

DIGITAL HERO

#30

MAY 2005



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DIGITAL HERO

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Issue #30 (May 2005)



When Last We Left Our Heroes...

by Steven S. Long

This month, we put *Dark Champions* and *Champions* in a blender and whip up a little concoction we like to call *Dark Champions: The Animated Series!*

Lots of gamers enjoy the thrills and excitement of *Dark Champions* crimefighting – but the “realism,” violence, squalor, treachery, and pure vigilantism found in many *Dark Champions* campaigns isn’t their cup of tea. They’d rather tone the violence down a bit and get away from the “grittiness” so they can have more strangeness, weirdness, and powers in their characters and campaigns. That’s the great thing about the *HERO System*: it lets you mix and mingle to create what *you* want.

In this case, what you get is *Dark Champions: The Animated Series*. The “animated series” style of campaign focuses on the less grim side of vigilante crimefighting: caped crusaders with vigilante style but who refuse to kill; low-powered superheroes who fight street crime instead of world-threatening supervillains; “theme” villains with clever costumes and psychotic minds. As the name indicates, the main inspiration for this subgenre is popular cartoons like *Batman: The Animated Series*, but you can find plenty of other examples of DC:TAS in the comics and movies.

Chapter One, *Stalking The Night*, discusses the “animated series” subgenre in general – how it differs from mainstream *Dark Champions* and *Champions* games, the sorts of characters that are appropriate (and how to design them), and how to GM the subgenre. It’s not a long chapter, but it’s packed with useful advice and suggestions, including the Thug Rule and expanded rules for the *Deduction* Skill.

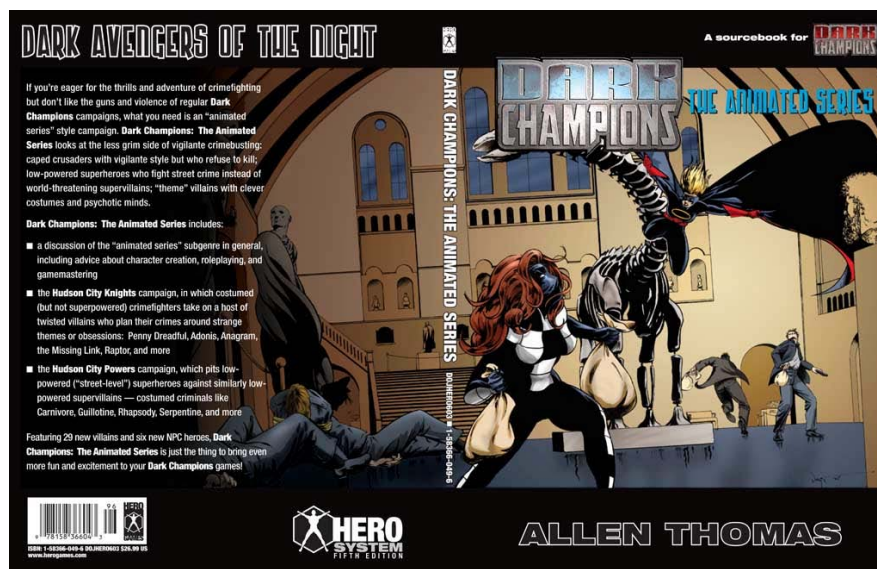
Chapter Two, *Hudson City Knights*, focuses on the first type of DC:TAS campaign: one in which there are no superpowers *per se* – the heroes and villains are normal people, albeit well-trained and -equipped ones. Many villains, and more than a few heroes, have a “theme” that influences their costumes, weapons, and activities. Chapter Two includes several NPC heroes and plenty of villains to get the GM started, including Penny Dreadful, Adonis, Anagram, the Missing Link, Raptor, and more.

Chapter Three, *Hudson City Powers*, looks at the other type of DC:TAS game: the low-powered (or “street-level”) superheroes game, in which the heroes and villains alike often have minor superhuman abilities – nothing as powerful as what you’d see in a typical *Champions* campaign, but mighty impressive to the average street punk! It, too, provides some NPC heroes and lots of villains (such as Carnivore, Guillotine, Rhapsody, and Serpentine) for the GM to pit against the intrepid player characters.

Additionally, Chapters Two and Three have some notes about how to adapt existing *Champions* and *Dark Champions* villains to Hudson City Knights and Powers campaigns, respectively. Plenty of existing Hero Games characters like Black Harlequin, Card Shark, Lazer, and Scorpia fit the DC:TAS subgenre just fine with a few tweaks.

So make sure your utility belt is fully equipped and your swingline’s in good repair – it’s time to stalk the night-dimmed streets with *Dark Champions: The Animated Series!*

— Steven S. Long
HERO System Line Developer



HEROglyphs by Steven S. Long

Taking Advantage

BUILDING ABILITIES WITH META-POWERS AND ADVANTAGES

Long, long ago in a galaxy far, far away – Virginia in 1988, to be precise – Hero Games was busy conceptualizing and working on the fourth edition of the *HERO System* rules. Since the change from Third to Fourth Edition involved bringing together and harmonizing the rules from various books Hero Games had published during the 1980s, many different proposals for how to present the rules were offered.

According to what I've been told, one of the proposals was to reduce the number of Powers to just four – Attack, Defend, Move, and Sense. Gamers could then “build” the other Powers from previous editions by applying Advantages (or, in some cases, Limitations). This proposal was rejected, and I think rightly so – it has a real potential to cause game balance problems, makes it difficult to define some Powers, and would, I believe, make the *HERO System* harder for most people to learn. Nevertheless, it's an intriguing idea, so in this column I'm going to explore it *briefly*, using Attack Powers and Movement Powers as an example. Instead of a slew of Powers covering those two categories, under this scheme, there would be two Powers – Attack and Move – with defined rules, and gamers would then apply Advantages to alter how those Powers work.

Of course, there are other ways to approach this type of design. you could use all of the 5th Edition Power categories – Adjustment, Attack, Body-Affecting, and so on – instead of just Attack, Defend, Move, Sense. This is just a short experiment, not elaborately explored or playtested, and so not necessarily how I'd end up doing such a rules system for publication... but that's part of the fun of this column. ;)

ATTACK

Type: Attack Power

Duration: Instant

Target: Target's DCV

Range: 5" x Active Points

Costs END: Yes

Cost: 5 Character Points for every 1d6 of Attack

This Power allows a character to attack at Range, doing Normal Damage. The character must define the special effects of his Attack and whether Physical Defense or Energy Defense protects against it.

The following Power Modifiers apply to customize Attack to simulate various Powers:

Darkness (+0 or +1): Attack does not inflict damage, but instead blocks one Sense Group in a 1" radius – +0 for a Nontargeting Sense Group, +1 for a Targeting Sense Group – and becomes a Constant Power. Each additional Targeting Sense Group is an additional +½ Advantage; each additional Nontargeting Sense Group is an additional + Advantage; each doubling of the radius affected (2", 3-4", 5-8", and so on) is a +¼ Advantage.

Dispel (-½): Attack does not inflict damage; it must achieve a total Effect Roll equal to or greater than the Active Points in a target power to stop that power from functioning altogether.

Drain (+1): Attack reduces any one Characteristic or Power (defined when Power is bought), applies against Power Defense, and has No Range.

Ego Attack (+1): Attack becomes a Mental Power (*i.e.*, its Range becomes Line Of Sight, it applies against Mental Defense, and so forth) and only inflicts STUN damage.

Energy Blast (+0): No changes.

Entangle (+1): Attack does not inflict damage, it restrains the target. The restraint has 1d6 of BODY and 1 DEF.

Flash (-½, +0): Attack does not inflict damage. Instead, it temporarily blinds one Sense Group: -½ for a Nontargeting Sense Group, +0 for a Targeting Sense Group. Each additional Targeting Sense Group is an additional +½ Advantage; each additional Nontargeting Sense Group is an additional +¼ Advantage

Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½): Attack still inflicts Normal Damage. It has No Range, but the dice purchased add to the character's Normal Damage from STR provided he's able to inflict at least ½d6 damage with STR alone.

Images (+½, +1½): Attack does not inflict damage, but instead creates images that affect one Sense Group in a 1" radius – +½ for a Nontargeting Sense Group, +½ for a Targeting Sense Group – and becomes a Constant Power. Each additional Targeting Sense Group is an additional +½ Advantage; each additional Nontargeting Sense Group is an additional +¼ Advantage; each doubling of the radius affected (2", 3-4", 5-8", and so on) is a +¼ Advantage. PER Roll modifiers cost additional Character Points as usual, and all Advantages apply to them.



Killing Attack, Hand-To-Hand (+2): Attack inflicts Killing Damage instead of Normal Damage. It has No Range. The character can use his STR to increase the damage done by HKA, but unlike Hand-To-Hand Attack a character can still use his HKA at its base damage even if he can't or won't use his STR.

Killing Attack, Ranged (+2): Attack inflicts Killing Damage instead of Normal Damage.

Mental Illusions (+1): Attack becomes a Mental Power (*i.e.*, its Range becomes Line Of Sight, it applies against Mental Defense, and so forth) and creates illusions in the target's mind instead of inflicting damage.

Mind Control (+1): Attack becomes a Mental Power (*i.e.*, its Range becomes Line Of Sight, it applies against Mental Defense, and so forth) and allows a character to take control of the target's mind.

Suppress (+1½): Attack reduces any one Characteristic or Power (defined when Power is bought), applies against Power Defense, and becomes Constant.

Telekinesis (+0): Attack becomes, in effect, STR usable at Range (though it does not add to the character's regular STR), with 3 STR for every 1d6 Normal Damage that Attack would do, and gains some "Indirect" properties.

Transfer (+2): Attack reduces any one of target's Characteristic or Power (defined when Power is bought), increases any one of character's Characteristics or Powers (defined when Power is bought) by the same amount, applies against Power Defense, and has No Range.

Transform (+0, +1, +2): Attack alters target in some way – +0 for Cosmetic, +1 for Minor, +2 for Major.

MOVE

Type: Movement Power

Duration: Constant

Target: Self

Range: Self

Costs END: Yes

Cost: 2 Character Points for every 1" of Move

This Power allows a character to move from place to place in some manner. As a default, the character can move in all three dimensions. The following Power Modifiers apply to customize Move to simulate various Powers:

Extra-Dimensional Movement (N/A):

Although it's technically a Movement Power, Extra-Dimensional Movement doesn't relate well to the other Movement Powers for purposes of this rules structure. It would need to be created as a separate Power (thus illustrating one

of the drawbacks of the "four Powers plus Advantages" approach – not everything fits neatly into that framework).

Faster-Than-Light (FTL) Travel (N/A):

Again, FTL Travel doesn't work very well with this arrangement. After the base 10 Character Points are paid, every 2 Character Points spent double the FTL speed.

Flight (+0): The character can move through the air.

Gliding (-½): The character can move through the air, but subject to the rules for Gliding (he can rarely gain altitude, has to descend as he moves forward, and so forth). However, Gliding costs no END.

Leaping (+0): The character can leap through the air, over things, and the like; he can add his base inches of Leaping (typically 2") to the inches purchased.

Running (+0): The character can only move along the ground, but can add his base inches of Running (typically 6") to the inches purchased.

Swimming (-¾): The character can only move through the water, but can add his base inches of Swimming (typically 2") to the inches purchased.

Swinging (-1): The character can move through the air, but only by using some sort of "swingline" that restricts his movement path.

Teleportation (+0): The character can move from one point to another without crossing the intervening physical space. He has no velocity and thus cannot perform Move Bys/Throughs or the like, and Noncombat Movement works slightly differently for this form of movement.

Tunneling (-½): The character can move in three dimensions, but only through the ground or other solid substances of 1 DEF or less. Every +1 DEF costs 3 Character Points in addition to the cost of the inches; the *Tunneling* Limitation and some other Limitations cannot be applied to these extra points.



You Gotta Have Character

by Jason Walters

“Any fool can make history, but it takes a genius to write it.” — Oscar Wilde

The bow of the ship rose up and down like a furious horse trying to break free from its master. Within its meager timbers sailors scurried desperately this way and that tying down lines, lashing bales of supplies into place, and erecting the protective tent that ran across the entire length of the craft. Men who were far more used to the temperate climes of the Mediterranean than the frigid temperatures of the northern seas, they understandably wanted to be ready when it started: freezing sleet that would rake across the small craft like countless arrows launched from the bows of those tiny people that the Kassiterides so fervently believed in.

Of course, the Kassiterides spent a lot of their time carving boulders into giant stone phalluses, so it was a little hard to take them completely seriously.

Pytheas was scribbling furiously on one of his scrolls as he manipulated the strange instruments that he used to guide us on our equally strange voyage. He seemed oblivious to the coming squall as well the desperate preparations of the ship's sailors. Typical.

“Pytheas!” I yelled into his ear as the wind whipped about us, “The ship can't survive another storm like the last one! She just isn't designed to stay upright in this kind of weather with this much cargo weighing her down.”

In our hold lay almost a ton of refined tin that we'd traded with the Kassiterides. Valuable stuff; if we all made it home we would be wealthy men. Unfortunately, that was looking increasingly like a very big “if.”

“The Thulians say that if we continue going this way,” he yelled back at me as he pointed in a seemingly random direction, “that we shall reach the northernmost land at the top of the world. Once we discover it we can set up a base that will allow us to travel anywhere in the globe in a fraction of the time! Then we can turn Massalia into the richest city on earth!”

“Globe my grandfather's toga! The Thulians worship trees and kill each other with stone hatchets! Sages and

philosophers they are most certainly not. What we are going to do is fall off the edge of the world if we don't turn back!”

Pytheas shook his head sadly.

“How many times must I tell you Herodotus; the world is not flat. It is shaped like an orange, not a map! Have our travels not taught you at least this much?”

I had to admit that the sage-navigator had been right so far. The days had been getting longer even as they'd grown steadily colder; just as he predicted. We hadn't gotten lost yet on our voyage either; again, just as he'd predicted. But I still didn't believe a word of it down in my bones. Any day we were going to get pulled off the edge of the world by monstrous tides and consumed by equally monstrous serpents. I could just tell.

I actually smiled at the thought. It was, after all, more appealing than freezing to death.

“Land ho!” screamed Thermodon, interrupting my thoughts as he pointed at the horizon in front of us. Pytheas had been right again. A sheer wall of black and forbidding cliffs practically leapt out of the sea ahead, snow covered and terrible in their majesty. Still, a stretch of ice-filled dangerous water lay between this “farthest northern” land and us. I wasn't at all certain that we had any chance of actually reaching it, but if we did and it were full of yet more foul smelling, red haired, tattoo-covered giants insisting that there was yet another nation a few weeks further north.... well, hitting Pytheas over the head and heading back to the Mediterranean seemed like the best course of action.

The sage-navigator was looking at me smugly.

“This land looks yet even more hospitable than the last few wind-swept rocks inhabited by heavily armed barbarians we stopped at.” I snapped at him. “With any luck a Cyclops will emerge from his cave with a healthy appetite for Greek bookworms and spare us yet another month of freezing our sandals off.”

ANCIENT GREEK WEAPONS AND ARMOR

Composite Bow:

The ancient Greeks took great pride in their bows, which they carried in special combination holsters on their sides that also held their arrows. They were made of three distinct materials. The bow's core consists of five pieces of laminated wood: a central grip, two arms, and two tips with nocks for bowstrings. Once the pieces were glued together, a timber skeleton was steamed into the bow's curve. Finally, strips of compressible horn were glued to the belly of the bow. A typical bow of this type could take up to six months to complete.

Hoplon: A large oblong bronze-faced shield with an armband rather than a handgrip (although a cord was looped round the inside of the shield for grasping purposes), it protected a warrior's body from his nose to his knee and fitted around the body in a concave shape.

Kamax: This five-foot long spear could be used either one- or two-handed. It's leaf shaped, unbarbed bronze head was mounted on a sturdy ash shaft that ended in a “butt spike” so that it could be planted in



the ground to receive a cavalry charge.

Xiphos: A slashing weapon worn slung from a baldric over the right shoulder, this weapon was more generally known as a “hoplite sword” after the heavily armored soldiers that favored them (*hopla* means heavy defensive armor). It had a long straight blade that tapered slightly from the hilt to the point. Xiphos were made from high quality, twice tempered polished carbon steel and carried in ornately decorated scabbards.

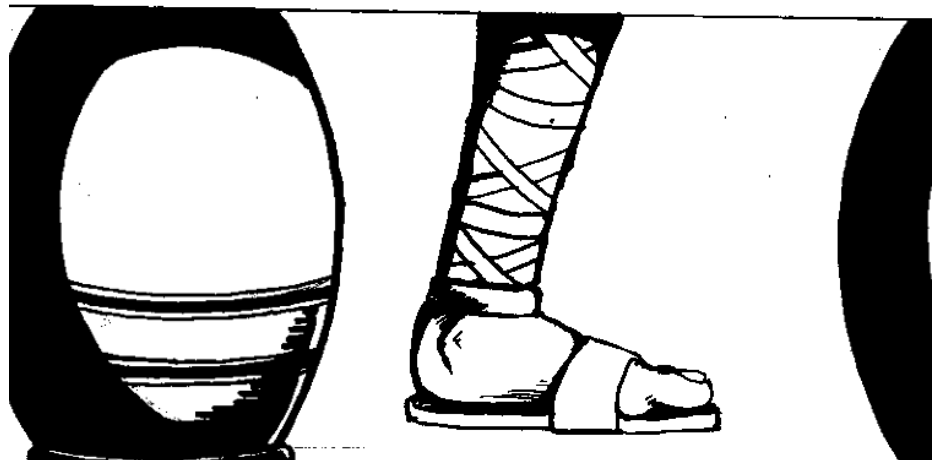
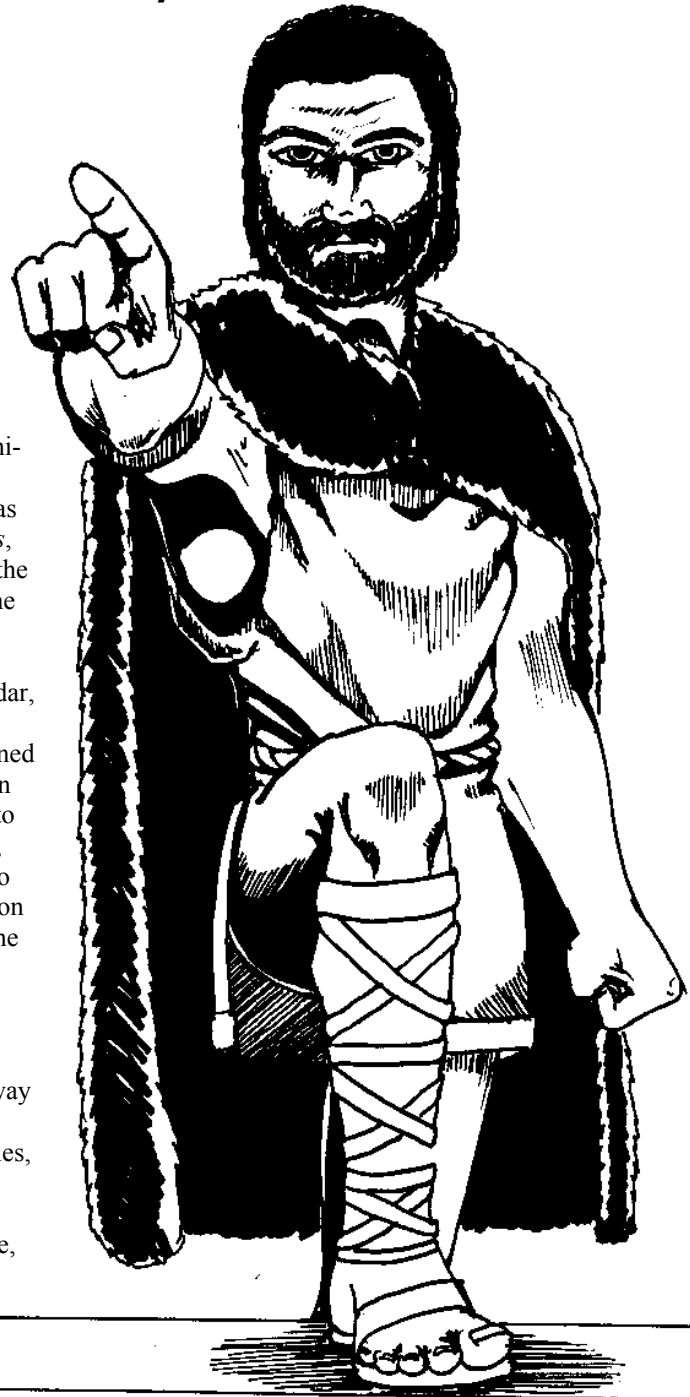
THE KYRENIA

Pytheas’ ship is a narrow beamed, single-masted trading vessel some fifty feet in length named the *Kyrenia*. Its single square sail measures some 64 square yards and hangs from a single beam attached to the top of the mast. Although a shallow keeled vessel isn’t made to withstand serious Atlantic storms, it does well enough in calm weather or mild squalls. Lacking any sort of cabin, the ship’s passengers and crew sleep under a long tent that is stretched from stem to stern at night or in foul weather. In still weather or when in port, six oars can be deployed to row the ship. The *Kyrenia* is

Pytheas just smiled at me for a moment. Then he gazed northward at the newest unknown land to be stumbled across, fingering a scroll case as he thought about all the wonderful notes he would soon be taking. I sighed to myself. For this, I fought for the great King Philip of Macedon at the battle of Tessaglia? Both the old man *and* his brat son Alexander would be laughing themselves sick if they could see me right now.

The ancient Greeks believed in a semi-mythical northern people whom they referred to as *Hyperboreans*. This race was believed to live beyond the rule of *Boreas*, god of the North Wind. A happy people, the Hyperboreans were believed to be immune to disease, famine, and even mortality. “With shining laurel wreaths about their locks of hair,” wrote the ancient poet Pindar, “they hold feasts out of sheer joy. Illness cannot touch them, nor is death foreordained for this exalted race.” But at least one man wasn’t content to sit by the fire listening to tall tales of the far north. The geographer, explorer, and merchant Pytheas decided to gain more tangible knowledge of the region by organizing an expedition. In 350 BC, he left his home city of Massalia (now Marseille), slipped past the Phoenician blockade on the Straits of Gibraltar, and headed north along the western coast of what is now France. Stopping along the way to learn Gallic from the people he encountered, he then continued on to Wales, Scotland, Scandinavia, Germany, and possibly Iceland. He recorded his many astute observations on the weather, people, animals, and navigational problems he encountered along the way in a now lost work entitled *On the Ocean*.

Pytheas



DIGITAL HERO #30

Pytheas

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	150 kg; 2½d6 HTH [1]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5(7)
18	CON	16	13-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
7	PD	4		Total: 7 PD (0 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 6 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
7	REC	0		
40	END	2		
35	STUN	4		

Total Characteristic Cost: 80

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

Cost Powers **END**
3 +1" Running, +1" Swimming 1

Perks

6 The *Kyrenia*

Talents

3 Bump of Direction

Skills

2 +1 with Composite Bow

2 +1 with Kamax

2 +1 with Xiphos

3 Conversation 12-

3 Deduction 13-

3 High Society 12-

5 Navigation (Land, Marine) 14-

3 Persuasion 12-

4 Survival (Arctic/Subarctic, Arctic/
Subarctic Coasts, Arctic/Subarctic
Forests, Marine) 13-

2 TF: Small Rowed Boats, Small Wind-
Powered Boats

3 Trading 12-

3 WF: Blades, Bows, Polearms, and Spears

3 Linguist

0 1) Language: Greek (Native)

1 2) Language: Celtic (Conversation)

4 3) Language: Gallic (Idiomatic, Literate)

1 4) Language: Phoenician (Conversation)

1 5) Language: Scandinavian (Conversation)

Weapon	Damage	STR	Min	Shots
Composite Bow	1½d6	9		10r
Kamax	1½d6	10		
Xiphos	1d6+1	12		
Shield	DCV	BODY	DEF	
Hoplun	+2	4	5	

3	Scientist
2	1) SS: Astronomy 13-
3	2) SS: Geography 14-
2	3) SS: Natural Science 13-
3	Traveler
2	1) AK: British Coastline 13-
2	2) AK: Iberian Peninsula 13-
2	3) AK: Massalia (Marseille) 13-
2	4) AK: Mysterious Thule 13-
2	5) AK: Western Europe 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 80

Total Cost: 160

100+ Disadvantages

10 Hunted: The Phoenicians 8- (Mo Pow,
NCI, Limited Area, Mild)

5 Money: Poor

15 Psychological Limitation: Obsessively
Curious (Common, Strong)

10 Reputation: Crazy, Unreliable Explorer,
11-

10 Unluck: 2d6

Total Disadvantage Points: 160

The *Kyrenia*

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
6	SIZE	30	4"x 2"; -6" KB
40	STR	0	Lift 6 tons; 8d6 HTH [0]
10	DEX	0	OCV: 3/DCV: 0
16	BODY	0	
3	DEF	2	Does Not Protect Some Occupants (-¼)
3	SPD	10	Phases: 4, 8, 12

Total Characteristics Cost: 42

Movement: Ground: 0"/0"
Sailing: 5"/10"
Rowing: 4"/8"

Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Propulsion Systems	END
1	<i>Sailed Watercraft:</i> Swimming +3" (5" Total); Surface Only (-1), Sailed (-1), OAF (Sails, -1), Limited Maneuverability (-¼), Cannot Move Backwards (-¼)	1
1	<i>Rowed Watercraft:</i> Swimming +2" (4" Total); Surface Only (-1), OAF (Oars, -1), Costs Endurance (Rowers' END, -½), Increased Endurance (3x END, -1), Limited Maneuverability (-¼)	3
-12	<i>Water Vehicle:</i> Ground Movement -6" (0" Total)	

Total Ability & Equipment Cost: -10

Total Vehicle Cost: 32

Total Cost: 32/5 = 6

steered by a stern
mounted rudder that
must be manned by a
sailor at all times. The
ship has a crew of a
dozen men.

PYTHEAS QUOTES

"The name of the
enterprising sailor,
Pytheas, has come
down to us. He
appears to the
imagination, a solitary
figure framed in light,
as if a gate had swung
open between the
Pillars of Hercules
toward the western
world."

— Isabel Paterson,
*The God of the
Machine*

"Having come to
her barbaric shores
from civilized lands,
having traveled all
over her on foot, it is
fair to say that he
indeed was the true
discoverer of Britain."

— Sire Clement
Markham, *Pytheas,
Discoverer of Britain*

"Most people argue
that it was the
Norseman, Leif
Erickson, or the
Genoese, Christopher
Columbus, who
should be given credit
for first probing the
shores of the "new
world." But perhaps it
was a much earlier
explorer – many,
many centuries earlier
– named Pytheas who
deserves the honor.
We do not know. But
we do know,
categorically, that
Pytheas, the intrepid
Greek sailor and
navigator from



Massalia, deserves to join the ranks of Columbus, Erickson and the other great explorers of history. As for many of us, we are convinced that Pytheas traveled to the edge of the “new world” during the time of Alexander the Great!”

— Barry Cunliffe,
The Extraordinary Voyage of Pytheas the Greek

PYTHEAS PLOT SEEDS

An Age of Heroes:

With the civilization of the Greeks threatened not only by Phoenician militancy from without but the dark minions of Ares from within, Emperor Alexander the Great summons the best warriors, philosophers, and magi of his age from the four corners of his domain (the PCs). Their mission: to travel to far Ultima Thule at the edge of the world and seize the hammer of the Norse god Thor, the only weapon mighty enough to save Greek civilization from its enemies. Their leader: the elderly, eccentric, and possibly insane explorer Pytheas, the only man to have ever been there....

On the Shores of Hibernia: The inhabitants of the legendary island of Hibernia are a fabled race of warrior-poets, fiercely loyal to their



Pytheas

Background/History: Pytheas was born in 380 BC in the Greek colony of Massalia (today the French city of Marseille). A geographer of some repute, he longed to test several of his scientific theories by traveling to the world’s northernmost regions. Very much aware that the earth was round, Pytheas hypothesized that when the sun follows its northern path, the days become longer because the earth tapers close to the poles. Using the Pole Star to fix latitude, he made calculations that indicated the sun would not set at certain times of the year if one were standing very close to one of those poles. According to the ancient historian Posidonius, he had developed a (completely accurate) theory that the tides had a relationship with the phases of the moon by studying the beaches in northern Spain. He was also the first man to calculate the latitude of Massalia, which he determined to be 43°11’ North (very close to the modern figure of 43°18’ North for modern Marseilles).

Of course, people had been sailing between the Mediterranean and the Kassiterides Islands (Great Britain) for several centuries. Trade between northern Gaul and Britain was routine and Gallic fishermen plied the waters of the North Sea with regularity. But we know from the writings of the ancient historian Herodotus that for generations the lucrative trade between the Mediterranean peoples and the rest of the ancient world had been tightly controlled by the Phoenician colony of Carthage, who maintained a tight blockade of the Pillars of Hercules (the Straits of Gibraltar) to keep out competition. This is partially because the Kassiterides Islands were the ancient world’s principle source of tin (known as “kassiteros” in Greek) which, when blended with copper, provided the highly valued metal known as bronze. While used to make many types of tools, coins, and ornaments, this metal was especially prized for the production of swords, spears, and armor. So, in essence, the ancient Phoenicians were practicing a form of arms control by depriving the competing Greeks and other ancient civilizations of independent access to the raw materials of war.

Polybios, a historian writing a century after Pytheas’ death, informs us that the ancient astronomer, not a wealthy man, had acquired the patronage of a wealthy Greek merchant interested in establishing independent access to Welsh and Cornish tin mines. Pytheas used this wealthy man’s resources to acquire, outfit, and provision a small ship known as the *Kyrenia*. While ostensibly his purpose was to bring back a shipment of tin for profit, it is not unreasonable to assume that the geographer’s primary purpose was one of exploration and scientific experimentation. Because of his training as a

mathematician and astronomer, Pytheas had the important habit of recording all of his observations. As ship’s pilot, he had mastered the use of an ancient navigational device known as the Gnomon, a specialized sundial that helps to locate true north or true south depending on the time of year. In order to avoid the blockading Phoenicians, Pytheas slowly and carefully guided his vessel along the coastline at night for five full days before slipping through the Pillars of Hercules, a journey of about 600 nautical miles. He then turned the craft north along the Iberian seaboard and onto what is now the western coast of France. He stopped at many points along this journey to explore inland for fresh water and provisions, taking notes on geography and recording his impressions of the local inhabitants as the *Kyrenia* traveled northward.

Finally, the ancient explorers crossed the English Channel. They landed in Cornwall, where Pytheas studied the production and processing of tin ore by the local people. He recorded the Celtic name for the islands in Greek as being *Prettankike* or “land of the painted people.” The historian Diodorus later translated this into Latin as *Pretannia*, from which we have derived the modern Britannia or Britain. This is also the origin of the Latin word *Picti* from which we have derived the modern term for those most ancient British peoples: the Picts.

The *Kyrenia* sailed onward to northern Scotland where the local people told Pytheas several very interesting stories about yet another land farther to their north known as *Thule* (later recorded by Latin historians as *Ultima Thule* or “farthest Thule”). According to these hardy hill folk, in this land there were only two or three hours of night during certain times of the year. If one were to travel yet even further north he would find that the sun shone all night long at these same times. Naturally, this greatly excited Pytheas, who has already arrived at the same conclusions using his own scientific observations. He and his men set sail to the northwest, arriving six days later at a distant island that was indeed referred to as Thule by its inhabitants. Probably “Thule” was a portion of the Norwegian coastline, although it might also have been Iceland, the Shetland Islands, or the Faeroe Islands. The citizens of Thule had many habits that the Mediterranean explorer found bizarre. They were an agricultural people who lived in log and clay houses, brewed alcoholic beverages out of wheat and honey (beer and mead respectively), and stored their grain underground because of the cold. They threshed this grain in barns rather than in the open fields as were common in lands far to the south. Although these practices are common knowledge today, tales of them were considered fantasy fiction by Pytheas’ contemporaries.

Still the Greek explorer wanted to see more. The *Kyrenia* sailed yet further north, where it first encountered gigantic boat-sized fish that swam lazily on the surface of the ocean, loudly bowing out sprays of water from their foreheads. Pytheas and his men were astounded; they had never seen or even heard of whales before. Sometime thereafter, they encountered a dense, thick fog that was so eerily quiet that the explorers seemed to be suspended in a void. The sea began to “congeal” and, as the historian Strabo reported that:

Pytheas also speaks of the waters around Thule and of those places where land properly speaking no longer exists, nor sea nor air, but a mixture of these things, like a “marine lung” (ancient Geek for jellyfish), in which it is said that earth and water and all things are in suspension as if this something was a link between all these elements, on which one can neither walk nor sail.

Many modern scientists believe that Pytheas was attempting to describe “ice cakes,” a natural phenomenon that occurs at the edge of drift ice. Although the explorers had to turn back at this point, it is entirely possible that if mythical Thule were modern Iceland rather than Scandinavia (a distinct possibility as the island is only 500 nautical miles from Britain) Pytheas and his men had gotten close to the shores of Greenland (and thus North America) before the fog and slush forced them to retreat. It would not be until the 20th Century that Arctic explorers like Fridtjof Nansen and Vilhjalmur Stefansson were able to confirm the ancient scientist’s descriptions of the bizarre mixture of fog, ice, and water in those wild, frigid seas that forced Pytheas and his crew southward once more. It is therefore tantalizingly possible that this ancient voyager came close to the edge of the New World during the time of Alexander the Great, a thousand years before the Norseman Leif Erickson and fifteen hundred years before Christopher Columbus.

The *Kyrenia* returned to Britain to complete its survey then traveled south to the shallow waters along the northern German coast. It landed on the island of Helgoland (one of the ancient world’s primary sources of amber) then continued on down the Rhine and Rhone rivers. Pytheas and his men completed their journey overland, returning to Massalia a year later with a profitable load of tin as well as the detailed record of his scientific observations. The explorer then set about consolidating these records into a single volume which he entitled *On the Ocean*, a book which has unfortunately been lost to modern history (although fragments remain). His contemporaries greeted his work

with disbelief and scorn. Ancient writers and historians were convinced that it was impossible to travel north from Scotland, as the ocean must certainly turn to ice. Fortunately, although he was thought of as a liar and scoundrel by many ancient commentators (sadly including the historian Strabo), later writers considered his book an important source of information. References to his book have been found in the works of the astronomer Geminus of Rhodes, the scholiast Apollonius of Rhodes, the historian Diodorus of Sicily, and the encyclopedist Pliny the Elder.

Personality/Motivation: Pytheas is a man motivated by scientific curiosity in a time when most people are more than content to stay at home, telling one another amusing fictions by the warmth of a fire. He is also smart enough to bend his thirst for knowledge to a practical commercial venture that allows him to conduct pure scientific research while also turning a profit for his backers. While he craves most of the same pleasures that all men desire, such as wealth, respect, and popular acclaim, he is far more motivated by his curiosity than any base desire for purely temporal gain. He is meticulous and thorough in his observations; recording everything of interest in his travels on papyrus scrolls that are stored in special waterproof bone cases.

Thus, Pytheas is a daring adventurer, admittedly of a peculiar sort. While he is more than willing to take risks that other Greeks have barely even conceived, let alone contemplated, he has no particular interest in violence or conquest. He would much rather peacefully interact with the native people he encounters on his voyage than fight with them. That said, Pytheas and his men will not hesitate to defend themselves if violently attacked. Although they do not dress in the heavy armor of a hoplite soldier (too risky on the water), the men of the *Kyrenia* carry powerful composite bows, *kamaxs* (spears), and razor sharp military swords known as *xiphos*. For personal protection, they have large shields known as *hoplon* that cover most of their bodies.

Quote: “No, I am not lying to you Diorous. We were two days out of the Kassiterides Islands when we encountered them: massive fish the size of huge boats. They were swimming lazily on the surface of the ocean, blowing out enormous geysers of water from their heads like... no, no I am not pulling your leg!”

Powers/Tactics: Although he’s a capable enough fighter (various Weapon Familiarities and Combat Skill Levels), Pytheas’ strengths lie more in his abilities as a multitasking explorer, scientist, and trader. As an explorer, he possesses

clan leaders and highly suspicious of outsiders. How do these proud but isolationist people react when strange looking men in a bizarre boat land upon their shores, asking questions about the mysterious land of Thule? The PCs are shepherd-warrior-bards of the Tuatha deDanann tribe tasked by tribal elders to accompany Pytheas the Greek and the crew of the *Kyrenia* on their quest to the northern lands.

Operation Tin Hat: For generations the Picts of Cornwall have fought the twin menaces of Phoenician raiders on their shores and the dark races of undercreatures that invade their tin mines from below. Now with their numbers dwindling, a group of saviors from far Massalia have arrived to save their beleaguered race. Will Pytheas and the men of the *Kyrenia* (the PCs) teach the primitive Picts the greatest military secret known to modern man: the creation of bronze weapons? Can they teach them how to use the greatest tactic known to modern man: the phalanx? Only the great goddess Sulis knows for certain.

a canny natural sense of direction (*Bump of Direction* talent) as well as a good command of languages (various Language Skills) and locations (various AKs). Amazingly physically healthy (CON of 18), he is an able seaman and experienced hiker able to make his way by the stars (*TF*, *Survival*, and *Navigation Skills*, respectively). As a scientist, he is a capable if intuitive master of astronomy, geography, and what our ancestors referred to as “natural science,” essentially the study of the physical, non-human aspects of the Earth (various Science Skills and *Deduction*). As a trader and businessman, he is persuasive, shrewd, and able to convince others to back his dubious commercial schemes despite their misgivings (*Persuasion*, *Trading*, and *High Society* skills). To make Pytheas into a more powerful character for higher-level heroic campaigns, increase his STR and STUN, then add Penalty Skill Levels against range for use with his composite bow.

Campaign Use: Pytheas is an example of what a force for good an explorer could be (but seldom is) in a roleplaying game. While most adventures in a fantasy RPG are motivated to various extents by a grim combination of bloodlust, greed, and fatalism, Pytheas simply wants to explore out of a deep sense of personal curiosity. Although he is definitely motivated by a desire to turn a profit while conducting his explorations, Pytheas interacts rather than conquers, trades fairly rather than stealing, and seldom if ever resorts to force.

Players in a Low Fantasy campaign who are particularly prone to committing grisly acts of violence in the lawless wilderness might find themselves confronted with a considerably nobler group of adventures in the person of Pytheas and the men of the *Kyrenia*. Conversely, players who are tired of the continual hack-and-slash of that genre might embark on a more worthy quest of trade and exploration backed by a powerful merchant or noble who sends Pytheas (or someone very much like him) along to assist them. In a historically realistic campaign that takes place in the age of Alexander the Great (not an unexciting prospect that), the PCs might hire on as sailors only to find themselves confronted with angry Phoenicians, warlike Picts, aggressive “sea monsters,” and mysterious Thulians on a journey that takes them to the very Edge of the World... which Pytheas will continually argue does not exist, much to their amusement.

Appearance: Pytheas is a compact, olive-skinned man with wild brown hair that falls down to his shoulders in wavy locks. Like most ancient Greek men, he wears a bushy beard that covers much of his face, which is otherwise dominated by a pair of extremely intelligent,

curious eyes that peer over an aquiline nose. When he is in his own native temperate climate, he dresses in the woolen togas commonly worn by his people, but when he is on his voyage to the far north, he typically wears a massive bearskin cloak to keep warm. He usually goes about unarmed.

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Leftover Hero

by Scott Bennie

Scenario Five: "Eat Caped Injustice, Fool!" (Supervillains on Trial)

Okay, so you've captured the bad guys, filled out the police reports (or left them eating your dust) and smiled for the media. What's next?

Unfortunately, the bad guys don't get to prison just because they got knocked unconscious in a fight with superheroes. One of the most important principles of a democratic society (which comprise the political structure in most traditional comic book campaigns) is that the bad guys, no matter how scummy, get their day in court. This is, of course, a potential source for complications which a GM can exploit to craft interesting scenarios.

A lot of space has been dedicated in a lot of superhero supplements to superheroes and the law; even so, players who are interested in the subject are rarely satisfied with the way the subject is handled. Well, this scenario is *not* about adopting legal conventions and making them "realistic" in a traditional superhero world because frankly, it's a lost cause. Particularly after the recent problems with real world terrorism and their obvious applications to any world where supervillains are actively engaging in acts of destruction, it's hard to think of any government that would allow laws to stand on the books that would permit masked superhuman vigilantes to operate with the same reckless abandon as most Silver Age superheroes in a typical four-color comic book universe.

So this scenario asks the players to suspend their disbelief on three points that are necessary to support the genre, but virtually impossible to justify in a real world context.

First, that society is willing to tolerate (and in some cases work with) vigilante superheroes.

Second, that the legal system will tolerate vigilantes who maintain secret identities (within limits; homicidal heroes are likely to receive less protection from the authorities) and allow them to participate in the legal system using their costumed identities.

Third, that even though lawsuits would probably be flying at superheroes on a near daily basis, lawsuits against superheroes are a relatively rare and special event, and the average superhero isn't trapped in litigation hell or facing the constant threat of bankruptcy – except when the scenario requires it.

Once these three points are accepted, the GM should feel free to play with other legal conventions in a realistic manner and use them to build interesting scenarios.

Developing the Scenario

When plotting a trial scenario, the GM needs to determine the following: the specifics of the crime (usually one committed by a villain in a previous scenario), the effects of the trial on existing laws (if any), the reasons why the PCs are involved, prominent NPCs who'll also be involved in the trial, and plot complications.

Characters enter the scenario based on their roles in the trial. If they're lawyers, they may voluntarily take the case or be assigned pro-bono work. If they're witnesses, they may be asked by the D.A.'s office (or by a friend) to testify, or they may receive subpoenas and be treated as hostile witnesses (having someone serve a subpoena to a PC at the end of an unrelated scenario is a good way to introduce an upcoming trial scenario).

THE CRIME

Legal dramas make for great television, but there's probably a reason there's not a *Law and Order* RPG or a game based on *The Practice*, *Boston Legal*, or *Perry Mason*: it's a repetitive situation that's probably not suited to long-term play. Every supervillain who's captured will go on trial, but the GM shouldn't feel compelled to roleplay *every* trial. Trials should be reserved for three special situations: legal controversies that deal with the law and superpowers; the trial of one of the PC's archenemies (crime bosses who have previously escaped capture and who believe themselves beyond the reach of the justice system make especially good defendants); and trials that will degenerate into a battle against supervillains in a courtroom.

Open and shut cases don't make for interesting trials. If Black Harlequin's game of "Pirates of the Spanish Maim" results in six fatalities, and the crime was committed on a live television feed, unless it's got a really novel twist ("Black Harlequin's pleading it was self-defense?!?") it shouldn't be run as a trial scenario. (It may make for a great battle, but if a GM's not planning to run a combat, he can generally skip the trial except as color.)

One situation that does *have* a lot of dramatic potential is the "Fall of a Crime Lord" scenario. One of the PCs' most elusive enemies, a mob boss who's never been directly linked to a crime, is finally going to pay for his misdeeds; the district attorney's gathered enough evidence and witnesses that he's sure he can bring him down. The PCs will be needed as witnesses to testify about his operations – and to protect other witnesses who are going to be threatened by the boss when his back's up against the wall.

WHICH LEGAL SYSTEM IS THIS?

Because most of the countries that play *Champions* are familiar with the basics of the American legal system (as presented in cinema and television), American law is the basic assumption for this scenario. If your campaign is taking place in a different country, some of the suggestions will require adjustment.

OFF-STAGE VERSUS ON- STAGE ACTIONS

As with paperwork and police interviews, appearing at trials is usually a boring, mundane activity. Players with a simulationist bent often want to act out everything in their character's lives, even the most boring bits. But fiction rarely encompasses the entirety of a character's lives – rather, fiction is a compilation of the interesting bits (with enough added background to form a coherent narrative.) So unless a GM is running something interesting in a courtroom scenario, he should leave the courtroom off camera.

However, when a scenario is relegated to “off camera,” there's a risk that the players will be so unfamiliar with it that they'll stumble. If a PC decides not to swear an oath on a Bible because he's the reincarnation of a non-Christian god, that conflict would probably have been resolved a long time earlier. Likewise, unless the PC has only recently arrived in the campaign setting, he should play it as though he's familiar with the basic procedures of American superhuman law. Situations like these, however, do bring up

Trials that threaten to set precedents in superhuman law are also terrific vehicles for player involvement. Giving PCs a chance to make law is a great reward for “builder” characters (those who like to effect the nuts and bolts of a campaign).

Another good reason to have a trial scenario is to use them as a cover for another scenario. Suppose a villain has kidnapped someone's loved one, and then gets himself arrested; he'll blackmail a superhero by offering the safety of the hostage in exchange for a guarantee that he won't get imprisoned for his crime. A more convoluted plan would involve a villain deciding that being involved a public trial would make a perfect alibi for another crime (though he'd have to make a secret deal with someone in the attorney's office to ensure he gets the right court date to set up the alibi – and ensure the charges are dropped when they become inconvenient).

PRECEDENT LAW

One staple of comic book trials is that they set precedents about how superhuman abilities are treated by the world. This is absurd; unless superhuman abilities are a very recent phenomenon, the precedents should have been set a long time ago. However, that spoils a lot of the fun for the players. So how does someone justify setting new precedents in a campaign with a lot of history?

First, cases can be settled on a case-by-case basis; the judge can note that a decision may not be applicable in all circumstances. In this case, the lawyer can argue whether the current case is applicable to that precedent, and decide whether they're breaking new ground.

Second, a ruling established by a previous precedent can be overturned, but in such a muddled manner that the field is open to further rulings and debate.

Third, some judges are ornery, activist, and/or incompetent and allow debate in areas where the case law should be well established.

So who gets to decide these things? Well the GM does, of course, but that doesn't mean the PCs can't be involved in the seminal trial and help make case law. Issues for which interesting precedents might be set include:

Artificial Intelligence/Robot Rights: The works of Isaac Asimov deal with this question in far more detail than can be given here, but a few relevant and interesting questions include: at what point do robots turn from mechanical servant into slave? Is a military robot responsible for taking a life? At what point does self-awareness override programming? Does a creator have parental rights and responsibilities over his creation?

Undead Rights: Is someone who's dead still legally a human being? Are they entitled to the property and possessions they owned when they were alive? If so, can a vampire legally own the castle he owned while he was alive; can a five hundred year old native American spirit lay claim to his ancestral lands? Does killing someone who's undead constitute murder? Is there a legal difference in the status of sentient undead such as a vampire, and non-sentient undead such as zombies? What laws are broken when someone performs a necromantic spell? Are exorcisms against the law?

Lycanthropic Rights: If a person knows he's a werewolf, but fails to take precautions, is he liable for the damage he does or any loss of life? If he does take precautions, breaks free, and kills someone, does it constitute diminished capacity? Can a werewolf bring a civil suit against the person who made him a werewolf in the first place? If a superhero team has a lycanthropic member, are they liable for the injuries he causes, even if he has a modicum of control over his actions?

Involuntary Use of Powers: If, during someone's origin, someone gets hurt or injured, is the nascent superhuman liable? Suppose the newly minted superhuman got into a mutually consensual fight with someone, didn't realize that he could now punch through tanks, and accidentally crippled (or killed) his opponent, how liable is he for what happened?

Campaigns with an Iron Age tone also raise unsettling issues. If a seductress' powers include an area effect Transform (from normal to sexually interested) does that constitute sexual assault, even if the power cannot be negated and the seductress has no choice over who's being targeted? And if this definition is accepted, could a pack of outraged males who beat up a male superhero who's using the same power be justified because they're claiming it was done in self-defense?

Environmental Laws: Even more contentious than labor laws are environmental laws. What happens when a superhero's radar powers interferes with a city's cell phone network? Or when people, craning their necks to get a good glimpse of the superhero flying overhead, cause a car accident? What happens when someone claims they developed terminal cancer from exposure to the hero's energy field? Do their powers violate noise bylaws? Do they always break the sound barrier when they're flying in the downtown core? Do innocent bystanders get headaches when they use their sonic powers?

Alien Rights: Even if aliens are recognized in the campaign setting, legal issues still need to be settled. How does society handle people from cultures where things like alien dueling codes are commonplace, as are social mores such as the need to eat live prey (especially when the alien is many parsecs away from any sympathetic representative)? How does the alien invader handle being put on trial for war crimes? Can the sole representative of an alien race on earth claim diplomatic immunity status, even if he's a criminal? Can a human court try an alien for a crime committed off-planet? ("Beowulf Jr. came aboard *our* ship when we were entering your solar system, it was perfectly within our rights to try to dissect him!") Does any alien technology violate human environmental laws?

Labor Laws: Labor laws are a really tricky area; they're a place where the PC's best intentions can come back to haunt him. Unions like to play hardball with anyone who runs afoul of their membership, and superheroes tend to push anyone who gets pushy with them; the resulting conflict can end up as a messy court case. On the other hand, superheroes who are willing to defer to trade unions (and pay hefty dues) are often allowed to use their powers in emergency situations without too many problems. (Using powers to make sure a building that was damaged in a fight is safe enough for repair crews is okay. On the other hand, using one's powers to completely repair a building and take jobs away from good union folks is *not* okay.)

All this, however, is nothing compared to the complications that might occur when a superhero uses his powers to practice medicine without a license. What happens if a hero uses his powers to try to save someone's life and he dies a few hours later? Who gets sued? What if he used his healing powers on someone who later contracts a terminal illness? And suppose an emergency blood transfusion temporarily gives someone superpowers, and they go on a rampage?

Identity/Trademark/Copyright Law: Few things are as personal to a superhero as his identity. Does the fact that a superhero is a public figure mean that a hero loses the right to make money from merchandising his identity? What happens when a villain shows up with the same name as a PC? What happens when someone publishes a comic book about a hero whose name and costume are barely different than the hero's? When a web site makes scandalous claims about a PC's private behavior, do lawsuits get filed? What happens when a website publishes pictures of an NPC hero's secret identity, as well as his phone number and address?

Psionics: No question is more capable of turning a campaign on its head than whether testimony gained from telepathic intrusion or coercion is admissible in a court of law. Most campaign worlds don't allow this, in part because it opens up huge avenues of abuse for the use of telepathic powers. In worlds where telepathy is inadmissible, defense attorneys may attempt to hammer a superhero for any sign that their actions were prompted by telepathy; admitting that you obtained illegal evidence is known as "prospering from the fruits of the poisonous tree," which is a great way to get the entire case summarily dismissed.

Even more controversial is the tenuous connection between intuition and telepathy. Is danger sense considered psionic, and is information gained from telepathic senses admissible? If a superhero is on patrol, and breaks into a building to stop a crime based on a preternatural intuition, is this as legally valid a reason to interfere as a cry for help?

Of course, there's the *really* important issue involving psionics: are lottery, horse race winnings or (more seriously) stock purchasing and selling information based on precognition considered cheating, and if so, how can anyone possibly prove that a person's winnings were based on this power in a court of law?

Clones/Artificial Organic Creations Rights: Similar to robot rights issues, sometimes the clone scenario has the additional complication where the court needs to figure out who's the original and who's the copy (which may be further complicated if amnesia-inducing drugs were used on the individuals). Another potential controversy is property rights ("Mr. Harmon, the clone that Teleios made from your DNA claims to be just as much your father's heir as you are and is suing you for 50% of your estate!"). Also, who's the legal guardian of a clone, the creator or the genetic donor? What's the legal age of a clone, the approximate chronological age of the original character, or the chronological age since the clone emerged from the vat?

In general, while the PCs should be sweating bullets during a trial, ultimately the rulings made on these cases should favor the PCs; they should permit PCs to pursue a normal superhero career without having to constantly trip over any significant legal obstacles. However, winning the fight to ply one's heroic trade without excessive interference or persecution can be as taxing a challenge as facing Takofanes single-handedly (in the Mother of all Graveyards).

the thorny issue of precedent law.

THE JOY OF DEFLATING EGOS

When PC jurors deliberate with other jurors in their secret identities, don't miss the opportunity for the conversation to drift to the subject of the PCs' costumed identities – and what the NPCs really think about them. Sure, it's a cheap shot, but if the players become more involved in the scenario because of it, don't knock it.

Roles For the PCs in a Trial Scenario

There are two approaches that a GM can take when running the trial scenario. First, he can run it as a game/metagame, where the player gets to run his character at the trial, but also helps to adjudicate the proceedings. Second, the GM can find roles for both the PCs in either their heroic or secret identities, and run the trial totally in character.

The metagame option is a great way to involve all of the players in a roleplaying experience. When something controversial happened in the previous session, the PCs have to go to court. Each player has two roles: first, there's the PC, and second, there's the position of an important figure in the court. Appoint one player to fill the judge's role, another as prosecutor, a third as defender, and the other players will be the jury. The GM will play the accused. If a PC has to testify and he's also playing the role of judge, prosecutor, or defender, have some other player take over their courtroom role.

The GM should be careful that emotions don't get too high when playing the metagame; the urge to be a lawyer and win a case is a very powerful one for some people, and when players get emotionally involved in the scenario, they *really* get involved.

Even in the In-Character Trial, the GM can be creative with the role of the PCs. There are five major roles they can play: juror, lawyer, spectator, investigator, and witness.

THE SUPERHERO JUROR

Suppose at the end of a busy day a superhero comes home, changes into his secret ID, sorts through the day's mail, and discovers that he's been summoned to jury duty. Known superheroes would probably be seen as too prejudiced against suspects to serve on a jury, but there's no such problems for a hero's secret identity; so this is one scenario where a PC's secret identity disadvantage can really be brought into play.

In the real world, it's very easy to get out of jury duty. However, if a GM *really* wants a PC to be sitting in the box, he should make it almost impossible for the PC to say no. Ultimately, the most persuasive argument might be, "These supervillains have gone to trial and walked in the past. This is your chance to make sure they're put in the hole where they belong."

There are other ways to bring the superheroes onto the jury – one obvious method is by cheating. Someone who knows the superheroes' identities and who wants the heroes on that jury arranges for them to get the summons. Perhaps the trial itself is a sham,

staged to catch a crooked judge or to get close to another juror (a suspected criminal) and spy on him during the proceedings. But if the authorities deliberately stack the deck, then it becomes more believable that multiple PCs will belong to the same jury at an important trial.

A truly fiendish GM, of course, uses PC jurors to make the scenario more interesting. What happens when the PC is on a jury in his secret identity, and during the testimony, his costumed identity is called to the stand – and he walks into the room, testifies, and his evidence damns the PC's side? Who is this imposter, and how did he know the PC was not going to be able to make it to the trial? What if the PC's costumed identity is named as a co-defendant in the case, or the testimony in the middle of the trial impugns the PC and a additional investigation is launched?

In play, there are several potential problems with the "superhero on the jury" scenario. First, there's the problem of staging and party separation. If a single member of a superhero team is stuck on jury duty, then he doesn't interact with the rest of his teammates and other players don't have a reason to be emotionally invested. The former can be solved by PC trickery; give the PCs a reason to stay in touch, and they'll find a way. The latter can be solved if the trial concerns issues and/or people that interest the entire team, so that the other players will find things to do during the trial (either to exonerate the defendant or make sure he doesn't get away when he hires the slickest attorney on the planet).

Second, the role of a juror requires the PC to have to listen to a lot of dialogue. Rather than play out large sections of the trial, summarize the key points of each witness's testimony, and their cross-examination. For important testimony, act out the most dramatic exchanges between the witness and the attorney. Finally, allow the juror's player (and the other players) to ask whether particular questions were addressed during the testimony. The answer doesn't always have to be yes, but this will give you an idea of what questions are of interest to the players in the trial – use that as a guide to make the trial more dramatic.

Lastly, the role of a juror is a passive one. Jurors aren't the ones asking the questions, and players don't like to sit down and listen to a GM gab non-stop (nor should they). Using the "was this question bought up in the testimony?" technique is one way to reduce the PC's passivity; another way is to cut away from the main action of the scenario and play a scene with the sequestered jury (allow other players to take the roles of other jury members during the deliberation).

Finally, in genre fiction, the jury who sent a villain to prison is often targeted when he escaped. Having a PC on that jury – whose secret identity is then targeted by the villain for revenge (who doesn't know who he's really attacking) is an interesting twist on a Hunted. PCs who are hated by supervillains in their non-costumed identities is a common convention in the comics, but it can be very rare in *Champions*.

LAWYER SUPERHEROES

Another role that a PCs might find himself playing at a trial is as an attorney. Unless one of the PCs is an attorney in his secret identity, or has a license to practice law in his costumed identity, this option is going to be relatively rare. Nonetheless, there are a few situations which allow the PC to take the role of a lawyer and go up in front of a judge and argue a case without an extensive legal background.

Small Claims Court: There's always the possibility that someone whose car was scratched or dented during a fight against a supervillain will take the PC to court to seek damages. Lawyers rarely involve themselves in a small claims dispute, so this is a perfect opportunity for PCs to brush up on their legal skills. There are numerous television programs that show small claims courts in action (often "blessed" with particularly loud and self-righteous judges); watch a couple of episodes to get the feel for the proceedings. Typically, it will involve a reconstruction of the incident from different perspectives, witness testimony, and a judge's ruling on the credibility of the case. ("I don't care how many people you've saved, Mr. High and Mighty Superhero, in this courtroom, I wear the cape!")

Small Towns Don't Need Lawyers. While not a particularly flattering or necessarily accurate stereotype, some small towns take pride in doing things a lot differently than in "the big city." If the PCs get into a dispute on someone else's home soil, they may be forced to present their case to the local judge (who, if the dispute is with other locals, will probably not be very sympathetic to the PCs). Alternatively, a young local lawyer might be called in to defend the PCs, but he's so clearly incompetent and/or incapable of representing their interests that the PCs are forced to take over the case themselves (much to the chagrin of the authorities).

The Alien Court: So you've been kidnapped by aliens. That means you're going to have to defend yourself for some crime in front of a tribunal, right? (Of course, in that culture, a lawyer who defends a criminal in a capital case also shares the penalty...)

One particularly silly episode of the 1960s *Batman* series allowed the titular character to

go into the courtroom and act as a prosecutor ("because Batman was so familiar with the case, we made him the prosecutor!") Of course, that version of *Batman* was silly even by Silver Age standards (Catwoman loaded the jury with ex-cons, which later resulted in many "POW!s," "OOOF!s" and a mistrial), however if you're going for a camp flavor, this approach can't be beat.

When you allow PCs to act as lawyers in informal situations such as these, try to be a little more loosely structured than you would be for a formal court hearing. Allow multiple PCs to object or ask questions, allow them to spread the roleplaying around the group. Keep as many PCs occupied at a time as possible.

Blind Justice – The Superhero as Lawyer: If a PC is a lawyer in his secret identity, then you need to spotlight him in his profession. Prior to the start of a major storyline, give PCs a scene that runs from 1-2 minutes that showing them at their "civilian" jobs when they receive the signal that brings them together; this should include lawyer PCs having a day in court (for a lawyer, this scene usually focuses on the final summation to the jury on a case).

Superhero lawyers are usually cast as defenders of unjustly accused defendants but not always – there's nothing wrong with the prosecutor's office making an offer to bring a good, principled attorney onto their team. More disturbingly, a defense attorney might be forced to do *pro bono* work to defend one of their enemies (with the following instructions from the judge: "I don't care if he tried to sink the city in an earthquake, he needs an effective advocate, so if I don't see your best effort up there, you'll be up before the Bar Association!")

This can lead to amusing situations where the PC is defending someone in his secret identity, while he's one of the complainants in his superhero identity.

When the PC is a lawyer at a trial, it's a showcase role – that PC is clearly the most important character in the room. Use frequent breaks in the trial to allow the lawyer PC to talk with other characters, and (from time to time) give those PCs a chance to try to offer the lawyer some input. However, trial scenarios *are* the lawyer PC's star vehicle, and there are two key moments in any trial that the GM must try to make as spectacular as possible: the cross-examination of the villain (where the lawyer tries to get him to admit his crime) and the final summation to the jury. Especially for the latter, staging is crucial. For the best dramatic effect, ask the player to try to keep the speech down to five minutes or less (use an egg timer).

Of course a superhero can fill other roles in a trial; they can be a judge, a bailiff, or a court secretary in their secret identities or (for high

A JURY OF OUR PEERS

Firewing is on trial! But he's an alien, right? How can an alien be tried by a jury of his peers when all of his peers are hundreds of parsecs away?

This problem has come up before, of course, but never to the legal system's satisfaction. As a compromise, for this trial only, the defense is willing to accept Earth's superhumans as Firewing's peers. However, as superhumans willing to serve on a jury can be hard to find, a pair of former supervillains had to be added, which should make for interesting conversations...

profile cases involving extremely dangerous villains) they can be hired as additional security in their costumed identities. These roles do not have quite as much pinache as that of a lawyer, however if you're running a strict combat scenario where the details of the trial are relatively unimportant, then it's fine to cast PCs in these relatively minor roles. Certainly a superhero who wears his costume under judge's robes is a neat trick to pull (likewise, it's a cool trick for a villain too).

WHEN SUPERHEROES TESTIFY

The most likely role for a superhero in a trial scenario is that of witness. Most of the time, superheroes will be asked to give a deposition on a case, and not have to worry about a court appearance; however the most dramatic trials (i.e. the ones which the GM wants to roleplay) will require live testimony.

Much of the testimony will be to establish a timeline (which the defense will try to destroy), and to describe the PC's perception of the crime in detail. The cross-examination will attempt to poke holes in the PC's statements. However, there's always the possibility that someone hates the PCs so much that they'll instruct the opposing attorney to do everything he can to besmirch the PC's reputation, even if that means that they risk losing the case because they've alienated the jury.

TEN QUESTIONS USED IN CROSS EXAMINATION TO SCREW UP PC TESTIMONY

When the PC is on the stand, the defendant attorney's job is to attack him as vigorously as possible and destroy his credibility. Because this is a classic comic book adventure, questions pertaining to the character's secret identity are likely to be met with an immediate objection from the prosecutor that will be upheld by the judge. However, there are other questions that an attorney will ask that he'll twist to discredit the PC and build his case.

1. *"So you like to hurt people?"* This (cheap shot) leads into an argument that lets the attorney point out previous examples where the PC physically abused criminals, and tries to get him to admit that he has psychological issues.

2. *"Let remind you of something you said earlier..."* This statement allows the attorney to point out past instances when the PC gave phony excuses to mislead the authorities and get them off his back, and intimates that his word can't be trusted now.

3. *"So how did you come to be in that particular place at that time?"* This question tries to trick the PC into admitting that he used

illegal methods to get to the scene of a crime, so the entire testimony can be thrown out.

4. *"What was your past relationship with the defendant?"* This question allows the attorney to establish a context for the fight – and paint the PC as prejudicial to the defendant because of their history.

5. *"Could you describe the combat in detail?"* Try to get the PC to admit that he was so busy during the fight that he missed key details (particularly if he was distracted by one particular foe, knocked unconscious, or stunned) that punches holes in the opponent's account.

6. *"Have you ever been mind controlled or had your senses confused by a telepath?"* This is an especially pertinent question if a telepath was involved in a scenario, since for many juries, a good telepath on the scene establishes reasonable doubt.

7. *"When the battle was over, did you or anyone else handle any of the evidence on the crime scene?"* This is a good question to plant doubts on the reliability of evidence and the police's forensics expert – or catch the PC committing perjury.

8. *"How long have you been a superhero? How much time did you spend training for your profession?"* Superheroes are often considered to be "expert witnesses." If the attorney can establish that the person didn't spend a lot of time preparing for his career and that he doesn't spend a lot of time training in his heroic identity, then he's not much of an expert. This tactic will not be employed against long-established or highly respected heroes.

9. *"Have you ever received treatment for psychiatric problems?"* This question is reserved for when the attorney has gotten *really* desperate, or it's used by mob lawyers who are more interested in smearing a hero's reputation than in defending their client (or by crazed supervillains who have decided to take charge of their own defense).

10. *"Have you ever taken a life?"* This is another cheap shot question designed to rattle the witness, though unless the attorney has laid down a foundation for the hero being a bloodthirsty murderer (and it's relevant to this case), it's unlikely that the question will be allowed to stand.

CAPE IN THE GALLERY

Beyond the traditional roles of superheroes in the courts, there's always the possibility that superheroes will be allowed into the stands. The conduct of superhero spectators is expected to be beyond reproach. In genre stories, however, courts are rarely orderly, and spectators are usually free to interrupt repeatedly until the judge throws them out.

Likewise, in the real world, when a court is in session, spectators can't burst into the closed courtroom, proclaim they've uncovered new evidence, and not expect to hear the words "contempt of court." Yet in the genre, this sort of behavior usually gets rewarded (even in situations where the opposing attorney would be entitled to an evidentiary hearing).

If PCs are serving as spectators, give them something interesting to watch. Perhaps they can be seated in a convenient position to overhear an interesting conversation, or spot someone acting suspiciously (why is that person staring at his watch?), Perhaps a key lieutenant or close friend of the defendant is in the court, and it's important for a spectator to keep an eye on him. In fact, it's possible that the whole point of a trial might be to bring the defendant's boss or another reclusive figure out of hiding, in which case a spectator (particularly if they're assigned to spot or follow a target) might be more important than the lawyers or the witnesses.

Unless there are other roles for the PC in the scenario (such as an investigator or a security guard), the GM should avoid relegating a PC to the role of a spectator, and if he does, he should try to keep the trial portion of the adventure reasonably short. For most gamers, watching a scenario is a whole lot less fun than playing.

SUPERHEROES ON TRIAL!

Perhaps the most dramatic situation for a superhero is to be the defendant in a trial. Superheroes often commit minor crimes in the performance of their duty, but some crimes can't be overlooked, resulting in the worst experiences in the PC's life. And then there are the frame jobs.

Superhero trials shouldn't be handled too much differently than other jury trials. The defendant will have to face a lot of pretrial interrogation from the police (discrepancies between the initial testimony and what's given on the stand will be noted), the defendant gets to sit next to the defense attorney and comment on each witness (or complain about how they're handling the case), and when there's a break, he gets to be involved in a big media circus (as the reputation of the entire team is on the line). If a PC's been framed, then the focus of the scenario may not be on the defendant, but on the friends who are trying to clear him.

A few scenes that can be expected at a superhero's trial include:

Blasts From the Past: Okay, maybe the GM promised the PCs that certain villains would remain captured for the rest of the campaign. Nothing was said about them never *appearing* again. Feel free to pull out enemies of the PCs who are languishing in Stronghold for a guest appearance. Let the PCs' rogues galleries get a chance to smear the PC on the witness stand (and if the PC wants to hurl back insults, let him).

Harassing the DNPCs: As tough as it is for a superhero to stand trial, when the press is camped on the doorsteps of a person's loved ones and known associates, it's even tougher.

The Offer: Sometimes when a superhero's on trial, he hears from the "other side." Maybe it's a longtime opponent who respects his ability, or maybe it's a crimelord who thinks he has the PC "right where he wants him"; the villain is willing to help the hero escape from custody in exchange for his allegiance.

The Villain Gloats: So what do you do when you're a supervillain and you've framed a superhero for murder, destroyed his life, and he's on the verge of being sent to Death Row? You go to the prison (in disguise, if necessary) and tell him that you're responsible for all his misery and suffering, of course.

I Was in My Secret ID, So I Don't Have an Alibi: As a genre convention with no bearing on how it'd be handled in the real world, superheroes in costumed identities remain masked until they've been found guilty of a crime, and the unmasking is carried out at sentencing. This does not protect the hero from having no alibi because he was attending a business meeting or taking his kid out to the ballgame. (Trials, unfortunately, have a way of prying out a man's secrets.)

THE TRIAL

Once you've decided on the specifics of the trial and the role of the PCs, it's time to stage the trial. Although the structure of jury trials is generally well known from movies and television programs, here's a refresher.

Step One: Judge or Jury. The defense determines if they'd rather have the case tried by a judge or a jury. Prosecutors cannot require a jury trial.

Step Two: Select the Jury: If it's going to be a jury trial, prosecutors and defense attorneys conduct a process called *voir dire*, a question and answer process that determines the jury. The judge and the attorneys collaborate on the list of questions.

IN CASE OF BAD APPLES, BREAK GLASS

If a PC has been caught committing a very serious crime (murder, rape, high treason, etc.) and he's actually guilty of it, and none of the other PCs want anything to do with him, don't hold a trial. Just put the PC in prison and cut him loose from the campaign. The longer his expulsion is delayed, the more likely it is that hurt feelings will surface and wreck the campaign.

This advice does not apply to Iron Age *Champions* or to *Dark Champions* campaigns (where the use of lethal force is not a bug, it's a feature).

Step Three: Address the Evidence: Before the trial begins, the defense and prosecution ask the court to either admit or exclude certain pieces of evidence. These request motions are called *in limine*. At this stage, witness lists are submitted.

Step Four: Opening Statements: The prosecution and then the defense make opening statements that outline the case that they're trying to prove. Sometimes the defense reserves his opening statement until he begins to present his case.

Step Five: The Prosecution Makes Its Case: Witnesses swear oaths to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." The prosecutor interrogates the witnesses on the prosecution's witness list.

Step Six: Cross-examination and Redirect. The defense gets to cross-examine the prosecution's witnesses. Then the prosecution may reexamine its witnesses and undo the damage done to their case during the cross-examination.

Step Seven: The Prosecution Rests. The prosecution finishes presenting its case.

Step Eight: Motion to Dismiss: The defense has a chance to make a motion to dismiss charges. The judge rarely grants this motion (in which case the trial moves to the defense portion of the case).

Step Nine: The Defense Case: The defense gets to cross-examine witnesses on the defense's witness list.

Step Ten: Cross-examination and Redirect. The prosecutor cross-examines the defense witnesses; then the defense reexamines the defense witnesses to rebut claims made in cross-examination.

Step Eleven: The Defense Rests. The defense finishes presenting its case.

Step Twelve: Prosecution Rebuttal. The prosecutor offers evidence and tries to refute the defense's case.

Step Thirteen: Compose Jury Instructions. The prosecution and defense get together with the judge. The Judge crafts a final set of instructions for the jury.

Step Fourteen: Closing Statements. The prosecution makes its closing argument, summarizing the case from the prosecution's viewpoint, explaining why the defendant is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, then the defense summarizes its case and tries to persuade the jury that the client is not guilty (or guilty of a lesser offense).

Step Fifteen: Jury Instruction: The judge instructs the jury about what law to apply to the case – and which law is not applicable and whether certain issues need to be ignored – and how to perform its duties. In particularly emotional cases, some judges might give instructions to the jury before closing arguments.

Step Sixteen: Jury Deliberations. The jury tries to reach a verdict. Unanimous agreement is usually required, but Oregon and Louisiana allow convictions with 10 of 12 votes.

Step Seventeen: Post-Trial Motions. If the jury produces a guilty verdict, the defense can request that the judge set aside the verdict and either grant a new trial (or give a full acquittal) to the defendant. This motion is rarely granted.

Step Eighteen: Sentencing. If there's been a guilty verdict, the judge either immediately passes down a sentence or (more commonly) sets sentencing for another day.

Of course trials, especially in comic books, have many ways to turn into a farce or a complete disaster for one side or another. Consider the following complications:

A Dark Secret Comes Out: While it may have no bearing on the trial, at some point in the proceedings (in true soap opera fashion) someone's darkest secret will come out: affairs, children sired out of wedlock, witnesses to visits to strip clubs or leather bars, evidence that someone participated in a crime long ago and covered it up, etc.

The Battle For Court TV: Major trials are a media circus, and competition in the big top has never been as fierce as it is today. When the crime media gets its teeth into a trial, regardless of how many more gruesome crimes might go unpublicized, they grab onto it and mercilessly exploit it. Unfortunately, one of commentators on Court TV has a grudge against the PCs and will automatically slant the coverage to discredit the PC as much as possible.

Contaminated Evidence: You may have gotten the perpetrator, but the lab boys botched their work. Samples taken from the crime scene have been contaminated and invalidated, and a major part of your case is thrown out of court.

Dead Alive: A true melodramatic staple, someone who was thought to be dead (in murder trials, it's often the victim), bursts through the doors of the courtroom and proclaims that he's alive. In superhuman worlds, this can be a shapeshifter who's impersonating the dead person, so extra caution is advised.

Disruptive Relatives: The distraught relatives of the accused (or the victim, use

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whichever side is opposed to the PCs) makes a public scene at the trial, throwing wild accusations at one of the PCs. When the trial's adjourned for the day, the relative gets out in front of the press and calls for an independent investigation of the PC's conduct. (It's even possible they'll start an organization that will turn into a persistent thorn in the PC's side.) They'll also go on court television programs and besmirch the reputation of the PC (and his supporters).

A Sympathetic Witness is a Liar: Your side was relying on the testimony of a particular witness (a stoolie, a police officer, a relative of one of the parties) but when he gets on the stand, the opposing side easily dismantles him and shows that he's a complete liar. This doesn't just affect his testimony – it puts the entire case in jeopardy.

Someone Else Comes Forward. Halfway during the trial, a plausible suspect comes forward and confesses to the crime. Perhaps it's a supervillain who doesn't want to see his illegitimate son (who's just manifested the same powers as his dad) get off to the same lousy start he got, so he's willing to make a sacrifice, or perhaps it's someone hired by a mob boss to take the fall for a crime. Regardless of his reason, his confession is throwing the trial into turmoil.

A Witness is in Danger: A very common problem when the mob or ethnic gangs are involved, people are afraid to talk about a crime or come forward to testify, and when they do, the mob calls out for a hit. Sometimes a superhero will have to be extremely persuasive to get people to talk, and sometimes they'll be called upon to perform bodyguard duty.

THE BATTLE

Neil Gaiman once described fight scenes in comic books as having the same importance as musical numbers in a musical or sex scenes in a porn film – they're the quintessential moment that defines the genre. So even though a trial provides great drama in its own right, there needs to be a way to integrate superbattles into the proceedings.

The Rescue: Sometimes a supervillain on trial may will display extreme arrogance toward the proceedings; his defense essentially boils down to, "Wait until my friends show up, then all of you will *pay!*" At some point in the scenario, it happens – the villains launch a full scale assault on the courthouse and try to grab their friend and get away. Now admittedly, attacking someone in public and announcing you're going to do it in advance is either extremely stupid or extremely overconfident, but supervillains enjoy doing this sort of thing.

The Infiltration: A more clever way of dealing with the supervillain attack problem is the infiltration. The villains know the heroes and the authorities will be there to stop them, so instead of just storming the courtroom, the villains are going to be moving into positions (taking the place of jurors, bailiffs, reporters, even the judge) and planting explosives and other booby traps where the superheroes are expected to be sitting. Once the boobytraps go off, the villains drop their disguises and attack.

The Takeover: A classic comic book scenario is for a villain and his gang to storm the courtroom and take control of the trial. The lead villain becomes the judge, another plays the role of the prosecutor, and the other bad guys form the jury. This is a hostage scenario, because the spectators will be shot if the heroes don't play along with whatever buffoonery the villains have in mind. As with most hostage scenarios, the heroes have to stall for time, play along with the bad guys and wait for the ideal moment to make their move.

The "Supervillains knock the superhero unconscious, kidnap a defense lawyer and put him on trial" plot is a variation on this scenario.

AFTERSHOCKS

The consequences of this scenario should be obvious; if an innocent man is sent to prison, then at some point the heroes will have to work to clear his name, typically by tracking down the real culprit and forcing a confession.

If a PC was convicted, the consequences will be more severe. If the PC had a secret identity then it's probably going to be gone, barring trickery: someone else agrees to take the rap for the PC, or the PC's conviction is really a ruse to get him into prison and close to a felon (that needs to be pumped for information, in which case their "normal" identity will actually be a disguise).

If a guilty person is found innocent, it should redouble the resolve of the PCs to bring him to justice. However, if you've run a big trial scenario for a villain and he's gotten off once, don't stage a second trial. Instead, nudge the PCs into finding conclusive evidence on the bad guy, and when they do, summarily lock him away for good.

Of course, when a villain is locked away, it doesn't mean they're gone from the campaign. *Champions* campaigns are notorious for having paranormal prisons that are essentially villain sieves. However, when you put a villain on trial, that makes the PCs go to extra effort to put him away, so it feels even more like a slap in the face when the villain escapes from a trial. On the other hand, the "supervillain goes after the jury that convicted him" is a time honored classic, so if you feel inclined to release a villain from

AND THE VERDICT IS...

...whatever the story needs it to be, though if the players do a really bad job (or an exceptional) job of roleplaying, change the verdict (or reduce or increase the sentence).

prison, make sure that they do something interesting. A supervillain who's released from prison might try to go straight, only to be spotted close to several other criminal operations (Unluck can create generate a lot of painful misunderstandings); if the heroes overreact and hound the ex-villain, it's possible he'll "fall off the wagon" and return to crime.

NPCs

As with other scenarios, trial scenarios have their own unique cast of characters.

LAWYERS

Currently one of the most maligned professions on the planet, lawyers are necessary for the criminal justice system to function – which doesn't mean superheroes are going to appreciate them when they do their job right: by putting professional ethics (loyalty to the client comes before everything else) ahead of universal human morality. Within the fraternity of lawyers (at least in cinema and the comics) there are distinctive sub-varieties.

The Crusader: This young firebrand believes in the purity and righteousness of his profession, and loves to represent the underdog or the person neglected by society or (in the case of district attorneys) the interests of society that are crushed by the system. The Crusader is one of the most loyal people you'll ever meet, but their passion can get in the way of a good defense.

The Dealmaker: This attorney (prosecutor or defender) is tired, worn out, overworked, and coasting. He wants to get the case over with as quickly as possible, pick up his next paycheck, and go. Even if it's in his client's worst interest, he'll take the first deal that's set on the table, and if the client's too mentally incompetent to judge his actions, so much the better.

The Gloryhound: "When capes commit crime, they must do the time, or else they're slime!" Welcome to the world of the Nationally Famous Lawyer. He's on all the talk shows, he knows how to play the media like a violin, he's almost certainly a capable attorney, but he's more interested in getting high profile cases than defending a client to the best of his abilities.

The Mob Mouthpiece: Long ago, whatever integrity this guy possessed was swallowed up by greed, fear, and deals with the devil. This guy knows all the dirty tricks of the trade, and will not hesitate to use them. He may also be an active participant in his boss's crimes, strategizing ways to circumvent the law before the crime's even committed. In a superhero world (because a mouthpiece has access to so much privileged information), a mob boss might

try to force him to wear a device that gives him Mental Defense at all times.

Old Man Eloquent: The attorney was at one time a top lawyer in his field, but he's been on the decline for many years, he only gets an occasional case, and even the judges take pity on him. Nonetheless, give this lawyer a cause of great importance, one which he truly believes, and he'll display oratory skills of legend.

The Overworked Newbie: Life's rough for newcomers in any profession, and the law is no exception. This person's probably juggling three cases, pro bono work, and trying to find time to do the research, and even if he had the time, the lack of sleep is killing him. Usually only half-prepared, the Overworked Newbie is fresh meat for an experienced D.A., who usually leaves their arguments bleeding on the floor after the first cross examination.

The Vengeful D.A.: The district attorney prides himself on being on the right side of the truth nine times out of ten. Sometimes this pride is expressed through pig-headedness, contempt for the other parts of the judicial process (including superheroes), excessive competitiveness, and a desire to win every case, regardless of whether the defendant is guilty or innocent.

JUDGES

The Folksy Southern Boy With Knives Under His Robes: This man is a real charmer, formerly a great lawyer and orator. Now one of the most respected men on the bench, this man is relaxed and usually in good spirits – but when someone annoys him, he'll cut them down to size so quickly that their heads will spin.

High Priest of the Constitution: To this judge, the intention of the American Founding Fathers is holy writ; his highest duty is to preserve the status quo, and if change is necessary, it must be in concord with the will and the intent of the framers. This judge is a complete stickler for the law, and anyone who gets in the way of the law without the proper respect for the founders' wishes had better watch out.

The Relentless Harpy: Maybe at one time, this woman wasn't such a relentless control freak, but now she's one of the most unbearable people in the whole legal system. She's constantly berating witnesses and lawyers, intimating that people are liars, and screaming how much smarter she is than anyone else. (There are male versions of this archetype, of course.)

The Insane Ol' Coot: Sometimes when a judicial authority behaves like a ranting madman,

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it's not because he's under mind control, it's because he's too old and too burnt out to be a judge anymore. His rulings are bizarre, his statements even more bizarre, he abuses his authority at the drop of a hat, and he's lost everything except the pity of the older court clerks who remember him back in his prime. The presence of this man on the bench guarantees that a trial will be thrown into turmoil.

Of course, sometimes there are other explanations for a judge's bizarre behavior. Telepaths love to play with authority figures (including judges, lawyers, and bailiffs) and even if the judge isn't directly influenced, he can be blackmailed into making rulings that will hurt the PC's side.

The Liberal Activist: This judge's rulings are guided by a profound sense of social justice – and much less respect for precedent. He's interested in fairness toward minorities and protecting the little guy from establishment interests; if you're onboard with his agenda, great; if not, watch out.

OTHERS

Other NPCs whom PCs might encounter in this scenario include:

The Hardened Police Detective: This guy's a star witness for the prosecution who thinks he's seen it all. He may be honest or he may be in the pockets of the mob (or running a small independent operation on the side), but this tough-as-nails investigator backs down from no one, even when it's in his best interest to do so. He's a reluctant ally at best (though secretly he may admire the heroes), but cast as an adversary, he's as ruthless as anyone the heroes will ever encounter. The detective hasn't got a lot of respect for the judicial process and is used to getting away with telling bald faced lies under oath.

The Crusading Newspaper Reporter: This young man is a trusted ally (unless the PCs have something to hide); even more idealistic than most superheroes, this reporter is determined to pursue justice regardless of the personal cost. If the PCs don't have a lot of investigative skills, his assistance can be invaluable (though he'll usually point the PCs in the right direction, rather than do all the legwork himself).

The Gossipmonger Disguised as a Court Reporter: These days, crime stands as an equal beside celebrity in the scandal sheets, and this gossipmonger, a former attorney, is better known for his looks and his hawkish attitude against defendants in scandalous cases (“Innocent until proven guilty? What planet do you live on!”) and costumed vigilantes. He's a minor nuisance at best, but when he needles someone on a daily basis, he can turn into an irritant that's way out of proportion to his actual importance.

The Stubborn Juror: There's one on every jury. Perhaps he's a hardcase who'll never buy into a character's guilt or innocence, no matter how obvious it might be to everyone else. Perhaps he's a supervillain in his secret ID with an agenda. Whatever his motivation, he's so intractable that he makes Mechanon look wishy-washy.

CRIMINAL LAWYER PACKAGE

A good lawyer has many skills that they have to develop to be a successful lawyer. Here's a basic package for a lawyer who's fresh out law school after studying criminal law.

Criminal Defense Attorney Package Cost Perks

- 1 Fringe Benefit: License to Practice Law

Skills

- 1 Acting 8-
- 3 Bureaucratics 11-
- 3 Conversation 11-
- 3 Criminology 11-
- 3 Deduction 11-
- 3 Interrogation 11-
- 2 KS: Criminal Law 11-
- 1 KS: The Legal World 8-
- 1 Oratory 8-
- 1 Persuasion 8-
- 3 PS: Lawyer 12-

Val Disadvantages

- 15 Social Limitation: Required to be Totally Loyal to Client (Frequently, Major)

Total Cost of Package: 10

BUT WE NEVER DID THAT!

The scenario assumes that one of the adventures in Holocaust's seeds in CKC took place, and the PCs were involved. If you're not willing to run that adventure with the PCs (or would rather use other villains than Holocaust, or change the set up) go ahead and make the necessary changes.

This scenario can be summed up as "supervillains booby-trap a courtroom and then attack" adventure.

In the *Champions Universe*, Holocaust has a secret ID, which would be tipped off in this scenario if he was captured. There are (at least) two ways to circumvent this: first, arrange it so that Holocaust with an imposter prior to arraignment. Second (a more brutal option) arrange it so the explosion that ends the fight knocks Holocaust into an overloaded electrical power grid that burns his face. This will allow Holocaust to be captured and unmasked, but not positively identified. (The latter will be the assumed reason in this scenario).

**Scenario: Disorder in the Court****BACKGROUND**

Holocaust is on trial. He tried to enter an electrical plant on the outskirts of Millennium City and absorb the energy (which he'd vowed to use to destroy the hero team's headquarters). He was defeated by the PCs and has been shackled with the latest, best technology so he can be put on trial. The PCs are on the witness list.

Holocaust is acknowledged as a major supervillain and his trial is an event of national, if not international proportions. However, one of the reporters at the trial would like to make it an even bigger story. Wendell Williams, host of the controversial show "Legal Eagle" on SNN, has contacted a group of supervillains and commissioned them (using money appropriated from one of Holocaust's secret bank accounts) to rescue him. The villains in the scenario are: Stormfront, Mirage, Morningstar, and Shadowdragon. If additional villains are needed, use Howler, Herculan, and Brainchild. There should be one villain per PC, not including Holocaust. There are also a pair of freelance criminal technicians accompanying the team; their job is to free Holocaust.

LOCATION

The trial is being held in a medium sized courtroom in a local courthouse. Television cameras are not permitted in the courtroom (much to the media's chagrin). Although the courthouse was recently built, it was not designed with a modern look. The interior walls are lined with wooden paneling, and its furniture is made from solid oak, in keeping with the building's traditional look. Chairs have 4 DEF and 4 BODY; tables and benches have 4 DEF, 6 BODY. The panels on the judge's bench are inscribed with the symbol of the scales of justice.

A transparent, bulletproof shield (DEF 8) protects the court reporter, the clerk, the judge, and the witness from possible gunfire. There's also a concealed Mental Defense field generator below the floor, conferring 12 points of Mental Defense to the Judge, Jury, and the witness.

Behind the judge's bench is a statue of Justice (9 DEF, 6 BODY) and a pair of flags (state and national) suspended on a pole (DEF 2, BODY 4)

THE TRIAL

The prosecuting attorneys are Liz Hardin and Patrick Collins, a team that's acknowledged for their ability, professionalism, and utter ruthlessness in cross-examination. The defending attorney is Lee Meyers. Meyers will disrupt the trial with spurious motions at every opportunity, including a motion to dismiss based on the principle that Holocaust has a right to look into

his accusers' faces, but the eye shield robs the villain of his fundamental right.

The Judge is Barrett Carlson, whose best described as "a folksy Judge with knives under his robes. He knows the trial's a media circus, and he's content to let it play out as one, and tolerate some of the more melodramatic acts of the attorneys (within reason).

Holocaust is up on charges of aggravated assault, breaking and entering, sabotage, misuse of superhuman abilities, aggravated assault, and attempted murder (against the heroes).

The prosecution argues that Holocaust is a career criminal, that this was yet another in a long series of incidents, and that Holocaust must be locked away for the public good. The defense will argue is that (at most) Holocaust is guilty of breaking and entering; he entered the power plant to absorb energy, not to commit destruction, and would have not harmed anyone had he been allowed to leave peacefully. "It's these so-called heroes who, through their reckless and irresponsible actions, escalated the situation to a point where lives and property was damaged." He'll also argue that superfights constitute consensual violence (an argument with no supporting precedents) and thus Holocaust can't be held responsible for his actions.

Holocaust is sitting in a reinforced chair at the defense bench, with a heavy steel apparatus over his eyes (DEF 18, BODY 8, Security Systems at -3 and a minimum of 1 Turn to unlock). He also has manacles that contain power neutralizers (DEF 10, BODY 6, 10d6 Suppress vs. all mutant powers) which help keep his powers down to a manageable level.

Prosecution witnesses include:

The Heroes (of course).

Greg Gleason, a security guard who was attacked when Holocaust entered the building; he has third degree burns over much of his body. Under cross-examination, he will admit that Holocaust told him to go away, and he responded by opening fire on him with a heavy weapon, and that opening fire without issuing a warning is against approved the plant's approved procedures.

Ted Harrison, an expert in superpowers and their effect on engineering, will testify to the potential dangers of what Holocaust was trying to do on the region's power grid. The defense will argue that Harrison's testimony is prejudicial and irrelevant.

The defense witnesses include:

Dr. Valerie Beaumont, metahuman biochemist, who will testify that the metahuman urge to feed can be very strong, and that Holocaust is so addicted to absorbing energy that he was operating at a reduced capacity. ("So he went to the most available source of energy – and I dare say the safest, because he could meet

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his needs without risking harm to the general public.”) The defense will just mock her.

Dr. Harold Housen, metahuman injuries specialist. He’ll testify that it’s his professional opinion that Holocaust was not attempting to seriously hurt Ted Harrison, because he could have easily killed him with a single shot.

(“clearly Holocaust was trying to use minimal force against a man who opened fire on him – unfortunately the guard’s unnecessary actions, though well-intentioned, resulted in tragedy). The defense will be outraged at the attempt to justify such a hideous injury.

Holocaust. His testimony is reserved until the end of the defense.

Throughout the trial, Holocaust will sit and smile slightly, saying (uncharacteristically) nothing. When he’s called to testify, he’ll put his hand on the Bible, and when asked to swear to tell “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help... ME!” And that’ll be the signal for the attack.

(Williams has, through the use of hired telepath, informed Holocaust about the attack, but the villain hasn’t been given specific information, aside from “hold your breath after you take the oath.” Mirage came in, disguised as a security consultant a few hours before the trial, and planted the booby traps while pretending to look for traps).

THE ATTACK

The hired villains have made plans and will to infiltrate the gathering. Mirage will be disguised as Liz Hardin, Shadowdragon will be in the stands as a spectator, Stormfront and Morningstar and the others will be in a caterer’s truck behind the courthouse; Stormfront will be disguised as a delivery man.

When the signal phrase is said, Mirage will use a radio control bracelet on her wrist to trigger a preset sequence of traps:

First, a preprogrammed illusion of a second Holocaust blowing a hole in the ceiling, proclaiming that he’s the *real* Holocaust, and there’s no need for people to surround themselves with trappings and “garbage” when he’s around (at this point, he uses an energy blast to destroy the American flag).

Second, three segments later, the statue of Justice will issue a sonic scream; a 2d6 NND Sonic Energy Blast (the defense is covering your ears or Hearing Group Flash Defense, DEX 20, SPD 5) whose area effect fills the entire courtroom, and lasts for 3 phases.

Third, after the statue of Justice is destroyed or the scream finishes, the judge’s gavel will explode, releasing a noxious gas that contains a special chemical that drives berserk anyone who breathes it.

25 Mind Control 13d6, Telepathic (+1/4), Area Of Effect (32" Radius; +1 1/2) (179 Active Points); 1 Charge which Never Recovers (-4), Based on CON (Defense: PD; -1), Conditional Power One Command, “Go Berserk” (-1/2), Limited Power Doesn’t Affect Those Who Hold Their Breaths or Have LS: Self-Contained (-1/2) [1nr]

Once all three events have occurred, the remaining villains should have arrived at the courthouse. The villains will engage any superheroes, while two technicians will attempt to free Holocaust from the two devices that are neutralizing him.

If half of the villains are knocked unconscious and the technicians have obviously failed, the remaining villains will sound a retreat. If Mirage is present, she’ll trigger a fourth booby trap, a small explosive charge that was placed under one of the benches in the gallery, doing an Energy Blast 8d6 Explosion. Under no circumstance will Morningstar retreat; he’s in the fight until the bitter end.

AFTERMATH

If Holocaust is freed, the villains will sound a retreat, and Holocaust will cover it by blasting everyone in sight. If the heroes are defeated, the headlines will range from “Outmatched Heroes Fight Valiant, Losing Battle” to “Heroes: Incompetent or Inept?”. Holocaust will be free to terrorize the world and avenge his humiliation at a later date – and he *will* want to personally defeat the heroes at some point.

Mirage, who had absolutely no interest in freeing Holocaust, only wanted to throw down the gauntlet and infuriate heroes to the point where’d they’d be willing to follow her into one of her pre-arranged deathtraps. She may also emerge as a major thorn in the hero’s side.

Wendell Williams, who’ll celebrate his victory by being the loudest voice criticizing the heroes after the battle, will find it to be an intoxicating experience, one he’ll want to repeat as soon as possible. He’ll be a step closer to christening a full blown supervillain career as the nefarious Monopole.

On the other hand, if the heroes win, then they get a major boost to their reputation; Holocaust may not be Dr. Destroyer, but he’s no piker. He’ll want revenge for defeating him prior to the trial *and* preventing his glorious escape. And if the PCs track down the money trail for the mercenary villains, they may expose Wendell and send him to prison (sometime later, he’ll escape and assume the identity of the supervillain Monopole).

NO SHOES, NO SHIRT, NO SPANDEX

Finally (unfortunately for superheroes) the courtroom has a dress code: superheroes are expected to wear pants, shoes, and a dress shirt. The code generally doesn’t apply to characters who wear bulky battlesuits.

MIRAGE’S IMAGE

This is bought out of Mirage’s Bag of Tricks pool as follows:

CostPowers

52 Sight and Hearing Groups
Images Increased
Size (2" radius; +1/4), +/-8 to PER Rolls,
Trigger (+1/4),
Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2) (78 Active Points);
Conditional Power One
Preprogrammed Sequence Only (-1/2)

Trial Random Scenario Generator

TABLE 1: VILLAIN GUILT

Roll 1d6, roll on any indicated sub-table, then roll on Table 2-1

- 1-3 Villain was caught by the heroes performing the criminal act
- 4-5 Villain is guilty (roll on Table 1-1, Unusual Circumstances, Guilt)
- 6 Villain is innocent (roll on Table 1-2, Unusual Circumstances, Innocence)

TABLE 1-1 UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES, GUILT

Roll 1d6, roll on any indicated sub-table, then roll on Table 2-1

- 1-3 No complications. It's an open and shut case.
- 5-6 Complications (roll on Table 1-1-2)

TABLE 1-1-1 UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES, COMPLICATIONS

Roll 1d6, then roll on Table 2-1

- 1 Villain was performing the crime under duress (blackmail, telepathic instruction or he'd been drugged)
- 2 Villain did not mean to commit the crime, it was an accident (reroll if inappropriate)
- 3 Villain was performing the crime to protect a loved one,
- 4 Villain was tricked into performing the crime by a third party
- 5 There was no crime – the villain and the victim are colluding as part of a publicity stunt, insurance scheme, or other plot
- 6 Villain was performing the crime as part of a deep cover operation – he's working for the good guys!

TABLE 1-2 UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES, INNOCENCE

Roll 1d6, roll on any indicated sub-table, then roll on Table 2-1

- 1-3 No complications. It's a simple misunderstanding.
- 5-6 Complications (roll on Table 1-2-1)

TABLE 1-2-1 UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES, COMPLICATIONS

Roll 1d6, then roll on Table 2-1

- 1 Villain was framed – probably by another villain, but sometimes by a hero or the police
- 2 Villain was framed by a superhero looking to boost his reputation.
- 3 Villain was targeted by police who willfully ignored the possibility of other suspects.
- 4 Villain was committing a different crime at the time he was being falsely accused.
- 5 There was no crime – the crime is meant as a cover to protect an innocent person from other villains.
- 6 Villain was performing the crime as part of a deep cover operation – he's working for the good guys!

TABLE 2: VILLAIN CRIME

Roll 1d6, then roll on Table 3

- 1 Murder
- 2 Willful Destruction
- 3 Blackmail
- 4 Kidnapping
- 5 Robbery
- 6 Assault

TABLE 3: PROSECUTOR STYLE

Roll 1d6, then roll on Table 3

- 1 Competent but Quiet
- 2 Corrupt, In The Pay of Criminals
- 3 Incompetent Newbie
- 4 Self-Righteous Shriker
- 5 Silver Tongued Charmer
- 6 Vengeful, Take No Prisoners

TABLE 4: DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Roll 1d6, then roll on Table 5

- 1 Attack Dog, Never Relents
- 2 Burned out, overworked veteran who's always going to plea bargain.
- 3 Grandstanding speechmaker
- 4 Gloryhound
- 5 Incompetent Newbie
- 6 Mob Mouthpiece

TABLE 5: JUDGE

Roll 1d6, then roll on Table 6

- 1 Bland Pushover
- 2 Folksy Southern Boy (With Knives Under His Robes)
- 3 High Priest of the Constitution
- 4 The Insane Ol' Coot
- 5 The Liberal Activist
- 6 The Relentless Harpy

TABLE 6: NUMBER OF TRIAL COMPLICATIONS

Roll 1d6, if there are complications, roll on Table 6-1

- 1 1
- 2-3 2
- 4-5 3
- 6 4

TABLE 6-1: COMMON TRIAL COMPLICATIONS

Roll 1d6

- 1 Courtroom proceedings are disrupted by a tantrum (the defendant, or a distraught relative of the victim).
- 2 Evidence is contaminated
- 3 Excessively stubborn juror refuses to acknowledge the possibility of error.
- 4 Friendly witness is caught perjuring his testimony
- 5 Gossipmongers besmirch the PCs' testimony (and reputation)
- 6 Roll on Table 6-1-1, Special Complications

TABLE 6-1-1: SPECIAL TRIAL COMPLICATIONS

Roll 1d6

- 1 A jury member has a heart attack
- 2 One of the people in the gallery is an assassin who tries to kill someone
- 3 Someone's dark secret is revealed
- 4 Someone else comes forward and takes credit for the crime.
- 5-6 Supervillains attack the courtroom

Ten Unusual Superhuman Trial Scenarios

BODY SWITCH/MINDGAMES

They're saying it's an insanity defense: at the trial of one of the world's most maniacal supervillains, the defendant is claiming that he's really one of the world's greatest superheroes – and he's accidentally switched bodies with the villain. Telepathy doesn't prove his contention, but the hero with whom he's allegedly switched bodies *is* acting a little odd.

This is a scenario that can be run with one of the PCs in place of the NPC hero, and a player in a dual role (both as the PC and the defendant) just to keep the other players guessing. The villain could always have made the switch (a device that creates Mental Group Images is being used to fool telepaths) or the villain could be making the claim as a last desperate attempt to smear an old enemy's reputation (and the "oddness" is actually personal quirks that have previously fallen under people's radar).

COLLAR ME

A criminal who was convicted on bank robbery charges has served his sentence and is being released into the community, but one of the banks he robbed is trying to add a stipulation to his release. The bank wants the ex-con to wear a special bracelet; not only would it contain a GPS system to track the device, it would also contain a mechanism that would trigger a serious electric shock when it receives a radio signal on a particular wavelength. The bank plans to line its walls with short range radio transmitters; if the villain comes within fifty feet of these transmitters, he'll receive a serious electric shock.

As a prominent local superhero, people want to hear the PCs' opinions on this issue. The prosecution wants the heroes to say it'll be an effective deterrent. The defense would like the heroes to state that it's probably unreliable and likely to provoke villains into becoming so afraid of capture that they'll commit more violent crimes. Where does the PC stand?

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

A duplicating villain named Multiplex committed murder – he killed a cop, and is facing a death sentence. However, the villain on trial swears that he's not the duplicate that killed the cop, and that he actually opposed the murder. He wants the PCs to honestly evaluate his case and get him off if he convinces them he's innocent. Can they? Worse, Multiplex's duplicates involuntarily recombine every fourteen days! How does the law handle someone who's *partially* a killer?

HIS HONOR, JUDGE BLACK HARLEQUIN

While one of the PCs are present in the courtroom, a team of insane superpowered agents infiltrates the courtroom and takes everyone hostage... and that's when the new judge arrives – Black Harlequin! The only way he'll allow the hostages leave is if the PC agrees to stand trial for his crimes (these "crimes," of course, consist of interfering in the plans of Black Harlequin).

Can you win in a trial when guns are being held to the jury's heads and the judge is one of the world's craziest supervillains?

HANGING JUSTICE

At a preliminary hearing where a PC is being questioned about a villain's actions, the notorious Captain Chronos appears out of nowhere, and addresses the courtroom, telling everyone that something horrible will happen unless the supervillain is released *immediately*. Naturally, his concerns are ignored, but a few minutes later, the villain's powers flare up, the courthouse is moved backward through time - and the PCs appearance and abilities are altered to fit the new milieu.

The PCs are now pulp hero characters in the Old West, outstanding physical and mental specimens (but with no superhuman powers). The PC who was being questioned at the hearing is now a notorious gunslinger who's on trial for murder, his lawyer is the town drunkard, and the judge is a hanging judge (and he's in a bad mood). Find a way to prevent the PC from being sentenced to death (and figure out a way to reverse the temporal transposition).

TODAY'S COPYRIGHT LAWS ARE MURDER

Former minor league pro athlete Burton Davis has decided to trademark one of the hero's identities and sue him for copyright infringement. Normally, this sort of case would get thrown out of court, but because of some paperwork filed before the hero's first appearance, the judge is willing to hear the case.

However, the PC is a real hothead, and Davis has a real gift for being obnoxious, and the person who's really behind the lawsuit – a telepath – is counting on it being an explosive combination. The telepath intends to telepathically enflame Davis's insults in court, and once the PC's gotten mad enough, he'll mind control the PC into attacking, and (he hopes) killing Davis in open court. The only thing standing in the way of his manipulations are clever PCs.

THE DEAD WALK

A criminal who was given the death penalty has come back to life. His lawyer claims that he should walk free, given that he's already been executed by the state (and therefore he's legally served his sentence). The PCs have been asked to find evidence that he faked his death, but what if the execution wasn't faked?

JUDGE NOT, LEST YE BE JUDGED

A telepathic vigilante has found an intriguing way to use others to carry out his mission – if, at the end of a trial, a criminal who's accused of a serious crime gets off on a technicality, a gun will automatically teleport into the hands of the judge, who then follows a mental command to shoot the criminal until he's dead.

Three men are now dead, and the careers of three respected jurists are in ruins. The authorities would like you to find a way to prevent this from happening again – but what happens when a crimelord who's managed to avoid the law for years becomes the next target?

DUDE, WHERE'S MY EXHIBIT A?

A notorious supervillain is caught on film killing several guards, an alien death ray pistol in his hand. Unfortunately, when the murder weapon is presented to the jury, it morphs into an alien creature and flies away. The defense is trying to get the trial dismissed on the grounds that if the murder weapon's an alien creature, it may have been responsible for the death and not the defendant. Of course, there's always the possibility that some other force morphed the murder weapon to give the defendant an alibi.

Someone needs to recapture the weapon and prove the weapon had no free will, and prevent a murderer from being set Scot-free.

NOT IN MY BACK YARD

Tired of destructive battles on their doorstep, supervillains crashing through their windows at all hours of the night, and cleaning up collateral damage, a team of superheroes with a publicly known HQ are the recipients of a civil suit from their neighbors. They want the PCs to move their headquarters as far away from their property as possible – now!



Home Away from Home

by Charles Braden

Bases in the HERO System

The Commander sat in the control room and oversaw the operations of the entire facility with ease. On Level 3 there were agents training for the next big attack against the United States. Level 6 held the hangar with its strike craft, including the two recently damaged in the fight over Columbia. Level 7 was dedicated to the Genetics and Mutant Biology labs. Very soon, their latest experiment would yield a new form of super-agent, a killing machine under their complete control.

“Today is a good day to be in command,” he said softly to himself.

On the other side of the world, The Warriors were just clearing up the mess from their latest battle. Gladiator was sweeping out the Viewing room while Myrmidon and Trident cleared debris from the bowling alley. Warlord was just returning with groceries when he realized that the kitchen was without power. He set down the sacks with a huff and was about to check the circuit breakers when the alarm began to wail.

“Today is not going to be my day!”

Bases and headquarters have been a staple product of all genres of fiction for decades. From floating cloud cities to dark mountain strongholds to extensive labs and living quarters in the heart of the city, bases can take any form the creator desires. The following is a brief list of some basic types of bases and methods for using them in your own games.

The Starting Hero Base

This base serves as a headquarters for a fledgling team of *Dark Champions* crime fighters or a low-powered Superhero group. It provides a place to rest and recuperate after a hard day's battle as well as a strategy room for making future plans.

This base is 64" by 32" and all on one floor. The walls are made of standard concrete and the roof is reinforced sheet metal. There is a normal access door on each side as well as two large overhead doors at one end where the group stores their vehicles. The team has purchased the building and the records have been altered to reveal that the building has been empty for years (the Deep Cover). The comm suite allows them to catch the local police stations, popular local radio programs, and even cable TV.

The Starting Hero Base

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
5	BODY	3	
6	DEF	12	
12	SIZE	24	64"x32"

Cost Lab/Equipment

2	<i>Abandoned Warehouse:</i>	Deep Cover
5	<i>Comm Suite:</i>	Radio Perception and Transmission (Radio Group), Concealed (-5 to PER Roll), OAF (Immobile, -2)
7	<i>Electronics Lab:</i>	Electronics (Cellular, Digital, Radio, Telephone, Jamming Equipment) 11-
7	<i>First Aid:</i>	Paramedics 11-
9	<i>Garage:</i>	Mechanics 12-
5	<i>Gym:</i>	PS: Physical Fitness 11-
0	Location:	City
9	<i>Planning Room:</i>	Tactics 12-
13	<i>Vacant Warehouse:</i>	Disguise 14-
8	<i>Weapons Locker:</i>	Weaponsmith (Firearms, Muscle-Powered HTH, Muscle-Powered Ranged) 11-

Pts Disadvantages

15	Hunted:	Local Underworld Figures 8- (As Pow, NCI, Harshly Punish)
18	Final Cost =	89/5

The gym is fairly standard, with space for fighting and tumbling practice. The weight set will accommodate about a thousand pounds, good enough for STR 20 or so to get a workout. The electronics lab is for working on the base comm suite as well as the personal equipment for the group. The garage is fairly well stocked but can only accommodate one vehicle at a time. There is ample space for parking another vehicle next to the garage bay. The first aid station is very simple and should only be used for flesh wounds and simple sprains. Anything else will require actual medical facilities and likely X-Rays. The planning room is where the group discusses group tactics and plans future operations. The weapons locker contains tools for working on standard firearms, missile weapons like bows and crossbows, and hand-to-hand weapons like clubs, staves, and knives.

While this base may seem quite meager, it's fine for starting out. It provides a place to meet, rest, get news, and make plans. For a cost of 18 points, each team member could chip in 3-4 points to spread the cost around. Such a base is also very easy to expand as the team gathers experience.

The Sinister Fortress

This base serves as the headquarters for a powerful foe in *Fantasy Hero* or a remote base for a brooding villain.

This fortress is just the thing for an established villain or up-and-coming warlord. The remote location guarantees little trouble from those pesky invading armies. A magic crystal can be used at will to view approaching foes out to a kilometer away. The magic spells cast on the area ensure that sunlight never gets through. The overall gloomy disposition of the place saps the will and courage of approaching forces before they even reach the outer defenses. As a bonus, a dead zone twice the size of the fortress itself has been cleared of vegetation and any form of cover. No sneaking up on this place!

The fortress itself covers some 64 kilometers on numerous levels and is constructed of the most durable stone that can be found. The magic library is said to be the best in the whole region. Built-in defense consists of 16 ballistae strategically mounted around the outer walls. These babies are guaranteed to throw a bolt out to 600 meters, and have a 180° arc. Each one comes with a stockpile of 32 bolts that must be replaced from the forest to the south. Rooms include an animal pen, two armories, two blacksmiths, and two training areas for the troops.

And speaking of troops, the sale price includes 100 common soldiers and their equipment as well as 50 elite soldiers and four gigantic hunting cats. Guaranteed to keep those persistent salesmen at bay.

Unfortunately, with great possession comes great adversity. In this case, it's in the form of an extremely bad reputation for the fortress. This (and the magic library) tends to draw heroes from far and wide trying to sneak into the place or mount an attack. Finding the place is easy; just ask anyone within a week's ride and they can point the way thanks to the extremely public location.

Now a total cost of 60 character points might seem steep for some, but your typical warlord or evil sorcerer should be able to scrape it together in no time.

The Sinister Fortress

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
8	BODY	6	
8	DEF	18	
20	SIZE	40	400"x200"

Cost Lab/Equipment

8	<i>Animal Pens</i> : Animal Handling (choose animal type) 12-
7	Armorsmith 11-
5	Second Armorsmith 11-
43	<i>Aura of Dread</i> : Drain 1d6 PRE and 1d6 EGO, 1" Radius (Megascale, 1 km), 0 END, Persistent, Always On
7	<i>Aura of Gloom</i> : Change Environment (Overcast, -1 Sight PER Roll), 1" Radius (Megascale, 1 km), 0 END, Persistent, Always On
14	<i>Ballista</i> : 4d6 RKA (One Turn to ready, Limited Arc 180 Degrees, Beam, OAF Immobile Focus, Real Weapon, 32 Charges that recover in 1 Week)
20	15 Extra Ballistae
7	<i>Blacksmith</i> : Weaponsmith (Muscle-Powered HTH, Muscle-Powered Ranged) 11-
5	Second Blacksmith 11-
15	<i>Distant Wilderness</i> : Location (Mountains)
1	<i>Dreadlands</i> : Grounds, 2x Base Size
45	<i>Guards, Common</i> : 100 Followers (Base 50 points, 50 points of Disads)
45	<i>Guards, Elite</i> : 50 Followers (Base 75 points, 50 points of Disads)
40	<i>Guardian Cats</i> : 4 Followers (Base 150 points, 50 points of Disads)
8	<i>Magical Library</i> : KS: Magic 14-
5	Reputation: Feared Stronghold 11- (Medium Sized Group) +5/+5d6
16	<i>Sense Foes</i> : Detect Enemies (Unusual Group, Discriminatory, 360 Degree, Sense) 1" Radius (Megascale 1 km), OAF Bulky Magic Crystal
4	<i>Training Area</i> : WF: Common Melee Weapons and Common Missile Weapons
5	Second Training Area

Pts Disadvantages

25	Distinctive Features: Huge Ominous Fortress (Not Concealable, Extreme)
15	Hunted: Various Heroes (Less Powerful, Harshly Punish, Fortress is easy to find)
25	Social Limitation: Very Public Location (Very Frequently, Severe Reaction)
60	Final Cost = 299/5

Menacing Space Station

The ultimate in hostile getaways, this space fortress is spherical, can get from Earth to Alpha Centauri in 6 days, and carries a gun large enough to destroy an entire planet.

The pinnacle of destructive technology, this mobile base is said to be the ultimate power in the universe. Pulse cannons are set around the outer hull to deter attackers from getting too close. Energy fields keep big enemy guns from doing too much damage while the wave cannon warms up. The hangar bays carry 100 of the most sophisticated fighter craft around. For ground security, the station carries 1000 crack troops. The tractor beam can drag in just about anything the enemy is likely to try and escape with.

Needless to say, this is certainly an extreme example of a base. However, it gives the players an idea of just how large, how powerful, and how terrifying a base can be.

Players are encouraged to be creative with their bases. With a little planning and a bit of research (and the GM's permission), a base can have anything from a trash compactor to a long-range teleportation device. With the HERO System, the sky's the limit.

Menacing Space Station

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
6	BODY	4	
10	DEF	24	
25	SIZE	50	1250"x640"

Cost	Lab/Equipment
11	<i>Communications Lab</i> : Systems Operation (Communications, Medical and Environmental Systems) 12-
27	<i>Communications Suite</i> : HRRP (+5 PER), Concealed (-5 PER), Discriminatory, Rapid (x10), Tracking, Megascale (1" = 1000 km, +1), OAF (Immobile, -2)
30	<i>Defense Screen</i> : Force Field (20 ED), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2)
11	<i>Equipment Bay</i> : Electronics (Communication Systems, Environmental Systems, Medical Systems) 12-
9	<i>Interrogation Room</i> : Interrogation 12-
28	<i>Jump Engines</i> : 1 LY per Day
9	<i>Medical Bay</i> : Paramedics 12-
9	<i>Nav Station</i> : Navigation (Space, Hyperspace) 12-
9	<i>Piloting Simulator</i> : Combat Piloting 12-
30	<i>Pulse Cannons</i> : RKA 3d6, Autofire 5 (+1/2), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1); Beam (-1/4), 2-man Crew (-1/4), 180° Arc (-1/4), OAF (Immobile, -2)
35	<i>More Cannons</i> : Total of 128

15	<i>Reputation</i> : Impregnable Space Station 14- (Large Group) +5/+5d6
38	<i>Sensor Suite</i> : Spatial Awareness (Radio Group, +5 PER Roll, Discriminatory, Analyze, 360 Degree), Rapid (x10), Tracking, Transmit, Megascale (1" = 1000 km, +1); OAF (Immobile, -2)
9	<i>Ship Repair Bay</i> : Mechanics 12-
65	<i>Shock Troopers</i> : Followers (1000, 75 Base, 50 points of Disads)
35	<i>Space-Based</i> : Location (Space)
75	<i>Strike Fighters</i> : 100 Vehicles (200 Base, 50 points of Disads)
9	<i>Suit Repair</i> : Armorsmith 12-
25	<i>Support Systems</i> : Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing, No Eating or Sleeping, Safe in Cold, Heat, Pressure, Vacuum, Radiation)
67	<i>Thrusters</i> : Flight 20", 4x Noncombat Movement, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2)
40	<i>Tractor Beam</i> : 75 STR Telekinesis, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2), 60° Arc (-1/2), 4-man Crew (-1/2), Affects Whole Object (-1/4), OAF (Immobile, -2)
30	<i>Wave Cannon</i> : RKA 4d6, Area Of Effect (17" Radius, +1), Increased Range 5250" (+1/4), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2), Megascale 1" = 1000 km (+1); 24-man Crew (-1/4), Extra Time (20 Minutes, -2 1/2), Limited Arc One Hex Row (-3/4), OAF (Immobile, -2)
8	<i>Weapon Bay</i> : Weaponsmith 12- (Energy Weapons)

Pts Disadvantages

25	<i>Distinctive Features</i> : Huge Ominous Station (Not Concealable, Extreme)
15	<i>Hunted</i> : Various Rebel Alliances (Less Pow, Harshly Punish, Easy to Find)
25	<i>Social Limitation</i> : Very Public Location (Very Frequently, Severe Reaction)
127	Total Cost = 637/5



WHAT ABOUT OTHER SPECIES?

With such proliferation of variant genotypes, one might wonder if they can be applied to other species in the galaxy. Could one have, for example, a Caver Rigellian, or a Mer-Fex?

The answer is: maybe. From a logistical standpoint there are few impossible or impractical combinations, but they should also be considered from a cultural standpoint. Would that species show enough interest in the use for that genotype – or even genetic alteration in general – to justify altering the genome to fit the environment?

Even if the answer is yes, such variants would be *extremely* rare – even the more successful variant types, such as a Heavy Toractan, would be far less frequent than the genotypes discussed in this article, for reasons too numerous to go into here.

The main exception to this is Xenovores. Their interest in alternate genomes would not only make these variant types for their species very likely, but also make combinations of two or more genomes – such as a Heavy Mer Artificer, for example – even more frequent than among Humans.



Variant Human Genotypes

by Bob Greenwade

Both *Terran Empire* (pages 18-20) and *Alien Wars* (pages 26-27) mention how Humans, probably at some time during the Solar or Interstellar Ages (that is, the 22nd and 23rd Centuries), modified their children's genes to better adapt to various environments. Both books go on to list the four most successful variant genotypes: Heavy, Martian, Selkie, and Spacer.

Both books also imply the existence of several more variants. The following are some of the most durable and interesting examples.

AQUATICS

While Selkies are the only truly successful water-dwelling Human subspecies, Aquatics – true water-breathers – are still a viable option. They are physically similar in most ways to Selkies, and are essentially identical in appearance, with the main exception being gills on the sides of the neck to allow water-breathing.

The difficulties of genetic breeding of Aquatics gives them a particularly low birth rate. They've kept their subspecies alive by promoting cloning and *in vitro* fertilization, giving big tax breaks to large families on the three colony worlds they control, and occasionally interbreeding with Selkies for genetic stability. Still, their population in the 23rd through 27th Centuries remains steady at less than ten thousand.

AQUATIC PACKAGE DEAL

Cost Ability

- 8 *Water-Dwelling*: Life Support (Can Breathe Underwater); Safe in High Pressure and Intense Cold)
- 3 *Webbed Hands and Feet*: Swimming +3"
- 5 Nightvision
- 3 *Environmental Movement*: Aquatic Movement

Val Disadvantages

- 10 Physical Limitation: Light-Sensitive Eyes (-2 Sight PER Rolls in bright light) (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 20 Vulnerability: 2×Effect from Sight Group Flashes Based on Bright Light (Common)

Total Cost of Package: -11



DIGITAL HERO #30

CAVERS

Engineered for underground environments, Cavers have enhanced night vision and improved agility and resilience to avoid and withstand cave-ins. They are distinctive from normal Humans by their leathery skin and unusually large eyes. Male cavers are also considerably more hirsute than other Human stocks.

Cavers were originally engineered to work on mining worlds, especially where conditions on the surface were harsher than those underground. Since these criteria only fit a small handful of worlds (Venus and Neptune among them), not many Cavers were engineered even before first contact with natural cave-dwelling species made the engineering moot.

CAVER PACKAGE DEAL

Cost Ability

- 6 +2 DEX
- 4 +2 CON
- 3 *Leathery Skin*: Armor (3 PD/1 ED)
- 3 *Tunneler*: Environmental Movement (No Penalties in Cramped or Cluttered Spaces)
- 5 Nightvision

Val Disadvantages

- 10 Physical Limitation: Light-Sensitive Eyes (-2 Sight PER Rolls in bright light) (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)

Total Cost of Package: 14



ELECTRIC SENSE GROUP

In this context, Electrosense could be treated not as “No Sense Group,” but as a Sense Group of its own – the Electric Sense Group. This Sense Group might be sensible for certain other species as well, such as Aza’arca or certain piscine or insect species.

The Electric Sense Group may be treated as Ranged by default; this is entirely the GM’s decision.

While the Sense as shown here is good only for identifying people and other targets by their electromagnetic fields, an Electric character could (with the GM’s permission) add Range and/or Targeting to make it more useful. Some could even add Transmit, to communicate using the ability – though a Language would also be necessary (the Aza’arca native language being one possibility).

ELECTRIC JOLT: PERSONAL IMMUNITY

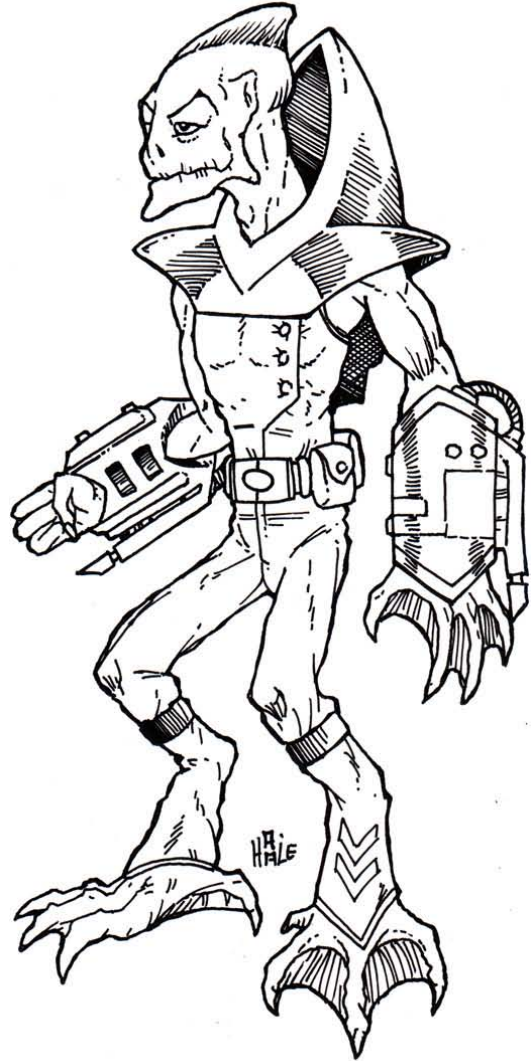
The *Personal Immunity* Advantage on the Electric Jolt ability only means that an Electric can’t shock himself should the jolt come back to hit him (such as through a lightning rod, Malvan device, or some similar means). Electrics can

ELECTRICS

The only genotype developed for a military purpose, Electrics (sometimes called “Shockers”) were bred during the last half of the Xenovore War, using transgenic DNA from various electric fishes (eels and catfish). On average, they are taller and lankier than normal Humans, and have greyish, scale-like skin.

The arms of an Electric have organic batteries similar to those of the piscine progenitors, but generally not quite as powerful. This ability, plus the military intent behind their creation, led to the arguably unfortunate nickname “shock troops.” Their development began too late in the war for them to see much action, and afterward the project was abandoned. During the Imperial Era, their population never exceeded five thousand.

With the GM’s permission, an Electric might also learn other electricity-based abilities (see pages 76-81 of the *UNTIL Superpowers Database* for examples), though always at a level comparable with normal Human characteristics and other powers in the Terran Empire setting (such as the psionic powers described in *Digital Hero #8*).



ELECTRIC PACKAGE DEAL

Cost Ability

- 2 +2 ED
- 12 *Electric Jolt*: EB 2d6, Personal Immunity (+¼)
- 1 *Webbed Hands and Feet*: +1” Swimming
- 10 *Electrosense*: Detect Electrical Fields (INT Roll) (no Sense Group), Discriminatory

Val Disadvantages

- 2 -1 BODY
- 2 -1” Running
- 5 Physical Limitation: Colorblind (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)

Total Cost of Package: 16

Cost Options

- 5 Range on Electrosense
- 10 Targeting on Electrosense
- 5 Transmit on Electric Sense Group

DIGITAL HERO #30

ELVES

A genetic variant dating to the mid- to late 21st Century, Elves are the product of die-hard fans of J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and related novels. The modifications are mostly cosmetic, with pointed ears, aquiline features, and long limbs, though these have had some minor effects on individuals' physical characteristics.

During the Interstellar Age, Elves established two colony worlds on forested planets. They have mostly kept to themselves ever since. Though their total population is in the hundreds of thousands, usually only a few dozen can be found away from these worlds.

ELF PACKAGE DEAL

Cost Ability

6 +2 DEX

Val Disadvantages

-1 -1 STR

-2 -1 CON

-2 -1 BODY

Total Cost of Package: -1



still shock one another.

FELINES

During the middle 21st Century one of the oddest genetic phenomena in Human history surfaced. Known collectively as *zoomorphs*, their subculture was the most extreme form of the “furry” philosophy and lifestyle originating in the late 20th Century. While a more typical furry would do little more than gather collectibles and adapt a few animalistic social behaviors, the more extreme would actually dress, paint, tattoo, or even surgically alter themselves to resemble the animal with which they identified. Zoomorphs took the concept to its extreme, actually receiving transgenic treatments from various animals – bears, cats, dogs, foxes, rabbits, and many other creatures, both wild and domesticated.

Of these, by far the most successful in the long term was felines, specifically those with tiger genes.

Externally, they differ from normal humans in only two respects, though they’re fairly distinctive. First, they are covered with a thin but definite coat of fur, either orange or silver with black stripes. Second, they have tails with minor prehensile abilities. They do not have the cupped ears, fangs, or facial features of their feline donors, and the very few with retractable claws have only very small ones.

**FELINE PACKAGE DEAL****Cost Ability**

- 3 +3 STR
- 9 +9 DEX
- 8 *Powerful Legs*: Running +4”
- 1 *Powerful Legs*: Leaping +1”
- 6 *Feline Senses*: +2 with all Sense Groups
- 5 *Feline Eyes*: Nightvision
- 5 *Feline Nose*: Discriminatory for Normal Smell
- 5 *Tail*: Extra Limb, Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)

Val Disadvantage

None

Total Cost of Package: 42**Cost Option**

- 5 *Claws*: HKA 1 pip (½d6 with STR)

GOTHS

Like Elves (above), Goths were originally made as an “on-demand” genotype for a particular subculture, in this case those in the “Gothic” scene as it reached its peak of both popularity and extremism in the middle 21st Century.

In keeping with their fascination with vampirism, most Gothic-inspired genetic modifications were purely cosmetic, yielding pale skin, thick black hair, extended canine teeth, and similar features. This modification had almost completely intermarried into the general Human population before the invention of Hyperdrive. However, a more extreme minority went so far as to include transgenetic material from bats, yielding ears large enough for echolocation abilities and wings on which a person can at least glide (though only the most athletic can actually fly; the Flight option in the Package Deal can either replace the Gliding, or join it in a Multipower).

Sometimes referred to a Chiroptics (after the bat’s scientific name *Chiroptera*) or Bat-Men, most Goths left earth during the Interstellar age and formed a small colony on a world they named New Transylvania. To this day, nearly all of the genotype’s population of roughly eighty thousand live there. Most have eschewed the “Gothic” viewpoint for a simple agricultural lifestyle resembling that of the Amish, though nocturnal and with a certain definite Eastern European feel to its trappings and history.



GOTH PACKAGE DEAL

Cost Ability

3 +1 DEX

15 *Echolocation*: Active Sonar

5 *Wings*: Gliding 8”; Restrainable (-½)

Val Disadvantage

-4 Running -2”

-10 Physical Limitation: Light-Sensitive Eyes (-2 Sight PER Rolls in bright light)

Total Cost of Package: 9

Cost Option

10 *Wings*: Flight 8”; Restrainable (-½)

HIGH-RADS

The galactic population of High-Rads suffer less from lack of purpose or viability – though these certainly have been problems for them – than from an incredibly low natural birth rate. They were originally engineered for survival on high-radiation worlds, as miners of uranium, plutonium, and other highly volatile materials, though energy-production and weapons technology soon advanced beyond the need for those materials.

Galaxy-wide, High-Rads number only in a very few thousand. Despite the loss of their original purpose, they are still quite effective as hazardous-materials handlers for industry, law enforcement, and the military. Also, most of the Terran diplomatic mission on Korun is made up of High-Rads.

They are distinctive from normal Humans by their mottled, multicolored skin. As a side effect of their radiation resistance, their skin is also easily cut, and they suffer a slight hemophiliac condition subspecies-wide. They also suffer some prejudice from other Human stock due to a superstition (altogether false) that High-Rads give off dangerous radiation. This superstition isn't altogether unfounded; while their natural radiation is harmless to most other life, it does kill any infectious diseases they may receive.

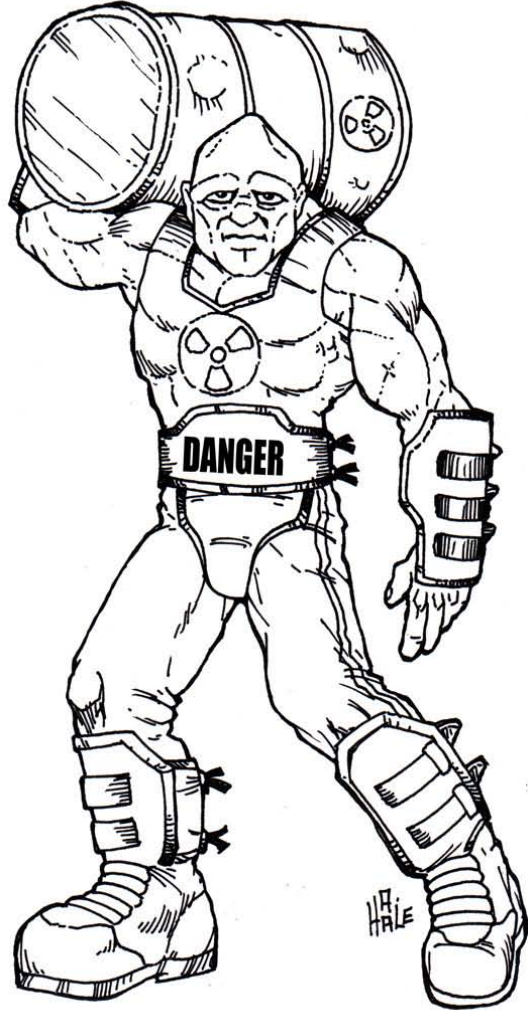
HIGH-RAD PACKAGE DEAL**Cost Ability**

- 6 +3 CON
- 10 *Radiation Resistance*: Life Support (Safe in High Radiation; Immune to Bacterial, Viral, and Fungal Infections)
- 3 *Radiation Resistance*: Power Defense (10 points); Only versus Radiation-Based Attacks (-2)

Val Disadvantages

- 4 -2 BODY
- 2 -4 COM
- 10 Physical Limitation: Fragile Immune System (-2 to Paramedics to Stop Bleeding) (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 5 Social Limitation: Reputedly Radioactive (Occasionally, Minor)

Total Cost of Package: -2



DIGITAL HERO #30

PRIMES

Dating from the late 21st Century, Primes were one of the first variant Human genotypes to be developed for reasons other than culture. Of those developed during that time, this type is the only one to survive intact through the Xenovore War period and into the Terran Empire without having a colony of its own.

When they first appeared, Primes were hailed as the “super-humans” of the time, physically and intellectually superior to normal Humans. The problem was, too many of them started to take that role seriously enough to try taking control of the planet, either militarily or through business conglomerates (and on at least one occasion a combination of both). These efforts were foiled and many of the genotype were killed; their low birth rate has kept the type in check ever since.

Numbering in the dozens of thousands, Primes in the latter part of the 3rd Millennium fall more or less into three philosophical camps: Integrationists, Responders, and Imperialists. The Integrationists are the largest group, making up nearly half the population, and want nothing more than to integrate into galactic society right alongside normal and other variant Humans as well as non-Humans. Responders hold to the philosophy that “with great power there must come great responsibility” – their genetic superiority is a gift, and as such its benefits should be shared with the greater society. Imperialists hold to the philosophies of their world-conquering progenitors; while the smallest group, they’re big enough to be a serious concern.

The Imperialists are numerous and well-known enough that they cause concern among those who encounter them, especially other Humans. The Terran Security Service keeps a close eye on all known Primes within the Terran Empire (a Prime spending a lot of time outside the Empire would take the *Limited Geographic Area* modifier on the Hunted).

Besides their basic health and strength, Primes have several physiological improvements over other Human genotypes. They have two hearts, highly efficient and resistant metabolisms, thickened skin, and the ability to heal back lost body parts. Their senses are particularly keen; it’s quite difficult to surprise or fool a Prime.

Primes do not develop psionic powers, for many of the same reasons that they are not possible for Jhinu (see *Alien Wars*, page 30) – the genetic abnormalities that allow possession of such abilities are “weeded out” of the Prime genome.

PRIME PACKAGE DEAL

Cost Ability

- 5 +5 STR
- 9 +3 DEX
- 6 +3 CON
- 4 +2 BODY
- 5 +5 INT
- 5 +5 PRE
- 3 +6 COM
- 3 Ambidexterity
- 3 Lightsleep
- 8 Running +4”
- 2 Swimming +2”
- 6 *Thick Skin*: Armor (2 PD/2 ED)
- 5 *Toxin-Resistant Body*: Power Defense (5 points)
- 14 *Superior Health*: Life Support (Extended Breathing [1 END per Minute], Diminished Sleep [Eight Hours per Week], Longevity [Ages at Half Normal Rate], Immunity [Most Terrestrial Diseases and Biowarfare Agents])
- 11 *Limb Regeneration*: Healing 2d6 [Regeneration; 2 BODY per Week], Can Heal Limbs, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Persistent (+½); Extra Time (2 BODY/Week, -2¼), Self Only (-½)
- 3 *Dual Heart*: +5 BODY; Only versus Chest-Penetrating Wounds (-2)
- 10 *Superior Senses*: +2 with all PER

Val Disadvantage

- 10 Hunted: by TSS (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching) 8-
- 5 Social Limitation: Distrusted Minority (Frequently, Minor, Not Limiting In Some Areas)

Total Cost of Package: 87

Cost Options

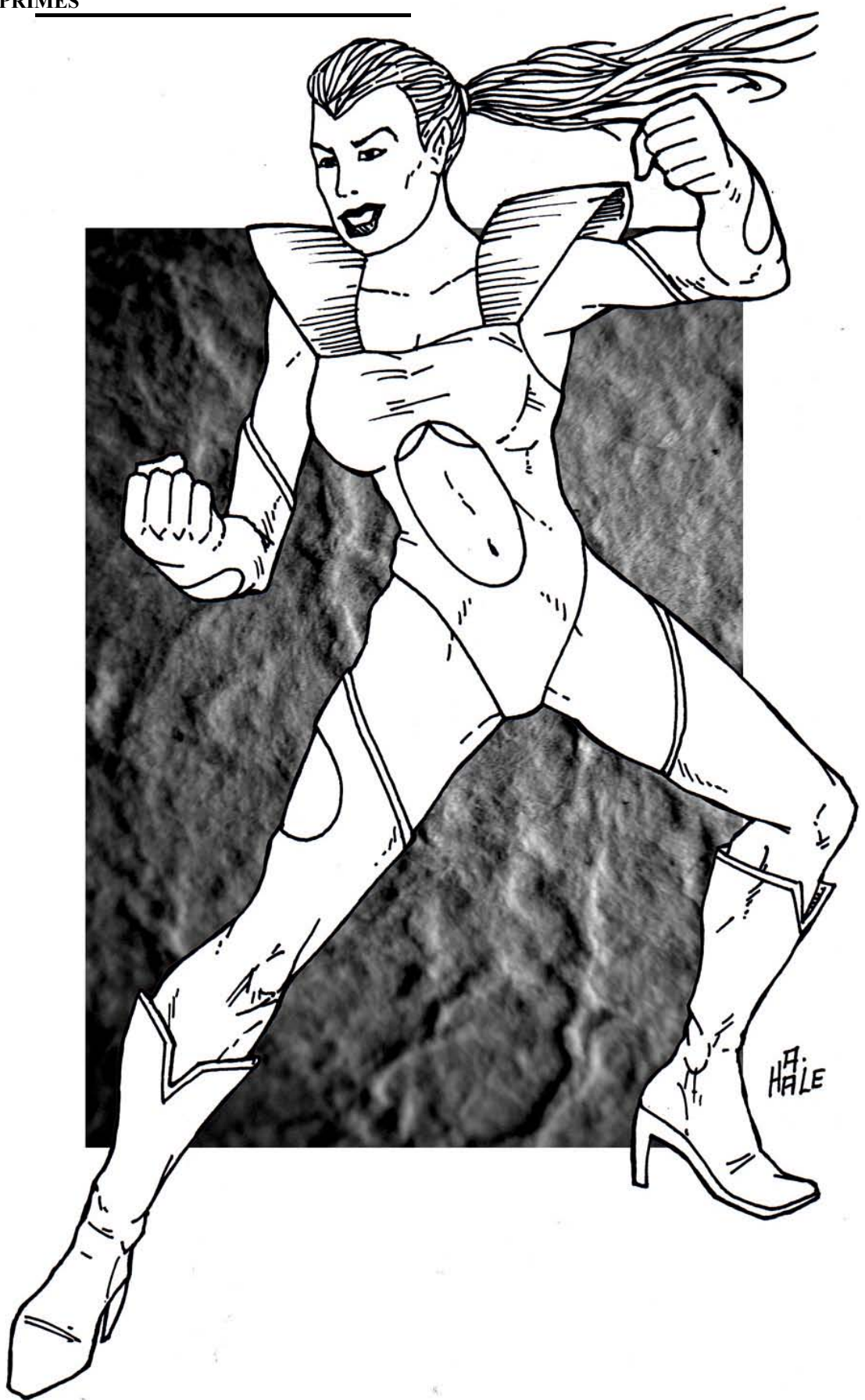
- 3 Absolute Time Sense
- 3 Bump of Direction
- 45 Danger Sense +8 (Immediate Vicinity, Out of Combat, Sense), Discriminatory, Targeting
- 3 Lightning Calculator

DANGER SENSE FOR PRIMES

The Danger Sense shown as an option for the Prime Package Deal should be considered the *maximum* allowed. Any given Prime – especially a starting PC – would probably have a much lesser level of Danger Sense, if any.

Full Targeting for Danger Sense costs only 5 points because its “build” already has Targeting with a -1 Limitation *Only If Make Half Roll*. Essentially, full Targeting simply removes the Limitation.

PRIMES



DIGITAL HERO #30

SANDWALKERS

Also called “Desert Dwellers,” Sandwalkers are engineered to survive on arid worlds with wild extremes of temperature. During the Imperial Era, they are the most populous Human variant type on Europa Nova and New Canaan, though other than the hundred thousand or so on those planets they’re quite rare. Most of those off these worlds are explorers or soldiers.

Their appearance, with several visible features for protection against desert environments, is perhaps the most unusual of all the variant Human genotypes. To many, they hardly seem Human at all. The flesh is thick and leathery but highly porous, heavy flaps of skin cover the mouth and nostrils, the eyes are small and heavily-lidded, the ears unusually large, the limbs long and lanky, and the head and torso almost spherical.

SANDWALKER PACKAGE DEAL

Cost Ability

- 6 +3 CON
- 6 +3 BODY
- 6 *Leathery Skin*: Armor (2 PD/2 ED)
- 10 *Desert-Dwelling*: Life Support (Can Breathe in Heavily Sanded and Other Particulate Air); Safe in Intense Cold and Heat; Immune to Fungal Infections)
- 1 *Sand-Walking*: Environmental Movement (No Penalty on Sand)

Val Disadvantages

- 6 -2 DEX
- 2 -1” Running
- 1 -1” Swimming

Total Cost of Package: 20



SLEEPERS

Originally designed in the very early days of Human genotype experimentation, Sleepers were designed to survive the long, rigorous journeys of the first interstellar exploration. The ships they used at that time needed to conserve energy as much as possible, so the explorers were given the survival abilities of a waterbear. These microscopic animals, when exposed to harsh conditions, can “shut down” their systems to a nigh-indestructible state – even surviving the rigors of outer space – only to reanimate later when conditions are more favorable.

After the invention of Hyperdrive, the Sleeper stock nearly died out. They made a brief comeback during the last decade of the Xenovore War, and maintained a population of several thousand during the Imperial period. Most have jobs as explorers, investigators, soldiers, hazardous-materials handlers, and similar professions.

Other than being somewhat stockier and having shorter limbs on average, Sleepers are indistinguishable from normal Humans – in fact, most can pass for normal Human.

**SLEEPER PACKAGE DEAL****Cost Ability**

- 16 *Hibernation*: Life Support (Need Not Breathe, Eat, Nor Sleep, Safe in All Environments, including Zero Gravity, Immortal, Immune to All Diseases and All Poisons), Trigger (Environment Becomes Harsh Beyond what the Character Could Normally Survive, +1/4); Concentration (0 DCV Throughout, Totally Unaware of Nearby Events, -1½), Extra Time (1 Minute to Activate, Character May Take No Other Actions, -1), Requires Revival Procedures to Stop (-½)
- 14 *Hibernation*: Invisibility (Detect Life Signs/Paramedics/Forensic Medicine, Mental Sense Group), No Fringe, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Persistent (+½); Linked to Life Support (-½), Concentration (0 DCV Throughout, Totally Unaware of Nearby Events, -1½), Extra Time (1 Minute to Activate, Character May Take No Other Actions, -1), Requires Revival Procedures to Stop (-½)
- 13 *Hibernation*: Armor (20 PD/20 ED); Linked to Life Support (-½), Concentration (0 DCV Throughout, Totally Unaware of Nearby Events, -1½), Extra Time (1 Minute to Activate, Character May Take No Other Actions, -1), Requires Revival Procedures to Stop (-½)
- 4 *Hibernation*: Power Defense (20 points); Linked to Life Support (-½), Concentration (0 DCV Throughout, Totally Unaware of Nearby Events, -1½), Extra Time (1 Minute to Activate, Character May Take No Other Actions, -1), Requires Revival Procedures to Stop (-½)

Val Disadvantage

None

Total Cost of Package: 47

DIGITAL HERO #30

TREEMEN

More formally referred to as “Arboreals,” Treemen are engineered for better survival in dense forests and jungles. They have longer than usual arms and prehensile tails for easier transportation in the treetops. They also have a natural, nigh-feline ability to catch themselves when falling. However, their legs are shorter than those of normal Humans, and they cannot run as quickly.

Equipment and artificial shelter kept the Treeman genome from becoming as popular as many others. However, their general health is good, and their population, while small, has kept pace with that of mainstream Humanity over the centuries.

TREEMAN PACKAGE DEAL

Cost Ability

- 6 +2 DEX
- 3 Breakfall
- 3 **Skilled Climber:** Environmental Movement (no penalties when climbing)
- 7 **Brachiation:** Swinging 7”, No Turn Mode (+¼); No Upward Climb (-¼)
- 5 **Tail:** Extra Limb, Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)

Value Disadvantages

- 2 -1 BODY
- 4 *Poorly Suited Runner:* Running -2”
- 10 **Physical Limitation:** Has Difficulty On Flat Surfaces (-2 to all DEX Rolls, OCV, and DCV) (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)

Total Cost Of Package: 8



YETI (COLD-DWELLERS)

While truly icy planets cannot sustain any form of Human life, a few worlds are “tundra worlds,” just below the Martian range of temperature. The large, furry stock of Humans nicknamed Yeti (notwithstanding the H’rothans described in *Digital Hero #21*, though those of the Yeti genotype are sometimes also called Snowmen) were engineered for this purpose.

The most important factor of survival in cold is the retention of body heat. Heavy external fur, thick limbs and torsos, and even sheer size of Yeti achieve this nicely. Their body chemistry is designed to prevent ice crystals from forming, making frostbite a minor concern at worst. Their bodies are also well suited for climbing, and their large feet make walking in shifting snow much easier than for most other Human stock.

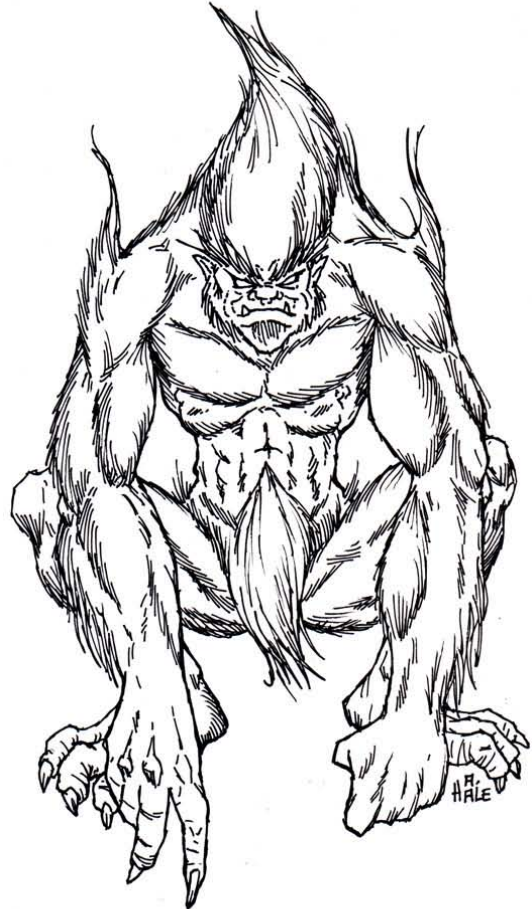
YETI PACKAGE DEAL**Cost Ability**

- 5 +5 STR
- 6 +3 CON
- 6 +3 BODY
- 9 **Heavy Fur:** Armor (3 PD, 3 ED)
- 2 **Heavy:** Knockback Resistance -1”
- 3 **Skilled Climber:** Environmental Movement (no penalties when climbing)
- 1 **Snow-Walking:** Environmental Movement (no penalty on snow)
- 2 **Cold Resistance:** Life Support (Safe Environment: Intense Cold)

Value Disadvantages

- 5 **Physical Limitation:** Large (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)

Total Cost Of Package:



Combining Genotypes

With as many variant Human types as there are, it stands to reason that there would be combinations. There are two ways to combine genotypes: through interbreeding, and through engineering.

As already noted in *Terran Empire* (page 18) and *Alien Wars* (page 26), any variant Human type can interbreed with any other type. The offspring tend to “average out” in abilities, so a Caver interbreeding with a normal Human would be not quite as strong and not quite as tough as a full-blooded Caver, but wouldn’t be as sensitive to light.

Since a world can have more than one harsh characteristic, it should also be possible for more than one genetic variant type to be engineered into the same stock. In this case, the Package Deals would not average out, but instead add together. For example, a high-gravity world with no surface atmosphere but extensive air-filled underground caves might be the home for a stock of Heavy Cavers. Simply apply the already-published Heavy Package Deal and the Caver Package Deal found here. If the planet is also cold and has extensive radiation, and the caves are mostly filled with water, you could also apply the High-Rad, Selkie, and Yeti packages. The total population of High-Rad Heavy Caver Yeti Selkies would probably be several dozen to a couple hundred at most (and a quick glance at the combined Package Deal below should give a pretty good idea as to why), but it would be theoretically possible.

Some genotype combinations should be considered impossible from an engineering standpoint. Just as it makes little to no sense to engineer a Heavy Spacer, so a combination of the Aquatic and Caver Package Deals doesn’t work well because the environments for which those types were devised are all but mutually exclusive. If a character needs to combine types like this, it’s better done through intermarriage.

HIGH-RAD HEAVY CAVER YETI SELKIE PACKAGE DEAL (SAMPLE COMBINATION)

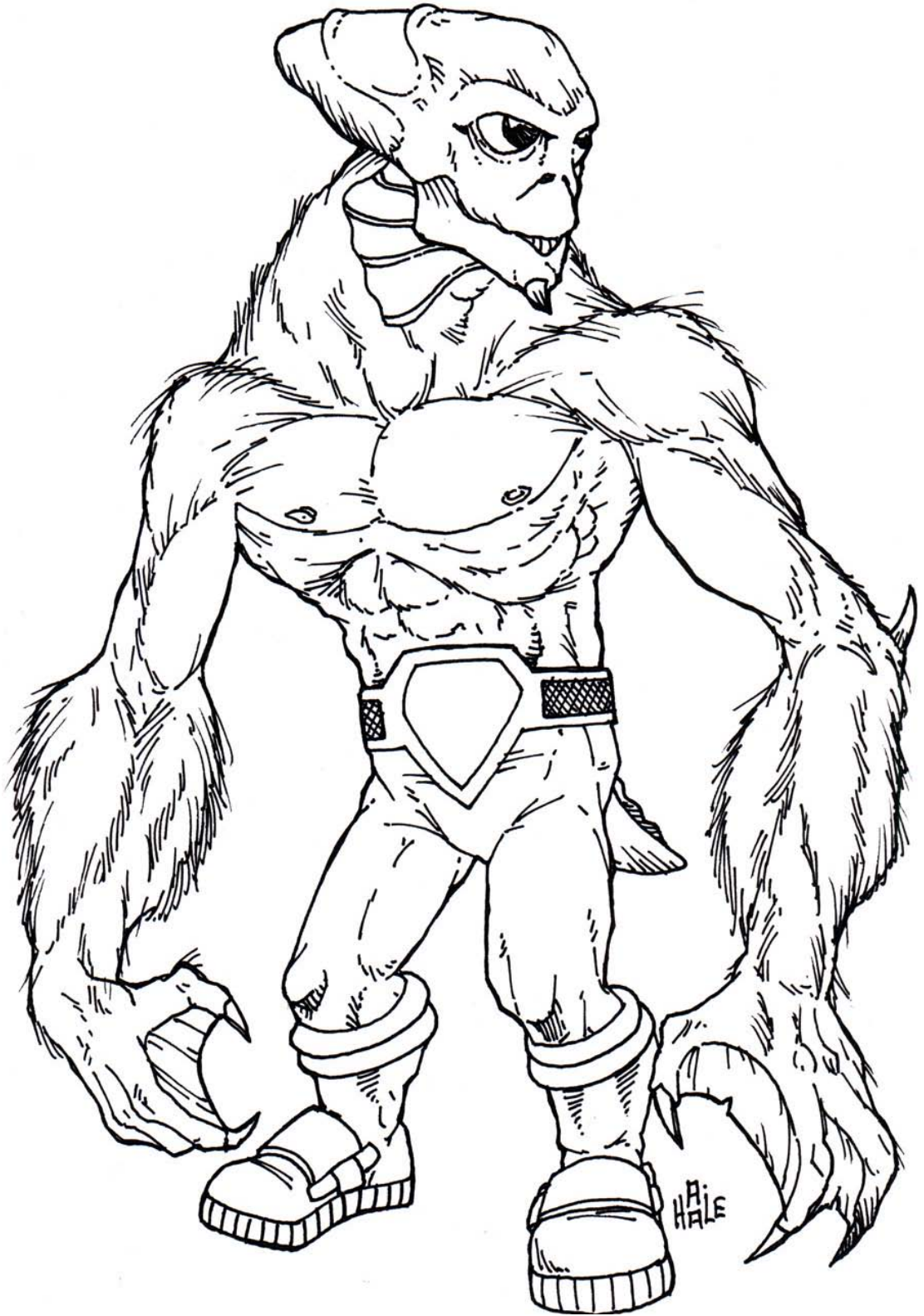
Cost	Ability
10	+10 STR
3	+1 DEX
24	+12 CON
8	+4 BODY
15	Leathery Skin/Heavy Fur: Armor (6 PD/4 ED)
1	Used To High G: Armor (2 PD/0 ED); Only to Protect Against G-Force Damage (-1)
3	Webbed Hands And Feet: Swimming +3”
4	Heavy: Knockback Resistance -2”
15	Water-Borne Radiation/Cold Resistance: Life Support (Extended Breathing: 1 END per Minute; Safe Environment: High Pressure, High Radiation, Intense Cold; Immunity: Bacterial Infections, Viral Infections, Fungal Infections)
3	Radiation Resistance: Power Defense (10 points); Only Versus Radiation-Based Attacks (-2)
3	Tunnel Movement: Environmental Movement (no penalties in cramped or cluttered spaces)
3	Aquatic Movement: Environmental Movement (no penalties in water)
3	Skilled Climber: Environmental Movement (no penalties when climbing)
1	Snow-Walking: Environmental Movement (no penalty on snow)
1	High Gravity Training: Environmental Movement (no penalties in high gravity)
5	Nightvision

Value Disadvantages

-2	-4 COM
-15	Physical Limitation: Enormous (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
-15	Physical Limitation: Extremely Light-Sensitive Eyes (-4 Sight PER Rolls in bright light) (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
-10	Physical Limitation: Fragile Immune System (-2 to Paramedics to stop bleeding) (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
-5	Social Limitation: Reputedly Radioactive (Occasionally, Minor)
-20	Vulnerability: 2× Effect from Sight Group flashes based on bright light (Common)

Total Cost Of Package: 35

HIGH-RAD HEAVY CAVER YETI SELKIE
PACKAGE DEAL



Gary Van Brugge

Background/History: Gary van Brugge grew up in Blackbeard, a small spaceport town on Venwordien IV. His parents, both Humans of the Electric genotype, kept to themselves, and did what they could to pass for mainstream Humans (with perhaps a little Selkie heritage).

Gary didn't like that idea. He wanted to be exactly what he was, and make no pretense. As he came into adulthood, he started using his electric abilities whenever it suited him. The idea suited several potential employers, and he started hiring himself out as a sort of "muscle for hire."

Since then he's made his living as a freelance mercenary, bodyguard, security guard, courier, or whatever else happens to be handy, all for whatever price he can get. In the process he's run afoul of authorities in both the Terran Empire and the Mon'dabi Federation, but so far he's always managed to escape back to his homeworld.

Personality/Motivation: Greed motivates Gary more than anything else. He'll do just about anything if the price is right. However, he's not an assassin, and will turn down any contract for murder (though a particularly large offer might sorely tempt him).

Toward that end, Gary always tries to make himself look good to employers both current and prospective. If he has to make others at his own level look bad to do it, he will, though generally he'll only go as far as to embarrass his rivals. He's certainly not above using knowledge he might have of his rivals' past misdeeds to his own advantage – and he actively seeks out such knowledge when he can.

Other than that, any actions he takes against people (PCs or otherwise) are rarely if ever personal – he's "just doing [his] job."

Quote: "Don't even bother trying to escape. If you try to fight me, you might be in for a... heh... real shock."

Powers/Tactics: Gary is sufficiently skilled with weapons that he doesn't necessarily have to rely on his electric organs to win a fight. He generally sticks to the equipment he's given (since that's usually more powerful than anything he can muster up on his own), and only turns to his electric shock and other electrical "tricks" he's taught himself when they're needed to either win a fight, or draw it to a quicker conclusion.

As an Electric, he can not only generate enough electricity to stun someone, but also throw an electric arc bright enough to momentarily blind someone, or generate electricity to power – or even overload – an electrical device. These abilities aren't nearly as powerful as artificial weapons – his jolts are

about the same as a good punch, and his blinding arc is only effective for a very few seconds – but he can actually do quite a bit with the element of surprise.

Campaign Use: Gary is a mercenary, available to whomever needs him. For example, he could be found in the employ of Bertrand Devereaux, Dargen, Ghenak Vaa'resh, or Zee'gansh (see *Star Hero*, pages 308-314) with equal likelihood.

Besides this, Gary is an example of how a properly-motivated Electric character can expand his electricity-generating capacity beyond just giving someone a mild jolt. He has additional power, additional applications, and range in his favor, any of which can be a surprise to an Electric PC, or someone who's encountered Electrics before.

He doesn't generally Hunt individuals. A rival mercenary might earn him as an enemy, but mostly to publicly humiliate or discredit the target (that is, the Mildly Punish modifier would apply). He no non-combat influence, and generally covers only a limited geographic area (unless the campaign is limited in scope to Venwordien and nearby worlds).

Appearance: Like his parents, Gary looks a bit more like a mainline Human than most Electrics. The grey color of his skin has a tinge of pinkish tan, and could easily be explained (if Gary was so inclined, as his parents are) as a partial Selkie heritage. He stands 185 cm (6'1") tall and weighs 73 kg (160 pounds). His features are rugged and not particularly handsome; his nose is overly large, and his beard too thick for him to be considered truly handsome. He wears casual clothing of the common style on Venwordien, mostly in subtle earth tones to make his skin look more like that of a baseline Human.

GARY VAN BRUGGE PLOT SEEDS

Gary gets in over his head – he's been hired as a guard by Akbar Kusama, but had no idea what his employer was up to until it was almost – *almost* – too late. He sends a secret message to the PCs, trying to give them what little information he has, hoping they can piece together the rest in time to save millions of lives.

On a former Malvan colony, Gary is hired by Bertrand Devereaux to help in an archaeological dig beneath a densely populated city. Devereaux's goal is a certain old Malvan gadget, which would fetch millions of credits on the open market (and possibly more on the black market, where the buyer's intent might not be scientific). During the activities there, Gary is exposed to the device's effects, and his electric abilities are amplified a hundredfold – and beyond his control.

A particularly vicious rival of Gary's murders a Mon'dabi diplomat in Terran space (or vice versa), and frames Gary for the deed. This steps up the efforts by the TSS and Federated Intelligence to bring him in. Either the two agencies can engage the PCs to

apprehend him as quickly as possible, or he can approach them to clear his name.

Gary Van Brugge



DIGITAL HERO #30

Gary Van Brugge

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2½d6 [3]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
11	BODY	2	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
3	PD	0		Total: 3 PD (0 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total: 6 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
32	END	1		
26	STUN	0		

Total Characteristic Cost: 44

Movement: Running: 5"/10"
Leaping: 2½"/5"
Swimming: 3"/6"

Cost	Powers	END
19	<i>Electrical Attacks:</i> Multipower, 19-point reserve	
2u	1) <i>Arc:</i> Sight Group Flash 3d6, Personal Immunity (+¼)	2
2u	2) <i>Electric Jolt:</i> EB 3d6, Personal Immunity (+¼)	2
2u	3) <i>Overload:</i> Dispel Any Electronic Device 5d6, One at a Time (+¼)	2
1u	4) <i>Power Supply:</i> Succor REC for END Reserve 3d6; Electrical Power Only (-½)	1
1	<i>Webbed Hands And Feet:</i> Swimming +1" (3" Total)	1
25	<i>Electrosense:</i> Detect Electrical Fields 12- (No Sense Group), Discriminatory, Range, Targeting, Transmit	0

Talents

- 2 *Aquatic Movement:* EM: No Penalties in Water
- 3 Bump of Direction
- 3 *Lightning Reflexes:* +2 DEX to Act First with All Actions

Skills

- 16 +2 with All Combat
- 3 Breakfall 12-
- 3 Bribery 12-
- 3 Bureaucratics 12-
- 3 Combat Piloting 12-
- 3 Electric Tricks (Power Skill) 12-
- 6 Gambling (Card, Dice, Roulette) 12-
- 3 KS: Mercenary World 12-
- 2 PS: Mercenary 11-
- 3 Security Systems 12-
- 3 Streetwise 12-
- 10 Survival (Desert, Marine, Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical, Urban) 12-
- 4 Systems Operation (Communications Systems, Environmental Systems) 12-
- 3 Teamwork 12-
- 3 Tracking 12-
- 3 WF: Human Small Arms, Human Vehicle Weapons

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 131

Total Cost: 175

75+ Disadvantages

- 15 Hunted: Federated Intelligence 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Area)
- 15 Hunted: Terran Security Service 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Area)
- 5 Physical Limitation: Colorblind (Infrequently, Slightly)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Greedy (Very Common, Moderate)
- 10 Rivalry: Professional (Other Mercenaries, More Powerful, Seek to Outdo, Rival Aware)
- 15 Social Limitation: Mercenary Code of Conduct (Frequently, Severe, Not Limiting in Some Cultures)
- 25 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 175

AKBAR KUSAMA PLOT SEEDS

At a gathering for a visiting religious leader, Akbar hires a group of mercenaries to create a violent disruption. He knows the bodyguards' trained response – get the leader to safety in his armored vehicle – and will be waiting by the vehicle to perform the actual assassination. The PCs may be brought into this as extra bodyguards or security, catch word of the plot ahead of time, or just happen to be on the scene when it goes down.

A day after Kusama is reportedly seen in the PCs' sector, a cargo ship carrying a large supply of antimatter disappears from its route. His goal: take the ship to a highly populated planet dominated by some "false" religion, and program its computer to ram the planet at high speed as he makes his escape.

The PCs capture a one-time colleague of Kusama's, and in exchange for leniency he gives them the location of one of Akbar's favorite respite places. Whether as official law enforcement agents, bounty hunters, or (as much of an oxymoron as it may seem) altruistic self-preservationists, the PCs now have an



Akbar Kusama

Background/History: Very little is known about the background of Akbar Kusama, even to the TIC. Most data is based on remarks he's made to others, and this information may be accurate or not.

Kusama grew up on New Canaan (*Terran Empire*, page 71). He says that he grew up in a village made up mostly of Muslim Sandwalkers, and that he can trace his paternal line back to 21st-Century Indonesia. In his devoted studies of the Koran, he found that his people had grown soft against infidels, willingly living among them and not only permitting their heresies but actually following some of them. Angered by this, he chose to follow Allah's way and devote his life to purifying the Muslim faith.

That sketch is the closest thing anyone has to a biography of him. He's mentioned at least one older brother, younger brother, and younger sister, though he's never mentioned a name, nor been specific about how many are in his family.

In his fifteen-year career as a terrorist, he's blown up at least three cities and one small planet, personally assassinated four religious leaders, and destabilized twelve planetary or local governments.

Personality/Motivation: Akbar actually knows very little about the Koran, and Islam in general. His hostility toward other religions is indeed based upon passages in the Koran, but his response is his own creation (albeit one based on centuries of tradition). He sincerely believes that he is following God's path, but his knowledge of the Koran is so sketchy that he's actually operating more on wishes and assumptions than on Mohammed and Allah.

His greatest hatred is toward Jews, Christians, and the Galactic Church of the Creator. Which of the three he hates the most changes from one month to the next, but if he could destroy them all in a single blow he'd do it. Shortly after those faiths are all religions with extraterrestrial origins and Human converts; "lesser" Terran religions, and non- or quasi-religious philosophies such as deism and agnosticism, are the least important, but still deserving of extinction.

His goal, as he states it, is to purify Earth's Middle East and the entire planet of New Canaan to "pure Islam." Failing that, he will establish a colony based on his vision of "pure Islam," and train warriors to bring about the prime vision.

Quote: "For my service to Allah – for my execution of these infidels – I shall be rewarded greatly in Heaven."

Powers/Tactics: Generally speaking, Kusama's most often-used tactic is weapons of mass destruction – space nukes and antimatter missiles

are a favorite, since they work quickly can't be counteracted, but chemical and biological agents work too. Whatever he can find to kill heretics and infidels is good.

He also occasionally kills individual targets by hand. Usually these are religious leaders, especially liberal Muslims. In such situations, he prefers to attack by surprise, jumping out of nowhere and killing his target with a single blow. He'll readily dispatch any bodyguards, but only if he needs to in order to achieve his mission; once his target is dead, his only goal is to escape so he can kill more infidels later.

To say that Akbar doesn't care about fellow Muslims killed by his attacks would be unfair. He cares about them very much – he counts them as martyrs for the cause of pure Islam, to be rewarded in Heaven.

Campaign Use: Akbar Kusama is a terrorist, and a very dangerous one. His motives are sincere, and may or may not be laudable (or at least understandable), but his methods make him a threat to everyone who doesn't agree with his way of thinking.

At first, Akbar will come across as nothing more than a nut with very big guns. As he issues his rhetoric, however, he may seem more sympathetic – less a simple bigot than someone genuinely concerned with the path and fate of his religion, and the standing of his people before God. He's horribly misguided, of course, but his desires are sincere.

In general, Akbar can be treated as a fictional representative (albeit a fairly blatant one) of Muslim extremists in the modern-day real world. Like many such people, his goals are sincere but his methods are despicable – so much so that he's actually become just like the very individuals he so passionately hates and seeks to destroy.

Akbar could easily be a Hunter for any character (PC or NPC) who is a significant religious figure, or anyone who repeatedly thwarts his plans. This will generally take the form of direct assassination attempts, at least at first; once such tactics have sufficiently failed, he'll try allying with and supplying other enemies of his target, or even such sophisticated ideas as discrediting the target by framing him for murder.

Appearance: Akbar's skin is quite dark, and his face, apart from his obvious Sandwalker characteristics, have clearly Indonesian features. Generally he wears the manifold robes typically associated with Sandwalkers, though if he's working with a uniformed group or trying to blend into a crowd, he's flexible.

Akbar Kusama

opportunity to get this dangerous individual out of circulation for good.



Akbar Kusama

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
17	STR	7	12-	Lift 260 kg; 3d6+1 [3]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
18	CON	16	13-	
16	BODY	12	12-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll: 11-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
4	PD	1		Total: 12 PD (8 rPD)
4	ED	0		Total: 12 ED (8 rED)
4	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
7	REC	0		
36	END	0		
34	STUN	0		

Total Characteristic Cost: 84

Movement:

Running:	7"/14"
Leaping:	3"/6"
Swimming:	2"/4"
Gliding:	4"/8"

Cost	Powers	END
6	<i>Leathery Skin:</i> Armor (2 PD/2 ED)	0
10	<i>Desert-Dweller:</i> Life Support (Can Breathe in Heavily Sanded and Other Particulate Air, Immune to Fungal Infections, Safe in Intense Cold/Heat)	0
2	<i>Swift Runner:</i> Running +1" (7" total)	1
2	<i>Ground Gliding:</i> Gliding 4"; Costs Endurance (-1/2), Ground Gliding (-1/4)	1

Martial Arts: Pentjak-Silat

Maneuver OCVDCV Notes

4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Disarm	-1	+1	27 STR Disarm
4	Dodge	-	+5	Dodge, Abort
5	Kick	-2	+1	7d6+1 Strike
3	Legsweep	+2	-1	4d6+1 Strike, Target Falls
4	Punch/Elbow Strike	+0	+2	5d6+1 Strike
4	Rahasia Strike	-1	+1	2d6 NND
4	Weapon Element:			Blades, Clubs, Staffs, Whips

Talents

3	Absolute Time Sense
12	Combat Luck (6 PD/6 ED)
3	Lightsleep
5	Resistance +5
1	Sand-Walking: Environmental Movement (No Penalties on Soft Sand)

Skills

20	+4 with Hand-to-Hand Combat
3	Acrobatics 12-
3	Concealment 11-
3	Demolitions 11-
3	Fast Draw 12-
4	Gambling (Dice, Horse Racing, Poker) 11-
3	Interrogation 12-
10	<i>Kerojok:</i> Defense Maneuver I-IV
2	KS: Islamic Law 11-
1	KS: Koran 8-
4	Language: Arabic (Fluent, Literate)
3	Shadowing 11-
3	Sleight Of Hand 12-
3	Stealth 12-
3	Streetwise 12-
4	Survival (Desert, Urban) 11-
3	Tactics 11-
3	Tracking 11-
3	Trading 12-
7	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Small Arms, Off Hand, Staffs, Whips

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 164

Total Cost: 248

75+ Disadvantages

15	Enraged: when a God Other than Allah is Invoked (Uncommon, Go 11-, Rec 11-)
20	Hunted: TSS 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
10	Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer (Common, Moderate)
15	Psychological Limitation: Muslim Extremist (Common, Strong)
10	Reputation: Deadly Terrorist 8- (Extreme)
103	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 70

Malachi Justice

Background/History: During the Terran Civil War (2336-2345), the Terran Union, under the command of First Magistrate Joseph Krutch, funded a top-secret government project combining the Prime and Sleeper genomes, and training them as “super-assassins.” The project never got into the history books however, because in the end it went horribly wrong.

Trained by some of the Terran Union’s top ninjitsu and kung fu instructors, the soldiers did learn well the art of killing. They came to see their enemies as simply “targets,” and the ending of those individuals’ lives as a function as basic as eating and breathing. One in particular, Malachi Justice, was particularly adept, and was given a senior position.

The Prime Sleepers were sent on their first mission – a covert assassination against the Spinward Union’s leadership – and went into hibernation to make the long journey more tolerable. Only one or two at a time were kept conscious, to keep matters under control should the equipment malfunction. Unfortunately for them, there was a malfunction... and it wasn’t in the equipment.

When the time came for the ship’s mission to be carried out, it was nowhere to be seen. Weeks later it reappeared near Earth, with only three survivors out of the dozens on board. Forensic technicians confirmed the horrific tale told by the trio, and by the ship’s log.

About halfway along the journey had been Malachi Justice’s turn to monitor. Apparently he had decided to hone his assassination skills on his fellow passengers. He made the first death look like a surprise suicide, and revived another assassin to “help” him deal with the matter. One after another, he revived and killed his crewmates – some quickly, some cleverly, some after long periods of torture. Finally an automated system revived the last two as Justice was attacking a third, and the three together managed to overpower him and shove him out the airlock.

Decades, and even centuries, have passed since then. The record of Justice’s killing spree became nothing more than a passing remark in most history books. A skilled researcher could probably find the full report with a little effort, but there would be little point to that – the man himself is forever lost in deep space.

At least, until a passing ship discovers his body and decides to collect him....

Personality/Motivation: To anyone meeting him for the first time, Malachi is a charming, witty, friendly sort. He can keep up a friendly, intelligent, and interesting conversation on a variety of topics, and knows just how to “read” people and give them the sort of compliments

they like to hear. Most people who meet him think highly of him, and a very courteous and charming man.

The truth is that Malachi is entirely antisocial and amoral. Every kind word and kind deed is a set-up for later betrayal. He doesn’t mind setting someone up in something good, but he especially likes it if he can set up his beneficiary for a disappointment. There’s no sadistic pleasure beyond him; he’ll torture and kill parents in front of their children or vice versa just to revel in the observers’ reactions.

He’s an unusual sort of serial killer, in that he doesn’t care much about his victims’ race, age, or gender. He also doesn’t stick to a single method of killing. He prefers to “play the field,” as it were, and experience as many possibilities as he can.

His favorite hobby is the meanings of people’s given names. Because there were few known species other than Humans when he last went into hibernation, he only knows Human given names; he’d be interested in knowing the meanings of any other species’ given names, though. His own name fostered that interest: Malachi means “messenger” or “angel of God,” so he is an angel of justice – which he sees himself as, in his own twisted way.

Quote: “You know, I just love the sound of your voice. Have you spent much time on Rigel V? There’s a certain musical quality about the way you speak that reminds me of Rigellians.”

Powers/Tactics: Malachi is a master of killing. He can bring death instantly, or he can stretch out the agony for weeks, depending on his mood and purpose. His only preference is that death be at his own hands – massive vehicular wrecks, building demolitions, high-yield bombs, and similar means of death have their place, and can be good as a pleasant diversion, but for him the real joy comes from taking a series of personal actions leading to a single death.

Though he’s a highly skilled combatant, he has little experience dealing with more than one opponent at once, and is entirely unprepared to deal with more than two or at most three. If surrounded, he’ll do whatever he can to escape, or at least get himself in a more advantageous position. He almost never goes into a situation without at least two escapes planned out in advance, and often has as many as four or five.

He prefers to strike from up close, by surprise. Ideally, he’ll win the trust of his intended victim, and savor the expression of betrayal when he turns against him.

Though he does have some fancy “martial arts tricks” he learned in his ninja training, he prefers to keep those in reserve and use them in secret or by surprise. If he can, he’ll try to play up the theatrics of using such abilities to make

MALACHI JUSTICE PLOT SEEDS

The PCs happen to be on board (if not operating) the ship that discovers Malachi floating in deep space. They bring him aboard and revive him – freeing him to start his killing spree all over again. He may not start right away, especially if the ship’s contingent is small (the killer’s identity would quickly be deduced, and he’d end up in deep space again, or worse), but he’ll find a way to continue his “favorite hobby” and keep the authorities at bay.

Rather than a ship, Malachi is “rescued” by a passing comet, as he’s pulled into its gravity field (such as it is) and dragged along into the orbit of a nearby planet. Able to survive planetfall in his hibernative state, he awakens and starts integrating himself into society. Of course, his idea of integrating into society involves killing a few unfortunate souls who get in his way.

With improved space travel, the known galaxy is a much larger place. There are dozens if not hundreds of new species that Malachi had never heard even of in his day. Each species brings with it dozens – or even

hundreds – of new weapons, to say nothing of torture techniques and other new technologies he could apply to his “favorite hobby.” Where could he best experiment? Someplace crowded, where many different species congregate... A capitol world seems best, such as Earth or Ecra-Shen.

observers think he has mystical abilities. He can even fake his own demise using body-control disciplines learned from his ninjitsu sensei, rather than go into a full hibernation state.

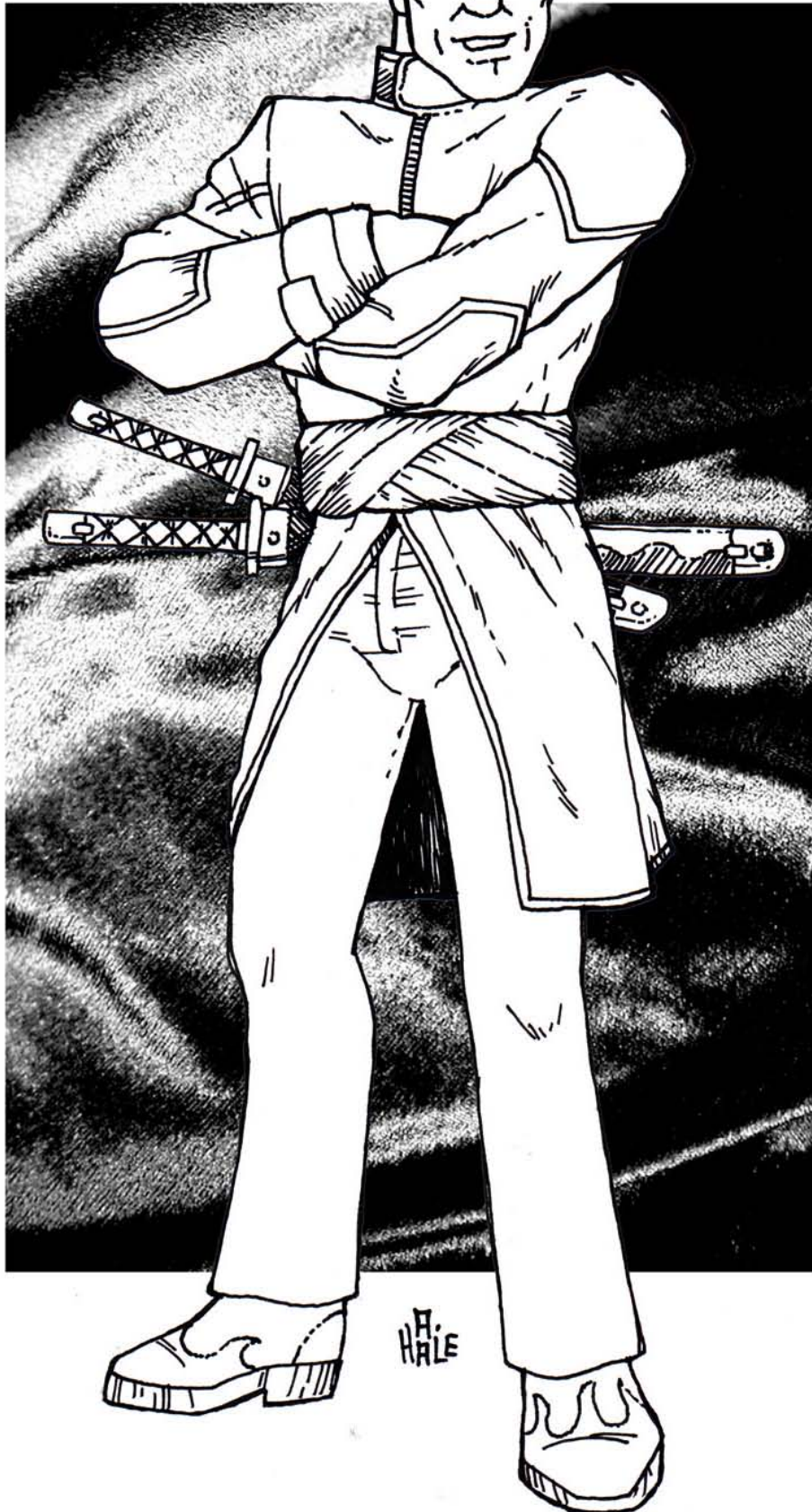
As a Sleeper, he’s very hard to kill using environmental damage. As long as he can survive for just the minute it takes for him to enter his hibernative state, he can survive extreme temperatures, intense radiation, and even the rigors of space. Only a directly fatal injury, or an environment so harsh as to kill him before he can reach hibernation, will result in his final death.

Campaign Use: Malachi Justice is the sort of character who can give experienced veterans fits, but still present no more than a difficult challenge for even a group of beginning adventurers. He’s powerful, but enjoys “toying” with his enemy and could, with a little ingenuity, be tricked into putting himself in a position where he could be ambushed, and captured or killed.

Justice could easily Hunt a character – and the character wouldn’t even necessarily have to know why. His reasoning behind his choice of targets is his own, and nearly anybody could be “an interesting challenge,” “a deserving target,” “a lesson to those like him,” “a poetic name calling for a poetic death,” or any other excuse he finds to carry out his twisted “entertainments.”

Appearance: Malachi Justice is an incredibly handsome man, with well-kept black hair, baby blue eyes, a clean-shaven face, a winning smile, and an outstanding fashion sense. He stands 184 cm (an even six feet) tall, and weighs a lean, muscular 82 kg (180 pounds).

Malachi Justice



Malachi Justice

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 HTH [2]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
20	BODY	10	13-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 15-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
20	COM	5	13-	
4	PD	0		Total: 6 PD (2 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 5 ED (2 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
7	REC	0		
30	END	0		
38	STUN	0		

Total Characteristic Cost: 103

Movement:

Running:	11”/22”
Leaping:	4”/8”
Swimming:	5”/10”
Tunneling:	1”/2”

Cost	Powers	END
3	<i>Dual Heart:</i> +5 BODY; Only versus Chest-Penetrating Wounds (-2)	0
6	<i>Thick Skin:</i> Armor (2 PD/2 ED)	0
5	<i>Toxin-Resistant Body:</i> Power Defense (5 points)	0
13	<i>Superior Health:</i> Life Support (Extended Breathing: 1 END per Turn; Immune to Most Terrestrial Diseases and Biowarfare Agents; Longevity 200 Years; Character Only Has to Sleep 8 Hours per Week)	0
11	<i>Limb Regeneration:</i> Healing 2 BODY, Can Heal Limbs, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½) (50 Active Points); Extra Time (Regeneration-Only) 1 Week (-3), Self Only (-½)	0
16	<i>Hibernation:</i> Life Support (Need Not Breathe, Eat, Nor Sleep, Safe in All Environments, including Zero Gravity, Immortal, Immune to All Diseases and All Poisons), Trigger (Environment Becomes Harsh Beyond what the Character Could Normally Survive, +¼); Concentration (0 DCV Throughout, Totally Unaware of Nearby Events, -1½), Extra Time (1 Minute to Activate, Character May Take No Other Actions, -1), Requires Revival Procedures to Stop (-½)	0

12	<i>Hibernation State:</i> Invisibility to Hearing and Mental Groups and Detect Life Signs/Paramedics/Forensic Medicine, No Fringe, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½) (56 Active Points); Concentration, Must Concentrate throughout use of Constant Power (0 DCV; Character is totally unaware of nearby events; -1½), Extra Time (1 Minute, Only to Activate, Character May Take No Other Actions, -1), Requires Revival Procedures To Stop (-½), Linked (Hibernation Stasis; -½)	0
13	<i>Hibernation Protection:</i> Armor (20 PD/20 ED) (60 Active Points); Concentration, Must Concentrate throughout use of Constant Power (0 DCV; Character is totally unaware of nearby events; -1½), Extra Time (1 Minute, Only to Activate, Character May Take No Other Actions, -1), Linked (Hibernation Stasis; -½), Requires Revival Procedures To Stop (-½)	0
4	<i>Hibernation Stability:</i> Power Defense (20 points) (20 Active Points); Concentration, Must Concentrate throughout use of Constant Power (0 DCV; Character is totally unaware of nearby events; -1½), Extra Time (1 Minute, Only to Activate, Character May Take No Other Actions, -1), Linked (Hibernation Stasis; -½), Requires Revival Procedures To Stop (-½)	0
12	<i>Athletic Runner:</i> Running +5” (11” Total), Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼)	1
3	<i>Athletic Swimmer:</i> Swimming +3” (5” total)	1
6	<i>Superior Senses:</i> +2 PER with all Sense Groups	0
5	<i>Rapid Climbing:</i> Clinging; Requires a Climbing Roll (-½), Sideways Move at Half Ground Rate (-¼), No Ceiling or Angles Less than 80° (-¼)	0
5	<i>Well-Covered Defense:</i> Lack of Weakness (-5) for Mental Defense	0
6	<i>Burrowed-Out Hiding Place:</i> Tunneling 1” through 1 DEF Material, Fill In; Maximum Distance 1” (-1), Limited Medium Limited (Soil, -½)	1

DIGITAL HERO #30

Martial Arts: Kung Fu/Ninjutsu

Maneuver OCVDCV Notes

4	Atemi/Tien-	-1	+1	2d6 NND hsueh Strike
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Choke Hold	-2	+0	Grab One Limb, 2d6 NND
4	Disarm	-1	+1	30 STR Disarm
4	Dodge	-	+5	Dodge, Abort
4	Dragon's Claw	+0	+0	8d6 Crush, Must Follow Grab
4	Escape	+0	+0	35 STR vs. Grabs
5	Flying Kick	+1	-2	8d6 Strike
5	Kick	-2	+1	8d6 Strike
4	Knifehand	-2	+0	HKA 1d6 +1
3	Legsweep	+2	-1	5d6, Target Falls
4	Punch	+0	+2	6d6 Strike
4	Reversal	-1	-2	35 STR Escape, Grab Two Limbs
5	Takeaway	+0	+0	30 STR to Take Weapon Away
3	Takedown	+1	+1	4d6, Target Falls
3	Throw	+0	+1	4d6+v/5, Target Falls
5	Weapon Element:			Blades, Clubs, Fist- Loads, Staffs, Whips

Talents

3	Absolute Range Sense
3	Ambidexterity (-2 Off Hand Penalty)
3	Bump of Direction
5	Eidetic Memory
3	Lightning Calculator
3	Lightsleep
5	Resistance (5 points)
3	<i>The Sleep of Escape:</i> Simulate Death

Skills

40	+4 Overall
3	Acrobatics 13-
3	Acting 13-
3	Analyze Combat Technique 13-
3	Breakfall 13-
3	Bugging 13-
3	Climbing 13-
3	Combat Driving 13-
3	Combat Piloting 13-
12	Computer Programming (Computer Networks, Hacking and Computer Security, Personal Computers, Artificial Intelligence, Mainframes and Supercomputers, Military Computers) 13-
3	Concealment 13-
3	Conversation 13-
3	Deduction 13-
3	Demolitions 13-
3	Disguise 13-
3	Fast Draw 13-
3	Forgery (Documents, Credit Cards) 13-
8	Gambling (Board, Card, Dice, Roulette) 13-
3	High Society 13-

3	Lipreading 13-
3	Lockpicking 13-
3	Paramedics 13-
3	Persuasion 13-
2	PS: Knot-Tying 11-
3	Security Systems 13-
3	Seduction 13-
3	Shadowing 13-
3	Sleight Of Hand 13-
3	Stealth 13-
16	Survival (Arctic/Subarctic, Desert, Marine, Mountain, Temperate/ Subtropical, Tropical, Underground, Urban) 13-
6	Systems Operation (Communications, Environmental, Medical) 13-
3	Tactics 13-
6	TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Riding Animals, Science Fiction & Space Vehicles
3	Tracking 13-
3	Trading 13-
11	WF: Early Firearms, Human Common Melee Weapons, Human Common Missile Weapons, Human Small Arms, Off Hand, Staffs, Whips
3	Scholar
1	1) KS: Current Fashion 11-
1	2) KS: Kung Fu 11-
4	3) KS: Meanings Of Human Given Names 15-
1	4) KS: Ninjutsu 11-

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 412

Total Cost: 515

75+ Disadvantages

10	Distinctive Features: Martial Arts Style (Concealable, Major, Large Group)
20	Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer (Common, Total)
15	Psychological Limitation: Sadistic (Very Common, Moderate)
20	Social Limitation: Harmful Secret [Dangerous Serial Killer] (Frequently, Severe)
375	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 515



The Whole Package

by D.T. Butchino

Of Shadows and the Supernatural

Movies have done much for the horror genre. They allow the viewer the ability to see humanity as a larger than life hero against the shadows of supernatural evil. In some of these movies, the hero is a thinker, a planner, someone who helps coordinate others to take action, while in others, the hero is someone taking the threat of monsters head-on.

In the *Dark Champions* genre, players have the opportunity to take on either role against the supernatural, as well as many others. This article focuses on four such heroes and explores possible roles they could take. For the most part, the templates below are meant for modern or post-modern campaigns; with a bit of tweaking, however, they could be adapted to any other genre.

Pumn de Lemn

Rumored to have been developed in the Middle Ages by a small group of monks, Pumn de Lemn roughly translates into “Wooden Fist.” Adapted by many European vampire hunters as their style of choice, Pumn de Lemn has been concealed from the general public in hopes of keeping the style unpredictable.

PUMN DE LEMN

Maneuver	Phs	Pts	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
Choke	½	4	-2	+1	Grab One Limb, 2d6 NND
Crush	½	4	+0	+0	+4d6 Crush, Must Follow Grab
Passing Grapple	½	5	+1	+1	Grab One Limb, Block
Pin	½	3	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, +10 STR to Hold
Staked Palm	½	4	-2	+0	½d6 HKA
Spin	½	4	-1	-2	+15 STR to Escape, Grab Two Limbs

Skills

KS: Pumn de Lemn

Stealth

WF: Common Melee Weapons

Elements

Weapons +1 Use Art with Stakes

The Exorcist

As someone who may cast out an evil entity that inhabits a person, item, or place, an exorcist is often thought of as a myth created by shysters and movie producers. In reality, these people do exist, casting a beacon upon the possessed, and preventing the innocent from being used as a tool of evil.

Though commonly tied to the Christian church, an exorcist may be of any religion. The only differences are the rites involved, as every religion, even the various sects of Christianity, have distinction in the details they may use.

Typical Goals and Motivations: In contrast to most heroes, a typical exorcist serves a greater good, defending not only his beliefs, but the people that make up his congregation as well. The main goal of exorcist is to protect humanity through salvation of their souls, all the while protecting the world from an incursion of evil. The exorcist may be a mere man, but he also serves as a bastion of good in most cases.

Typical Abilities: A bit of a scholar by nature, an exorcist is usually shown as being an intelligent person that's well-versed in not only his faith, but in the concepts that make up the antithesis of his faith as well. In a cinematic sense, the powers that the exorcist shows are usually focus and faith driven, as his abilities are often depicted through prayer and sheer piousness.

Suggested Disadvantages: Though they're usually portrayed as an independent agent, many an exorcist is first and foremost an agent of their church. Because of this, he should have Social Limitation: Subject to Orders and, in some cases, could even be subject to a congregation of followers. With the station that he's chosen, an exorcist may have made a few enemies in life, often with a more infernal nature or in the form of a cult (especially in games that use *DEMON: Servants of Darkness*).

Progression: Assuming that the exorcist stays within the church, he could easily advance further with his skills and abilities, possibly gaining rank within the church structure. In the case that the exorcist goes rogue, finding his role in the church to be too confining, there are several areas he could expand into. Perhaps he falls from a personal grace and winds up crossing into occultist territory, or, in another extreme, decides to go a bit "hands-on" as a hunter or slayer of some kind. In high adventure games, the exorcist could even ascend a bit, becoming a low-level superhuman... though this usually requires a death of some kind (usually his own) and a lenient GM.

Quote: "Release this child, Fiend!"

EXORCIST HERO

Cost Ability

- 3 +3 INT
- 6 +3 EGO
- 5 +5 PRE
- 7 Faith (EGO-based) +2
- 6 KS: Demons of Myth (INT-based) +3
- 7 KS: Religion of Choice (INT-based) +4
- 4 Language: Latin (completely fluent; literate)
- 3 Oratory
- 3 Fringe Benefit: Priest
- 6 Choose 6 pts worth of the following: Bureaucratics, Concealment, Contacts, Conversation, Paramedic, Persuasion, Streetwise, Transport Familiarity,
- 15 15 Points of Divine Powers

Val Disadvantages

- 10 Hunted: Church 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Social Limitations: Subject to Orders (Frequently, Major)

Total Cost of Package: 40

Cost Sample Divine Powers

- 12 *Banish Evil*: Dispel 6d6, Cumulative (+1/2); Only versus Summoned Infernals (-1/2), Requires a Faith Roll (-1/2), Incantations (-1/4)
- 11 *Sanctify Area*: Dispel 6d6, Cumulative (+1/2), Explosion (+1/2); OAF (Holy Book, -1), Limited Power Only versus Summoned Infernals (-1/2), Requires a Faith Roll (-1/2), Incantations (-1/4)
- 6 *How's Your Faith?*: +20 PRE; Attack Only (-1), Only versus Summoned Infernals (-1/2), Requires a Faith Roll (-1/2), Gestures (-1/4)
- 10 *Cleansing the Body*: Simplified Healing 4d6; Increased Endurance Cost (5x END, -2), Requires a Faith Roll (-1/2), Gestures (-1/4), Incantations (-1/4)

The Occultist

Throughout time, man has always craved to find knowledge he was not meant to know. Some would call these men scientists, while some would call them occultists. Students of the occult and the strange, occultists often study old tomes on magic and mythology in an attempt to understand them. Though often considered a fool's errand, his thirst for knowledge is only quenched by a search for even more knowledge.

In contrast to mainstream research, an occultist believes that his work could unlock some vital key to the past and future of mankind. Cinematically, most occultists are a bit off-hinge, offering loved ones and innocents to greater beings beyond the scope of comprehension. It typically turns out that, in the end, the occultist learns the error of his ways.

Typical Goals and Motivations: The goal of most occultists is to gain a vast array of occult knowledge. Some use it for the benefit of mankind, while others use the information to their own selfish means. More often than not, the lines blur a bit, as most help mankind... but they usually have ulterior motivations for doing so.

Typical Abilities: The occultist is armed with one of the greatest weapons against evil: knowledge. Unlike the other heroes depicted in this article, an occultist rarely sullies his hands with combat, leaving that chore to others more qualified. Instead, he researches the supernatural, finding explanations for the supernatural (or in some cases, even the sources of their powers). In cinematic games, it wouldn't be too peculiar to see a few spells or artifacts in the occultist's bag of tricks.

Suggested Disadvantages: Most occultists have some kind of secret; some skeleton in their closet that they'd prefer stay there. Many times, this secret is also the motivating force behind their quest after the supernatural. Because of his knowledge, it's possible that the occultist is Hunted either by something that wants the knowledge, or by the thing that is the subject of the knowledge. For the most part, Vulnerabilities and Susceptibilities are unlikely, though with a good story reason, could be taken.

Progression: An occultist could very well cross over to various other scholarly packages or stay within his own, depending on the campaign. Of the possibilities, something like a Hacker could be an interesting excursion from the norm, as the occultist goes from having a physical library to a digital one.

Quote: "Interesting... perhaps if you try sage, you may get a better result out of that spell?"

OCCULTIST HERO

Cost Ability

- 5 +5 INT
- 6 +3 EGO
- 3 +3 PRE
- 4 KS: History 13-
- 6 KS: Legends & Lore +3
- 7 KS: The Occult +4
- 2 Language: Aramaic (Conversation, Literate)
- 2 Language: Latin (Conversation, Literate)
- 2 Language: Sanskrit (Conversation, Literate)
- 3 Linguist
- 7 Spellcasting (EGO-based) +2
- 18 18 Points of Spells

Val Disadvantages

- 20 Hunted: Secret Society 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
- 15 Psychological Limitations: Curious (Common, Strong)

Total Cost of Package: 30

Cost Sample Spells

- 13 *Blood Casting:* RKA 1d6, Continuous (+1); Requires a Spellcasting Roll (-1/2), Range Based on STR (-1/4), Side Effects (Takes 1 BODY, Always Occurs, -1/4), Gestures (-1/4)
- 13 *Dominance:* Mind Control 6d6; Costs END to Maintain (-1/2), Requires a Spellcasting Roll (-1/2), Incantations (-1/4)
- 12 *Induce Madness:* Drain EGO 3d6; Gestures (Both Hands, -1/2), Requires a Spellcasting Roll (-1/2), Concentration (1/2 DCV, -1/4), Incantations (-1/4)
- 10 *Soul drinking:* Transfer 2d6 (EGO to END); Requires a Spellcasting Roll (-1/2), Gestures (Both Hands, -1/2), Concentration (0 DCV, -1/2), Incantations (-1/4)
- 9 *Mage Sight:* Detect Magic 11- (Unusual Group), Discriminatory, Range; Requires a Spellcasting Roll (-1/2), Incantations (-1/4), Gestures (-1/4), Costs Endurance to Activate (-1/4)



THE EXORCIST



THE VAMPIRE HUNTER



THE OCCULTIST



THE ZOMBIE SLAYER

THE VAMPIRE HUNTER

Where there are vampires, there are always those who hunt them. Sometimes seen as agents of a church or as a scholar who's learned too much, the vampire hunter is a warrior academic who scours the earth for his quarry. Using a vast array of weapons at his disposal, the vampire hunter is ready to confront his foe and any of its minions.

But, unlike the old days where one could accuse freely, in the modern world, the vampire hunter must be cautious of who his targets are and of the ramifications his actions could cause. After all, if a powerful CEO is killed by a hunter, who's going to believe that that he was a vampire without solid proof?

Typical Goals and Motivations: Trained in the use of various melee weapons as well as the lore revolving around his chosen prey, the hunter has only one purpose in life – to destroy vampires. He travels any lengths to find his quarry; whether it be stalking the corporate world or tracking through the underbelly of a city's sewer, the hunter will do what he needs to find and destroy his prey.

Typical Abilities: Strong in both body and will, a vampire hunter is one part scholar, one part warrior. Because of this, the hunter commonly has increased STR and EGO, as well as some additional PRE to fend off any Presence Attacks that may be thrown at him. In cinema, vampire hunters frequently are shown with some martial arts abilities, in addition to several melee and ranged weapons. Add to this some knowledge of vampires and some stealth abilities, and the vampire hunter is on his way to stalking the creatures of the night.

Suggested Disadvantages: Because of their chosen vocation, vampire hunters typically have at least one Hunted in the form of a vampire. In addition to this, the hunter may carry additional psychological baggage such as a deep rooted hatred of vampires or perhaps a fear of something common. In recent years, the cinema has popularized the tattoo as a marking system of some kind. It's very possible, depending on the campaign, that the hunter has such a brand as a Distinctive Feature.

Progression: Though most vampire hunters are dedicated to their trade, some occasionally cross over into other useful packages. A profession in the clergy would be quite useful to a hunter, as the power to bless items and repel evil could be essential tools in his war. In contrast, cat-burglar skills could also be useful in allowing them to get into the places that are normally locked away.

Quote: "Garlic? You watch too many movies kid."

VAMPIRE HUNTER HERO**Cost Ability**

- 3 +3 STR
- 6 +2 DEX
- 5 +5 PRE
- 4 *Fast Runner:* +2" Running
- 3 Acrobatics
- 3 Breakfall
- 3 Fast Draw
- 5 KS: Vampires +2
- 2 SS: Anatomy 11-
- 3 Shadowing
- 7 Stealth +2
- 2 Survival (Urban)
- 2 TF: Common Motorized Ground
- 6 WF: Common Melee, Common Missile, Small Arms
- 10 10 points of Martial Arts Maneuvers (Pumn de Lemn)
- 14 Fearless
- 8 *Vampire Hunter:* +3 OCV; Only versus Vampires (-1)
- 6 Choose 6 Points from the Following: Climbing, Combat Driving, Conversation, Deduction, Interrogation, Lockpicking, Paramedic, SS: Herbology, Security Systems, Streetwise

Val Disadvantages

- 20 Hunted: Vampire 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
- 10 Psychological Limitations: Hunts Vampires (Common, Strong)

Total Cost of Package: 61**Cost Options**

- 29 *Dhampir:* +5 STR, +3 DEX, Fangs (HKA 1d6)

The Zombie Slayer

The zombie slayer is the result of a world gone mad... a world where zombies, and possibly other *things*, shamble about seeking the brains or flesh of the living. Attempting to escape that world and find some peace, the slayer has become an icon of sorts to the other survivors.

Armed with mundane weapons and a slightly unbalanced psyche, the zombie slayer now fights to protect himself and others from suffering the same fate as the creatures he may have called friends in the not too distant past.

Typical Goals and Motivations: A zombie hunter has only one true motivation: survival. Living in a quasi-apocalyptic area where the dead have taken over in masses has forced the slayer to “readjust” his life. This typically means that the slayer begins living on the run, trying to find a safe haven from the various hordes of zombies while taking means against contracting the dreaded virus that created them in the first place.

Typical Abilities: Though normal people for the most part, a zombie slayer is usually a person pushed to an extreme through madness and sheer gore. Because of this, it’s very possible that the slayer is quite adept at using a group of weapons, as well as adapting normal items into deadly variants. Because of what they encounter almost daily, zombie slayers are commonly quick on their feet and have adjusted to life on the road as they look for a safe haven.

Suggested Disadvantages: Often depicted as being on the cusp of sanity, a zombie slayer should have at least a few Psychological Limitations such as Paranoid, or possibly a few odd fears. In addition to that, a slayer could have possibly made a few enemies in his flight from the undead, though these are rarely supernatural in nature. While it’s possible that he could’ve made a few foes within the upper echelon of the undead, it’s usually within the group that she works in that enemies begin to show up, especially as paranoia sets in.

Progression: Unlike many other packages, most people will find the zombie hunter an easy package to have in addition to others. Commonly, players may progress into this package from a normal occupation, showing that their world has changed and that they must adapt to survive. While in this apocalyptic scene, the hunter may move onto something like survivalist or possibly into a leadership position. In the advent of a new world order, one where zombies become a memory, the hunter could move into something more militant or, in a negative sense,

even a criminal (especially if he can’t seem to let go of the horror).

Quote: “You can smell ’em before you see ’em. I’ll never forget that smell...”

ZOMBIE SLAYER HERO

Cost Ability

- 2 +2 STR
- 6 +3 CON
- 3 +3 PRE
- 6 *Fast Runner:* +3” Running
- 3 AK: Hometown 12-
- 4 KS: Zombies 13-
- 1 Paramedic 8-
- 2 PS: Choose One 11-
- 3 Stealth
- 4 Survival (Temperate/Subtropical, Urban) 11-
- 4 WF: Common Melee, Small Arms
- 8 *Zombie Slayer:* +3 OCV; Only versus Zombies (-1)
- 5 Rapid Healing

Val Disadvantages

- 15 Psychological Limitation: Protective of Survivors (Common, Strong)
- 5 Rivalry (Another Person, As Pow, Seek to Outdo, Aware of Rivalry)

Total Cost of Package: 31

Cost Options

- 4 *Viral Immunity:* LS (Immune to Viral Infections)
- 14 Fearless



Summoned Monkey Warrior by Michael Surbrook

On page 135 of *Ninja Hero* we see that John Wa the Monkey King has the ability to Summon eight 200-point Monkey Warriors one a week. However, no character sheet was made available for the Summoned character. Although you can create any write-up you desire, I offer this character sheet for those who don't have the time or inclination.

Description: The monkey warriors John Wa summon closely resemble John himself. They are all about his height and build, with each having slightly different facial features, hair styles, and fur color. The warriors all wear the same harness as John does and are equipped with broad-bladed *darn do* and non-magical *kuen*.



Summoned Monkey Warrior

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
18	CON	16	13-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll: 11-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
7	PD	4		Total: 11 PD (4 rPD)
7	ED	3		Total: 11 ED (4 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
7	REC	0		
36	END	0		
30	STUN	3		

Total Characteristics Cost: 74

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
 Leaping: 9"/18"
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
16	<i>Kuen:</i> HA +4d6 (7d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); OAF (-1), HA Lim (-1/2) plus +1 OCV; OAF (-1) plus Stretching +1", Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); OAF (-1), Always Direct (-1/4), No Noncombat Stretching (-1/4), Only To Cause Damage (-1/4), No Velocity Damage (-1/4)	0
15	<i>Darn Do:</i> HKA 1d6+1 (2 1/2d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); OAF (-1)	0
5	<i>Brigandine Armor:</i> Armor (4 PD/4 ED); Activation Roll 11- (Locations 6-7 and 10-13, -1), OIF (-1/2)	0
6	<i>Master Of Movement:</i> Leaping +6"	1
6	<i>Feet Useable As Hands:</i> Extra Limbs (2), Inherent (+1/4)	0
5	<i>Tail:</i> Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+1/4); Limited Manipulation (-1/4)	0

Martial Arts: Mad Monkey Kung Fu (a.k.a. Feng Hou Wu Shu)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
4 Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
5 Caper	—	+4	Dodge, Abort, FMove
4 Kick/Punch	+0	+2	5d6 Strike
4 Leaping Spin Kick	+2	+0	5d6 Strike
5 Side Kick	-2	+1	7d6 Strike
3 Trip	+2	-1	4d6, Target Falls
2 Use Art With Blades, Staff			

Talents

3 *At Home In The Trees:* Environmental Movement (Supreme Balance)

Skills

6 +2 with Mad Monkey Kung Fu

3 Acrobatics 13-
 2 AK: Tien 11-
 2 AK: Tien Mountains 11-
 3 Breakfall 13-
 3 Climbing 13-
 3 Contortionist 13-
 2 KS: Mad Monkey Kung Fu 11-
 1 KS: Tien Healing 8-
 1 KS: Tien History 8-
 1 KS: Tien Mountains Flora And Fauna 8-
 1 KS: Tien Philosophy 8-
 3 Shadowing 11-
 3 Sleight of Hand 13-
 3 Stealth 13-
 2 Survival (Mountains) 11-
 1 Tactics 8-
 4 WF: Common Martial Arts Melee Weapon, Common Melee Weapons

Total Powers & Skills cost: 126

Total Cost: 200

100+ Disadvantages

10 Distinctive Features (Style): Mad Monkey Kung Fu (Not Concealable, Always Noticed, Large Group)

25 Hunted: The Dai-She 14- (As Pow, NCI)

25 Psychological Limitation: Dedicated to the Cause of John Wa the Monkey King (Very Common, Total)

15 Psychological Limitation: Protective of Friends and Allies (Common, Strong)

10 Reputation: Rabble Rouser and Rebel 11-

10 Social Limitation: Wanted Outlaw (Frequently, Major)

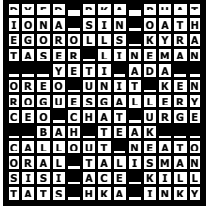
5 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 200



LAST ISSUE'S
PUZZLE KEY

Here is the solution for the crossword puzzle from *Digital Hero* #29.



Champions Crossword

by Dave Mattingly

Crazy Like a Foxbat

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
18									19			
			20					21				
22	23	24			25	26	27				28	29
30					31				32			
33					34				35			
		36					37	38				
39	40				41	42				43	44	45
46					47							
48					49				50			
51					52				53			

ACROSS

1. Dropped pick-up?
5. Radio watchdog (abbr.)
8. Blue Moon Killer, to his friends (if he had any)
12. DeVito series
13. Mutant-hating group (abbr.)
14. Blue-green
15. Unshakable, as an alibi
17. Grease
18. Space transformer? (2 words)
20. Quill
21. rPD + rED (abbr.)
22. Growing Kids God's Way author
25. Foe
30. Credit
31. Unusual apparel (abbr.)
32. Connery film (2 words)
33. Noted leaper
35. Meat label (abbr.)
36. Recede
37. Saloon
39. How to paint the whole town red all at once (2 words)
46. Sandwich title
47. Kirby comic team
48. Eads role
49. Cruise in a jet?
50. Young bears
51. Florida isles
52. Computer key
53. Spirit

DOWN

1. Mix
2. Raider Croft
3. Nerve fiber
4. Foxbat's ammunition of choice (2 words)
5. Hard-boiled detective genre (2 words)
6. DS9's Rosalind
7. Engineering design software
8. Almost effortless (2 words)
9. Well beds
10. Cartoonist/inventor Goldberg
11. Jethro Max
16. Average grade
19. Wedding vow (2 words)
22. Moose
23. Tiny organisms
24. Western author (2 words)
26. Background Skill (abbr.)
27. Disadvantages
28. All-or-nothing attack (abbr.)
29. Fits you ___ tee (2 words)
34. Midsections
38. Type of engineering (abbr.)
39. Earth's inheritors
40. What a spy might drop?
41. Rampart's system, Tau ___
42. What 28 STR can lift
43. Actor Julia
44. Napoleonic isle
45. Organization (abbr.)

