

# DIGITAL HERO #47

JAN 2008





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Issue #47 (January/February 2008)



# Thanks for All the Fish by Dave Mattingly

Welcome to the final issue of *Digital Hero*. It's been a long fun ride, and it's been great to have all of you along. This incarnation of *Digital Hero* started over five years ago, just after the launch of the brand new *HERO System Fifth Edition*.

## THE ORIGIN STORY

I first got started with Hero Games back in '88 or so. Red October BBS and Champ-L were big at the time, in the pre-WWW days. I participated in various email discussions about Champions, especially on the how-to side of things, and my emails brought me to the attention of James Davis. James was starting an APazine called *Haymaker!*, and invited me to join. I had never really considered writing before, but I was having fun with it online, so I figured I'd give it a shot.

I wrote for *Haymaker!*, and over the next five years or so, found my voice, and was soon regularly cranking out articles in the 30-40 page range. After 15 issues, I took over the editorial reins of *Haymaker!*. I took it to a quarterly publication, doubled the number of authors and artists involved, introduced themes and supplements. This was during Hero Games' "lean years," so *Haymaker!* was one of the few outlets for upcoming talent to shine.

After coordinating 15 issues of my own, some as large as 5E, I passed on the reins of *Haymaker!* so I could focus on my new project, *EZ Hero*. This was a PDF magazine, based on the base of *Haymaker!*'s articles. That went out bimonthly, and lasted for two years, with a few more that were waiting in the wings, when I was contacted at GenCon.

Darren Watts tracked me down at GenCon with a business proposition. He and some other investors were buying Hero Games, and instead of having *EZ Hero* as competition, they wanted me to come onboard to run the new Hero Games in-house magazine. The plan was to use *Digital Hero* as a platform to try out new authors and artists, and as an "advertising expense," to generate interest in the new company with the old system. But as it turns out, *Digital Hero* was profitable from the get-go, much to everyone's delight.

Hero Games, under its new DOJ management, was publishing more and more books. But over time, the amount of effort required to put together an issue of *Digital Hero*, overtook the declining subscriptions in terms of return on investment. It seemed better to end *Digital Hero* where it was than to continue down a path that no longer seemed quite as attractive.

## THE SECRET IDENTITY

With a variety of new business ventures, my plate will continue to fill up even without editing *Digital Hero*. BlackWyrn Games has been carving out a roleplaying niche for the last few years. We started with *The Algernon Files* line and other books, and have expanded into publishing others' works, notably Scott Bennie's *Gestalt: The Hero Within*, with some other Hero fanboy favorites on the way.

BlackWyrn is still working out the logistics, but we've got a fiction arm planned as well. We'll be printing science fiction and fantasy novels from *Digital Hero*'s own Jason Walters and other authors.

I've also recently been named Vice President of the Christian Gamers Guild. I've been running church services at Origins and GenCon on the Guild's behalf for the last several years, and plan to continue doing so. I've also taken on editorship of the Guild's free ezine, *The Way, the Truth, and the Dice*.

And, the freshest news is that just this week, I was appointed as the Executive Director of the Games Publishers Association.

So even though I won't be running *Digital Hero* anymore, you'll still be seeing me around the game industry.

## THE ONGOING ADVENTURES

Hero Games has a plan to deal with unfilled subscriptions. Since we're ending before a ten-issue block number, that will leave some leftover credits for our subscribers. Most will have 3 credits left, but there are a few that paid ahead for more than a single year.

All leftover credits will be converted into gift certificates for the Hero Store. Those are credits that exceed the number of *Digital Hero* issues published. If you have a few credits left, but still haven't bought all the back issues, they'll be assumed to go towards that.

It's been great working with all the authors and artists over the years, and I wish blessings for everyone.

— Dave Mattingly  
Digital Hero Editor





# HEROglyphs by Steven S. Long

## Eaten Away

### MINOR EFFECTS OVER TIME

A friend that I play both *HERO System* games and *World Of Warcraft* with asked me a while back about creating “damage over time” effects in *HERO System* terms. In *WoW*, some classes, particularly the Warlock, have “DoT” spells that cause a defined amount of damage over a specified period of time (usually 18-30 seconds). Sometimes the damage accrues in even increments during that time period, sometimes it starts off small and gets much larger by the period’s end. Thanks to the way these things work, Warlocks are godawful powerful in many situations. Just riding past one in a battleground is enough time for him to put four or five “dots” (as they’re called) on you – and that means that unless you have some way to get rid of them, you’ll arrive at your destination incredibly weak... if you even survive.

So that leads to the question of how to create such an attack in the *HERO System*: a “fire and forget” power that causes small amounts of damage over a short period of time, with the whole thing adding up to a pretty significant effect. I can see several possibilities.

The most obvious option would be to use a Constant attack (whether it’s a Power that’s normally Constant, or one made that way with the *Continuous* Advantage). However, that poses some difficulties because a Constant attack functions on the attacker’s Phases, not at a steady, calculable rate over time for anyone using it.

A game mechanic that *does* allow for a steady, calculable effect is the *Gradual Effect* Limitation, but in its standard form it’s not always what we’re looking for, either. In some situations it might work to create a “damage over time” power quite well, but the fact that it apportions the damage over time means it won’t always function the way we want it to. Each “tick” of damage should affect the target separately; it shouldn’t be a matter of having to “build up” damage to overcome the target’s defenses as it is with a *Gradual Effect* attack.

Reduced to its essentials, what we need is a game element (or elements) that lets us do the following:

- Define how much damage the target takes per interval
- Define how long the power remains in effect (its duration)
- Define how often the target is affected during the duration
- Define whether the damage increments are always the same, or change

## Amount of Damage

The first issue, the amount of damage the attack does per interval, isn’t difficult: it depends on the Attack Power you want to use and the Advantages applied. Given the way this type of attack usually works, typically you’re going to buy a small amount of attack – 1 point RKA, Drain STUN 1 point, or the like – and apply the *Penetrating* Advantage (maybe even twice), or NND (perhaps with *Does BODY*). That way you can be sure the target takes the defined amount of damage every time interval. Otherwise the target’s defenses will protect against each “tick” of damage.

### DURATION

Next we have to define how long the power remains in effect. For purposes of this discussion, I’m going to assume we’re always dealing with Instant Powers; if you want to start fussing around with Constant Powers, you’ll just have to adapt these rules for yourself. ;)

Since making an Instant Power continue to work over time without the need for character Actions or the like is helpful and potentially quite powerful, this game element should be an Advantage. The longer the duration, the greater the value of the Advantage. But since *Continuous* is +1, this Advantage should be capped at that value, with the GM’s discretion factoring in as always.

Because a power with this Advantage is in some ways Constant, you should normally treat it as a Constant Power. For example, it could be *Dispelled* or *Drained* at any point during its duration.

## Rate of Effect

The next issue is how often during the duration that target takes the damage. Does it occur every Segment? Every three Segments? Every Turn? Every Minute? The quicker the rate of effect, the greater the value of the Advantage.

### ALTERING THE DAMAGE PROGRESSION

The standard rules for this new Advantage assume that the damage occurs in evenly-spaced increments throughout the duration. However, in some cases a character may want to create a power with greater initial “oomph” that dies away swiftly, or one that starts slow but builds to a big ending “punch.”

To do this, add up the total amount of damage the attack should do to an average target over its duration. Then work with the GM to re-apportion that total damage differently. In some



cases this may, at the GM's discretion, require an adjustment to the value of the Advantage – doing a lot of damage early is often more beneficial, while having to wait for a big final “punch” is a hindrance.

**Example:** *Hellfire, a mystic supervillain, is designing a power that lets him “soulburn” people from inside out. He wants it to do 1 point of RKA damage, NND Does BODY, over 36 seconds. The power should start slowly, but build up to a major “soul conflagration” at the end of the period.*

*As a baseline, Hellfire defines the power as doing 1 point of RKA damage every 3 seconds for 36 seconds – a total of 12 BODY damage to the average target. With the GM's permission, he re-arranges the damage this way: the first 6 BODY occur one every 5 seconds for 30 seconds, and the last 6 BODY at the rate of 1 per second for the last 6 seconds. If the GM thinks this is restrictive (perhaps because many characters in the campaign have a way to negate this power before it finishes its effect), he might reduce the Advantage's value by  $-\frac{1}{4}$ .*

## The *Damage Over Time* Advantage

The accompanying table lists suggested values for a *Damage Over Time* Advantage based first on duration, and secondly on how often the target suffers damage within that timeframe.

### THE DAMAGE OVER TIME ADVANTAGE

Value	Duration
up to 6 Segments	$+\frac{1}{4}$
7-12 Segments	$+\frac{1}{2}$
13-24 Segments	$+\frac{3}{4}$
25 or more Segments	+1

Value	Rate of Effect
$-\frac{1}{4}$ less Advantage	Once per 6 Segments (or slower)
+0 more Advantage	Once per 5 Segments
$+\frac{1}{4}$ more Advantage	Once per 4 Segments
$+\frac{1}{2}$ more Advantage	Once per 3 Segments
$+\frac{3}{4}$ more Advantage	Once per 2 Segments
+1 more Advantage	Once per Segment

The minimum value of Damage Over Time is  $+\frac{1}{4}$ .



# You Gotta Have Character

by Jason Walters

“It [the Old West] is a vanished world.... A transition has followed the horsemen of the plains; a shapeless sate, a condition of men and manners unlovely as that bold moment in the year when winter is gone and spring not come, and the face of nature is ugly....”

— Owen Wister, *The Virginian*

Lawman, scout, soldier, hired gunman, detective, outlaw, miner, and professional killer: there were very few professions available in the Old West that legendary cowboy Tom Horn did not practice at one time or another. Although not nearly as famous as better-known and more colorful gunfighters such as “Wild” Bill Hickok, Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, or John Wesley Hardin, Horn had more confirmed kills than any of them: a remarkable 17 in the four year period between 1890 and 1894 alone. Estimates for the total number of killings he performed in his life range between 42 and 47, making him by far the deadliest killer in the Old West.

Ironically, Tom Horn was most likely innocent of the killing he was executed for. On July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1901 a 14-year-old boy was murdered near Iron Mountain, Wyoming during a “cattle war” between cowboys and sheep farmers. Two years later a federal lawman operating out of his jurisdiction arrested Horn for the murder. A confession was coerced from the gunman, a trial quickly convened, and a verdict of “guilty” quickly rendered by a group of jurors openly hostile to Horn’s employer. His execution in 1903 is considered by many scholars to be the symbolic end of the Old West.

**Background/History:** Tom Horn was born in Scotland County, Missouri in 1860 to an old Pennsylvania-Dutch family. The son of an alcoholic, abusive father, he left home at sixteen in search of fame and fortune. Drifting west he became a cowboy in Texas, later helping his brother homestead a small ranch in the Flint Hills. By seventeen he had become a skilled cattleman and an expert shot, but he chaffed at the rigid routine of ranch work. Heading to the Southwest, he learned Spanish and joined the U.S. Cavalry as a scout, as a result becoming involved in a series of conflicts that became known as the Apache Wars. These “brush wars,” which raged between 1851 and 1886, were the result of a variety of factors that brought whites into conflict with the Native Americans of the region. Disagreements over land, changing federal policies, and natural tendency of Apache warriors to raid and kill all played a part in the violence.

Easygoing Tom got along well with the Apache. He spoke their language, understood their customs, and even lived on the San Carlos reservation when he was low on cash. Eventually the Bureau of Indian Affairs hired him on as an “agent,” enabling him to engage in two years of uninterrupted (and government funded) hunting, fighting, and horse racing alongside of his native friends. Sympathetic to their way of life, he did little to interfere with the affairs of renegade Indian leaders like Geronimo (whom he may have been friends with). That changed in 1883 when the infamous General George Cook assumed command of the Arizona and New Mexico reservations. Known to the Apache as *Nantan Lupan* (the “Grey Fox”), Cook was well known for employing Native Americans as scouts and soldiers, cleverly pitting one tribe against the other in an effort to keep the peace. He had commanded successful campaigns against the Bannocks, Paiutes, Nez Perces, Sioux, and Cheyenne.

Tom went to work for General Cook. Though the two men got along well enough, the General quickly learned not to trust Horn entirely when it came to Indian matters. Tom had a habit of becoming mysteriously “lost” in hills that he knew like the back of his hand when asked to pursue his friends. It was under his not-terribly-careful watch that Geronimo slipped out of his reservation and over the border into Mexico in 1885, provoking one of the greatest manhunts in the history of the Old West. Horn’s employment with the government ended shortly thereafter.

Tom Horn took up mining and was fairly successful at the endeavor, but his experiences with the Apache and the Army seem to have embittered the cowboy, “hardening his heart” in ways that would prove deadly for many in subsequent years. Bored and at loose ends he quickly became involved in a conflict known as the Pleasant Valley War: a bloody feud between a clan of cowboys and a tribe of sheep-herders over grazing rights that led to the almost complete annihilation of both families. Working as an “officer” for both sides (his real title could be better describes as “assassin”), he is believed to be responsible for several of the unsolved killings that resulted from that conflict.

Horn left Arizona for friendlier pastures when both families became aware of his duplicity. He served as a deputy sheriff in Colorado for a while, but the laid-back young man from Missouri had acquired a taste for killing and adventure that could not be satisfied by a normal law enforcement career. His

## TOM HORN QUOTES

“If you really knew how dirty and raggedy-assed the Old West was, you wouldn’t want any part of it.”

— Steve McQueen  
in *Tom Horn*

“Show me a man who is against Tom Horn and I will show you a cattle thief.”

— Major Wolcott,  
leader of the infamous  
Johnson County raid

“Why did I fire that bastard Tom Horn? It’s simple: he kept getting ‘lost’ in mountains whose every foot he knew. We were there to track down Apache renegades. To accomplish this objective we had to hire their own cousins and brothers as scouts – or hire whites who had been virtually adopted into the tribe. Of course these scouts knew perfectly well that their pay would stop the moment we killed the last renegade.”

— General Nelson A.  
Miles

“No one, in all probability, will ever know just who his employers were, for when Tom Horn floated into the world of myth and legend the men who had hired him locked their secrets into their own hearts.”

— Jay Monaghan,  
author of *Tom Horn:  
Last of the Bad Men*



## TOM HORN PLOT SEEDS

**Geronimo!:** The PCs are US Army cavalymen under the famous western General George Cook, who gives them a secret mission: sneak into Mexico and capture the infamous Apache renegade leader Geronimo! There guide for this dangerous assignment is the legendary tracker and gunman Tom Horn. Only one question remains: whom is he *really* working for?

**Johnson County War:** The PCs are guns-for-hire in Wyoming at the outbreak of the infamous Johnson County War. With mercenary shootists from all over the west descending on the Cowboy State like locusts, they must choose sides: small landholders or cattle barons. Looming like the Grim Reaper over the entire conflict lays the shadow of Tom Horn, the most legendary assassin in the West. Which side will he take? And if the PCs take the other side, can they survive?

**Murderer:** Fourteen-year-old Willie Nickell is dead and Tom Horn stands accused of his murder. But the infamous Western assassin has vanished

increasing fame, legendary prowess as a gunman and tracker, and police credentials brought him to the attention of the infamous Pinkerton Detective Agency, who hired him to conduct investigations in Colorado, Wyoming, and other western states in the Rocky Mountain area. Though it took some time for him to develop serious investigative skills, Horn so excelled at tracking and killing that it compensated for his shortcomings as a detective. During his four years of employment as a Pinkerton he killed a well-documented seventeen men, gaining a reputation so deadly that dangerous outlaws such as “Peg-Leg” Watson simply surrendered when confronted by the infamous cowboy.

Interestingly, Horn’s employment with the Pinkerton Detective Agency wasn’t terminated due to his lethality, but because he committed a train robbery in Nevada while working for them! The Agency covered up the robbery to avoid negative press, but forced his resignation in 1893 to avoid further incidents. Famous Pinkerton detective Charlie Siringo, who worked with Horn on many occasions, would later comment: “I greatly respect Tom Horn’s abilities. He’s an extremely talented agent, but he has a dark side that can be easily accessed.” Horn became a self-employed “range detective” for various wealthy cattlemen in Wyoming and Colorado: a kind of independent policeman charged with hunting down rustlers and robbers. This “hunting down” was invariably fatal. Horn basically functioned as a hired killer, gunning down rustlers for cattlemen and train robbers for local businessmen.

In 1894 Tom Horn began working for the Wyoming Stock Growers Association (or WSGA) during the end of the notorious, bloody range war known as the Johnson County War. This battle between small landowners and wealthy, powerful rancher-barons in Wyoming began after the disastrous winter of 1888, and would continue on until the late 1890s. A fight over land and water rights, it included numerous shootouts, bands of mercenary gunmen and quickly assembled posses, the killing of “rustlers” who weren’t, and eventually the direct intervention of the Federal Government, who assigned the infamous all-black 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (better known as the Buffalo Soldiers) to pacify the region. The WSGA marked over 70 small landholders for death and their ranches for destruction. Unknown assassins carried out many of these targeted killings, and it is likely that Horn was behind many of these slayings.

In Horn’s defense the line between “small rancher” and “cattle rustler” in 1890s Wyoming was a blurry one. Many small landowners were indeed cattle thieves (though most of them probably weren’t). The WSGA was strongly

backed by the Wyoming state government and counted a state senator and the water commissioner as members. So Tom rather justifiably felt that he was operating under government sanction – though his participation would later come back to haunt him. With the “war” concluded, Horn began working for Swan Land and Cattle Company in 1900. He received \$600 for every rustler killed – and he killed a lot of them. During this period he gunned down between 22 and 24 cattle rustlers. He also took time out to work freelance for the Pinkertons on the case of murdered Sheriff Josiah Hazen, providing his old friend Charlie Siringo with evidence that linked the murder to the infamous Wild Bunch Gang: the legendary outfit of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

Horn took time out of his duties to join Teddy Roosevelt’s Roughriders during the Spanish-American War. He contracted malaria in Florida, but convalesced quickly and returned to Wyoming in 1901 to work for a cattle baron named John Coble. Due to this employment he was in the area of Iron Mountain when a 14-year-old boy named Willie Nickell was murdered while shepherding. The killer used Horn’s legendary signature of placing his victim’s head on a rock. Horn was accused of the murder, and tracked down by lawman Joe Lefors in 1903. A jury of men hostile to the WSGA was hastily convened under an elected judge determined to please his constituents. A coerced, drunken confession was introduced alongside a variety of circumstantial evidence. The fact that the killing had occurred during a violent feud between the Nickell and Miller clans was ignored. Tom Horn was quickly convicted and sentenced to death by hanging.

Horn insisted that he was innocent of the killing (though he was certainly guilty of many others), and that he would have admitted to it if asked. Several character witnesses testified on his behalf, and a local schoolteacher testified that a member of the Miller family seemed nervous on the morning of the killing. Yet on the morning of November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1903 after a large breakfast Tom Horn was led to the gallows. By all accounts he was the least nervous of anyone at the event, even joking with the sheriffs gathered to witness his execution. Interestingly, he was one of the few men in the Old West to be hung my automated process. Straps were buckled around his arms and legs, a noose was placed around his neck, and he was lifted onto a trapdoor connected to a lever that pulled the plug out of a barrel of water. This caused a counterweight to rise, pulling the support beam free from under the gallows and hanging the condemned man. Apparently Tom Horn was hung with a rope that he had woven himself to pass the time as he waited in jail.



## DIGITAL HERO #47

The hanging of Tom Horn is considered by many to be the symbolic end of the Old West. Like his colorful life, Horn's execution was violent, bizarre, and somewhat quixotic. To this day historians debate whether or not he was guilty of Willie Nickell's murder. Many feel that although he *could* have killed the boy, he probably did not. In 1993 a group of historians and lawyers in Cheyenne recreated the trail using all of the statements and evidence known to exist, as well as the coerced confession, and acted out the same trial in the same location. Tom Horn was acquitted.

**Personality/Motivation:** Tom Horn is a very proud man. He has good reason to be. A living legend in a hard land known for systematically crushing lesser men, he has lived his life as a master tracker, infamous lawman, and feared wielder of the rifle. In his own environment he fears nothing, knows everything, and holds the undiluted respect of the powerful men who employ him. His ability to maintain calm under extreme pressure is nothing short of miraculous, as is his ability to doggedly track his quarry. His deadliness is a matter of record.

Tom is an excellent traveling companion who never complains, endeavors to entertain his companions, and is always in a good mood while on the road. Without a task to perform he easily becomes bored and fidgety, however. Horn spends most of his idle time practicing his marksmanship and weaving ropes as a way to relax. He is constantly in search of employers who require his skills as a tracker and gunman. Fortunately for Tom Horn, such bosses are seldom hard to find.

Horn isn't a particularly emotional man. He has the quirky, fatalistic sense of humor typical of rural Westerners, but otherwise forms few attachments. He spends most of his time living alone in the wilderness. He has no close associates and seldom seeks out female companionship. He is painfully aware of his status as the last of the Old West's great gunmen, and has no fear of death. Indeed, he welcomes it like the old friend it is.

**Quote:** "Killing men is my specialty. I look at it as a business proposition, and I think I have a corner on the market."

**Powers/Tactics:** A legendary western gunfighter, lawman, and detective, Tom Horn is best known for his ability to track down and kill anyone. He is an expert shot with the iron sight .45 lever action Winchester, and is able to make shots far over the gun's normal effective range of 50 yards. Tough as old leather, he can live in wilderness for indefinite periods of time without suffering any ill effects. Incredibly difficult to kill, he's survived numerous shootings, stabbings, and beatings. At one time or the other he's held most of the jobs commonly associated with the Old West, and has been at least proficient in all of them. Tom Horn has worked as a lawman, scout, soldier, hired gunman, detective, outlaw, miner, and professional killer. He speaks Spanish, Apache, Dutch, and English, and is a master horseman.

Tom Horn's tactics when pursuing a target are fairly straightforward. He uses his Area Knowledge to augment his superb Tracking Skill. Once he has located his target, he uses his Shadowing Skill to follow him until he can set an ambush. Horn prefers to ambush his targets from a comfortable distance of several hundred yards, utilizing his Combat and Penalty Skill Levels to make a targeted killing from a distance. Then he places a rock under his victim's head as a calling card.

Upon occasion Horn may attempt to take a target alive. This is rare, however, and generally only occurs when he feels that his quarry is too cowardly to be of any real danger.

into the wilderness without an explanation, and nobody is eager to go after him. With the fallout from the Johnson County War still hanging heavy over Wyoming and a huge bounty on his head, the PCs set out into the American Outback in search of the legendary killer. Only one question remains: will they be the hunters, or the hunted?

**Campaign Use:** Tom Horn is a legendary tracker, cavalry scout, and an agent for the early American law agency the Pinkerton Police who fought with the Rough Riders under Theodore Roosevelt, and once brought in the American Indian chief Geronimo during the Apache Wars. Now he is in his autumn years and out of step with the world around him. The Old West is vanishing yet he remains, a symbol of a romanticized, lawless past with little place in a bland and civilized present.

There are many possible uses for infamous cowboy Tom Horn as a roleplaying PC or NPC. A famous lawman and gunfighter, he is perfectly suitable for use as a PC in a Western Hero or Victorian Hero campaign. He could also serve as an adversary for PCs who are on the wrong side of the law in such a campaign: not a hard position to arrive at, considering the number of competing “lawmen” found in the Old West. It might be particularly interesting to place PCs in situations like the Johnson County War or Lincoln County War (best known in our era from the movie *Young Guns*) where both sides of the conflict claim to represent the law and employ competing posses of “lawmen” to fight one another.

But characters like Tom Horn are not unique to the Old West. In our era Bounty Hunters legally operate in the gray area between law enforcement and vigilantism in 49 American states (the one exception being Kentucky), much as Horn worked as a “range detective” during his long and colorful career. In the 1970s the colorful Ralph “Papa” Thorson was arguably the most famous bounty hunter in the world. (Amusingly, Steve McQueen played Thorson in the 1980 movie *The Hunter* – the same year he played Tom Horn in the movie *Tom Horn*). In our era Duane “The Dog” Chapman holds that dubious title (and his own TV show). With slight modifications Tom Horn’s character sheet he could easily become a Dark Champions bounty hunter, suitable for either assisting or hunting the PCs as needed. Similarly, with a few changes the character sheet can be transformed into a Star Hero NPC, suitable for hunting wanted interstellar villains (or PCs) in much the same manner that the “mercs” Johns and Toombs hunt the character of Riddick through the various *Chronicles of Riddick* films.

**Appearance:** Tom Horn is a small, gaunt man with the sort of weathered features that can only be earned from a lifetime of exposure to wind, sun, and earth. He has a pug nose and crimped ears that give him a slightly feral look. His sharp blue eyes betray nothing, and his voice is soft and calm. He seldom smiles.

Tom is vaguely bowlegged and he walks with a slight limp due to the number of times he has injured his legs. He wears the casual, rugged clothing typical of a working cowboy: leather chaps, battered ten-gallon hat, spurs, and filthy bandanna. A great fan of the .45 lever action Winchester, Horn seldom wears a sidearm (though he certainly knows how to use one). He is never far from his rifle.

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Tom Horn



**Tom Horn**

Val	Cha	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	150 kg; 2½d6 HTH [3]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
17	CON	14	12-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
				Total: 9 PD (0 rPD)
				Total: 7 ED (0 rED)
				Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
9	PD	6		
7	ED	4		
4	SPD	13		
7	REC	2		
34	END	0		
36	STUN	5		

**Total Characteristic Cost: 92**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
 Leaping: 2½"/5"  
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
10	<i>Tough Guy:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, 25%	0
7	<i>Cowboy Brawling:</i> HA +2d6 (4½d6 with STR); HA Lim (-½)	1

**Perks**

- 2 Fringe Benefit: Local Police Powers
- 4 Reputation: Dangerous Lawman/Assassin (Large Group) 11-, +2/+2d6

**Skills**

- 6 +3 with .45 Winchester Rifle
- 4 +3 vs. Hit Location modifiers with .45 Winchester Rifle
- 4 +3 vs. Range Modifier with .45 Winchester Rifle
- 3 Animal Handler (Bovines, Equines) 12-
- 3 Deduction 12-
- 3 KS: Rope Making 12-
- 4 Navigation (Land) 13-
- 3 Riding 12-
- 3 Shadowing 12-
- 10 Survival (Desert, Mountain, Temperate Forests, Temperate Plains) 14-
- 9 Tracking 15-
- 2 WF: Small Arms

- 3 Jack of All Trades
- 2 PS: Cowboy 12-
- 2 PS: Lawman 12-
- 2 PS: Miner 12-
- 2 PS: Outlaw 12-
- 2 PS: Soldier 12-
- 3 Linguist
- 1 Language: Apache (Conversation)
- 1 Language: Dutch (Conversation)
- 2 Language: Spanish (Fluent, Literate)
- 3 Traveler
- 2 AK: Montana 12-
- 2 AK: Oklahoma 12-
- 2 AK: Texas 12-
- 2 AK: Wyoming 12-
- 2 CuK: Apache 12-

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 108**

**Total Cost: 200**

**150+ Disadvantages**

- 10 Hunted: Rustlers, Outlaws, and Occasionally Lawmen 8- (As Pow, Harshly Punish)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Calling Card: Places Rock Under Victim's Head (Uncommon, Total)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Proud (Common, Moderate)
- 15 Reputation: Dangerous Killer, 11- (Extreme)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 200**





## The Alien Elite by Bob Greenwade

In Human society, we have such elite warriors as samurai, ninjas, and Special Forces soldiers. In the *Terran Empire* setting, it stands to reason that at least some alien societies would have similar forces of elite fighters. Three such elite forces – the Donburil Amazons, the *ta’hrevk* of the Esagites, and the practitioners of Tranta Shun on Sigma Caeruleus III – are mentioned in *Terran Empire* and *Worlds Of Empire* but are not detailed.

Until now.

### **Azarmo (Donburil Amazons)**

The tradition of the Donburil Amazons dates back to Donbur’s pre-gunpowder era, during a period of considerable political upheaval in the Elnabar region. The Ka’urash, the Matriarchal Dynasty of that time (corresponding roughly to the early fourth to middle third centuries BC on Earth) were hardly despotic, but were not popular with certain business interests who sought to overthrow the Dynasty with rulers of their own choosing. At the same time, two neighboring states with whom the Elnabaril had centuries-long rivalries sought to take advantage of the instability and seize lands for their own use.

In response, the Ka’urash instructed their military commanders to develop a special elite force of fighters, known as the *Azarmo* (a word translating more or less to “Sentinels”; singular is *Azar*). These Sentinels were encouraged to experiment during training to develop the most efficient possible means of fighting, creating the now-traditional *jath a’Ri* combat style.

The *Azarmo* succeeded in not only defending Elnabar from invaders and insurgents, but in stabilizing the region and creating a position of strength from which the Ka’urash could forge a lasting peace with its neighbors. Though the last of the Ka’urash Dynasty died before the peace could take hold, all succeeding Matriarchal Dynasties have credited the creation of the *Azarmo* with not only this peace but the eventual formation of the Donburil Council.

Over the centuries, the *Azarmo* have become one of the most respected military groups among the Donburil. They have developed a code of honor holding to such values as honesty, integrity, loyalty, kindness, courtesy, respect for authority, defense of the weak, opposition to despotism, and an open-mindedness to truth. Most, though by no means all, are also faithful adherents of Scomaru Shaan (see *Terran Empire*, page 101).

When Humans first encountered the *Azarmo*, the similarity to Earth’s legendary Amazon warriors – even the similarity in names – led to the “Donburil Amazon” nickname.

Today, the *Azarmo* are among the most respected components of the military structure in the Velarian Confederation. In addition to the seven platoons active within the Federation’s borders, they also have the honored task of guarding the grounds at any Federation embassy or consulate to the other major galactic powers, with one platoon in each.

In many ways, the *Azarmo* may be treated as a combination of samurai, ninja, Buckingham Palace Guard, and US military Special Forces. Their image, function, and skill sets encompass all of these and more. Wherever they go, few people want to tangle with them. They can strike openly or by stealth; they can take the battle to the enemy or wait for the enemy to come to them; they can operate as free-ranging individuals or as a perfectly-tuned group.

The Package Deal shown represents a typical *Azar* who has just finished training and is starting her tour of duty. Most quickly gain experience, learn new Skills (both combat and non-combat), meet Contacts, and cultivate knowledge until their abilities become nigh-legendary.

#### **AZARMO PACKAGE DEAL**

##### **Cost Ability**

- 20 Martial Arts (Usually *jath a’Ri*)
- 3 Breakfall
- 3 Fast Draw: Small Arms
- 3 Paramedics
- 3 Survival (Choice of Environment)
- 3 Teamwork
- 2 KS: The Azarmo 11-
- 2 KS: Martial Arts Style 11-
- 4 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Donburil Advanced Small Arms
- 12 Acrobatics, Analyze Style, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Defense Maneuver, Environmental Movement, Fast Draw (Melee), Feint, Instructor, Lipreading, Navigation, Rapid Attack, Shadowing, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, Tactics, Tracking, Weaponsmith
- 3 Membership: Warrior

##### **Disadvantages**

- 5 Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Azarmo Code of Honor (Common, Strong)
- 20 Social Limitation: Subject to Orders (Very Frequently, Major)

Total Package Cost: 18

“I swear by my life, and all that is sacred, that I will do my utmost to uphold the honor of the *Azarmo*; to maintain my personal integrity in all dealings with others; to treat others with kindness and courtesy; to show proper respect for authority in all its forms; to protect the weak against tyranny and abuse; and to pursue truth and justice in all matters.”

— *Azarmo* oath of allegiance (Tichenor’s English translation)

**OTHER POSSIBLE AZARMO MARTIAL ARTS**

While nearly all *Azarmo* learn *jath a'ri*, there is a small minority who enter the force with training in some other style. While learning *jath a'ri* is encouraged, they are not required to do so if their skill with their chosen style is sufficient to qualify them for the field.

While there isn't space here to provide even a significant list of Donburil martial arts styles, some are virtually indistinguishable from Earth styles (as described in *The Ultimate Martial Artist*), having developed under similar circumstances.

The most notable include:

- bekoro* – nearly identical to Gatka
- elish* – similar to Arnis, Kali, and Escrima, though usually fought with a stick in one hand and a knife in the other
- ephari* – functionally identical to Jailhouse Rock, though with a more politicized history
- esoth* – functionally identical to Kalaripayit
- gen-tara* – identical to Commando Training
- ko'a mai* – eerily identical to Hwarang-Do, including its history, philosophy, and legendary Special Abilities (most

**AZARMO EQUIPMENT**

The typical *Azarmo* carries or wears the weapons, armor, and other equipment listed below.

Most specialists would naturally carry or wear additional equipment to reflect their respective specialties. For example, a cold-weather unit would have survival gear for low temperatures and other features of the tundra. Most such equipment can be found in *Terran Empire* (pages 148-153) or *Spacer's Toolkit* (pages 20-25). While not all of the items on those pages would precisely fit the normal Donburil *Azar* and Velarian Confederation way of doing things, most can be easily adapted.

**Azar Battlestaff**

No *Azar* is without this weapon, a traditional polearm consisting of a straight eighteen-inch blade similar to that of a Roman gladius, set at the end of a four-foot staff. An *Azar's* battlestaff is a highly personalized item, with marks and decorations commemorating every battle she's been a part of, every injury she's sustained, and every notably courageous act she's performed. The *Azarmo* are fiercely possessive of their battlestaves; the last person to steal one, a Hzeel, ended up with body parts scattered across the galaxy.

**Cost Azar Battlestaff**

- 13 *Azar Battlestaff*: Multipower, 40-point Reserve; OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-1/4), STR Minimum (12, -1/2), One-and-a-Half-Handed Weapon (-1/4) 0
- 1u 1) *Blade*: HKA 1d6+1, Armor Piercing (+1/2), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-1/4), STR Minimum (12, -1/2), One-and-a-Half-Handed Weapon (-1/4) 0
- 1u 2) *Staff*: HA +4d6, Armor Piercing (+1/2), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); HA (-1/2), OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-1/4), STR Minimum (12, -1/2), One-and-a-Half-Handed Weapon (-1/4) 0

**Total Cost: 15 points**

**Donburil Dagger**

A straight blade not much unlike a dirk, the Donburil dagger is also a traditional weapon of the *Azarmo*, but not nearly as personally significant.

*HKA 1/2d6, Armor Piercing (+1/2), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2) (20 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-1/4), STR Minimum (5; -1/4). Total cost: 8 points.*

**Velarian Class 3 Ion Pistol**

Developed by the Velarians, the Class 3 ion pistol is the most widely-used military sidearm

giving a good amount of power for its size and price. While its overall power is less than that of its Terran equivalent, it's capable of three shots in a single pull of the trigger instead of just two, and it has an extra-powerful setting capable of burning through nearly any armor.

**Cost Velarian Class 3 Ion Pistol**

- 18 *Velarian Class 3 Ion Pistol*: Multipower, 50-point Reserve, 32 Charges (+1/4); OAF (-1), STR Minimum 9 (Cannot Add/Subtract Damage, -1), Real Weapon (-1/4), Limited Range (60", -1/4) 0
- 1 1) *Extra Lethal Setting*: RKA 2d6-1, Autofire (3 shots, +1/4), Penetrating (+1/2); OAF (-1), STR Minimum 9 (Cannot Add/Subtract Damage, -1), Real Weapon (-1/4), Limited Range (60", -1/4)
- 1 2) *Lethal Setting*: RKA 3d6-1, Autofire (3 shots, +1/4); OAF (-1), STR Minimum 9 (Cannot Add/Subtract Damage, -1), Real Weapon (-1/4), Limited Range (60", -1/4)
- 1 3) *Non-Lethal Setting*: EB 8d6, Autofire (3 shots, +1/4); OAF (-1), STR Minimum 9 (Cannot Add/Subtract Damage, -1), Real Weapon (-1/4), Limited Range (60", -1/4)

**Velarian Class 2-Delta Laser Rifle**

The Class 2-Delta Laser Rifle is a general-purpose weapon, designed to balance the needs of a sniper rifle and heavy combat weapon.

*RKA 2d6+1, Increased Maximum Range (2175", +1/4), Autofire (5 shots, +1/2), Armor Piercing (+1/2), 32 Boostable Charges (+1/2) (96 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (12, Cannot Add/Subtract Damage, -1), Two-Handed (-1/2), Real Weapon (-1/4), Beam (-1/4), Blocked by Smoke or Steam (-1/4) (total cost: 22 points) plus Penalty Skill Levels: +2 versus Range Modifiers (6 Active Points); OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-1/2), Real Weapon (-1/4) (total cost: 2 points). Total cost: 24 points.*

**Azar Body Armor**

The *Azarmo* wear this decorative but functional body armor, snugly covering their entire bodies except for face and arms. Its construction is a melding of modern materials science and ancient metal-forging techniques, providing a strong yet lightweight armor over the protected areas.

The armor's design looks to a Human eye like a combination of what might be worn by a Samurai, a Roman gladiator, Western police of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the legendary armored hero Defender. This design is considered the *Azar* "uniform."

## DIGITAL HERO #47

*Armor (7 PD/7 ED), Hardened (+1/4) (26 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Armor (-1/4), Activation Roll (13-, Hit Locations 4-5 and 9-18, -3/4). Total cost: 9 points.*

### Azar Combat Goggles

These goggles, part lens-based and part electronic, assist and protect the *Azar*'s vision in combat. They're not especially comfortable, however, so in noncombat situations many *Azar* move them to their foreheads or around their necks.

#### Cost Azar Combat Goggles

- 3 *Light Amplification*: Nightvision; OIF (-1/2)
- 5 *Glare Protection*: Sight Group Flash Defense (8 points); OIF (-1/2)
- 4 *Magnifier*: +4 versus Range Modifier for Sight Group; OIF (-1/2)
- 3 *Targeting Sensor*: +2 versus Range Modifier with All Attacks; OIF (-1/2), Only With Guns and Firearms (-1/4)

### Velarian Wrist-Comm

This device is worn on the wrists of all military personnel associated with the Velarian Confederation, by unanimous consensus among the various services. Besides a basic audio-visual orbital communications system, it also includes a universal translator, a geokinetic compass, a mathematical computer, and a global positioning system with a transmit beacon. (It also includes a chronometer, but since Absolute Time Sense is an Everyman Power in the *Terran Empire* setting it's not included in the write-up.)

#### Cost Velarian Wrist-Comm

- 13 *Communicator*: High Range Radio Perception (Radio Group), MegaScale (1" = 1000 km, +1), Can Be Scaled Down 1" = 1 km (+1/4); Affects Sight, Hearing, and Radio Groups (-1/2), OIF (-1/2)
- 7 *GPS Locator*: Detect Exact Position on Planet with GPS Satellite System 17- (Radio Group), Transmit; OIF (-1/2)
- 2 *Compass*: Bump Of Direction; OIF (-1/2)
- 2 *Calculator*: Lightning Calculator; OIF (-1/2)
- 11 *Translator*: Universal Translator 13-; Extra Time (Full Phase, -1/2), OIF (-1/2)

### JATH A'RI (DONBURIL KUNG FU)

While Donbur is actually home to nearly one hundred distinct martial arts disciplines, nearly all Amazons learn *jath a'Ri*, one of the most ancient and tradition-laden styles from their

home world. The name translates roughly to "discipline of the Sentinel" (the root language is different than the one from which *Azarmo* is derived), though superficial similarities to Kung Fu have led many Terrans to call it simply "Donburil Kung Fu."

The recorded history of *jath a'Ri* dates back to the foundation of the *Azarmo*, though it clearly dates to much earlier times. The actual origins are quite sketchy, even among the most expert historians – many records of the period were simply wiped out by wars and natural disasters.

As with Kung Fu, the history of *jath a'Ri* is steeped in mystic legends. According to the best-known legend, somewhere deep in the Silverwood Forest (the planet's largest and, some say, most beautiful wooded region) is a school where Tham Dorash, the last survivor of the original *Azarmo*, continues to teach the ways and philosophies of her order. Historically some individuals have claimed to have learned from her, but no such claims have surfaced in over five hundred years.

Besides its use as the official martial art of the Donburil Amazons, *jath a'Ri* has a thriving sporting tradition. The leading *jath a'Ri* champion is given as much respect as the heavyweight boxing champion on modern-day Earth, and the winners of the men's and women's *jath a'Ri* competition at the quintennial Global Meet (the Donburil equivalent of the Olympic Games) are instant celebrities among their people.

The central philosophy of *jath a'Ri* is often summed up with the slogan *Dolri Kem*, which translates most accurately to, "Use whatever works." Most *a'Ri* (practitioners of the technique) have a fixed set of fighting sequences they use most often because they've been successful in the past. (This makes the technique a very good candidate for the *Style Distinctive Feature*; see page 135 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist*.) *A'Ri* also keep a handful of secondary tactics in the backs of their minds for situations where the standard tactics don't work – most are very good at improvisation.

The discipline includes both hand-to-hand and ranged combat maneuvers. A typical student *a'Ri* learns the basic hand-to-hand maneuvers (Block, Strike, Disarm, and Counterstrike, in that order) first, and then may learn the basic ranged maneuvers (Offensive Shot and Distant Shot) if she wishes.

*Azarmo* using this style are psionic)

*melbothim* – similar to Savate and Zipota, but with a Staffs element and a Dodge maneuver reflecting a more aggressive approach

*salet* – similar to Fencing, but with Barehanded and Clubs elements

(though the latter is infrequently taught)

*tareth p'i* – nearly identical to Krav Maga; the most commonly-encountered among these styles within the *Azarmo*

*zham'p'iri* – similar to Capoeira, but with a Clubs element and no razor WF

**JATH A'RI (DONBURIL KUNG FU)**

<b>HTH Maneuver</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>OCV</b>	<b>DCV</b>	<b>Rng</b>	<b>Effect</b>
Block	½	4	+2	+2		Block, Abort
Charge	½	5	-	+4		Dodge, Abort, FMove
Counterstrike	½	4	+2	+2		+2d6 Strike, Must Follow Block
Crush	½	4	+0	+0		+4d6 Crush, Must Follow Grab
Disarm	½	4	+2	-2		Disarm, +10 STR to Disarm Roll
Escape	½	4	+0	+0		+15 STR vs. Grabs
Flip	½	3	+1	+1		Block, Target Falls
Legsweep	½	3	+2	-1		+1d6 Strike, Target Falls
Lunge	½	4	+0	-2		+2d6 +v/5 Strike, FMove
Nerve Pinch	½	4	-1	+1		2d6 NND (1)
Push Back	½	4	+0	+0		+15 STR to Shove
Roundhouse	½	5	-2	+1		+4d6 Strike
Seize	½	5	-2	-1		Grab Two Limbs, +10 STR Hold, FMove
Strike	½	4	+2	+0		+2d6 Strike
<b>Ranged Maneuver</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>OCV</b>	<b>DCV</b>	<b>Rng</b>	<b>Effect</b>
Disarming Shot	½	4	+0	+0	+0	Disarm, +15 STR
Distant Shot	1+1	5	+0	-2	+6	Strike; +1 Segment
Hard Shot	½	4	-1	-1	+0	Strike, +4 DC
Offensive Shot	½	5	+1	-1	+4	Strike
Running Shot	½	5	-1	+0	+0	Strike, FMove

**Skills**

Acrobatics  
 Breakfall  
 Deduction  
 Defense Maneuver  
 KS: jath a'Ri  
 Rapid Attack (HTH)  
 Sleight Of Hand  
 WF: Common Melee Weapons  
 WF: Donburil Martial Arts Melee Weapons  
 WF: Bows  
 WF: Small Arms  
 WF: Off Hand

**Elements**

Weapons (HTH) +1 Use Art with Blades  
 +1 Use Art with Chain Weapons  
 +1 Use Art with Clubs  
 +1 Use Art with Staff  
 +1 Use Art with Whip  
 Weapons (Ranged) +1 Use Art with Bows  
 +1 Use Art with Pistols  
 +1 Use Art with Thrown Knives  
 +1 Use Art with Thrown Rocks

**Optional Rules:** The Counterstrike, Nerve Pinch, Roundhouse, and Strike take location rolls of 2d6+1. The Lunge takes a location roll of 3d6. The Legsweep automatically targets the legs, but this has no effect on the damage done by the maneuver. The Seize automatically targets the arms as does the Crush, though this also does not affect the damage done. The other hand-to-hand maneuvers do not use Hit Location rolls.

The Ranged Disarm automatically targets the weapon specified with the maneuver; all other ranged maneuvers use location rolls of 3d6.

**Special Abilities:** According to legend, early *a'Ri* were capable of many amazing feats, among them flurries of up to a dozen strikes in a second, withstanding swords and fire, running up walls, seeing over great distances, and being almost psychically aware of impending danger. Some historical documents even indicate that most of these stories may be true. However, as of the Terran Empire period, only a handful of lesser abilities are documented. These include the following (listed in alphabetical order).



- 1) *Athletic Prowess*: Many *a'Ri* have extra inches of Running and Swimming, and possibly 1" of extra Leaping (as well as increased physical Characteristics), to reflect their superior physical well-being.
- 2) *Battle Array*: See page 119 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist*.
- 3) *Battle Shout*: This is essentially the same as the *Kiai Aid* from page 120 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist*.
- 4) *Defensive Movement*: This is the ability to move so erratically in combat that enemies have a hard time hitting the character. It's bought as 5-point Combat Skill Levels with DCV, with the Limitation *Costs Endurance* (-½). The maximum most *a'Ri* should be allowed is +6 DCV, and most only have about half that.
- 5) *Eyes of Darkness*: Despite its mystical-sounding name, this is simply the ability to quickly and completely adjust one's eyes to a dark environment. It's bought as Nightvision with the *Extra Time* Limitation (typically at One Turn).
- 6) *Lightning Reflexes*: An *a'Ri* may have up to +6 to DEX through Lightning Reflexes, usually with all actions.
- 7) *Master Climber*: An uncommon ability, this is essentially an enhanced form of the *Climbing Skill*, bought as Clinging (at normal STR) with the Limitations *Cannot Resist Knockback* (-¼), *Sideways Movement Is At Half Ground Movement* (-¼), *No Ceiling Movement Or Angles Of Less Than 80* (-¼), and *Requires A Climbing Roll* (-½).
- 8) *Mental Discipline*: The mental discipline of *jath a'Ri* is such that most learn some resistance, however small, to mental powers. A typical *jath a'Ri* mistress would have 5-10 points of Mental Defense (plus whatever she gets from EGO).
- 9) *Shattering*: It's quite common for *a'Ri* to be able to break small gadgets and items of equipment even with their bare hands. This is bought as Dispel, with No Range (see page 123 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist* for more details).
- 10) *Steel Skin*: Some *a'Ri* can resist cutting attacks, similar to the "Breath Control" ability of some Terran martial artists (see *The Ultimate Martial Artist*, page 122). This is bought as Damage Resistance with the Limitation *Must Be Aware of Attack* (-¼). The Limitations *Does Not Work against Guns* (-¼) and *One Hit Location Left Undefended* (-¼), though standard for Breath Control, are optional for Steel Skin. Also, Damage Resistance from this ability may include ED, though the resistant ED may not exceed resistant PD.
- 11) *Tunnel Hiding*: See page 130 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist*.

## Ta'hrevk (Esagite Assassin-Saboteurs)

On the planet Lregh, one of the more noteworthy worlds of the Conjoined Civilizations Republic, the species who call themselves Esagites hold to one of the strictest philosophies of peaceful vigilance. They scorn conflict and violence, but they also recognize that others do not share this philosophy, and so have maintained their elite force of *ta'hrevk*, their traditional assassin-saboteurs.

In the days before Lord Esagai, the founder of their modern philosophy of peace, the Esagites were constantly at war with each other. Rather than standing armies, they used squads of *ta'hrevk* to wreak havoc among their worldwide complex of city-states.

Today, the *ta'hrevk* are viewed by most other species with awe. The closest Terran analogy to their style, skill, and discipline would be a combination of Japanese ninja, American elite Special Forces, and the Israeli Mossad.

Esagites are naturally more long-lived than most other species; however, the training for the *ta'hrevk* takes long enough that recruits are only accepted at the ages of fifteen through eighteen (their prepubescent years). Only those already demonstrating impressive strength, agility, and mental discipline are accepted. Twenty years of intensive training in martial arts, stealthy action, infiltration, and many other subjects make them the most skilled force in the known galaxy – a single *ta'hrevk* has been known to prevail over an entire legion of enemies (that's an army of six hundred!).

Because of their position, the *ta'hrevk* are accorded several privileges. They are allowed free access to secure government locations, regardless of the nature of the location, with the government-provided housing for executives standing as the sole exception. They have access to any government document upon request. The Lregh government provides free and unlimited liability insurance, covering any and all property and medical damage done by a *ta'hrevk* in the course of his duties. They are even allowed to kill another person in cold blood – including a *ta'hrevk* or a government official – provided the act can be justified as a part of his duties. While these privileges are only absolute on Lregh itself, the CCR as a whole extends some form of them throughout its territory; the Republic also allows them access to its highest-security computer networks.

In addition to the Skills, Talents, and Perks shown, nearly all *ta'hrevk* have at least six of their Primary Characteristics at 15 or above, and most have all eight at that level.

## LREGH AND THE ESAGITES

The species of Esagites are very humanlike, but with tall, almost sepulchral forms, skin colors in various shades of red, and six fingers on each hand. Biologically they combine features of mammals and reptiles; they have scales for skin and vertically-slitted irises, but are warm-blooded, give live birth, and have hair on top of their heads (and, for males, on the face) though not in any other body location. They have +1 DEX, -1 CON, -1 BODY, +1" Running, and Life Support (longevity: average lifespan 200 years).

For more information on the planet Lregh and its population, see page 79 of *Terran Empire*.

**MORE TA'HREVK WEAPONS**

More ideas for weapons used by the *ta'hrevk* can be found among the equipment lists in *The Ultimate Martial Artist* (pages 167-185), with emphasis on the "Concealed and Inobvious Weapons" sidebar on pages 174-176 and the specific weapons listed below. In many cases the specific appearance of the weapon is different, though the function and game mechanics are the same. Each is listed with the Esagite name, to give a more alien "feel."

- bo: *gva*
- blowgun: *thukha*
- cymbal: *tsi'kvom*
- dropped marbles: *dlevk mo'chri* (usually made of steel)
- fist-load: *acha-hrim*
- garrote: *ekredh*
- metsubishi (powder grenade): *khodna*
- ring needle: *dlevk hrokti* (literally "steel stinger")
- rope dart: *nyovk*
- shuko: *dlevk kharg* ("steel claw")
- shuriken: *dlevk hrazl* ("steel star")
- steel toad: *dlevk mi'urkh* (actually made in the shape of a variety of small animals on the Esagite homeworld)
- tetsubishi (caltrops): *kza'hroz*
- three-section staff: *dlaki-dlaki*
- toami (net): *kzez*
- tonfa: *ngo'kzarzh*
- tsubute: *dlevk znivk* ("steel disk")

**TA'HREVK (ESAGITE ASSASSIN-SABOTEUR) PACKAGE DEAL**

**Cost Ability**

- 30 Dloth A'Harj (Esagite Ninjitsu)
- 3 Acrobatics
- 3 Acting
- 3 Breakfall
- 3 Bugging
- 3 Bureaucratics
- 3 Climbing
- 3 Combat Driving
- 3 Computer Programming
- 3 Concealment
- 3 Contortionist
- 3 Conversation
- 3 Cryptography
- 3 Deduction
- 10 Defense Maneuver IV
- 3 Demolitions
- 3 Disguise
- 3 Electronics
- 3 Fast Draw
- 3 Forgery
- 3 High Society
- 3 Interrogation
- 3 Lipreading
- 3 Lockpicking
- 3 Mechanics
- 3 Mimicry
- 3 Paramedics
- 3 Persuasion
- 5 Rapid Attack (HTH)
- 3 Security Systems
- 3 Seduction
- 3 Shadowing
- 3 Sleight Of Hand
- 3 Stealth
- 3 Streetwise
- 14 Survival (Arctic, Mountains, Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical, Deserts, Marine, Urban)
- 3 Tactics
- 3 Tracking
- 6 Analyze (Combat Technique or Style), Bribery, Combat Piloting, Criminology, Feint, Gambling, Inventor, Navigation, Systems Operation, Teamwork, Two-Weapon Fighting Ventriloquism
- 3 KS: Poisons and Toxins (INT based)
- 3 PS: Assassin (DEX based)
- 3 PS: Saboteur (INT based)
- 1 WF: Rifles
- 5 WF: Player's Choice
- 6 +2 with Any Three Skills
- 10 +2 with a Category of Skills (Agility, Intellect, or Interaction)
- 20 +2 Overall

**9 Universal Environmental**

- Movement:** +3 Penalty Skill Levels vs. environmental penalties
- 10 Computer Link: CCR Security Network
- 10 At least two Contacts totaling at least 10 points
- 10 Membership (*ta'hrevk*)
- 10 Security Clearance

**Disadvantages**

- 25 Hunted: *Ta'hrevk* Seniority (More Pow, NCI, Easy to Find, Watching) 14-
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Lregh and the CCR (Very Common, Strong)

**Total Cost of Package: 216**

**TA'HREVK EQUIPMENT**

Many weapons used by the *ta'hrevk* are very similar to those used by ancient assassin castes on other planets. Garrotes, blowguns, poison-needle rings, sword canes and similar simple weapons – most of them easily concealed, or disguised as something else – are the tools of their trade (see sidebar) at least as much as sniper rifles and other high-tech gear. Nonetheless, a few ancient traditional weapons continue to see usage by the *ta'hrevk* even today.

**A'KENZ (ESAGITE PALM-DAGGER)**

Usually disguised as part of a decorative wrist-cuff traditional to Esagite culture, a hinge mechanism extends a diamond-tipped needle from the base of the wearer's hand when he pulls it back to expose his palm. The same mechanism retracts the needle when his hand returns to a normal position, so the wearer doesn't inadvertently stick himself. The needle's diamond tip allows the wearer to punch through virtually anything.

The weapon actually does relatively little damage on its own; however, it's often used as a delivery system for a poison, drug, or other chemical.

The *a'kenz* requires its own completely separate Weapon Familiarity.

*A'Kenz:* HKA 1/2d6, Penetrating (+1/2), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2) (20 Active Points); IIF (-1/4), Real Weapon (-1/4). Total cost: 13 points.

**PSCF BODYSUIT**

A near-perfect blend of plastic, steel, ceramic, and natural organic fabric, PSCF is a flexible, stretchable material used in some ATRI 12 and higher societies to make protective clothing. A thin layer can protect the wearer against most forms of damage, while staying

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concealed under or even within more casual garments. The material is a cutting-edge technology within the CCR, but the *ta'hrevk* have already made full-cover PSCF bodysuits standard issue.

The softness and flexibility that allows the material to be easily worn also means that it does not protect against blunt or impact damage, such as might be delivered by a fist, a moving vehicle, or a long fall.

**PSCF Bodysuit:** *Armor (14 PD/10 ED), Hardened (+1/4) (45 Active Points); IIF (-1/4), Real Armor (-1/4), Does Not Protect Against Blunt or Impact Damage (-1/2). Total cost: 22 points.*

### DLOTH A'HARJ (ESAGITE NINJITSU)

The ancient fighting art of *dloth a'harj* (the closest English translation of the phrase would be either "silent warfare" or "ambush force," depending on whom you ask) has a developmental history almost completely parallel with that of the *ta'hrevk*. In the earliest days, each city-state's force had its own fighting style; while the basic philosophies of the various styles were the same, many of the specific ideas were different. After Lord Esagai united his people, the *ta'hrevk* gradually united into a single network, and over the next three hundred years their fighting disciplines merged into a single style, which was given the name *dloth a'harj*.

*Dloth a'harj* emphasizes a combination of stealth and brutal force. Its adherents, almost exclusively *ta'hrevk*, learn to attack from ambush with great brutality, preferably eliminating the enemy before a counterattack is possible. A sufficiently skilled *ta'hrevk* can bring down even a more powerful opponent in this way using only two or three blows, and can often dispatch two or three ambushed enemies with little risk.

**Optional Rules:** Breaking, Disabling, and Stunning all take Hit Location rolls of 2d6+1. Circumventing, Overcoming, Returning, and Smashing may take a Hit Location roll of 2d6+1 or 2d6+7, depending on whether the maneuver is defined (at the time of the Attack Roll) as a punch or a kick. Suffocating automatically targets the Head, and Toppling automatically targets the Legs; neither takes any OCV or damage modifier for their locations. Crashing uses a Hit Location roll of 2d6+4. The other maneuvers do not use Hit Locations.

**Special Abilities:** As with Earth's ninja, *ta'hrevk* and other practitioners of *dloth a'harj* have many impressive abilities, both mundane and mystical. The most commonly-taught mundane abilities are listed below.

Generally, mystical abilities should be limited to *Galactic Champions* campaigns, unless the GM is allowing such abilities in his *Star Hero* game. They are left to the GM's discretion, though nearly any ability in *The Ultimate Martial Artist* or *Ninja Hero* that isn't tied to a specific cultural concept should be possible.

1) *Ambidexterity:* Many *dloth a'harj* practitioners learn to fight equally well with either hand, or at least nearly as well with their "off" hand as with their dominant one. This can be bought as Ambidexterity, possibly (but not necessarily) with the Limitation *Only for Combat* (-1/4), and/or WF: Off Hand.

2) *Athletic Mobility:* Practitioners of this style tend to be very superior athletes, with extra inches of Running, Swimming, and occasionally Leaping. The last ability often includes the *Accurate Adder* and/or the *Requires an Acrobatics Roll* Limitation.

3) *Battleground Confusion:* Some *dloth a'harj* practitioners are even better at avoiding attacks from multiple attackers than they are attacks from single foes. A character with this ability must have at least Defense Maneuver II. The ability may be bought multiple times, at 5 points per +2 DCV.

**Battleground Confusion:** *Combat Skill Level: +2 with DCV (10 Active Points); Limited To +1 Per Opponent above the First (-1). Total Cost: 5 points.*

4) *Broken Pattern:* This is Lack of Weakness for Analyze Style.

5) *Combat Reflex:* Many practitioners of *dloth a'harj* learn to reflexively pull back from any successful blows. This is functionally the same as Combat Luck.

6) *Courage of Steel Will:* It's hard to startle or frighten a *ta'hrevk*. This is represented with extra PRE, with the Limitation *Only to Protect against Presence Attacks* (-1).

7) *Darkness Sense:* Some practitioners are said to be able to fight in pitch darkness as well as they can in full light. This is bought as Combat Sense.

8) *Feet of Undetectable Stride:* This ability allows a *ta'hrevk* to pass over an area without disturbing the walking surface. This is bought as Gliding with the *Ground Gliding* Limitation, and often the *Requires a Stealth Roll* Limitation as well.

9) *Focused Mind of the Warrior:* Some *ta'hrevk* can focus their minds to "fight through the pain" (to borrow a Terran term).

The form shown below is the "mature" form of the ability. Beginners may have only Healing 2d6 or even 1d6, and more restrictive forms of the *Concentration* Limitation. More advanced characters may have up to 4d6, add the *Reduced*

("steel disk")  
urumi: *esha mayavk*  
("wire sword")  
war fan: *dlevk hrolth*  
("steel fan")  
whip: *kyoek*  
wishful steel ball:  
*dlevk mlozn* ("steel sphere")

### RANGED COMBAT

For ranged combat, *ta'hrevk* also learn *esho mlataadh*, a technique functionally identical to a synthesis of Shurikenjutsu and Zen Riflery (see pages 54 and 73, respectively, of *The Ultimate Martial Artist*), including the Special Abilities of both. Rifles is the default Weapon Element; others available include Thrown Blowgun, Bows, Crossbows, Handguns, Rocks, Steel Toad, Thrown Axes and Knives, and Wishful Steel Ball.

**DLOTH A'HARJ (ESAGITE NINJITSU)**

Maneuver	Phase	Pts	OCV	DCV	Effect
Avoiding	½	4	-	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
Blinding	½	4	-1	-1	Sight Group Flash 4d6
Breaking	½	4	-2	+0	HKA ½d6
Circumventing	½	5	+1	+3	Strike
Crashing	½	4	+0	-2	Strike +2d6 +v/5, FMove
Disabling	½	5	-1	-2	Grab One Limb; HKA ½d6; Disable
Disarming	½	4	-1	+1	Disarm; +10 STR to Disarm roll
Diverting	½	5	+1	+3	Block, Abort
Escaping	½	4	+0	+0	+15 STR vs. Grabs
Overcoming	½	4	+2	+0	Strike +2d6
Pushing	½	4	+0	+0	+15 STR to Shove
Returning	½	4	+2	+2	Strike +2d6, Must Follow Block
Smashing	½	5	+1	-2	Strike +4d6
Stunning	½	4	-1	+1	2d6 NND
Suffocating	½	4	-2	+0	Grab One Limb; 2d6 NND
Toppling	½	3	+2	-1	Strike +1d6; Target Falls

**Skills**

Acrobatics	WF: A'Kenz
Analyze Style	WF: Axes, Maces, Hammers, and Picks
Breakfall	WF: Blades
Contortionist	WF: Chain & Rope Weapons
Defense Maneuver	WF: Fist-Loads
Fast Draw	WF: Garrote
Paramedics	WF: Homemade Weapons
Rapid Attack (HTH)	WF: Nets
Shadowing	WF: Polearms and Spears
Sleight Of Hand	WF: Rope Dart
Stealth	WF: Staffs
Teamwork	WF: Three-Section Staff
Two-Weapon Fighting	WF: Whip
KS: Dloth A'Harj	

**Elements**

Weapons	+1 Use Art with A'Kenz
	+1 Use Art with Axes, Maces, Hammers, and Picks
	+1 Use Art with Blades
	+1 Use Art with Chain & Rope Weapons
	+1 Use Art with Clubs
	+1 Use Art with Fist-Loads
	+1 Use Art with Garrote
	+1 Use Art with Homemade Weapons
	+1 Use Art with Nets
	+1 Use Art with Polearms and Spears
	+1 Use Art with Rope Dart
	+1 Use Art with Staffs
	+1 Use Art with Three-Section Staff
	+1 Use Art with Whip

Endurance Advantage, and remove the Concentration and/or Requires a Paramedics Roll Limitations.

**Focused Mind of the Warrior:**

Healing STUN 3d6 (30 Active Points); Does Not Work on Some Damage (Impairing or Disabling Wounds, or NND Damage, -½), Self Only (-½), Requires a Paramedics Roll (-½), Concentration (½ DCV, -¼). Total Cost: 11 points.

10) *Hands of Masterful Ascent*: Some *ta'hrevk* are such skilled climbers that they can exceed what would normally be possible with just the Skill.

**Hands of Masterful Ascent:** *Clinging* (10 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½), Cannot Resist Knockback (-¼), No Ceiling Movement or Angles of Less Than 80° (-¼), Requires a Climbing Roll (-½). Total Cost: 4 points.



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11) *Lone Warrior*: When a *ta'hrevk* is fighting alone against many opponents, he can often find otherwise untapped reserves to fight more fiercely than he could otherwise. This is bought as Combat Skill Levels with All Combat (8 points each) with the Limitations *Costs Endurance* (-½) and *Only When Fighting Alone Against Many Opponents* (-2).

12) *Masterful Aim*: Some practitioners can strike so accurately that they can strike anywhere on their opponent's body they wish with little trouble – even targeting an eye (normally taking a penalty of -12 OCV) can be little or no extra trouble. The same ability can be used to target and break an opponent's weapon. This is bought as Targeting Skill Levels.

13) *Mental Walls*: The mental disciplines inherent with the practice of *dloth a'harj* often allow the practitioner to resist psychic powers. This is bought as Mental Defense, though usually no more than 10 points' worth (not counting the EGO/5 bonus) unless the GM allows otherwise.

14) *Mystic Sleep*: Though credited as a mystical ability, this is actually a highly refined mental discipline allowing the *ta'hrevk* to slow his vital signs until he appears to be dead. This is identical to *The Sleep of Escape*, as described on page 79 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist*, and is a form of Simulate Death.

15) *Speed Attack*: Many practitioners can strike so rapidly they can land several blows in less than a second. This may be bought as the *Autofire* Advantage on one or two maneuvers (see pages 104-105 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist* for details on this), a naked *Autofire* Advantage that can be applied to any weapon, or a Multipower with one Energy Blast slot and one RKA slot, both with the *OIF* (weapon of opportunity; -½) and *No Range* (-½) Limitations.

16) *Swath of Destruction*: In a massive combat, certain *ta'hrevk* can wade through a crowd of opponents, mowing them all down with wild flourishes of his weapon.

**Swath of Destruction:** HKA 1½d6, Area Of Effect (10" Long, 1" Tall, 3" Wide Line, +1½), Conforming (+½) (75 Active Points); OIF (any weapon, -½), Cannot be Used with Multiple-Power Attacks (-¼), Damage Limited to Weapon's Damage (-¼), Must Travel Along Center Line (-½). Total Cost: 30 points.

17) *Unseen Ambush*: Many *ta'hrevk* learn to hide against nearly any background, and strike without warning. This ability is so common that the GM may declare it a required purchase among *ta'hrevk*.

**Unseen Ambush:** Sight and Hearing Group Invisibility, Reduced Endurance

(0 END, +½) (37 Active Points); Chameleon (-½), Concentration (0 DCV Throughout, -1), Requires a Stealth Roll (-½). Total cost: 12 points.

Many other "Super-Skills" from *Dark Champions* may be available as well, at the GM's discretion.

### DLOTH A'HARJ SUBSTYLES

While the overall discipline is united, there are still several dozen substyles. This was initially a conscious decision by the practitioners of the "parent" styles, who wanted to maintain their ethnic traditions, but supported by the *Ta'hrevk* Seniority to keep a sense of variety, and thereby unpredictability, in the *ta'hrevk* abilities. Today, all *ta'hrevk* learn at least three substyles before they are allowed to go into the field.

The Esagite word for substyle, *dzeok*, has a meaning blending the English-language concepts of "discipline," "school of thought," "tributary," and "shade of color." Each is named for the Esagite City-State where it was developed.

Players should be encouraged to choose which three (or more) substyles their characters are most familiar with, but the GM needn't require this if he doesn't want to.

The most significant and widely-taught substyles are listed below.

#### **Blara**

Students of *dzeok Blara* learn to deal with matters carefully and deliberately. Skills involving careful planning, such as Analyze: Style, Stealth, Tactics, and Teamwork, are taught right alongside combat maneuvers; most also learn Find Weakness.

To know *dzeok Blara*, a character must have at least three of the following maneuvers: Avoiding, Blinding, Circumventing, Disarming, Diverting, Returning, or Suffocating. Abilities such as *Feet of Undetectable Stride* and *Hands of Masterful Descent* are also common among these *ta'hrevk*.

#### **Gvath**

During Lregh's era of warfare, the patriarchy of Gvath was among the most openly imperialistic, and so the fighting style of its *ta'hrevk* became the most aggressive.

An adherent of *dzeok Gvath* will learn at least three of the following maneuvers: Avoiding, Breaking, Crashing, Overcoming, Smashing, Toppling. The *Focused Mind of the Warrior* and *Swath of Destruction* abilities are unusually common among these *ta'hrevk*.

#### **Lroneth**

The City-State of Lroneth was the home of Lord Esagai, hailed as the founder of the Esagites' peaceful vigilance philosophy. He did

not actually originate the idea, but was the first to spread it across the planet; the general idea had been a part of the City-State's philosophy for centuries. Over time, its *ta'hrevk* learned to be prepared for an attack at any time; among its legendary abilities are various types of Clairsentience, Danger Sense, Invisibility, and other preventative measures. Even today, many *dzeok Lroneth* students learn to be more observant than most (usually with up to +3 Enhanced Perception, and sometimes Eidetic Memory).

Adherents of *dzeok Lroneth* begin by learning the Avoiding, Diverting, and Toppling maneuvers, plus at least one of the following: Circumventing, Overcoming, Returning, Stunning, or Suffocating. The Escaping and Pushing maneuvers are also considered a part of this substyle.

### Zrana

On Lregh, the name of Zrana long ago became a slang term for "counterattack." The *ta'hrevk* of the City-State by that name took up a primarily defensive position, assigned to protect Zrana from attacks by other *ta'hrevk* – and to do so with a vengeance.

The first maneuvers learned by a *dzeok Zrana* student are Diverting, Returning, and Smashing, in that order. They also may learn the Avoiding, Breaking, Disabling, and Suffocating maneuvers. The *Combat Reflex*, *Darkness Sense*, and *Focused Mind of the Warrior* abilities are also common, as is the *Lightsleep* Talent.

### Tranta Shun

A general history of Tranta Shun, the warrior cult of Sigma Caeruleus III, can be found on page 91 of *Worlds of Empire*. In short, the early twenty-fourth century saw the height of violence between the planet's native Zarr and the Human settlers known as Yezidi. To stop the endless cycle of revenge, the leaders of both sides melded their religion together into *Tranta Shun*, including a strict code of honor demanding peace between the two sides and a guerilla war against their mutual enemies.

At first this had the effect of focusing the violence on the ruling Kinzareth, another faction of Humans, more than abating it. However, the arrival of the Xenovores stopped the infighting altogether. Instead of a means of internal warfare, Tranta Shun became the cornerstone of the planet's defense, making Sigma Caeruleus III a thorn in the Xenovores' side for the duration of their occupation.

Afterward, Tranta Shun was reformed into a sort of monastic warrior order charged with preserving the planet's various martial traditions, and protecting it from future invaders. Every child on Sigma Caeruleus, whether Yezidi, Zarr,

or Kinzareth, spends the summer following his eighteenth birthday learning the basics of Tranta Shun.

The code of Tranta Shun is very clear: one's enemies are to be destroyed, but those who are innocent to the conflict are to be protected. Over time the code has been modified slightly, to emphasize the violent destruction of societal enemies while society's own systems are the tools to use against one's personal enemies... though to this day there are those who don't quite understand that last part.

The Package Deal shown here is not for these one-year students (see below). It applies to the more serious practitioners, who teach the art, serve in the planetary militia (which combines the duties of a planet-wide police force and National Guard), or otherwise put their knowledge to professional use.

### TRANTA SHUN PRACTITIONER PACKAGE DEAL

#### Cost Ability

- 20 Tranta Shun (17 points in Maneuvers, plus the Blades, Rifle, and Staff Weapon Elements)
- 3 Breakfall
- 3 Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, or Riding
- 3 Concealment
- 2 KS: Tranta Shun (Martial Art) 11-
- 2 KS: Tranta Shun (religion) 11-
- 3 Stealth
- 4 Survival (Deserts and any other category or two subcategories)
- 3 Tactics
- 3 Teamwork
- 5 WF: Human Common Melee Weapons, Human Small Arms, Staff
- 9 At least 9 points' worth of the following Skills: Analyze Fighting Technique, Analyze Style, Bugging, Conversation, Deduction, Demolitions, Disguise, Fast Draw, Forgery, Gambling, Lipreading, Navigation, Persuasion, Poisoning, Rapid Attack, Security Systems, Seduction, Streetwise, Tracking, Trading, any Background Skill

#### Disadvantages

- 10 Psychological Limitation: Ruthless Warrior (Common, Strong)

Total Cost of Package: 50

### TRANTA SHUN (MARTIAL ART)

Tranta Shun as a martial art developed at approximately the same time as Tranta Sun as a religion; their origins and philosophies are so intertwined that they share the same name almost interchangeably. The name, which derives from an old Yezidi term roughly meaning “the Ancestors’ War,” roughly defines the philosophy: one’s ancestors’ enemies are one’s own enemies, at least until peace is made.

As a martial system, it can be said that the theme of Tranta Sun is amalgamation. It combines not only Human and Zarr traditions, but also the ancient with the modern, the armed with the unarmed, the ranged with the close-quarters, the brutal with the merciful, and many other normally opposed or mutually exclusive elements.

Because of its pervasiveness in the society of Sigma Caeruleus III, most people from that planet, including nearly all Zarr, know the basics of the Tranta Shun combat style. This includes KS: Tranta Shun Martial Art, at least three hand-to-hand maneuvers, two ranged maneuvers, and the Sword, Spear, and Rifle Weapon Elements (Barehanded and Bow being free).

**Optional Rules:** Intercepting the Plan, Returning the Violence, and Smashing the Enemy all take 2d6+1 location rolls. Disrupting The Energy takes a 3d6+3 location roll. Crippling the Enemy and Sabotaging the Charge automatically target the legs, and Taking the Breath automatically targets the head, but these get no bonuses or penalties in to-hit roll or damage. All other ranged maneuvers take 3d6 location rolls, except Neutralizing the Treat, which does not use a location roll. Toppling The Tower also takes a 3d6 location roll. The remaining maneuvers do not require location rolls.

**Special Abilities:** Many practitioners of the Tranta Shun martial disciplines have become legendary in their skill at survival, stealth, camouflage, and similar pursuits. While stories of such individuals are often exaggerated, Tranta Shun practitioners may possess certain minor “super-skills” in these areas. The following are a few examples of such abilities as they practice them; more can be culled from the *Super-Skills* section of *Dark Champions* (pages 106-149), and the *Heroic Talents* section of *Pulp Hero* (pages 264-296).

1) *Aerial Stealth:* Practitioners who operate in forest or jungle environments can often swing from one tree to another without being noticed. The basic swinging ability is bought as Swinging, usually with no more than twice the distance that the character can Leap forward; the GM may require the OIF Limitation to require that the character use swinglines of opportunity. The “unnoticed” aspect is bought as Naked *Invisible Power Effects* Advantage to the Sight and/or Hearing Groups (Touch Group is the third possibility, but never by itself), with the Limitation *Requires a Stealth Roll* (and OIF, if that’s required for the basic Swinging).

2) *Danger Sense:* This is bought as the Talent of the same name (see pages 88-89 of the *HERO System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Revised*). Most often it’s bought with the *Sense* and *Intuitional* Modifiers, and while a truly experienced individual could “buy off” the latter the ability should still not extend beyond out-of-combat dangers in his immediate vicinity.

3) *Locating Sustenance:* Some practitioners, particularly those of Zarr heritage, can locate nearby food and water almost by instinct (though in reality it relies heavily on the individual’s sense of smell). This is bought as *Detect Sustenance (Smell/Taste Group)*, usually with the Limitation *Requires a Survival Roll*.

4) *Supreme Camouflage:* With this ability a Tranta Shun practitioner can completely hide himself within his environment. This is taken as Invisibility to Sight Group, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (30 Active Points); Requires a Concealment or Survival Roll (subject to Skill Versus Skill contests; -½). Total cost is 20 points. The character would typically use his *Survival* Skill in environments where that Skill applies, or *Concealment* in other environments; in the former case, the GM may allow him to use complementary Skills, even including Concealment. The GM may also allow individuals to add the Hearing and/or Touch Sense Groups if the justification is logical.

5) *Tunnel Hiding:* See page 130 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist*.

6) *Unseen Passage:* This is the ability to pass over the ground without leaving footprints or other traces. This is bought as Gliding with the *Ground Gliding* Limitation; see page 127 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist* and page 182 of *Hero System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Revised* for more details.

**TRANTA SHUN (MARTIAL ART)**

<b>HTH Maneuver</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>OCV</b>	<b>DCV</b>	<b>Rng</b>	<b>Effect</b>
Balancing The Power	½	5	+0	+0		Grab Weapon, +10 STR to take weapon away
Blinding The Eyes	½	4	-1	-1		Sight Group Flash 4d6
Crippling the Enemy	½	5	-2	+0		HKA ½d6 (2 DC), Target Falls
Disrupting The Energy	½	4	-1	+1		2d6 NND (1)
Intercepting the Plan	½	4	+2	+0		STR +2d6 Strike
Preventing the Blow	½	5	+1	+3		Block, Abort
Returning the Violence	½	4	+2	+2		STR +2d6 Strike; Must Follow Block
Running the Maze	½	5	-	+4		Dodge All Attacks, Abort, FMove
Smashing the Enemy	½	5	+1	-2		STR +4d6 Strike
Taking The Breath	½	4	-2	+0		Grab One Limb; 2d6 NND (2)
Toppling The Tower	½	3	+0	+1		STR +v/5; Target Falls

**Ranged Maneuver**

	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>OCV</b>	<b>DCV</b>	<b>Rng</b>	<b>Effect</b>
Usable with Bows Group; Bows Weapon Element is free						
Blasting The foe	½	4	-1	-1	+0	Strike +4 DC
Felling The Eagle	1+1	5	+0	-2	+6	Strike; +1 Segment
Neutralizing the Threat	½	4	+0	+0	+0	Disarm, +15 STR
Protecting The Archer	½	3	-1	+2	+0	Strike
Repelling the Warrior	½	4	+1	+0	+0	Strike +2 DC
Sabotaging The Charge	½	5	+1	-1	+0	Strike +v/5, Target Falls
Withstanding the Battle	½	4	+0	+0	+2	Strike +2DC

**Skills**

Acrobatics  
 Breakfall  
 Concealment  
 Demolitions  
 Fast Draw  
 KS: Tranta Shun Martial Art\*  
 KS: Tranta Shun Religion\*  
 Sleight Of Hand  
 Stealth  
 Survival  
 WF: Blades  
 WF: Bows\*  
 WF: Off Hand  
 WF: Rifles  
 WF: Staff

**Elements**

Weapons +1 Use Art with Blades  
 +1 Use Art with Crossbows  
 +1 Use Art with Spear  
 +1 Use Art with Staff  
 +1 Use Art with Rifle  
 +1 Use Art with Thrown Weapons

# Atomic Monster HERO by Michael Surbrook

## "Oh No, There Goes Tokyo!"

With a purposeful grimace and a  
terrible sound  
He pulls the spitting high tension wires  
down  
Helpless people on a subway train  
Scream bug-eyed as he looks in on them  
He picks up a bus and he throws it back  
down  
As he wades through the buildings  
toward the center of town

Godzilla  
Blue Öyster Cult

### AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

In 1954 Warner Brothers released *Them!*, one of the first "giant atomic monster" movies, and the studio's biggest moneymaker for the year. It also touched off a whole new film genre, with giant monsters popping up in the theaters with some regularity. Soon, movie-goers would be treated to gigantic spiders, scorpions, and preying mantises, as well as numerous immense radioactive dinosaurs awoken from epoch-long sleeps in polar ice. To top this trend off, 1956 saw the American release of *Godzilla, King of the Monsters!* and introduced the world to 150 feet of prehistoric fury who flattened cities, armies, and anything else in his path with blasts of "Atomic Breath."

To our modern eyes, many of these films seem to be utterly cheesy, filled with strong-jawed military men who are doomed to fail in their battle against the giant monsters; pretty lab assistants, who always seem to be perfectly made up, and always fall when running from the atomic menace; and the true hero of the film – the lab coated scientist, who usually determines what the monster is and how to best destroy it. Along the way we, the viewers, are treated to often laughable special effects, wooden acting, and if we're lucky, scenes of the monster in question rampaging through a model city, wreaking havoc on a grand scale.

Of course, one needs to remember when these films were made. *Them!*, for example, might be considered a parable about communism mixed with a warning about the dangers of unregulated atomic experimentation. *Godzilla*, on the other hand, was meant from the start to be an allegory about the threat of nuclear warfare, inspired by director Ishiro Honda's memories of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Of course, not every such movie had a deeper message, and with the popularity of films like *Them!*, *Godzilla*, and *The Beast From*

*20,000 Fathoms*, other studios were quick to try and cash in on the giant monster craze, leading to some rather questionable efforts in the years to follow – such as *The Giant Gila Monster*, *The Black Scorpion*, and *The Killer Shrews*.

This article will take a look at the giant atomic monster genre, concentrating mostly on the output of Hollywood, as the Japanese *kaiju* ("mysterious creature") films are a genre all to themselves. Within the following paragraphs you'll find suggestions on how to design and develop your giant atomic monster, starting with its basic origins, the creature's weapons, and ways for the Player Characters to eventually destroy it. Several sample giant atomic monsters will finish the article, as well as some further resources for your reading and viewing enjoyment.

### THE SCIENCE OF ATOMIC MONSTERS

Before we get started, let's take a moment to consider how exactly, an atomic monster works. Is it possible to have a creature hundreds of feet long, invulnerable to bombs and guns, and able to survive untold millennia encased in ice? Simply put – no.

The average atomic monster is the perfect example of "rubber science." While many elements of the monster may be based on fact (okay, *some* of the elements), much of it is pure fallacy, clothed in just enough technobabble to sound good. Stating the monster is a relic from the age of the dinosaurs usually helps account for its size, having it frozen alive in ice lets it be millions of years old, and gaps in the fossil record explains why we've never seen something like this before. As for the fire breath? Oh that's easy....

### RADIATION EXPLAINS EVERYTHING!

That's right, radiation. The 1950s was the Atomic Age, and atomic power was the way of the future. Thus, atomic radiation became the answer to any problem. Radiation made things grow into monsters, but could also destroy said monsters. Radioactive isotopes could be used to create all sorts of serums, some of which would create horrid mutations, or cure them. Harnessing certain forms of radiation allowed man to create death rays, propulsion systems for aircraft and space ships, shrink rays, enlarging rays, medical scanners, and whatever else a Hollywood writer could dream up. So when the time comes to unleash an atomic monster on the heroes, don't bother thinking too deeply about how the creature got the way it did. Simply announce 'it's radioactive' and you're all set.

artwork by C. Jason Bilbrey

### KAIJU?

*Kaiju* is a Japanese word meaning "mysterious creature" or "weird beast." It is used to describe the creatures who appear in live-action *tokusatsu* ("special effects") films (such as *Kamen Rider* or *Ultraman*). Western viewers are usually more familiar with the *daikaiju* ("big monsters"), such as *Godzilla* and *Gamera*. While nominally modeled after real-world animals, many *kaiju* (and especially *daikaiju*) are utterly bizarre in appearance and behavior. Usually hundreds of feet high (or long) and weighing tens of thousands of tons, *daikaiju* are immensely strong and powerful, nigh invulnerable (except to each other), and equipped with all sorts of weapons. Fiery breath, laser-beam eyes, spinning buzz saws for hands, blasts of wind, bolts of electricity – *daikaiju* have used all of these attack forms and more. When creating your own *daikaiju* feel free to give it just about any sort of attack you can think of; odds are, someone in Japan has already designed one just like it.

## Part One: It Came from Beneath the Sea

### WHERE DOES THE BEAST COME FROM?

Although radiation might explain *why* your atomic beast is 200 feet long and breathes fire, you still need to decide *what* your beast is. And to do that, you first need to decide *where* the beast comes from. Did it rise up out of the sea? Did it crawl in from the trackless desert? Was it found frozen in Arctic ice? Or did it fall to Earth from the depths of outer space? All of these are valid origins, and selecting one will help you decide what your beast actually is and what it can do.

### SOME SAMPLE PLACES OF ORIGIN

**Desert:** If your beast crawled in from the desert, it is probably some sort of mutated desert dweller. Insects and reptiles are popular, as seen in the films *The Black Scorpion*, *The Giant Gila Monster*, *Tarantula*, and *Them!*. Since even in the United States much of the Southwest has rarely been visited by man, you can even have totally new creatures appear, such as the burrowing monsters featured in *Tremors*. The origins of many desert creatures tend to be tied into atomic bomb testing (or these days, the storage of radioactive or toxic wastes).

**Ocean:** Even today, we know more about the far side of the Moon than we do the ocean bottom, and the deeper we dive, the stranger the life forms we find. Man has long hypothesized the existence of “living fossils” at the bottom of the ocean and real-world discoveries have given some support for this idea. Hollywood loves to throw such things at the audience, and many of the classic atomic monsters from the 50’s were aquatic dinosaurs of one sort or another. *Godzilla* came from the ocean bottom, while *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms* was released from Arctic ice and swam south to New York City. Of course, the one problem with water monsters is how to make them a threat to land dwellers. Most of the time, this is solved by making the creature amphibious (such as with *The Giant Behemoth* and *Reptilicus*), but as the six-armed octopus proved in *It Came From Beneath The Sea*, make anything big enough and it’ll still prove a threat to those who thought themselves safe on dry land.

Ocean monsters tend to have two origins – the bottom of the ocean, or frozen in polar ice. In either case, the testing of bombs (usually atomic bombs) is what sets the creature free on its rampage.

**Outer Space:** The arrival of a creature from outer space is usually announced by the sight of a meteorite arcing through the sky. One earthshaking crater-making explosion later, and a strange alien monstrosity is free to wreak untold

harm on the world. The monster from outer space is probably the GM’s best friend. It can be *anything* he wants, including massive, semi-mobile crystals (*The Monolith Monsters*), a huge mass of protoplasm (*The Blob*), or an ever-growing lizard-like humanoid (*20 Million Miles To Earth*). Better yet, as an alien, the creature doesn’t have to conform to terrestrial eating or breeding habits, and can be a source of constant surprises for the PCs. Fortunately, this alienness also works in the hero’s favor, as there is usually one common Earth substance that is instantly lethal to the visiting extraterrestrial.

**Underground:** The creature from the depths of the earth is a lot like the creature from the depths of the ocean. It is often a living fossil, unchanged in form or function since it was trapped in its subterranean prison millennia ago. Either that, or it has been frozen in some strange form of stasis until man’s (or nature’s) actions free it. Dinosaurs are a favorite candidate for the creature in question, although giant insects and arthropods come a close second. The huge size of the creatures can be explained either through immense life spans (the creature never stops growing), or the interaction of strange radioactive vapors. Earthquakes and volcanoes are often the cause of the creature’s release, although bomb testing also works (with the bombs causing aforementioned earthquake or volcano). Oh, and don’t forget the ever popular mining accident.

## Part Two: Them!

### WHAT IS THE BEAST?

So, you’ve selected the point of origin for your atomic monster. Now you need to narrow it down a bit and figure out exactly *what* it is you’re going to throw at your players. By deciding on what sort of creature you’re going to use, you can then determine a few basic facts – such as how the creature moves, what it eats, and what sort of natural weapons it might have. Deciding what sort of creature it is also helps in picking a method the PCs can use to stop or destroy it.

### CREATURES BY PLACES OF ORIGIN

**Desert:** As stated previously, most creatures from the desert tend to be either arthropods, insects, or reptiles. Scorpions, spiders, and snakes – not to mention immense lizards – are all possibilities. To make matters worse, many desert dwellers are poisonous, possessing either venomous bites or stings. They are also well-protected, with either armored exoskeletons or scales, both of which are more than sufficient to resist any sort of small arms our heroes might muster. Your best bet for building a desert-dwelling atomic monster is to



pick a suitable creature from *The Hero System Bestiary* and apply the appropriate size template. In fact, many of the creatures in the book can be used as is, such as the Giant Insects and the Giant Lizards. You might want to make the Giant Wasps a little bigger, though, as the ants in *Them!* were roughly car-sized (see the Atomic Wasps at the end of the article for more on that). In any case, at the very least up the STR score of your beast. The scorpions in *The Black Scorpion* could overturn trains, as could *The Giant Gila Monster*, while the *Tarantula* could easily kick over cars with a single leg blow.

**Ocean:** The first question when picking an aquatic monster is whether it can come out of the water. If yes, make sure your creature has the *Aquatic* template from *The Hero System Bestiary* (I recommend adding Safe Environment: Extreme Cold as well). If no, you need to decide if your beast can affect people on dry land. A giant fish won't be able to do much, if anything, unless it can catch its victims on a pier, bridge, or a boat. A gigantic octopus or squid, on the other hand, can extend its tentacles onto land to search for additional prey. And as seen in *It Came From Beneath The Sea*, there's nothing stopping you from making your oversized cephalopod big enough to tear down a bridge! The Kraken on page 94 of *The Hero System Bestiary* makes a good starting template for such a monster, just bump it up from Gigantic to Colossal. The Sea Serpents and Whales make good choices for giant fish and sharks, as do many of the aquatic creatures found in the *Asian Bestiaries*. For amphibians, pick something that seems fairly aquatic and go from there. Gigantic crustaceans, frogs, salamanders, and dinosaurs are all good choices.

All water-dwelling creatures need Swimming, and many atomic monsters can swim as fast, or faster, than any submarine or surface vessel. Many also can use the force of their passage to wreck boats in their wake. This might be a Side Effect of their Swimming, or, more likely, a form of Telekinesis with the *Area Of Effect: Trail Advantage* (see *The Ultimate Speedster*). Water monsters are also usually big enough to be able to smash even large ships, so make sure they are – at minimum – Gigantic. Don't be afraid to go beyond the Colossal size scale; Godzilla is 600' long after all, while Colossal technically tops out at a "mere" 420 feet or so. Aquatic beasts also can have fairly unusual attacks – deafening roars or sonic pulses, atomic/fire breath, venomous bites, or even unusual diseases.

**Outer Space:** The fun thing about the atomic monster from space is that it can be most anything. You can pick just about any creature you like from any *HERO System* book of monsters, slap on the *Space* template and you're

all set. The Deadly Ooze found in *The Hero System Bestiary* is a perfect example (and you don't even need the *Space* template to use it). Start it at human size, and shift it up the size scale periodically after it has devoured enough victims. There, you've now sent the Blob after your players. Want something stranger? Use the Monstrous Plants from *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*. Just make them mobile (even just an inch or two of Running helps) and you're all set. In fact, MMM is just full of potential space-born horrors to inflict on your characters. Want a really unpleasant earthworm? Use the Carrion Worm with a few *Size* templates tacked on. Certain Demons make for excellent alien monsters, and the Qliphothic Hound and Hunter are perfect for scenarios combining Weird Science with Things Man Isn't Meant To Know, especially if someone is experimenting with atomic-powered teleporters and the like.

**Underground:** Creatures from under the earth can be most anything, depending on how they got there in the first place. Radiation can mutate otherwise normal creatures such as earthworms, mole crickets, termites, or even mice into monstrous versions hungry for fresh meat. If the creature was trapped millennia ago and has survived in a vast subterranean cavern it could be some sort of land animal – such as an insect, arthropod, or even a dinosaur. For true fun, make the newly released animal a bat, pterosaur, praying mantis, or some other form of flying animal. Imagine the player's surprise when they discover the creature's lair but no sign of the creature at all. No tracks, spoor, *nothing!*

### WHAT DOES IT EAT?

You've picked our creature's point of origin, and then decided what sort of creature it is. Now you need to decide what the creature feeds on. This might seem a strange decision to make (especially since most [if not all] atomic monsters are carnivores), but the creature's food supply can actually be an important plot point. For example, in *Them!* the ants rip several buildings apart in search of sugar, *The Monolith Monsters* wanted silicon, and a number of *kaiju* have "fed" on electrical energy. You can use such diet requirements to allude to the size and nature of your atomic monster early on. Arthropods such as spiders will want to feed on animals large enough to sustain them (usually cattle, but humans will do in a pinch), and might leave desiccated husks behind. Immense water monsters might empty the local waters of fish, while space-borne beings may feed on electrical energy (and grow ever larger as a result), leaving a trail of wrecked transformers and power lines.

Once the PCs know what the creature eats, they might be able to use this knowledge to destroy the monster. To use the previous

examples, the heroes might bait a trap for the spider with a cow (or two), might entice the water monster with poisoned fish, and may be able to destroy the space monster by either feeding it too much electricity or by grounding it out and shrinking it down to a manageable size. Of course, some creatures like to simply eat *everything*.

A short list of items an atomic monster might eat include: Cattle, Energy (atomic, electrical, solar, and so on), Fish, Minerals (such as silicon), People (a popular choice), Radiation (usually atomic, but in these movies you can never tell), and if big enough, entire Whales.

## Part Three: Crush, Crumble, and Stomp

### WEAPONS OF THE BEAST

Once you've decided on the origin of your beast, and what it is, you need to arm it. My suggestion is start with the basics and build from there. For example, most atomic monsters are physically immense, and their sheer size is also their greatest weapon. Each footstep is a micro-earthquake in and of itself, crushing cars and people, and leaving craters in the landscape. Each sweep of the creature's tail topples trees and telephone poles, smashes cars, and shatters buildings. Simply brushing against a building is enough to start it on the way to collapse, and if someone manages to actually *wound* the creature and cause it to recoil in pain (or worse yet, fall over)... well, let's not think about that.

A list of "weapons" for your atomic monster (and how to create them) follows:

**Sheer Size:** As stated, an atomic monster's size is a weapon all in itself. You can simulate this by giving the monster such Advantages as *Area Of Effect (One Hex, Extended)* on its STR to simulate the size of its footsteps, or *Area Of Effect (Cone)* on its tail. Or, you may want to use the *Trail* version of *Area Of Effect* (seen in *The Ultimate Speedster*), to simulate the creature's overall destructive passage. Even if you don't use these ideas, don't forget to apply the creature's great weight to surfaces it stands on or leans against (see *The Ultimate Brick*). With regular STR numbers of 100 or greater, even 50 points of Casual STR should be enough to crack walls, wreck cars, and crater roads.

**Bite/Teeth/Claws:** A big monster is going to have a big bite, and atomic monsters are more than capable of ripping up buildings, ships, trains, and military armor with their HKA teeth and claws. You might want to be nice to your PCs and give the claw attacks *Reduced Penetration*, but an atomic monster's bite should suffer no such limitations. Worse yet, bite (and claw) attacks often get the *Area Of Effect* Advantage, since a beast 200 or more feet in

length is going to have a maw to match. To represent the sheer crushing power of a monster's bite, don't forget to include the *Armor Piercing Advantage*, since most atomic beasts can tear through armor plate like it was tissue paper.

**Breath Weapon:** A common staple of *kaiju*, breath weapons allow an atomic monster to devastate the landscape on a vast scale. They can be used to incinerate buildings, shoot down aircraft, and destroy whole sections of town. Pure atomic fire is a natural choice, although some monsters breathe regular everyday fire, and a few can project blasts of light, ice, or other elemental effects. In any case, it is almost a given the beast's breath weapon will be built around an RKA. At barest minimum, it should have the *Area Of Effect (One Hex)* Advantage, but you can easily make any such attack *Area Of Effect (Radius)* or even *Explosion*. Certain laser-like effects might be *Area Of Effect (Line)*. Other Advantages you might want to consider include *Increased Knockback*, *Increased STUN Multiple*, and *No Range Modifier*.

**Disease:** A beast millions of years old, who has been entombed in ice for millennia, might just be infected with an equally old virus. It can be transmitted through the creature's bite (usually if the beast is fairly small), or might be spread through contact with the monster's blood. Atomic monsters created through serums and the like might have strange new diseases as well. And if the idea of a monster that makes people sick isn't exciting enough for you, simply make it venomous, with a poisonous bite or sting! See *The Hero System Bestiary* for more on animal diseases and venom.

**High Speed Flight:** A number of giant atomic monsters can fly, and almost all of them at speeds equal to (or better than) many jet fighters. Of course, when a creature that big passes another flying object, the turbulence is usually sufficient to send it spinning from the sky. You might want to make this a Side Effect of the creature's Flight, but since it doesn't really inhibit the creature (it's not like it cares about what happens to the people in the planes after all), you might want to use the *Area Of Effect: Trail* Advantage instead. Make the attack an Energy Blast with Damage Classes equal to the creature's Active Points of Flight. So if the creature has 20" of Flight, that's 40 Active Points, or 8d6 of Energy Blast. 30" of Flight is 60 Active Points (*i.e.* 12d6) and so on. Toss in *Double Knockback* for an destructive bonus.

**Radiation:** As you might expect, atomic monsters tend to have atomic side effects. If the result of atomic bomb tests, the beast might be radioactive itself, and cause illness to anyone who comes near it. Worse yet, the creature's blood is also radioactive, and will contaminate

the area if spilled! Even worse are those creatures with “atomic breath.” Able to exhale goutts of radioactive energy (such as superheated plasma), a beast such as this can easily incinerate squads of military riflemen, melt tanks, and burn down whole sections of town. See the *UNTIL Superpowers Database*, pages 170-173 for more on radiation-based powers.

**Sonic Cry:** Many animals, especially birds, have a piercing shriek or call. Now imagine this sort of call uttered by a creature a hundred feet (or more) tall! Such a cry is often sufficient to shatter windows (and ear drums), and will easily deafen anyone not properly protected. Such a cry is usually *Area Of Effect: Cone* and *No Range*, centered on the beast itself. You might want to link a Flash Attack versus Hearing to the base Energy Blast, or make it a Multiple Power Attack. A sharply piercing cry might even be *Armor Piercing*. Some creatures can create resonating calls that will slowly shake objects to pieces. You can simulate this with *Continuous* and *Penetrating*.

**Webs:** An atomic spider (or spider-like being) is sure to have webs. This being Hollywood, said webbing is just as likely to be projected from the mouth as from spinnerets. It also tends to appear as a spray of strands, as opposed to the single thread a real spider makes. You can easily adapt the Webs Multipower from the *HERO System Bestiary* Giant Webspinning Spider character sheet to for your own monstrous atomic spider – just increase the Area Of Effect, Charges, and DEF and BODY of each Entangle slot to the desired levels.

**Wing Buffet:** Any animal that can fly at hundreds of miles an hour must have powerful wings. Such atomic monsters are often able to generating virtual windstorms by flapping their wings. *Area Of Effect: Cone* Telekinesis creates this effect nicely, usually with such Limitations as *No Range*, *Affects Whole Object*, and *Only To Push Objects Away (-1)*. Anything that can't be pushed away (such as a building) should take the TK STR damage (thus allowing the wing buffet windstorm to push over trees and tear the roofs off of buildings).

**Other:** It's possible you might develop a weapon for your atomic monster that's not covered on this list. If so, just make sure the beast's attacks are powerful enough to threaten military vehicles and can affect a wide area. Both are hallmarks of most any atomic monster.

## Part Four: Destroy All Monsters

### HOW TO DESTROY THE BEAST

At some point the Player Characters are going to attempt to destroy your atomic monster. How they do so depends on the nature of the

beast, the dictates of the plot, how clever the PCs are, and what you're willing to let them get away with. In most cases, the PCs should be allowed to destroy the monster once and for all, usually at the end of the scenario after everything else has failed. Of course, you can also choose to simply have the PCs drive the beast off for a time, and eventually bring the monster back for the sequel. But, regardless of how powerful the beast is, it should either have an exploitable weakness or a vulnerability to *something* the PCs can discover and take advantage of.

Some ways to destroy your beast are as follows:

**Conventional Weapons:** If your beast is small enough (such as the ants in *Them!* or the spiders in *Eight-Legged Freaks*), then the PCs might be able to kill it with small arms. If this is the case, then you need to make sure there are enough beasts to present a threat to the PCs. Initially, there were only dozens of ants in *Them!*, and for a while only a few people had anything better than pistols with which to fight them. However, when the army arrived, with sub-machines guns and flame-throwers, the ants numbered in the hundreds. In other cases, the monster may be vulnerable to military-grade weapons (such as tanks and artillery), but is in the middle of an inhabited area, so the PCs need to drive it out into the open, where it can be dispatched without risking the lives of hundreds of innocent citizens. Of course, don't forget the fact that no matter how vulnerable your monster is to conventional weapons, if the PCs don't have any on hand, they're pretty much helpless. Thus, the plot might not be one of defeating the monster, but simply getting away from it long enough to get the word out, and then staying alive long enough for the Army (and/or) Air Force to arrive.

**Fire:** Fire is the all-purpose answer to many a monster problem. It put an end to the *Beast From 20,000 Fathoms*, and helped drive off the octopus from *It Came From Beneath the Sea*. The trick is getting the fire to the target and then keeping it there. Player Characters may have access to military flame-throwers, or might be forced to build their own. Or, they may simply lure the creature(s) into an area stocked with flammable materials and then let the monster have it. Fire is also useful for getting rid of creatures who regenerate, breed by budding, are diseased, and/or infected.

**Napalm:** A variant of the fire solution, napalm is jellied gasoline. Usually found only in the hands of the military, a strike force of F-86 fighters (led by a very young Clint Eastwood) dropped napalm on the giant spider star of *Tarantula*. The PCs might be able to call in the Air Force as well, or may be able to make it themselves. In either case, once deployed it

should be effective against most monsters.

**Electricity:** Electricity can either create, feed, or kill an atomic monster. Obviously, most PCs will prefer the last option. When it comes time to destroy the monster, the PCs will probably try to lure it into high-tension power lines, or an electrified net or cage. Another option is to run the electrical charge through water, especially if the creature is amphibious.

**Radiation:** Usually radiation creates an atomic monster, it doesn't destroy it. Many atomic monsters live up to their moniker, and are radioactive themselves. Dumping radiation on them normally only makes them A) stronger, B) bigger, C) creates more of them, or D) all of the above. However, sometimes a scientist is able to develop a radioactive isotope of some sort which can be used to eliminate a monstrous threat. The only problem is getting close enough to inject it into the monster. This is where the PCs come in.

**Sonics:** While a monster's sonic cries can be used to flatten buildings and wreck vehicles, humans can use various sounds to attract or drive off an atomic creature. Sometimes, the creature responds to a certain frequency, and can be lured into a trap and destroyed. In other cases, the sound itself is dangerous, and can be used to dispatch the monster directly.

**Weird Science:** When all else fails, the GM can allow the PCs to discover and develop some sort of new invention and use that to destroy the threat. For example, Gojira was killed in his movie debut by the "oxygen destroyer," which broke down the oxygen in seawater and reduced fish (and other animals) to skeletons. How does this work exactly? It doesn't matter, just as long as one of the PCs is allowed to sacrifice himself heroically so the other PCs, the city, and the world, can be saved. Another example is the maser tank, star of innumerable *kaiju* movies. Consisting of a microwave dish on a tank chassis, it looks cool in action, but never seems to *do* anything to its target. Other options include tailored poisons, microwave emitters, intense radio pulses, infrared beams, and so on. Nothing is too weird or too impossible for Weird Science. And and remember lesson number one for atomic monsters: Radiation Solves Everything!

## Part Five: The Creature That Ate Sheboygan

### ATOMIC MONSTER RESOURCES

#### Movies

*20 Millions Miles to Earth*  
*Beast From 20,000 Fathoms*  
*Beginning of the End*  
*The Black Scorpion*  
*The Blob* (1958)  
*The Blob* (1988)  
*The Deadly Mantis*  
*Deep Rising*  
*Earth Versus the Spider*  
*Eight Legged Freaks*  
*Gamera: The Guardian of the Universe*  
*Gamera 2: Assault of the Legion*  
*Gamera 3: The Awakening of Iris*  
*The Giant Behemoth*  
*The Giant Gila Monster*  
*The Giant Monster Gamera* (and sequels)  
*Gojira* (1954 Japanese version)  
*Godzilla, King of the Monsters* (1956 American version)  
*Godzilla* (multiple sequels)  
*Gorgo*  
*The Host*  
*It Came from Beneath the Sea*  
*The Killer Shrews*  
*King Kong* (1933)  
*King Kong* (2005)  
*Night of the Lepus*  
*Reptillicus*  
*Tarantula*  
*The Monolith Monsters*  
*The Thing*  
*The Thing from Another World*  
*Them!*  
*Tremors* (and sequels)

#### Other

Steve Jackson Games. *GURPS Atomic Horror*  
 Simulation Publications Inc. *The Creature That Ate Sheboygan*  
 Epyx. *Crush, Crumble, and Chomp*  
 Epyx. *The Movie Monster Game*  
 Bally Midway. *Rampage*

Up from the depths  
 Thirty stories high  
 Breathing fire  
 His head in the sky!  
 Godzilla!  
 Godzilla!  
 Godzilla!

Theme to *The Godzilla Power Hour*

## Part Six: "I Saw It! It's Alive! It's Huge!"

### Atomic Wasps

**Ecology:** The result of nuclear weapons testing in the deserts of New Mexico, atomic wasps are mutated versions of North American paper wasps. Like their smaller brethren, they try to feed on nectar, but as the wasps grow larger, they are forced to forage for more accessible sources of sugar – such as watermelons and other vine-grown crops, bags of raw sugar, containers of soda syrup, and vats of honey. Even worse, the wasps need prey of sufficient size to support their young, and since there are few insects capable of supporting a five foot long atomic wasp larva, the wasps have started preying on dogs, sheep, horses, and cattle. It's only a matter of time before people are added to the list....

Atomic wasps live in huge nests made of vegetable and wood pulp formed into thick sheets of "paper." As the wasps are now roughly ten to fifteen feet long, they've been forced to make their nests in large caves, mines, and spacious abandoned buildings (such as old warehouses and vehicle hangers). A nest can contain upwards of 700 or more wasps, and will have sentinels outside the nest, as well as guards near any entrance.

**Personality/Motivation:** Normal animal motivations. Atomic wasps are known to be aggressive and territorial, and will attack anyone or anything they perceive to be disturbing the nest, regardless of the intruder's intent.

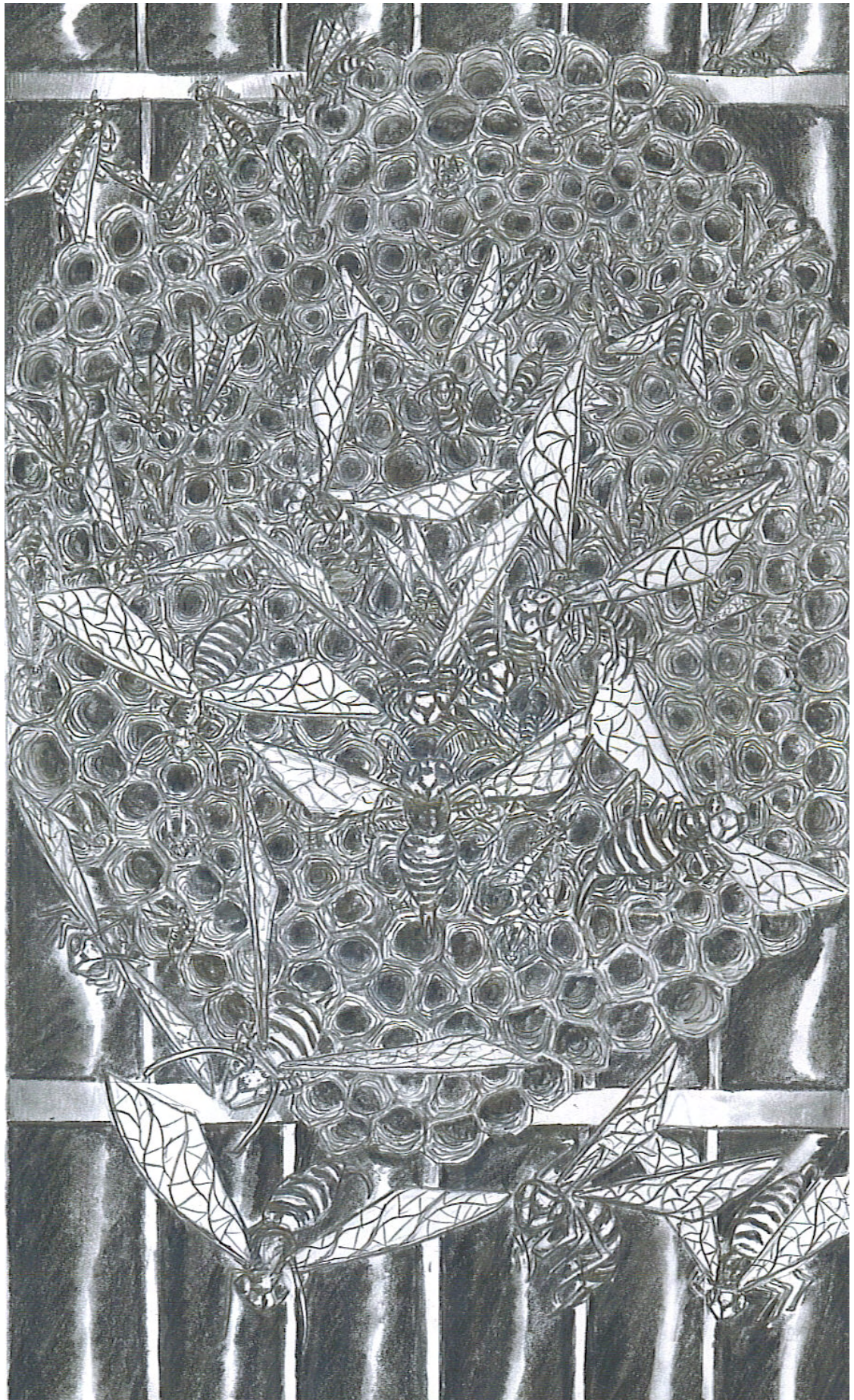
**Powers/Tactics:** Atomic wasps are aggressive combatants, who will attempt to swarm an attacker and bury him under sheer weight of numbers. Small foes (such as humans) will be Grabbed by the mandibles and then stung, often repeatedly. A larger target, such as an elephant (for example), will have to deal with two or three wasps landing on and clinging to its body, with the wasps using their stings until the foe drops. Wasps whose stings have run dry will still grapple, bite, and sting foes. Some will drag the dead away (either attackers or defenders), while others will return to the nest to seek reinforcements.

**Campaign Use:** The atomic wasps are the perfect low-end foes for a group of PCs to deal with in an Atomic Monster scenario. Although any one wasp is more than a match for the average human, a small group of PCs, armed with reasonably modern firearms (such as hunting rifles and shotguns), should be able to dispose of even a small group of wasps – provided the PCs aren't caught out in the open. The trick is dealing with the hundreds and hundreds of wasps the nest will contain, as well as finding the nest in the first place. In fact, the main focus of the plot might be simply *finding* the nest; destroying it can probably be left to the army and a suitable application of napalm.

**Appearance:** An atomic wasp is roughly ten to fifteen feet of mutated yellowjacket or hornet. They have brightly patterned bodies of black and yellow, two pairs of wings, and large stingers. The largest wasps (such as the queens) will be nearly twenty feet in length. Atomic wasps, due to their origin, *might* register as mildly radioactive on a Geiger Counter, but only at very close range.



Atomic Wasps





## DIGITAL HERO #47

### Atomic Wasps

Val	Cha	Cost	Roll	Notes
30	STR	20	15-	Lift 1600 kg; 6d6 [3]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5(3)
18	CON	16	13-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
4	INT	-6	10-	PER Roll: 10-/14-
3	EGO	-14	10-	ECV: 1
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
4	COM	-3	10-	
6	PD	0		Total: 8 PD (2 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 8 ED (2 rED)
3	SPD	5		Phases: 4, 8, 12
10	REC	0		
36	END	0		
36	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristic Cost: 49**

Movement:	Running:	4"/8"
	Leaping:	1"/2"
	Swimming:	2"/4"
	Flight:	16"/32"

Cost	Powers	END
10	<i>Mandibles:</i> HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR)	1
10	<i>Sting:</i> HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR)	1
65	<i>Venom:</i> Drain CON 4d6, Personal Immunity (+¼), Delayed Return Rate (5 per Hour, +1), NND (Appropriate LS [Immunity], +1); Extra Time (Begins 1 Minute after Victim is Bitten, -1½), 4 Charges (-1), HKA Must Do BODY (-½), Gradual Effect (4 Minutes, 1d6/1 Minute, -½), Linked (RKA, -½) <b>plus</b> RKA 4d6, Personal Immunity (+¼), NND (+1), Does BODY (+1); Extra Time (1 Minute, -1½), 4 Charges (-1), No Range (-½), HKA Must Do BODY (-½), Gradual Effect (1d6/1 Minute; -½)	[4]
6	<i>Exoskeleton:</i> Armor (2 PD/2 ED)	0
21	<i>Wings:</i> Flight 16"; Restrainable (-½)	3
8	<i>Insect Senses:</i> +4 PER with Smell/Taste Group	0
-4	<i>Slow:</i> Running -2"	
8	<i>Insect Feet:</i> Clinging (Normal STR); Cannot Resist Knockback (-¼)	0
6	<i>Six Legs and Two Pairs of Wings:</i> Extra Limbs (10), Inherent (+¼)	0

### Skills

4	+2 OCV with Sting
3	Climbing 12-
3	Tactics 10-

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 140**

**Total Cost: 189**

### 75+ Disadvantages

20	Physical Limitation: Instinctive Intelligence (All the Time, Greatly Impairing)
5	Physical Limitation: Large (4m, -2 DCV, +2 to PER Rolls to Perceive) (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
5	Physical Limitation: Reduced Leap, Can Only Leap 1" (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
15	Physical Limitation: Very Limited Manipulation (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
69	Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 189**

## Giant Sea Scorpion

*Pterygotus Giganticus*

**Ecology:** A relic of the Devonian age, *Pterygotus Giganticus* is a eurypterid (sea scorpion) of immense size, dwarfing its closest relatives by a factor of 30. It is unknown how or why *P. Giganticus* grows so large, although the most popular theory states the animal has a very slow metabolism, allowing it to live for decades (or centuries) – and it apparently never stops growing (if you decide this theory is true, add Life Support versus Aging to the creature’s list of Powers).

Found only at the bottom of the ocean, in the darkest abyssal reaches, *P. Giganticus* is pure apex predator, feeding on everything else in the ocean. It will take both live prey (such as immense deep water sharks, colossal and giant squid, and smaller *P. Giganticus*) as well as carrion, and apparently seeks out ‘whale falls’ in order to consume the entire corpse, down to the bones.

Totally unknown to science until recently, *P. Giganticus* was first sighted off of the Alaskan coast, where off-shore oil drilling apparently disturbed its feeding habits. Enraged and wounded (it seems the drill actually penetrated the animal’s shell) *P. Giganticus* wrecked the oil platform and then started attacking (and sinking) fishing boats working in the cold waters, consuming the catches secured in the hold. Recent reports have it moving south, down the coast of Canada and into warmer waters....

**Personality/Motivation:** Normal animal motivations. Like any gigantic atomic monster, *P. Giganticus* often seems to go out of its way to attack and wreck surface targets, although in this case, you can have the sea scorpion restrict itself to fishing ships, factory ships, and any place where it will find food.

**Powers/Tactics:** *P. Giganticus* will usually try to Grab its foe with one pincher and then rend it into bite-sized chunks with the other, passing the food to the mouth to be devoured. If threatened, it will usually forego the Grab, and simply snap at its attacker (its pinchers [a.k.a. chelae] can affect a 3” line of hexes.) If it comes up onto land, the sheer size of the giant arthropod is sufficient to cause massive destruction, as does its STR damage in a 6” wide line wherever it goes. This will allow *P. Giganticus* to topple trees and telephone poles, flatten cars, and collapse buildings, leaving a virtual wake of destruction behind it.

Although mostly immune to most forms of attack, *P. Giganticus* can be hurt, and will quickly retreat back into the water if injured or if it encounters fierce resistance. Once in the water, *P. Giganticus* will usually sink out of sight and

descend to great depths in order to recuperate (healing roughly two BODY every three days).

**Campaign Use:** *Pterygotus* is a real animal, an extinct form of sea scorpion that grew to be about 7 feet in length. *Pterygotus Giganticus* is virtually identical, except it grows to be around 200 feet in length. You can use *P. Giganticus* in any number of atomic monster scenarios, blaming its appearance on a drilling operation (mentioned above), atomic testing in the Pacific, bomb tests in the Arctic, or a hidden undersea cave filled with living fossils. It should be tough enough to resist most anything the PCs (and the military) can throw at it, until someone (*i.e.* a PC) discovers its Vulnerability to sound and sonic attacks and modifies the ship’s sonar into a weapon capable of, if not killing *P. Giganticus*, at least driving it away for the inevitable sequel.

If you feel *P. Giganticus* isn’t tough enough for your game, simply up its PD and ED, and increase its Damage Reduction to 75%. As it’s supposed to be a 200 foot long terror from the deeps, you shouldn’t reduce its power level any.

**Appearance:** *Pterygotus Giganticus* has the classic eurypterid body shape, stretched out to a full 200 feet in length. It has a broad, flat body covered in heavily armored plates, and ending in a shrimp-like tail. The eyes are large and give it an wide range of vision. It has twelve limbs: two chelae (pinchers), eight walking legs, and two swimming paddles. It’s dark in color, with a brownish-bronze shell.



Giant Sea Scorpion

**Giant Sea Scorpion**

Val	Cha	Cost	Roll	Notes
70	STR	60	23-	400 tons; 14d6 HTH [7]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5(0)
45	CON	70	18-	
45	BODY	70	18-	
4	INT	-6	10-	PER Roll: 10-
5	EGO	-10	10-	ECV: 2
50	PRE	40	19-	PRE Attack: 10d6
4	COM	-3	10-	
15	PD	1		Total: 27 PD (12 rPD)
15	ED	6		Total: 27 ED (12 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
23	REC	0		
90	END	0		
103	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristic Cost: 246**

**Movement:** Running: 18"/36"  
 Leaping: 0"/0"  
 Swimming: 30"/60"

Cost	Powers	END
70	<i>Rending Pinchers:</i> HKA 2½d6 (5d6+1 with STR), Area Of Effect (2" Radius; Actually a 3" Line Attack, Not the Full Radius, +¾)	7
15	<i>Grasping Pinchers:</i> +20 STR, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Only to Grab (-1)	0
34	<i>Reach:</i> Stretching 8", Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Always Direct (-¼), No Noncombat Stretching (-¼), No Velocity Damage (-¼)	0
70	<i>Tail Dragging:</i> Area Of Effect (Trail: Area is Equal to the Width of the Sea Scorpion [6" Wide], +1) for 70 STR	7
45	<i>Armored Shell/Exoskeleton:</i> Armor (12 PD/12 ED), Hardened (+¼)	0
60	<i>Too Big To Hurt:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%	0
60	<i>Too Primitive to Affect Mentally:</i> Mental Damage Reduction, 75%	0
50	<i>Heavy:</i> Knockback Resistance -25"	0
3	<i>Dwells in the Abyss:</i> LS (Safe in High Pressure and Intense Cold)	0
5	<i>Gills:</i> LS (Breathe Underwater)	0
24	<i>Sea Scorpion Walking Legs:</i> Running +12" (18" Total)	2
28	<i>Sea Scorpion Swimming Paddles:</i> Swimming +28" (30" Total)	3
38	<i>Sense Vibrations:</i> Detect Physical Vibrations 13- (Touch Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Range, Targeting	0
2	<i>Compound Eyes:</i> 240° Normal Sight	0

18	<i>Sensitive To Water Currents And Pressure:</i> Spatial Awareness (Touch Group), Increased Arc of Perception (360°); Only In Water (-½)	0
6	<i>Multiple Walking Legs, Swimming Paddles, Chelae, and Tail:</i> Extra Limbs (10), Inherent (+¼)	0

**Talents**

9	Ambidexterity (Full)
3	<i>Amphibious:</i> Aquatic Movement

**Skills**

15	+3 with Hand-to-Hand Combat
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**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 555**

**Total Cost: 801**

**75+ Disadvantages**

15	Physical Limitation: Gargantuan (60 meters long, weighs 6 million kg; -10 DCV, +10 PER) (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
20	Physical Limitation: Instinctive Intelligence (All the Time, Greatly Impairing)
5	Physical Limitation: Cannot Leap (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
15	Physical Limitation: Very Limited Manipulation (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
10	Vulnerability: 2x STUN from Sonics (Uncommon)
10	Vulnerability: 2x BODY from Sonics (Uncommon)
651	Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 801**



## Radioactive Sentient Slime Mold (From Space)

**Ecology:** The first warning man had of the arrival of the Radioactive Sentient Slime Mold (from space) was the bright streak of a meteor across the night sky. Of course, meteors fall all the time, and this one vanished far into the distance, to land somewhere isolated and alone, where there was no one to witness its actual landing site – no one currently alive anyway.

After the meteor containing the tiny mass of protoplasm cooled and cracked open, the Slime Mold crawled out and did what it did best – started eating. Nothing was too base for it to devour, and it quickly consumed dead leaves, fallen trees, the corpse of a deer, and numerous insects, reptiles, and small mammals unable to escape its grasp. As it grew, so did its appetite. No longer content to simply eat forest detritus and carrion, it became a more active predator, catching deer on the run, a bear, and if later reports are true, several hunters who'd set up camp for the night.

Growing as it eats, the Slime Mold has also gained intelligence, its communal mind becoming more self-aware all the time. Now it is intelligent enough to realize that if it wishes to survive, it will need to rid the planet of the dominant life-forms who are already there: humans.

**Personality/Motivation:** Normal animal motivations. The Sentient Slime Mold wishes to protect itself from harm by removing any and all possible threats to its existence – which includes all of humanity. However, it's smart enough to pick its battles carefully, and tends to avoid confrontations, sending in enslaved humans to do its work for it.

**Powers/Tactics:** Normally, the Sentient Slime Mold prefers to work through its slaves, sending them out to gather food or fight off enemies. However, it's smart enough to realize some threats are too big for its slaves, and need to be handled personally. If threatened in such a manner, the Slime Mold's first response is to form a huge pseudopod and simply smash its attacker into submission and then Engulf it. If the target is too big to smash, then a cloud (or two) of Lethal Fruiting Bodies will be used to weaken it, followed by a pseudopod bash and then an Engulf (which will usually result in the foe being devoured). On top of all of this, the Slime Mold is radioactive, and continuously emits sufficient rads to kill anything that strays too close to the Mold.

Virtually immune to pain and harm, it is very difficult to drive the Slime Mold off, but it can be done. If injured, the Mold will retreat to some isolated area (like the bottom of a lake) and

spend time recuperating and feeding before returning.

**Campaign Use:** The Radioactive Sentient Slime Mold From Space is meant to be an unstoppable atomic horror of the world-threatening sort. It is very hard to hurt, can't be reasoned with, can't be approached without protective gear, and has no need for humans beyond as slaves. The only thing the PCs can do is destroy it. The question is "how?" Well, that's up to you. The Slime Mold hasn't been given any Susceptibilities or Vulnerabilities in order to allow you, the GM, to come up with your own way to dispatch it. Suggestions include directed microwaves (time to rewire that radar dish), a full napalm strike, white phosphorous, large amounts of electricity (perhaps by using a helicopter to drop a power line on the Slime Mold?), or something as strange as clouds of salt crystals.

The Slime Mold should be tough enough for any game; however, if you need it to be even stronger, up the PD and ED, increase the Energy Damage Reduction to 75%, increase the Healing to 5 BODY, and decrease the interval to 1 Minute. You may also want to consider Linking some sort of Healing BODY power to an HKA, defined as the Slime Mold absorbing the mass of things it devours to repair physical damage.

**Appearance:** The Sentient Slime Mold is just that – a slime mold roughly 100 feet in diameter. It is a bubbly mass of protoplasm shot through with veins of various colors. Assorted fruiting bodies, which appear as spherical masses atop thin stalks, litter the top of the mold. It moves slowly, but can form massive pseudopods with frightening speed.



Radioactive Sentient Slime Mold (From Space)



## DIGITAL HERO #47

### Radioactive Sentient Slime Mold (From Space)

Val	Cha	Cost	Roll	Notes
60	STR	50	21-	100 tons; 12d6 HTH [6]
10	DEX	0	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3(0)
50	CON	80	19-	
27	BODY	34	14-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll: 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
30	PRE	20	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
2	COM	-4	9-	
18	PD	6		Total: 18 PD (0 rPD)
18	ED	8		Total: 18 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	10		Phases: 4, 8, 12
22	REC	0		
100	END	0		
85	STUN	3		

**Total Characteristic Cost: 237**

**Movement:** Running: 4"/8"  
Leaping: 0"/0"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

**Cost Powers** **END**

30	<i>Cosmic Radiation Field:</i> RKA ½d6, Side Effects (Automatically, Only Affects Nearby Environment, +0), Damage Shield (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Persistent (+½), NND (Life Support [High Radiation], +1), Does BODY (+1), Continuous (+1), Area Of Effect (12" Radius, +1¼); Only Works on Living Beings (-½), Always On (-½), No Knockback (-¼)	0
30	<i>Engulf:</i> Entangle 7d6, 7 DEF (Stops Sight and Hearing Groups); Feedback (-1), Lockout (Only One Entangle in Use at a Time, -½), No Range (-½)	9
7	<i>Pseudopod Bash:</i> HA +2d6 (14d6 with STR); HA (-½)	1
95	<i>Acidic Secretions:</i> HKA 3d6, Penetrating (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Persistent (+½), Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (Offensive, +¾); Always On (-½), No STR Bonus (-½)	0
117	<i>Lethal Fruiting Bodies:</i> RKA 3d6, 32 Charges (+¼), NND (LS [Self-Contained Breathing], +1), Does BODY (+1); Limited Range (10", -¼) [32]	
93	<i>Slave Fruiting Bodies:</i> Major Transform 5d6 (Humans into Slime Mold's Slaves, Heals at Normal Rate for Healing BODY), Works Against EGO, not BODY (+¼), 32 Charges (+¼), Based On EGO Combat Value (+1); Limited Target (Humans, -½), Normal Range (-¼), Limited Range (10", -¼)	[32]

10	<i>Slime Mold Body:</i> No Hit Locations	0
60	<i>Semisolid Body:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%	0
30	<i>Semisolid Body:</i> Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%	0
60	<i>Alien Mind:</i> Mental Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%	0
24	<i>Heavy:</i> Knockback Resistance -12"	0
-4	<i>Slow:</i> Running -2" (4" Total)	1
10	<i>Semifluid Body:</i> Clinging	0
38	<i>Sense Vibrations:</i> Detect Physical Vibrations (Touch Group) 16- (Unusual Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Range, Targeting Sense	0
18	<i>Sense Heat:</i> Detect Heat (Touch Group) 16- (Unusual Group), Discriminatory, Range	0
24	<i>Semifluid Body:</i> Desolidification (Affected by Any Attack), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Does Not Protect Against Damage (-1), Cannot Pass Through Solid Objects (-½)	0
18	<i>Slime Mold Regrowth:</i> Healing 3 BODY, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Persistent (+½); Extra Time (5 Minutes, -1¾), Self Only (-½)	0
36	<i>Slime Mold Body:</i> Life Support (Eat Once per Week, Immunity to All Terrestrial Diseases, Biowarfare Agents, Poisons, and Chemical Warfare Agents, Safe in High Radiation, Self-Contained Breathing, Does Not Sleep)	0
48	<i>Mental Link to Enslaved Humans:</i> Mind Link, Specific Group of Minds (Those Affected by Slave Fruiting Bodies), No LOS Needed, Number of Minds (x128), Psychic Bond; Does Not Provide Mental Awareness (-¼)	0
34	<i>Pseudopod Reach:</i> Stretching 8", Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Always Direct (-¼), No Noncombat Stretching (-¼), No Velocity Damage (-¼)	0

#### Skills

10	+2 with HTH Combat
2	+1 with Grab
9	Stealth 14-

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 799**

**Total Cost: 1036**

#### 75+ Disadvantages

5	Distinctive Features: Radioactive, Registers on Geiger Counters (Not Concealable, Unusual Senses)
20	Physical Limitation: Blind (All the Time, Greatly Impairing)
5	Physical Limitation: Cannot Leap (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)

- 20 Physical Limitation: Deaf (All the Time, Greatly Impairing)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Gigantic (Roughly 30 meters in Diameter, -8 DCV, +8 PER) (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Very Limited Manipulation (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
- 881 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 1036**



# The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

 by Curtis Gibson

Welcome back to the third collection of Talents for your game. This time around there isn't much in the way of combat and spell enhancement Talents, but there are some other interesting things here. Combat skill levels are a staple of the game, but with the right Limitations, Advantages, and special effects they can be used to create really unusual effects such as someone who seems to Abort to a Dodge right after they have launched an attack.

## General Talents

### ABSORB SPELL

The person with this Talent has the ability to siphon just a bit of the magic from spells that target him. When any offensive spell is cast at him (no matter the defense type), he gains some spell energy back for using his own spells. The default build for this Talent assumes an Endurance Reserve, however the absorbed points could go into Charges or normal END.

**Absorb Spell Cost:** 6 Character Points (bought as Absorption 2d6 from Magic into Endurance Reserve) (10 Active Points); Only One Attack per Phase (-1/2), Must be Aware of Attack (-1/4)

### ANTIMAGIC FURY

There are legends of Berserkers who, once in the midst of their fury are nearly immune to magic. This Talent gives a taste of that immunity. When the character with this Talent uses his Berserk Fury, his inner strength is brought to the fore and he shrugs off many magical affects. He gains 10 points of Armor that applies to any spell.

**Antimagic Fury Cost:** 10 Character Points (bought as Armor (10 ED) (15 Active Points); Linked to Berserk Fury (-1/2))

### ASSASSIN'S STRIKE

The assassin is trained to be able to kill with a single strike. This Talent represents that ability. When attacking from surprise out of combat if the character deals even one BODY roll 2d6 and add it to the BODY damage total. The amount of STUN from this added damage is only 1 per BODY rolled.

**Assassin's Strike Cost:** 13 Character Points (bought as HKA +2d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2) (45 Active Points); Only with Surprise Out of Combat (-1), Only when Primary Attack Does BODY (-1/2), -2 Decreased STUN Multiplier (-1/2), No STR Bonus (-1/2))

### BATTLETRANCE

The character can take a moment of concentration to focus himself for combat. While in his battletrance he gains 10 STR, 3 DEX, 5 CON and 1 SPD. This costs 3 END per Phase (at the newly enhanced SPD). The Characteristic increases remain as long as the character pays Endurance. Normally, because of the SPD change, a Turn's worth of Phases of this ability is paid for at once, or whatever portion of a Turn is left at the time of the activation of the ability.

**Battletrance Cost:** 19 Character Points (bought as Succor 3d6+1, STR, DEX, CON, SPD simultaneously (+1) (34 Active Points); Self Only (-1/2), Extra Time (Full Phase to Activate, -1/4))

### BEAUTIFUL AND KNOWS IT

The character is beautiful and knows it. When using this ability the character does some obvious thing to draw attention to his or her appearance – a male may pose showing off his physique, and a woman may smile brightly and flip her hair – but whatever the gesture is, it doesn't take any more time than a normal PRE attack. When using this ability, the character gets an additional 4d6 of PRE Attack, but the attack cannot be for fear, only to distract opposition, and cause them to lose portions of their Phase, in awe of the characters beauty. Those not attracted to the character still hesitate, but out of annoyance or jealousy.

**Beautiful and Knows It Cost:** 11 Character Points (bought as +20 PRE (20 Active Points); Attack Only (-1/2), Gestures (-1/4))

### COUNTERSPELL RIPOSTE

When a character with this Talent successfully dispels an incoming spell with a readied (or aborted to) Dispel, he can immediately cast any 1/2 Phase or faster spell he has the ability to cast. Normally this is an attack spell at the mage whom he just countered.

The spell costs its normal spell cost (charges, END, what have you), and this ability costs 6 additional personal Endurance. The caster has to take a moment to restore his inner balance to be able to Riposte again.

**Counterspell Riposte Cost:** 15 Character Points (bought as Naked Advantage Trigger (Zero Phase Activation, Zero Phase Reset, +1/2) for up to 60 Active Points (30 Active Points); Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END, -1/2), Gestures (-1/4), Incantations (-1/4))

## ALTERNATE SPEED SHIFTING IDEAS

Many players and GMs don't care for changing speeds mid turn. The author is one of them. The house rule we use for abilities such as things as Battletrance – the character pays a turn's worth of end at once, and the ability activates at the start of the next turn.

**LONG TERM**

Both the Deep Rester and the Incredible Endurance talents utilize the optional Long Term End rules, located on page 425 of the *HERO System Fifth Edition Revised* rulebook.

**USING RULES TO SEEM TO BREAK THE RULES**

Having a Lieutenant that “aborts to dodge” in the same Segment that he threw an attack is going to surprise your players... and maybe draw cries of outrage.

It is also a great way to showcase the HERO System’s flexibility, to use a power to do something that seems impossible to do on the surface.

**DEEP BREATH**

The character with this Talent can spend a little extra concentration and recover a little faster than others. When taking an active recovery he can choose to let his DCV drop to 0, and gain an extra 10 REC. This ability can never be used during the Post-12 Recovery.

**Deep Breath Cost:** 9 Character Points (bought as +10 REC (20 Active Points); Not with Post-12 Recoveries (Only when Taking an Active Recovery, -1), Concentration (Drops from ½ DCV to 0) (-¼))

**DEEP RESTER**

The character with this Talent recovers from heavy exertion much quicker than others. When he rests for the requisite 5 hours for a long term recovery, he gains an extra 10 Long Term Endurance.

**Deep Rester Cost:** 7 Character Points (bought as +10 REC (20 Active Points); Only for Recovering END Lost to Long Term END (-2))

**DODGING ATTACK**

The character has trained to be very defensive when he attacks. He gains a +3 DCV Bonus if he takes a full Phase to attack.

**Dodging Attack Cost:** 10 Character Points (bought as +3 DCV (15 Active Points); Extra Time (½ Phase, -¼), Only with an Attack (-¼))

**DEFENSIVE FOCUS**

The character with this Talent has a strong concentration and can choose one opponent that he spends extra concentration on. He gains +2 DCV and Combat Luck against the chosen opponent. The character can choose a different opponent on each of his Phases.

**Defensive Focus Cost:** 11 Character Points (bought as +2 DCV (10 Active Points); Only Applies to Attacks from One Target (-½) (Real Cost: 7) **plus** Combat Luck (6 Active Points); Only versus the Attacks of One Target (-½) (Real Cost: 4))

**GRANITE FURY**

When the character triggers his Berserk Fury, he draws on the element of earth, and his physical form looks like it is made of stone. He gains 6 PD/6 ED armor. A favorite of Dwarven Berserkers.

**Granite Fury Cost:** 12 Character Points (bought as Armor (6 PD/6 ED) (18 Active Points); Linked to Berserk Fury (-½))

**HEADLONG CHARGE**

The character with Talent has learned how to use his abilities in a Move Through. When he does a Move Through, his attack fills the entire hex that is the endpoint of his attack. He makes an attack roll on the hex instead of the target. This ability takes 4 END and causes the user’s DCV drop to half as he leaves himself open in the charge.

**Headlong Charge Cost:** 12 Character Points (bought as Naked Advantage Area Of Effect (up to One Hex, +½) for up to 45 Active Points (22 Active Points); Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END, -½), Concentration (½ DCV, -¼))

**I CAN DODGE ANYTIME I WANT**

The character with this Talent has the ability to dodge an attack even after he has attacked, and normally has no action left. This DCV increase is not active if the character has an action available. The ability is purchased as +3 DCV (or +5 with the Martial Dodge variant) but the special effects of the ability is a “dodge.” Like any other CV bonus this lasts until the target’s next action.

**I Can Dodge Anytime I Want Cost:** 10 Character Points (bought as +3 DCV, Visible when Used (+0) (15 Active Points); Can Only be Used when the Character Cannot Take a Normal Action (-½))

The Martial Dodge Variant costs 17 points. Purchased the same, but with +5 DCV.

**INCREDIBLE ENDURANCE**

The character with Talent can exert himself much longer than most other characters. He has an extra 30 Endurance, but this END is only usable with long Term End. Any LTE that the character loses is taken from these 30 points first.

**Incredible Endurance Cost:** 5 Character Points (bought as +30 END (15 Active Points); Only for Use with Long Term END Loss (-2))

**INCREDIBLE ENTRANCE**

The character really knows how to make an entrance. When he comes into a room, the crowd is hushed, all eyes turn towards him, and they know that this person is someone to be reckoned with. The character can choose to make a PRE Attack when entering the room, and if he does, he adds +4d6 to his PRE Attack.

**Incredible Entrance Cost:** 8 Character Points (bought as +20 PRE, Attack Only (-½), Only when Entering a Room (-1))

## DIGITAL HERO #47

### INFORMATION SPECIALIST

Some people just understand more of what they see than others. This Talent allows the user to add Analyze to any sense of magic, normally a Detect, whether the source of this sense is another Talent, natural ability, or spell cast.

**Information Specialist Cost:** 6

Character Points (bought as Analyze All Magic-Related Senses)

### INSTANT STAND

The character has trained at taking falls so well that no matter how he is taken down, he gets to his feet instantly. The only way to keep him on the ground is to actively hold him there. With this ability, a character can use Breakfall for limiting damage, and use this ability to stand up.

**Instant Stand Cost:** 12 Character Points (bought as Teleportation 1", Position Shift, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Invisible Power Effects (Fully Invisible, +1), Trigger (Activating Takes No Time, Resets Automatically Immediately After Activating, +1) (24 Active Points); Only from Prone to Standing (-1))

### KNOCK THE AIR OUT OF THEM

When the character Stuns his opponent he causes him to lose 2d6 active points of REC. This costs no END, and can happen any time the user Stuns a target.

**Knock the Air Out of Them Cost:** 11 Character Points (bought as Drain REC 2d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½) (30 Active Points); Only when Target is Stunned by Primary Attack (-1½), Linked to Any Other Attack, Cannot be Launched by Itself (-¼))

### LINE FIGHTING

The character with this Talent has had practice fighting in line, and likely as part of a shield wall. He knows when he can take cover under an ally's shield, or utilize an opening that an ally has made. He gains +1 OCV and +1 DCV if he is adjacent to someone else that has this Talent.

**Line Fighting Cost:** 4 Character Points (bought as +1 OCV (5 Active Points); Only Works When You are in the Next Hex with Someone Else Who Has This Talent (-1) (Real Cost: 2) **plus** +1 DCV (5 Active Points); Only Works When You are in the Next Hex with Someone Else Who Has This Talent (-1) (Real Cost: 2))

### LUCKY

The character is lucky, and occasionally has a bit of a bonus to things he does. The GM assigns where the bonus applies. In combat, the player cannot choose where the level applies, but can choose to use it. With skill uses, it is up to the GM when and if the level can be used.

**Lucky Cost:** 5 Character Points bought as +1 Overall Level (10 Active Points); No Conscious Control (-1)

### MYSTIC BLOODHOUND

The character has the ability to follow wisps of magic and track magic effects and powers with his Detect Magic sense, whether the sense is a spell, a natural ability, or a trained ability.

**Mystic Bloodhound Cost:** 5 Character Points (bought as Tracking Sense with Detect Magic)

### OVERPUSH

When spending extra END to gain a bonus on an attack isn't enough, there is the Overpush. A character makes an EGO Roll, and if the roll is successful, he takes 10 STUN, and gains an extra 10 Active Points of STR, that costs no extra END (the stun is good enough, thank you).

**Overpush Cost:** 6 Character Points (bought as +10 STR, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½) (15 Active Points); No Figured Characteristics (-½), Side Effects (Automatic 3d6 +1 STUN-Only Damage (Standard Effect 10), -½), Requires an Ego Roll (-½))

### PRESSING ATTACK

A character can attack so forcefully that he causes his opponent to stumble back from the force of his blows. The character spends 1 Endurance, multiple-power attacks with this and his normal attack, and his target is forced back 1".

**Pressing Attack Cost:** 4 Character Points (bought as Running 1", Usable As Attack (+1) (4 Active Points))

### VAIRATIONS ON A THEME

*Knocking the Air Out of Them* can be changed around easily by draining other things.

- *Bruiser* drains CON
- *Rattle the Noggin* Drains INT or EGO

### OVERPUSH OVERLOAD

This version is just a simple STR bonus, but Overpush can be purchased for just about anything. If the base Active Cost is 10, and it is 0 END, then the cost remains the same.

**OTHER GOOD STUFF**

Both the Unholy Berserker and Unholy Ch'i talents can be reversed to be Holy, and reverse the "Only versus Good" Limitations to "Only versus Evil"

**SAVAGE HEALTH**

When a character turns on his Berserk Fury he is healed 2d6 STUN and BODY. This ability recovers 5 minutes after use, with the first free 0 Phase action the character has at that point. This takes 12 END. The healing and END loss is automatic upon the character entering his Berserk Fury.

**Savage Health Cost:** 18 Character Points (bought as Healing Simplified 2d6, Trigger (Using Berserk Fury) (Zero Phase Activation, Zero Phase Reset, Character Does Not Control Activation of Personal Trigger, +1/4), Decreased Reuse Duration (5 Minutes, +1) (45 Active Points); Increased Endurance Cost (x3 END, -1), Self Only (-1/2))

**SMASH THOSE CLAWS, BLUNT THAT SWORD**

The character with this Talent knows how to attack his enemy's weapon, whether it is a carried or natural. When he attacks the weapon, it blunts it for 2d6 Active Points of the attack, and causes it to do less damage. Using this costs 2 END.

**Smash Those Claws, Blunt That Sword Cost:** 13 Character Points (bought as Drain HKA 2d6 (20 Active Points); OIF (Weapon of Opportunity, -1/2))

**STRONG WILLED**

The character is very adept at breaking mental abilities that affect him. He gains +3 with any breakout roll versus any continuing effect metal power.

**Strong Willed Cost:** 9 Character Points (bought as +3 with Mental Breakout Rolls)

**TONGUE OF THE GODS**

The character can speak the language of the Gods. This language is burned into the being of every living creature – whenever the character speaks, anyone can understand him. They know he isn't speaking a language that they know, but they understand him anyway. The understanding is complete and total.

**Tongue of the Gods Cost:** 13 Character Points (bought as Language: Tongue of the Gods (Idiomatic) (Real Cost: 4) **plus** Language: Tongue of the Gods (Idiomatic), Usable As Attack (+1), Area Of Effect (64" Radius, +2 1/2) (18 Active Points); Only to Understand the Language, Not Speak It (-1) (Real Cost: 9))

**VENGEFUL**

This Talent is perfect for characters that can't let go of a grudge. If he takes BODY during combat, any time he attacks the being that did him BODY, he gains an extra +3 OCV.

**Vengeful Cost:** 7 Character Points (bought as +3 OCV (15 Active Points); Only Against Someone who Has Dealt You BODY This Combat (-1))

**VOICE OF COMMAND**

The character has an impressive voice, and people tend to do what he tells them to do. The bonus dice this character gets from Soliloquy are doubled, up to 3 extra dice.

**Voice of Command Cost:** 7 Character Points (bought as +15 PRE (15 Active Points); Attack Only (-1/2), Max Dice Equal to Soliloquy Bonus (-1/2))

**The Good****HOLY TOUCH**

The character has a connection to holy power. When he is fighting an evil creature (Demon, Undead, Necromancer – anything that has ties to the lower planes), he can spend the three Endurance and use this ability. He drains 2 BODY (4 Active Points) that recovers after 5 minutes. The attack is penetrating, so even if the target has Power Defense, 1 BODY (2 Active Points) is drained.

**Holy Touch Cost:** 11 Character Points (bought as Drain BODY 1d6+1 (Standard Effect: 4 points), Penetrating (+1/2), Delayed Return Rate (5 per 5 Minutes, +1/2) (26 Active Points); Only versus Evil (Undead, Demons, etc.) (-1/2), OIF (-1/2), Can Only be Part of a Multiple Power Attack (-1/4))

**FLAME OF THE GODS**

The character with this Talent can call forth Holy flame to shroud his weapon. It does 1d6 Killing and is Penetrating, but it only works on supernatural Evil (Demons, Undead, and the like). It costs 2 END to use.

**Flame of the Gods Cost:** 9 Character Points (bought as HKA +1d6 (versus ED), Penetrating (+1/2) (22 Active Points); No STR Bonus (-1/2), OIF (Weapon of Opportunity, -1/2), Only versus Supernatural Evil (Demons, Devils, Undead, etc.) (-1/2))



**PERFECT FAITH**

A character with this Talent is almost impossible to force to act against the dictates of his faith. He has 75% Damage reduction, only versus mind control commands that make him act in ways not allowed by his creed. A popular Talent for Priests and Paladins. Note that if the character has acted against the will of his God, and not sought absolution, this Talent does not work.

**Perfect Faith Cost:** 17 Character Points (bought as Mental Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75% (60 Active Points); Only versus Mind Control and only Against Commands That Would Make the Character Act Contrary to the Rules of His Religion (-2), Only when Serving the God's Purposes (-1/2))

**The Bad****UNHOLY BERSERKER**

A character with Talent has tied his fate to the powers of the lower planes. When he goes into Berserk Fury (FH Page 104) he is shrouded in flickering dark energy. When fighting Divine beings, Paladins, Unicorns or other powers of goodness and light, he can make two attacks with no OCV penalty and only take a -2 DCV penalty. These extra attacks only work when he is fighting those that are empowered by the forces of Good.

**Unholy Berserker Cost:** 7 Character Points (bought as Two-Weapon Fighting (HTH) (10 Active Points); Linked (Berserk Fury, -1/2), Only versus Holy (Paladins, Divine Beings, etc.) (-1/2) (Real Cost: 5) **plus** Rapid Attack (HTH) (5 Active Points); Linked (Berserk Fury, -1/2), Only versus Holy (Paladins, Divine Beings, etc.) (-1/2) (Real Cost: 2))

**UNHOLY CH'I**

The character has trained to match his inner energy to that of the infernal. He has a ch'i attack that deals an extra 3d6 of damage, but this damage has no effect on any creature that is tied to the same infernal or evil sources. This ability costs 1 Endurance.

**Unholy Ch'i Cost:** 8 Character Points (bought as HA +3d6 (15 Active Points); HA (-1/2), Does Not Work on Evil (Demons, Undead, etc.) (-1/4))

**The Ugly**

The following two Talents works best for someone with single digit, or even better, a negative Comeliness score.

**ANYONE LOOKS BETTER BY COMPARISON**

Some people are just so ugly, that just standing next to them makes you look better. Someone with this Talent is just that ugly. Anyone within 4" of them has their comeliness raised by 2.

**Anyone Looks Better by Comparison**

**Cost:** 7 Character Points (bought as Aid COM 1/2d6 (standard effect: 1 point), Uncontrolled (+1/2), Continuous (+1), Area Of Effect (4" Radius, +1/2) (20 Active Points); Aid Fades as Soon as Target Moves Outside of Range (-1/2), Always On (-1/2), Others Only (-1/2), Only Once per Target (-1/4))

**TOO UGLY TO LOOK AT**

There are those that are so ugly, that they cause revulsion in others, and they do not want to look at him. This Talent reflects that level of ugliness, granting the user a +2 DCV. If someone looking at them makes an EGO Roll at -1, this bonus is removed; the target has overcome his revulsion and can attack normally. The effect is also defeated by any Targeting Sense other than sight.

**Too Ugly to Look At Cost:** 6 Character Points (bought as +2 DCV (10 Active Points); Once Opponent Makes Ego Roll at -1, This Power No Longer Affects Them (-1/2), Not versus Those That Have Targeting Senses Other Than Sight (-1/4))

**UGLY STICK**

This Talent allows a character to turn any blunt weapon into the fabled Ugly stick, and beat people with it. Each attack that does any amount of STUN Drains 1 point of COM. The target gets bruised and cut and looks worse and worse as the attacks continue. The Comeliness returns at a rate of 5 per hour.

**Ugly Stick Cost:** 2 Character Points (bought as Drain BODY 1 Point, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2), Delayed Return Rate (5 per Hour, +1) (7 Active Points); Half Effect (Only 1 COM Drained) (-1), Can Only be Used in Multiple Power Attack, Only When That Attack Does STUN (-1/4), Blunt Weapons Only (-1/2) OIF (Weapon of Opportunity) (-1/2))

**OTHER BAD STUFF**

Both Holy Touch and Flame of the Gods can be reversed by changing the "Only versus Evil" limitations to "Only versus Good" and change the target of the specialized damage.

**HORRIBLE STENCH**

The Too Ugly to Look At could be changed to a Scent based talent that can be overcome with a CON Roll, and removing the "Other Targeting Senses" Limitation. The cost changes to 7.



# Bloom of the TygerLily by Lisa Brown

## Chapter 1: The Die is Cast

Joe woke on a normal, crisp, March morning. It was still dark outside. Quietly, he slipped into the shower. He shaved and washed the last remaining traces of sleep from his system. He dressed in the bathroom in order to avoid any unnecessary noise. He crept across the bedroom and down the stairs, careful to miss the creaky boards.

Some mornings he hated sneaking around being quiet not to wake anyone. But he knew it was for the best. His training helped him to walk quietly even with his large frame. At 6'2" and 210 lbs, he still carried much of his athletic build from his high school days. He didn't work out much these days, just running when he felt the need and a pick-up basketball game when he could. He could make some noise if needed. But now, stealth was the goal. Preparing to leave the house, he opened the box with a key from his ring and retrieved his gun. With the gun secured onto his belt, he glanced one last time up the stairs, listening for noise. His blond hair ruffled as he let himself out the front door.

In the car, he looked back at the dark house and whispered good morning to his wife and daughter sleeping within. Before he would have kissed them good-bye, but he found that waking them made it harder for him to get out of the house. He would love to stay and wake his daughter Lily with a smile and giggle, watch Julie prepare breakfast, smile at the battle between mother and child on who will select the clothing for the day, and then drive Lily to school. But those days didn't seem to happen for him. Instead, he whispered, "I love you," in his dark car, as he drove away at dawn.

Joe pulled into a parking spot at the station, waving to a patrol car pulling in beside him. It was 6:00 am, and the graveyard shift was passing the buck over to the day shift. Joe met up with his former partner Mike O'Brien as he entered the conference room. Mike had been promoted less than a year ago and was now Joe's boss. While he gave Mike a hard time about it every opportunity, he couldn't be happier for his best friend. Mike was a responsible and reasonable captain for the street patrol.

Roll call was fast and easy that morning. There was only one special instruction for the day, and no major cases working on the streets. An accident during the night had been cleared, so the streets were in pretty good shape for the morning rush hour to begin. "We have had a lot of complaints of speeders along Hudson Drive in front of Maple Elementary. So Joe, how about you head in that direction now, and let's see

about slowing them down for the kiddies this morning." With that, Mike dismissed the group, and various officers headed for their cars. Some of the more experienced officers were partnered with rookies. Joe might get a rookie assigned to him when the next recruit arrives, or he may not. O'Brien knew that Joe could handle himself well, and liked the lone patrol most times.

Heading down Hudson, Joe turned into a business parking lot before the school, circled around and pointed his car out toward the street. In most cases, just the presence of a patrol car was enough to slow the drivers. He watched as minivans and sport utility vehicles brought their little passengers to school. For a moment, his mind wandered back to Lily and Julie who would be doing a similar trek to school across town. The turn lane was starting to fill up before him as the school's start time grew closer. He noticed a few cars pushing the limit of speed and safety. It was clear that not all of the business commuters had found an alternative route around the school zone. His watched as a shiny black sedan broke from behind a van. The driver swirling and accelerating barely missed the back corner of the minivan in his obsession to pass.

Joe had seen these drivers much too often. The kind who followed too closely, hoping for a chance to pass, and when a slight chance presented itself, the driver ignored safety in favor of speed. If the driver noticed Joe's patrol car, it was already too late for him. Flipping the switch for his lights and siren, Joe eased out onto Hudson behind the black sedan. Even without the radar gun, it was clear the car was exceeding the posted speed limit for a school zone. The car was close to exiting the school zone when the driver flipped on his signal to park at the side of the road. The radar gun showed he was clocked well over the posted limit.

Joe keyed the license plate into the laptop console, knowing the query results would be waiting when he returned. Then he eased his way out of the parked cruiser. Carefully he checked out the backseat of the car as he moved to the window.

"Good morning, sir. License and registration, please."

"Is this really necessary officer? I was just trying to get around that mess back there and get to work on time. Now, I'll end up late... again." The man's entire manner showed that he didn't want to be bothered.

"License and registration, sir." Joe said with a little more force as he looked down at the man. With a huff the man handed over the documents.

"Do you realize how fast you were going through that school zone, sir?"

“Thirty maybe thirty-five... Look I was just trying to get out of that school maid’s line and get to work. I wasn’t hurting anything. That line was crawling.”

Joe nodded his head as he made notes on his ticket board. “Wait here, I’ll be back.”

The screen in his car had the vehicle information retrieved, and the owner information checked with the driver. A brief query on the driver showed that he was clear. Joe wrote out the ticket, watching the “school maids” move along.

Returning to the window, Joe handed the registration and license to the man. “Well, Mr. Scott you were traveling well over the posted speed limit and this is a school zone. We take the speed limit through here seriously. The safety of the school students is very important, so we need you to observe and respect the posted speed. Therefore, I am going to have to write you a citation.” Pointing to the slip, “Here’s the information about the citation, along with a date for if you choose to appear in court. However, if you wish to avoid the court, you may pay the fine by this date. You will find the amount and mailing information on the back.” Joe flipped the form over and pointed to this section before passing it through the window. “Do you have any questions?”

The man took the ticket, nodded and mumbled something like, “Sure, whatever,” and then put the car into gear. “Are we done here?”

Joe gave a slightly surprised nod, watched the car pull away and moved on down the street in a barely acceptable safe manner. Shaking his head, he moved back to his own car. Except for the brief time when Joe thought that the speedy Mr. Scott was going to end up hurting himself or someone else, Joe went on with the rest of his shift, writing citations, giving warnings.

At the end of the day, he returned to Julie and Lily as he did every night. They laughed and played together. When asked about his day, he said the same thing he said every night, “Same old thing... writing tickets and saving kittens.” Lily just rolled her eyes as 10 year olds do. She had been hearing the same line for most of her life, and she thought she was big enough to know what was really going on. Joe however tried hard not to bring his work home to his precious wife and innocent daughter. He wanted to protect her from the evil of the world; plus most of the traffic stops were routine and didn’t stick in his mind.

~~~~~  
Tim Scott arrived to work late. He made sales calls throughout the day without much luck. It was after four, and he wanted to make one more call. “If I could just make one big sale,” he told himself. His wife was unhappy. His job was on the line. They had chased the

American dream and had the debt to prove it. The phone at his desk beeped. “Step into my office for a moment,” his boss said, sounding indifferent.

Tim straightened his tie and brushed off lint from his jacket as he made his way to the boss’ corner office. Knowing his performance recently, he figured a pep talk was coming.

“Come in,” came the answer to his knock. As he stepped into the office toward the chairs in front of the large polished oak desk, his boss started right in. “Don’t bother to sit, this will be quick. Tim, I’m not going to beat around the bush. You’re not doing your job here. You’re coming in late, not making sales. I have customers complaining, going to other vendors, and so I’m going to have to let you go. I want you to clear out your desk tonight, and don’t bother to come back. Security will escort you to your desk and your last paycheck will be mailed. That’ll be all.” With that, his boss turned his chair back to his computer and didn’t give Tim a chance to reply at all. Tim opened his mouth to speak, but didn’t find the words. In a daze, he turned to find two company security guards standing just outside the door.

*So this is how those famous 4:30 meetings go,* Tim thought as he walked to his car carrying his lone box of personal items. The main thing he noticed is how the few coworkers he saw wouldn’t make eye contact. He had heard about other 4:30 meetings, where the boss calls the unfortunate loser in and fires him, while everyone else is in the conference room being informed of the termination, but he never thought he would be on the receiving end of one.

As he neared the school zone on his drive home, he glanced over to where the cop had pulled him over earlier that morning, “This is your fault, pig! You caused this, and you’ll have to pay!” His face was set and hard, his voice full of hatred. His mind was busy with his problems and thoughts that someone must pay.

~~~~~  
Joe arrived home on a warm August evening. It had been so dry and hot that summer. The sky had some clouds forming, and people were becoming hopeful for some showers that evening. Lily was jumping rope on the sidewalk in front of the house. “Hi, Daddy,” she said breathless without missing a beat of the rope.

“Hi sugar. How’s my little tiger Lily?” he asked, climbing from his unmarked police car. Over the summer, Joe had been moved from a patrol car to one of the unmarked units. There were some rumors of a promotion in his future, but Joe secretly hoped the rumors were in error. He knew his friend O’Brien didn’t understand it, but Joe liked working the streets. He didn’t want the round the clock responsibility of making detective or the politics of captain.

Lily swung her handles together into one hand and ran up to her daddy. “Daddy, we went to the movies today! And guess what we saw?” She squealed as he swept her up into his arms.

“Hmmm, Sleeping Beauty?” He guessed, knowing already it was incorrect.

“No daddy!” she giggled. “Sleeping Beauty is for kids.”

“Oh that’s right. Hmmm, was it attack of the tickle monster?” He asked as he hands found her ribs and the tickling began. He continued to tickle as she squealed and squirmed in his arms. Looking up, he met Julie eyes as she stepped out onto the front porch, her eyes shone as she watched her man and child playing so happily.

He tucked Lily against him, balancing her light weight on his arm as he leaned in to kiss his wife.

“Hi” he whispered as he kissed her again. She responded with a soft smile and stepped over so they could enter the cool house. He heard a car engine turn over and pull away behind them. He glanced over his shoulder but didn’t see anything that caused an alarm.

Inside the house, the family settled into a peaceful evening. Supper was prepared and eaten as a swift rain shower popped up and passed. The rain cooled the air enough that outdoors was beckoning as the sun started its slow decline. Lily had pulled Joe outside right after the rain to check on their flowers. The backyard was framed with orange and black tiger lily plants. The plants grew wild in that area, untamed and hard to kill. Julie had transplanted a few, and those adapted and came back stronger than before. Joe had even hit them with the mower a few times, but they would always come back blooming again. It was easy for them to choose their daughter’s name after seeing the beauty of their backyard.

This night, Joe and Julie sat on the swing in the backyard, their backs to the house. Lily was chasing lightning bugs around the yard, caring only about catching the next bug. Joe leaned over to whisper a private suggestion for after Lily’s

bedtime into his wife’s ear when he noticed movement behind them.

Suddenly the night’s silent broke. Joe jumped to his feet facing the barrel of the gun. “Lily, get inside,” he yelled as he pulled Julie to her feet and pushed her toward the door.

Lily’s glass jar shattered as her mother pulled her inside the house. A scream broke from her lips as the images seemed unreal to her young mind. Julie grabbed the phone. The line was dead. She grabbed the service revolver lock box. “Where’s the key?!” she yelled. Lily stood frozen at the bay window. The men were fighting. Punching and wrestling over the gun.

She must have screamed again when she saw the gun, because Joe looked toward the house. That was all it took for Tim Scott to get the advantage. The lock of the revolver box popped. The dark figure squeezed the trigger. Red spread over Joe’s chest. Lily watched. Her father fell. The man didn’t stop but continued to beat and kick Joe’s crumpled body.

Then suddenly the house shook. It felt like something exploded against Lily’s tiny chest. The dark figure of the man dropped beside Joe. Julie dropped the service revolver and ran to her husband’s side. Lily rushed after, crying. Joe whispered “I love you,” as he took his last breath, blood tickling from his mouth.

The rest was a blur to Lily. Later she didn’t recall the police arriving. The trip to the emergency room to be checked out, as well as any other activities of that night, was gone from her memories. Her next memory was sitting at the grave service, staring ahead into the bouquet of tiger lilies. The bouquet rested on the shiny casket holding her hero, her daddy.

She had felt so helpless that night, frozen in terror. Her father had always been so strong, so protecting. But he had been defenseless that night, and so had she. That was a feeling she swore she wouldn’t feel again.

She didn’t plan for this life, but that August night the die was cast. Daddy’s little tiger lily will be helpless no more.

**OFFICER JOE**

13 STR	11 DEX	13 CON	10 BODY
10 INT	10 EGO	10 PRE	10 COM
4 PD	3 ED	3 SPD	
5 REC	26 END	24 STUN	

**Abilities:** Local Police Powers; CK: City of Operation 11-; Combat Driving 11-; Conversation 11-; KS: Criminal Law 11-; Streetwise 11-; WF: Small Arms

**15+ Disadvantages:** Distinctive Feature: Uniform (Easily Concealable); DNPC: Family 8- (Wife Julie, Daughter Lily); Hunted: Local Police Department 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)



## Realistic Martial Artists by Michael Surbrook

The term “martial artist” usually brings to mind the image of lean Asian man dressed in a loose tunic and trousers who can break boards and bones with equal skill and efficiency. But that doesn’t always have to be the case. A martial arts-based character can appear in almost any setting, campaign, time period, or genre. All it requires is a logical mixture of background, personality, and martial arts style. This article presents three such martial artists, designed to be “realistic” (as defined on page 7 of *Ninja Hero*) with regards to power level and skill. The characters are, in order of point totals: Ray Carmichael, an young inner-city boxer; Marcellin Guiscard, highly-enthusiastic French Musketeer; and Wolfram von Ostheim, a towering *Landsknechte*, a 16th Century German mercenary.

### Ray Carmichael

**Background/History:** When you’re a black youth growing up in Watts district of Los Angeles your prospects are few. Here, violence is almost a way of life, and street gangs can be found on every corner, dealing drugs and bullets in equal amounts. Joining a gang is almost a requirement if you expect to survive, and an early death from gang-related violence is a far to common result.

For Ray Carmichael this was his future. At least for a while. He ran with a gang. he carried a gun and a knife, and made sure no one, and that meant *no one*, dis’ed him or his homies. This was his life and he liked it -- until one of his best friends died in his arms after a fight with another gang. Standing there, covered in blood, Ray made a vow to himself. He was going to get out.

A few days later, Ray ended up at a local gym. There he struck up a deal with the manager. He’d help out around the gym, doing odd jobs, and in return he’d be trained in the art of boxing, as part of a local youth program. He quickly became an adept at the “sweet science” and has started to make a name for himself in Los Angeles amateur boxing circles.

**Personality/Motivation:** Ray is young man with a mission. Although only 19, he’s all ready decided on his future plans; which in his case involves becoming a champion amateur boxer, trying for the Olympic team, and then going pro. Thus, most everything he does is meant to future this aim. He works out constantly, both through weight training and in the ring, and often joins pickup basketball games to improve his reflexes and footwork. The only drawback to this whole plan is that Ray may be a little *to* dedicated to his dream, to the point where he has dropped out of school, and doesn’t look after his family like he should. To make matters worse, his younger brother has joined a street gang, while his old gang has started to pressure him to rejoining.

**Quote:** “I’m gonna punch my way outta Watts, and ain’t nobody gonna stand in my way!”

**Powers/Tactics:** Ray is both strong and fast, a dangerous combination in boxing. When in the ring he likes to stay close to his opponent, wearing them down with rapid combinations of Crosses and Jabs. If pressed, Ray will pull his arms in tight and go on the defensive, blocking his opponent’s blows with a tactic he calls “Rope-a-Dope” in honor of boxing great Muhammad Ali. Only when a foe is sufficient tired and worn out will Ray throw at Hook, often putting his levels into doing more damage when he does so.

**Campaign Use:** Ray is a fairly straightforward character, and can be dropped into most modern-day campaigns with ease. He works well as an NPC in *Champions* or *Dark Champions* games, and with a little editing could even be made into a character’s DNPC (especially if that character is of the “urban superhero” type). If you want, he could even be turned into a superhero himself (or a supervillain if your so inclined).

For a more powerful version of Ray, give him STR 20, DEX 20, CON 18, and a 4 SPD. Add a few levels with Boxing and even a Damage Class (if needed). For a weaker (or younger) Ray, drop his STR to 15, his DEX to 14, his CON to 14, and eliminate his skill levels.

**Appearance:** Ray stands 5’8” and weighs a well-muscled 151 pounds. He keeps his head shaved and tends to go shirtless when working out or training at the gym. In the ring he wears shorts, a tank top, boxing gloves, and protective headgear. Out of the ring he wears clothing typical of “inner-city” black youths.



**Ray Carmichael**

Val	Cha	Cost	Roll	Notes
18	STR	8	13-	300 kg; 3½d6 HTH [2]
16	DEX	18	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
11	BODY	2	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll: 11-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
12	COM	1	11-	
7	PD	3		Total: PD 7
5	ED	2		Total: ED 5
3	SPD	4		Phases: 4, 8, 12
7	REC	0		
30	END	0		
28	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 55**

<b>Movement:</b>	Running:	6"/12"
	Leaping:	3½"/7"
	Swimming:	2"/4"

**Cost Skills**

Martial Arts: Boxing				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Cross	+2	+0	5½d6 Strike
5	Hook	-2	+1	7½d6 Strike
3	Jab	+2	+1	3½d6 Strike
6	+2 with Boxing			
4	<i>Rope-a-Dope</i> : +2 with Block			
2	AK: Los Angeles 11-			
2	CK: Los Angeles 11-			
2	KS: Boxing and Famous Boxers 11-			
2	KS: Street Gang Culture 11-			
1	Language: Street Slang			
3	Streetwise 12-			
2	WF: Knife, Pistol			

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 40****Total Cost: 95****50+ Disadvantages**

10	Distinctive Features: Style
10	DNPC: Roy Carmichael (His Younger Brother and a Gangbanger) 8- (Normal)
5	Hunted: His Old Gang 8- (Mo Pow, Lim Geo, Mild)
15	Psychological Limitation: Dedicated to His Training (Common, Strong)
5	Rivalry: Other Up-and-Coming Boxers (Professional, Seek to Outdo)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 95**



## Marcellin Guiscard

**Background/History:** As a young man, Marcellin came to Paris with a letter of commendation in his pocket and high hopes of glory in his head. He desired to follow in his father's footsteps and be a King's Musketeer. Of course, nothing is ever that easy, and with sword in hand and honor in his heart he served his two years in a more regular troop, before being admitted to the more elite Musketeers. Since then, Marcellin has tried to be a Musketeer's Musketeer, taking to his duties with unflappable enthusiasm.

Having taken residence in a *hôtel* near the barracks, Marcellin has also taken the required mistress, a local maid by the name of Giselle L'Aventure. Giselle, however, is no fainting lady in waiting, and is almost as hot tempered as her lover. For his part, Marcellin often wonders out loud what he ever saw in her, while his companions are of the opinion the two are perfect for each other. To make matters even more interesting, Marcellin has started to instruct Giselle in the art of the sword, a skill she is picking up with frightening speed.

**Personality/Motivation:** Although a gentleman and strict adherent of the gentleman's code of honor (which means Marcellin will never break his word, or ignore in insult to himself, any lady, or France), Marcellin still has the rashness of youth. He is quick, some times far too quick, to take offense, and shows an overwillingness to duel -- even if it is an outlawed activity. He is also quick to jump to conclusions, and more than willing to race off on some grand adventure with only the merest scrap of information to back up his claims. Those who know him can often talk him into just about anything by playing on his honor, his word, and his duty to the king. Members of the Cardinal's Guard have been known to entice him into duels in just the same way.

**Quote:** "Quick, we must hurry if we are to rescue the fair lady! No, this time it's for real!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Marcellin is an accomplished student of the French school of fencing.

Although skilled with the use of a weapon in his offhand, Marcellin tends to prefer using just the rapier when fighting. Surprisingly, considering his personality, he does tend to follow the precepts of the French school and places two of his levels into his DCV when fighting. However, he is quick to exploit any openings in his opponent's defense and will quickly switch a high-OCV attack if the opportunity arises (in other words, he tends to use Parry and *Riposte* combinations in a fight). Marcellin is also working on something he calls *La botte secrete* (the secret thrust), a maneuver against which there can be no defense. As of yet, no one knows what this technique is supposed to be, while his fellow Musketeers have tried to tell him no such thing exists -- all to no avail. If you allow Marcellin to perfect this technique, make it either the Double a Double or *Pasata Soto* maneuver.

**Campaign Use:** Marcellin is meant to simulate all those fictional swashbucklers seen in fiction ever since Alexander Dumas wrote *The Three Musketeers*. Thus, he is handsome, skilled, hotheaded, and honorable. He is perfect for *Ninja Hero's Swords of the Sun King* campaign (naturally), but also fits quite well into virtually any fantasy setting in which lightly-armored fighters and duelists exist.

To make Marcellin more powerful (or more cinematic) give him some Combat Luck (defined as "tis But A Scratch!"), some Swinging (for ropes and chandeliers of course), increase his DEX to 20, and his SPD to 4. To make him less powerful, reduce his Combat Skill Levels to +1 with Fencing and remove his +2 with Agility Skills.

Marcellin's temperament means he can easily be duped into Hunting a PC or PCs. Of course, in true swashbuckling fashion, once the nature of the ruse becomes known, Marcellin will stay with the PC through thick and thin in order to clear both his and the PC's good names.

**Appearance:** In good physical shape, with bright green eyes and wavy dirty-blond hair, Marcellin cuts a dashing figure in his Musketeer's uniform. He normally wears knee-high leather boots, black knee breeches, a white shirt with loose sleeves, a black vest, gloves, and his blue and white Musketeer's tabard. When on duty (or campaign), Marcellin will carry his sword, a musket, and two pistols; when off-duty he wears just the sword.

# DIGITAL HERO #47

## Marcellin Guiscard

Val	Cha	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	150 kg; 2½d6 HTH [1]
16	DEX	18	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
14	CON	8	12-	
11	BODY	2	11-	
12	INT	2	11-	PER Roll: 11-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
16	COM	3	12-	
6	PD	3		Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)
5	ED	1		Total: 5 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	4		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	1		
25	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 52**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
Leaping: 2½"/5"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

### Cost Perks

- 5 Contact: Captain of the Musketeers 8- (Extremely Useful, Significant Contacts [the Captain has the ear of the King!])
- 2 Fringe Benefit: King's Musketeer

### Skills

Martial Arts: French School Fencing

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
5 Ballestra	+2	-2	+4 DC, HMove
3 Cut	+2	+1	Weapon
4 Fleche	+2	-2	+v/5; FMove
5 Lunge	+1	-2	+4 DC
4 Parry	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4 Riposte	+2	+2	+2 DC, Follows Block
5 Thrust	+1	+3	Weapon

- 8 +1 with Combat
- 6 +2 with French School Fencing
- 10 *He is, After All, the Hero:* +2 with Agility Skills
- 3 Acrobatics 12-
- 3 Breakfall 12-
- 2 CK: Paris 11-
- 3 Climbing 12-
- 4 Gambling (Card and Dice Games) 11-
- 3 High Society 12-
- 2 KS: The Best Hôtels In Paris 11-
- 3 KS: French Fencing Styles 12-
- 1 Language: French (Literacy)
- 5 Rapid Attack (Hand-to-Hand)
- 3 Riding 12-
- 3 Seduction 12-
- 3 Shadowing 11-
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 3 WF: Blades, Early Firearms, Off-Hand

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 102**

**Total Cost: 154**

### 75+ Disadvantages

- 15 DNPC: Giselle L'Aventure 11- (Normal)
- 5 Distinctive Features: Muskeeter's Uniform (Easily Concealable)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Style
- 0 Hunted: The Cardinal's Guard 8- (As Pow, Limited Area, Watching)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Gentleman's Code of Honor (Very Common, Strong)
- 5 Psychological Limitation: Hotheaded (Common, Strong)
- 0 Psychological Limitation: Strong Sense of Duty to His King and Comrades (Common, Strong)
- 15 Social Limitation: Subject to Orders (Frequently, Major)
- 9 Experience Points

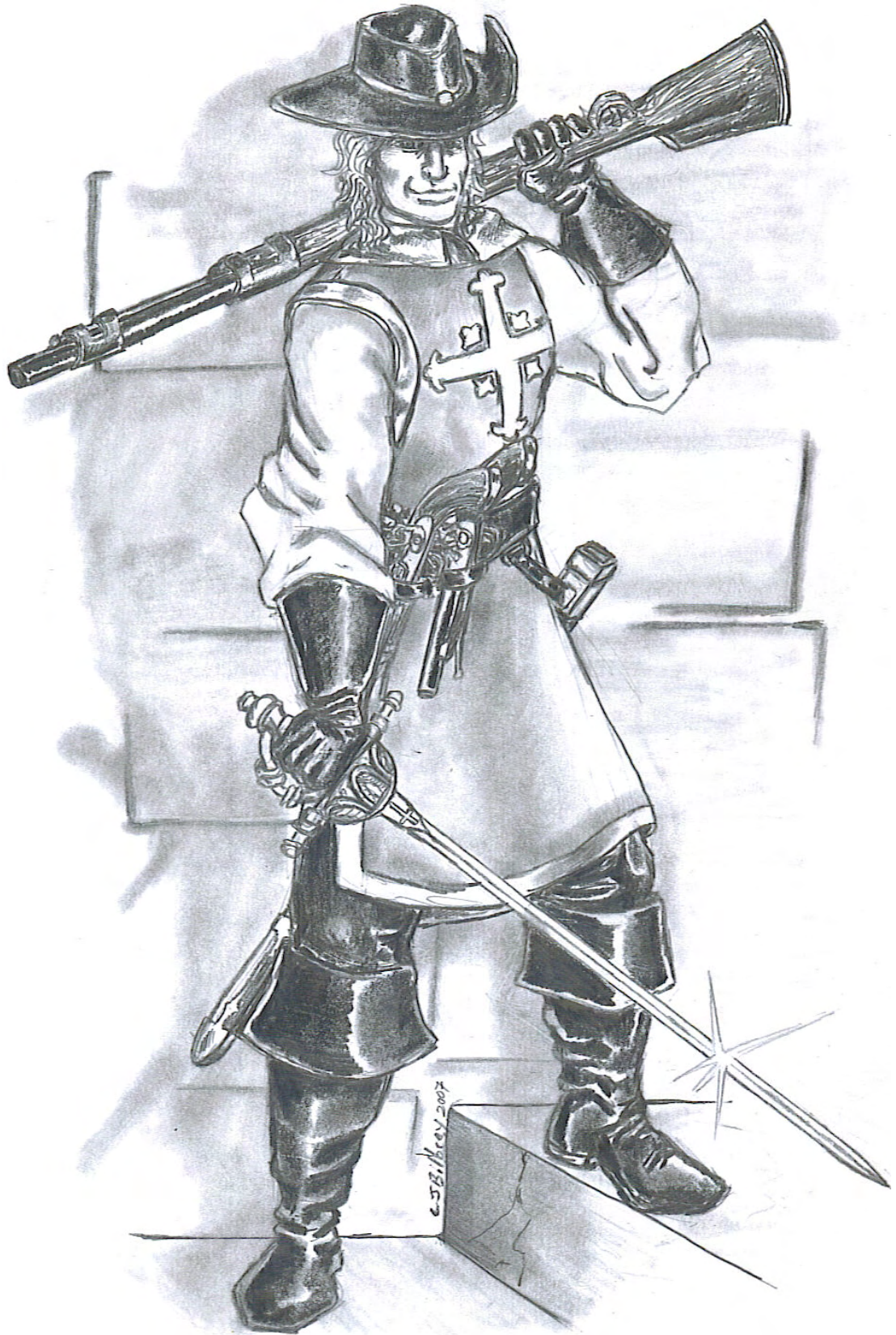
**Total Disadvantage Points: 154**

### EQUIPMENT

Weapons	OCV	Rmod	Dam	STUN	Shots	Notes
Matchlock Musket	+0	-3	1½d6 AP	+0	6	Act 11-, Concentrate (½ DCV Throughout Loading), Extra Time (1 Turn to Reload), 2H, AP Only Affects Low-Tech Armors
Matchlock Pistol	+0	-4	1d6 AP	+0	6	Act 11-, Concentrate (½ DCV Throughout Loading), Extra Time (1 Turn to Reload), 2H, AP Only Affects Low-Tech Armors
Name	OCV	Damage	STNx	Notes		
Rapier	+1	1d6	+0			



Marcellin Guiscard





## Wolfram Von Ostheim

**Background/History:** As a young farmer's son in northern Germany, Wolfram's sheer size, not to mention his impressive strength, quickly brought him to the attention of several *Landsknechte* (lit. "servant of the country") recruiters. Tantalized by their talk of travel and plunder, not to mention having been plied with copious amounts of strong drink, Wolfram readily agreed to leave his father's farm to join their Company.

Initially he was issued a pike and trained to be part of a pike block, until the Company commander saw the brawny youth lifting kegs of gunpowder into the gunner's wagon. Wolfram soon found himself with a halberd in his hands, and a few battles later a massive *Zwiehander*, the German two-handed sword. Promoted to the rank of *Doppelsoldner* (lit. "double-soldier, so named as they received double pay), Wolfram was placed in the front ranks, where he used his sword to great effect on enemy pikes (not to mention the pikemen themselves).

Now nearing 30, Wolfram has been a *Landsknechte* for nearly 15 years. He has no interest in returning to his farming roots, and fully expects to die some day in battle... or a tavern brawl. Until then, however, he intends to get all he can out of life, as well as anything he can find after a battle...

**Personality/Motivation:** Life as a professional soldier has given Wolfram a distinct lack of morals. To him, the only people that matter are the people in his Company. They are his friends and fighting companions, and everyone else is either the enemy or a source of food, drink, clothing, and occasional sexual companionship (if female). This attitude becomes readily apparent when Wolfram is on campaign, during which he and his companions will take what they want from any local farms and townships they come across, virtually bullying the locals to get what they want.

While Wolfram may feel most commoners are simple weaklings (If they weren't, he wouldn't have been hired to fight their wars for them would he?), he, like most *Landsknechte*, utterly despises the mercenary armies of the Swiss. It is a deep-seated hatred of national proportions, and *Landsknechte* have been known to ignore battle orders in order to charge enemy positions of Swiss soldiers.

**Quote:** "The sooner we get the killing done, the sooner we get our pay."

**Powers/Tactics:** In war Wolfram's philosophy is simple: hit the enemy hard and repeatedly. The battlefield press is too cramped and chaotic for any of the fancy sword tricks they teach in the tournament schools back home, so

Wolfram's fighting style consists of virtually battering his opponent with blows from his *Zwiehander* until he falls and then moving on to the next one. In tight quarters, such as when two lines meet, Wolfram will pull such stunts as ramming an armored knee into his foe's groin (Low Blow), hitting a foe in the head with the pommel of his sword (Punch), or jabbing the quillions of his sword in his foe's face (Eye Gouge). In cases such as this, the GM should consider Wolfram's sword to be a glorified club (allowing it to be used with Dirty Infighting).

Although his sword style is very basic, Wolfram is very good with his hands, and can move his weapon around quickly. He prefers to go on the offensive when in combat, and will aim his blows at a target's upper body, concentrating on the upper torso, shoulders, arms, and head. If a foe attempts to block (such as with a pike shaft), Wolfram will strike at the blocking weapon, trying to either knock it away or out-and-out break it.

Years of campground and tavern brawls have made Wolfram a frighteningly good infighter. Such brawls have also made him quite the dirty fighter as well, and Wolfram will gladly combine groin kicks, foot stops, and arm twists, with such forms of mayhem as hurled tankards of beer, hurled daggers, and the ever popular knife in the back.

**Campaign Use:** Wolfram von Ostheim is meant to depict (with some accuracy) the sort of professional soldier who fought in the various wars between principalities and city-states of Germany and Italy all through the 16th Century. His attitude is pretty typical for the time, as is his fighting style. With a simple name and Area Knowledges change, Wolfram could be made into a mercenary for almost any type of *Fantasy Hero* setting.

To down-power Wolfram, drop his STR to 20, eliminate his Dirty Infighting, and remove his +2 with Two-Handed Weapons. To boost his power level, raise his DEX and SPD, and add in a "Great Weapons" martial art, consisting of Block, Charge, Cleave (Offensive Strike), Legsweep, and Strike (Fast Strike). This art is usable with blades, polearms, and staves. Finally, give him a helmet (DEF 8, covers locations 4-5) and arm harness (DEF 7, covers locations 6-8). This version of Wolfram would make for a good *Landsknechte* or mercenary company commander.

Since he's part of a mercenary company, Wolfram doesn't have the time (or the inclination) to Hunt a PC.

**Appearance:** Wolfram stands a towering 6'4" with a broad, muscular build. He has dirty blond hair and a full beard, and like all *Landsknechte* he dresses in brightly colored clothing so full of

slashes (with the inner lining pulled through) it looks like he's wearing rags. Over this Wolfram wears a steel breastplate and fauld for protecting his torso, and articulated cuisses on his thighs

and knees. A simple leather swordbelt supports his purse, Katzbalger, and his ballock knife. On his head he wears a floppy cloth cap decorated with brilliantly dyed feathers.

### Wolfram Von Ostheim



## DIGITAL HERO #47

### Wolfram Von Ostheim

Val	Cha	Cost	Roll	Notes
23	STR	16	14-	600 kg; 4½d6 HTH [1]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
16	CON	12	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
8	PD	3		Total: 8 PD
7	ED	4		Total: 6 ED
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
8	REC	0		
32	END	0		
32	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 72**

**Movement:** Running: 7"/14"  
Leaping: 4½"/9"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
6	<i>Tireless:</i> Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼), On 23 STR	1
2	<i>Takes Big Strides:</i> Running +1" (7" Total)	1

#### Skills

Martial Arts: Dirty Knifefighting/ Tavern Brawling				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Eye Gouge	-1	-1	Sight Group Flash 4d6
3	Grapple	+0	-1	One Limb; 33 STR Hold
4	Kidney Blow	-2	+0	HKA ½d6
4	Low Blow	-1	+1	2d6 NND(3)
4	Punch/ Backhand	+0	+2	6½d6 Strike
2	Use Art with Clubs, Knives			
10	+2 with Hand-to-Hand Combat			
6	+2 with Two-Handed Weapons (Great Sword, Halberd, Pike, and so on)			

2	AK: The Holy Roman Empire	11-
2	AK: Italy	11-
2	AK: The Low Countries	11-
3	Defense Maneuver I	
1	Demolitions	8-
4	Gambling (Card and Dice Games)	12-
2	KS: Ceremony And Drill	11-
2	KS: Military Customs And Procedure	11-
2	KS: Scrounging	11-
1	Language: French (Basic, German Native)	
1	Language: Italian (Basic)	
1	Navigation (Land)	8-
1	Paramedic	8-
5	Rapid Attack (Hand-to-Hand)	
3	Streetwise	13-
4	Survival (Temperate, Urban)	12-
1	Tactics	8-
1	TF: Carts & Carriages	
7	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Crossbow, Flail, Matchlock, Staff, Thrown Knife	
3	Jack-Of-All-Trades	
1	1) Armorer	11-
1	2) Carpenter	11-
1	3) Dopplesoldner/Landsknechte	11-
1	4) Leatherworker	11-
1	5) Smoking Meat	11-
1	6) Teamster	11-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 103**

**Total Cost: 175**

#### 100+ Disadvantages

5	Distinctive Features: Landsknechte Sense of Style (Easily Concealed)
15	Psychological Limitation: Arrogant and a Bully (Common, Strong)
0	Psychological Limitation: Despises Swiss Soldiers (Uncommon, Strong)
10	Psychological Limitation: Loyal to His Companions and His Company (Common, Moderate)
10	Reputation: Landsknechte, a Rough, Uncouth, Violent Mercenary Soldier, 11-
20	Social Limitation: Subject to Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
15	Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 175**

#### EQUIPMENT

Weapons	OCV	Dam	STUN	Notes
Zweihander	+1	2d6	0	Two-Handed Sword
Katzbalger	0	1d6+1	0	German Broadsword
Ballock Dagger	0	1d6+1	0	Can Be Thrown
Armor	DEF	Location	Notes	
Breastplate and Fauld	7	10-13	Half Value Versus Guns	
Articulated Cuisses	7	14-15	Half Value Versus Guns	



**DEDICATION**

For Stan “The Man” Lee, a man without peer!

**NON-OFFICIAL**

This article contains material that is nonstandard for the Champions Universe.

## Secret Origins, Part 2 by Michael Satran

The Golden and Silver Ages of comics were very different from the comics that are published today. As a result, heroes and villains of that era had different motivations, abilities, and powers from those that we know. Fears were different, beliefs were different, and characters were rewritten for the modern era many times, sometimes in radically different ways. In your hands (or more likely, on your screen) you have before you some ways of updating old material in new ways, or backdating new material into old ways. In a golden or silver age campaign, for instance, you have the ability to make a new version of the character later. The simplest way to do this is to simply use the same sheet, and say the character hasn’t changed at all. This is very easy, but can also lead to many roleplaying problems. While in the 1950s, having the disadvantage “Won’t Strike a Woman” is an occasional, clever twist, in the modern era, that disadvantage can be absolutely crippling.

Example: (Golden/Silver Age) Captain Unity, battling Doctor Brutalloy and his new ally, Icewoman, focuses on Doctor Brutalloy because he can’t attack Icewoman at all! Icewoman has a soft spot for handsome men, holds back, Doctor Brutalloy curses Icewoman and vows never to work with her again.

(Modern Comics) Captain Unity, battling Doctor Brutalloy and his new ally, Icewoman, focuses on Doctor Brutalloy because he can’t attack Icewoman at all. Icewoman has a soft spot for handsome men, and freezes Captain Unity, taking him home to put on her wall of “romantic conquests.” Doctor Brutalloy grins. His greatest enemy is defeated/frozen eternally in a block of ice? Who will stop him now? And whose comic book is this, anyway?

While this isn’t the only way this scenario can play out, it is certainly one of the more common differences between Golden Age/Silver Age scenarios and the comics of today. The Golden/Silver Age example works, and the modern comics example also works, except for the fact that the Modern Comics example stands a very good chance of derailing your campaign, especially if Captain Unity is one of your group’s PCs.

**Part One****BUILDING YOUR LEGENDS: THE GOLDEN AGE CHARACTER(S)**

The Golden Age or Silver Age character as a PC is much more complicated than the Golden or Silver age villain. Whereas a Golden Age character or PC updated to the modern world may be very different, most Golden Age villains largely remain the same. Two examples are below. Captain Unity (Mentioned in *Digital Hero #15*), and Monstro, the Horror from Beyond Space! (also mentioned in *Digital Hero #15*).

While Captain Unity requires a great deal of changing, Monstro, due to his nature as Evil Dimensional Alien/Giant Rampaging Monster, remains largely unchanged. Monstro can easily be adapted to be one of the creatures on Monster Island (*Digital Hero #32, 33, 36*), should he be trapped in his giant form. Heroes are doable in one of two ways. One is to completely rewrite the character and redesign it. But the more simple method, especially if you love the character or the classics, is this: One character, two Skills, Perks, and Talents lists, two backgrounds, and two Disadvantage lists. This maximizes design potential and character development without sacrificing concept. Ironically, Monstro is precisely the opposite, as he is two character sheets (Using Multiform), and one background. Since minor modifications are possible, two full character sheets will be printed for easy reference and to avoid confusion.



## Captain Unity

**Background/History:** Carlton Wolfowitz's parents fled Germany after the first Great War, in the early 1920's. Their prospects were not good, as their father had to get a wheelbarrow just to collect his paycheck, and even then, they could barely make ends meet. Their trip across the ocean was made in steerage, and Carlton was born only five days after the ship docked in America.

Carlton's parents made sure that he was raised American, and that he grew up strong and healthy. By the time he was thirteen, he was easily as big as most boys who were much older. But his hard-working parents always had trouble making ends meet. Most of their money went to paying the rent and keeping the children fed. Carlton's parents had raised him to be a straight arrow, and he always learned his lessons, and learned to speak English as an American would. His parents never spoke a word of German in the house, except when he wasn't around.

Carlton ran away from home to join the army at the age of fifteen. He was big, so he could easily pass, and his parents didn't know where he was until he started sending them his paychecks to spend late in the summer of 1936. He kept his Jewishness secret from his fellow soldiers, changing his name to Hughes on his registration papers. Some of them may have sympathized with the Hitler fellow across the ocean, and he was afraid of their reaction. He returned to a stateside position, the Army assigned him to a military attaché position defending a top secret project named Dimensional Project Z. The project was based on and directed by a Russian expatriate scientist from the original Russian Revolution, Doctor Nikolai Borodenko, with whom he became fast friends. The doctor, while eccentric, was likable enough, and he realized that while the research was basically crackpot, it was better than being far from home. Then America entered the Second World War, and Carlton had to leave Doctor Borodenko and the project behind.

Carlton fought in World War II, in the Japanese Theatre, hopping from Island to Island. He survived the Bataan Death March, and was wounded there, and was returned to his old position in the Dimensional Project, on which he was sworn to secrecy. However, funding on the project began to go sour as more and more research was poured into the project known as the Atomic Bomb.

Doctor Borodenko was obsessed with his research. It was his whole life. Carlton cautioned his friend not to press forward with the project, as it was clear that his mind had become damaged from the dangerous radiation experiments that he had been performing, and

funding to the project had almost been completely removed. Doctor Borodenko would work late into the night, with unsafe equipment, to try and complete the project that was his dream. In late December of 1945, the government decided to shut the project down, and Carlton was given the task, late at night, of removing his friend from the work that he had devoted his entire life to.

As Carlton approached the research lab, he saw strange lights flashing on the inside. He walked in to discover Doctor Borodenko, standing over a strange machine, in the center of which pulsed an unruly vortex of light, color, and sound. Yet the machine was only partially active, and Doctor Borodenko was tampering with the power switches. Carlton ordered Doctor Borodenko to shut down the machine, but Doctor Borodenko resisted, and began raising the machine to full power. Carlton struggled to shut it down, and the two old friends battled for their research, and for their very lives. As the energy expanded and shuddered, there was a thunderous explosion, and Doctor Borodenko was hurled through a window, while Carlton took the full brunt of the blast, and the building was eerily silent.

Yet, Carlton Wolfowitz lived. He was a paragon of physical perfection, his wounds healed, his body strong. His eyes glowed with the energy of Dimension Z! Through the window, Doctor Borodenko viewed himself in the rear view mirror of Carlton's car. His brilliance had multiplied a hundredfold, but he had been transformed into an apish monster, the supervillain Doctor Brutal! (Digital Hero #15, True Believers, to see more of the conflict between hero and villain!)

The United States Government was quick to conceal the existence of Dimensional Project Z, and began to conduct tests on Carlton, hoping that he could become some sort of super-government agent. Carlton could fly, he was super-strong, and he could fire beams of strange energies from his eyes! He was a superhero, like Partacel, Liberator, Americana, and the others. But the military decided to keep his existence a secret, devoting him to the defeat of sinister enemies and dangerous spies from other nations.

That lasted six months. A film was mailed to his military base from someone named "Doctor Brutal!" blackmailing of the entire nation with destruction unless the country was turned over to him. He was short, and brutish, and apish in countenance, with shambling limbs, threatening to use a device called a "Proton Bomb." Once the government was turned over to him, he would use the United States vast resources to rule the world! But for Carlton, there was no mistaking the voice of his old friend, Doctor Nikolai Borodenko...

## CAPTAIN UNITY PLOT SEEDS

*Time in a Bottle:*  
1950's Captain Unity comes to the present! What will he do when he discovers the world he left behind is completely different? Can the heroes get him home? What mistakes will he make that might get him into trouble?

*The Mysterious Disappearance of Carlton Wolfowitz:*  
Carlton's Rabbi comes to visit the heroes to ask them for help. Carlton Wolfowitz has disappeared. Perhaps the PC's can find him? In the 1950's, the PC's may or may not discover the true identity of Captain Unity. In the modern day, the heroes must discover not only who he was, but who might have him now, and why...

*A Torah for the Captain:* A new Nazi supervillain appears, and attacks Captain Unity over and over again, with attacks that are incredibly powerful against him. Do neo-nazis have access to Dimension Z? And if so, will more supervillains appear? And how did they know he was Jewish....?



Springing into action, Captain Unity went to battle his old friend, who was likely completely insane. He managed to stop the Proton Bomb with his superior strength, but Doctor Brutal escaped! The government decided, in order to preserve Carlton's secret, to create a comic book company called Mighty Comics, which would preserve the existence of Doctor Brutal and Captain Unity as fictional characters. The trick worked.

Eventually, the government recruited other superbeings to aid Captain Unity in his battle against Doctor Brutal and other threats against America, as Doctor Brutal created allies and gained minions. The secret superpowered arms race was on!

**Personality/Motivation:** Captain Unity is a true-blue honest to god superhero, fighting for Truth, Justice, and the American Way. He will never kill, he protects innocents, and he goes to Temple every Saturday morning in secret. He is a defender of justice, and always upholds the law and obeys the orders of his superiors, assuming that they do not turn out to be evil. He always tries to do the right thing. Captain Unity would never betray the United States of America; he's a hero's hero!

**Quote:** "By the Power of Dimension Z, I am Captain Unity!"

"That's enough! People will never yield to a madman like you!"

"Step away from the Seismotron, Doctor! You've shaken your last tree!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Captain Unity usually flies right into the thick of things, trusting to his superior defenses and high strength to carry him through. He usually only uses his Univision and other special abilities when the need is dire, because of their higher endurance cost. He will usually abort actions to support buildings, catch innocent people that have been hurled, and the like. His word is his bond. He likes to appear impervious, using his flight to resist knockback.

**Campaign Use:** Captain Unity is a superhero for a secret government organization. Unless the PC's work for the government, it is unlikely that he will be encountered, as the government has gone to a great deal of trouble to conceal his actions from the world. Should he be discovered, and your PC's not work for the government, this could produce significant roleplaying and combat challenges for the player characters in a Golden Age game. Will they agree to cover it up? Or will they fight against the government to expose the truth? What side will Captain Unity take in the conflict?

If your Golden Age game is lower powered, reduce Captain Unity's Strength to 35 and his SPD to 4. Reduce his attacks to 40 Active Points instead of 50, and lower his defenses to 25 and 20. Remove one of his combat skill levels.

If for some reason, your Golden Age game is higher powered than this, increase Captain Unity's Strength to 50, increase his multipower to 60 or even 75 points, remove the increased endurance cost on the Multipower, and increase his defenses to 35 and 30.

Add power and mental defense, and increase his EGO to reflect his superheroic iron will.

Increase his DEX to 26 and his CON to 33. Add two Combat Skill Levels.

**Appearance:** Carlton Wolfowitz is six foot two, and weighs 225 pounds. A powerfully built, redheaded man, he is well muscled and trim of figure. He usually wears tailored suits when he is not a superhero, as most people did during that time period. He does not wear a Yarmulke in public.

As Captain Unity, Carlton wears a red, white, and black outfit with stars up and down the torso, the stripes vaguely reminiscent of the American Flag. His face is covered with a three quarter mask, covering his red hair. The boots and gloves are black, and the majority of the outfit is red and white. The arms are blue dominant, and the torso is red dominant.

**Note:** Not all of Captain Unity's history after his origin is listed here. This is to make him more playable in your game if you wish to change things.

Captain Unity



**Captain Unity**

Val	Cha	Cost	Roll	Notes
45	STR	35	18-	12 tons, 9d6 HTH [4]
21	DEX	33	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
28	CON	36	15-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 17-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
25	PRE	15	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
24	COM	7	14-	
29	PD	20		Total: 29 PD (15 rPD)
26	ED	20		Total: 26 ED (15 rED)
5	SPD	19		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
15	REC	0		
56	END	0		
55	STUN	3		

**Total Characteristic Cost: 211**

**Movement:**

Running:	6"/12"
Leaping:	9"/18"
Swimming:	2"/4"
Flight:	15"/120"

Cost	Powers	END
35	<i>Dimension Z Energy Powers:</i> Multipower, 52-point Reserve; Increased Endurance Cost (2x END, -1/2)	0
3u	<i>Dimension Z Optic Blast (Uni-Vision):</i> 10d6 EB; Increased Endurance Cost (2x END, -1/2)	10
3u	<i>Vitality Drain Ray:</i> Drain CON 3d6, Ranged (+1/2), Delayed Return Rate (5 per Minute, +1/4); Increased Endurance Cost (2x END, -1/2)	10
3u	<i>Dimension Z Eyebeams:</i> RKA 3d6+1; Increased Endurance Cost (2x END, -1/2)	10
1u	<i>Unity Fist:</i> HA +4d6 (13d6 with STR); HA (-1/2), Increased Endurance Cost (2x END, -1/2)	+4
15	<i>Dimension Z Toughness:</i> Damage Resistance (15 PD/15 ED)	0
5	<i>Dimensional Resistance:</i> Power Defense (5 points)	0
10	<i>Looking into Dimension Z:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points)	0
50	<i>Sustaining Energy of Dimension Z:</i> Life Support (Total, including Immortality)	0
35	<i>Energy Propulsion:</i> Flight 15", 8x Noncombat	3
15	<i>Dimension Z Awareness:</i> Enhanced Perception, +5 PER	0
32	<i>Z Vision:</i> Spatial Awareness, 360°	0

**Perks**

- 8 Base and Vehicle Contribution
- 3 Federal Police Powers
- 3 Security Clearance: Attached to US Armed Forces

**Talents**

- 1 Environmental Movement: Dimension Z

**Skills**

- 16 +2 Combat Skill Levels
- 5 +1 with Hand to Hand Combat
- 3 Bureaucratics 14-
- 3 Climbing 13-
- 3 Combat Driving 13-
- 3 Combat Piloting 13-
- 3 Conversation 14-
- 3 Cryptography 14-
- 3 Deduction 13-
- 3 Defense Maneuver I
- 3 Demolitions 12-
- 3 KS: Superpowered World 12-
- 3 KS: U.S. Military 12-
- 3 Language: German (Conversation, Read/Write)
- 3 Language: Russian (Conversation, Read/Write)
- 3 Navigation (Land) 13-
- 3 Oratory 14-
- 3 Paramedics 12-
- 3 Persuasion 14-
- 9 Power (EGO-Based) 15-
- 3 PS: Soldier 12-
- 3 PS: Superhero 12-
- 3 SS: Mathematics 12-
- 3 SS: Physics 12-
- 3 Systems Operation 12-
- 3 Tactics 12-
- 3 Teamwork 13-

**Total Powers and Skills Cost: 324**

**Total Cost: 535**

**200+ Disadvantages**

- 15 Hunted: Dr. Brutallos and the Alliance of Evil 8- (Mo Pow)
- 10 Hunted: Monstro, the Horror From Beyond Space 8- (Mo Pow)
- 15 Hunted: U.S. Government 14- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Always Keeps His Word (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Code vs. Killing Humans (Common, Total)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Protects Innocents (Common, Total)
- 5 Social Limitation: Real Name is Carlton Wolfowitz
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Colonel Carlton Hughes)
- 10 Vulnerability: 1 1/2 x STUN and BODY from Dimensional Energy Attacks (Uncommon)
- 215 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 535**



heroes? And can he manipulate them into fighting the monolith if he can't? What will happen if Monstro does go home? Can Earth be saved from his mighty army?

his transformation ends. Monstro never stays transformed for more than twelve hours. He must burn off the Dimension Z charge in his system before returning to normal. Monstro will breathe angry clouds of dreaded Dimension Z gas at the angry gnats who swat at him, and crush them with his mighty fists in his giant form. Tactics are few.

Monstro can fly in his smaller form, but he is FAR too large and heavy to fly anywhere in his giant form. Monstro's flight is not bought with the Restrained limitation because of his great strength.

In contrast to his great abilities and territorial conquests, in his 3' high form, Monstro speaks in a high-pitched, nasal voice.

**Campaign Use:** There are a variety of ways to use Monstro in a campaign. He can either be an intelligent manipulator or a helpless victim. Monstro can try to manipulate the PC's into returning home, so that he can gather his army and return to crush this dimension under his mighty (albeit short) heel, or another villain can somehow capture Monstro and threaten to bombard him with the energies of Dimension Z, unleashing a horrible rampage upon a city while the villain commits wicked crimes elsewhere. As an alternative to this, Monstro can threaten to bombard himself with Dimension Z energy, knowing what the result will be, if he is not returned to his native dimension. PCs should have to creatively think their way around Monstro in his giant monster form, beating him down should be excessively difficult.

To make Monstro in his giant form tougher, raise his strength by 50, his breath weapon by 80 active points, increase all of his defenses by ten, and give him more levels. More reach is largely unnecessary, as by that point he can hurl battleships or other gargantuan objects around like small toys. To weaken Monstro, lower his STR to 75, drop all of his defenses by 5, remove the damage reduction, and lower his DEX to 15.

To make Monstro in his small form tougher, increase all of his attacks by 30 active points, and raise his defenses by five points each. Increase his DEX to 30, and his SPD to 8. Raise his END to 80, and his STUN to 90. Add 2 combat skill levels. To weaken the smaller form, drop all of his attacks and his STR to the 50 AP level. Remove five points of his defenses and take away two of his combat skill levels.

Monstro belongs to the Alien class of minds.

To update Monstro to the modern era, change his Hunteds. He is one of the few characters that needs very little updating. In a standard Champions Universe campaign, these Hunteds can be replaced with Primus and UNTIL. In other games, the possibilities are endless.

**Appearance:** In his three-foot form, Monstro is a green, scaly, lizardlike creature with a broad, fanged apelike lower jaw. Four muscular arms protrude from the his shoulders, and his thick, broad legs lead down to powerful, clawed feet with three digits each. Monstro has four fingers on each hand, and a thumb. Large green wings protrude from the squat monsters back. He typically wears orange spandex trunks that hug his legs, the only thing the US government had in his size while they were keeping him prisoner.

As a giant monster, Monstro looks much the same, only he stands over 150 feet tall. A dim glint of intelligence rests behind massive eyes, and his bellow can be heard for several miles.



## DIGITAL HERO #47

### Monstro, the Horror from Beyond Space!

Val	Cha	Cost	Roll	Notes
90	STR	80	26-	6 kTons; 18d6 HTH [9]
20	DEX	20	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
50	CON	80	19-	
30	BODY	40	15-	
3	INT	-7	9-	PER Roll: 9-
25	EGO	30	14-	ECV: 8
50	PRE	40	19-	PRE Attack: 10d6
4	COM	-3		
40	PD	30		Total: 40 PD (40 rPD)
40	ED	30		Total: 40 ED (40 rED)
4	SPD	10		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
30	REC	4		
100	END	0		
100	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 354**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
Leaping: 18"/36"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
60	<i>Giant Arms:</i> Stretching 14", Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); Always Direct (-1/4), No Noncombat Stretching (-1/4), No Velocity Damage (-1/4)	0
112	<i>Breath Weapon of Z!:</i> 5d6 RKA, Area Effect (34" Cone, +1), Reduced Endurance (1/2 END, +1/4); No Range (-1/2)	8
30	<i>Foot Thick Scales:</i> Damage Resistance (20 PD/20 ED), Hardened (2x, +1/2)	0
20	<i>Dimensionally Energized Scales:</i> Hardened for 40 PD and 40 ED	0
30	<i>Impervious to Harm:</i> Physical Damage Reduction 50%, Resistant	0
30	<i>Absorption of Energy:</i> Energy Damage Reduction 50%, Resistant	0
25	<i>Dimension Z Shield:</i> Power Defense (20 points), Hardened (+1/4)	0
20	<i>Energy Infusion:</i> Lack of Weakness -10 for Normal and Resistant	0
20	<i>Weighs Tons:</i> Knockback Resistance -10"	0
5	<i>Four Arms:</i> Extra Limbs (2)	0
27	<i>Dimension Z Vision:</i> Spatial Awareness, 360°	0
120	<i>Energy Conservation:</i> Multiform to 600-point Smaller Dimension Z Monster	0

#### Talents

30 *Alertness Beyond Alertness:* Danger Sense (Out of Combat, All Attacks) 14-

#### Skills

5 +1 with Hand-to-Hand Combat  
3 Defense Maneuver I

**Total Powers and Skills Cost: 537**

**Total Cost: 891**

#### 200+ Disadvantages

25 *Distinctive Features:* Giant Green Four Armed, Ape-Jawed, Lizardlike Monster Over 150 feet High (Not Concealable, Extreme Reaction)  
25 *Enraged:* When Attacked (Go 11-, Recover 8-, Berserk)  
20 *Hunted:* PRIMUS 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)  
20 *Hunted:* UNTIL 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)  
10 *Physical Limitation:* Reverts to Smaller Form Automatically after 12 Hours (Frequently, Greatly)  
20 *Psychological Limitation:* Attacks Anything That Moves (Common, Strong)  
20 *Psychological Limitation:* Destructive (Common, Total)  
10 *Reputation:* Giant Rampaging Monster 11-  
541 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 891**

**Monstro, the Horror from Beyond Space! (Genius Form)**

Val	Cha	Cost	Roll	Notes
60	STR	50	21-	100 tons, 12d6 HTH [6]
23	DEX	39	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
30	CON	40	15-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
23	INT	13	14-	PER Roll: 14-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
25	PRE	15	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
30	PD	18		Total: 30 PD (15 rPD)
25	ED	19		Total: 25 ED (15 rED)
6	SPD	27		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
20	REC	4		
60	END	0		
60	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 250**

**Movement:**

Running:	6"/12"
Leaping:	12"/24"
Swimming:	2"/4"
Flight:	17"/34"

Cost	Powers	END
60	<i>Eyes of Monstro:</i> Multipower, 60-point Reserve	0
6u	1) <i>Mindgrab:</i> Telepathy 10d6 [Human]	6
6u	2) <i>Mindgrab:</i> Telepathy 10d6 [Alien]	6
6u	3) <i>Weakening Gaze:</i> Drain STR 4d6, Ranged (+½)	6
6u	4) <i>Gaze of Dimension Z:</i> Entangle (8 DEF, 4d6 BODY)	6
37	<i>Monstro's Power Rod:</i> Multipower, 75-point Reserve; OAF (Power Rod, -1)	0
4u	1) <i>Dimension Z Power Blast:</i> EB 12d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼); OAF (-1)	3
4u	2) <i>Vitality Drain:</i> Drain CON 4d6, Ranged (+½), Delayed Return Rate (5 per Minute, +¼); OAF (-1)	7
4u	3) <i>Grasp of Dimension Z:</i> Telekinesis (50 STR); OAF (-1)	7
4u	4) <i>Burst of Light:</i> Sight Group Flash 12d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼); OAF (-1)	3
15	<i>Tough Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (15 PD/15 ED)	0
5	<i>Dimensional Resistance:</i> Power Defense (5 points)	0
12	<i>Staring into the Vortex:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (12 points)	0
10	<i>Sturdy and Squat:</i> Knockback Resistance -5"	0
4	<i>Sustained by Dimension Z:</i> Life Support (Lives 1600 years)	0
55	<i>Muscular Wings:</i> Flight 17", 8x NCM, Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼)	1
5	<i>Four Arms:</i> Extra Limbs (Four Arms)	0

**Skills**

16	+2 with All Combat
10	+2 DCV (Monstro is Small)
5	Defense Maneuver II
3	AK: Dimension Z 14-
3	Animal Handler 15- (Dimension Z Animals)
3	Concealment 14-
3	Contortionist 14-
3	Conversation 14-
3	High Society 14-
3	Interrogation 14-
3	KS: Dimension Z Residents 14-
4	Language: English (Dimension Z-Speak is Native)
3	Mimicry 14-
3	Navigation (Dimension Z) 15-
3	Oratory 14-
3	Persuasion 14-
3	Power (Eyes of Monstro) 13-
3	Power (Power Rod) 13-
3	PS: Ruler of Dimension Z 14-
3	Shadowing 14-
3	Stealth 14-
12	Survival (All Categories) 14-
3	Tactics 14-
3	Tracking 14-
3	Trading 14-

**Total Powers and Skills Cost: 350**

**Total Cost: 600**

**200+ Disadvantages**

10	Accidental Change: When Exposed to Dimension Z Radiation Attacks (Uncommon), 11-
20	Distinctive Features: Short, Squat Four Armed Dimension Z Monster (Concealable, Causes Shock and Terror)
20	Hunted: Super Six 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
20	Hunted: US Government 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
10	Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Those Who Do Not Treat Him as the Ruler of Dimension Z (Uncommon, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Overconfident (Common, Strong)
10	Psychological Limitation: Vengeful (Uncommon, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Will Do Anything to Return Home (Common, Strong)
10	Vulnerability: 1½x Effect from Drains and Transfers
20	Vulnerability: 1½x STUN and BODY from Ice Attacks
250	Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 600**