-Arms, and started college, earning a degree in Chemistry. His long military experience and native talents took him to the top of the corporate ladder, and soon he was in charge of manufacturing ammunition for the national gun company.

Marshall proved to be a good choice. He innovated several new ways of making gun powder that reduced costs, and increased effectiveness. Meanwhile, his wife stayed at home, raising four beautiful daughters. They vacationed yearly in Ocean City, Maryland and lived the perfect American life: a home with two cars, a swimming pool, club memberships the works. Marshall worked hard, but it was worth it, worth all the sacrifices. His girls would go to the best schools, and marry right. What more could a proud father ask?



He didn't share in the post traumatic trauma many of his fellow vets suffered. He'd gone through lots, sure. He'd seen the effects of Charlie's clever mines and walking suicide bombs, sure. He'd investigated many of the cases, and filed the reports on what had happened. War was terrible, but worth the price for liberty. He was glad to have served, and he'd go again in a minute. So what if he was too old for the Reserves anymore. He purchased an M-16, like the rifle he'd carried in 'Nam, and kept it in perfect working order.

Sam's world came crashing down around him the day Hugh Price called him into his office.

"Times are changing, Sam," Price had said. "We need to catch up with the modern business world. I've got to downsize a bit to stay competitive."

"Sir, you don't mean to lay off some of my people, do you?" Sam had protested. "Some of them have been with us for nearly thirty years. Let me go over our department with a fine toothed comb. I'm sure I can come up with ways to cut back without cutting people." Sam was proud of his people — and proud that he always looked out for them.

"That's not quite what I had in mind, Sam." Price shook his head, and shuffled some papers on the antique Jacobean desk. "Nowadays, the fat is on the top. I've got to cut out the fat in my middle management, Sam. But I'm not unsympathetic. I'll do what I can to make it easier for you. I'm prepared to give you your full pension, and a generous bonus as a thank you for your loyalty and service. How does that sound?"

"You're laying me off?" Sam was incredulous. "But I'm too young to retire! I'm only fifty-five!"

Price leaned back in his desk, and crossed his fingers. "I don't think you quite appreciate the position I'm in, Sam. I hate to let you go — you're a good man. But I need to breath some vitality into the company — and I've got just the man for the job. No hard feelings."

Sam was aghast. "You're letting me go for a younger guy? You can't do this! This is age discrimination!"

Price shook his head. "I'm not firing you, Sam. I'm just outlining your options. You can retire with a full pension and your bonus, or you can stay on. But if you do stay on, I can't guarantee I won't have to lay you off in a few months — with nothing. I'd take the buyout if I were you, Sam."

"Just who do you want to replace me, anyway?" Sam felt an uncomfortable suspicion growing in his mind.

"Well, now that you mention it, my son Mark will be graduating from Johns Hopkins in a few months. He's got some wonderful ideas for automation. I'd snatch him up in a heartbeat even if he weren't my own son. If I don't get a job ready for him soon, some other lucky company will get him."

"I won't stand for this!" Sam rose to his feet, shaking with rage. "I'll file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission!"

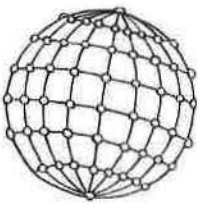
"Go right ahead, Sam. It won't do you any good." Price's laughter followed Sam as he stormed out of the office.

Sam did file the complaint, but it didn't do him any good. Price's money bought a decision in his favor, and Sam found himself out of a job. He moped at home for several months, deeply depressed. He took to spending hours with his gun collection, fantasizing about how to get even with Hugh Price. But one day he made the mistake of correcting his wife with the barrel of his treasured M-16, and they locked him up and threw away the key.

Even after the firing, Sam was not totally without resources. His lawyer was able to get him off as "not criminally responsible" thanks to a diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome from Dr. Marlow, and he found himself in the maximum security wing of Saint Elizabeth's Hospital for the Mentally Ill instead of prison. And there, Sam conceived his plans for revenge.

Sam was a gregarious man, even in the hospital, and quickly made friends with most of the other patients. There he met men with backgrounds similar to his: used up and tossed aside in favor of the latest rage. He met men with contacts on the streets, their minds burned out by drugs. He met arsonists, and escape artists. He soaked up everything they had to teach him about getting around the system, for making the doctors think you were getting "well", for getting extra privileges. Sam took what he had learned, and had the doctors so convinced, he was able to get transferred to minimum security. With grounds privileges.

Sam was careful not to abuse his privileges at first. He studied the layout of the hospital carefully. He studied the routine of the staff, and the guards. He made friends with those on the staff who could be bribed. And he recruited



new friends among the patients willing to help him in his revenge. For it would not just be revenge against Hugh Price — it would be revenge against the wasteful society in general. He would teach them the price for throwing away people, and the reckoning would be high.

When he was ready, he snuck out of the hospital at night and made contact with people on the street he learned about from his fellow inmates. People who would help him for the right compensation. He set up a drug lab, and began working on the means for bringing his schemes off at night, while playing the part of the happy, cooperative patient during the daytime.

Just before Christmas, his plans were completed. Everything was ready and in place. Sam took the quickly approaching New Year as a sign, and set December 31st as D-Day. In the early morning hours of the last day of the year, Sam escaped from Saint E's.

**Powers/Tactics:** Sam Marshall is a driven man. He has extensive military experience, and is an expert in chemical explosives and demolition devices of all kinds.

He plans to use that knowledge to help him carry out his revenge. Sam also has some experience with Pharmacology, and has studied

drugs and their effects as something of a hobby. Drug dealers on the street have found his genius with chemistry to be a real asset, and have financed his schemes, thinking he was using the money to come up with new "custom" drugs for the underground market.

Sam is trying to prove that people do not become useless simply because they get older. To do this, he is setting out to show that his mind is as sharp as ever — thus his games are as much mind games as they are crimes of violence. The players will need to out think Marshall as much as out-manuever him. However, he is still quite insane, and his impulses demand a certain amount of violence and physical pain to accompany the humiliation his actions are designed to bring. Thus, Sam will fight if cornered, gibbering. He will be clever, resourceful, and violent.

**Quote:** "The Tree of Liberty must be watered with the blood of innocents!"

**Appearance:** Sam Marshall stands 6 feet, 1 inch, is white with graying dark hair. He is clean shaven, with his hair in a crew cut. He is dressed old Marine fatigues with his patient's uniform sticking out from underneath. His eyes bulge, and his throat swallows convulsively every time he speaks.

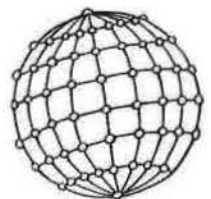
"And in five! four! three! two! one!" the floor manager called, sweating against the cold barrel of a gun pressed to his cheek. Sally Spaknek, the usually chipper anchor, fought to hold back tears as the madman sitting in Dan Druthers chair giggled and twirled a .45 pistol.

"Good evening. Sally Spaknek with a special report, b-being brought to you by Samuel Marshall, who is currently holding WTTG hostage." Sally stuttered slightly, but Marshall seemed unconcerned. He had instructed her to explain the exact situation when she came on the air. "Mr. Marshall, the airwaves are yours."

"Thank you, Sally," Marshall smiled as he leaned forward in his chair to face the camera. "Good evening, city! We face a great moment in history, friends. An old year is about to die, and with it all the things that made this year

something to remember. It should be a sad occasion, but it's not. We celebrate the death of a year with a display of hedonism unmatched by any other American ritual of recent days. We've forgotten our past, friends. We've thrown away the old in favor of the new-and-improved! We should mark such occurrences carefully.

"Did you know that a new life enters this world every day of the year? It sure does. Somewhere, someone is born everyday. I thought it would be fitting to observe the passing of the Old Year, full of birthdays, with a special event. For 365 births, we should observe 365 deaths as well. So that's how we'll do it. When the Old Year dies, 365 bombs attached to randomly chosen people will explode. Happy New Year!" Marshall fell back in his chair, laughing hysterically as static overtook the airwaves...



# WINSTON ARMS AND AMMUNITION COMPANY

**Abbreviation:** WinArm

**Primary Operations:** Manufacture of civilian and military grade weapons and ammunition.

**Primary Competitors:** National Weapons Corp; BronCo.

**Worth:** 78 Million

**Corporate Headquarters:** Washington, DC.

**Head:** Hugh Price, CEO

**Hunted/Watched (Company):** 10 pts (As Pow, Lim, 11-)/ 5 pts (As Pow, Lim, 11-)

**Hunted (Sam Marshall):** 20 pts (As Pow, Lim, 14-, harsh)

**Background/History:** Winston Arms was founded in 1864 to meet the Federal Government's increasing need for weapons and ammunition during the Civil War by Armand Winston, a well bred Harvard graduate from Boston, Massachusetts. In 1862 Winston had lost an arm and an eye at the battle of Antietam when an improperly made cannon exploded next to him. After he recovered from his horrific injuries, Winston vowed to continue to help the Union by starting a weapons company that would produce well made arms for the Government at a low cost. Although keeping costs down was in Winston's mind when he founded his company, his own injuries kept the specter of shoddy goods fresh in his mind, and he swore that no other soldier would go through what he had.

Winston Arms and Ammunition Company, or Winston Arms as it came to be known, quickly established a good reputation for quality goods. After the Civil War, Winston expanded his business into the production of weapons, ammunition and power for civilian uses as the National Expansion west continued. He obtained a contract to supply explosives for the railroads building tunnels in the Rockies, and often boasted that his dynamite never caused a fatal accident due to faulty manufacturing. Winston Arms also continued to be a major supplier for the War and Navy Departments through the War of 1898, World War I, and through to the present day. During World War II, Winston Arms expanded it's operations into heavy weaponry such as bazookas, mines, and long range artillery, and specialized demolitions devices. Winston Arms became the leader developer of

such instruments of destruction, which it maintains to the modern day.

The company remained in the family for the most part until the previous President, Harvey Winston, died leaving only a daughter as his sole heir. Her husband, Hugh Price, took over running the company, and astounded the stock market when he made stock publicly available. Price also managed to gain key Government contracts one after the other, and the worth of Winston Arms exploded. Price was ruthless at obtaining new markets, and aggressively expanded sales into the Third World. Price has also made tentative moves towards moving into high tech weaponry, such as tanks, fight planes, and similar defensive hardware while maintaining his company's lead in traditional weapons and ammunition.

**Campaign Use:** Winston Arms makes a perfect supplier of unique, and hard to get hardware for both heroes and villains. Although Price is careful never to sell directly to criminals or terrorists, he has endless layers and "held companies" with which to sell his products to anyone who can pay their price.

**Slogan:** "Safe. Effective. Eternal."

## Hugh Price

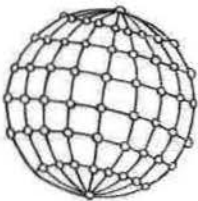
10 STR	12 DEX	15 CON	10 BODY
18 INT	18 EGO	16 PRE	14 COM
3 PD	3 ED	3 SPD	
5 REC	28 END	24 STUN	

**Skills:** Tactics 13-, Trading 13-, KS: The Business World, Demolitions 11-, WF Small Arms, Weaponsmith 11-, Contact EEOC 11-.

**Disadvantages:** Power Hungry (Com, Tot); Devoted to son (Com, Str).

**Background:** Hugh Price was born wealthy. Running the multi-million dollar Winston Arms is a game to Price's megalomaniac obsession with power and control over other people. While improving and extended Winston Arms influence, Price has worked extensively in the stock market, raiding smaller companies with the assets and know-how to make Winston Arms the first choice in mass destruction. Price will stoop to nothing to make money: bribery, blackmail, insider trading, and similar activities are second nature to him. He distrusts everyone, and hates anyone who won't tow the party line or obey his orders without question. Price prefers to keep the most sensitive positions in the company in the family, believing family is the only thing in which he can really trust. While one might question the type of love Price has for his son Mark, there is no question that Mark is valuable to him and Price will undertake any means necessary to protect his son's interests.

**Quote:** "Ethics are for little people"



# DARK KNIGHTS



## Special Thanks

Thanks to The Usual Suspects: Hero Games and Gold Rush Games, my coworkers, friends and fellow gamers, many of whom contributed materially and spiritually.

## HISTORY

### The Origins of SABRE

During the advent of the supersoldier experiments and the appearance of designer drugs, the military tried chemical enhancements to create “perfect soldiers,” but each time it failed. After fifty years of effort, the military decided it needed to concentrate on less esoteric methods of creating better soldiers, and a better way to spend its money. The intelligence community could easily afford the supersoldier projects

the military had discarded. It was a simple task to create a new shadow organization to oversee the project.

SABRE (a reference to the agency’s “cutting edge technology,” not an acronym) had the sole purpose of creating supersoldiers, or in this case “superoperatives.” Using the technology rejected by the military, as well as sophisticated brainwashing techniques they have produced five complete operatives.

The process was designed by specialists relying heavily on the work of Francis Hueger. As the world’s foremost authority on inducing unwilling behavioral change — or “brainwashing” — Hueger wrote a treatise on the subject. The treatise was intended as an aid for military psychologists who would need to “de-program” returning POWs. Through a strict drug regimen and sensory deprivation, the techniques could be used to destroy a man’s personality, or to cure him.

The experiments Hueger performed involved several subjects who were permanently harmed — either losing memories, gaining false ones, or undergoing radical personality changes.

**Author**  
Greg Lloyd

**Artist**  
K.C. Lancaster



As a “threat to national security,” and as a potential embarrassment, Hueger was ordered to silence. The military destroyed the treatise; the existence of the program was quietly and efficiently concealed.

Even as the military was destroying the evidence of Hueger’s research, SABRE was recruiting him as part of their staff. In return for joining, he would be allowed free reign in his experimentation. Hueger felt this was the only way he could continue experimenting without compromising his nation.

The first step in creating a superoperative, code-named *Knightsabre*, was to implant a miniaturized, voice-activated computer and radio near the occipital bone. Through bone conduction, the subject could “hear” instructions and access data from the computer. The implant was also used as part of the indoctrination procedures, constantly transferring audible and subliminal commands.

Next, the candidate had a series of ceramic plates surgically grafted under his skin at key locations: reinforcing bones, over nerve clusters and joints. While healing from this round of surgery, dental patterns were altered, as were his footprints and fingerprints.

The final surgical procedure involved connecting a biofeedback computer to the spinal cord of the subject. This computer acted as a “surge suppresser,” blocking pain signals. (As a side effect of the suppresser and the ceramic plates, the *Knightsabres* are immune to most martial NNDs.)

Survivors of these procedures were trained in a number of useful combat techniques: commando martial arts, military weapons and hand-to-hand combat tactics. Instead of conventional military gear, the agent would receive a special-function Taser and glue-dart mechanism. (SABRE feels a “trademark weapon” is crucial for projecting a “masked man” image.)

SABRE will begin indoctrinating the final “products” as patriots and suicidal loyal agents, but for now, they are programmed to believe they are vigilantes. SABRE believes a vigilante lifestyle will provide the best test for their future operatives. If an operative can survive the streets of Hudson City while evading the police, he should be able to function outstandingly as a secret agent.

## Number Four

Until now, SABRE had only one operative active at any time. If the operative became incapacitated, they replaced him with another *Knightsabre*. When the previous *Knightsabre* was killed in a shoot-out, he was replaced by the current incarnation.

Something went awry. Perhaps from the brain tumor, or a genetic fluke, but unlike the previous *Knightsabres*, this one differed. He was faster, stronger and more cunning than his predecessors; he had an unmatched affinity for the role of a caped crusader. This *Knightsabre* ignored his built-in safeguards. He stopped speeders, muggers, jaywalkers, and streetwalkers — stopped them by killing them. Regardless of the severity of their crime, *Knightsabre* decided their guilt and exacted a death penalty. That was three weeks ago.

Since then, SABRE has been in a panic. They recalled *Knightsabre* but he ignored all their transmissions. They failed to track him. SABRE’s illegality means they can’t risk discovery — they can’t call on other agencies to aid them. Their only option is to release another *Knightsabre* and hope they can use the new agent to capture, or destroy, the current one.

## Previous Incarnations

Subject One was a fairly successful candidate, even though he performed unspectacularly in the field. After serving as the *Knightsabre* four months, his AIDS became too debilitating



for the rigorous lifestyle of a costumed vigilante. He died and his body was cast asea, wrapped in chains.

Subject Two became comatose during an indoctrination session — a “refresher course” to keep his artificial personality functioning as designed — and the specialists at SABRE could not revive him. ‘Two’ has been moved to a local Veteran’s Administration hospital for long-term care. His original identity has been restored and the implants removed, but the scars from the procedures remain. He has been diagnosed with inoperable lymphatic cancer and the doctor’s at the VA mistakenly believe this is the cause of his coma.

Subject Three was the most effective of the early subjects, but was killed in a shoot-out. His body was recovered by Subject Four from the city morgue. Subject Four was then programmed to forget his recovery of Three’s body and sent out into the streets. Like Subject One, Three’s corpse was committed to the sea.

Three other candidates are in varying stages of the conversion process. “Five” is virtually ready, “Six” is about half done and “Seven” has just begun. They may be used to help recover the rogue Knightsabre if things become desperate enough.

### Hueger’s Actions

Francis Hueger is torn between conflicting desires. He is dedicated to his work in mental control, but feels compelled to keep the project a secret. When Four became a rogue agent, Hueger was led to believe his project might be suspended, so he established a makeshift lab on the docks of Hudson City where he could “Tinker With the Mind.” He has been capturing indigents and attempting to alter their personalities by erasing their memories.

Some of the subjects of Hueger’s new work have been released back to the streets with artificially induced amnesia... and a little extra added to their minds. Whether through circumstance or subconscious genius, Hueger’s simplified process is inducing a vigilante mentality to his new subjects, just as in the SABRE project. Only this time, his subjects were not super-tough, super-trained or super-strong!

Hueger’s timidity made him recruit the G-Reign street gang to help with the abductions.

## Timeline

- 2 Years Ago:** Military ends supersoldier program; Francis Hueger authors paper on brainwashing. SABRE is formed and recruits Hueger.
- 1 Year Ago:** Knightsabre One becomes active.
- 8 Months Ago:** Knightsabre One’s HIV becomes too debilitating; Knightsabre Two becomes active.
- 3 Months Ago:** Knightsabre Two becomes comatose; Three is activated.
- 2 Months Ago:** Knightsabre Three is killed and his body retrieved by Knightsabre Four.
- 3 Weeks Ago:** Knightsabre Four goes rogue. Hueger secretly plans to leave SABRE.
- 1 Week Ago:** Francis Hueger leaves SABRE and sets up his simplified lab.
- Present:** SABRE cannot find Four or Hueger; releases Five. Bishop interviews Four and is killed by Five. Police begin searching for Knightsabre as a murderer.

Francis managed to stockpile money during his military years and it has financed most of his actions. If continues unfinanced for more than a month or two, he’ll begin a new program, making his victims thieves.

## Player Information

The important events are mentioned in the Timeline and should be introduced into the campaign as time warrants. Important NPCs should be introduced as early as possible.

Specific incidents of atrocious behavior can be created to personalize Knightsabre’s erratic actions, such as a well-known NPC killed for some minor legal infraction. It’s important to make sure the PCs understand there was nothing their characters could have done to stop Knightsabre.

Other background elements: many homeless people are missing, an unusual number considering it isn’t wintertime; or the partially decayed body of Subject One or Subject Three may have surfaced.







## PART ONE: KNIGHT MOVES

Once the background information has been imparted, the GM needs to motivate the PCs. If the events described in the timeline are worked in slowly during an on-going campaign, it should be a simple to accomplish; the characters should already have strong motivations to deal with Knightsabre.

### Witness To An Atrocity

A player character could become peripherally involved, like watching Knightsabre brutally beat a man who turns his car without signaling. Because the PC can't get free to change into his alter ego, doesn't have his gear or is too far away to arrive in time, he is unable to stop the beating.



### Friend or Witness

A much gentler alternative than the previous one, is to have a friend of a PC witness some violent act and complain to the PC. Or the PC's friend could be the victim. Another variation of this theme would be a frightened NPC complaining to the PC about Knightsabre to the PC's secret identity, then stage a separate appeal to the PC's masked identity. Frank Bishop could be the friend used to draw the player character into the scenario.

### The Ugly Media

The media has always remained relatively neutral about the vigilantes in Hudson City, though different papers have differing stances. The death of the well-respected newspaperman, Frank Bishop, has prompted every newspaper editorial about the subject to condemn Knightsabre's actions and for most papers to call for "something to be done." Television newscasts are filled with amateur video footage of some of Knightsabre's activities and every radio commentator in town is haranguing the mayor's office to take action.

### The Police Slaughter

A group of off-duty police officers are unofficially hunting Knightsabre. By coincidence, they stumble across each other and Knightsabre attacks. As a variation, create character sheets for the police officers, give them to the players and play out the fight scene. That should motivate the players, even if it does not motivate the characters!

### The Mayor's Action

As a last resort, the mayor will implement a police task force to capture all of the vigilantes in the city. If the mayor's a good friend of one of the PCs, there's a chance he'll ask for their help. Otherwise, the PCs will be as pursued as Knightsabre.

# THE INVESTIGATION

## The Autopsy

Should the PCs interview anyone at the morgue, they'll discover Knightsabre was declared dead, then left on the operating table. Before the autopsy began, the lights went out "and there was a great crashing noise." The PCs will learn the fuse box was shorted out by an electrical surge. When power was restored, Knightsabre was gone. No one actually saw him leave; rumors claim he walked out under his own power.

## Crime Scenes, Witnesses & Video Tape

After the PCs have been motivated, they can pursue a number of angles on locating Knightsabre. Each of the crime scenes will have differing details, in part because some of the crimes may have been committed by Subject Four or perhaps an "other" Knightsabre. If only examining a couple of scenes, have the PCs roll vs. Criminology and give them clues based on the chart, below. Bonuses of +1 to +3 should be applied if the character has the noted Complementary Skills. Bonuses should be applied for appropriate question as well as penalties for inappropriate questions. All knowledge gained from each category is cumulative (i.e., a character making his roll by half gains all the presented information), except the disinformation presented by a missed roll.

### Criminology Roll

#### Missed By 1 Or 2

Knightsabre...

...has inhumanly high strength and was seen lifting a train.

...uses some sort of hammer as a weapon.

(*Conversation*) ...can "use the Force, man, I saw him lift a box just by gesturing at it."

...threw the hammer over his head and "sort of flew after it."

(*Forensic Medicine*) ...all of the victims show traces of aspirin.

#### Made Exactly

Knightsabre...

...has inhumanly high strength and was seen lifting a car.

...carries a sword that has an electrical "aura." ...always seems to be talking to himself or is in radio contact with someone.

(*Conversation*) ...has skin like concrete. "It was like punching a brick wall."

..."knows some kind of Kung Fu fighting; he was fast as lightning!"

(*Forensic Medicine*) ...left strange contusions when he struck his victims; something is unnatural about his skeletal structure.

#### Made By 1

Knightsabre...

...his sword can send off electrical bolts at a distance

...hates cops. He stopped chasing a double-parked cabbie to attack a policeman.

...has some sort of grappling line fired from his wrist; instead of traditional grapples it uses an adhesive.

(*Conversation*) ...had bad breath. "I know he's a smoker, man."

...picked up a car but "looked like he was straining."

(*KS: Martial Arts or KS: Analyze Style*)

...practices a martial art called Combato.

#### Made By 2 Or More

Knightsabre...

...attacked an FBI agent.

...kept looking around to see if someone was following him (he's probably paranoid).

...wears an armored costume, built like a Kevlar vest.

(*Tracking*) ... had a size 10 shoe at one crime scene and a size 11 at another.

(*Weaponsmith*) ...carries a highly-modified Taser.

#### Made By 1/2 Roll

Knightsabre...

...was almost kayoed by a stun gas grenade, even though he had only been in the periphery of the grenade's effect.

(*Conversation*) ...had an identical twin. "I tell ya, there was two of 'em."



## The BCJ

The "BCJ" is a run-down flop house near the docks: chipped-paint exterior in a faded brown; a dull neon marquee missing letters; and an ancient desk clerk are its main attractions.

### The Desk Clerk

The clerk will be gushing over the characters — he's as much of a fawn over "masked men" as he hates police officers with as little reason — and will ramble at length about several fictional pulp heroes as if he knew them personally. The clerk will say, in a hushed tone, he knows what room Frank always used and knows it's been unused since Frank's last visit.

### The Hotel Room

Inside the room, the players can find generic tobacco ash and some partial fingerprints. Suspicious roofing tar and scuff marks, as well as a trace of some dried, strange, tannish-brown material are near the window frame.

The substance is a petroleum lubricant, used only in military naval vessels. It is a high-quality, expensive oil used as an anti-corrosive and is incredibly resistant to salt water. Any PCs familiar with modern ship-building will recognize the chemical from its distinctive look and smell. Any competent chemist will be able to figure it out as quickly. Checking in town, there is only one location storing the substance: a warehouse a few blocks away.

## The Warehouse

Contrary to public opinion and to his own claims, Knightsabre needs rest as much as anyone — he certainly has no superhuman regenerative abilities. To have a haven, Knightsabre has broken into a rarely-used warehouse and formed a "lair" of cardboard boxes on the second floor. If the PCs investigate, they shouldn't have any trouble locating the lair and have a good chance of finding Knightsabre asleep.

The key features are the storage vats filled with the special oil found at the BCJ and a pallet of cardboard boxes arranged to form a hidden hollow for Knightsabre. The roof is made of galvanized sheet metal (DEF 4/BODY 4), with Plexiglas windows inset (DEF 3/BODY 2). Anyone approaching from the roof can look down directly into Knightsabre's nest from the outside of the warehouse, though they'll find it difficult to remain silent while walking across sheet metal.

Instead of rolling immediately, the GM can always let the PCs puzzle it out a little at a time. The information here represents a half dozen crime scenes, one captured on amateur video. If the players look at only the video, or only interview a few witnesses, they should get a lot less information, regardless of their rolls.

When describing the flurry of interviews and crime scene investigations, it's important to give the impression Knightsabre is everywhere and involved in hundreds of run-ins with citizens and police. While he is involved in a lot, many "sightings" are hysterical overreactions.

## Tape Of The Interview

Frank Bishop had just left from an interview with the Subject Four when he was murdered. The killer took Frank's notebook, but failed to take his tape recorder. The police have analyzed the tape gotten little information: Knightsabre smokes regularly and claims to have incredible recuperative powers.

Because the tape is sound- and voice-activated, there's a brief section toward the end police believe is a recording of the murder. A loud thump followed by the sound of squealing brakes and a raspy voice: "You know too much," then an electrical whine. The voice sounds again: "I have confirmed one kill and bagged the evidence. Operation Elvis is a green light."

Observant PCs (Hearing PER Roll -3) will notice Knightsabre's voice from the beginning of the tape differs from his voice at the end.

## Bishop's Friends

Talking to Bishop's friends and coworkers will reveal Frank was a sloppy dresser who liked digging on a story. When he wasn't writing dripping news copy or driving around in a beat-up, trash-filled car, he'd be... well, they're not sure, having never seen him doing anything else. Aside from his shortcomings, Frank had redeeming qualities: he loved children, dogs and was so safety conscious he wouldn't even start his car unless he had the seat belt fastened. One other important piece of information the players will gain if they ask about Frank: he always used the same hotel for all of his "undercover" interviews, The Belair-Carlton-Jager Hotel. The police have already been there but the obstinacy of the desk clerk has them stymied.



The point of this encounter is to capture Subject Four, so he should be asleep, injured, or otherwise not performing at full capacity. He has been operating as a 24-hour-a-day vigilante for some time and is worn down.

## Troubleshooting

The characters should examine some of the crime scenes, examine the tape, talk to Bishop's friends, investigate the hotel, then make straight for the warehouse. If the PCs don't check into Bishop's background, or don't follow up on the hotel information, the GM needs to get them to the warehouse encounter some other way.

## Losing The Fight

Should the PCs lose their fight with Knightsabre, they can try to track him down again, though he'll certainly have moved his lair if he was discovered there. If the players look like they'll be unable to capture Knightsabre using their own abilities, either weaken him more or have his tumor complicate matters. Lost actions in combat as he writhes in agony, poor decisions or using only part of his Strength, are all possible side-effects of the progressive condition of his brain tumor.

## Other Methods of Finding Knightsabre

### Trapping

By looking at the evidence gathered from crime scenes, the PCs might determine what is most likely to draw Knightsabre out. He looks for: police and law enforcement personnel; any sort of criminal; government-sponsored or military crime fighters; and prefers to strike from surprise. The more of these elements the players incorporate in their, the greater their chances.

### Stumbling Across Him

As a last-ditch method of encountering Knightsabre, the PCs can happen by just as Knightsabre "makes his move." Knightsabre will deal with the PCs indirectly, being as callous as possible: throwing NPCs off of buildings, using his dart cables to pull innocents into the line of fire, and destroying a lot of property.

## Dealing With Knightsabre

Some PCs may try to reason with Knightsabre, but he's not rational. If the PCs go to the effort of pointing out the inconsistencies of Knightsabre's actions, he'll pause to think about what they say. (Treat this as a PRE Attack, adding +1d6 for every point the PCs bring up which shakes Knightsabre's worldview. The dichotomy of being both a vigilante and one denouncing all crimes—including vigilantism—should confuse Knightsabre.)

Assuming the PCs left Knightsabre alive, they'll probably try to gather information about his origin. The doctors were thorough, however, and have left little to trace Knightsabre's past.

Knightsabre will maintain he is the spirit of vigilantism and was created from nothingness. He'll truthfully maintain his innocence in the matter of Frank Bishop's death. Psychiatric professionals will quickly conclude Knightsabre has lost touch with reality and is suffering from amnesia. Medical doctors who examine him will find extensive surgical modifications and an untreated, inoperable brain tumor.

## Aftermath

### Hueger & G-Reign's Actions

Hueger will continue his experiments, unaffected by the events surrounding Knightsabre. G-Reign will be a little more conscious of the police, since there is stepped-up police. The crimes they commit don't appear Knightsabre-related so the PCs shouldn't take interest.

### SABRE's Actions

SABRE realizes they've been compromised and will suspend any new activities. They have one "complete" super-operative and two partially complete.

The partially complete Knightsabre-facsimiles will be retained at the base and kept hidden until Hueger can be located. If Five reports he has found Four's location, or Hueger, and needs assistance, SABRE will reluctantly mobilize Six, Seven and some of their non-super agents.

### The City's Attitude

The citizens of Hudson City are upset. Normally non vocal groups will speak against vigilantism; curfews may be enacted; and the community will try to rid itself of all vigilantes, even the PCs. If time warrants, let the PCs try to mend the poor publicity left them by Knightsabre.



# PART TWO: SABRE RATTLING

## If the PCs Have Met "Five," "Six" or Seven"

These Knightsabres aren't "as brainwashed" as Four, and could easily lead the PCs to SABRE's base. If the PCs go directly to the base at the start of the adventure, they will learn of Hueger but will gain no clues to find him; no one at SABRE knows Hueger's location.

## Introduction

Disturbing reports continue to come in from witnesses who claim to see Knightsabre operating in the city again, albeit without his earlier destructive tendencies. These new Knightsabres attempt to apprehend criminals, avert disasters and otherwise behave as noble, though unskilled, vigilantes.

## Motivating The PCs

Once they've checked all of the obvious leads (Knightsabre's grave is undisturbed or he's still under medical care and supervision, whichever's appropriate), they should be motivated to find out what's happening. If they ignore the sightings, the problem will only grow and the anti-vigilante sentiment will return to Hudson City.

### Goal

Find Francis Hueger, shut down his and G-Reign's operation, and use Hueger to reveal SABRE. Once exposed, SABRE should be easily removed.

### Typical Sightings

Hueger has inadvertently prepared many indigents to be his new crop of Knightsabres. While he was creating amnesia in some of the homeless of Hudson City, he has accidentally given them the same personality as the Knightsabres. These Faux Knightsabres will appear during a crime, wearing whatever dark clothes they can scrounge up and using some feeble equivalent to Knightsabre's weaponry. Because the city is still fearful, anyone seeing

these false Knightsabres may react with panic or hostility; anyone tougher than an average citizen should easily defeat the false Knightsabres.

## Tracking the Faux Knightsabres

Only innate cunning has kept Hueger undiscovered this long. He has remained incognito, been very cautious and run all of his errands through G-Reign.

The false Knightsabres are relatively easy to track down. Unlike the original, they aren't trained agents provocateur, nor have they had surgery making them more difficult to identify. The victims will be low income, faceless members of the "invisible underclass." Many of the victims will be derelicts, winos, or drug addicts, and may be known to the PCs.

Examination will reveal radio transmitters secreted on the bodies of the Faux Knightsabres. Any PC with the right Skills (Concealment, Bugging or medicinal skills) has a chance to spot the device with a Skill Roll at -2. The bugs are easy to track down: they are emitting on an uncommon frequency and are only sold in one place in town: Chapman's Electronics.

## Chapman's Electronics

Chapman's Electronics is a local electronics store specializing in digital, radio and security equipment. Contacting the manager or sneaking in late at night to peruse their records will yield the location of Francis Hueger's base. Hueger listed it as an address on the purchase order and he still receives catalogs there. Technically adept PCs can create a tracking device to home in on Hueger's detector.

## Street Gang Involvement

G-Reign has been working for Hueger for some time. They aren't aware of the connection between their kidnappings and the appearance of the false Knightsabres. The few members who have any opinion at all believe Hueger is a cannibal or a "pervo." Most just don't care. When word on the street connects some disappearances with G-Reign, the PCs may want to interrogate some G-Reign members. They're easy to locate and the story is easy to drag from them. According to the gang members, Hueger approached their leadership several months ago and asked for help in procuring "specimens." Within a few days, Hueger gives the same victim back to G-Reign and then has the gang drop the victim off in a back alley.



# The Laboratory

## Description/Layout

The lab is an old two-story, clapboard house on the waterfront. Unlike SABRE's facility, there's no need for training rooms or surgical equipment, just space for Hueger's simple equipment and a storage room for pharmaceuticals. Francis has set aside a few rooms to live in: bedroom, dining area and kitchen. The remainder of the house is vacant.

When G-Reign brings a new "patient" in, a quickly applied sedative keeps the victim numb and uncaring, and locked into a small room in the basement. At any given time, two to five partially converted subjects will be in the house's basement, awaiting release onto the unsuspecting city.

In Hueger's bedroom, a hand-held Chapman's Electronics transceiver allows him to track the movements of his Faux Knightsabres, though he's used it infrequently.

## Encountering Hueger

Once inside, the PCs will discover there's no fight in Hueger; he'll come along peacefully. If threatened, he will tell how many Faux Knightsabres are still loose and where they're located, and how he's just helping mankind. He'll also reveal the existence of SABRE.

## Backup

The leaders of G-Reign have been keeping tabs on Hueger and will do their best to keep him from being captured. Unlike the street soldiers of G-Reign, who'll give away Hueger's location to the first PC who interrogates them, the leaders believe Hueger is a big moneymaker and will stage a full-scale assault to retrieve him. Four to five G-Reign members per PC will probably make a good fight.

## Hueger Leads To SABRE

If Hueger is killed, the PCs will have to locate the SABRE base by reading through Hueger's notes. Hueger's diary explicitly describes the location of SABRE's base. If SABRE decides to make an appearance, following much the same leads as the PCs, they'll try to leave Francis Hueger uninjured. But should the SABRE operatives believe they can't capture Hueger, they'll try to kill him and destroy the lab — anything to protect the agency.



## SABRE's Base

If SABRE realized Hueger has been captured, they'll destroy their base and connections to any agents remaining. If Hueger has not been compromised, or SABRE is unaware of his location, they'll be in a state of partial readiness.

SABRE will use all the manpower at its disposal to repel invaders, and destroy all its records. The incomplete Knightsabres will be ready to defend the base. The rest of the defenses of the base come from a small cadre of hand-picked agents. They're normal humans with guns and training and should present little problem to the PCs.

## Description

SABRE's hidden base was once a small school. The cafeteria has been replaced by a tile-covered surgical room and the gymnasium is changed into a confidence course. The one-room surgery has been left in readiness until Hueger can be relocated; the equipment has been covered in plastic sheets, awaiting sterilization and the return of a surgical team. The gym is still wood-covered and ropes still hang from the ceiling, but myriad tunnels and ob-



stacles dot the outer ring of the gym floor. Rope ladders, tire swings, rappelling lines and a simulated rock-climbing wall exist to help train SABRE's superoperatives.

A music room, hand-drawn clefs on the blackboard still in evidence, was converted to handle the same job as the experimental area of Hugger's house, and is laid out in much the same way. The important equipment was taken by Francis when he left. There are obvious outlines on the floor where things have been removed.

The remainder of the building has been converted to a sleeping area for the agents with military cots and footlockers. There's no need for an armory; personal weapons are carried at all times.

## Final Options And Results

### The Other Knightsabres

The false Knightsabres can be deprogrammed by Hueger in a few months. Without Hueger or his notes, deprogramming could take years. 'Five,' 'Six,' and 'Seven' will suffer much the same fate as 'Four.' The government may have use of their special abilities, or they may become NPC vigilantes in Hudson City. Other than 'Four,' all of their memories and identities can be restored; 'Two' identity has already been restored. 'Seven,' while not suffering from a fatal illness, has some mob-related problems and would be willing to do almost anything to escape their grasp.

### Hueger

Hueger will be compliant and easy to handle. He'll be remorseful about his actions, but is still driven to experiment with the memories of others. He is passionate about his work and unapologetic about his methods.

### G-Reign

The PCs shouldn't have any more problems with G-Reign, though they may seek revenge. Any losses sustained while fighting the PCs won't be easily recovered and G-Reign's reputation has taken a serious blow.

The police may be able to arrest several members of G-Reign if the Faux Knightsabres recover enough to testify against specific gang members, though testimony from someone with reconstructed memories will probably be inadmissible in court.

### SABRE

Once SABRE has been exposed, their effectiveness will be limited; they'll probably just fade into the background. The federal government will step in and take over any investigation from the local authorities. PCs who are exceedingly patriotic may also want to cover up what happened to protect the country's image. If SABRE is left intact, they'll try to recruit Hueger. Other covert agencies may try to capture Hueger for their own nefarious purposes. The federal government may try to coerce Hueger into going into hiding, perhaps for its own nefarious purposes.



# FRANCIS HUEGER

Val	CHAR	Cost	Roll	Notes
7	STR	-3	10-	64 kg; 1d6 [1]
8	DEX	-6	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
13	CON	6	12-	
8	BODY	-4	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
1	PD	0		
3	ED	0		
2	SPD	2		Phases: 6,12
4	REC	0		
26	END	0		
19	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 27**

**Movement:** Running: 6"  
Swimming: 2"  
Leaping: 1"

## **Powers & Skills:**

AK: Libraries 12- (3)  
Bureaucrats 8- (1)  
Computer Programming 8- (1)  
Conversation 13- (3)  
Eidetic Memory (10)  
Electronics 11- (3)  
Forensic Medicine 8- (1)  
Interrogation 13- (3)  
Inventor 11- (3)  
KS: Brainwashing (INT-Based) 13- (3)  
2d6 Luck (10)  
Oratory 8- (1)  
Persuasion 13- (3)  
PS: Hypnotist 12- (3)  
PS: Stage Magician 8- (1)  
PS: Research Scientist 11- (2)  
Scientist (3)  
SC: Bacteriology 11- (1)  
SC: Biochemistry 12- (2)  
SC: Biology 12- (2)  
SC: Biophysics 12- (2)  
SC: Botany 11- (1)  
SC: Chemistry 12- (2)  
SC: Pharmacology 13- (3)  
SC: Psychology 13- (3)  
SC: Sociology 8- (1)  
Sleight Of Hand 12- (5)  
Speed Reading (3)  
Systems Operation 13- (3)  
Ventriloquist 11- (2)  
+2 Overall Levels (20)



## **Brainwashing Equipment:**

**Major Transform** 14d6: Normal Human To Vigilante Mind-set, Zero END (+½), No Range (-½), Gradual Effect over 1 week (-3), OAF (-2, Immobile Laboratory Equipment), Extra Time: 1 week (-4) (30)

**Chapman Electronics Receiver:** Detect Faux Knightsabres, Ranged, +16 Telescopic, OAF (-1, receiver), ½ DCV throughout use (-½) (13)

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 148**

**Total Character Cost: 175**

## **50+ Disadvantages:**

### **Psychological Limitations:**

Fear of being injured (Com, Str) (15)  
Committed to completing his experiments regardless of cost (Com, Str) (15)  
Patriotic; believes he is serving his country as best he can (Uncom, Str) (10)  
Hatred of Crowds; doesn't like dealing with people (Com, Str) (15)

### **Physical Limitation:**

Numerous allergies (Infreq, Slight) (5)  
**Watched** by G-Reign (MoPow), 11- (10)  
**Hunted** by SABRE (MoPow) 14- (25)  
**Experience** (30)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 95**





**Background:** “Francis! Mind your manners,” Martha Hueger snapped at her child. Eight hours a day, Francis and the other carnival children would be tutored, then do chores, then go to bed. The routine was the same every day, broken only by matinee performances on Sundays. For a child, the carnival life was not colored lights, clowns and cotton candy, it was hard work. Francis wasn’t a child built for hard work.

Francis Hueger had always been a little smaller than the other children his age, a trait he would carry throughout his life. Diminutive size alone would not have been enough to make things hard for Francis, but coupled with his incessant sneezes and allergic reactions, his life was miserable.

Martha Hueger, “The Great Helena,” spent very little time being Francis’s mother. She swept imperiously through his life, like she swept across the stage during her magic act, always demanding Francis act like an adult, instead of the eight year old child he was. “Francis, clean up the trailer”; “Francis, go into town and buy me some colored scarves for my act”; “Francis, why are you loll-gagging around? Get busy.” And just like that, she’d be off doing something else, leaving Francis alone.

Francis couldn’t relate to children his own age and felt best when he was left alone. Unfortunately for Francis, the carnival life is often one of marginal existence and Martha needed her son’s cooperation to make money so they could get by, and he was forced to help his mom in her magic act. He discovered he had a knack for stage magic, especially hypnosis and mentalism tricks. The Great Helena would bring subjects up from the audience and Francis would quickly hypnotize them and make them act outlandishly: clucking like chickens; singing show tunes; or revealing titillating personal secrets.

While Francis became an accomplished stage magician, he was still not happy. The crowds he dealt with made life unbearable for Francis. When he turned eighteen, Francis packed his possessions into a duffel and left. Working from odd job to odd job, he managed to build up enough cash to rent a studio apartment. In time, he managed to forge a new life for himself, one where he needed little contact with others.

By careful scrimping and saving, Francis found he need spend only a few hours a day working and could devote the rest of his time to the library. There he was isolated from humanity, yet a whole world of information opened up for him. Greedily, Francis absorbed

everything he could pick up and read: esoteric medical texts, books on physiology, books on books... he never stopped reading.

Then Francis’s entire world changed again. He had spent so much time in the library, he was mistaken as an employee by a researcher looking for a particular book. The researcher was amazed Francis could not only locate the book, but had read it and remembered most of it. The researcher asked about another book and Francis knew that one too. Another book, another look of amazement on the researcher’s face as he discovered how knowledgeable was Francis.

Francis Hueger, a poorly educated man without a high school diploma became a research assistant. Overnight, he went from being a bum to a man with a career. Francis built a reputation as an intuitive, yet methodical, researcher and he began working on his own projects, particularly his area of greatest interest: how to influence the human mind.

Almost fifty years later, Francis Hueger’s past has been forgotten. Francis has three honorary degrees from different universities. At the behest of the United States Air Force, Francis conducted a series of tests on volunteers to see if they could be “brainwashed,” a term Francis derides, without violence.

Francis succeeded more brilliantly than he’d intended, but the military would not let him publish. The methods Francis used left many of his test subjects with no memories, altered memories, and altered personalities. More than a year of his life had been wasted; Francis could never publish, never share the results of these tests with anyone.

As Francis was debating what to do, SABRE contacted him and recruited him to create “superoperatives.” Francis now knew he would have a chance to continue the exciting leads developed during his military experiments. For two years he labored, making five complete operatives for SABRE, until one of the operatives went rogue. When it looked like SABRE was going to shut down Francis’s experiments for good, he escaped with his notes and equipment. “The Work,” as Francis called it, had to continue.

**Personality:** Dedication to his research is Francis Hueger’s keystone. At one time, he had many interests, but now has dedicated himself to a project of questionable morality: the eradication and alteration of human memory. Perhaps he wants to perfect this ability so he can excise certain painful memories of his own, and hope to create a change within himself, or perhaps he’s just a little wacko.



He talks about his project as if it has a life and intent all its own. Francis avoids crowds and loves his country and, as long as he does not go against those two things, he'll do anything else to continue his research. If Francis is captured, he'll try to continue experimenting, even illegally, unless someone can convince him the experiments are unpatriotic.

**Quote:** "Just relax and stare at the watch as it swings. Slowly, slowly close your eyes..."

**Powers & Tactics:** Francis will avoid a fight if he can. His philosophy: he has worked hard to be where he is today and is not ready to die. If a combat should occur, Francis will cower in fear. If a chance arises, he will try to escape, saving any notes or equipment he can.

Francis's Detect allows him to track the movements of the Faux Knightsabres. The small, hand-held detector looks vaguely like a walkie-talkie, complete with telescoping antenna and a cheap, plastic wrist-strap.

**Appearance:** Francis is still as small-boned as in childhood, and nearly as short. At 5'3", he often appears comical when talking to a mesmerized subject. To offset his height disadvantage Francis wears lifts in his shoes, making him two inches taller. Francis almost always wears a pocket watch and a monocle; he feels they make him look a little more dignified and "Continental." He wears a white, stain-spattered lab coat almost constantly.

The Major Transform takes a week to implement, another week to affect a character and will make the target have the Characteristics, Physical and Psychological Limitations and abilities of a Faux Knightsabre. (If the target's Characteristics or abilities are superior to the Faux Knightsabre's, use the original statistics.) The newly created Faux Knightsabre will have no memories and will believe he is the only Knightsabre. The brainwashing equipment can be moved with major effort, as Hueger did when he left SABRE's base, but takes some time to set up again. The Transformation is not healed back normally; any victim of the effect must be treated by an expert in brainwashing, or a mentalist with similar abilities, to reverse the process.

The Gradual Effect Limitation means the Power will take place slowly and evenly during the indicated time frame, with the target's defenses subtracted only once. In this case, the target will take 10 dice of Major Transform over a week's span of time (about 1 1/2d6 per day) until they are Transformed. If the dice do not roll enough to Transform the character, he is unaffected.



# KNIGHTSABRE

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
35	STR	25	16-	3200 kg; 7d6 [1]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
25	CON	30	14-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
7	PD	0		
7	ED	2		
5	SPD	20		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
10	REC	-4		
50	END	0		
50	STUN	4		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 127**

**Movement:** Running: 9"  
Leaping: 7"  
Swinging: 15"

### Powers:

**Electro-Sword:** Multipower, 60 Points, No Knockback (-1/4), 16 uses (-0) (27)

- u- 2d6 HKA (Electricity), STR Does not add (-1/2), Armor Piercing (+1/2), Increased Stun Multiple (+1/2) (2)
- u- 12d6 EB, Reduced by Range (-1/4), Reduced Penetration (-1/4) (2)

**Grappling Cable Darts:** Multipower, 20 Points, OIF (-1/2) (13)

- u- 2d6 Entangle, Lasts for only one phase (-1/2) [2] (1)
- u- 13 STR TK, Lasts for only one phase (-1/2), can only pull toward user (-1/2) [2] (1)
- u- 15" Swinging [1/5"] (1)

**Martial Art:** Combato (16)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
Martial Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Choke Hold	-2	+0	3d6 NND, Grab
Legsweep	+2	-1	10d6, target falls
Fast Strike	+2	+0	11d6 Strike

Weap Groups: Open-Hand, Blades, Spear (2)  
Damage Class +2 DCs (already added in) (8)

**Insulated Suit:** 8/8 Armor, IIF(-1/4) (19)

**Dermal Implants:** 7/7 Damage Resistance (7)

**Altered Nervous System:**

50% Physical & Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant (60)

- +3" Running [1/5"] (6)
- Cramming, Incantation (-1/4) (4)
- Eidetic Memory, Incantation (-1/4) (8)

**Skills:**

- AK: Hudson City 14- (5)
- Climbing 13- (3)
- Concealment 11- (3)
- SC: Chemistry 12- (3)
- Security Systems 11- (3)

Shadowing 13- (7)

Stealth 13- (3)

Scholar (3)

KS: Criminal Psychology 11- (1)

KS: Gangs 11- (1)

KS: Mafia Activities & Personalities 11- (1)

KS: Police Procedures 12- (2)

WF: Flamethrowers, Grenade Launchers, Hvy

MGs, Rocket Launchers, Man-Guided

Missiles, Common Melee, Small Arms (9)

CS: +2 Levels w/Combato Martial Art (6)

CS: +2 Levels with Electro-Sword (6)

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 233**

**Total Character Cost: 360**

### 100+ Disadvantages:

**Vulnerability:** 2x BODY & STUN to Gas, Poison, and Chemical attacks (Com) (40)

### Psychological Limitations:

Overconfidence; believes he is immortal (Vry Com, Mod) (15)

Must pursue criminals without regard to innocents (Vry Com, Str) (20)

Hates all government sponsored heroes and law officers (Com, Str) (15)

Paranoid; trusts no one (Com, Str) (15)

### Physical Limitations:

Highly susceptible to hypnosis & suggestion (Infreq, Slight) (5)

Addicted to nicotine (Infreq, Slight) (5)

**Susceptibility:** 1d6 When using STR over 20 (Com, Inst) (10)

**Distinctive Feature:** Talks to himself as if he is in radio contact with someone (Easily Concealed, Noticed) (5)

**Reputation:** Murderous and uncaring vigilante (Extreme), 14- (20)

**Hunted:** by SABRE (As Pow), 11- (15)

**Experience** (95)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 165**

**Background:** He stood gazing out the window at the stark nighttime cityscape, only his silhouette visible against the backdrop of the cloud enshrouded skyline. A wispy tendril of smoke curled up from the cigarette dangling from his left hand, he paused in his dialogue as if lost in thought.

"Please go on, Knightsabre." The sloppily dressed man sitting in the overstuffed leather chair leaned forward to scratch a note on a pad draped across his lap. "My readers will be interested in knowing more about you."

The caped and cowed figure brought the cigarette up to the mouthpiece of his matte black costume and inhaled deeply. He gripped it between thumb and forefinger, cupping over the lilt end as if to mask the light from observers. As he drew in the smoke, the glowing end of the cigarette briefly lit his face, casting a sinis-



ter light and transforming his normally ominous mask into a fiendish, grimacing effigy. Knightsabre held his breath for a moment, becoming a carved wooden totem of a man, seeming to lack all life and depth — a visual cipher.

Dropping his hand to his side, he flicked the ashes into the palm of his right hand with a curiously feminine tap of his wrist, then stuffed the ashes into a concealed pouch on his costume. As he removed his hand, he caressed the strange energy weapon strapped to his right hip. "One can't be too careful, I wouldn't want anyone analyzing the ashes and trying to trace me through my tobacco purchases... not that you would do that, Mr. Bishop. Besides, I smoke generic while I am in costume."

"Do you think smoking is a good habit for a superhero, Knightsabre? Isn't it something a role model tends to avoid?" the thin reporter asked.

Knightsabre flashed his patented grim smile, "If smoking kills me, it'll be accomplishing something half the hardened criminals of this state have tried and failed. I'm blessed with not having to worry about run-of-the-mill diseases; a little nicotine, tar and carbon monoxide won't bother my enhanced metabolism."

"That's right, you were almost killed in a gangland shooting less than three weeks ago. The police reported you were shot fifteen times, yet you appear very healthy tonight." The pen sat poised, waiting for Knightsabre's response. The notes were a prop; a tape recorder sat openly on the table next to the empty ashtray. A pile of microcassettes lay next to it.

"Eighteen bullets, actually. If I had stuck around for the police, I'd have told them, but they and I aren't seeing eye-to-eye on the matter of dispensing justice these dark nights."

Frank Bishop, a seasoned reporter, smelled a hint of a falsehood, but couldn't pin it down. On the surface, Knightsabre was being straightforward and direct with his answers; underneath it all, he was being evasive and deceptive. Frank couldn't tell what were lies, but he knew a lot of what he was hearing was a line. "And you can heal almost any wound?"

"As far as I can tell, Mr. Bishop, my powers make me effectively immortal. But only time will tell. I plan on being around an awful long time. Which is why I asked for this interview: so criminals would learn I plan on staying and that they better leave or face my wrath..."

\* \* \*

The sun was peaking out through a rosy-hued dawn by the time Bishop finished with his interview. There would be no follow-up; Knightsabre made that clear. Bishop waited a few minutes after Knightsabre left — he didn't want him to think anyone was trying to follow him — and headed for his beat up Duster.



Something Knightsabre had said stuck, and Bishop rolled it around in his mind as he started his faded green car and rattled out into early morning traffic.

'Eye-to-eye about justice,' that's what he said. 'The police and I aren't seeing eye-to-eye these dark nights.' Frank wondered if he was an ex-cop. Bishop pulled the Duster up to a red light, his brakes squeaked a warning. While waiting for the light, he scratched a tentative title on his legal pad: Looking Justice in the Eye. He crossed out his first title and writes Dark Nights. There, perfect.

A loud thump from the bumper and the force of an unexpected impact threw Bishop to the extent of the reach of the seat belt. He leaned forward against the restraining belt, trying to reach the recorder on the floorboard, but could not get his fingers on it. Bishop shook his head and looked back into the rearview mirror; no cars were nearby. He put the car in park and started to unfasten his seat belt, only to see a familiar cloaked form next to his window.

"You know too much."

Bishop heard the electrical whine of Knightsabre's energy weapon. As the world faded to black, he felt a tug at his pocket where he kept his note book. The last sound he heard was Knightsabre, apparently talking to himself.

*"...my powers make me effectively immortal. But only time will tell. I plan on being around an awful long time."*



"I have confirmed one kill and bagged the evidence. Operation Elvis is a green light."

\* \* \*

Knightsabre is a constructed personality. Originally a Petty Officer in the Navy, Douglas Newman was a simple man who believed in the greatness of his country, a man who was content to stay in the service without advancing his career. Until he began getting headaches, Doug had been happy with his life. The headaches, ignored at first, became more severe, and began recurring with greater frequency. The Navy doctors couldn't isolate the problem, so Doug was sent stateside. The verdict: an inoperable brain tumor.

Doug was discharged from active duty. In a few months he might become irrational, the doctors warned, so he was forced to leave the service. Doug took his medication religiously, hoping to prolong his life and its quality as long as possible. He rented an apartment near the VA hospital in his home town of Hudson City, said good-bye to his friends, and sat back to wait for death.

A few months of inactivity and a gradual lessening of social contacts made Doug jump as his doorbell rang. He expected a salesman, a religious lecture, or something mundane. He was startled by the appearance of two men in dark suits and glasses. Their pitch was simple: do you want to waste the final months of your life or would you like to serve your country again?

For almost six months, Doug became the subject of experimentation by Francis Hueger and a team of surgeons, all working for SABRE. Doug was put in isolation tanks and made to float in mineral-laden water for hours; perception-altering chemicals were pumped into his system; colored strobe lights flashed him into wakefulness each night as slept. Doug Newman's personality and memories were slowly and methodically stripped away and replaced with another set until he was no more. Knightsabre stood in his place.

The implanted communicator gave subliminal commands to Knightsabre: serve justice; protect the innocent; stop criminals; you are justice incarnate. Over and over they played in his head; like the voice of God, they seemed to come from nowhere.

Doug was being groomed to be the next version of Knightsabre— Number Four, to be precise. When the previous Knightsabre was killed in a shoot-out, Doug, now the reigning Knightsabre, used his Taser "Electro-Sword" to short out the power in the morgue and escape with his predecessor's body.

Whether through the combination of chemicals used to treat the brain tumor or from some

influence of the tumor itself, Knightsabre went from being a two-dimensional vigilante to a man with an unquenchable drive and the conviction he was vigilance personified. Without warning, he ignored the voices in his head and broke from SABRE.

Knightsabre has become more violent and more intent on enforcing even trivial laws. No "crime" is safe from his scrutiny: double-parking, failure to yield right of way, jaywalking, graffiti — all are illegal in his eyes and punishable by death.

Freed from SABRE's and Hueger's influence, Knightsabre became a threat to their project, and a threat to Hudson City. Knightsabre still talks to himself, as he was trained to do, but he is no longer transmitting; his biological system has eradicated the radio implant. SABRE can't recall him so they have unleashed the next version, Number Five, to search for Knightsabre. If Five fails, two incomplete versions are waiting to take over.

**Personality:** Unaware of his true origins, Knightsabre believes he is the incarnation of justice and vigilance and behaves as if he were some sort of deific creature, better than those around him. While once humble, his new persona is cold, callous and cruel. He ignores the "common man" and only pays attention to someone who is committing a crime.

Knightsabre's original programming has become confused. Instead of respecting law officers and government officials, he loathes them; instead of punishing major criminals and ignoring minor criminals, he tends to do the opposite. The brain tumor continues to erode Knightsabre's personality and logic, making him act irrationally. As time progresses, Knightsabre's grasp of reality will begin to loosen even more.

**Appearance:** Unrelenting black is the color of vigilance, according to Knightsabre, and his costume follows the scheme. He wears a shrouded hood and waist-high cloak of matte-black, covering a loose jump suit, also in black. The jump suit's sleeves flare out at the elbow, leaving his forearms, and hands bare. The two wrist-launchers are a copper-hued steel alloy, completely encircling his wrists. He wears a thick, brown leather belt, upon which Knightsabre clips his Electro-Sword.

Uncostumed, Knightsabre is tall, blond and muscular with a lantern-like jaw and steely-blue eyes — the very picture of a "superhero." In his Douglas Newman identity, Number Four was very similar to this, though changes were made to the bone structure of his face to subtly alter his appearance.

**Quote:** "Now you face vengeance and vigilance incarnate!"



**Powers & Tactics:** Knightsabre's surgical modifications have made him strong and quick. He can use a superhuman amount of STR, though this tends to cause him injury (his Susceptibility). Knightsabre can take a lot of punishment and uses this to his advantage; he will close with an opponent, where his high strength, martial arts and 'saber should give him an edge.

Knightsabre routinely carries a radically altered Taser, one using twin lasers to ionize a blade-shaped zone in front of the handle. The ionized air (or water, since the device will work underwater) carries an electrical charge from the hilt of the weapon to his target. Close-in, the weapon is lethal, but can be tuned and "defocused" to strike at a distance. The Electro-Sword is capable of over a dozen discharges before running out of power; it can be recharged by being plugged into any wall-socket with a standard current.

A pair of wrist launchers firing adhesive-tipped darts are Knightsabre's other device. The darts trail a cable back to Knightsabre, which he uses to climb walls, control his falls, drag things toward himself, and to brachiate through the city from rooftop to rooftop. The glue is a special chemical, unstable in oxygen and dissolving in seconds, making it an ineffective weapon. The darts retract back into the launcher after each use, timed to retract as the short-term glue dissolves.

Knightsabre has been programmed with enough knowledge of chemistry to make more glue as his supply runs low. The amount of glue used is insignificant and Knightsabre will always have enough to last through any given encounter.

### Typical Faux Knightsabre

20 STR 10 DEX 10 CON 8 BODY  
 10 INT 10 EGO 10 PRE 10 COM  
 4 PD 2 ED 3 SPD  
 6 REC 20 END 50 STUN

**Skills:** CS: +2 w/ Puny Impromptu Weapon, Disguise 13- (only to look like Knightsabre), Other Skills as appropriate for normal identity (5 Pts)

#### Powers:

##### Puny Impromptu Weapon:

Multipower (15 Pts), OAF (-1), Burnout 9- (-1), Reduced Penetration (-¼) (4)  
 u- 1d6 HKA, STR Does not add (-½) [1] (1)  
 u- 3d6 HA, STR Does not add (-½) [1] (1)  
 u- 3d6 EB, 1 Recoverable Use (-1) [1] (1)

##### Puny Grappling Cable:

3" Stretching, OAF (-1), No NNC (-½), Not for Weapon Use (-½), No Fine Manipulation (-½) [3] (5)

3" Swinging, OAF (-1), No NNC (-½), Limited Maneuverability (-½) [1] (1) +10 PRE, Defensive only (-1) (5)

**Disadvantages:** Overconfidence/believes he is immortal (VryCom, Str); Must pursue criminals without regard to innocents or own safety (VryCom, Str); Phys Lim: Highly susceptible to hypnosis and suggestion (Infreq, Slight); Amnesiac; Reputation: Murderous and uncaring vigilante 11-; Watched by SABRE 8-

**Background:** Typically, these amnesia people will behave normally until something triggers their change. If they see a crime or violent act, regardless of how dangerous the situation, they will change into clothing resembling Knightsabre's costume and act as if they were superheroes.

**Personality:** A Faux Knightsabre will remain in the background, unseen and quiet. They tend to be a little shy, since they do not remember who they are and have no goals or motivations of their own. When danger strikes, the artificial personality of Knightsabre becomes dominant and the Faux Knightsabre becomes a dark avenger of the night!

**Quote:** "Beware, evildoer! I am Justice, come calling to..." *BANG! Thud.*

**Powers & Tactics:** The Faux Knightsabres are not weaponless in their fight against crime, though they might as well be. The makeshift weapons and gear they can scrounge could be effective against an unarmored target, but are worthless against anyone else, much like the Faux Knightsabres themselves.

Should, by some miracle, a Faux Knightsabre survive an initial encounter with a dangerous opponent, he will not retreat or seek safety for himself. He'll continue to attack mindlessly, all the while spewing out pithy soliloquies about justice, vengeance, and the power of the righteous to triumph over evil.

**Appearance:** Because these characters are not funded by SABRE and do not have their own costumes, they will grab whatever black clothing they can use as impromptu costumes. Some suggestions: jogging suits; old sweaters; black trash bags; any clothing spray-painted black. The Faux Knightsabre will also wear some sort of face covering: ski masks; shoe polish; a hat pulled low over their eyes; or a nylon stocking. The weapons and equipment they carry will vary: clotheslines; whips; jumper cables; car antennae; portable phones; or chrome detailing from a car.

All of the individuals have varying appearances; G-Reign has been very careful to make sure they are not looking for a specific body type.

*Author's Note: The Puny Impromptu Weapon Multipower and the Puny Grappling Cable Swinging are below minimum cost and are therefore not strictly legal. The ability is marginal and more for special effect than anything else; it certainly is not abusive in this situation. As always, GMs should feel free to use whatever mechanic, or cost, seems more appropriate for their campaigns.*



### Knightsabre Weapons

**Electro-Sword** (See *Knightsabre*) (31)

**Grappling Cable Darts** (See *Knightsabre*)  
[2-3] (16)

### Knightsabre Powers

Radio Listen & Transmit, Incantation (-¼) (4)

### Knightsabre Talents

Cramming, Incantation (-¼) (4)

Eidetic Memory, Incantation (-¼) (8)

### Knightsabre Skills

Concealment 11- (3)

KS: Criminal Psychology 11- (1)

KS: Gangs 11- (1)

KS: Mafia Activities & Personalities 11- (1)

KS: Police Procedures 11- (1)

SC: Chemistry 8- (1)

Security Systems 11- (3)

Stealth (Dex-Based, roll varies) (3)

Scholar (3)

**Martial Art:** Combato (16)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
Mart Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Choke Hold	-2	+0	2d6 NND, Grab
Legsweep	+2	-1	7d6, target falls
Fast Strike	+2	+0	8d6 Strike

Weap. Groups: Open-Hand, Blades, Spear (2)

**Total:** 33 Pts.

### Subject Five

30 STR 18 DEX 20 CON 15 BODY

10 INT 10 EGO 20 PRE 10 COM

6 PD 6 ED 4 SPD

11 REC 40 END 40 STUN

#### Powers:

**Knightsabre Weapons** (47)

**Martial Art:** Combato (16)

**Insulated Suit:** 8/8 Armor, IIF (-¼) (19)

**Dermal Implants:** 6/6 Damage Resistance (6)

**Altered Nervous System:** 50% Physical &  
Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant (60)

**Running:** +2" (8" Total) [1/5"] (4)

**Skills:** Knightsabre Skills; AK: Hudson City 13-, WF: Flamethrowers, Grenade Launchers, Hvy MGs, Rocket Launchers, Man-Guided Missiles, Common Melee, Small Arms

**Disadvantages:** Overconfidence/believes he is immortal; Must seek out "impostor" Knightsabre (VryCom, Str); Phys Lim: Highly susceptible to hypnosis and suggestion (Infreq, Slight); Susc: 1d6 When using STR over 20 (Com, Inst); DF: Talks to himself; Extreme Rep: Murderous and uncaring vigilante 14-; 2x BODY & STUN to Gas, Poison, and Chemical attacks; Watched by SABRE (AsPow), 14-; Experience (75)

### Subject Six

20 STR 17 DEX 19 CON 15 BODY

10 INT 10 EGO 18 PRE 12 COM

4 PD 4 ED 4 SPD

8 REC 36 END 36 STUN

#### Powers:

**Knightsabre Weapons** (47)

**Insulated Suit:** 8/8 Armor, IIF (-¼) (19)

**Toughened Skin & Dermal Implants:** 4/4

Damage Resistance (4)

**Altered Nervous System:** 50% Physical &  
Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant (60)

**Skills:** Knightsabre Skills; AK: Hudson City 13-; PS: Paramedic 11-

**Disadvantages:** Vuln: 2x BODY & STUN to Gas, Poison, and Chemical attacks; Protective of Innocents (Com, Str); Overconfidence — believes he is immortal; Phys Lim: Highly susceptible to hypnosis and suggestion; DF: Talks to himself; Extreme Rep: Murderous and uncaring vigilante, 14-; Watched by SABRE, 14-; Experience (40)

### Subject Seven

20 STR 15 DEX 17 CON 15 BODY

10 INT 10 EGO 15 PRE 10 COM

4 PD 4 ED 4 SPD

7 REC 34 END 35 STUN

**Powers:** Knightsabre Weapons (47)

**Skills:** Knightsabre Skills; AK: Hudson City 14-; Combat Driving 12-; PS: Cab Driver 8-

**Disadvantages:** Vuln: 1 1/2x STUN to Gas, Poison, and Chemical attacks; Highly susceptible to hypnosis and suggestion; DF: Talks to himself; Extreme Rep: Murderous and uncaring vigilante; Watched by SABRE, 11-; Hunted by the Mafia (LesPow) 8-; Experience (5)

**Backgrounds & Personalities:** Subjects Five, Six and Seven are identical to the original personality of Four. They are supposed to uphold justice, while concealing the existence of SABRE. Each of the three are in different stages of development in the alteration process leading to the creation of a Knightsabre, and each has a different background.

*Subject Five* is essentially complete. He is less powerful than Four, but has reached the peak of his performance and was waiting to take over for Number Four when Four's programming went sour and Four became uncontrollable. Five's new mission is the apprehension of Four, though he will still pursue justice when it does not conflict with Four's capture.

Five's memories of his past life are sketchy, but he was a Hudson City police officer, Malcom Rainier, diagnosed with Leukemia.



While on medical retirement, he was contacted by a representative of SABRE. Rainier has been relatively happy with his part in the experiment; he was thrilled when the pain suppresser was implanted because it masked many of the painful side effects of his cancer.

Five began calling his objective "Operation Elvis." There's a debate about who coined the phrase and its meaning. The most popular theory is a reference to Elvis impersonators.

*Number Six* is the most handsome of the group. Ted Cleary worked as a local Emergency Medical Technician in Hudson City, contracted HIV as part of his job and successfully sued his company for failure to safeguard him. After quitting his job, Ted spent most of his time moping in his apartment until SABRE arrived. Since joining, Ted has lost a lot of his medical skills and abilities, as well as most of his memories, but is happy to have found a new direction for the remainder of his life.

*Number Seven*, Larry Schwartz, is little more than a well-trained human. No skeletal enhancement and little training have made him a dim, shadow Knightsabre. While he retains his memories of being a cab driver in Hudson City and has no cosmetic surgery, he cannot wait to escape his earlier life. Larry still remembers the murder he witnessed and is still fleeing the Mafia. When Larry's cosmetic changes are made, he plans to escape SABRE and move from Hudson City. SABRE is aware of Larry's scheme and is planning on altering Larry's memories before his face and fingerprints.

#### Quotes:

*Five*: "The situation is 'Blue Christmas.' No sign of you, over."

*Six*: "Civilians down! I'm going in to effect a rescue, over."

*Seven*: "The base's been raided, I'm going outside to defend."

**Powers & Tactics:** These Knightsabres carry equipment identical to Number Four, though they lack the training to wield them as effectively. Unlike Four, these Knightsabres will be a lot less eager to close with opponents and will concentrate on using the "defocused" Energy Blast to strike from range. Number Seven in particular will avoid melee combat and is more likely to use the Electro-Sword's blast to escape from the SABRE base than fight an intruder.

**Appearance:** Like Knightsabre, these other "Knightsabres" wear the same costume of unrelenting black. Larry, Number Seven, has never worn his costume outside of the SABRE base, but is eager to get out, regardless of the reason.

Uncostumed, Number Five is as blue-eyed and blond-haired as his predecessor. He has been surgically modified to appear identical to Number Four. Number Six has brown hair and brown eyes; he wears blue contacts and has been bleaching his hair to achieve the "official" Knightsabre color scheme. Larry has black hair and brown eyes and still retains his old features: he is a mousy man, though muscular now after SABRE's physical regimen, and is the shortest of the Knightsabres — barely six feet tall.





### Typical SABRE Agent

13 STR 14 DEX 13 CON 11 BODY  
10 INT 10 EGO 10 PRE 10 COM  
4 PD 4 ED 3 SPD  
6 REC 26 END 25 STUN

**Skills:** PS: Instructor 12-, Choose 3 of the following: (Breakfall, Bribery, Bugging, Bureaucratics, Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Concealment, Conversation, Criminology, Cryptography, Demolitions, Disguise, Forgery, Interrogation, Lip Reading, Lockpicking, Security Systems, Shadowing, Stealth, 3 points in Weapon Familiarities)

#### Equipment:

#### Modified Garand Assault Rifle:

**Multipower:** 20 points OAF (-1) (22)

u- **Bullets:** 2d6 RKA, Autofire (+½), 4 Clips of 8 Shots (+0) (2)

u- **Buttstroke:** 3d6 HA (5.5d6 w/STR or Martial Art) [1+1] (1)

u- **Bayonet:** 1d6+1 HKA (2d6 w/STR or Martial Art) [2+1] (1)

**Kevlar Body Armor:** 5/5 Armor, Activate 14- (-½), OIF (-½) (7)

#### Combat Training:

#### Martial Art: Combato (16)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
Martial Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Choke Hold	-2	+0	2d6 NND, Grab
Legsweep	+2	-1	3½d6, target falls
Fast Strike	+2	+0	4½d6 Strike

CS: +2 with Assault Rifle (6)

Weap. Groups, Open-Hand, Blades, Spear (2)

**Disadvantages:** Psych Lim: Patriot (Com, Str); Hunting Hueger and the rogue Knightsabres (Com, Str); Watched by SABRE (MoPow), 11-; Experience (10)

**Background:** SABRE agents are culled from various parts of the US military, training "superoperatives." All of them are sworn to secrecy and perform this thankless job out of a sense of duty to their country.

Capable of wearing civilian clothing, these men are far more comfortable in camouflage, Kevlar body armor and helmets. While in Hudson City, they usually wear "urban camo" (black, gray and white camouflage).

Though they are competent bare-knuckle fighters, the SABRE agents will use their bayonets or rifle butts; it's more deadly than unarmed combat yet still very quiet. Against opponents they feel they can't beat using these tactics, they will fire their weapons in controlled three-burst patterns. For distant targets, they agents will Set and Brace to offset some of the range penalties.

While their body armor and helmets are sturdy and their weapons are first-rate, their equipment is also obtrusive. If forced to operate undercover, the agents will reluctantly forego their gear.

### Typical G-Reign Gang Member

13 STR 11 DEX 10 CON 10 BODY  
10 INT 10 EGO 10 PRE 10 COM  
3 PD 2 ED 3 SPD  
5 REC 20 END 22 STUN

#### Equipment:

**9 mm Skorpion Machine Pistol:** 1d6+1 RKA, Autofire, 4 clips of 20 shots (+1/2), OAF (-1) (20)

**Skills:** CS: +2 with Skorpion, AK: Hudson City 12-, KS: Fencing and Appraising Stolen Goods 12-, Streetwise 11-, WF: Small Arms

**Disadvantages:** Psych Lim: Protective of Hueger (Com, Mod), Watched by G-Reign street gang (MoPow) 11-, Hunted by local law enforcement (As Pow) 11-, DF: Orange gang colors (Easily Concealed), Experience (10)

**Background:** G-Reign has been one of the fastest growing street gangs in Hudson City. Some of it's from leadership and organization; a lot involves all the money they've been picking up working for Francis Hueger. They wear all sorts of "street level" clothing but they always wear something bright orange to declare their affiliation.

If a fight breaks out, this gang is well-prepared and are all armed with Skorpions. They aren't soldiers and aren't particularly resourceful. Their most common tactic is to shoot full, five-shot bursts until their clip is empty, reload, and repeat until they run out of clips.



# THE ОКТОбЬЯ REVELATION



Irony. It had grown to be the identifying characteristic of his country.

Grigory pondered it often, this irony. Like many things Russian, there was an absurdity to its tragedy that forced one to laugh. His was one of the most powerful nations on Earth; a superpower, they called it. Yet it was unable to provide even the most basic of services to its people. It had finally managed to gain a glimpse of freedom after fully a thousand years under the iron heels of first the Tsars and then the Communists. Yet that taste of freedom had given many a desire to attain it at any cost, resulting in oppressions as great as any in the nation's long history. It had spent its entire existence at war, preparing to repel any invader. Yet it would ultimately be defeated from within, without a single foreigner setting foot on its precious soil. And the greatest irony of all: Grigory's own.

He had spent his entire adult life preparing for the day he might have to deliver a hideous weapon of mass destruction upon the enemy he had been taught to hate, in an exchange that would almost certainly mean the end of his life, and perhaps the life of all of his countrymen. Yet on this day, he boarded the ship knowing that his delivery of the power of the atom to America would mean salvation for him, a new start, made possible because the enemy had extended the hand of peace, and the government that had used up so much of Grigory's life in preparation for war had chosen Grigory as one of the instruments of that peace.

While Grigory pondered this irony, the plutonium sat in the hold of the ship, unable to ponder anything, not worried about what role it might serve, indeed, completely impassive.

Waiting, as if for some revelation.

**Author**  
**Jim Crocker**

**Artist**  
**Dave Wong**

# INTRODUCTION

*The October Revelation* is an adventure for *Dark Champions*. It makes use of fairly high-powered foes, some with borderline paranormal abilities (the twins' STR, for example), but nothing outside the realm of possibility. It should work equally well against either heroic level characters (who should probably have a fairly sizable group of experienced heroes) or superheroic level (where a proportionally smaller group will suffice). As always, GMs should tailor the villains to suit their own campaign. Because all the NPCs in this scenario rely on equipment, any game which utilizes higher than normal tech can simply substitute. Use blasters for assault rifles, and so on, perhaps adding a few combat skill levels to bring the more prominent villains on par with superheroic players.

The group of NPCs calls itself "Red Star: Nova," when it bothers to use a code name at all. The name is an ironic reference to the collapse of the USSR. Red Star Nova is a group of Russians who served together in the army and have since quit and become involved with the Russian mob. They have managed to get a hold of the plutonium from five of the missiles they used to guard at a remote missile base in northeastern Russia. Taking advantage of the nuclear disarmament treaties between the US and USSR and the near total breakdown in record keeping following the breakup of the USSR, they caused the five missiles to "disappear" from the base's inventory. They then drove them to the tundra and left them there, planning to recover them later. With the help of the Russian Mafia, their leader has arranged to smuggle the plutonium from the missiles out of the country and transported to the West, where they will look for a buyer in the campaign city.

This scenario should have the feel of a spy adventure, or "techno-thriller" novel, mixed with the normal vigilante activities of a typical *Dark Champions* campaign. *Dark Champions* characters do not typically participate in activities that potentially have an effect beyond their own cities. With this adventure, they have a chance to have a wider impact without playing out of character or disrupting the genre. GMs should encourage characters to be more covert than they normally might, be sure players devote time to non-combat skills, and allow intelligent use of those skills to dictate their success in this adventure.

# RED STAR: NOVA

All of the Russian officers have a standard combat training package. It includes the same basic Martial Arts package (with one or two exceptions, which are noted in the individual write-ups).

## Red Star Commando Training

### Martial Art: Soviet Commando Style

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Effect
Boxing Cross	0	+2	STR+2d6, Strike
Aikido Throw	0	+1	STR+ V/5, Opponent Falls
Karate Chop	-1	0	1/2d6 HKA
Choke	-2	0	Grab neck, 2d6 NND*
Judo Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, +10 STR • to roll
Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort

### Skills:

Breakfall (at the base 9+DEX/5) (3)

Weapon Familiarity: Small Arms, Knives and Grenades (3 Pts).

The total cost of this package is 30 Pts. Any Damage Classes, Skill Levels, or other maneuvers are listed in the individual write-ups.

Russian is the native language for all of Red Star. They have varying competence in English, as reflected in the write-ups. All have Professional Skill: Soldier, AK: Russia, and, TF: Automobile as "free" Everyman Skills.

All of these characters are built with Normal Characteristics Maxima for 0 Pts, with a 75 point base, as Heroic Adversaries. (See *Equipment* for a listing of their available weapons and gear.



# Grigory Anastrovich

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	200 kg; 3d6 [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV:
16	CON	12	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
18	PRE	8		PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0		
6	PD	3		
4	ED	1		
4.0	SPD	15		Phases: 3,6,9,12
8	REC	4		
32	END	0		
30	STUN	2		

**Total Characteristic Cost: 87**

**Movement:** Running: 7"  
Swimming: 2"

## Skills & Powers

### Officer Training:

- +1" Running (2) [1/5"]
- Commando Training Package (30)
- 3 Damage Classes w/Martial Arts (12)
- Bureaucratics 13- (3)
- CS: 3 Levels w/All Combat (24)
- Conversation 13- (3)
- Demolitions 14- (9)
- KS: Fissionable Materials Handling 13- (3)
- KS: Nuclear Weapons 13- (3)
- Language: English, Fluent Conversation (3)
- Security Systems 13- (3)
- Tactics 13- (3)
- WF: Man-portable Rockets, MGs (2)
- Weaponsmith: Ballistic Weapons (3)
- Fast Draw 12- (3)
- Luck, 2d6 (10)
- Resistance [-5 to Interrogation Roll] (5)
- Contact: Russian Military 12- (3)
- Contact: Russian Mafia 13- (4)

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 125**

**Total Character Cost: 212**

### 75+ Disadvantages:

#### Hunted:

- By Russian Government (MoPow, NCI, Lim Area, Harsh, 8-) (15)

#### Watched:

- By Russian Mafia (MoPow, NCI, 8-) (10)

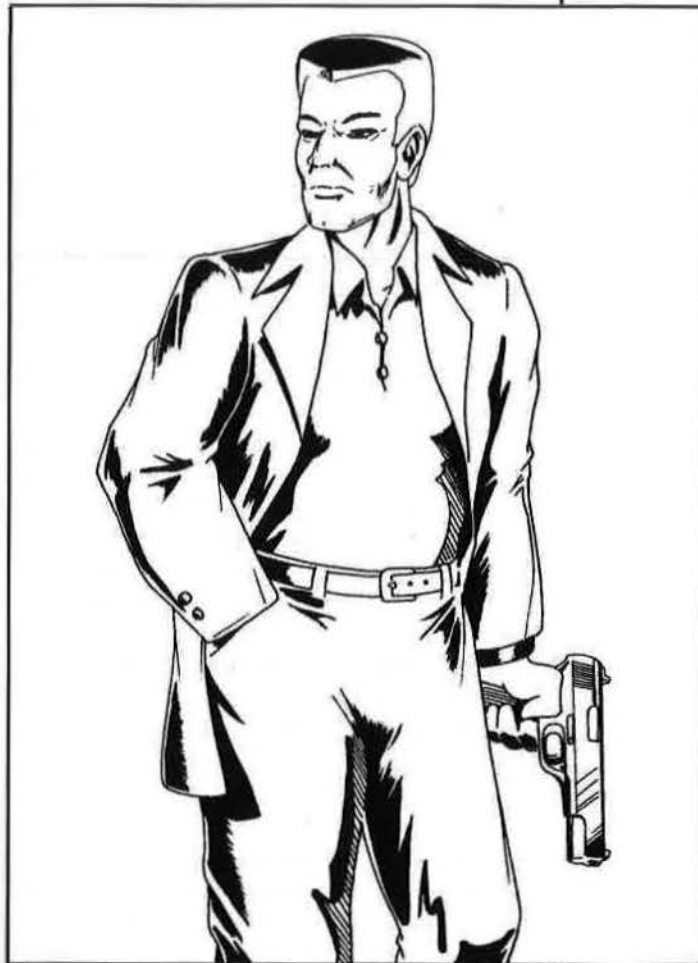
#### Psychological Limitations:

- Hates Governments of Both Superpowers (Com, Tot) (20)
- In Love w/ Adalaissa (Vry Com, Str) (20)

**Unluck:** 2d6 (10)

**Experience** (62)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 137**



**Background:** Grigory Anastrovich is a former Soviet army captain. He is a young man by Russian standards, a mere 30 years old. He is a product of cold-war Russia, not The Great Patriotic War Russia. He was in charge of a Soviet missile base in northeastern Russia, an inhospitable and unforgiving place. When the most recent set of peace accords were signed with the United States, Grigory's base was shut down, and he was given the option of retiring. He took it. He waited a full year before using money supplied him by the now-powerful Russian Mafia to go back to Siberia and retrieve the plutonium. The plutonium was then loaded on a ship and sent to America, where the Mafia was helping to set up a buyer for it.

Grigory had planned on being a career soldier, as his father was before him. His father, quite old when Grigory was born, had actually fought as a 14 year old during the siege in Stalingrad (now once again called St. Petersburg). Grigory would sit transfixed as his father described the almost unimaginable hardship the Russian people had to endure in order to survive the Nazi siege. His father saw his parents and his two sisters freeze to death over that long winter. His father always laughed at the irony of the Russians giving millions of their



lives in order to defend a city that millions had given their lives to build in the first place. He hated so much that they changed its name as one of the earliest acts of the Revolution.

His condition for helping the Russian Mafia to sell the plutonium was that it be sold to a private buyer in the United States, and not to another sovereign nation. This would serve a dual purpose: potentially wreaking havoc in the US and making Grigory (and all of his friends) rich by selling back what the Russian people had sacrificed their entire lives to buy in the first place.

His role in this scenario is as a motivator for the Russians as well as the technical expert in the handling of the plutonium. The Mafia needs him alive because only he knows the combination to the canister the plutonium is kept in, and only he has the technical expertise to handle it safely.

**Personality:** Grigory inherited his appreciation of the irony of Russian life, as well as his bleak and fatalistic sense of humor, from his father; this will flavor all conversation he may have with both PCs and NPCs alike.

Grigory hates the United States because of what it did to Russia. In an effort to keep up with America's technological military superiority, the leaders of Grigory's country poured all their efforts into developing military technology and the armies to use it. As a result, they all but neglected their people. This resulted in a country that threatened the United States militarily, but at the cost of misery to its own citizens. Grigory hates his own government only marginally less for the insanity it has perpetrated

against its people.

**Tactics:** He is an effective fighter, but with no outstanding skill in any particular area. He tends to be conservative in battle, letting his teammates handle what they each specialize in, and deploying his resources effectively. He will never shoot someone when talking will do the job; whenever he is present, his crew tends to take the same tack.

His main strength lies in his ability to motivate the other Russians, and he may also strike a chord in PCs who share his outlook on life. He has not given much thought to what he's going to spend his portion of the money on, except that he will ask Adalaissa to go with him to wherever she may want to go. He loves her, but is generally aloof in his treatment of her, attempting to maintain a more paternal relationship. The tension this creates between the two has a 'Nabokovian' flavor to it, and the other crew members comment on it regularly to both of them.

**Appearance:** Grigory always dresses in his old army uniform when on the ship, to remind everyone (and himself) of where he came from. When not in uniform, he wears out of style slacks, shirts, and sport coats. He is six feet tall, and in very good shape for a man of forty, as he gets up every day at dawn to perform his regular Army calisthenics routine. He wears his hair cut close, with no facial hair. He carries himself as a military man, upright and vaguely formal even in repose. He carries a pistol with him at all times, keeping it under his pillow at night. His English is quite academic sounding, with a slight Russian accent.



# Adalaissa Kataya

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	150 kg; 2 1/2d6 [1]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV:6
14	CON	8	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
18	PRE	8		PRE Attack: 4d6
18	COM	4		
5	PD	2		
4	ED	1		
4	SPD	13		Phases: 3,6,9,12
6	REC	0		
30	END	1		
28	STUN	2		

**Total Characteristic Cost: 85**

**Movement:** Running: 8"  
Swimming: 2"

## Powers & Skills:

### Officer Training:

- Conversation 13- (3)
- Language: English (Native Accent) (4)
- Bureaucratics 13- (3)
- Paramedic 13- (3)
- Systems Operation 13- (3)

### Commando Training Package: (30)

#### Martial Art: Commando

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Effects
Mart Escape	+0	+0	+15 STR v Grabs
Martial Dodge	—	+5	Abort
Weapon Bind	+1	+0	+10 STR to Bind opponent's Weapon, only with Knife

- +3 Damage Classes w/Martial Arts (12)
- Weapon Element: Knives (1)
- CS: +2 Levels w/All Combat (16)
- Range Levels: +4 for all attacks (12)
- +2" Running (4) [1/5"]
- Climbing 12- (3)
- Acrobatics 12- (3)
- Stealth 12- (3)
- Seduction 13- (3)
- KS: Western Culture 13- (3)
- KS: Western Literature 13- (3)

### Talents:

- Fast Draw 12- (3)
- Luck, 1d6 (5)

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 129**

**Total Character Cost: 214**

### 75+ Disadvantages:

#### Hunted:

- By Russian Government (MorPow, NCI, Lim Area, Harsh, 8-) (15)

#### Watched:

- By Russian Mafia (MorPow, NCI, 8-) (10)

#### Psychological Limitations:



- Self-centered (Com, Str) (15)
- Holds no ideology sacred, trashes them all (Vry Com, Str) (20)
- Western Culture Junkie (Com, Str) (15)

#### Distinctive Feature:

- Stunningly beautiful, voluptuous, long-haired redhead (Easily Conc, Noticed) (5)

**Enraged:** If personal freedom seems threatened (Uncom, 11-/14-) (5)

**Experience (54)**

**Total Disadvantage Points: 129**

**Background:** Adalaissa was a Lieutenant. Grigory is in love with her, so has brought her along despite the fact that she has doubts about the plan (more so than any other crew member). She represents the new Russia: her parents were minor bureaucrats, and she has tasted enough of freedom to know that she likes it. The kind of freedom she has developed a taste for can only be found in the West.

As a former technician for the nuclear plant, she is the only one besides Grigory with the true knowledge of just how dangerous their cargo is. She has doubts about the effectiveness of the plan. She knows Grigory loves her, and in her own way she loves him too. Her inherent pragmatism allows her to know it could



not work out, so she enjoys his company, but always persuades herself to pull back from him anytime things seem to be becoming serious. She was ready to simply leave and seek her fortunes in the West, perhaps working for one of the French power companies, when Grigory contacted her with his proposal. She came very close to turning him in, but the money was enough to allow her to live in comfort for the rest of her life. She swallowed her misgivings and decided to participate in the mission. She has come along with the intent of leaving the crew and remaining in America once she gets her cut of the money. She has little use for patriotism, and will make no bones about this fact of questioned. She feels the Russian government turned its back on her generation by foolishly spending its money on the arms race. The irony of selling the weapon to Americans is not lost on her, and it was one of the hooks she has used to help her rationalize her participation.

**Tactics:** Adalaissa is a highly skilled HTH combatant, and deadly with knives in close quarters, but hates guns, and never carries one.

**Personality/Motivation:** She finds Jaroslav disgusting, a lecherous old creep. The twins she simply finds amusing, as they are intimidated by her looks and brains. She will not hesitate to order them around in any crisis situation, as she knows how durable and effective they can be if given proper guidance.

She only once tried to boss Anatoly around. Anatoly made it clear that he liked and respected her, but she was not his commanding officer, and he would not hesitate beat her face in if she ever tried to give him orders again. She has let him go his own way since; she is afraid of him and his silent intensity.

She thinks the Americans are just nuts, but doesn't really care about their ideology as long as she gets her money. Her English is perfect, with American inflections learned from watching countless Hollywood movies. She can easily pass for an American college girl, but linguistic experts may notice that her accent is a mix of several different regional dialects in no particular order, as opposed to an identifiable accent. She should be exciting, sexy, dangerous, and more than most PCs can handle.

**Quote:** "If many in the West are decadent, it is because they have been presented with the choice to be that way. A choice of austerity is hardly noble if it is forced upon you!"

**Appearance:** She dresses in the latest Western fashions, often wearing short skirts with stockings or tights, and tight shirts that accentuate her ample figure. She also likes to wear sunglasses. She is a striking five foot ten redhead with green eyes (unusual for a Russian girl). She usually wears her hair pulled back in

a simple pony tail, and carries a large knife in her purse at all times. She is stylishly dressed at all times, and will discuss any aspect of pop culture at the drop of a hat.

## Other Members

### Jaroslav Sremien

13 STR 14 DEX 13 CON 10 BODY  
16 INT 18 EGO 15 PRE 12 COM  
5 PD 4 ED 3 SPD  
6 REC 30 END 30 STUN

**Skills:** Commando Training Package, Acting 14-, Bribery 12-, Bureaucratics 13-, CS: +2 w/Ranged Combat, CS: +2 (only vs. Location Penalties), +2 w/all Ranged Attacks vs. Range Penalties, Forgery 13-, High Society 12-, KS: International Trade/Customs Law 11-, KS: Russian Political World 11-, KS: Russian Mafia 12-, Security Systems 12-, Trading 12-, Stealth 14-

**Talents:** Lip Reading 11-, Lightsleep, Luck: 2d6, Linguist (English, French; Fluent w/accents; Polish, Dialects; Ukrainian, Fluent Conversation), Contacts (Russian Military 12-; Russian Mafia 13-)

**Disadvantages:** Hunted by Russian Government 11-, Watched by Russian Mafia 8-, Greedy, Crass Opportunist/Uses everyone he can, Unluck: 2d6, Reputation: Shady International Deal-Maker 8-

**Background:** Jaroslav Sremien was the political officer at the missile base. He had ties with the Mafia even in the Communist days, and was instrumental in bringing Grigory and the Mafia who are providing him with his transportation and buyer contact together. He is a snitch who is also secretly being paid by the Mafia to keep tabs on the mission, and see to it that it goes through should Grigory have any second thoughts. He is not much of a HTH fighter, but a deadly accurate shot with a rifle. He represents the corruption that permeated the old Soviet government at every level.

**Personality/Motivation:** He likes Grigory, but won't hesitate to kill him at a moment's notice. He lusts after Adalaissa, but has a knife scar on the back of his left hand to show for his attempt to grab her once, so he leaves her alone now. He manipulates the twins whenever he can. He is terrified of Anatoly, and would love to arrange for him to meet with an "accident." He will finger Anatoly as the leader of the group if questioned by Vigilantes.

**Quote:** "Vell, den I vent and sold him de fake stuff. Let me tell you, I vas shitless scared that he vould find out! Luckily, the guys he sold it to killed him first! Ha! Ha! Ha!"



**Appearance:** He is a five foot six, slightly overweight man with thinning gray hair. He speaks with quite a thick accent that is a cross of Polish and Russian. He dresses in casual American clothes, and carries a pistol in a small holster behind his back.

### Yuri & Zbigniew

25 STR 14 DEX 20 CON 18 BODY  
 8 INT 10 EGO 18 PRE 10 COM  
 10 PD 5 ED 3 SPD  
 9 REC 40 END 50 STUN

**Powers:**

**Martial Arts:** Soviet Commando Style

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Effects
Killing Throw-2	+0		1/2d6 HKA, Opponent Falls
Martial Grab -1	-1		+10 STR to Hold only
Crush	+0	+0	+4d6 to Squeeze, Must Follow Successful Grab

+2 Damage Classes

**Skills:** Commando Training Package, Breakfall 14-, CS: +2 Levels w/HTH Combat, CS: +2 levels w/Assault Rifle, Pistol & MG, +2 w/Thrown Objects (only vs. Range Penalties), English (Fluent Conversation), KS: International Sports World 11-, WF: Machine Gun

**Disadvantages:** Enraged if Brother takes Body (14-/11-), DF: Monstrous Twins, DF: Blood Test/Symptoms show massive Steroid abuse, Hunted by Russian Government 8-, Watched by Russian Mafia 8-, Psych: Dependent on each other/indecisive alone, Psych: Follow orders without question, Rep: Famous hot tempered Russian athletes 8-

**Background:** Yuri and Zbigniew (they have dropped their last name and their teammates aren't sure what it used to be) are twins, part of a Soviet fertility experiment performed in the 60s. They were raised in a state school and trained almost from birth to be athletes. They served in the army while training to be weightlifters. When, in a fit of steroid-induced frenzy during a training exercise, they killed a man with their bare hands because he picked a fight with them, they were relegated to the cold and seclusion of the missile base. Any hero who follows the international sports scene has a chance to recognize them. They are huge, hulking monstrosities, as close to having superhuman strength as the very best modern steroids will allow. While in Siberia, they had a lot of time to train together, lifting weights and doing manual labor. They have come to believe that together they are indestructible. They fight extremely well as a team, and while they may not be bright or very fast, can withstand tremendous punishment.

**Appearance:** Both are six and half feet tall and 300 pounds of rippling, shredded muscle. They have the telltale bloodshot eyes of steroid abusers, and many scars on the backs of their necks from shooting the stuff. They are easily enraged, and fight in a fairly straightforward manner, smashing away until whatever they are hitting goes down or runs away. They carry guns and other weapons when appropriate, but often simply forget they have them, preferring to let teamwork and brute strength win the day.

**Personality/Motivation:** They are totally devoted to Grigory, viewing him as the father they never had. They will follow any order he gives, and have unquestioning, absolute faith in his ability to get them their money so they can become a wrestling team. They both love Adalaissa in their clumsy, childlike way, and will thrash anyone who says anything even remotely insulting about her. They, like the others, are somewhat afraid of the mysterious Anatoly, but Grigory has told them to obey his orders as they would his own, so they do, but they avoid him whenever possible. They waffle on how they feel about Jaroslav, but have decided he's basically OK, because he can get them stuff (like steroids and American magazines) when they need it. Their English is pretty good, with only a light Russian accent. They tend to holler a lot, and have developed a liking for southwestern American accented English, in the manner of their professional wrestling idols.

**Quote:**

*Yuri:* "We're the Trauma Twins, pardnah! You'd best leave dese parts before ve rearrange yer face!"

*Zbigniew:* "I'd listen if I vas you, vigilante man! Don't make us devastate you!"

### Anatoly Gombrowitz

15 STR 17 DEX 16 CON 14 BODY  
 15 INT 15 EGO 18 PRE 6 COM  
 8 PD 5 ED 4 SPD  
 8 REC 40 END 40 STUN

**Skills:**

Commando Training Package (30), +3" Running, Demolitions 13-, Combat Driving 12-, CS: +2 Levels w/All Combat, CS: +4 w/All Ranged Combat (only vs. Autofire or Location Penalties, in any combination), KS: Russian History, 12-, Languages: English (Fluent Conversation) and Afghani (Basic Conversation), Mechanics 13-, Paramedic 13-, Range Levels: +4 (against Range Penalties) w/ All, Stealth 12-, Shadowing 11-, Tactics 15-, WF: Rockets, Machine Guns, Flame Thrower, Weaponsmith (Slug Throwers) 14-





*GMs wishing to use October Revelation as a one-shot style adventure might consider using the Russian crewmen as PCs with NPC heroes as antagonists. An NPC villain as a buyer could also spice things up. Playing "the enemy" for a couple of sessions might provide an interesting change of pace.*

**Martial Arts:**

<i>Maneuver</i>	<i>OCV</i>	<i>DCV</i>	<i>Effects</i>
Killing Throw-2	+0		1/2d6 HKA, Opponent Falls
Martial Grab -1	-1		+10 STR to Hold
Crush +0	+0		+4d6 to Squeeze, Follows Grab

Weapon Group: Knives  
+3 Damage Classes

**Disadvantages:** Hunted by Russian Govt 8-; Watched by Russian Mafia 8-; DF: Hideous Facial Scar & "Dead" eye; Totally Loyal to Communist Ideals; Perfect Soldier — follows orders of superiors/Loyal until death; Distrusts all Americans

**Background:** Finally, there is Anatoly Gombrowitz. At age 42, he is an actual combat veteran of the conflict in Afghanistan. He is a career soldier in every sense of the word. His father was one of the early Cosmonauts, who trained with Gargarin, but was killed during a test of one of the Russian rockets. His grandfather was killed fighting the Nazis. His great grandfather was killed during the Revolution. He was instilled with a fierce desire to serve Russia and be prepared at all times to make the sacrifice his father(s) did. He landed in the North when he disobeyed an order from a superior officer and shot down a border guard attempting to defect to Finland while patrolling there. Anatoly now follows Grigory because the moment the Communists lost power, his oath to the government ended. He is by far the most dangerous of the Russians. He is a crack shot,

deadly with his hands, and has an almost supernatural ability to sense danger and act before his enemies can. Because he has already come to terms with his own death, he is also utterly fearless.

**Personality/Motivation:** He hates Jaroslav, but has not killed him yet out of respect for Grigory. If at any point, it does look as if Jaroslav is abandoning ship, however, he will not hesitate to shoot him. He likes Adalaissa, but has little patience for the folly of the young, and finds her passion for Western decadence annoying. He likes the twins because their passion for the West is more forgivable, as they are not nearly as smart as Adalaissa. He likes to watch out for them without letting them know, as he feels they could be persuaded to come back to Russia after this is all over if given the proper motivation.

**Quote:** "I do this not because I hate you, American, but because I love the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. I follow in the footsteps of my fathers, for my Motherland!"

**Appearance:** He has a hideous scar that runs from just over his left eye over his head and down the back of his neck, disappearing into his collar. He wears a commando uniform at all times, with a black beret in place on his head. He plans to return to Russia when the mission is completed and use his money to finance Communist candidates in the elections. He speaks English with a moderate accent, and a disturbingly deep, gravelly voice.



# THE PLOT: NEUTRONS FOR SALE

*The October Revelation* is set in no particular city. The only prerequisites are that the city be accessible by water and that the Russian Mafia has some sort of presence in the city (or that the GM be willing to introduce them into the campaign during the course of this scenario). Dark Champions GMs who set their campaigns in Hudson City or San Angelo are encouraged to make whatever changes may be necessary.

## The Set-Up

GMs who wish to incorporate *October Revelation* into an ongoing campaign may wish to arrange for the presence of the major players in the campaign city to become known to the PCs before playing the scenario.

### Timeline

The adventure opens on October 28th. On the morning of this day, the ship carrying the plutonium arrives in the city's harbor and docks on a pier. It is registered in Finland as a standard cargo ship, and is listed as carrying automobile parts from Europe. To maintain the facade, the Russian Mafia loaded all but one cargo container with actual car parts (all stolen, foreign, and expensive, being sold at cut rates to chop shops in the USA). The ship will dock and spend most of the day unloading its 'legitimate' cargo. Its crew, all hired by the Mafia, will leave when they are done, leaving the ship to Grigory's people, who made the journey as members of the crew.

**Note:** The story can actually take place any time of year, but the significance of October to the Russians adds to the storyline, as does Halloween, which allows everyone to walk around in "costumes." It would also be very appropriate to have this adventure take place around the Fourth of July, or any other holiday involving extensive festivities in the city. In any event, the GM should make sure there is an atmosphere of sinister dealings going on behind a backdrop of celebration, as this will add to the espionage-style feel of the game.

## Questioning The Crew

Any hero who decides to track down a member of the ship's crew who is not part of Grigory's gang shouldn't have too difficult a time doing so. Most of them transfer to another ship and leave the following day, but several remain in town to see the sights or visit friends or relatives.

PCs who query crewmembers will learn some or all of the following information: The ship took on the car parts in Sweden, then sailed Northeast around Russia for a stop somewhere in a Siberian port and picked up some passengers. The passengers are Grigory and his crew, and it was here that the plutonium was loaded aboard, but none of the crew knows this.

If characters question more than one crewmember, the second one will be able to give the name of the port. It has no significance other than the fact that the ship has no compelling reason to stop there. Only a character with access to highest level government security could possibly cross-reference this site and come up with the missile base, which by this time will have been inactive for over a year. Particularly resourceful characters may connect its closing to the arms reduction agreements.

The ship's new passengers kept to themselves, staying in the spare staterooms. They had a long meeting with the captain when they came aboard, but other than that had no contact with anyone. The captain of the vessel is staying aboard, eating and sleeping in his quarters, gorging himself on his new passion, American TV. He and his quarters are described in the 'Ship' section, below.

## October 29th

The unloading of the ship complete, the Russians meet with the buyer the GM has decided upon. The Russians will designate the campaign city's largest public Library as the meeting site.

The two parties will sit down at a table in the middle of the library's reference room and start dealing. Next to Grigory is Adalaissa. The rest of Grigory's crew is spread around the room, as are an equal number of agents.

The meeting will run about an hour, with Grigory showing photos of the plutonium, the ship, and the loading process and the buyer showing a sample of the money they have available. The asking price of the Plutonium is \$100 Million US. After the negotiations are conducted to the satisfaction of each party, Grigory and Adalaissa leave, with the others straggling out





behind them. The Russians return to their ship, with the understanding that any attempt to follow them will spell immediate loss of consideration as a potential buyer.

### Enter The PCs

This is probably the best time to bring the PCs into this adventure. The characters may have had contact with the Russian Mafia in their campaign city. If so, they can get wind of a Mafia rep in town to facilitate the meeting of a Russian bigwig with some kind of contraband and an American group who wants to buy it.

The GM may also want to arrange for whoever he has designated as the buyer to become more active than normal, as they gather the money needed to make the Plutonium buy.

The third way for characters to get involved is for a contact, DNPC or other interested party to let them in on the unusual meeting at the library. In this case, they will get whatever details the GM decides are appropriate, given the source of the information.

If characters have any reason to frequent the library otherwise, they may notice some unusual goings on. The twins certainly attract attention, and characters may notice that suddenly about a dozen people in one area of the library are

armed today. They may then decide to follow one or both of the parties after the meeting.

In any event, the characters should become involved at this point. Just *how* involved depends on the circumstances, and who they go after will also depend on the information they've gathered so far, as well as their ability to follow where the various parties may lead them.

The outline of events from this point forward supposes that the characters have relatively minimal contact with either party, or that what contact they do have doesn't have a major effect on the ability of the two parties to reach their final meeting. GMs are encouraged to attempt to pace the adventure so that bits of the actual nature of the scenario are revealed slowly, as opposed to all at once in a grand soliloquy. Ideally, this adventure should involve a lot of shadowing, research, tracking, and sneaking around both the campaign villain's hideout and the ship the plutonium is carried on. Depending on the timing, and the inclination of the characters, conflict (not necessarily combat, but that is certainly a possibility as well) can occur in either or both places, in addition to or instead of the final showdown on Halloween night. The ideas given are guidelines, but GMs should be prepared to alter the chain of events to keep the suspense level of the game high whenever possible.

The Russians return to their ship and prepare for the next meeting, which will occur the following day. If they are followed in any kind of obvious manner, they will simply split up into three groups, and whichever one is actually followed will just spend the rest of the day wandering around the city, picking the most crowded, public places to go, hopefully losing the tail before returning to the ship at night. If characters manage to follow the Russians back to their ship, then the GM should use the map of the ship to play out any encounter. In any event, characters who sneak onto the ship have a much better chance of finding the Plutonium, and may decide to wait until it is a little less secure before trying to take it out.

If characters take out the buyer before the buy happens, but do not apprehend the Russians, then the Russians will immediately drop anchor and leave the moment they are made aware of the campaign villain's defeat. They will move their plan to another city where the Mob has been trying to find a buyer for them, and GMs are encouraged to improvise an appropriate ending for them. Possibilities include apprehension by Federal authorities, selling the Plutonium to another buyer in the campaign city (the GM will decide who an appropriate organization might be...) or another city, an accident in



which the Plutonium is somehow exposed, the bomb attached to it goes off accidentally (resulting in an environmental disaster), or even another organization discovering its existence and attempting to steal it.

## October 30th

### The Second Meeting

The NPC buyers will go to meet with the Russians on the ship. They will chat for a little while, then retire down to the cargo containers (see 'the Ship') where Grigory will show them the plutonium. They will test it with a Geiger counter, and make a \$10 million dollar 'good faith' down payment once the plutonium's authenticity has been verified. The buyers will be allowed to keep their weapons, but will be closely watched over by Grigory, Jaroslav, Adalaissa, and Yuri. Zbigniew and Anatoly will be above, patrolling the deck of the ship. All are wired for communication, and will not hesitate to call for help if things seem amiss. This meeting will last about thirty minutes, after which the buyers will return to their home base. The Russians will retire below deck to admire the money. Night will fall, and, if the characters haven't disrupted things too badly, the next day will be:

## October 31st: Halloween

While it is actually coincidence that this is the day for the meet to occur, the two parties are using it to their advantage. Both of them will spend the morning gearing up. The Russians will don their full military uniforms, including weapons. The buyers should be in costume as well. If they do not normally wear uniforms, they will arrange for rental of some kind to fit in with the crowds.

The meeting for the buy occurs in broad daylight in the afternoon, in the middle of the waterfront Halloween celebration.

## The Celebration

Every year, the City holds a Haunted House in one of the big warehouses down by the waterfront. The building is converted to a huge, scary, haunted house, and opened (for one day only) to kids all over the city. On Halloween,

the waterfront draws huge crowds that patronize the street vendors that set up all up and down the waterfront, and generally turn the area into a big, open-air festival. Cars can come and go, but slowly and with some difficulty as they drive past the booths and crowds of costumed revelers. It is into this scene that the buyers drive their vehicles, right up to the ship where the plutonium is being kept, on a pier that now has a large crowd in the street just in front of it...

The GM is encouraged to make this celebration gaudy, cacophonous, and intrusive. Skulking characters should feel out of place here, as there is really no place for them to hide. The other effect the GM should try to create is the surreal nature of these festivities: there are people of every type walking around in garish make-up, weird costumes, and should allow the characters to gradually realize they can parade right down the street of this area in full costume with weapons at the ready, and will blend right in. Unfortunately, their opponents also have the same advantage, and GMs should feel free to have several groups of 'Red' herrings in Russian military uniforms, founding father masks, and other appropriate costumes.

The actual buy occurs at dusk. If both sides are viable and have any members left, they will meet. The campaign villains should have sufficient forces available to give them an even footing with the players (the GM should adjust accordingly) on their own. All of the Russians will be in the area for the switchover. Both sides should abide by the terms of the deal (and this may affect the GM's choice of buyers). Too much is at stake for both sides to risk screwing things up.

The remaining 90 Million dollars will be brought by the buyers, in cash, waiting to be counted. It should be contained in a single vehicle, although they should have several vehicles present.

The plutonium will be moved up from the hold just prior to the arrival of the buyers. Adalaissa will stand on top of the cargo container that holds it. There is a crane on the ship, and one on the dock. Grigory operates the ship crane with a hydraulic remote control. The crane on the dock will be operated by an agent of the buyers. The transaction, if the heroes let it occur, will involve the two cranes simultaneously lifting the cash and cargo into the air. The cash (either in a vehicle or large container of some kind) will be hoisted onto the Russian ship with an agent inside. The cargo will be lifted to the buyers with Adalaissa standing on it. The Russians will check the back of the car and get a rough estimate that the money is all there (it





should be), and the buyers will hook a Geiger counter up to the plutonium container and verify its authenticity (it's legit).

Once this process is over (10 minutes or so), the respective contents will be removed from their containers and the containers returned to their original groups. The groups will then go their separate ways, the buyers taking the Plutonium back to their hideout, the Russians waiting until they are gone, divvying up their money, and departing the ship, to go their separate ways.

## Fighting The Russians

If the PCs end up battling the Russians, the GM should remember the Russians fight extremely well as a team. They probably won't have as sophisticated weaponry as the PCs, but it should be obvious to any who go up against them that they make up for it in skill and sheer iron tenacity. If attacked on the ship, the Russians will take the battle below deck as quickly as possible where their deadly HTH skills can come into play much more readily. They will hit-and-run, ambush, and generally use their knowledge of the terrain to their advantage. In

the open, they will seek cover and fire conservatively, waiting for the enemy to come to them, where (again) they can attempt HTH combat.

Grigory is pragmatic. If it looks like everyone is going to get slaughtered, he will respond accordingly, and can be reasoned with if the PCs are willing to bargain.

## Fighting A Free-For-All

GMs are strongly encouraged to save the climactic final battle to happen sometime during or just before or after the final meeting between the two parties. At this point, both teams will be paranoid, high strung, and loaded for bear. Any vigilante intervention at this point will result in what, if played right, can be an epic firefight and running battle, through the docks of the waterfront as well as the corridors of the ship. In any initial confrontation, the two sides should attempt to help each other put to the extent possible while still taking care of their own. Use the map of the dock and ship provided to lay out the battle, formulate the two sides tactics based on the information above, depending on how events have proceeded previously, and let the PCs loose.

## Final Repercussions

Hopefully the PCs will win the day in one manner or another, but the complex nature of this scenario make several outcomes possible. What follow are some basic suggestions on how to handle alternate outcomes.

If any of the Russians escape they will go their separate ways to pursue their individual desires. GMs can make one or more of them regular NPCs in the campaign, if appropriate. The only exception to this is that if either of the twins is killed, the other will not rest until his death is avenged, and might make an interesting Hunted for an unlucky PC.

If the GM's designated buyers get a hold of the plutonium, he must decide what they do with it. Keep in mind that there are many possibilities besides using it to build a bomb. It also has use as an extremely deadly poison. A tiny chip can be an excellent assassination weapon, causing a painful, inevitable death. It can also be used to contaminate a water supply or other environmental sabotage. In any event, this should provide material for several subsequent adventures as the players continue on the deadly contraband's trail.



# SOURCEBOOK

Included in this section, GMs will find suggested stats for the major players in the scenario, and brief maps and write-ups of the Russians' ship. If the players are involved in the meeting at the Library, GMs should simply make their own map based roughly on their local city or university library. These stats represent using these NPCs in a low-level (4-6 characters, 250 points) superheroic level game. GMs wishing to use this scenario for a street level game should shave combat levels and eliminate some of the more powerful weapons (like the grenade launchers and the .50 cal. on the ship).

All equipment is taken from the *Dark Champions* sourcebook, or *Hero System Rulebook*.

## The Russians

All of the Russians have the following standard gear available to them. GMs should decide before any encounter which items they will actually have on their person. All of them carry at least a pistol whenever they are off the ship. See the body of the module for a description of their personalities, backgrounds, and typical quotes.

### Available to All Russians:

**AK-74 Assault rifle:** 2d6-1 RKA, Autofire 5, w/OCV +2 AND OCV +2 ONLY vs. Autofire penalties; RMod +1; 30 charges.

Each rifle has a 1-shot Grenade Launcher underslung; these launchers fire a Concussion grenade (see below).

**BG 15 Grenade Launcher:** 8d6 (Normal) vs. PD, Explosion, w/+1 Range Modifier

**9mm Makarov PM Pistol:** 1d6 RKA, -1 Range Modifier, 8 charges. These pistols are very small and easy to conceal (only +1 to PER rolls to spot them)

**Bulletproof Vest:** 6rPD Armor, Covers shoulders, chest & vitals, Concealable under clothes (or 12- Activation)

**Combat Knife:** 1d6 HKA (plus STR adds)

**Gas Mask:** Life Support: self-contained Breathing (typically available only on ship)

**Radio Headset:** High Range Radio listen and transmit.

In addition, the Russians have in their arsenal (these will only be used in defending the ship):

4 LAW rockets, which can be fired by Anatoly or Grigory

**M-72 LAW:** 4d6 RKA, Armor Piercing, Explosion w/+1 Range Mod, +1 STUN Multiplier, 1 Charge (It is discarded after firing).

2 RPK Heavy Machine Guns, mounted at the front and rear of the ship (see the ship description, below...). Any of the crew members can fire these from the mounts. Yuri and Zbigniew can actually carry them and use them as weapons without penalty, and will not hesitate to do so to defend the ship.

**RPK MG:** 2d6 RKA, Autofire 10, +2 OCV, +2 Range Mod, 75 Charges.

1 SVD Sniper Rifle, typically used by Jaroslav, who will find high ground and pick opponents off with it. He will use this from a protected area if given a chance.

**SVD:** 2d6+1 RKA, +1 STUN Mult, +1 OCV, +2 Range Mod, 10 Charges.

The rifle has a scope on it that provides +8 vs. Range Penalties if the attacker Sets for a phase before firing.

The GM should feel free to modify this equipment as necessary to fit the power level of the campaign and the general tone of the encounter.

## The Ship

The Russians have come to America on a small cargo ship which is now docked at the city's waterfront (in the city Port, if the GM is running the adventure set in San Angelo). It is a container ship, meaning that it is essentially a large, floating platform that holds hundreds of cargo containers. There is little below deck area, and when full, it rides fairly low in the water. It is a reasonably small ship, and so can sit at a pier with relatively few special facilities. The pier is high enough that a passengerway connects the pier itself and the ship. The ship itself does have a crane on board to help move cargo (unusual for a ship of this type but it adds to the flavor of the adventure).

The map included shows a general outline of the ship itself, and a breakdown of the crew areas. The main thing to remember with a ship like this is that it is mostly space for cargo. The crew areas where members of the ship usually go are quite small in relation to the rest of the ship.

The cargo containers are 39 feet long and 8 feet wide and tall, but can be rendered as 6 Hexes by 1 Hex by 1 hex for convenience in *Champions* terms. They are standardized to facilitate further transport by truck or rail.

GMs should feel free to customize the ship to their liking. A large number of cargo con-



tainers would make for a cluttered, close-in environment with a 'house-to-house' fighting feel to any battle that breaks out amongst them, while having the cargo containers gone would create a large, open 'killing field' where characters race across open ground to various point of cover.

**Cargo Container:** 1 Hex by 6 Hexes, DEF 8/BODY 8 steel walls

### The Map Key

**A. Cargo Hold:** All of these areas are where cargo containers would normally be kept. GMs should stack cargo containers here or not as appropriate. The containers can be stacked up to half a dozen high, creating a 'canyon' effect, or only one or two high, allowing some characters to traverse their tops. There are walkways between the stacks 1 hex wide, and railings along the side of the ship to prevent falls (about chest high). Anyone who does fall will drop 10 hexes before hitting the water. Anyone who make it into a dice or relatively streamlined entry will suffer only half damage (5 dice), but characters who hit off-balance will suffer the full 10 dice (and then have to swim to where they can get out of the water...)

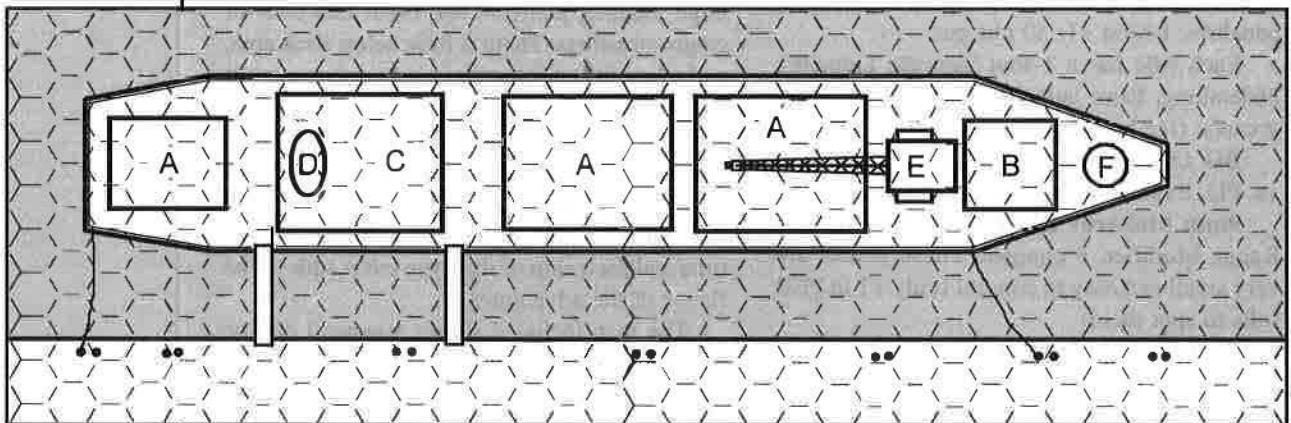
**B. Forward Hold:** This is the forward cargo area where the plutonium is being kept, in an otherwise nondescript cargo container. GMs should probably mix it in with other containers to make things more interesting, although hav-

ing it sitting in the middle of the deck all by itself gives it added drama.

**The Container:** The plutonium container is locked with a large padlock (DEF 6/BODY 4, Lockpick at -2), and hooked up to a basic alarm system rigged up by Jaroslav. If the container is tampered with without disconnecting the alarm (Security Systems or PER roll to notice it, then a Security Systems roll at -4 to disarm), an alarm will sound on the ship, alerting the crew that it is being tampered with. Jaroslav has hooked the alarm into the fire alarm system on the ship, so destroying the security mechanism will *not* disable the alarm, it has to be shut off from the bridge.

**The Plutonium Canister:** The Plutonium itself is in a large canister made of steel and lined with lead on the inside. It sits by itself in the middle of the empty cargo container. It is approximately three feet high and has a diameter of about two feet. Due to the lead inside, the canister weighs 1600 kg (it requires a STR of 30 to even lift). It has two large handles built into either side, where Yuri and Zbigniew can lift and move it if necessary.

The most significant feature of the canister, however, is the large block of plastic explosive very obviously wired to the container. The canister has been rigged so that if anyone tries to open it except Grigory or Adalaissa, both of whom know the code, it will explode, showering the area with radioactive steel and lead shrapnel. (Players tend to have an overactive



imagination. Any character with even a rudimentary knowledge of physics will know there is no danger of any kind of nuclear explosion from tampering with the canister; it's not set up that way.) Characters attempting to open it should realize right away this is a very difficult set-up, which will require lots of extra time or special equipment to work on (Demolitions -8 to disarm). Electronics (for the detonator) and Security Systems (for the booby trap mechanism) will complement the Demolitions roll, but cannot open the canister alone. If any attempt to open the canister fails, it will trigger a 6d6K explosion, Penetrating.

**Radiation:** The Plutonium is highly radioactive. It is left up to the GM to deal with the specific effects. Any character who comes in direct, unprotected contact with it will contract radiation sickness, horrible burns wherever he touches it, and should die relatively quickly, but extremely painfully. GMs may allow powered armor characters protection against the radiation, and any character who specifically has *Safe Environment: Radiation* may handle the Plutonium without danger, although the dilemma of dealing with a now highly-irradiated power suit should be used as a plot hook for a future adventure. In general, the Plutonium should be used as a plot device, a bargaining chip. It's actual use *must* have long-term and significant effects on any campaign, especially a more realistic "reality-based" *Dark Champions* game.

**C. The Bridge/Crew Area:** This takes up only a small portion of the area of the ship. It is detailed below. The observation tower and several antennas and radar arrays rise from this area.

**D. Smokestack:** This is a huge cylinder that reaches up above the highest point of the ship. It currently is inactive. Any particularly intrepid character may climb it and enter it to hide inside for any length of time. There is a strong, fine mesh grill at about deck level littered with dead birds and trash, keeping the debris from falling into the engine area.

**E. Deck Crane:** This is a large crane used to move cargo containers on the ship and to transfer them to shore. The Russians will use this in the "showdown" scene. It is an electromagnetic crane designed to latch onto the steel cargo containers and lift them out. It is operated from a control cabin at the bottom of the boom, and has a full range of motion.

**F. Observation tower/Antenna:** This is where Jaroslav will set up with his sniper rifle during the *Showdown* scene. At the top of the tower is a metal deck (DEF 9/BODY 7) with a chest-high metal wall around the area to keep people from falling (DEF 8/BODY 8).

**G. Dock:** this is the pier where the buyers will stand. The pier is very large, and there is a

10 hex drop to the water below, just as off the ship. The gangplank that sometimes is out connects the dock to the side of the ship near the bridge. The two large cranes on the dock function similarly to those on the ship, lifting the cargo containers (or cars) out by means of large magnets.

Large, heavy cable holds the ship against the dock. This cable is controlled by winches on the decks. The cables may be climbed across to the ship, but are slick and sharp, and will injure any unprotected character who tries this method of entry (1/2d6 KA).

## The Interior

**Walls:** All exterior bulkheads are welded steel (DEF 6/BODY 6). Interior walls are the same, but thinner (DEF 5/BODY 5). Interior doors are wood (DEF 3/BODY 3), and usually don't lock, with the exception of the cabin doors. (Lockpick at +2)

**Stairs:** All the stairs on the ship are nested (the stairs up are directly over the top of the stairs down, taking up the same vertical space). They are covered by roofs that keep the elements off, but are otherwise open to the air.

## Topside

**Bridge:** The bridge is a large, mostly open area. It has large windows all the way around the three sides to allow for viewing (reinforced Plexiglas DEF 6/BODY 2). Any conceivable piece of equipment or instrumentation used to control or monitor the ship can be found here, including radar, radio, power and light controls, and steering and engine control. Any character with TF: Large Ships or Electronics should be able to perform any reasonable action they come up with. There is always a radio scanner here tuned to the local police frequency, as well as a large chart with a nautical map of the city, its harbor, and environs laid out on it.

**Captain's Quarters:** This is a large cabin where the captain spends all his time waiting for the mission to be completed. He is a Normal (base stats) who speaks only Russian, and spends the vast majority of his time watching TV. He will not offer any resistance of any kind to characters, and will hide in his closet if any fighting breaks out on the ship. There is a small bathroom off the far corner of this room.

**Topside Lounge:** This is a fairly spacious lounge with a large table in the center. There is a big screen TV bolted into a cubby in the ceiling, and a microwave oven for heating snacks. There is also a couch and several overstuffed chairs for reading. On off hours, the crew may be found here reading or watching TV.







### Galley Deck

**Mess Hall:** This is a large, comfortable dining area, closed off with no windows. There are half a dozen tables with four chairs each laid out around the room. There is a swinging door that leads to the kitchen, as well as the storeroom. Depending on time of day, any of the Russians may be here taking a meal. The place is carpeted, and a stereo in a cubby bolted to the ceiling in a corner can provide music in the room. A large coffee percolator always has a pot going, at least half full.

**Galley:** This is a typical shipboard kitchen. Every cooking device required to prepare a wide variety of meals can be found here, as well as an extensive anti-fire system. There normally would be a cook overseeing this operation, but now that the crew is gone, the Russians use it at will. There is a large industrial dishwasher that hasn't seen much use lately, judging by the pile of dishes on it. There is a large walk-in refrigerator and freezer against the back wall.

**Storeroom:** This large room contains foodstuffs, paper goods, and toiletries in bulk quantity. The room is only about 1/3 full, having already made the long journey from Russia. There is a large washer/dryer combo here, too, and all the linens are piled neatly next to it.

### Crew Level

**Shower Rooms:** There are two bathrooms with showers. They are used pretty much equally by the crew.

**Quarters:** These are the individual crew quarters. Each contains two bunks, one on top of the other. Most of the Russians each have a room to themselves, except for Yuri & Zbigniew, who share, and keep their weights in the other room. The Russians have only a bare minimum of personal belongings. If PCs enter this area of the ship, the GM should customize each room as appropriate.

**Crew Lounge:** this is a smaller version of the Topside lounge. It has a beat-up couch, several chairs, and a B & W TV. The Russians don't use it, preferring to use the nicer topside lounge usually reserved for officers.

### Below Deck

This is the engine room/Power supply area. It is essentially one huge room, but if characters get here, they should find a maze of machinery, conduits, pipes, and so on, providing lots of cover and opportunity for interesting combat situations. The generators are going, but at very low power, just enough to provide the ship with electricity. It will take at least half an hour to get them going up to the speed where they need to be to move the ship anywhere. Any characters well-versed in electrical or mechanical engineering should be able to maneuver around without too much trouble, as well as tinker with any systems they may want to, including power to various parts of the ship (the alarm system on the Plutonium container can be disabled from here, as well).

The ship provides an excellent opportunity for some nail-biting close combat scenes. GMs who want to run combat on board should watch both *Under Siege* and *The Usual Suspects*. While *Under Siege* takes place on a much larger ship, it gives a feel for this kind of combat. *The Usual Suspects* features a rather complicated operation involving the taking of a ship much like this one, with good shots of the interior.

### In Conclusion

Hopefully, *The October Revelation* will add a bit of international spice to your *Dark Champions* campaign. Keep the pace rapid and the NPCs three dimensional, and the characters and situations in this scenario may become long-term additions to your campaign. Dos Vadanya!



# STROKE OF LUCK



## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Stroke of Luck*, a Heroic (street level) *Dark Champions* adventure. If you're a potential player, read no further! Why spoil your fun? If you're a potential GM, keep your eyes glued to the page. This adventure should take about three play-sessions to complete, and it's balanced for about three street-level vigilantes of roughly 150 points each.

These PCs should flinch when a gun is fired at them: they can be bruised, even hurt, by a kick or a punch. They're not walking armored vehicles, and they can't perform magic, literally teleport, or command the respect and cooperation of law-enforcement agencies. They are *Dark Champions*.

## How to Use this Book

GMs who wish to use this adventure should read it, then go back through the material, noting specific changes and details pertinent to their

campaign setting. The adventure may be too gritty, or not gritty enough: now is the time to tweak the plot and the NPCs so that the adventure won't clash with the game's tone up till now.

Photocopying necessary maps ahead of time is a good way to save time during play, as is readying scratch sheets for combat (perhaps photocopies of the NPCs themselves).

Once you, the GM, have read the material and made your preparations, it's time to get your group together and play out this story of industrial espionage.

## The Adventure

*Stroke of Luck* is divided into four episodes: one "Introductory Episode" to establish background information and to hook the PCs into the story, and three episodes, each of which should take one playing session to complete. Each episode has a balance of investigation, role-playing opportunities, and combat. As with any published adventure, actual mileage may vary.

**Author**  
Ed Carmien

**Artist**  
Greg Smith

# THE STORY

The Shonto Conglomerate, a large Japanese corporation, seeks to expand its holdings in Hudson City-based corporations. Shonto's chief executives have had a generations-long relationship with the Yakuza, and through the Yakuza, a clan of ninja. Shonto, in Japan, has long been known for shady dealings: what it cannot attain through honest business practice it does not hesitate to grasp using illegal methods.

Years ago, Shonto acquired Hudson City Health and Medical (HCH&M), a local Health Maintenance Organization (HMO). By offering high quality service at basement prices, taking a consistent loss, HCH&M garnered the lion's share of Hudson City's corporate HMO business. By implanting sneaky devices into various executives over the years that can be triggered by a coded radio signal, Shonto prepared the way for industrial espionage in Hudson City on a grand scale.

Today, the takeovers have been launched. A covert Shonto team consisting of a junior level executive, a computer expert, and some ninja of the Shuto ryu ("way of," or clan) are operating from a helicopter-equipped yacht in the ocean near Hudson City.

A stroke of luck (bad luck for Shonto, good luck for the PCs) exposes the implant technology accidentally to the PCs, allowing them the opportunity to interfere with the Shonto plan.

In order to take over an accounting firm, a whistleblower is eliminated and the company's records altered to manipulate the company's stock value, to drop in price. Then a pharmaceutical company is raided and valuable patent information is stolen, also rendering the company ripe for a forced takeover. And once the PCs have interfered and become a pest, the Shonto executive will make a desperate decision and call in the assistance of a Chinese Tong in an attempt to extort a promise of noninterference from the vigilantes.

Ultimately, a showdown on the Shonto yacht is in the cards, unless the PCs somehow let the Shonto covert operations team escape entirely...or the bad guys are all killed or captured while on the mainland.

## Timeline

**Ten years ago:** The Shonto Conglomerate purchased, through several dummy corporations, the Hudson City Health and Medical HMO. They paid top dollar, and the purchase

made the news, although it was never publicly connected to Shonto.

**Eight years ago:** A highly-trained team of surgeons became part of the HCH&M surgical team. These Japanese doctors were actually on loan from another Shonto company, a high-tech medical technology firm. They began implanting sinister devices into selected patients as a secret bonus to whatever normal surgery was being performed.

**Two years ago:** The team of surgeons left Hudson City after implanting as many as fifty of the devices into various executives.

**Several months ago:** The Shonto-owned yacht Blossom arrived off the coast of Hudson City, and Hideo Tanaka began directing covert operations against corporate targets using his team of ninja and his computer expert.

**Today:** An accident involving a criminal's cellular phone accidentally triggers one of the implanted devices, felling a rising star in a local corporation.

As the adventure progresses, the Shonto covert operations team attempts to reach its goals while the heroes investigate and try to stop them. Exactly how it pans out is in the hands of the PCs, but the whole story will take perhaps a month of game time to resolve.

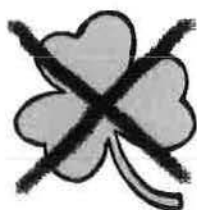
## Foreshadowing

Various news items are described in the *Introductory Episode* that set the tone and provide key information players will need to keep in mind as they try to solve this mystery and defeat the bad guys.

## Alternate Outcomes

The nature of this adventure is such that all outcomes are alternate outcomes, within reason. If the PCs don't investigate the odd happenings at the beginning, they will be caught flat-footed when later events confront them. If the PCs somehow become confused and take extreme actions based on incorrect information ("This scheme is being run from the Japanese Consulate! Let's blow it up!"), the bad guys could conceivably get away with everything.

GM's should do their best to see that the PCs follow along with the plot during the early stages to make sure the meat of the adventure receives the appropriate attention. However, once the mid-game has been reached, failure should be an option that the PCs genuinely fear.



Failure doesn't have to be permanent, however. GMs with groups who fail to nail down the covert operations team can assume that Shonto, having succeeded, will attempt more takeovers. With a little creativity, the heroes can have another hack at the bad guys, and the final stages of the adventure can be utilized.

If, on the other hand, the PCs are too good at what they do (they defeat the Tong attempt at extortion, capture the Shonto team, turn over damning evidence to the authorities, and save all the potential "stroke" victims from mysterious deaths) and the adventure is brought up short...Nobody's perfect. Award some extra experience and move on.

### Troubleshooting

PCs who don't investigate when they should be reminded that something mysterious is happening. GMs can remind them in person, or GMs can use a proxy — another Hudson City vigilante who does notice, investigates, and gets himself or herself killed.

GMs should make the puzzle worthwhile by not dropping too many hints...but once the PCs come up with a hypothesis that is correct (or nearly so) GMs should also do something to help reassure the players that they're on the right track.

Troubleshooting is easy when GMs remember the goals of the various parties: the Shonto team has very specific goals, as does the Tong involved. If a stage of the plot slips by the heroes, keeping track of what would logically happen next is the best tool the GM can use to keep the adventure moving forward.

## Customizing the Adventure

The PCs are tied into the adventure in the *Introductory Episode*, later. GMs who have a detailed campaign running should read through the adventure and note places that recognized elements from the on-going campaign can be integrated. Familiar names and places help lend depth to any campaign.

### Adjusting NPCs

This adventure is balanced for about three street-level heroes of approximately 150 points apiece. GMs running a game with stronger or weaker player characters can add or subtract a ninja, give the computer geek more or less combat skills, and even fiddle with the equipment

load of the bad guys. The same is true for the Chinese Tong hired during the adventure by Hideo Tanaka.

### Possible Dramatic Endings

The ending hinted at in the adventure is the final confrontation on the Shonto yacht, Blossom. It's a dramatic setting, and it could end with spectacular explosions, even a sinking ship! The "end" may occur on the mainland, however, if the PCs somehow lure the Shonto executive ashore.

However the end comes to be, it must involve the Shonto executive, Hideo Tanaka. If that means he goes down with the Blossom, pistol in hand, blazing away at the American vigilantes who ruined his career (and only incidentally his life), that's dramatic. If it means the vigilantes show up at the yacht, drop the bloody corpses of the ninja on the nice white carpet of Hideo's cabin, and Hideo subsequently commits ritual suicide, that's dramatic too — it just has fewer bullets.

A nice dramatic ending helps seal the end of the adventure and provides a sense of satisfaction for players. However, adventure seeds can always sprout from the leftovers.

## Adventure Seeds

What to do after it's over? GMs can use this adventure as an introduction to the Asian crime organizations described in *Dark Champions* (pages 114-132). The Tongs may have become annoyed with the PCs and wish revenge. The Shuto ninja clan might seek retribution if they feel their operatives were treated less than honorably.

On the other hand, an American executive who finds his or her company under assault may turn to the PCs for help. The assault may be orchestrated by foreign companies or the takeover might be entirely domestic and related to La Cosa Nostra, American-based Russian Mafia, or drug dealer plans to launder money.

For PCs who don't shrink from killing, an opportunity might arise to exact vengeance upon the less-than-ethical surgeons who implanted all those sneaky devices into patients of HCH&M years ago. A family member of a slain executive could easily bankroll a sightseeing trip to the Far East, leading to an adventure overseas, perhaps in a war-torn and appropriately chaotic (and despotic) country. Who knows what stories might spring from this adventure?



# SOURCEBOOK

In this section are all the details of the people, places, groups, and items used in the adventure.

## People

### Hideo Tanaka, Jr. Executive of the Shonto Conglomerate

Hideo is 31, a rising star in Shonto. He fully realizes the importance of his covert mission to Hudson City — both to his company and to himself. If he fails, he may as well die: he will have no future in business, and his family would be shamed were he to continue living. He is an ordinary person with average statistics. He does know a little Jiu-Jitsu (use the Jujutsu style in *The Ultimate Martial Artist*, page 35, or the Jiu-jitsi package in the *Hero System Rulebook*, page 32.) but does not know how to use a weapon. He has skills in international business, management, accounting, and speaks both Japanese and English fluently.

### Alex Carstair, Computer Consultant

Alex is 26 and two years out of MIT. He was hired by Shonto as a computer consultant of the highest caliber. He earns well into six figures, and he is as loyal as an American can be to a Japanese company that pays him exceedingly well. He's willing to break the law for Shonto but he's not a killer. He takes comfort in the idea that his crimes are relatively "victimless" — what does it matter who owns what company?

He is peripherally aware of the implant project. His task is to steal and alter computer records, and he often accompanies Mr. S and the other ninja on breaking and entering missions to accomplish this. Alex has superb computer skills, speaks both English and Japanese fluently, and carries a pistol for self defense.

### Mr. S, Ninja Leader

"Mr. S," as he is known, is a short, unassuming Japanese man in his late 30s. He customarily dresses in a brown suit and never speaks when it is wiser to listen. He is tattooed with mystic images he believes help him remain unseen, unheard, and unnoticed. He follows orders to the letter and is an experienced, savvy criminal. Unbeknownst to him, he carries an implant that can be triggered remotely, causing his death by seemingly natural causes.

Base Mr. S on the Terrorist write-up in *Jus-*

*tice, Not Law* (page 127). In addition, he has a Strength of 17, a 23 DEX for purposes of determining who attacks first (Lightning Reflexes), +3 Combat Levels with all combat, Stealth at 17-, and the ninja abilities described below.

Mr. S has an ancestral weapon that is especially deadly: his Katana does a total of 2½d6, Killing.

### Chagi, Ninja Minion

He is a young man, in his 20's, and fanatically loyal to his clan. Base Chagi on the Street Thug Type 2 in *Justice, Not Law* (page 126). Because Chagi is a mere Ninja Minion, he does not carry a sword as Mr. S does. His only weapons are his Ninjitsu and the items on his utility belt.

### Geri, Ninja Minion

See Chagi. Note that replacement ninja are available in small numbers in case the PCs munch up poor Chagi and Geri early in the adventure: they will be identical in all ways to Chagi and Geri.

### Special Ninja Details

If Aaron Allston's *Ninja Hero* or Steven S. Long's *The Ultimate Martial Artist* are available, GMs will be able to fill in a lot more details about these ninja. The Shuto clan can be any clan that has survived into the 20th century by adapting to new technologies, new types of missions, and new patrons. They emphasize stealth and avoidance, but their members are always ready to deal out quick violence if it will serve their ends.

Here are a few details that hold true for the ninja in this adventure:

**Skills:** Acrobatics; Breakfall; Bugging; Climbing; Concealment; Disguise; Electronics; KS: Ninjitsu; Languages: Japanese, English, Ninja Clan Codes and Symbols; Lockpicking; Martial Arts: Ninjitsu Maneuvers (see *Hero System Rulebook*, page 33, or *UMA*, page 53); Security Systems; Sleight of Hand; Stealth; Tactics; WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Pistols, and Machine Pistols

**Equipment:** To better accomplish their high-tech infiltration missions, Shuto ninja carry a sophisticated utility belt (see *Dark Champions*, page 100, for a full description). The stats for the belt are listed below:

*Utility Belt:* Multipower (30 Pt Base), OAF (15); 1u (all): Mini Camera, Mini Recorder, Smoke Pellets, Flash Pellets, Thermite Pellets, Sleep Gas Pellets, Rebreather, Mini-Radio, Monocular, Flashlight, Lockpick Set, Security System Analyzer, Weakness Darts.



Combined with their Tactics skill and natural evasive abilities, these belts should make the ninja a slippery crew to pin down. In addition to these Utility Belt gizmos, Shuto ninja have two other trademark tricks:

**The Mantle of Night (invisibility in darkness or shadow):** Invisibility to Sight Group, 0 END, Only Works In Darkness or Shadows, Requires a Stealth Roll.

**Dropped Marbles:** 20 STR Telekinesis, One Hex, Continuous, Uncontrolled, Activation Roll 14-, 2 Recoverable Charges, Does No Damage, Only to Throw Target to Ground, Only Affects Characters Moving on the Ground, DEX Roll Cancels Effect.

### Captain and Crew of the Blossom

Captain Muwashi is an older man, in his 50's. As a long-time Shonto employee, he knows full well the scope of the conglomerate's illegal activities. He is assisted in sailing the vessel by a first mate and a common sailor.

Arunhei Sato is the helicopter pilot and mechanic, and is armed with a machine pistol.

The Engineer has two assistants, as does the Steward. Even for a luxury yacht the vessel is over-crewed: the extra hands are there to handle "unfortunate incidents" that may arise. Each crewmember has some extra skill or talent that serves in this regard: for example, at least two of the crew know how to use the .50 twin machine guns mounted on the Blossom. Otherwise, however, the crew are average.

### Phillip "Jackie Duck" Hsaio

15 STR 14 DEX 15 CON 12 BODY  
10 INT 10 EGO 13 PRE 8 COM  
8 PD 5 ED 3 SPD  
7 REC 30 END 30 STUN

**Powers and Skills:** Tong Member package deal (*Dark Champions*, page 130), Gambling 11-, Stealth 12-, Martial Arts (Kung Fu), +2 with Martial Arts, +1 with Uzi, +1 with Shotgun

**Disadvantages:** Tong Member package, Reputation (Law Enforcement, Chinatown): Leader of Emerald Door street gang 11-, Hunted by the Police (MoPow, Capture) 8-

**Background:** Phillip leads the Emerald Door street gang, which is associated with the Choy Sing Tong. He leads the gang of about 35 members (for more information see *Dark Champions*, page 131). In his early 30's, "Jackie Duck" feels he is a little old to be running around with a street gang, and he yearns for promotion in the Tong. His boss, Han Fei, is also bucking for promotion, and both see the extortion operation funded by Hideo as a means

of moving up the Tong ladder. Doing the dirty work, no matter how profitably, of a Japanese conglomerate, is not apt to gain them any points with the Tong's top leaders, however.

**Notes:** To throw off police investigations, Jackie Duck has been known to dress his gang in Vietnamese gang colors when they commit crimes. While this doesn't fool any Asian witnesses for a second, most American witnesses don't have a clue and point the police in the wrong direction when they describe the Vietnamese gang colors.

### Emerald Door Gang Members

Use the Type I thugs from *Justice, Not Law* (page 125). About half should be SPD 2 (not 3), to represent rookie gang members. GMs should equip them with game balance and situation in mind: if they're out on the street looking for trouble, they'll be packing Uzis and shotguns. If they're enjoying pizza and beer, they might be packing pistols.

There are about 35 active members in the gang, but all of them won't be involved in this adventure. Some will be taking care of gang business, while others can't be trusted not to blab details to disapproving higher-ups. The exact number involved is a question of balance: 7-8 is a median number, and GMs should add a few or take a few away as necessary to balance any combat that comes up.

## Places

All adventures have to take place somewhere. Here is a quick review of the different settings where the action might occur in *Stroke of Luck*.

### NHS Blossom

A private luxury yacht belonging to the Shonto Conglomerate that can cruise for months without resupply while carrying 20 passengers and crew, not to mention a helicopter, the Blossom is the perfect base for sophisticated industrial espionage. It has a full communications suite, is equipped with the latest marine radar and navigational equipment, and is even armed

At top speed the Blossom can make just over 30 knots, a very respectable speed for a private craft its size. It carries a wide selection of automatic weapons for anti-personnel purposes, and in addition mounts twin-.50 caliber machine guns in a camouflaged turret on top of the bridge (see the M2HB Heavy Barrel .50 cal. in *Dark Champions*, page 190).



The Blossom's helicopter is itself a high-tech marvel, and can be flown remotely from the bridge. While technically unarmed, it does possess a unique anti-theft device. (See the map of the *Blossom* for more details.)

### South Harrison Community Organization Center

This wishy-washy name conceals the operations of the Choy Sing Tong. It is an unremarkable office building with receptionist, conference rooms, and offices for the organization's officers (the Tong leaders). They do their illegal business while masquerading as legitimate businessmen concerned for the progress of Chinatown. Located on South Harrison street, it is near to a social club, described below. Oddly, the front door to the center is painted a vivid emerald green.

If a map is required of this building, GMs should use the floorplan from one tower level from the HarpCor office building, such as Floor 12 (*DC*, page 186), making minor adjustments to allow for exterior access (a front and back door).

### Ming Garden Social Club

For "members only," this is the headquarters of the Emerald Door street gang, which is affiliated with the Choy Sing Tong. GMs who need a map of this joint should use the "Bar" floorplan from *Justice, Not Law*, page 73.

Persons who are not ethnic Chinese won't get in the front door: those who do get in who are not members of the Emerald Door gang (or otherwise affiliated with the Tong) will be viewed with suspicion and outright hostility.

## Groups

There are two groups involved in this adventure, three if the PCs are counted as a "group." The Shonto Conglomerate is a Japanese corporation which doesn't mind taking a shortcut on the road to capitalistic success. The Choy Sing Tong, along with its associated Emerald Door street gang, is a criminal organization headquartered in Hudson City. (Tongs in general and the Choy Sing Tong specifically are described in lavish detail in *Dark Champions*, pages 125-132.)



## Items

Here is a list of the special items that might influence play and/or end up in the player character's hands.

### Expert Computer Kit

Alex Carstairs carries with him an aluminum briefcase carrying the following extremely high-tech items:

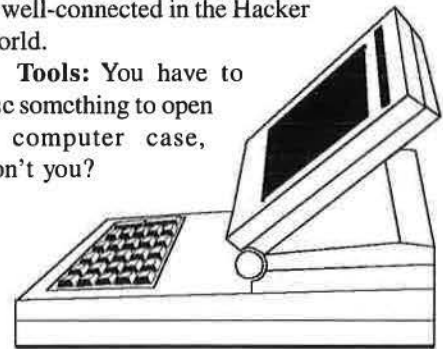
**Miniature notepad computer:** Like a laptop, but smaller.

**Networking multiplexer:** Provides for connections to all known computer networks.

**Hacker software:** Illegal software that helps a user break into other people's computers (+3 to Computer Programming roll).

**Contact Info:** Alex Carstairs is well-connected in the Hacker world.

**Tools:** You have to use something to open a computer case, don't you?



### Ninja Bulletproof Undies

Hideo Tanaka, his ninja, and Alex Carstairs all wear a special bullet-proof undergarment that serves as 6rPD/4rED protection. The armor only protects half as well against bladed attacks (knives, swords, shuriken), weighs only a few pounds, and does not interfere with movement. Unfortunately, the special fibers that make up the armor break down after extended contact with air and sweat, so even if the PCs liberate these special items, they won't serve for more than a few months before becoming useless (Alternately, GMs could treat these as having the Ablative Limitation). There are a few extra suits aboard the Blossom, however.

### Ninja Utility Belts

See the description in *Dark Champions*, page 100, for a run-down on these items.

## Mr. S's Ancestral Sword

This Katana is old but extremely well-made. It adds +2 Damage Classes (+1/2d6 KA). Naturally, he values it greatly: if he loses it, he will go to great lengths to retrieve it. The hilt and scabbard are hi-tech black nylon and rubber; to the untrained eye it will appear as nothing special. To someone who knows swords, however, one look at the blade will reveal all its secrets!

## Sneaky Implants

These tiny devices are nearly invisible to X-Rays (-5 to PER Roll when viewing X-Ray film, etc.). They come in various types: some induce a heart attack, some a failure of the liver, while some can cause a sudden stroke. They can be set off by a radio code broadcast on the cellular phone frequency: it is unlikely the code will be received accidentally.

GMs should view this as a special effect. Because none of the PCs should be directly affected, and because removing the devices involves surgery, exactly how they work isn't important. Determining that they exist is half the battle. The other half is figuring out how they got there. Once those two feats are accom-

plished, the public can be made safe from this threat relatively easily.

## Blossom Helicopter

Full statistics for this helicopter are based on the "Combat Helicopter" in *Dark Champions* (page 98). It carries no weapons, but is armored as noted. The helicopter carries six in comfort, eight in a squeeze, but is still small enough to fit on the deck of the Blossom — and onto the rooftops of almost all significant office buildings in Hudson City.

It is locked and unlocked with an electronic key carried by the pilot. If the helicopter's anti-theft device detects a forced entry, a signal is sent to the electronic key. If a break-in is successful, the helicopter promptly starts up, disengages the internal controls, and hovers 100 meters straight up. It can be retrieved remotely from the bridge of the Blossom or by the electronic key.

The helicopter has active-matrix variable-color paint controlled from the cockpit: this allows the pilot to change the appearance of the helicopter...and more important, to alter the ID numbers present on all aircraft.





# INTRODUCTORY EDPISODE: STROKE OF LUCK

This material can be worked into the tail end of the adventure that occurs before this adventure begins, or GMs can add some encounters of their own and use it for a whole gaming session. Alternatively, GMs can use this material immediately before beginning Episode One.

To allow maximum flexibility, this episode is not set in any particular season. GMs should try to fit the following background/foreshadowing items in as naturally as possible, however, perhaps by generating local news items as a regular feature of the campaign.

Following are a series of news items and contemporary issues that need to be presented to the players before the main adventure can begin. It's a good idea to work these into play, rather than just reading them off a list. For example, one player character might be affected indirectly by the layoffs described below — perhaps they receive a phone call, as part of their daily life, from someone who's just received their pink slip.

## News Items

### Domestic Corporations Continue Layoffs Despite Union Outcry

Various Hudson City corporations have been downsizing their operations in order to spur profits. Many of them then turn to overseas labor in order to get the work done. In the fields of telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, light industrial engineering, and others, more than 10,000 layoffs have occurred during the previous calendar year. Labor unions are screaming bloody murder, the state legislature is considering a spate of possible laws aimed at curbing the practice, and the economy is in the midst of a brief downturn.



### Well-Known Publisher Slain in Murder-Suicide

The publisher Bill Randolph was shot and killed by his third wife, Celia, in his Hudson City office last week. She then turned the pistol on herself, committing suicide. Friends and co-workers were taken completely by surprise. The two had been married only a year....

There is nothing more to this story. No one will ever be able to determine what drove Celia to whack Bill and then take her own life. Due to their social position and the grisly nature of the event, the murder/suicide is the talk of the town, but the gossip will soon fade.

### Cab Fares Increase Next Month

The city-regulated fares for taxi rides in the city go up 10% beginning next month.

### Where Are They Now?

In Red Cinema's weekly Crime Column, he discusses the whereabouts and activities (known and speculated) of various Hudson City criminals, vigilantes, and law-enforcement officers. "Red Cinema" is a pseudonym for the journalist who writes the column.

GMs should fill in some appropriate background material to reflect the media's interest in the PCs and the criminals they've fought, as well as some information about other vigilantes. This is a good opportunity to plant a seed for a later adventure in which a criminal, long incarcerated, returns to a life of crime after being released.

### Residents Protest Increase in Downtown Air Traffic

A citizen's committee protested today in the Mayor's office, citing an increase in late-night helicopter traffic as the cause. "Nobody can hear 'em out in the suburbs," said one man who asked not to be identified, "but those darn 'copters make a lot of racket if you live in town."

Business leaders admitted their use of helicopters for business purposes was up. "With the streets the way they are today, it's safer and faster for our top executives to travel by helicopter," said one representative.

"Sure," rebutted a Union Leader. "Anybody who lays off a couple thousand guys so his Christmas bonus can be six million bucks better not be walking around my neighborhood at night."

This news item reflects not so much an increase in business air traffic as the late-night operations of the Blossom's helicopter.

## Wrong Place, Wrong Time

This is an encounter between one or more of the PCs and a small group of criminals. It occurs in the mouth of an alley near a posh restaurant on the edge of a bad neighborhood.

Josh "Sugar Heart" Hethke and his goons, "Muscles" Marvin and "Skinny" Jones have determined that a group of the hookers they "own" has been withholding money from the tricks they turn so they can afford to run away together and start a new life in Ohio, or some other state that starts with a vowel.

The goons are armed with cheap .25 cal. pistols, knives, and brass knuckles. Muscles is strong (STR 15) but otherwise average, while Skinny is pretty fast (DEX 15) and therefore has an OCV and DCV of 1 better than average. Sugar Heart is carrying a more reliable 9mm pistol and a knife, and GMs should use a Type 1 Street Thug (*JNL*, page 125). He also has a cellular phone he uses to conduct business.

The women he's planning to discipline in the alley are Myra, Joy, Iris, and Honey. Ranging in age from late teens to mid-twenties, these women are afraid of Sugar Heart, but because of the psychological domination he exercises over them, they will act to protect him up to the point he's actually helpless. This may come as a surprise to the PCs.

The timing of the encounter is simple. The heroes at some point will observe Sugar Heart, perhaps hearing an angry tirade directed against his "girls." Once they approach, Sugar Heart will tell the PCs to go away and mind their own business (if Sugar Heart sees them, of course).

Since Sugar Heart's entire livelihood is on the line (if he gives in to the PCs, he's out of business) he will do his best to salvage the situation.

Once violence breaks out, and bullets, fists, shuriken, swords, electro-shock gloves, or whatever fly, Sugar Heart's cellular phone takes a hit. At that moment, across the street, a restaurant patron getting into his car suddenly doubles over in pain. The man's wife shrieks, attracting attention. GMs should be sure one of the PCs happens to see this: it's very important!

Even with shrieking hookers and Muscles and Skinny on his side, Sugar Heart doesn't stand a chance against combat-hardened vigilantes. He can be packed up and shipped away at the player character's whim.

## The Real Mystery

The restaurant patron, John P. Kendricks, and his wife Allison, were enjoying a nice evening away from the kids at a restaurant. When they were done, they went to their car, and noticed a scuffle between masked vigilantes and what looked like a gaggle of hookers.

Shots (or punches, or whatever) rang out. John P. Kendricks felt an amazing stab of pain in his chest. Doubling over, his wife raced to assist.

But John didn't catch a stray bullet. He died anyway, an apparently healthy man in his late 30's, a successful executive, felled by...what?:

Lucky GMs won't have to lay it out any further for the players: they will investigate the mystery on their own. Unlucky GMs might have to parade the incident past them in the papers or on a TV news segment until they get the hint. The key coincidence they should take away from the scene itself is that John P. Kendricks fell to the ground the moment Sugar Heart's cellular phone was shattered (or dropped, or knifed, or whatever).

This event is a stroke of luck for the PCs. And for John P. Kendricks. Different kind of luck, but a stroke nonetheless.

## Residents Protest Increased Air Traffic

Shelley Morgan, Daily Union Staff Writer

A citizen's committee protested today in the Mayor's office, citing an increase in late-night helicopter traffic and the resulting noise. There were no arrests, but the Mayor's office reported that the protest caused a "minor disruption" to the staff.

"Nobody can hear 'em out in the suburbs," said one man who asked not to be identified, "but those darn 'copters make a lot of racket if you live in town."

Corporate leaders admitted their use of helicopters for business purposes was up. "With the streets the way they are today, it's safer and faster for our top executives to travel by helicopter," said one corporate representative.

"Sure," rebutted a Union Leader. "Anybody who lays off a couple thousand guys so his Christmas bonus can be six million bucks better not be walking around my neighborhood at night."

The City Council has agreed to look into the matter.





## EPISODE ONE: THE SHELL GAME

Several avenues of investigation are open to the PCs. Who was John P. Kendrick? Would anyone want him dead? How did he die? What could Sugar Heart's cellular phone have to do with it? These initial questions, plus others that creative players will discover, once explored, should lead to more sinister conclusions.

### Initial Questions

#### Who was John P. Kendrick?

John P. Kendrick, known as "JP" to his friends, was a self-employed accounting consultant. He was relatively free of debt, happily married to Allison Kendrick, and he had two

kids, Sally and John P. Jr. JP had no vices to speak of other than a love of sports, early morning jogging, and a tendency to work long hours. A graduate of Hudson City University, JP had until recently been employed as an accountant by the prestigious firm of Ernest & Youthe, an international accounting firm headquartered in Hudson City.

Much of this information can be found in JP's obituary: a little legwork can supply the rest, along with more very ordinary information that details a working professional's life.

#### Did JP Have Enemies?

JP, as a moderate amount of research reveals, had no enemies. He didn't owe money to a loanshark, he wasn't involved in any sinister business dealings, he wasn't sleeping around on his lovely wife. JP was an accountant, and while accountants aren't really as boring as they're stereotyped to be, JP didn't do much to dispel the dull but sincere image most accountants have.

#### How did he Die?

Since JP died unexpectedly, an autopsy is performed, but since no foul play is suspected, it is not an extensive autopsy. John P. Kendrick died of a sudden and complete blockage of his heart — apparently he wasn't as healthy as it appeared. He did not have any sort of pacemaker or other artificial implants, as his medical records on file with Hudson City Health & Medical testify.

The Coroner who performs the autopsy is Dr. Harold "Harry" Floyd. Two days after JP drops dead, he's done with the body and it is returned to Allison (actually, it is picked up by a funeral home).

#### Sugar Heart's Cellular Phone

If the PCs salvaged the phone, an investigation of the remnants doesn't reveal much. It was broken in such a way that the battery overloaded the send/receive unit, burning it out. Any character with electronics can deduce that it may have sent one last random burst of radio signal as it died, if the phone is examined thoroughly.

If the PCs don't have the phone, the police do. They will chuck it into the evidence bin and dispose of it as the situation warrants (it goes into evidence because it is an illegally "cloned" cellular phone). It would be easy to acquire if the PCs have a Contact on the police force.



## Enemy Action

As the initial phase of the heroes' investigation moves forward, the Shonto crew aren't far behind, cleaning up what they perceive as a minor accident. Since John P. Kendrick is on their list of implantees, and he dropped dead unexpectedly, they guess that his implant malfunctioned somehow.

JP was implanted because he worked for Ernest & Youthe, a target for Shonto acquisition. They couldn't know at the time that he would leave the firm — but enough of his fellow accountants have remained behind for the Shonto plan to succeed.

To make sure the implant isn't discovered, Mr. S and his ninja research the Coroner, Harry Floyd. While JP was a straight arrow, it turns out that Harry Floyd has a penchant for augmenting his income by prescribing narcotic drugs on the side and selling them for cash through a street contact. They force him to remove the implant and swear him to secrecy regarding what he found.

In fact, if the vigilantes are also making contact with Dr. Floyd, Mr. S or one of his assistants might meet them in passing, perhaps in Dr. Floyd's office.

Timing is important here: if the PCs urge Dr. Floyd to do a thorough autopsy very soon after he receives the body, the bad guys won't have threatened him yet and Dr. Floyd will likely agree: he is a good Coroner, despite his nasty hobby. Classic timing would have Dr. Floyd agree to look thoroughly at one point, then be threatened...and when the PCs check back, Dr. Floyd is uncooperative because he fears what Mr. S can reveal about him if he tells what he knows.

## More Questions

### The Dr. Floyd Connection

As the first few days after JP's death pass, the PCs, if they've taken an interest, have some answers. If they take Dr. Floyd's word, they may drop the matter. If they themselves investigate Dr. Floyd (unlikely, but possible) contacts on the street with drug connections can reveal his role in supplying illicit prescription drugs through a dealer named Vinnie.

It's possible that PCs with the proper skills or contacts might spirit JP's corpse away and have an independent autopsy performed. If this

occurs before Dr. Floyd's autopsy, an implant can be recovered, but the theft will certainly make the press buzz. The body will be more accessible after Dr. Floyd's autopsy. Evidence of something being implanted near the heart can be found, but other than an odd scorch mark, nothing else can be determined.

Heroes who really need their hands held can have Vinnie paraded past their noses, complete with a store of illicit prescription drugs that can be traced to Dr. Floyd, who can then be pressured to reveal information as described below.

Dr. Floyd believes he was influenced by people working on the behalf of Hudson City Health & Medical. He knows they were Japanese. He's reluctant, of course, to reveal how they influenced him to overlook the implant (which he might have overlooked in any case), but as vigilantes have ways of getting people to talk, he'll reveal all if pressed hard enough.

### The Fat Settlement

Allison, upset and distraught, contacts the family lawyer in order to begin an investigation of what took her husband from her so early in life. Obviously there must be a cause! There must be someone to sue! This information is passed to the Shonto operations team via a tap on the family phone.

Panicked, and trying desperately to smooth things over, Hideo Tanaka visits Allison in an effort to prevent any official inquiries from being started. He offers her a tremendous sum to let the matter be: his story is that the insurance company would rather resolve the matter immediately than pursue any investigation into potential actionable causes.

Posing as a representative, he presents a fat check. Allison tearfully agrees: she and her children are set for life. Hideo assures her that other, much smaller checks are forthcoming from "his" company, and he drops into the conversation that "his" firm also represents Hudson City Health & Medical.

The Kendrick's insurance firm has no direct dealings with HCH&M, although many of the HMO's customers are insured by the firm.

The information in this section can be discovered a few days after JP's death. The PCs may be interested in interviewing Allison after follow-up news interviews indicate a change of heart on Allison's part: early interviews indicated she was upset and intensely curious about what caused her husband's death: later interviews (after Hideo's visit) demonstrate that Allison has let the matter rest.





## Enemy Action II

Having carefully left a trail pointing to HCH&M, the Shonto group then plants information suggesting the HMO may have misdiagnosed a heart ailment in John P. Kendrick. Since the Shonto Conglomerate owns the HMO, however indirectly, it is easier than usual for Mr. S, his ninja assistants, and Eric Carstairs to sneak in and alter the requisite records.

This done, the false trail is complete. While the HMO might be implicated, that is of no concern to Shonto.

Of course, the PCs have to have some fun this Episode, don't they? Of course they do. Therefore, whenever the PCs get around to investigating the HMO, that's when Mr. S and his team are taking care of business.

Hudson City Health & Medical's headquarters is in downtown Hudson City. Downstairs is a clinic, very handy for downtown employees of the HMO. The upper floors are offices.

This initial encounter should be frustrating for the PCs. They shouldn't do much more than injure the bad guys, who will accomplish their mission and get away, probably in a cloud of

patented ninja pepper smoke. The best the PCs should do is to kill or capture one of Mr. S's assistants. The bad guys should survive so they can be encountered later. And since the bad guys only wish to escape, their task is easier. Details of the fracas are below.

## Investigating HCH&M

Assuming that the PCs investigate the building at night, probably to acquire a copy of John P. Kendrick's medical records, they arrive just as the ninja are finishing up. The heroes might realize that something is up the minute they see internal alarm systems that are disabled — not with wirecutters, but seemingly shut off with the security code. If the PCs visit during daylight hours, the ninjas have cleared the building with a false fire alarm or pest spraying or some such nonsense.

Once the PCs make contact with the Shonto team, the bad guys flee. There may be a chase, but they should get away relatively unscathed.

What the villains left behind should confuse the PCs. While some might imagine that a cover-up engineered by the HMO is in progress, and that therefore JP's medical records (computerized and on paper) will have been expurgated by the bad guys, this is not so! In fact, the dead man's records indicate the HMO's doctors, overworked and in a rush, may have misdiagnosed a heart disorder.

An obvious conclusion is that the good guys scared the bad guys away before they could steal the records. Careful investigation reveals that the paper record, a file folder from one of those sliding ceiling to floor filing systems, is on new forms. Other paper forms from the era John P. Kendrick received care from the HMO are a different style — a subtle difference, and a key error the PCs may notice and exploit.

JP's record also shows that he had surgery while he was an employee of Ernest & Youthe: a cracked rib from a car accident while jogging punctured a lung. His record also shows that he was terrifically healthy in most respects...except for the heart problem that was seemingly misdiagnosed.

## Conclusion

Lots of investigating, lots of shifts in motivation by NPCs, and at the end a quick brush with mysterious, black-clad shadows. Have the PCs followed the thread? Are they convinced that the HMO is not in fact at fault, that there is actually something deeper afoot? If this is the case, the PCs are on the right track.



# EPISODE TWO: TAKEOVER!

In this episode the bad guys make their move on Ernest & Youthe. First they suborn an employee by telling him quite frankly that his life is in their hands and that of course he'll do whatever they wish. Second, they are forced to silence a whistle-blower. Third, they attempt to make it look as if the firm has been practicing unethically by planting information and instigating an SEC investigation. Finally, after driving the stock price down through news of these events, Shonto will make their move to acquire a controlling interest in the company.

Will the bad guys be successful? Only the good guys can tell.

## An Inside Job

Robert Seawater, a senior partner in Ernest & Youthe, suffered a minor heart attack seven years ago. While he was having that little problem fixed, doctors secretly implanted a device that triggers a heart flutter when it receives a coded radio signal. Now he's been approached by Hideo Tanaka and the device has been demonstrated to his horrified satisfaction.

Robert's job is to spread rumors that things aren't as they should be at the company he has served for so many years. Since he's been promised a secure and wealthy future, he regrets this less than he ought to. He is also to assist in the alteration of records, and to keep a sharp eye peeled for people in the company who notice what's going on.

Should news of this deal become public, Seawater will likely commit suicide, even though he was coerced.

## The Whistleblower

Several days after Seawater is suborned, Monique Doolittle, a junior partner and a sharp accountant, becomes aware that something isn't as it should be. She records proof of illicit record altering on her hard drive at work and at home, and also on a floppy disk. She takes proof of this meddling to her boss, Robert Seawater, who promptly reports it to Hideo Tanaka.

Unfortunately, the PCs are likely to begin

following this trail after Doolittle is killed by the ninja, as she, too, has been implanted with a tiny device in her neck that produces an embolism on command.

## Dead Doolittle Story and Details

For heroes who are following the music, the following headline and news item should signal the beginning of a new movement:

Monique Doolittle, a ten-year veteran of the international accounting firm, was found dead this morning after her car was found blocking traffic in the suburb where she lived. Initial reports suggest she suffered a massive stroke. Survived by...

If the coincidence of the accounting firm and the mysterious, odd death isn't enough to attract the PCs' attention, whack them upside the head with a stick. If that doesn't work, Monique might have contacted a journalist, a contact who knows the PC's, the SEC, or even a close friend from outside the firm and spread the general idea that something was "up" at Ernest & Youthe.

Here are a few details an investigation can reveal about Monique's life:

As with all Ernest & Youthe employees, she received her health care via HCH&M. Single, Monique was married for seven years and has been divorced for the past three. She is childless, and lives in a townhouse north of Hudson City. Six years ago she fell while painting her living room and suffered head and neck injuries that required minor surgery to her neck to heal properly.

These details can be discovered with a little footwork and/or chicanery by the PCs: a physical search of her home and office might reveal more information.

## Dead Doolittle's House

Monique lived in a posh townhouse twenty minutes north of Hudson City. Security in general is lighter in the suburbs, but strangers are more quickly noted. Vigilantes who search her house will be one step behind the ninja, who have come and gone. Careful examination of her alarm system shows that it was recently bypassed. Her home office reveals nothing: it is neat, clean, and devoid of any information useful to the PCs. Oddly, there are no floppy diskettes in her office to be found: even com-



mercial software for which she has the manuals is missing.

The ninja, rather than search every diskette for incriminating information, took every floppy disk they could find. When they removed the data from Monique's hard drive, they did a very good job; the data is impossible to retrieve. That's why Eric Carstair is on the payroll!

### **Dead Doolittle's Office**

Monique's office is in a moderately high-security building, and it, too, has been "cleaned" by the ninja of all the incriminating data. However, they did leave clues. For example, Monique's schedule indicates a meeting with "Seawater re: Strange Stuff" the day before she was found dead.

And being cautious, Monique sent a copy of the data to herself via inter-office mail: since she died, it has arrived in her "IN" basket, along with a number of other items.

Discovering this information should bring the PCs into conflict with the ninja once more, as they too have various missions to complete in the office building late at night. This time, the conflict can be a little more bloody without endangering the plot!

## **New News**

After Seawater begins spreading rumors, news stories hit the local papers speculating about a possible Ernest & Youthe fall from grace. As the SEC investigation gets under way, the news stories will continue. PCs who aren't quite following the scent can be reminded with mentions of these articles where a fruitful line of inquiry should be directed.

### **Enemy Action I**

Before and after the news hits the streets that something might be up with the accounting firm, the Shonto team is hard at work in the office building late at night. Their window of opportunity is small: the cleaning crew works until about one AM most evenings, and early bird employees begin arriving as early as six or seven in the morning.

And there is much to do. To convince the SEC that something unethical is going on without actually proving that the firm has done something wrong (Shonto doesn't want to buy a company liable to be fined huge amounts or banned from doing business) takes a lot of legwork, most of which involves Eric Carstair and his computer expertise.

The standard plan the infiltrators follow is to land on the roof of the Ernest & Youthe building, a modest skyscraper in downtown Hudson City. The pilot remains with the aircraft, although he occasionally will venture within to use the toilet or get a drink from a drinking fountain. Mr. S and his assistants make sure they're alone in the upper floors (on the ground floor a security guard dozes over a bank of video monitors) and disable the security system. Then Eric Carstair makes his way from office to office, making subtle alterations and adding incriminating evidence as necessary to complete his mission.

### **Encounter at Ernest & Youthe**

If the PCs interfere (and one evening or another they should) the ninja will attempt to eliminate the threat if possible and escape if not. In the worst-case scenario, Mr. S will order the pilot to take off without his passengers and attempt to escape on foot. In any case, the pilot will try to assure his vehicle is not captured.

Mr. S trusts his fellow ninja to suffer capture in silence, but Eric Carstair is another matter. If the computer expert falls into vigilante hands, Mr. S will attempt to silence him — forever.

GMs should use as a map the bottom floors of the HarpCor Towers, described on pages 177-184 of DC. The Ernest & Youthe building is a modest 10 stories tall and is located in the downtown district of Hudson City, between the Kleinmann Center and the Governmental Center on 4th Avenue.

## **Wrapping It All Up**

The PCs may have some interesting questions for Robert Seawater, they may have some interesting data on diskette for the authorities in charge of the Ernest & Youthe investigation. They may have managed to capture or kill one or more of the Shonto industrial espionage team.

Then again, they may have been humiliated at the point of an antique sword, and crawled away to save their sorry skins. Who knows how well the PCs are doing at this point in the story? No one knows until it happens. If the PCs are doing well, the bad guys are down a minion or two (if many have bought the farm, Hideo may be able to call for reinforcements for the final encounters in the next episode). If the PCs are doing poorly...the bad guys have them confused and on the run. And it's about to get worse.



# EPISODE THREE: TAKEDOWN!

This is a hectic episode that might take more than one evening of play to resolve. If the PC's decide to take on the Emerald Door street gang, for example, in head to head combat, it is unlikely that combat and the dramatic conclusion can be played all in one session.

Now that the heroes have proven to be a serious obstacle, Hideo is desperate to fulfill at least part of his mission. Accordingly, he negotiates a little "terror for hire" with the Emerald Door street gang, which is affiliated with the Choy Sing Tong. After finding some means of communicating with the PCs, he pays the gang to bust up an after-hours office party...and lets the good guys know that unless they lay off, the same will happen elsewhere, with death and destruction aplenty.

Meanwhile, Hideo is trying to wrap up Shonto's covert business in town and get out of Dodge before the Sheriff comes calling.



## The Office Party Blues

Jackie Duck and the gang members he brings with him (numbering between four and eight, determined by GM for balance purposes) arrive in three cars: one beat-up old Chevy and two sleek new Nissan Pathfinders. The Chevy is for driving through the glass doors at the front of the small office building, and was stolen with that purpose in mind. The Pathfinders are also stolen, but they are for an energetic escape as necessary.

The plan is for the gang to arrive noisily, bust up the party, steal a few cars (the execs of the company drive cars with names like Lexus and Infiniti and Cadillac), a few cell phones, a bunch of wallets, laptop computers, and jewelry. No one is to be seriously injured (unless, of course, they play hero). After about ten minutes (less, if the gang thinks a call to the police has gone out) the gang will split.

To divert suspicion and to sow discontent amongst a rival gang, the Vietnamese "VC" gang, Jackie's troops all wear black bandannas and (brand new) jean jackets with "VC" painted in white letters on the back.

Few non-Asians would notice the difference, but there are a few details they have wrong.

The real VC gang wears jean jackets with white beads sewn on the back to make the letters stand out, and of course their jackets aren't all new. Also obvious, to some people, is that the Emerald Door gang members are all ethnic Chinese, while the VC gang is of course Vietnamese.

### Interference

GMs should pick a PC to be in the area when this raid goes down. After placing the office complex (it isn't downtown), it may be obvious who might come across this event as it goes down.

The other players can be assigned roles as panicked office workers, gang members, or even police officers also showing up on the scene.

### The Upshot

Jackie Duck and perhaps half of his group should get away so they can be taken care of later. This leaves a lot of victory for the hero on the scene. Will the hero be able to prevent any innocents from being shot? Will he or she precipitate a hostage situation? Jackie Duck won't let himself get boxed into the building, but he might take some warm bodies with him on a getaway.





His goals are simple: raise hell, grab a few bucks, and get away clean. He's being well paid to do just that, and nothing more.

## Hideo Tanaka's Message

As the office party is being raided, Tanaka is getting word to the PCs that he is responsible. But how? If the PCs use radios to communicate, Tanaka broadcasts his message (in the clear, unscrambled). If the PCs have underworld contacts, they might be used to get a message delivered at the proper time. If, delightfully, one of the PCs has been captured or otherwise revealed his or her identity, the message can be delivered via a mysterious package that shows up on their doorstep. However the message is delivered, it is the same:

"You have meddled long enough in matters far beyond your comprehension. Do so again and the trouble being visited on a certain office party will be repeated at random somewhere in the city. Expect a significant rise in profits at local funeral homes if you cause such trouble to continue. You have been warned."

## The Problem, Therefore...

Now the PCs have to defeat the Shonto covert operations group and prevent the Emerald Door gang from being sent to commit mass murder. Accomplishing both tasks almost simultaneously is the only way to be safe: take out

the Shonto group without tracking and neutralizing the Emerald Door threat, and some fail-safe mechanism ("Do this if you do not hear from me every 24 hours,") might kick into gear.

On the other hand, whacking the Emerald Door gang into submission without doing anything about the Shonto group invites Hideo to make arrangements with some other gang...which would probably entail another "example."

What will the heroes do? Following are some avenues they might explore as they try to nail down concrete information on both the Emerald Door gang and the Shonto covert operations group.

### Tracking the Emerald Door Gang

Assuming that the PCs don't know the perpetrators of the office party raid are Chinese and not Vietnamese, they will probably begin tracking down the Vietnamese "VC" gang. Street contacts can reveal where they hang out and that things have been quiet. Outright interrogation of a VC gang member reveals that "some other gang" was responsible for the very newsworthy raid on the office party.

Once the PCs figure out that the VC gang probably didn't commit the crime, they will have to track down the actual perpetrators. If, however, the vigilante who responded to the office raid has the appropriate background knowledge, the PCs may already be investigating Chinese street gangs.

There are a number of ways of determining which gang raided the party.

**The Pathfinders:** The spanking new Pathfinders were stolen within the last month. According to police contacts, they were stolen from the docks where they were unloaded (or the train yard, if that makes more sense) by a well-orga-

You have meddled long enough in matters far beyond your comprehension. Do so again and the trouble being visited on a certain office party will be repeated at random somewhere in the city. Expect a significant rise in profits at local funeral homes if you cause such trouble to continue. You have been warned.

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nized ring of car thieves equipped with forged paperwork. It is rumored that one or more Chinatown Tongs are involved, but which one is unknown.

A review of known Tong hideouts might reveal a disproportionate number of Pathfinders in one particular parking lot.

**The Jackets:** Buying eight or so brand new jean jackets at one time tends to stand out in the retail world. A thorough search of retail establishments in or around Chinatown might lead to a clue that leads to Jackie Duck (perhaps his girlfriend purchased them, for example).

**Follow the Money:** The items stolen from the office party might be traceable. Also, since the gang was well paid to bust the place up, some gang members might have more cash than usual to flash around. This is an instance where Jackie Duck's use of only part of the street gang might work against him: it's possible that a gang member he didn't use is jealous of the members Duck did employ (and enrich).

**The Martial Arts:** If Jackie Duck's gang mixed it up with a vigilante who knows the martial arts, it's possible the gang might be traceable via their fighting style. A search of martial arts schools might lead to students who belong to the Emerald Door gang.

**If Nothing Else — A Contact:** Clueless PCs can always be led in the right direction with a contact who knows Chinatown and who can reveal the key information as necessary to put the PC's on the right track. Lusterless, perhaps, but quick, fast, effective, and a no-brainer. Even PCs who are sharp might lack the background knowledge of the many Asian cultures in Hudson City, and therefore require a wise helper who can fill in the blank spots.

## What to do with the Emerald Door Gang?

Once the PCs figure out who Hideo has hired to cause trouble if the PCs interfere, they can put an end to the arrangement any number of different ways.

**Physical Solution:** Shoot 'em. If the Emerald Door gang is in pine boxes (or in the hospital), they can't go out and cause trouble when Hideo wants them to. GMs should keep in mind the repercussions of such an action in the underworld, the land of grudges and revenge!

**Political Solution:** Sensitive PCs may pick up on the paradox of a Japanese company covertly paying a Chinese street gang to do their dirty work. Enmity between the two ethnicities may be strong: it could be possible to pull the plug on Hideo's deal with Jackie Duck by bringing it to the Tong's attention, or to the rest of the Emerald Door gang's attention.

Clever and diabolical PCs might think to supply the VC gang with information about just what gang impersonated them by wearing their colors at the raid on the office party. The ensuing gang war might prevent Hideo's wishes from being carried out, and Jackie Duck would certainly have to explain himself if a full-scale gang war erupted. The Tongs, remember, disapprove of events that draw unwelcome attention to themselves!

If nothing else, it might be in the PCs power to outbid Hideo, and offer Jackie Duck so much money that he would forget Hideo ever spoke to him. This isn't a smart solution, for obvious reasons, but it would work.

## Tracking The Shonto Conglomerate's Covert Ops Team

The PCs may have begun investigating the bad guys already — that's to be expected. How far they've gotten is up to the GM. When they succeed should also be up to the GM: after all, if the good guys learn where the bad guys are holed up in Episode One and blow them out of the water, there's a lot of fun gaming that will be overlooked.

Finding the Shonto's yacht, Blossom, should be difficult but not impossible. Determining who is really behind all these business shenanigans should be nearly impossible. The Shonto Conglomerate is a multi-national corporation with a net worth far greater than many small and medium-sized nations. They're not about to be sniffed out in a way that can be proved and held up to the world at large.

An unprovable guess, on the other hand, should be achievable, if only so the PCs can put a name to their pain.

First are some details about tracking the Shonto Conglomerate's involvement on the business level. Following is information about tracking Hideo's team in and near Hudson City.

**Tracking Shonto:** The Shonto Conglomerate is a shady outfit based in Japan. It has tentacles all around the world, and GMs can link it to whatever criminal organization in their campaign that they wish.

Determining the company is behind Hideo's machinations cannot be proven, but suggestive clues can be found. For example, the era when the HMO was purchased was rife with similar purchases by Japanese investors looking for big bucks in a depressed American market. And in the cinematic world of *Dark Champions*, older conspiracies of a similar nature may have come to light in the recent past, suggesting to the heroes that something similar is going on now.

All business deals are performed via cut-outs, off-shore corporations, holding companies,



and so on. At some link in the chain, usually at many links, the information necessary to tie Shonto to the deals in Hudson City are confidential and don't have to be disclosed.

Hints can be uncovered by a savvy person who knows the market, perhaps a contact. For example, major purchases aren't made with cash on hand: companies borrow funds for large transactions, even if they're able to pay enormous amounts up front. This borrowing can be tracked through the marketplace by following subtle hints and changes in the financial markets all around the world, and the borrowing patterns can be linked with particular global business entities such as the Shonto Conglomerate.

When the PCs begin investigating the bureaucratic elements of the situation, progress should be slow at first, but by the action phase of this episode they should have a name to pin their pain on — even if they can't prove it.

**Tracking Hideo's Team:** Getting a fix on the Blossom and Hideo's covert operations team is a much more concrete task. When the PCs find the Blossom, the end of the adventure is near, assuming that GMs are going for the dramatic conclusion set on the yacht.

One (unexpected) method is for a select hero to find the Blossom as a captive, perhaps aboard the helicopter (don't forget the helicopter's special security device!) immediately after the hero tries to break into it. With a signal or some other ruse, the hero could lead his or her compatriots to the yacht to effect rescue and put the kibosh on the Shonto team.

Knowing that the bad guys are actively using a helicopter, the good guys may fight fire with fire and follow the Blossom's helicopter back out to sea. Of course, the yacht has radar, so the guys in black suits and hats would know the PCs were coming, but this would work.

Spotting a ship using radar is a simple task, however, and if the PCs take to the seas, they can easily spot the Blossom using a passive radar receiver.

Chemical interrogation might work on one of the ninja minions or on Eric Carstairs. While the minions won't talk under even the cruelest punishment, Eric is only a weak American, and he'll blab if captured. To keep a prisoner from blabbing too much, GMs might wish to engi-

neer some sort of "vengeful death" for anyone who begins to talk, resulting in the classic "They are on a yacht called uggghhh!" (thud).

Close investigation of the various crime scenes might reveal some forensic evidence that is suggestive of a small ship at sea: sea salt, marine lubricant, yachting club matches from some far port (to avoid a wild goose chase to a nearby yacht club), and so on.

This investigation might have been going on for some time before it bears fruit: that's OK. GMs should try to stage-manage it's progress to assure that the final showdown takes place on the Blossom at the end of the adventure.

## Quick Thinking

If the PCs are very good at getting themselves into gear and finding out some key data, they should be able to neutralize the Emerald Door street gang and hit the Shonto team hard enough that their Hudson City sojourn comes to an end.

If the PCs aren't so good at one or both of their investigative tasks and they continue to pursue the Shonto team, who are perhaps working on yet another corporate takeover using their sneaky tactics, the Emerald Door gang may do something awful.

Because this is *Dark Champions*, GMs might be willing to let the PCs fail in some key area to bait the ending with even more passion. For example, if half a dozen innocents are killed by the Emerald Door gang, the PCs will want the villains dead even more than before!

This last phase of the adventure should take no more than a few days, unless the PCs fail. If that occurs, the bad guys can continue their campaign while the PCs take another hack at the problem.

Another solution is for GMs to help the PCs along to the planned ending, but penalize them for receiving help. Awards can be reduced or awarded points can be "pre-spent" by the GM: "Well, because you got that call from the Coast Guard, you now have a contact there. That's two points of your award!"

One way or another, though, the bad guys must be bearded in their lair....



# Fun at Sea: The Good Ship Blossom

Infiltrating and/or attacking a ship at sea is quite difficult. For starters, it's like walking up to someone standing in the middle of a football field. It's hard to do any sneaking when they can see you coming. There isn't much cover on the open sea.

In addition to the lack of cover, there's radar, which extends much farther than the eye can see (say, 3-5 miles in this case under most conditions — the Blossom's radar mast isn't very tall).

Since the Blossom is equipped with both eyeballs and radar, sneaking up on her will be difficult. The PCs might pirate the Blossom's helicopter and take the crew by surprise. One or two PCs might manage to ride on the helicopter's undercarriage: an exhausting, dangerous journey, but it could work. A trick using a small boat might succeed in getting the PCs close to the Blossom, close enough for other trickery to be employed.

GMs should remember that the open ocean is cold and usually inhospitable for small craft, much less swimmers!

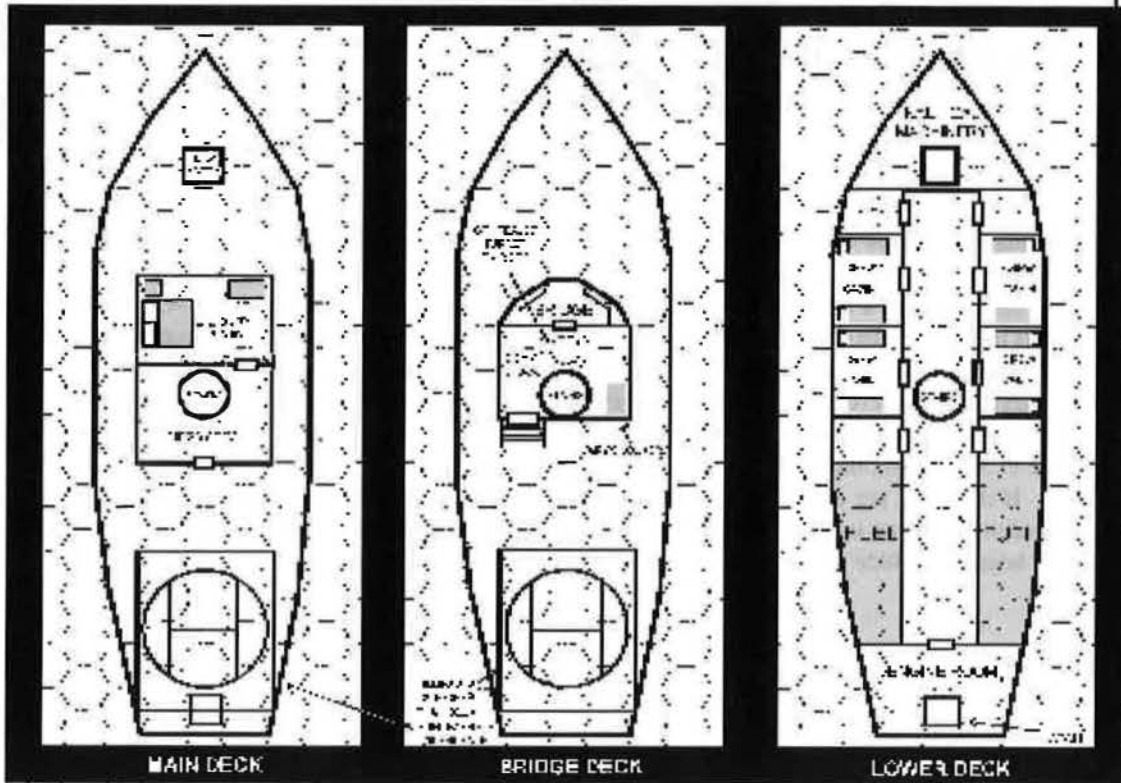
## The Blossom at Rest

Under ordinary conditions about one-half to one-third of the crew is awake and active at any one time. Firearms are kept under lock and key. There is a bridge watch consisting of the Captain or his mate, and there is always someone on duty in or near the engine compartment.

The Blossom steams slowly in a circle, away from commonly used ship routes, about 35-50 miles offshore from Hudson City.

## The Blossom Alarmed

Alarms can be sounded from the engine room, the communications suite, and the bridge. When an alarm is sounded, one crewmember climbs atop the bridge to man the machine guns, while others respond to specific orders as required. The Captain or his mate has the key to open the arms locker, which is located near the bridge: if they perceive trouble is afoot, they will arm the crew.





In almost all instances, the Captain will also order some crewmen to stand ready with fire extinguishers near the stern of the vessel: between the helicopter fuel and the diesel fuel used by the Blossom, a lot can go wrong if bullets start to fly, and the Captain is a cautious man.

**Tactics:** Once the bad guys are armed and ready the Captain (or Hideo) will order a sweep of the vessel, inside and out. If the Shonto find the PCs on board, they will try to capture them.

If the ninja are aboard, they will act independently and as sneakily as possible. Eric, if on board, will hide in his cabin.

**Taking Hideo Tanaka:** If the heroes prevail on the vessel, Hideo will lock himself in his cabin, dress in a traditional, ceremonial robe, and contemplate committing suicide. PCs who discover him who are familiar with (*Dark Champions* cinematic) Japanese customs will know immediately what he intends to do.

## Aftermath

Once the Emerald Door gang and the Shonto covert operations team are neutralized, the PCs have carried the day. They may be on a burning yacht 40 miles from land without a ride home, but they win anyway.

If GMs allow the bad guys to win occasionally, who knows what fix the PCs are in? Whatever fix it is, they wouldn't be in it if they'd done their jobs right, that's for sure!

The Shonto Conglomerate has no connection with anything, anywhere that is remotely illegal...but they're still mighty upset that their plans were foiled in Hudson City. They may or may not have managed to take over one or more companies in town — truly successful PCs will have made sure the appropriate authorities are aware of the various shenanigans being pulled to influence the market (usually the province of the Securities Exchange Commission, which has a Hudson City branch office), thus preventing any illicit acquisitions by Shonto affiliates. The PCs may have earned a new set of enemies in Chinatown as well.

Finally, cracking open the sneaky implant plot will save dozens of HMH&M customers from being subject to Shonto extortion. The devices can be discovered if doctors know what to look for, though an anti-tampering device renders them mysterious lumps of plastic. This could easily turn into a tabloid-like story that most of the nation never really believes to be true!

After all, who would believe the PCs foiled such a complex plan based on such a strange *Stroke of Luck*?



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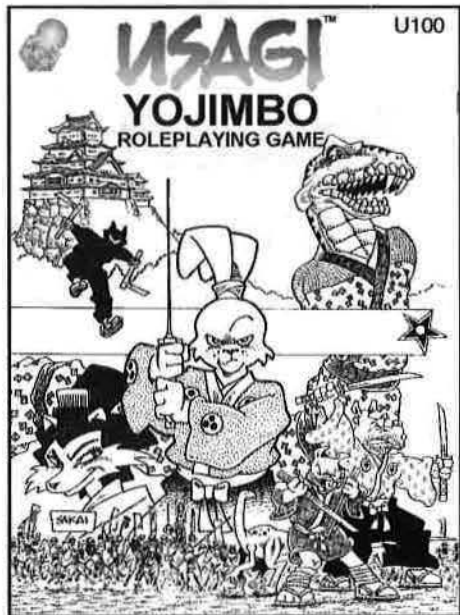
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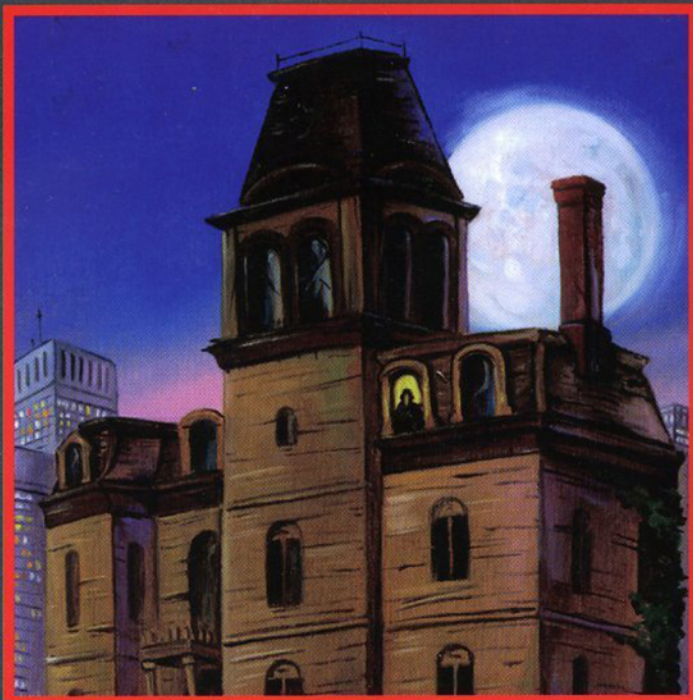
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