

DIGITAL HERO

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In this issue:

- Skills
- Stats



- Details
- Toothpicks
- Gifts



- Nazis
- Magic
- Schoolgirls

Table of Contents

HERO HIGHWAY

WHEN LAST WE LEFT OUR HEROES...

Keep up with the news from Hero Games. This issue – Learn to do new things with *The Ultimate Skill*. 2

HEROGLYPHS

See how Steve Long himself answers rules questions. This issue – Separate Derived Characteristics from their Primaries. 3

YOU GOTTA HAVE CHARACTER

Feliciano “Commander Toothpick” Luces is an insane warlord, with minty-fresh breath and a pop soundtrack. 5

RESOURCE ROAD

DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS

Games with a measure of verisimilitude make immersion easier. Keep your players in the groove with accurate details. 11

GIFTS OF THE GODS

Besides traditional arcane and divine spellcasting, god-given gifts can spice up your party roster. 16

ADVENTURE AVENUE

CHAINS OF DOOM

Nazi gold, alchemy, legendary dwarves, occult schoolgirls, the mafia... What more could a Champions adventure need? 20

DIGITAL HERO

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Issue #40 (September 2006)



When Last We Left Our Heroes...

by Steven S. Long

...they were posed on the brink of disaster. The bomb had to be defused in 10 seconds or they'd all die. The security system had to be defeated so they could get into the master villain's lair undetected. They were trapped in the mountains with a blizzard coming and had to find a way to survive. Whatever would they do?

Read *The Ultimate Skill*, that's what! Our latest release is chock-full of details about every Skill in the book and Skill rules in general, and among many other things it provides information to help characters (and GMs!) deal with all three of the situations described above.

Chapter One, *Skill Rules*, provides general rules for Skills in the *HERO System*. It reviews all aspects of Skills – buying them, making Skill Rolls, Complementary and Extraordinary rolls, Skill Modifiers, and more – in detail, providing not only more information about them but expanded or variant rules for the GM's consideration. If for some reason you're not happy with the *HERO System* Skill rules, or you want to tweak the Skill rules for a particular setting or game (the way we did for our published *Valdorian Age* setting), this chapter gives you the tools and information you need to make the changes you want.

Chapter Two, *The Skills*, contains the bulk of the book – 310 of 400 pages, in fact. It discusses the *HERO System* Skills one by one, providing detailed information about what characters can do with them, specific modifiers that apply to them, and how they work in various genres. Nearly every Skill is vastly expanded – the example I like to cite is that Security Systems, which is about 150 words in the main rulebook, becomes about 20,000 words in TUS. That's an extreme, but it's still a good example of how detailed the book is.

After reviewing the existing Skills, Chapter Two provides several optional new Skills that players and GMs may want to use in their games: Armorsmith; Divination; Feint; Hoist; Instructor; Musical Instrument Familiarity; Parachuting; Poisoning; and Research. They're not necessarily appropriate for all games, but they fit perfectly into many settings and campaigns.

Chapter Three, *Skills And Equipment*, covers the topic of how Skills apply to and are bought for/by equipment such as Vehicles, Bases, and Automaton. It includes a section on laboratories, and some examples of equipment that improve a character's chances to use various Skills. (You can also find equipment pertaining to some Skills in those Skills' sections of Chapter Two.)

Chapter Four, *Adventuring With Skills*, concludes the book with some information on how characters use Skills in combat and similar situations.

The text of *The Ultimate Skill* includes all the text from pages 42-77 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook. Usually the text has been expanded or rewritten to the point where it's effectively new, but in places where no further elaboration was necessary or desirable, the text is reprinted as-is so that all the information about Skills in the *HERO System* is in one easily-referenced volume.

— Steven S. Long
HERO System Line Developer



HEROglyphs by Steven S. Long

Figuring Derivations

CONVERTING DERIVED ABILITIES INTO FIGURED CHARACTERISTICS

Under the standard *HERO System* rules, certain Primary Characteristics – notably STR, DEX, and INT – provide important and useful ancillary abilities to characters, such as Leaping, CV, or a PER Roll. The system has no name for them as a class; for purposes of this article, they're referred to as *Derived Abilities*. From one perspective, Derived Abilities are a reasonable accommodation based on the “dramatic action” emphasis of the rules. From another, it may not make much sense from the standpoint of logic or “simulationism.”

STR, for example, provides Normal Damage in HTH Combat, the ability to throw things, and base inches of Leaping. The first two seem acceptable. It stands to reason that someone who's stronger can hit and squeeze harder, and throw things further. After all, those guys hurling the discus and other Big Heavy Things in the Olympics definitely look like they've spent some time building up their muscles for just that purpose, and boxers and football players work to improve their strength so they can deliver more powerful blows. But Leaping – that doesn't make quite as much sense. It's a relic of the *HERO System's* roots in *Champions*, since super-strong characters in the comics can almost always leap a long way. From a dramatic perspective, this doesn't seem to hold true in other genres. And it certainly doesn't hold true “realistically” – if raw strength correlated to leaping, championship weightlifters would also be championship broad- and high-jumpers, and that obviously isn't the way things work.

DEX provides a character with initiative (acting first in combat), accuracy (OCV), defensive agility (DCV), and good rolls with many important Skills. Within the context of dramatic action, none of those capacities are necessarily out of bounds for DEX, but they seem to lump an awful lot into one package. Correlating initiative and Skills seems to make the most sense, but keeping CV as well may be a bit much.

INT gives a character a PER Roll and good rolls with many important Skills. INT reflects “a character's ability to take in and process information quickly” (SER 37). From a dramatic action perspective connecting that with Perception seems reasonably logical, but PER is *so* useful that you have to ask whether it should be a Derived Ability. If it became a Characteristic, *it* could represent the “ability to take in and process information quickly” as well

as general observational capacity and skill. That would leave INT to represent more what the name “Intelligence” suggests: memory, ability to learn, deductive capacity, the ability to apply one's brain power to solve problems, and so forth.

WHAT TO TAKE, WHAT TO LEAVE

As a design experiment, let's take some of the Derived Abilities away from these three Primary Characteristics and turn them into Figured Characteristics of their own.

From STR Leaping is removed, leaving damage and throwing capacity. The cost of STR remains the same at 1 Character Point per point.

From DEX we remove OCV and DCV, leaving DEX as the determinant of initiative, SPD, and many Skills. The cost of DEX becomes 2 Character Points per point.

From INT the PER Roll gets separated. INT continues to serve as the basis for Intellect Skills, and its cost remains 1 Character Point per point.

NEW FIGURED CHARACTERISTICS

That leaves three new Figured Characteristics to define. Technically they're not “Figured,” in that they're no longer derived from the Primary Characteristics at all, but for game purposes they should still be thought of as Figureds.

Defensive Combat Value (DCV): DCV represents a character's general ability to avoid being hit by attacks. It starts with a base value of 3, each +1 DCV beyond that costs 5 Character Points.

Offensive Combat Value (OCV): OCV represents a character's accuracy – his ability to hit targets with his attacks. It starts with a base value of 3, each +1 OCV beyond that costs 5 Character Points.

NEW MOVEMENT

Leaping becomes just a basic form of movement, like Running and Swimming. All characters start with a base 2” of Leaping (1” upward) and may buy more via the *Leaping Power*.

NEW ABILITY

Perception (PER) becomes a new ability that all characters have, similar to Running, Swimming, and Leaping. It represents a character's capacity to observe things, and more generally speaking his ability to take in and process information quickly. It's defined with a roll, not a numeric value. It starts with a base roll of 11-; each +1 to the roll beyond that costs 3 Character Points.



IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Converting OCV and DCV to Figured Characteristics, and PER to a new ability, has several implications you should consider before using these new rules.

First, using these rules means characters will have to spend a larger percentage of their Character Points on Characteristics. Since they no longer get OCV, DCV, PER, or Leaping “for free” as Derived Abilities, they have to spend points to obtain those abilities. For example, a character with STR 20, DEX 20, and INT 15 has to spend 35 more Character Points on Characteristics to obtain the same Leaping 4”, CV 7, and PER Roll 12- he would have using the standard rules. (The new abilities cost 45 points, but the character saves 10 points because DEX is now cheaper.) If this seems too onerous to the GM, he can lower the cost of the new Figured Characteristics, but that may also require him to change the cost of Combat Skill Levels and Enhanced Perception.

Second, if OCV and DCV are Figured Characteristics, and PER is a standard character ability with a defined Character Point cost, that means all three can be Adjusted using Adjustment Powers. Given their relatively high costs, making extreme Adjustments may be very expensive, but the GM should be aware that it’s possible before instituting the change.



You Gotta Have Character

by Jason Walters

“Out at the end of a dirt road there’s just you, death, dope, and dinero. And maybe the odd bottle of oil of wintergreen.” — Richard Fernandez

For generations the Christians and Muslims on the Philippine island of Mindanao have visited cruel and terrible violence upon one another. Although now majority Christian, the island was once predominantly populated by groups of Muslim tribesmen collectively known as the Moro – a Spanish shortening of the word “Moors.” The Moro have waged a bitter independence struggle against all comers for over five centuries. The Spanish, American, Japanese, and Filipino governments all tried unsuccessfully to eliminate (or at least contain) Moro revolutionaries. Although there has been a great deal of bloodshed and atrocity committed by all sides, no permanent way to tame the “Wild West of the Philippines” has ever been found.

Into this boiling cauldron of violence came Feliciano “Commander Toothpick” Luces. The child of Catholic immigrants to the island, as a young man he was brutally beaten by a Muslim paramilitary gang, dumped down an old well, and left for dead. Lying broken and bleeding in the muck deep beneath the earth, he was guided by disembodied voices to discover a fantastic artifact: a glowing bottle of oil of wintergreen that grants its users supernatural powers! After crawling from the well he vowed to use his newfound powers to combat the Moro menace on Mindanao. In the process young Feliciano inadvertently started a cult that was to elevate the already hideous brutality on the island to bizarre new levels.

Background/History: Like many young Filipinos, the Luces family moved from the urban slums of Manila to the frontier wilderness of Mindanao after World War II to hack a better living from the jungle. Having receiving a small land grant from the government, they settled in the Cotabato region where they set up a coconut plantation and had several children. One of these was a charming but precocious boy they named Feliciano, or “happiness maker.” Thus Feliciano grew up in the demanding but cheerful environment of a successful family farm, alternately working hard and sneaking off into the jungle alone to swim, fish, and hunt.

Unfortunately young Luces’ innocent adolescent existence was destined not to last. By the late 1960s Christian immigrants from Luzon and Visayas had begun to outnumber the native Muslim inhabitants, collectively referred to as the “Moro” by other Filipinos. Actually a

collection of several dozen distinct tribes that had converted to Islam over a period of several hundred years, the Moro began to press for independence under the banner of an organization called the Moro Islamic Liberation Front – or MILF. As part of their plan to drive the Christian settlers out of Mindanao the leadership of MILF decided to terrorize their more remote and isolated settlements using small gangs of guerrillas known as Barracudas.

Unfortunately for everyone in Cotabato, one of the very first victims of this campaign turned out to be young Feliciano. While out hunting monkeys in the jungle he was set upon by one of these roving Moro guerrilla gangs. Robbed and beaten to a bloody pulp with tree branches until he appeared to be dead, the unfortunate young man was finally dumped down an old abandoned well where he lay for days hallucinating in excruciating pain. Sprawled out broken in fetid muck, Feliciano began to hear voices coming from a side passage formed by a dried up subterranean stream. These voices called to him, promising him salvation if followed them into the darkness. Pulling himself forward with his one unbroken arm, the young man dragged himself a dozen yards down the passageway toward a tiny distant glow. Following this speck of light he found a completely unexpected artifact: a glowing bottle of oil of wintergreen (it was clearly labeled). The voices – which by now he was certain were angels – explained that the oil could be used to make a man impervious to bullets. Thanking God for his good fortune, Feliciano tucked the bottle into his pocket and clawed further down the passageway, which sloped gradually upward until it opened up into a small cave on the bank of a river. He pulled himself into the river, grabbed a passing log, and floated downstream until he reached a nearby town.

It was a miracle that Feliciano had survived. No one expected him to ever walk again. Yet, while took many months of convalescence before Feliciano could move under his own power, he did walk. Even more miraculously, he seemed to be stronger than he had been before his vicious beating! While his friends and family were pleasantly baffled by his recovery, the young man understood clearly what had happened. All the while God had been speaking to him through the mouths of angels, telling him that a steady diet of oil of wintergreen would not only make him whole but also transform him into a vessel of the Lord’s righteous wrath. He had been slowly mixing it into his food every day.

TONY ORLANDO AND DAWN

By 1969 former doo-wop singer Tony Orlando had given up on music to pursue a career as general manager of Columbia Records. On impulse he decided to sing the male vocals on a demo of the song Candida... which became a number one hit! Much like Feliciano Luces he chose to embark upon a sudden, demonically inspired career change. Forming a group named “Dawn” after a friend’s daughter, he became popular 1970s vocalist with a variety of Top 40 singles and a popular TV show on CBS. Their hits included Cupid, Tie a Yellow Ribbon ‘Round the Ole Oak Tree, and (most relevantly) Knock Three Times, which apparently makes a very fine marching song when one is drunk on gin.

Wintergreen is the name given to a variety of evergreen plants that share the characteristic of producing methyl salicylate, better known as oil of wintergreen. This oil is used in variety of products such as chewing gum and candy as a substitute for peppermint and spearmint oils. It is slightly phosphorescent, has some medical uses, and is quite toxic when taken in large doses. Symptoms of wintergreen poisoning include ringing in the ears, extreme agitation, dizziness, and hallucinations – none of which are especially helpful when combined with serious brain damage of the sort Feliciano had suffered.

So, after fully recovering from his injuries, Feliciano Luces publicly vowed to use his newfound “powers” to combat the Moro menace on Mindanao. While many laughed, others listened – especially when he began giving away free bathtub gin. Figuring that alcohol consumption was as good a way as any to separate Muslim from Christian, Feliciano decided to keep his followers consistently drunk. He also began speaking almost exclusively in Pig Latin on the grounds that Latin and Pigs both frightened away Muslims. Finally, he continually chewed on wintergreen-covered toothpicks to keep that sacred chemical constantly in his system. Locals began to refer to him mockingly as “Commander Toothpick.”

Commander Toothpick’s first recruits were primitive Tiruray tribesmen from the Manobo area. Although not Christians the Tiruray had a strong hatred for Muslims, who considered them devil worshipers. The two groups had been enemies for hundreds of years. The Tiruray were impressed by Feliciano’s mystical aura, not to mention intrigued by his offers of free booze, machetes, and possible loot from Muslim villages. Under his command they launched a bloody raid on the tiny village of Upi on March 22, 1970. Toothpick and his followers slaughtered the settlement’s inhabitants, and then mutilated their bodies so horrifically that the other Moro nicknamed the raiders “Llaga” (or “Rats”), a moniker they would come to bear with no small pride.

While many were horrified by Commander Toothpick’s actions, other more powerful individuals found them intriguing. Mindanao had long been a source of trouble for the government of President Ferdinand Marcos. The island was plagued by civil unrest created not only by Muslim insurgents organized by MILF, but also by a well-organized communist guerilla movement known as the Philippine Communist Party (or PKP). Both movements fought the Philippine army as well as one another, creating near total chaos in certain areas. The central government in Manila began to see armed vigilante groups as an effective weapon against

this chaos. They began looking for ways to covertly fund groups like the Llaga while still maintaining a measure of plausible deniability about their violent actions.

Within a fairly short period of time Toothpick’s gang began to receive extensive, but very quiet, support from Cotabato Christian leaders who enjoyed close ties to the government. Their assistance included camouflage uniforms, crates of freshly manufactured American AR-15 assault rifles, boxes of grenades, rations, and most importantly money. The size of his group expanded until it included hundreds of new recruits. Before MILF or the PKP fully grasped what was happening young Feliciano’s band of a dozen savages had been transformed into a small army complete with jeeps, tripod-mounted machine guns, and discreet intelligence support from the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (or ISAFP). Other Llaga groups quickly sprung up in Bukidnon, Lanao del Norte, and Zamboanga.

Nobody was laughing at Commander Toothpick now, not even when he began drilling his men to the dulcet tones of Tony Orlando’s “Knock Three Times” and anointing their foreheads with oil of Wintergreen to protect them against bullets. The Llagas struck out in all directions, razing Muslim villages to the ground all across Cotabato. They battled MILF-backed Barracuda gangs in its towns and the PKP in its jungles. Seemingly impervious to harm, Feliciano stayed at the forefront of every battle, chewing on wintergreen toothpicks, shouting incompressible orders in Pig Latin, and blasting out Tony Orlando from specially constructed loudspeakers attached to his command jeep. Although no reliable figures exist as to the effectiveness of his methods, both MILF and the PKP were forced to commit considerable amounts of their limited resources to fighting Llagas groups in Mindanao.

Feliciano’s success even inspired imitators. Other popular Llagas gang leaders with mystical powers appeared, most notably Norberto “Commander Bucay” Manero. Commander Bucay’s followers practiced ritual cannibalism, consuming the hearts and livers of their victims and drinking their blood. They wore amulets made from human kneecaps to protect them from bullets and blades. Other Llagas groups wore T-shirts inscribed with prayers in Latin they believed mystically protected them from harm. By the 1990s all of these beliefs had coalesced into a bizarre religious movement that, while having some pseudo-Christian trappings, seemed to harken back to the island’s headhunting days. Known alternately as “tad-tad” or “chop-chop” cults, these groups enjoyed hacking their enemies to death with machetes and bathing in

DIGITAL HERO #40

their blood to gain spiritual powers. They were also notoriously successful cattle rustlers.

Perhaps not surprisingly with all of this madness taking place History somehow lost track of Feliciano “Commander Toothpick” Luces, although the infamous and bloody exploits of his Llagas gang and its legions of imitators are a matter of public record (they continued fighting and killing for 20 years). Somewhere along the way he seems to have fallen off of the back end of Her bouncing truck and vanished into the jungle. Surely he is now dead. With his toxic habits, brain damage, and violent preoccupations he could never lived to see 30. Yet how can we be certain? Even as you read this it could be that, somewhere out there in the deepest jungle of Mindanao, a middle-aged man sits beneath a coconut tree, chewing on a toothpick, humming Tony Orlando songs to himself, and glowing slightly as night descends over the Philippine islands.

Personality/Motivation: Feliciano is insane. Charismatic... but insane. In spite of his occasionally amusing affectations, he’s not a particularly nice kind of insane, either. Had his life gone a bit differently, he might have grown up to be a perfectly affable Cotabato farmer or shopkeeper. Now he’s a homicidal, brain-damaged maniac who exists entirely to wage a private war of extermination against the Moro (not that they didn’t have a hand in creating him). He’s also obviously dying of methyl salicylate poisoning, although thus far he refuses to admit it to himself.

In his role as Commander Toothpick, Feliciano has become the personification of that uniquely Third World phenomenon known as “warlord.” Part gang leader, part general, and part religious visionary, he is suspended in a twilight realm between modern and primitive, official and outlaw. So long as his goals match that of the Philippine central government he will enjoy a certain level of immunity from criminal prosecution. The second that his activities become more of an embarrassment than a benefit, the same ISAFP agents that currently help him will hunt him down like a dog and destroy him. Even through the blinding light of madness Luces knows this, which is why he takes time out from fighting MILF to also combat the communist guerillas of the PKP. If it were left up to him he would focus all of his attentions on MILF, even working with the PKP to eliminate them.

Quote: “Repeat after me men: Knock! Three! Times! On the ceiling if you want me!”

Powers/Tactics: Holy men can debate whether it is Allah or Jehovah that watches over Mindanao; but whichever god it is must indeed be mad because Feliciano’s bottle of magical wintergreen actually works! Not all of the time – and certainly not against everything – but being anointed with the oil makes one practically immune (on an 8 or less) to bullets for the period of one year. It is unknown where this special bottle came from and who (or what) placed it in the bottom of a well for Commander Toothpick to find, but he has prudently used it to build up a small army of devoted followers.

Feliciano is a *bastonero*: a practitioner of the Philippine martial art of Kali. A synthesis of ancient Malay knife fighting techniques with more modern Chinese martial arts, a bastonero specializes in dodging, disarming, and finally stabbing an opponent in rapid succession. Feliciano fights equally well with barehanded strikes or with a knife – although he definitely prefers using his knife whenever possible. Commander Toothpick doesn’t believe in leaving a dangerous opponent alive.

On an individual level Feliciano is an effective, even cagey opponent. He’s a strong, fast, and sneaky guerrilla fighter who has excellent experience with military weaponry. Commander Toothpick is never far away from his trusty AR-15, a handful of grenades, and a knife. He is also well adapted to life in the Philippine jungle with decent tracking, shadowing, and survival skills. On the other hand, although charismatic he isn’t a particularly effective military leader. Trusting in God and his own madness he never tries to work out any sort of battlefield strategy. Instead he relies upon having more men, better mobility, and superior equipment than his opponents.

To make Feliciano Luces less powerful, remove his *Mysterious Oil of Wintergreen* power and his martial arts. To make him more powerful, give him the Stingray Light Tank listed on pages 35-36 of the *HERO System Vehicle Sourcebook*. Use caution, however: can you imagine this lunatic with a tank?

Campaign Use: A stone cold killer is never idle for long in any war-torn Third World country. His existence is as certain as death itself. Whether in Africa, Asia, or South America, Commander Toothpick is exactly the sort of strange bastard PCs in a Dark Champions Espionage or Special Ops/Military Action campaign will find themselves working with. His familiarity with local terrain, languages, and knowledge of whatever enemies they face should prove invaluable, while his bizarre and bloody methods should provoke barely concealed disgust in even the most hardened mercenary. Any character based on Feliciano Luces should

be used to provoke black humor, outrage, and moral reflection on the part of the PCs. As a quintessential embodiment of the Hite Principle* who has been assisted/driven mad by supernatural forces, Feliciano should also be at home as either a friendly NPC or antagonist in a Horror Hero game that involves jungle exploration. In a setting where everyone is half-insane he could be used to provoke sympathy as well as horror.

Leaders like Commander Toothpick always have and always will exist. Like weeds they inevitability spring up when the conditions are just right. Thus is isn't hard to imagine a very similar Fantasy Hero character waging a genocidal war against orcs or a futuristic Star Hero mercenary commander leading a purge of primitive aliens on a distant planet. A Pulp Hero Commander Toothpick doesn't require any significant changes at all save for a quick relocation to colonial Africa, as it is the preferred adventure location for that setting. Similarly as a crazed warlord Luces makes an excellent villain in a Ninja Hero *Wuxia: The Last Heroes in China* campaign.

In a Champions game set in the Champions Universe, make Commander Toothpick a wholly owned and operated minion of the Warlord (*Conquerors, Killer, and Crooks* pages 36-50) charged with leading a group of Shadow Army soldiers against a native population. While he and his men won't last more than a Turn or so against even a lightly powered superhero, his activities can help to establish the Warlord's credentials as a despicable villain.

Appearance: Commander Toothpick is a short, slightly heavysset Filipino man with pockmarked skin. He dresses in a plain olive green military outfit reminiscent of a colonel's uniform. He typically wears aviator's glasses and a bandolier of grenades. Feliciano compulsively chews on a toothpick impregnated with oil of Wintergreen and is typically spattered with blood.

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* To fight the evil you must pick up the gun. When you pick up the gun, you become the evil.

Feliciano "Cmdr Toothpick" Lucas



**COMMANDER
TOOTHPICK
PLOT SEEDS**

Against Abu

Sayyaf: The PCs have been hired to rescue a high-ranking Australian diplomat kidnapped by the Islamic terrorist organization Abu Sayyaf. To do this they will have to penetrate deep into the uncharted interior of Mindanao.

Unfortunately, there is only one group of men both able and willing to pursue Muslim extremists deep into the jungle: Commander Toothpick and his merry band of cutthroats.

Solid Nazi Gold:

In the last days of the Third Reich a single submarine quietly slipped away from an isolated cove in northern Germany. Inside it held a fortune in gold stolen from the victims of Nazi concentration camps: enough raw wealth to start a Fourth Reich somewhere in Southeast Asia. Then the submarine mysteriously vanished, leaving treasure hunters scratching their heads for decades. The PCs have uncovered a map detailing the exact location of the hidden gold deep within the jungles of Mindanao. Unfortunately other copies of the map have also surfaced, entangling them in a

four-way race inland with the Chinese military, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and Captain Toothpick's Llagas gang!

Striking The Root:
Frustrated by years of unsuccessfully attempting to curtail sex tourism in the Philippines, famed child activist Andrew Vachss has hired the PCs to track down and eliminate a ruthless band of traffickers operating off of the southwestern coast of Mindanao. Having already destroyed their base, the PCs pursue the traffickers inland only to be caught up in a full-blown rural gang war between the Barracudas and Llagas.

Feliciano "Cmdr Toothpick" Luces

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes |
|-----|------|------|------|--------------------------|
| 15 | STR | 5 | 12- | Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1] |
| 15 | DEX | 15 | 12- | OCV: 5/DCV: 5 |
| 19 | CON | 18 | 13- | |
| 15 | BODY | 10 | 12- | |
| 10 | INT | 0 | 11- | PER Roll: 11- |
| 10 | EGO | 0 | 11- | ECV: 3 |
| 15 | PRE | 5 | 12- | PRE Attack: 3d6 |
| 10 | COM | 0 | 11- | |
| 8 | PD | 5 | | T: 8/28* PD (0/20* rPD) |
| 6 | ED | 2 | | T: 6 ED (0 rED) |
| 4 | SPD | 15 | | Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12 |
| 8 | REC | 2 | | |
| 38 | END | 0 | | |
| 41 | STUN | 8 | | |

Total Characteristic Cost: 85

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Leaping: 3"/6"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost Equipment END

7 *Mysterious Oil of Wintergreen:* Armor (20 PD/0 ED), Hardened (+1/4), Usable by Other (+1/4); Activation Roll 8- (-2), 500 Charges That Can Never Be Recovered That Last One Year (-2), Only Against Bullets (-1), Gestures (-1/4) 0

Perks

- 21 Contact: ISAFP (Institutions, Contacts, Very Useful, Organization Contact) 12-
- 5 Paramilitary Rank: Leader of the Llagas
- 5 Improved Equipment Availability: Military
- 2 Reputation: Insane Mindanao Gang Leader (Medium) 11-, +2/+2d6

Skills

Martial Arts: Kali

| Maneuver | OCV | DCV | Notes |
|----------------|-----|-----|---------------|
| 4 Body Shift | — | +5 | Dodge, Abort |
| 4 Disarm | -1 | +1 | 25 STR Disarm |
| 4 Nerve Strike | -1 | +1 | 2d6 NND |
| 4 Redonda | +2 | +0 | 5d6 Strike |
| 4 Sinawali | +0 | +2 | 5d6 Strike |

1 Use Art with Blades

- 12 +4 with Firearms
- 6 +2 with Bladed Weapons
- 2 AK: Cotabato 11-
- 5 Concentrated Sprayfire
- 3 Bribery 12-
- 1 CuK: The Moro 8-
- 3 Interrogation 12-
- 2 KS: Kali 11-
- 1 Language: Maguindanao (Moro) (Basic)
- 1 Language: Spanish (Basic)
- 0 Language: Tagalog (Native, Literate)
- 4 Navigation (Land) 12-
- 3 Oratory 12-
- 3 Persuasion 12-
- 2 PS: Paramilitary Killer 11-
- 3 Shadowing 11-
- 2 Survival (Tropical) 11-
- 3 Tracking 11-
- 3 WF: Small Arms, Blades

Resource Points

- 8 Equipment Points: 100
- 15 Vehicle/Base Points: 40
- 20 Follower/Contact Points: 45

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 163

Total Cost: 248

100+ Disadvantages

- 5 Dependence: Oil of Wintergreen (Weakness, Uncommon, 1 Day)
- 15 Hunted: The Barracudas 11- (As Pow, Area, Easy to Find)
- 10 Hunted: ISAFP 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Slowly Dying of Wintergreen Poisoning (Infrequently, Fully Impairing)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Compelled to Destroy the Moro (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Brutal and Insane (Common, Strong)
- 15 Reputation: Leader of Violent Paramilitary Gang, 11- (Extreme)
- 10 Rivalry: The Barracudas (Professional, As Pow, Seek to Kill Rival, Rival Aware)
- 48 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 248

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

| Weapon | OCV | RMod | Damage | STUN | Shots | STR Min | Notes |
|---------------|-----|------|---------|------|-------|---------|---------------|
| Colt M16A2 | +2 | +1 | 2d6 | +1 | 30 | 13 | 2H, AF5, FS |
| Frag Grenades | 0 | 0 | 2 1/2d6 | +0 | 2 | RBS | Explosion |
| Combat Knife | 0 | — | 1d6-1 | +0 | — | 6 | Can Be Thrown |
| Machete | 0 | — | 1d6+1 | +0 | — | 8 | — |



Details, Details, Details by Rodney Ruff

I had the opportunity to serve as editor for a collection of character write-ups as part of a joint project by the members of the *Haymaker!* APA I belonged to. Unfortunately, the project didn't see the light of day, as hoped, but it did give me the chance to be part of something larger than myself, the chance to use the writing and editing skills I had developed on my regular job and apply them to something I loved. When I began working on the project, I sat down and read the write-ups as they had appeared originally in our APazine, made notes, and then E-mailed a list of suggested changes to the writers.

When I began receiving revised write-ups and started to read them individually, I found that I hadn't read them as carefully the first time as I thought and went back to the individual authors with further suggestions and requests for clarification. Although I was looking for different things from each writer based on the character I was reviewing, there was one thing I was looking for from each of them.

More detail.

Whether it was adding a couple of Limitations to one character's Powers or asking what kind of sign language another character was conversant in, I wanted more details to make the characters more interesting to the people who were going to buy our book and use our material in their own adventures. I wanted the Powers and Disadvantages to be grounded in the characters, not just chosen for point balancing. I wanted the details that would show the statistics and the write-up to be integrated with each other – and I got them.

The need for detail isn't limited to published materials, however. The presence and presentation of details is key to making the elements of a good role-playing adventure – campaign world, story, and characters – live in the mind of the readers and players. The presence of detail communicates the elements the GM has created to the players and their characters, allowing them to feel a part of the campaign world.

A consistent attention to detail links the campaign world, story, and characters together into a strong, vibrant campaign that everyone is eager to take part in. The absence of detail, however, communicates a lack of effort and interest that the players will take their cue to do likewise from.

I call myself "The Man of Trivia," but that name goes well beyond just the memorization of obscure factual knowledge. I am by nature a person who pays attention to details, whether on the job or off of it. I appreciate a work of fiction like Asimov's Foundation series not just for its

encompassing view of the future history of mankind, but also for such individual elements as First Foundation's personal force-field generators, the Second Foundation's communication by gestures, and the Solarians' ability to perform telekinetic feats by manipulating thermal energy. I appreciate knowing that Asimov's all-human universe stems from Earth being the only planet with a sizable moon in orbit around it.

I also appreciate a well thought-out role-playing adventure and characters. Although the number of basic plots for an adventure is small, varying the details in the story can make each adventure based on that plot different from the others. The plot of victim getting revenge on those who wronged him forms the basis of the origin stories of both Batman and the Punisher, but the two men saw different scopes to their goals and chose different paths to meet those goals. Likewise, while characters may share similar powers and/or origins, they can often be distinctive characters in their own rights. Green Lantern's foes Evil Star and Black Hand each invented devices that gave them roughly the same powers as each other, but Evil Star sought to conquer planets, while Black Hand was content to commit crimes on a much smaller scale.

In this article, I will explain the importance of detail and how to incorporate it in both role-playing adventures and the characters used in them. I will cite examples from games I have run and played in, as well as use some of my editorial decisions as examples for putting detail into characters.

The Importance of Detail

"I am a hero without fail.
 I can't be bothered with such details."
 — Underdog

That was how Underdog reacted when he thought he was too busy to help someone because he felt he had a more pressing duty to attend to. This usually brought an agitated reaction of "Details? Details?" from the person who asked for his help, after which Underdog would relent and do what was asked of him before returning to his other duties.

As the GM in a role-playing game, however, you *have* to be bothered with the details. You have to know all of the details that can be part of your adventure, decide which ones are relevant, and determine the best way to present those details to your players.

As a player in a game, detail is also important. The more details you can supply to the GM about your character, the better the GM will be able to integrate your character into the campaign. With enough background information, the GM can even build a night's adventure around your character and create suitable challenges for the character to face.

Getting the Details Down

“Fantasy must be grounded ten feet deep in reality.”

— Maurice Sendak

Knowing the details is more than just knowing that it's the Smithsonian *Institution* instead of the Smithsonian *Institute*. It also means knowing that the Smithsonian Institution was founded in 1846 and named after its benefactor, British scientist James Smithson, who sought to create “an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.”

In game terms as a GM, it means knowing your campaign world inside and out, forward and backward, so that you can put the players' characters into it in a meaningful fashion. If you find that the character one of your players wants to run won't fit into the campaign, you can tell him why, or if there are only a few things that don't fit, you can indicate them to the player and let the player decide whether to change them or submit a different character for your approval.

In game terms as a player, it means knowing where your character comes from and where your character wants to go. It means knowing the character's likes and dislikes and how they developed. It means knowing why the character does what the character does, whether it be crusading for justice or merely trying to have a positive influence on everyone he meets.

Details communicate the why as much as the how. In James Davis' original write-up for one of his characters, the White Dragon, it wasn't clear to me as to what kind of injustices led Johnny Li to seek out the Shaolin monk who trained him to become the White Dragon or why Johnny would gravitate toward sex crimes before stooping to common theft. When James added the specific injustices that Johnny had witnessed as a child, the White Dragon became a more realistic and more interesting character.

Details don't exist by themselves, however; they are and should be seen as part of a greater whole. The *HERO System* universe has an established timeline as to the kind of powers and abilities present in each era: galactic prehistory, mythic and medieval Earth, the Golden Age of comics, present day, the early colonization of space, and far-future interstellar empires. If you create or take part in a campaign set within this

universe, you need to have a general awareness of the overall timeline, while concentrating on that portion of the timeline in which your adventures will take place.

Establishing a timeline is a good idea for your own campaign universe as well. Even if you don't initially plan to run adventures outside of a given time period, it always helps to be aware of the bigger picture. It will be valuable later when you start looking for ideas for new adventures for your current group of player characters, such as having them encounter a time traveler from the future who believes that the development of super-powers cursed his generation or sending them back to the mythic era to be worshipped as gods and goddesses. It will also be helpful as a starting point when you reach the point of burnout in your current campaign and want to expose yourself to some fresh ideas.

The first few times you run, of course, will probably be devoted to mastering the gaming system and figuring out your basic GMing style. During this time, you will probably be looking for adventures to run and ideas for further adventures. Many of these early adventures will come from adventure modules and other gaming supplements, while the ideas may be furnished by your more experienced players and other GMs. Even as you pull things to use from other sources, start looking at how you can pull them *together*.

If you're not sure exactly what to run after the first time or two as a GM, you might want to treat your campaign universe as a campaign multiverse, trying out different settings and casts of characters until you find what you like. You can always keep the things you tried out early on and bring them back later in a somewhat altered form.

Once you start to pull things together, the next step is to figure out what follows from putting those things together. If you decide to run a campaign set in America several hundred years in the future and decide to base the population on currently projected demographic trends, you will find whites going from a majority to only a plurality and perhaps a slim one. Will bigotry and racial prejudice be eliminated in your campaign, or will it make a last stand? Will the previously dominant whites find themselves victims of racial slurs as blacks and Hispanics have been in today's world? You have to decide.

Suppose the creatures from mythology and fantasy literature were real and survived to the present day. Would Sauron's magic ring be replaced by a computer virus requiring Bilbo and Sam to slog day and night through thousands of lines of code to debug? Would *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom* offer segments on

griffins and balrogs? Would a band of trolls take up musical instruments and become a heavy metal band?

Now add superheroes and super-powers to the mix. Would there be a super-team called the Argonauts who receive reports of threats to humanity through the figurehead of their ship's prow? (Just imagine what the popular comic book titles in such a universe would be: Marvel's biggest sellers would go from *X-Men* and *Spider-Man* to *Thor*, *Hercules*, and *The Eternals*.) The possibilities are there; you have to address them.

Anything is indeed possible, but not everything is probable. Before you make it up, look it up. If you're planning to run an alternate history campaign, you first need to understand that part of history you're planning to change with respect to how events from that time forward built on that history. If you're planning to run a technologically oriented futuristic campaign, you need a good background in science to develop a logical progression of scientific development from the present-day to the time in which your campaign is set.

The same goes for characters. Most "alien" characters are not truly alien, in the sense that their motivations are not that much different from the human characters they may interact with. The Klingon race of *Star Trek* draws elements from Japanese samurai culture, as well as Sikhism, the American Indian tradition of telling history through song, and rite of passage traditions of many tribal cultures on Earth.

There are a number of ways to do research. The books in your personal library are a starting point, as are any reference CD-ROMs and DVD-ROMs you may own. The Internet offers easy access to vast amounts of information, through search engines such as Google, Yahoo!, and Ask.com and through reference sites such as Wikipedia and the Internet Movie Database. However, not everything you find on the Internet is necessarily valid information; many times, purported reference sites are little more than propaganda for their sponsors and the information they contain is dripping with the bias of the person who submitted it. You need to read what you find with a critical eye and, as much as possible, check out more than one website for the information you seek.

Sometimes, the information you want can't readily be found online. In these cases, your local librarian can guide your research at the public library. With these sources, persistence, and curiosity, it is possible to find information on many subjects. Don't ignore such common sources as the newspaper, magazines, radio, and television, either; they may not provide the depth you need, but they can expose you to enough information to whet your curiosity and motivate you to dig deeper.

The Relativity of Relevance

"I don't care if the sun don't shine,
 I don't care if the bells don't chime,
 Just as long as you love me."
 — "I Don't Care," Buck Owens

Once you have the details down, you have to decide which are important to you. What a character had for breakfast yesterday morning probably isn't important to the campaign, *unless* that character is a representative of a cereal company who ate one of his rival's products that day. In that campaign setting, breakfast is *definitely* the most important meal of the day.

In general, the kind of campaign you run will tell you what details are important. In a murder mystery, time of death, condition of the body, and what the deceased was doing in the hours before his demise are key facts, as is the kind of weapon used to commit the murder or the kind of wound made by the weapon if the weapon itself isn't known. If Doctor Destroyer is after a certain artifact, its individual components, their functions, and what they look like become as important as their last known locations. If one of the PC's Hunteds becomes the focal point for an adventure, details of the PC's history related to the Hunted become important, as does that part of the Hunted's history related to the PC.

However, not *every* detail needs to be relevant to the matter at hand. In the case of the PC's Hunted, his dealings with others who are like the PC in some way (other superheroes, those with the same personality traits as the PC) can shed light on the Hunted's personality. The Hunted's general background can have some bearing as well. Perhaps the Hunted comes from a culture that places a high value on personal honor, so that his pursuit of the PC has little to do with the PC's own actions. Perhaps the Hunted suffered some kind of loss that pushed him over the edge, and the PC was the first person who got in his way. Whatever the reason, a few well-placed details related to it can bring it across to the players.

There is also room for irrelevant detail. Many murder mysteries offer false clues and details designed to throw the detective off the track. These red herrings can be anywhere from obviously false to so close to the truth that the detective spends most of the case pursuing the wrong suspects. Eventually, one key detail that had been overlooked or not present before pops up, allowing the detective to determine who the real murderer is.

Red herrings are also useful in adventures other than murder mysteries. In one adventure that I took part in at a local gaming convention, a trio of villains had begun kidnapping juvenile delinquents and performing experiments on them

ACTING THE PARTS

As a way of showing the difference between two German soldiers in my World War II adventure Operation: Catapult when I ran it at Omaha's Nuke-Con gaming convention, I portrayed one soldier as being very stiff and formal by marching back and forth, counting, "*Eins, zwei, drei, vier.*" I portrayed his partner as being lax in discipline by skipping and singing, "*Ach du lieber, Augustin.*" When both soldiers were captured, I had the first soldier recite, "Tonder, *Unterfeldwebel, eins, acht, sieben, sechs, neun, zwei, vier, null*" and let one of the PCs with Language: German tell the other characters that he was reciting his name, rank, and serial number.

For these and other things, I was named best gamemaster at that year's Nuke-Con.

AND WHEN THE TABLE IS VIRTUAL...

One of the members of the *Haymaker!* APA pointed out to me that the presence of detail becomes more important when the game is a play-by-email game, simply because of the delay in getting responses to the players' questions. Here, you, as the GM, need to be more forthcoming with details to make the game flow more easily for yourself and your players. You'll also need to rely on vocabulary to a greater extent, since you can't use your voice or gestures to communicate information. (You do have emoticons and abbreviations to help you, but they are no substitute for good written descriptions.)

WE DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO FOLD THE MAP, EITHER

As with vocabulary, your players will not always understand your visual aids the way you expect. In the super-soldier adventure I took part in at the gaming convention, when our hero team finally reached the villains' lair for the climactic scene, based on the drawing of the building on the campaign map, we planned what we thought was a sneak

to produce super-soldiers. The altered youths were given with three hearts and needed to wear special cooling units to keep from dying of fever. The kidnappings were made to look like alien invasions, complete with mock spaceships and cryptic messages. Finally, our hero team arrived too late to prevent the abduction but not too late to see a villain who was clearly *not* an alien.

We then learned that several people had been involved in questionable biological and cryogenic research. This meant that the villains' base of operations was either the biological "research" laboratory or the cryogenics company. Thinking that the cryogenics research was helping to make the biological research possible, I figured that the biology lab would be the villains' lair. I was proved wrong when it came out that the head of the cryogenics company had been funding the biology lab because of his dream of creating a new "master race" adapted to living in a colder climate.

Other details, while also irrelevant to the adventure itself, serve to add flavor to it. In the original version of the television series *Battlestar Galactica*, the use of such words as "sectons," "centons," and "jahrens" for units of time reminded viewers that the characters are survivors of an alien race. The use of the word "felgercarb," however, despite its strange sound, reminds the viewer that the characters are as human as they are, with the same basic goals and frustrations, even though they're wandering through space.

In an alternate universe campaign I played in, our characters were transported to a universe where the Axis powers had won World War II, with the Nazis controlling the eastern third and the Japanese the western third of the United States. The central United States was still free, but cut off. As a result, its people had taken to living a nomadic existence like that of the American Indians, and many of the tribes had become resistance cells. Our camp was located in South Dakota, near the confluence of the Niobrara and Missouri Rivers.

Our GM labeled the campaign map with the location of the tribal cells and the names for each. Although he didn't match them exactly to their historical locations, he did use the names of such Midwestern tribes as the Omaha, Sioux, and Winnebago. The presence of those names on the map emphasized the resurgence of the tribes under these conditions, as well as preparing us to work with the mix of super-powered Indian PCs and NPCs that became part of the game.

Presenting the Details

"It's not what you say that counts; it's what you don't say."

— Tom Kennedy

Suppose the only information you had about me was my name: Rodney Ruff. What would you think of when you saw it? From my first name, you might think of comedian Rodney Dangerfield, child actor Rodney Allen Rippey, beating victim Rodney King, or the cowardly knight Sir Rodney from the comic strip *The Wizard of Id*. From my last name, you might think of Dennis the Menace's dog, the Hanna-Barbera cartoon *Ruff and Reddy*, Ruff Hewn clothing, or Ruffles potato chips. You would probably *not* think of a six-foot tall, overweight white man, 40+, with blue eyes, brown hair, and glasses who used to work as a help file author for a company that compiles and sells business and consumer information.

Even with that information, you would not know what kind of person I am. That my first name, Rodney, is taken to mean "renowned" tells you nothing about me personally. You are more likely to think of me in terms of the other Rodneys you have met in your life: if you respect the people you know with that name, you will probably respect me; if you don't, then I will have to work harder to earn your respect.

If you feel you know me, it's because I've told you something about myself at one or more times in the past. As a GM, if you want your players to know certain details about your campaign world or the characters in it, *you have to tell them*. It's that simple.

How you tell them can be as simple or as complicated as you feel comfortable making it. If you have the PCs encounter a minor thug who suddenly gets nervous in their presence, you can simply state, "He's nervous." You can also say, "As you approach, you see him start to tremble. His eyes dart around, and there are visible beads of sweat on his forehead. His lip starts to quiver as he opens his mouth to stutter a greeting." Instead of just telling them, you *could* say, "As you approach, he starts to act nervous," then quiver *your* lip, wipe *your* brow, dart *your* eyes around the room, and stutter "H-hi, guys. N-nice evening, isn't it?"

If you have any skill at mimicking voices and dialects, you can put that to use in your delivery. I at one time thought to become the next Rich Little and learned to do a number of celebrity voices; from there I learned how to change my pitch and speaking style as necessary. Even if you don't have those kinds of skills, you can often achieve the same results by changing the way you speak. Leah Watts, who runs the Golden Age campaign I currently take part in,

will adopt a stiffer speech pattern when speaking as Diana (Falcon) Blake's butler, Webber, and will make the effort to sound menacing when portraying a bullying brick character.

The words you use also determine how well your players receive your ideas. Whether someone shuffles, saunters, strides, or shimmies down the street says a lot more about the character than saying the character walks down the street. Using the right word at the right time will get the idea across, whereas using the almost-right word may not do so. A good working vocabulary is as helpful in describing things verbally as it is in writing about them. Reading a lot in a wide variety of areas and paying attention to how the writer says things as well as what the writer says will enrich your own vocabulary.

There is, of course, the danger in using words that your players may not understand. The story has been told in several gaming circles of the party who come into an open field and are told by the GM, "You see a gazebo in front of you." One of the players declares, "I want to shoot an arrow at it," and then makes his roll to hit, not dissuaded by the GM's emphatic shouting of "It's a gazebo!" In such cases, if the meaning of an unfamiliar word can't be figured out from the context in which it's being used, it's best not to use it.

The words your *characters* use are also important. Each profession has developed its own jargon, which you should be able to use effectively and correctly when your characters speak it. Also, while Americans, Britons, and Australians all speak English, they don't necessarily use the same words to mean the same thing. While a shopper in New York takes an elevator to the top floor at Bloomingdale's, a shopper in London takes a lift to the top floor of Harrod's.

The choice of words is important here as well to carry ideas and information across. This is often used in science fiction to indicate a character as being an alien, or in some other way different from the human reader or viewer. The android Data from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* spoke reservedly in complete sentences without using contractions. (In contrast, his "twin brother," Lore, *did* use contractions and was much freer in his speech.) The alien Ta'ra from *Something Is Out There* referred to the individual parts of the body by their scientific names, as in, "I worked my fingers down to the metacarpal." In the comics, the Kryptonian term for "year" was "sun-cycle."

Audio-visual aids can help to present your ideas. For my World War II adventure, Operation: Catapult, I have maps on graph paper of the islands next to the fjord in which the Nazis have their Norwegian submarine base that form

part of my slideshow presentation, currently delivered by holding them up and using a ballpoint pen as both pointer and "clicker." For my *Dating Game*-based adventure, I have the actual theme music for the show, along with Herb Alpert's recordings of "Whipped Cream," "Spanish Flea," and "A Taste of Honey" that were played at key points during the show.

When you present details is also as important as *how* you present them. If the adventure involves a mystery or puzzle, the presentation of details has to be planned carefully, releasing details often enough to keep the players interested, but not so frequently as to give it away or so infrequently that the players lose interest. This includes other kinds of adventures as well; if a player declares he wants his character to examine a particular object, don't tell him everything about it right away. Give the player what his character would find out by casually looking at or listening to it, and if he wants to examine it more closely, have him make the necessary PER Rolls with the appropriate modifiers.

The flow of details also has to follow a logical sequence. It does the player little good to be told "You encounter a femoid" without first telling him that a "femoid" is a robot made in the shape of a woman. Likewise, revealing that the Hunted out to destroy the PC is actually the PC's long-lost brother without dropping clues along the way is like dropping a bomb without a fuse – it's a dud that lands with a thud.

The Last Detail

"Trivia is the most important thing in life."

— Rodney Ruff

Paying attention to the details, whether creating a character, an adventure, or a campaign enhances the believability of the creation. Just as craftsmanship is appreciated in the making of fine furniture and works of art, it is appreciated anywhere else that requires creative talent. That includes role-playing games.

Just remember – it's all in the details.



attack on the rear, based on how the building was shaped. However, what we *thought* was the back of the building was actually the front, turning our surprise attack into a frontal assault.

THE BATTERIES ARE DEAD!

At one point in Operation: Catapult, the PCs find the entrance to a cave with two German guards in front of it. After taking out the guards, one of the PCs searches them for flashlights. Finding a flashlight, one PC flicks its switch only to find out ... it doesn't work. I tell the character to open up the flashlight, at which point the batteries slide out, reading *Das Supervolt* (after the dud batteries from the Energizer commercials). Another PC finds another flashlight and opens up the case; this time the batteries read *Der Energizer*. However, I tell the player to make a PER Roll, at which point his character finds that the bulb's filament has broken. (Of course, if someone had the bright idea to put *Der Energizer* batteries in the *Das Supervolt* flashlight, its bulb would give off a blue flash before going out for good. Can't let these players have it *too* easy, now can I?)

Gifts of the Gods by Curtis Gibson

A Plug-in Magic System for your Fantasy HERO Game

Gifts are special abilities given to mortals that please the Gods, or to whom the Gods wish to help along to their destiny. These abilities are things the character had no thought or choice to get, but received anyway. Whatever the character's reaction to the Gift he has, there is a purpose for it. Most Gifholders would be under the umbrella of the Wild Talent archetype in *The Ultimate Mystic*.

The Gifts system assumes there are Gods of one stripe or another in the world, whether active in everyday life or distant and never seen. It also assumes that not all divine-related abilities are the province of the organized churches of the world.

The differing flavors of Gifts are one of the primary reasons to use them in a campaign. Gifts are powers of the Gods; if a GM chooses to place these outside the control of the organized religions of the world this could lead to a number of roleplaying possibilities. Religions or cultures could see Gifholders as heretics claiming the power of the gods, as saints that the Gods bless, or somewhere in between. The character could see the Gift he has as a blessing or curse. Another use of Gifts are for abilities the GM wants in his world, but wishes to be rare or special things, such as having Healing as a Gift, but not something that is in the standard magic system he has set up.

The mechanics of the Gift system are fairly straightforward, much like the Talent system. Each Gift has a number of abilities associated with it. When a player decides he wants his character to be a Gifholder, he chooses one or more of these abilities and the character is then considered to have that Gift. The player may choose to spend experience to buy further aspects of his Gift at any time (with GM approval). How this system interacts with other magic systems in the world is entirely up to the GM. In the author's game, spells have no effect on Gifts, so detects, dispels, or defenses versus magic do not sense or affect the Gifted. This can be unbalancing, but it also can add to the flavor of the world.

Building your own Gifts is a fairly simple process. Take a theme or an idea, and build the abilities that are appropriate. The author's game tried to keep a complete Gift around 50 points. The powers that are built shouldn't have the Requires a Skill Roll Limitation, unless that skill is directly tied to the Gift, such as using a Healing Roll for Healer Gifts. Gestures and Incantations are similar, they shouldn't be

included as part of "casting" a Gift as one would a spell, but, for example using Gestures to show that the character must meditate or touch a target for a long period would work well. Keeping this difference in feel between the standard learned magic system and Gifts is fairly important for flavor. "Only when Serving the God's Purposes" is a good, but not a necessary, choice.

The purpose of the Gifts system in a campaign is to add options to the game, both for players and GMs.

It allows differing character types for the players to play, and the GMs can hang story elements, pieces of history, and social biases based on them. There can be a number of different types of these Gifts, and each one can have some interesting impact on the world, or upon the PCs who have them. In the author's campaign, there are about a dozen major Gifts, four of which are presented here.

Example Gifts

Healing

This Gift is one of the most commonly seen. The Gifholder can heal injuries, wounds, diseases, and even crippling conditions like missing limbs or blindness. Healers, by and large, are respected and treated well, both by the churches and citizenry alike, and are often given free room and board, as well as free passage between kingdoms as they travel. Leaders that treat Healers badly tend to not have the healing Gift appear in realms they control, either by travel or by new Gift appearance, and so they are not often given difficulty even by the most despotic tyrant. But this freedom of movement and respect comes at a price; healers and generally expected to do healings where they stay: the broken bone here, the injured farmer there. In times of great calamity, such as plagues or warfare, they are often called on to work days on end to help in any way they can.

The healing powers presented here are extremely powerful, and can unbalance a campaign, with a healer in the group keeping everyone at full health all the time. Some thought should be given to keeping them from being used excessively. In the author's campaign, every healer ability but Eyes and Hands of the Healer had an extra Limitation that it cost between 1d6 and 3d6 Long Term End. This gives reasons not to heal all the time on a casual basis, but in a crisis, the character can continue to heal until he goes unconscious from the strain.

DIGITAL HERO #40

HANDS OF THE HEALER

This ability enhances any non-magical healing the character performs up to double the effect. If he is using a non-magical herb, it's effect is enhanced. Two BODY is gained back by the use of the Paramedics/Healing skill instead of one. When this effect is used, the healer's hands glow with a soft blue light.

Hands of the Healer: Succor 2d6, Variable Special Effects (any non-magical healing effect, +1/4), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2), Persistent (+1/2) (22 Active Points); Only to Double the Amount of the Original (-1), Always On (-1/2). Total Cost: 9 points.

EYES OF THE HEALER

The character concentrates, spends some of his personal energy, and examines the subject for a Turn. At the end of this time, he is aware of what is wrong with the being he is viewing. This doesn't grant him the knowledge of how to cure it, unless he has the appropriate skills.

Eyes of the Healer: Detect Illness, Physical Problems, and Injury 11- (Sight Group), Discriminatory, Analyze (15 Active Points); Extra Time (1 Turn (Post-Segment 12)), Character May Take No Other Actions, -1/2), Concentration (0 DCV Throughout, -1), Only When Serving the God's Purposes (-1/2), Costs Endurance to Activate (-1/4). END Cost: 1. Total Cost: 3 points.

HEALING FLOW

The healer touches skin to skin with the target for 5 minutes. At the end of this time, a healing flow is created within the target, who will gain 1d6 of STUN and BODY per Turn. This ability also heals missing limbs. The flow is completed when the target is fully healed.

Healing Flow: Healing Simplified Healing 1d6, Can Heal Limbs, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2), Persistent (+1/2), Uncontrolled (+1/2), Continuous (+1), Decreased Reuse Duration (1 Turn, +1/2) (75 Active Points); Extra Time (5 Minutes, Only to Activate, -1), Concentration (0 DCV, Character is Totally Unaware of Nearby Events, -3/4), Others Only (-1/2), Only When Serving the God's Purposes (-1/2), Gestures (-1/4). Total Cost: 19 points.

HEALING BURST

The healer touches skin to skin with the target for 1 Turn. At the end of this time, there is a short flow of healing energy and the target is healed 4d6 BODY and STUN.

Healing Burst: Healing Simplified Healing 4d6; Extra Time (1 Turn (Post-Segment 12)), Character May Take No Other Actions, -1/2), Concentration (0 DCV; -1/2), Only When Serving the God's Purposes (-1/2), Gestures (-1/4). END Cost: 4. Total Cost: 11 points.

RESTORE TO NORMAL

The Healer places his hands on the target and concentrates for 1 minute. At the end of this time, a flow of healing energy is established, and the target, after 5 minutes or more, returns to his normal healthy self. This ability will cure blindness, mummy rot, vampirism, the ravages of disease and poison, and even problems such as a deformed limb or mis-healed break as well. It does not however, heal back lost BODY or limbs. It merely corrects what is there. It also does not negate or get rid of poisons or diseases; it merely cures the symptoms. If the cause of the damage is still active on the target, he could resume taking damage after being restored.

Restore to Normal: Major Transform 1/2d6, Improved Target Group (Person into Healthy Person, +1/4), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2), Persistent (+1/2), Uncontrolled (+1/2), Continuous (+1); Extra Time (1 Minute, -1/2), Only When Serving the God's Purposes (-1/2). Total Cost: 12 points.

CUREALL

The Healer places his hands on the target and concentrates for 1 minute. At the end of that time, the subject begins successfully fighting off the disease, poison, or other affliction that is causing him difficulty. This also cures the affects of non-completed transforms such as vampirism or lycanthropy. This ability and Restore to Normal are often used together.

Cureall: Suppress 1d6, All Poisons/ Diseases/Such Powers Simultaneously (+2), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2), Uncontrolled (+1/2), Continuous (+1); Extra Time (1 Minute, Only to Activate, -3/4), Concentration (0 DCV, -1/2), Only When Serving the God's Purposes (-1/2) Gestures (-1/4). Total Cost: 8 points.

HEALING NOTES

The Uncontrolled Continuous builds can be seen as fairly "cheesy," and that was understood while building them, but in my own campaign, I wanted to let the healers have the ability to completely heal someone, and have it be reasonably priced for PCs who wished to be healers.

LIGHTBEARER NOTES

Note that many of the abilities of the Paladin (FH71) are suitable for the Lightbearer.

Lightbearer

The Lightbearer is the bastion of good and truth in the world. His Gifts reflect the strength of his cause, and gives him great abilities to fight the forces of evil in the world. In some places he is called a Paladin, but unlike Paladins, Lightbearers do not need to belong to an order, or follow a particular path. However this Gift does regularly appear in paladins.

In the example powers below things that affect "Evil" only affect things that are supernaturally evil: Demons, Devils, Undead, Lycanthropes, Necromancers and other spellcasters that use inherently evil spells.

HOLY SHIELD

This ability gives the character significant abilities to withstand the powers of evil. The defense is effective versus any kind of rolled effect from the forces of evil; spells, weapons wielded by Evil, mental domination of Demons, even some sensory effects.

Holy Shield: Armor (4 rDEF) versus Special Effect Evil, Note the Defense here works as resistant Physical Defense, Energy defense, Mental and Power defense and any kind of Flash Defense. It is using a similar concept to "Magical Damage Reduction" as used on page 112 of *Fantasy Hero*. Total Cost: 6 points.

HOLY SMITE

This gives the character extra damage against any Evil creature he fights. Holy Smite and Holy Shield are often bought in paired increments of 6 rDEF per +1d6 Killing damage. This damage works in melee or at range. This is similar to the Deadly Blow variations from FH105.

Holy Smite: HKA +1d6 Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Ranged (+½); OIF (Weapons of Opportunity, -½), Only versus Evil (-1). Total Cost: 12 points.

HOLY AURA

The Lightbearer's very nature can consecrate the area around him. When he concentrates, everything in the area immediately surrounding him is considered holy ground. This has no direct combat bearing on the user or his allies, but it can come in handy fighting Undead and Demons that react badly to such areas.

Holy Aura: Change Environment to Holy Ground 2" Radius; No Range (-½). END Cost: 1. Total Cost: 7 points.

DIVINE PRESENCE

This ability is an outgrowth of the Holy Aura. A Lightbearer can kneel and stay immobile to focus the power of his Holy Aura and extend it much farther out, rough a third of a mile in diameter. In the past, groups of Lightbearers, in conjunction with the normal army, used this ability to stop onrushing demon hordes.

Divine Presence: Change Environment 128" Radius; Concentration (0 DCV Throughout, -1), No Range (-½), Gestures (Throughout, -½). END Cost: 4. Total Cost: 12 points.

Magic Null

There are people on whom magic just doesn't work. These people are incredibly resistant to magic whether of helpful or harmful intent. Those that have this ability, or curse as some see it, are completely unconnected to the magic fields. While they are pretty much immune to the spells of others, they also cannot use spells or magical devices. Unlike other Gifts, the powers in this Gift are of a set level, and the character must purchase both abilities.

Magic Resistance Type 1: Magic Damage Reduction, 75% Resistant. Always On (-½), Lockout (Cannot Use Magic of Any Sort, -¼). Total Cost: 34 points.

Magic Resistance Type 2: Armor (15 DEF) versus Magic; Always On (-½), Lockout (Cannot Use Magic of Any Sort, -¼). Total Cost: 13 points.

The Endless

These are people who do not die. They walk the world for eternity. While this might seem like a blessing, there are those who, after hundreds of years, do not see it that way. The Endless are not undead or evil, they just have an extra spark within them that does not allow them to die. Many of the Endless are connected in a loose society to keep in contact with each other to prevent ennui. This does have a hazard: endless can be killed by someone cutting off their head. When an Endless kills another Endless this way he gains some power, as he absorbs the spark of immortality that leaves the one he has killed. So going to a gathering of Endless can be a social event, or end in a number of duels. Like those that are Magic Null, the Endless must buy a certain minimum level of this Gift.

NECESSARY ABILITIES

IMMORTAL BODY

This ability reflects that the Endless gain their life force from inside, rather than outside.

Immortal Body: LS (Need Not Eat, Immortality, Self-Contained Breathing).
Total Cost: 18 POINTS.

I CAN COME BACK FROM THE DEAD

This is the basic regeneration ability of the Endless. It may take a day or so, but they keep coming back from the dead. The only way to actually kill one is to cut off his head.

I Can Come Back from the Dead:
Healing 1 BODY, Can Heal Limbs, Resurrection, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Persistent (+½); Extra Time (Regeneration-Only) 1 Hour (-2¼), Self Only (-½). Total Cost: 19 points.

POWER OF IMMORTALITY

This ability reflects the power that is inherent in the Endless. The character can make minor adjustments to his characteristics, being slightly stronger, faster, or smarter. When an Endless kills another, the pool should be bought up a point or two. The sample version uses characteristics, but the pool could be limited in any way the GM sees fit.

Power of Immortality: Variable Power Pool, 1 base + 1 control cost, Cosmic (+2); Limited Class of Powers Available: Characteristics Only (-1).
Total Cost: 2 points.

OPTIONAL ABILITIES

FAST HEALING

This represents an Endless that heals very quickly from wounds.

Fast Healing: Healing 1 BODY, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Persistent (+½); Extra Time (Regeneration-Only) 1 Minute (-1½), Self Only (-½). Total Cost: 7 points.

THE WORSE I'M WOUNDED THE FASTER I HEAL

This represents an Endless that heals very fast when he has taken a fair amount of damage.

The Worse I'm Wounded, the Faster I Heal: Healing 1 BODY, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Persistent (+½); Extra Time (Regeneration-Only) 1 Turn (Post-Segment 12) (-1¼), Self Only (-½), Only When at Negative BODY (-½). Total Cost: 6 points.

ENDLESS NOTES

Yes, where this idea came from is fairly obvious. It is included to show some of the interesting things Gifts can do for a campaign. Things like the Endless and the Magic Null allow new character types without changing races, professions or other campaign information. The existence of these Gifts give a game more options. In my game, one of the PCs is an Endless, and has led to some very satisfying adventures and scenes for both her, and the group.



CONVERTING THIS SCENARIO TO TEEN CHAMPIONS

Converting this scenario to *Teen Champions* is very easy. Simply replace St. Swithins academy with the PCs school, unless they belong to a Superhero Specific Academy, in which case the scenario can be run as written.

In this version, the girls are the long-term nemeses of the PCs, and grow in power with them, starting at as low a power level as the PCs do. It will start with low level pranks, and grow into something far, far worse. Woe to the poor heroine on the cheerleading squad! Save the final battle for prom night or graduation during Senior Year. Can the heroes get back in time after saving the day?

CONVERTING TO FANTASY HERO

In *Fantasy Hero*, Calendar Girl becomes a sorcerer, the dwarf remains the same in most Norse Fantasy settings, Hound becomes a werewolf, Snow Tiger becomes a Weretiger, and the Model becomes a powerful warrior renowned for her beauty. Gianni Orlande becomes the head of the local thieves' guild, and Das Blitzkrieg becomes a greedy storm wizard.



20

Chains of Doom

by Michael Satran

“Not all that tempts your wand’ring eyes,
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize,
Nor all that glisters, gold...”
— Thomas Grey

Adventure Background

Long ago, in the kingdom of the Holy Roman Empire, there lived a young woman who was the greatest weaver in the known world. Rumor had it that she could spin straw into gold, and unfortunately, the King of the Holy Roman Empire took her literally, for she was becoming one of the richest weavers in Europe. As the story is usually told, the King demanded of her that she spin straw into gold for him, and the helpless girl did not know what to do. The weaver was visited by a wicked dwarf, who told her that he would give her the ability to spin the straw into gold, if only she would give up her firstborn child. The girl, helpless and terrified, reluctantly agreed. The King and the weaver fell in love, and married, and the poor helpless queen was pregnant. Eventually, the queen’s fairy godmother appeared, telling her how to banish the wicked dwarf, by speaking his name, and hurling him into the black pits from whence he came. The time had come, and she spoke his name, and the dwarf was hurled back into the netherworld through a horrifying black crack in the Earth. Most children have heard this story before...

But that isn’t what happened at all...

In truth, Alberich, the wicked dwarf smith of Nephilheim, wished to bring ill to the humans of the world, seeking revenge for the indignities heaped upon him by Wotan and other Norse deities, and sought out those with exceptional skills and talents, that he might acquire their children, or have them himself, and use those children to wreak havoc with Wotan’s favorite people, humanity. He wandered the world, seeking out people in desperate need of his aid, and his powerful earth magic. When he found the weaver to be queen, he hoped that the child would be his, and that his power over those children would grow with the power of their bloodlines. However, his power wasn’t in their blood. It was in the straw that the weaver had spun into gold. The beautiful mortals and nymphs who taunted him would be punished, the curse of the gold of Nephilheim upon all who coveted it. And so, banished, Alberich waited, as the gold changed hands from ruler to ruler. Eventually, the last king of the Hollenzollherns (Pronounced Horn-zorn) gave way to the Weimar Republic, and

the Weimar Republic to the Nazi regime. In the closing days of World War II, the supervillain Das Blitzkrieg acquired the gold, and carried it to the campaign city under an assumed name, where he locked it in a safety deposit box, a safety deposit box that was never opened, paying the local Mafia to conceal the gold for him until he was ready to come for it.

Alberich could sense his gold, but was unable to find a way out of Nephilheim. Though the black elves of Nephilheim and his dwarven brethren struggled mightily, there was no way to lift the spell of banishment until someone else spoke his name. Until a small group of high school girls, playing with a Ouija board, decided to try and contact the characters from old fairy tales.

From the very stone of the earth, Alberich was free. And one by one, he approached the girls, and asked them what they wanted. They wanted magic powers, they said jokingly. They wanted to be paranormals. Alberich laughed, and began brewing potions and alchemy to grant their wishes. All they had to do was retrieve the gold from the safety deposit boxes, and perhaps give him some other favors to be named later, and they would receive gifts beyond price. Alberich changed them into the superbeings they imagined they would be like: The furry and clawed Snow Tiger, the vicious dog-girl Hound, the ubiquitous and clever Calendar Girl, and the super-strong “The Model.” Alberich knew he would be much more powerful once he had his gold back, and turned the gold to straw. He did not think that it would last forever. He did not think the girls would either. But as long as they did, the world would pay for mocking his stout brutish form. And the humans would pay for the sins of the Gods....

Notes for the GM

This adventure is designed for five or six PCs built on 200+150 in disadvantages, otherwise, you may have to adjust the level of the villains by giving them more skill levels or raising their overall power level. It can easily be inserted into any campaign. The plot works best if the heroes are members of a public team, but can easily be reworked for members of a more secretive superteam. All parts of the adventure with the exception of the finale are somewhat interchangeable, in order to allow the GM flexibility and the ability to deal with unexpected actions by the Player Characters.

artwork by James Dawsey
cartography by Brian Boyko

Part One: Once Upon A Time**A MYSTERIOUS OBSERVER**

In this part of the adventure, Alberich arrives in the campaign city, and tries to determine what the greatest opposition will be to his efforts to retrieve his gold and turn it back into straw. It is suggested that this be the first scene in the adventure, as the rest of the scenes except the finale don't really feature the dwarf at all. Having seen several television shows and news programs, the wily dwarf wishes to get a look at his superheroic opposition, and determine what powers and abilities they have while he is invisible. At the heroes first press conference, they may notice a short figure in the back, who is unnoticed by everyone else (Give the players a perception roll at -2 for size and -4 for range, in addition to the modifiers for invisibility.). This is Alberich. He will listen carefully to the questions the press asks, and shortly before the press conference ends, or if he believes he has been spotted, he will leave through the doors at the back of the room, melding into the stone floor outside and using his Stone Gate teleportation power. The heroes will likely be unable to follow him beyond this point, as the door will close behind him, and as he hasn't committed any crimes that they know about, further pursuit is unlikely.

Run the press conference normally; allow each of the PCs at least one or two standard questions. A list of questions for the heroes follows. Make sure that each PC answers at least one question. Alberich uses no mental powers in the courtroom, he is merely observing.

- 1) For the team leader: What are the goals of your organization?
- 2) For a brick: Do you believe you can control your massive strength?
- 3) For an energy projector, especially if they are known to have powers with explosive or area effect abilities: What assurances does the city have that you will not accidentally destroy a great amount of property?
- 4) For a "Dark Stalker" or detective type hero: Rumor has it that you don't normally enjoy the spotlight. Why did you come to this press conference?
- 5) For a speedster: Is it true that you gave up a lucrative contract with a pizza delivery service to take this job?
- 6) For a shapeshifter: Do you require any special materials to maintain your shapeshifted state, and are you in a shapeshifted state right now?
- 7) For a mentalist: How do you feel about laws restricting telepathic access to other minds?

- 8) For a gadgeteer: How do you test the safety of the devices you design? Are there any concerns of which the scientific community should be aware?
- 9) For a magical character: How do your abilities and powers actually work?
- 10) For a character from a different country: How do you like America? How is it different from your home country? Would you like to say anything to the folks back home?
- 11) Is it true that you are dating (Insert movie star here, or Foxbat if you are feeling particularly cruel.)?
- 12) Some heroes sign autographs and others don't. Which are you?
- 13) Were there any of you who didn't attend the conference? And if not, why not?

If the heroes are not a public team, allow the heroes to occasionally catch sight of a short, stumpy form while they patrol the city, keeping an eye on them. Whenever they approach the figure, he seems to meld into the very rock itself. A character with N-Ray vision that can see through stone can easily verify that the mysterious watcher is not inside the stone. This can also be a great way to bring the heroes together if they start out separately. If this is the case, move to the press conference portion of the adventure above after they decide to work together.

Run a couple of minor combats with agents of organizations and normal criminals, and allow them the same types of perception rolls as the one in the press conference room to notice Alberich watching them. He will still flee from the heroes if they pursue, he is not ready to face them yet.

A SURPRISE BANK ROBBERY!

Run this scene within a week of the press conference, now that Alberich has had a little time to figure out how to deal with the heroes, and develop a strategy. While he does not appear in this scene, he has told the girls a little about their possible opponents, and how to fight together in order to disable their enemies and get away with his gold.

When the heroes arrive on the scene, the bank has already been assaulted, and the villains are making their way out of the bank with the gold in two sacks that Hound is holding. The villains will be trying to escape with the gold, and will do everything in their power to do so.

VILLAIN TACTICS

Calendar Girl: Calendar Girl will use her abilities to throw a monkey wrench into the heroes' tactics, causing them to take disruptive or useless actions. She will also be a flirt and a terrible tease, taunting the heroes, especially if any of them have lecherous disadvantages. For all intents and purposes, Calendar Girl is the leader of the group, and will use her support abilities to keep people away from the others, especially for the purpose of getting away.

Hound: Hound will take off with the bags of gold, and get into active traffic as quickly as possible, moving and dodging to take advantage of cover. Anyone who engages Hound will be the unlucky recipient of martial throw attacks, directly in front of oncoming vehicles. Once there are a few accidents, and injured civilians, the heroes may have to abandon pursuit. As soon as Hound gets behind cover, she will try to slip away.

The Model: The Model will leap into the fray and hurl cars skyward, counting on the heroes' natural proclivities to rescue the innocents within. Any heroes with a weakness to physical attacks, or mentalists, will be targeted by her first.

Snow Tiger: Snow Tiger will assist The Model, keeping accurate heroes away from The Model and Hound, and keeping heroes busy with her high DCV.

In order to decrease the difficulty of the scenario, run it at night when the bank is closed, or place the bank in an area that is not urban and crowded.

To increase the difficulty of the scenario, design and add a security system to the bank that is disabled only for the villains, while the heroes are the victims of immobilization and gas attacks from the bank itself.

MAP OF THE BANK AND THE STREET OUTSIDE

The Bank itself is managed by Oswald Mannheim, a third generation American who, despite his German name, is a complete red herring in this scenario. Create various bank employees as necessary to make the scenario function. A key to important areas on the block is included below.

The walls of the Bank are 15 DEF, and 15 BODY, and the floor is made out of the same materials. The basement, which contains bathrooms and an employee lounge, is not detailed in this adventure. All areas not included in the bank have standard walls and are not completely detailed.

1) *Entry Steps:* These entry steps have a motion sensor operative during daylight hours that opens the door to the lobby. Repeated use of the motion sensor will bring a response from the two normal security guards inside. The doors and windows of the bank are all bulletproof glass with a DEF of 9 and a BODY of 3. The steps themselves are made of stone, and have a DEF of 10 and a BODY of 10. However, they can be ripped up and used as a weapon once, providing the hero is willing to prevent exit and entrance to the bank.

2) *Lobby:* The lobby of the bank is carpeted in a thick plush carpet with two doors ahead and slightly to the left. They are constructed out of the same bulletproof glass. The carpet contains an engraving of the Bank Logo. (Choose a bank appropriate to your world)

3) *ATMs:* To the right of the lobby is a wall of ATMs, which contain \$2000 apiece when full. Each ATM has 10 DEF and 4 BODY. The ATMs can contain cheerful video advertisements for Supercola, Nar-Cola, or Coyle Jeans.

4) *Paper and Pen Tables:* Each of these tables contains deposit slips, withdrawal slips, release forms, credit card applications, and the like. Each one has 9 DEF and 5 BODY

5) *Banking Line Regulation Ropes:* Each of these ropes is actually a weighted chain covered in pillowing and supported by heavy metal stands. A length of chain may do up to +5d6 of Hand to Hand attack if the PC has a focus of opportunity. The metal stands have 7 DEF and 12 BODY.

6) *Security Door and Teller Windows:* This heavy, bolted security door rests between the two teller windows near the safe, and the rest of the teller windows. The windows are protected by the same bulletproof glass as the other windows, at 9 DEF and 3 BODY. The security door itself is heavy and made of metal, and is a DEF 10, 7 BODY object.

DIGITAL HERO #40

7) *Loan Officer Desks*: These desks are occupied by employees during the day and empty at night. The desks are heavy and made of wood, with two chairs in front of each one. The desks are DEF 6 BODY 7, and the chairs are DEF 5 BODY 3. Each desk has a computer terminal and drawers filled with many different forms.

8) *Safe and Safe Door*: This mighty structure is shielded from the world by an 18 DEF Hardened wall with 15 BODY. Unfortunately, removing the door by the hinges and lock is not nearly as complicated. Anyone with a STR of 50 or higher can easily rip the door off. Directly to the right of the Safe is the Emergency Exit, which has the same defenses as other doors and windows in the building

9) *Teller Stations*: These teller stations have the same heavy wooden desks, at DEF 6 and BODY 7. Each station also has a standard computer terminal.

10) *Secretary's Office*: This office is for the bank manager's secretary. It contains a similar desk and computer terminal, and a coffee machine on a small table, carefully hidden from public view.

11) *Manager's Office*: This office is for the bank manager. It contains a larger wooden desk at DEF 9, BODY 8, a computer terminal, and three chairs in front of the desk. It contains another coffee maker, only this one is grind and brew.

12) *Apartment Complexes*: Each of these buildings is an apartment complex. Feel free, should a character be knocked into one of them during battle, to fill the heroes' lives with the most bizarre apartment inhabitants you can possibly imagine. Aliens, the angry family dog, superhero fanboys or girls, and that guy who the hero's girlfriend dumped him for last week are all excellent possibilities.

13) *Weinberg's Kosher Deli and Sushi Bar*: While this is not usually a combination of foodstuffs that one might see in many areas, Tevye Weinberg has mastered both the art of crafting sushi and the traditional Roast Beef Sandwich on rye. This is a traditional Jewish Deli, with a Sushi Bar in it.

14) *Kwikie Mart*: Like many other convenience stores of its kind, Kwikie Mart is loaded with exciting cans of Nar-Cola, SuperCola, potato chips, bad coffee, and toilet paper. Should the battle spill over into the convenience store, be sure to inconvenience as many of the participants as possible.

15) *Todd's Organic Food Mart*: This food store is filled with all sorts of strange and sundry

organic foods. Some of them are even edible by humans. Todd is a thin, healthy man who usually spends much of his time inspecting the foodstuffs within.

16) *Morland's Taxidermy*: While the old Taxidermist doesn't get much business anymore, Victor Morland is something of an enigma. The shop is filled with stuffed animal heads, a few stuffed animals, and Morland, a man who must be close to eighty years old. Victor Morland is an excellent plot hook if you want to have a Demonhame with a creepy old morbane.

17) *Linehan's Irish Pub*: This is a traditional Irish Pub, where many of the bank employees stop for a drink after work. If the encounter occurs at night, this place is full. The bartender is a guy named Joe who happens to know more about superheroes than almost any person alive. (KS: Superbeings, 16-)

18) *Traffic Light Arrays*: This area is covered by staggered traffic light arrays at every intersection. Staggered traffic light arrays work in stages, where it progresses slightly, moving with the flow of traffic and then changes to stop it. Each array is DEF 7, BODY 4. Destroying these will create total chaos for hero and villain alike. Ideally, the combat should start with no moving traffic and progress with moving traffic sometime in the middle...

Investigating the Bank Robbery

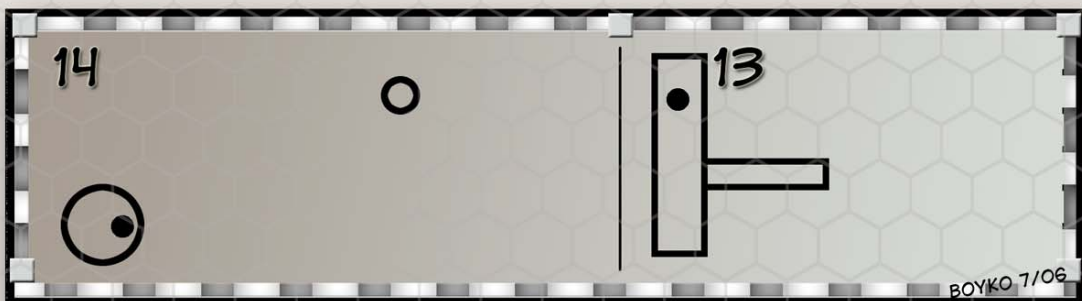
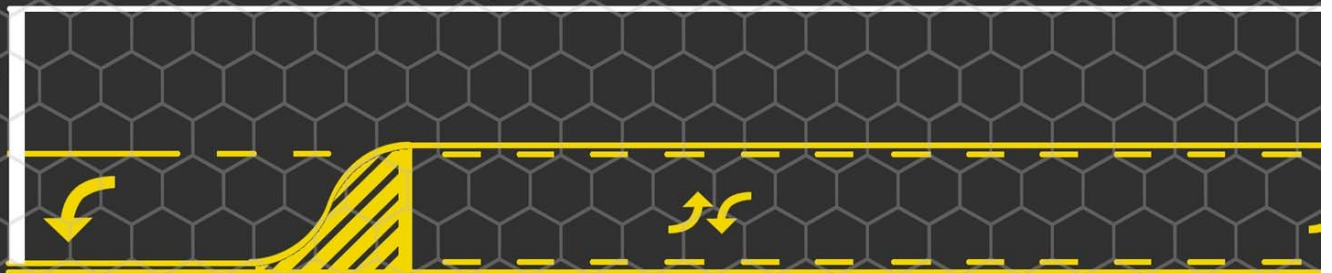
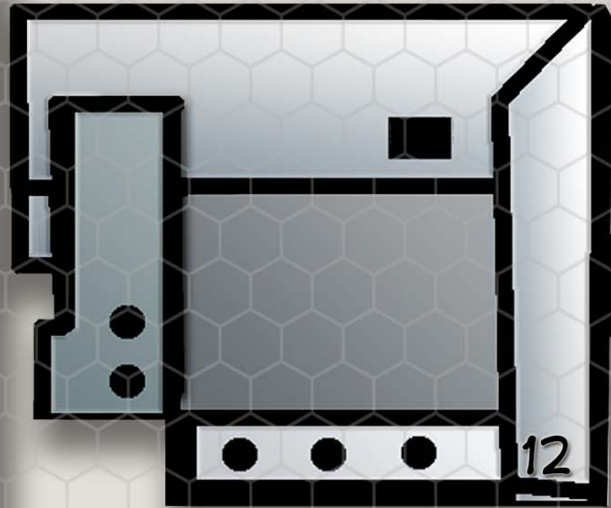
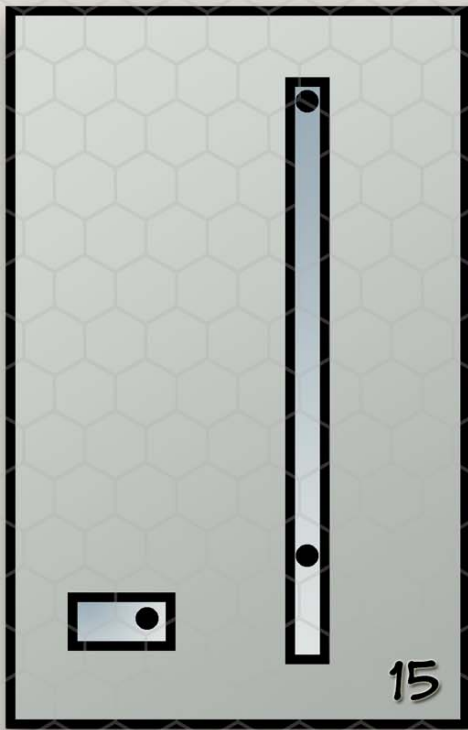
If the villains got away with the gold (And they should have, barring miraculous tactics by our heroes), the heroes will need to do some investigating of the bank vault.

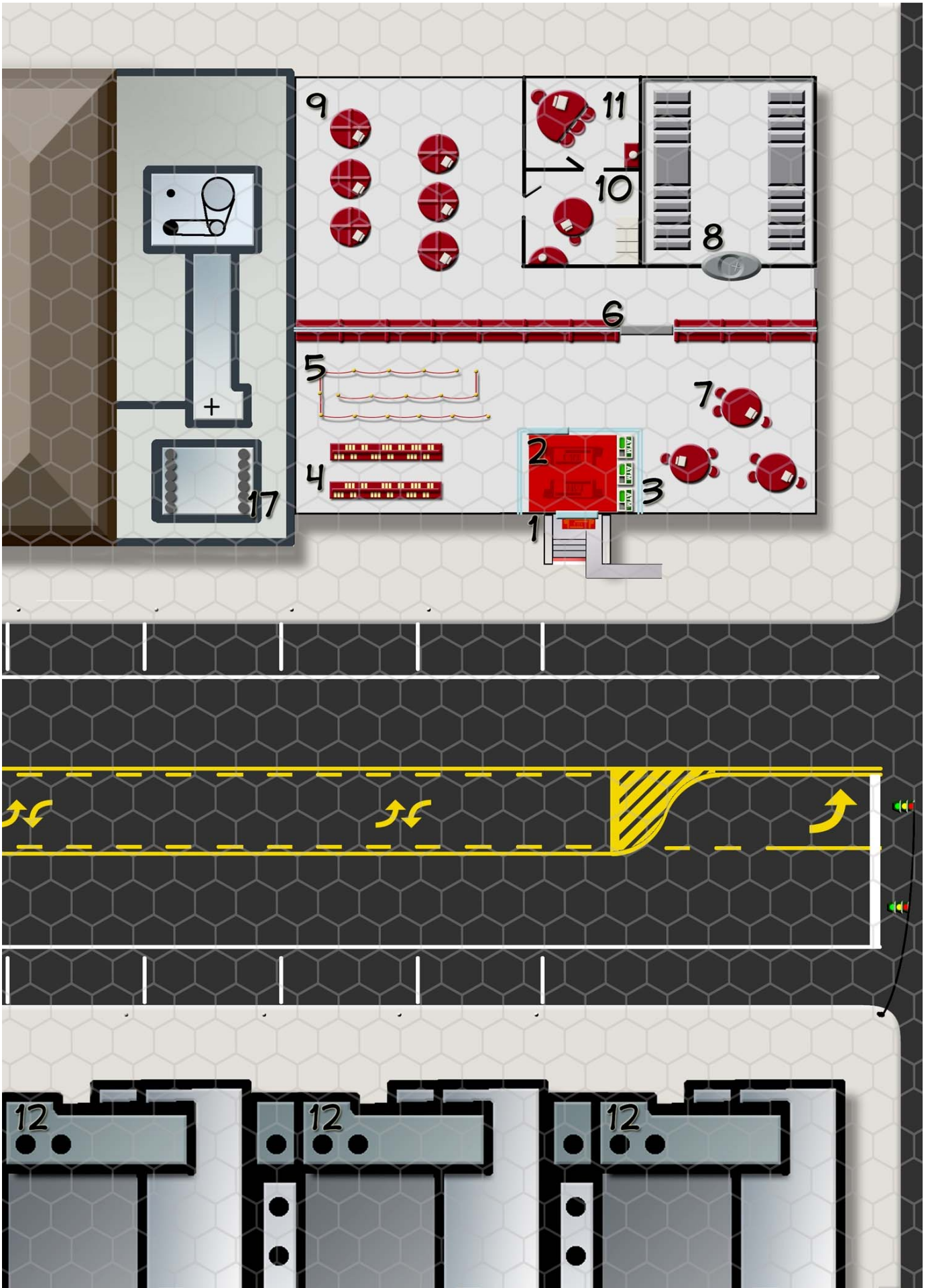
The door is clearly missing, casually tossed open by The Model's super strength. The PCs may wish to talk to the bank manager, who is not actually present, about the actual security conditions present in the vault and the bank. The manager will be happy to explain everything about the security system in great detail, unless the PCs are known vigilantes, in which case he will be much less forthcoming, and downright hostile.

The safety deposit box is large and ripped open, with absolutely nothing inside it, and the bank itself should largely be trashed by the combat. The safety deposit box belonged to a Gianni Orlante, a local mafia boss. The contents of the box are labeled "Personal Belongings."

If the Orlante Family is too much trouble to introduce into your campaign world, alter the text of the adventure for whatever mafia family is local to the area of the game that you are running. Alter Calendar Girls background and name appropriately to fit into the scenario.

Talking with bank employees reveals that the contents of the box were marked "Secret,"





from the days when such things were allowed. They can easily find out that the box has remained there since 1946. If the players were smart enough to blast away at the box or the bags during the robbery (Though this is illegal, and the bank will be really upset with them), then the PCs will know that there are gold bars inside the box, stamped with the symbol of the Third Reich.

When the bank manager finally arrives on scene, he will likely be shocked at the carnage and destruction that has been wrought at his bank, and interview the heroes as intensely as they interview him.

What the Bank Manager Knows:

- 1) The safety deposit box has been owned by Gianni Orlande for his entire life, and it was owned by his father, and his father before him. The Orlande family has had an account with this bank for this Safety Deposit Box since 1946.
- 2) He doesn't know what's in the safety deposit box, nor is disclosure required, as all old holdings were grandfathered through when the laws governing safety deposit boxes changed.
- 3) He does, however, know that the manager of the bank at the time, a Karl Reindauer, is still alive and living somewhere in the local area.

Part Two: Investigating the Missing Gold

KARL REINDAUER

Karl Reindauer lives in "Salvation Towers," a rest home in the campaign city. He is over eighty five years old, and though he can barely leave his bed, his mind is still quite sharp.

Getting in to see Karl should prove slightly difficult, but not impossible. The rest home is hardly designed to keep supers out, but if the heroes try to get in while in secret identity, they could be hard pressed to deal with an intolerant and cranky bureaucracy. For a comic encounter, insert an angry, elderly former supervillain from the 1940s or 1950s, who cackles madly at them from his walker and shouts: "You'll never defeat my master plan, you fools!" at this point.

Reindauer remembers Thomas Orlande, the former patriarch of the Orlande family, and what he put into the safety deposit box: Sixty four golden bars, stamped with a swastika, the symbol of Nazi Germany. From tests he ran secretly on the bars, he believes them to be authentic, though perhaps they have been melted down a couple of times throughout history and recast. Throughout medieval history, that would

frequently happen as leadership changed hands, much as coins would be melted down to provide a visage of a newer ruler. As Mr. Orlande was unfortunately killed in a gang war during the 1980's, he cannot be convicted of any crimes.

Reindauer realizes that he has broken the law for concealing the resources of the Nazis, but if the heroes confront him with the nature of his dark deeds, he simply looks up at them and shrugs his weak old shoulders, asking them "Where am I going to go?"

At this point, it is recommended that the GM run a brief adventure before continuing with this one, that wraps itself up neatly. Shortly after that adventure ends, the Orlande Family contacts the PCs and wishes to know if any progress has been made in the matter of their stolen property...

A MEETING WITH GIANNI ORLANTE

After the interim adventure is over, Gianni Orlande contacts the PCs by phoning them, and asks them if they would like to meet him at his estate for a little discussion over some pasta and wine. Orlande is genuinely interested in what the PCs have uncovered, and is curious if there is anything he could do for them to aid them in recovering his missing possessions.

(Warning: It is exceptionally unheroic for your PCs to make deals with the Mafia that enhance their criminal status, give them information which may lead to the deaths of innocents, etc.)

Gianni Orlande will happily meet the PCs with his daughter in the room, after all, as long as he's having a discussion about the missing safety deposit box, which he truly does not know the contents of, only that it belongs to him and his father told him not to open it, nor does he know that his own daughter is responsible for stealing the box. He wishes his possessions and his surprise cache of gold returned to him, after all, it was stolen, and technically it was in his safety deposit box.

Gianni Orlande does not know that the real owner of the gold, Heinrich Rasmussen, is secretly the ex-Wehrmacht supervillain Das Blitzkrieg, or that now that it has been stolen, he is intimately aware of its sudden and upsetting reappearance, as the bank has already followed through with the instructions of the Safety Deposit Box's owner to inform him through the most expedient means of mail possible. At the time, Das Blitzkrieg expected a two to three week delay, as he was unaware of his own extended lifespan, but now, thanks to the wonder of next day air, he will be arriving from South Africa in just a few short days.

Orlande does know that the Bank Manager informed him that his father was holding the gold box for someone else, but he doesn't know who Heinrich Rasmussen is. If the PCs could

find out for him, he would be very pleased, and perhaps even cut back on his activities for a brief time. Orlante also knows that there was enough gold in there to buy a hundred mansions like the one he owns now. Everyone who is greedy will be looking for it. He explains to the PCs that his own personal code of honor prevents him from spending the money himself.

If you have the Milford Mansion map, use that map to represent the Orlante Estate. Although no combat willingly occurs here, the PCs may choose to start one at some point. Be prepared. No plan survives contact with the players.

THE TRAIL OF THE GOLD

The PCs have some choices to make after their meeting with Gianni Orlante. The supervillains are clearly well organized, sneaky, and have a lowdown on at least some of the tactics their enemy might use. But tracing the gold back through the years may prove more important, if not the most important thing in tracking down the Chains of Doom and locating their new source of riches.

- 1) It is relatively easy to discover that Heinrich Rasmussen is an alias, and that it likely belonged to someone using it from the days of the Nazi Empire. Heinrich Rasmussen was the son of Doctor Erich Rasmussen, a Nazi Scientist who was thought destroyed during the bombing of Dresden. Since Heinrich died during the bombing, it is unlikely that it was him, though he may have used the dead man's papers.

Records from Dresden are difficult to find, though certain Nazi-hunting organizations, UNTIL, and other Nazi groups could have them, though the last one is essentially an adventure in and of itself. (Running this could also be good if you wished to introduce Das Blitzkrieg and introducing him as a villain with Nazi connections remaining, in this story he is assumed to be working with VIPER) If you wish to choose the third option, this is another adventure in and of itself, and is not covered in the course of the text of Chains of Doom. When these records are eventually discovered (KS: Research with a -6 penalty, or KS: History with a -7 penalty, or KS: History of World War II with a -5 penalty), it shows that the gold bars originally belonged to the Weimar Republic, and were melted down and recast as gold bars belonging to the Thousand Year Reich.

- 2) Weimar Republic records are even more difficult to find, and historians who cover the age of the Weimar Republic and the history of its predecessors back to the Holy Roman Empire will likely know little about the gold. Occult researchers might be able to come up with the legend of the dwarf, the gold, and the pretty young weaver. (KS: The Occult, -6, and then a deduction roll at base to notice a connection, or KS: Fairy Tales at base roll, but who the heck would have that skill?) However, a clever player might be able to put together the connection between the dwarf, the gold, and Rumpelstiltskin by supposition. Let them say his name. It won't work unless they can trick the girls into doing it.

If the PCs figure out the connection between the dwarf and the girls, let them. It should inspire a certain amount of fear at being hunted by an evil fairy tale character from the blackest pits of hell, and they can then do research, some of which will fail, but some of which might lead to some information about Alberich and his background. (Choose important events based on the success of the PCs' investigative skills and how good their rolls are.)

The most important fact that the PCs can discover is that the gold can be unforged back into Straw by a competent mystic forger. This can be discovered by any of the following means. A successful KS: Norse Mythology roll at -3 will reveal this information, as will a KS: Occult roll at -5, or a KS: Research roll at -7. If this were to happen, there would be a vast release of mystic energy free for the taking of any being who happened to be onsite, most notably the mystic forger in question. If the PCs can't figure out that the dwarf likely has these skills, then allow a deduction roll with a +3 bonus to realize this important fact. What he might want to do with all that power is anyone's guess, but it certainly can't be beneficial to anyone with the possible exception of him.

Part Three: Who is the Enemy of My Enemy?

DAS BLITZKRIEG RETURNS

Once the PCs think they have all the clues they need, a phone call is received from a man with a German accent who asks them to meet him in a public place, alone, with lots of witnesses. You should choose a PC who does not have excessive hatred of Nazis, or other disadvantages that might force immediate combat.

When the PCs get there, assuming they are smart enough to not go alone and have a decent place to hide, they will encounter Das Blitzkrieg in plain clothes, wearing a long trenchcoat, a brim hat, and a very nice navy blue pinstripe suit. He will very politely ask the PC what progress they have made in locating his gold, as he is the mysterious owner of the safety deposit box. If the PCs have encountered Das Blitzkrieg before, feel free to have him identify himself as such prior to combat if he was a significant threat to them. (And he should be) He explains politely to the PCs that the gold belongs solely to him, that he is not interested in returning it to the Jewish people, as he fought loyally as a soldier for the Germans (And he stresses this part very profusely, as he does not share the Nazi ideology, although he has a reputation for it.) for years. He informs the PC that should they refuse to turn the gold over to him when the girls are located, that the usual chaos and destruction that follow such events will be visited upon them and their city, unless they should comply with his request. Expecting the PCs to refuse, he has made a deal with the local VIPER nest to supply him with agents in exchange for a percentage of the gold. (Alternative Scenario: Das Blitzkrieg IS the local nest leader, or takes over the Nest. A splendid long-term enemy is guaranteed for all. Even if this *is* the case, he will inform the PCs of the primary situation above rather than reveal his nest leader status.) Combat may ensue if the PCs initiate it, but the primary purpose of VIPER and Das Blitzkrieg is not to initiate combat here, but simply to gauge the PCs' reactions.

Should combat erupt in this circumstance, unless the PCs took a great deal of time preparing for the meet, you should let them face the full fury of a pair of VIPER six teams with Invisibility Belts and at least two hired supervillains plus Das Blitzkrieg's awesome might. Blowtorch and Fenris are recommended individuals in this circumstance if you have not built your own. The heroes will likely get beaten, but it should provide a valued lesson in "Fights not to have." The goal of the agents will be to give Das Blitzkrieg a chance to escape. Any villains who are arrested here, unless they have previous criminal records that have not been paid for, will likely be let off, as they are not initiating combat.

THE ORLANTE FAMILY ACTS

Once the PCs acquire the information from Das Blitzkrieg, the heroes have the ability to begin looking for places where the gold might be hidden. However, other plots are afoot. In a desperate attempt to reacquire the gold in the name of Omerta, the Orlande Family puts out word on the street to the thieves that they will pay a substantial sum of money to reacquire the

missing gold. Calendar Girl gives the information to Alberich immediately, and Alberich comes up with his own plan to remove all of his enemies at once.

The plan is simple. When the Orlandes come to exchange the gold, the girls will steal the money, with the dwarf watching from a nearby secret location, which the girls will move to before he Earthgates away with them. The girls and the dwarf will disappear after leaving the PCs in the middle of a nasty firefight with the Orlande gunsels and any supervillains the Orlandes might have hired to counteract the Chains of Doom. Alberich is counting on the PCs to follow the Orlandes to the meet, and then the chaos will begin shortly thereafter. Once the money is missing, too, the Orlandes will be thrown into conflict with the PCs, and his enemies will be locked at each other's throats...

TRAILING THE ORLANTES

Any simple streetwise roll will let the PCs know that the Orlandes have a big deal going down sometime in the next few days. Another roll at -5 will let the PCs know that the gold is definitely involved, and reveal that the meeting is taking place at an Orlande safehouse, an Italian restaurant called "Il Trattoria d' Roma" All the PCs need to do is discover the location of the meeting place, and to do that, all they have to do is trail the Orlandes and follow them to the site, or look up the restaurant in the phone book. Assuming the PCs can stay hidden long enough to get to the location, the meeting will begin as the Orlandes approach the site and pull their cars into the parking lot, which is L-Shaped and surrounding an intersection and the restaurant.

If the PCs decide not to show up, the girls steal the money and the scenario moves on.

However, if the PCs do show up, the first of the multiple groups with multiple goals combats truly appears at this point in the scenario. Be careful. Not everyone is out to get the PCs here.

When the Orlandes arrive sometime after 11 PM, Calendar Girl, Hound, Snow Tiger, and The Model will be concealed by Invisibility and Stealth. The cars will form a perimeter around the edges of the two entryways to the L-shaped lot, and the group of Mafiosi will cover the center, where the only light in the parking lot is centered. The area around it is dimly lit.

Illumination from the nearby intersection is blocked by the restaurant. If the encounter uses the modifiers for darkness from the Hero System Fifth Edition Revised Rulebook, it is very difficult indeed. Visibility is limited without special vision powers, and PCs without them may find themselves at the mercy of angry mobsters with high-powered weapons (A fine selection of firearms is available from the Hero System Equipment Guide, p 104-115, choose

DIGITAL HERO #40

guns to taste.) In addition, the mafia has hired two supervillains to protect them from the Chains of Doom. Anklyosaur and Lazer are recommended if you do not have your own. Use the competent normal description in the Hero System rulebook for Orlante thugs throughout this adventure.

As the Orlantes move forward with the money, the Chains of Doom will swoop in, grab the cash, and attempt to vanish. While Hound and Snow Tiger grab the money and clear the field, the Model will create chaos in the ranks of the Mafia forces by picking up the concrete lamppost and hurling it at one of the parked cars. As the PCs come in to attack or prevent the theft, they will find themselves covered in images of the Chains of Doom, created by Calendar Girl. The images will linger long enough for Alberich to teleport (Earthgate) himself and the girls to safety. Assuming that all goes according to plan, the PCs will now be locked in a knockdown, drag-out fight with the Orlante family while the Chains of Doom get away.

Explaining this to the Orlantes should be a difficult challenge if the heroes are somehow working with them, and if not, they have made an enemy that will last until either they or the Orlante family are destroyed. It's now every man (or dwarf) for himself...

MAP OF THE EXCHANGE AREA

While it is not normally necessary to detail the inside of every building, as the fight can easily spill over into the restaurant with a few well-rolled Knockback dice, it is important to detail all locations within it.

All houses have DEF 5 BODY 4 Walls, and all lampposts are DEF 7, BODY 2.

1) *Il Trattoria d’Roma Entrance*: This luxury Italian restaurant entry is suitably quiet, with thick drapes, soft music in the background, and a coat check. There is a computer terminal near the front door where the concierge checks reservations. The floor is thickly carpeted, and the lighting inside the restaurant is dim. The walls of this area, and the outer walls of the entire restaurant, are DEF 6, BODY 5.

2) *Coat Check*: This is a small area where a girl seated in a chair takes coats and hangs them up for people. There is a little wooden box with tickets that are placed on hangars.

3) *Wine Chilling Area*: This is a sealed refrigerator that keeps wine chilled at precisely 55 degrees, except when it is opened or closed. The door is transparent so that the labels can be read, and swings open and shut quickly to preserve the temperature. The glass is 2 def and 2 body, and the wine bottles provide +2d6 HA, but have tend to break when used (Burnout 12+).

A broken wine bottle becomes a ½D6 HKA, which deals 1d6 with STR.

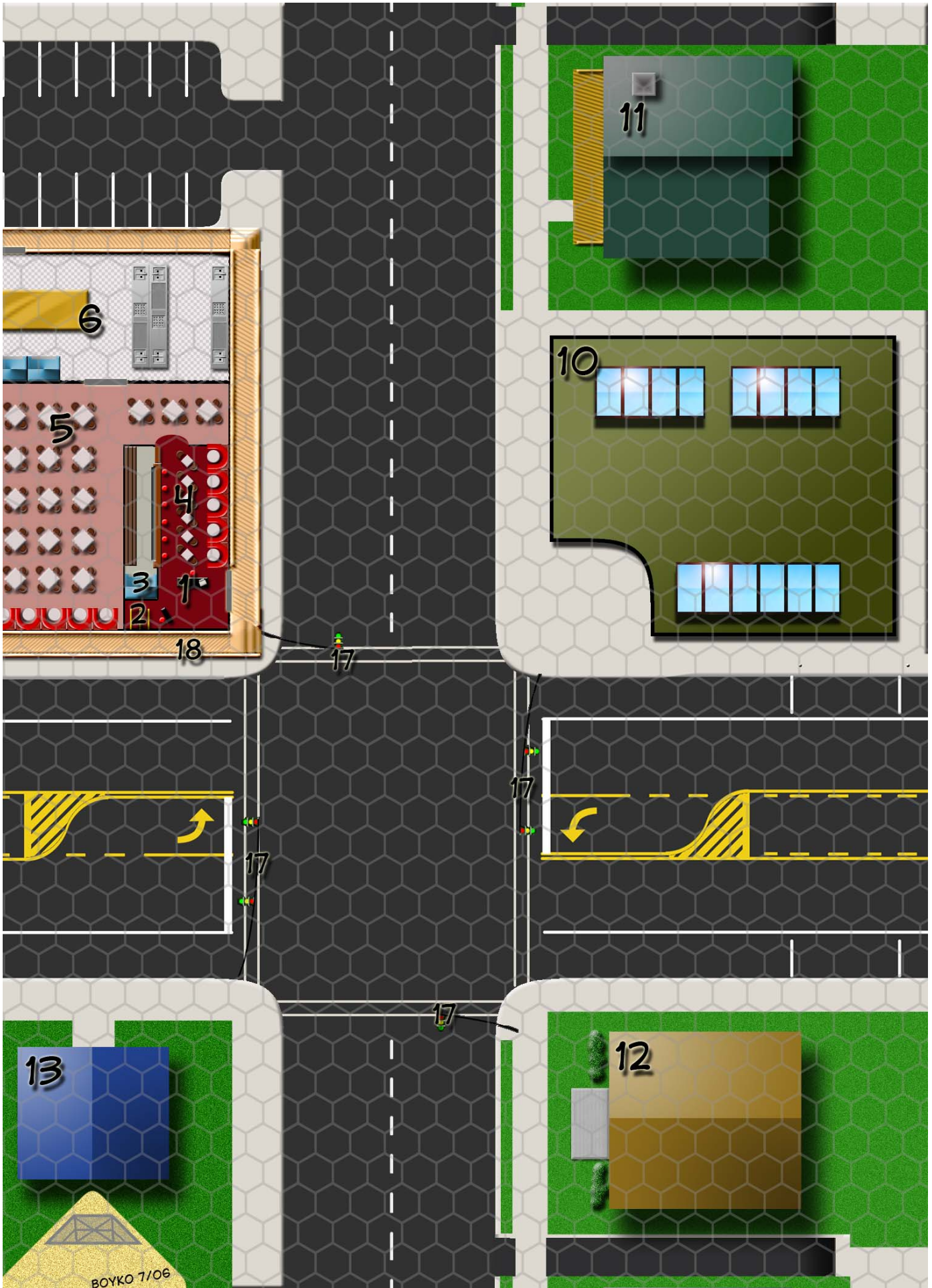
4) *Bar*: This area is a bar where people wait for their parties to arrive. The barstools are DEF 4, BODY 5 objects. They have plush cushions, but other than that, they are made mostly of brass and heavy steel bolts. The tables that stick out are attached to the wall, but if removed, or an attempt at their destruction is made, they have 6 DEF and 2 Body. More of the same brass stools surround each table. Behind the bar is Silvio Illatoni, a man who has no mafia connections and possesses the following skills. (High Society, 12-, KS: Wine, 13-, KS: Beer, 13-, KS: The Wine or Beer that goes best with your meal 13-, and PS: Bartender 15-) Silvio is very good at his job, and while the PCs may not get any useful information out of him regarding the scenario, should he be encountered, he is available for private catering parties.

5) *Restaurant Seating*: This area is where the posh seating for the restaurant is located. The tables are very heavy, as are the chairs, and all of them have brass fittings. The tables are DEF 8, BODY 5, while the chairs have DEF 7, BODY 4. The entire area is ensconced with thick curtains, and music plays lightly in the background while waiters bustle about their business in almost silent efficiency.

6) *Kitchen*: This area is filled with pots, pans, cooking gear, ovens and stoves, and several large refrigerators. Refrigerators have DEF 6, BODY 4. During business hours and about three hours before that, Chef Nostromo Catalano holds court here. (KS: Italian Cuisine 14-, PS: Italian Chef, 15-, PS: Dessert Chef 14-) Chef Nostromo is not associated with the Orlante family, and is the typically portly, cheerful Italian chef. He makes his own risotto every day, a three-hour enterprise that the heroes may find suspicious, but is surprisingly tasty when complete. Chef Nostromo makes his own pastries, which are expensive, but psychologically very satisfying. Unlike Silvio, his services are not available for private parties. While the Orlante family bankrolls Nostromo, he merely does not ask questions and serves food. There is an emergency exit in the back of the kitchen which leads to the parking lot.

7) *Parking Lot*: This is a low flat expanse behind the restaurant. It is the site of the meet between the Chains of Doom and the Orlante family. There are several parked cars in the lot, some of which may belong to nearby families who could not find parking on the street.





8) *Viola Residence*: This is the home of Jason and Margaret Viola and their three children, Andrea (Age 11), Paul (Age 10), and Joey (Age 7). As the battle starts, the children will peek out the window to get a look, while their parents try to restrain them and get them under cover. If a villain is in trouble, he may try to hold the parents or children hostage.

9) *Beecher Residence*: This is the home of Augustus Beecher, a portly middle-aged man whose wife died young. He despises Jason and Margaret Viola, but loves their children, so he puts up with the parents. He is an expert gardener, and while he loves the Viola boys, he grows angry with Jason and Margaret for letting them run onto his lawn and garden.

10) *Frames by Mortimer*: This place performs picture framing and painting restoration. Mortimer Rodriguez is an enthusiast, and dearly loves restoring artwork to its original, unblemished condition. Unfortunately, most of the time, he spends his days framing blown up photographs of people's cats and embellishing bevels on brass fittings. Mortimer is convinced that he is far more important in the scheme of the universe than he actually is, but his arrogance is tempered by his great skill. (PS: Picture Framing 14-, PS: Painting Restorer, 17-)

11) *House for Sale*: This house is currently unoccupied by anyone, though the Mafia pays the real estate agency to keep it unoccupied for clandestine meetings and to bug important conversations that occur in the restaurant with laser microphones.

12) *Pazzone Residence*: The Pazzones are a young Italian couple with a two-month old girl. However, Tommy Pazzone, the local superhero fanboy as a child, will run out onto the porch of his home to watch the chaos, risking the disapproval of Maria, his wife. Any stray shots will cause Tommy to dive for cover, into his bushes or onto his lawn. Tommy is a normal, as is his wife.

13) *Ricky's Baseball Cards*: This low lying residence has been converted into a store for baseball card collectors. "Ricky's" real name is Cherise Riccardi, and she's one of the craziest baseball fans a character could ever encounter. She has a good head for business, and, while a little on the chunky side, she displays an attractive cuteness with her pageboy haircut and whatever baseball cap she happens to be wearing that day. There is a television with a game always on, regardless of the time of day. During the day, shoppers can be treated to entertaining discussions about baseball, amid screaming at the television of "What do you mean? That was a STRIKE! Get that guy out of there!" Cherise is a

normal with an INT 13, EGO 15, COM 14, KS: Baseball 15-, KS: Famous Baseball Players, 15-, and PS: Business 13-. Cherise makes an interesting romantic interest for a PC who prefers tomboys, or an interesting foil who finds the PC attractive if the PC hates sports. She prefers to wear jeans and baseball fan paraphernalia.

14) *Martin Residence*: The Martins are currently out of town, but their home contains multiple exercycles, a weight room, and a meatless fridge. This vegan couple wakes up early, exercises a great deal, and lives in an extremely healthy manner. They despise Randy Sargone.

15) *Butcher Shop*: This butcher shop is run by Randy "The Cheese" Sargone. Randy is a made man, but will not be involved in the combat here. His job is to make sure things in the area stay nice and quiet, and he gets a healthy kickback for doing so. Nostromo is his best customer, who pays him extra money for special meats that may only be imported from Italy. Use the competent normal sheet for Randy.

16) *Plasmahot Coffee Shop*: The Plasmahot coffee shop is yet another one of the many gourmet coffee shop chains that have sprung up around the world. The coffee here is extremely hot, fresh, and tasty, and they are open 24 hours a day. Unfortunately, the pastries are below par, and the Danish is so awful that it drives people to digestive distress. However, the Danish is the featured item almost every day. PCs who frequent coffee shops should know this, however, should a PC who doesn't know get a coffee and a free Danish with it....

17) *Traffic Light Array*: The traffic on this street is two way, so all four crosswalks have a traffic light array. Each traffic light array is DEF 7, BODY 4. Damaging the traffic lights can result in serious mayhem later, but late at night, there probably won't be much traffic.

18) *Walkway*: This is a walkway that guides people from the parking lot behind the restaurant to the front door. It has no special characteristics other than to make the sidewalk narrower.

TRAILING THE CHAINS

Now that the Orlantes have no money, and the PCs have no Chains of Doom in their clutches, it's a mad race between all the groups involved to get to the gold first. This can be exceptionally difficult to run and time, and requires the PCs to find the Chains of Doom before the Orlantes or Das Blitzkrieg and VIPER.

The PCs have some options at this point. They can try and find the Chains themselves, they can follow the Orlantes until they locate the Chains, or they can follow VIPER until they

DIGITAL HERO #40

locate the Chains. The PCs also have the option of hunting down the local VIPER nest and destroying it, and shattering the Orlante organization, but given the relative scope of the respective groups, there are probably time frame issues with these choices. Locating the villains themselves is probably the best option, as risking detection from the other groups will likely result in chaos and a lot of innocent lives lost.

Streetwise rolls will reveal that any villains not captured in the previous scenarios are also looking for the Chains of Doom for payback for all the indignities they have already suffered. A temporary “Enemy of My Enemy is My Friend” alliance is possible to arrange here with Das Blitzkrieg or the Orlante family if the PCs have not willfully worked to make enemies of these people. However, once the Chains are located, it will swiftly devolve into the same general free for all as if the PCs had done this work on their own.

In order to unforge the gold and acquire the mystic energy, the Dwarf and the Chains will require forging equipment that is not immediately in use. This means he must be using forging equipment that is not immediately in use. Most common steel mills and workshops will lack the facilities, as they are too modern for immediate use, so the PCs will rapidly be able to isolate an abandoned Ironworks from the late 1870’s located outside the campaign city. Since it is likely that the NPCs do not have this information, the PCs will be able to arrive first, which will set off the events of the final climactic encounter....

Part Four: All that Glitters

GOLD INTO STRAW

The goal of Alberich and the Chains of Doom is to melt the gold down and reforge it into straw, whereupon it will be consumed in the fires of the forge and all of the mystic energy will be able to be harnessed for his use. The girls will get no additional power, but Alberich will get all of it, and he will gleefully use it to empower himself. Should you wish to complicate the scenario further (This is NOT recommended unless the group is exceptionally high powered, four character groups in a single combat is already complicated enough), you may add a greedy team of DEMON agents and Morbanes to the list of combatants, eager to harvest the mystic power for themselves. The combat and tactics of the participants are listed below, including the tactics of recommended Supervillains from existing Hero System sourcebooks.

Alberich’s reforging of the gold into straw takes three full combat turns. The gold is assumed to be melted down by the time the PCs

arrive. Interrupting his efforts is fairly easy, unless the GM truly wishes a massive eruption of mystical energy and power to suddenly enter the game world.

LIGHTNING WARFARE

(Das Blitzkrieg vs. The Orlante Family vs. The Chains of Doom+ Alberich vs. The PCs.)

Of the various groups arriving at the Ironworks, only the Chains of Doom should be in place, unless the PCs were exceptionally stealthy, clever, or foolish. The setup for this combat assumes none of these things. Adjust villain tactics appropriately if the situation should be different. Range Modifiers are EXTREMELY important in this fight, or the heroes will get flattened early, don’t forget to use them. Alliances can change, break, and restart at a moment’s notice in a fight like this, so be careful to keep track of who should and should not be attacking whom.

MAFIA TACTICS

The Mafia will arrive outside the south side of the Ironworks on Phase 3 with twenty-four men armed with heavy weapons, Utility, and Anklyosaur. Since their advantage is ranged heavy weapons, they will begin to pepper the battlefield with grenades and explosions from afar. Once the initial barrage of rockets, bombs, and grenades is expended (Choose judiciously from Dark Champions so as not to kill your PCs), the Mafia will close in with close range weapons such as submachine guns and rifles. After this, they will close in slowly, using concentrated fire against the heroes and villains alike.

Anklyosaur: The armored villain attempts to bombard the Ironworks from range, providing cover for Utility as per Utility’s suggestions. As the Mafia closes in, his bombardment will cease and he will close to battle, again, seeking conflict first with any hero he might have a rivalry or problem with.

Lazer: Lazer intends to use this opportunity to steal any technology the heroes might possess. He sneaks into the battlefield carefully under the covering fire, taking cover and hiding, choosing his targets carefully. If he has an opportunity to leach technology from a hero, he will do so in order to add it to his arsenal. Lazer is not foolish enough to take the gold for himself.

CHAINS OF DOOM TACTICS

Alberich: Alberich will continue to unforge gold and burn straw until such time as he no longer can. He will place himself in a Force Wall of Stone of 12 DEF and 12 Body while he continues to do so. Should his Force Wall be knocked down, Alberich will enter combat. He can only teleport to locations on the ground, so his movement will be limited. He will strive to target the fastest heroes and slow them down with Area Effect Entangles and well placed throws of his mighty stone hammer, letting his girls control the heroes and other supervillains in the chaotic fight around them. He will make certain if possible that no one who he has granted their abilities to has the ability to say his name and return him to hell if he can at all avoid it...

Calendar Girl: Calendar Girl will attempt to immobilize, distract, and redirect attacks using Missile Deflection and Mental Illusions. Making targets appear as other targets, she will attempt to find a good place to hide and unleash confusion and chaos in the ranks of heroes, villains, the Mafia, and VIPER alike.

Hound: Hound will engage slower enemies and bounce from hero to hero, moving about to distract, confuse, and retarget. She will focus on people with invisibility or concealment powers, as she has means of easily detecting these people. She will keep her combat levels in defense due to the overwhelming propensity of targets.

The Model: The Model will attempt to lift heavy cisterns and throw them about the battlefield to attack multiple opponents with Area Effect attacks. Trusting her defenses to carry her through, she will wade in once she is out of local ammunition, using other agents, villains, and heroes as weaponry. Any victims of her grab will be hurled into the Smelter. The Model begins the combat at the location numbered 4 on the map of the Ironworks.

Snow Tiger: Snow Tiger will pounce on the nearest target with low defenses and try to make short work of him. Once that target is down, she will move on to the next target. Like Hound, her combat skill levels will be in DCV.

VIPER TACTICS

Das Blitzkrieg: Das Blitzkrieg will fly into the battlefield from the North side of the battlefield on phase 6. Backed by two VIPER six-teams, Utility and Ogre, he will begin clearing a path to the gold, blasting aside anything in his way. He will attempt to clear multiple opponents with area effect attacks, disable metallic characters with electrical NNDs, and attack haplessly grounded targets hefting large metal containers over their heads like The Model. He intends to use Ogre and the Six-Teams to get to the gold while Utility runs interference.

Ogre: Ogre, not being very smart, simply leaps into combat and attacks anything that is not on his side. He will punch, destroy, and maul everything within arm's reach, and since he can jump a fair distance, this is a pretty good idea as far as he's concerned.

Utility: Utility will sneak carefully about the battlefield, isolating difficult targets of his choice and neutralizing them. He will endeavor to remain outside the arc of fire of the VIPER six-teams, and remain as unobtrusive as possible. Use Utility's gadget pool to achieve this effect. Utility may come into conflict with Lazer over the technology of heroes, and knowing how greedy he is, may attempt to neutralize him and loot Lazer should an opportunity present itself.

VIPER Six-Teams: The six-teams will lay down suppressive fire and target heroes and villains alike with coordinated neutralization and immobilization tactics. They will not target their own supervillains, unless Ogre should somehow go berserk and threaten either Utility or Das Blitzkrieg.

UNTIL or the Police can come to clean up the mess after the chaos dies down, or before that if the GM feels the PCs really need some help. Feel free to use this situation to establish local UNTIL contacts with the PCs, as recurring NPCs are always better.

MAP OF THE OLD IRONWORKS

Alberich has been forced, (ironically) due to the limited (yet still more advanced) equipment available, to rework sections of the Ironworks for his use. Only the most basic smelting techniques will work, so Alberich has rearranged much of the equipment here to set it up in a more primitive fashion conducive to the working of magic.

1) *The Path Up*: This is an ordinary dirt path, unpaved, that leads up the hill towards the ironworks. It is important to remember the elevations of the areas, as some areas will have intensive knockback potential, while others merely enforce the existence of the “Sudden Stop at the Bottom” rule.

2) *Foundry Entrance*: This is the original entrance to the foundry, although there are many open windows and shattered areas of rubble through which the PCs may also enter.

3) *Stream*: Like many old foundries and mills, this one is built on a streambed. The streambed provides a source of water for the ironworks, in order to cool the hot iron and produce a finished product (Or melt another.)

4) *Winch*: Usually, in the old days, this winch would be pulled by horses, or pushed in a circle by many men. The winch would move the heated iron over to the sluice. (Area 7) The iron would then travel to the smelter (Area 5) and the runoff would sink into area 6. However, now the heavy metal winch and chains turn of the Model’s super strength. The Model can easily lift the winch, which is DEF 11 BODY 8. It weighs close to eight tons.

5) *Smelter*: This large, heavy metal box supported on struts separates metals into their pure states, usually producing a large amount of pig iron runoff. However, in this case, there is no runoff. The large metal smelter is currently exceedingly hot to the touch, much hotter than it would need to be to melt normal gold. Anyone touching the smelter takes 3d6 of Killing damage. The Smelter has DEF 12, BODY 7.

6) *Runoff Pit*: This is a large hole in the ground with a large clot of pig iron in it. Alberich had to run some tests to make sure the equipment worked. The clot of pig iron is a large, heavy metal object with a DEF of 13 and a BODY of 10. Alberich melted a lot of iron. The clot of Pig Iron may be lifted and hurled with a STR of 50+. Just remember that what gets thrown away might come back...

7) *Heating Cisterns*: These cisterns are currently in use, suspended from the chain that is attached to the winch. If the winch is removed from the ground, then the cisterns are no longer attached

to the chain. Each cistern has 10 DEF and 12 BODY. These cisterns start the combat HOT, even hotter than the smelter. Anyone touching a cistern takes 4d6 of RKA.

8) *Molds*: These large, heavy molds are designed to produce steel ingots. Because they do not serve Alberich’s goals, the molds have simply been left here. Each mold is very heavy, and has a DEF of 10 and a BODY of 12. For the Model, they make excellent weapons, especially to bat people into the cisterns or the smelter with....

9) *Switch*: This switch tilts the cisterns to empty them into the sluice that leads to the smelter. The cisterns are very heavy and tough, but the switch is not. It is a DEF 4, BODY 2 object. Once destroyed, the cisterns remain above the ground, unable to dispense their superheated contents.

10) *Office*: This wrecked office contains nothing of value, even the furniture has crumbled into dust and wreckage. If Calendar Girl has mental abilities at this time of year, this might be an excellent place to hide.

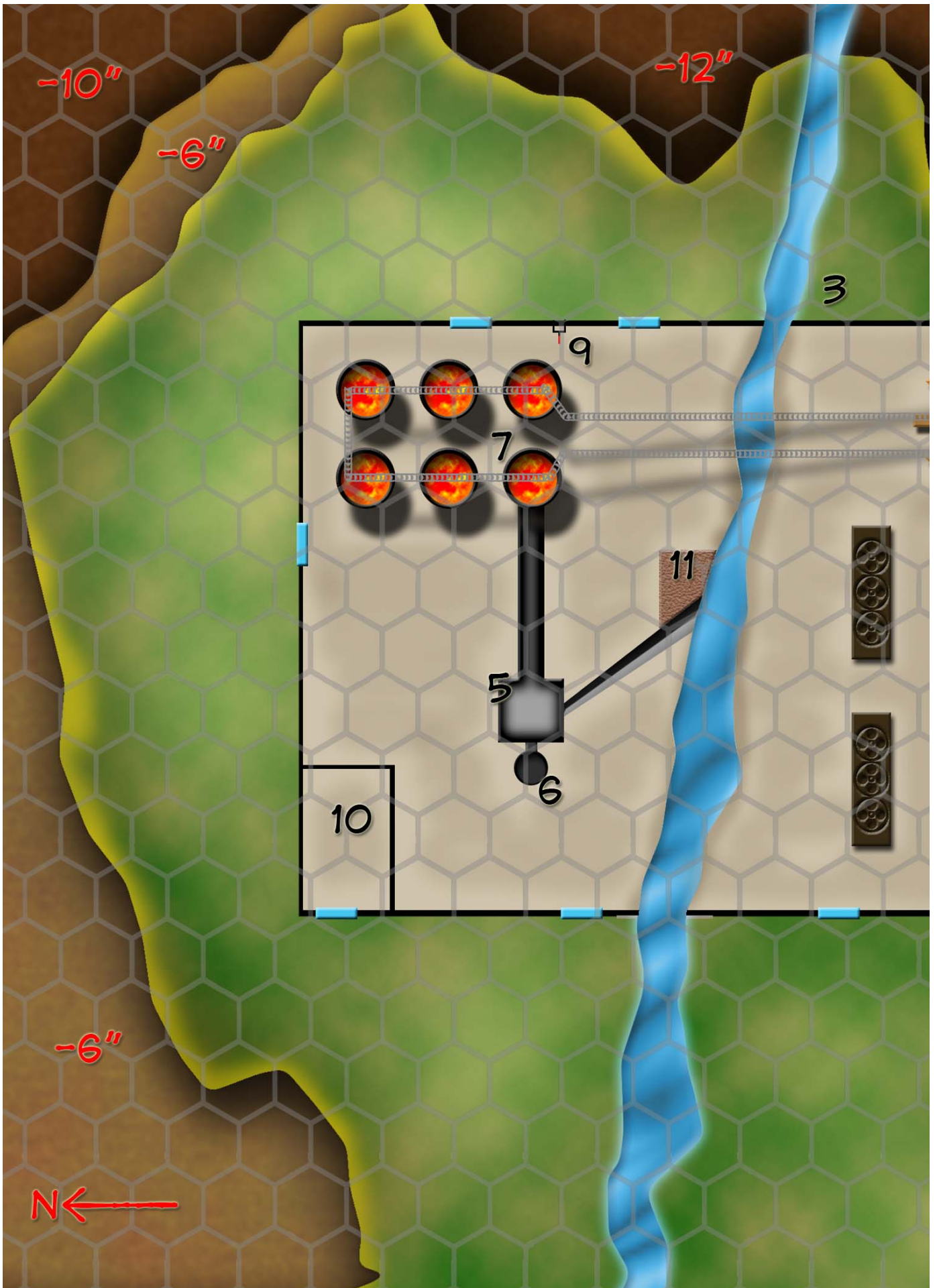
11) *Platform*: This high stone platform is the location of Alberich, who is located at the black dot on the map, beating the melted gold back into straw as it comes out of the runoff sluice. Alberich created this platform and merged it with the cobbles of the ancient foundry floor. The platform has 12 DEF and 20 BODY. Alberich will attempt to defend himself and shield the gold runoff from the depredations of angry heroes and villains alike, many of whom may be surprised to find that their desired wealth is going up in smoke...

EVER AFTER

From the ashes of the battle, the PCs have hopefully emerged victorious, recovered the gold, and prevented Alberich’s evil plan, perhaps with some dubious villainous assistance. Many villains will wind up in jail after this battle, along with the majority of the agents, VIPER Six-Teams, and Mafia thugs. Utility, Ogre, Lazer, and Anklyosaur all may have opportunities to get away, and if at a disadvantage, will likely do so. The PCs are heroes once again, and not a moment too soon...

If Alberich escaped, the heroes have gained an immortal magical enemy, one who will stop at nothing to bring about their destruction, and forge around them a mighty set of Chains of Doom. He may contact DEMON, or set up a shop forging powerful magical weapons for people who oppose the heroes...

If the girls escape, they return to their ordinary lives as a local group of cheerleaders, growing up and living their villainous lives, having fulfilled their end of the bargain. They





ALBERICH PLOT SEEDS

“Excuse Me, But Are You a Model?”: Alberich takes a liking to a beautiful woman in the fashion modeling industry, but the woman spurns Alberich’s advances and brings vengeance from the wicked dwarf. Can the PCs’ save the beautiful lady? And is she carrying on with the media circus just to attract attention from superheroes?

Jewelbox of the Damned: Alberich is crafting jewelry for beautiful women, as he did in days of old. What is his motive for doing this a second time? Has anyone been cursed by the wicked dwarf? Could this be a trigger for a new Ragnarok?

Live Action Swordplay: A live-action role playing game reports an unusual number of crippling injuries and several deaths. Weapons found at the site of the game were found to be real, although when inspected, they met all the safety standards. Is Alberich behind this plan? If not, who is?

Wands Before Butter: A local criminal organization gives up guns for strange new magical weaponry that bears the handiwork and smith’s mark of

continue to remain thrill-seeking supervillains who commit crimes for the fun of it, until Alberich comes for their firstborn children...

If Das Blitzkrieg escaped, the heroes have gained an implacable long-term nemesis, which will stop at nothing to seek revenge on the heroes who have taken his last nest egg and ruined many of his future plans...

The Orlande Family will have lost many of its soldiers, and be highly weakened, though Gianni Orlande will no doubt strive to be a thorn in the side of the PCs in the future...

In UNTIL Headquarters, a melted cistern of gold rests in Sublevel D, vault 3, section B, glittering in darkness, ominous, and silent....

Alberich

Background/History: Long ago, in the bowels of Nephilheim, there lived a dwarf named Alberich. Alberich was cunning, skilled in magic and jewelcraft, stunted, and horribly ugly. Alberich fell in love with the Rhinemaidens, the magical guardians of the headwaters of the Rhine, which flowed out of Asgard and into the world. To prove his love to them, he promised to craft a ring to honor their beauty, if only he could have some of the gold that the Rhinemaidens guarded. The Rhinemaidens agreed, and Alberich took the gold to craft the beautiful ring, in exchange for their love. Many years later, he returned, the beautiful ring shining in the light, and offered it to them. The Rhinemaidens took the ring, and mocked Alberich, calling him ugly, fat, and stunted. In response, Alberich pronounced a terrible curse upon the ring, a curse that would eventually lead to the deaths of many of the Norse Gods in the terrible conflict of Ragnarok.

But Alberich survived, making his way into the Rhine and sneaking through the forests of Germany and Europe. There was always work for a swordsmith, even a despicable, vile stunted one. For those women who were dissatisfied with their husbands, he would make deals with them in the time-honored tradition of Nephilheim. In exchange for their first-born child, he would make their lives much easier. Many accepted, and after a child disappeared, the couple would be happy and prosperous. Alberich would spirit the children back to Nephilheim, and put them to work in the mines, where they would grow up, grow broken, and die. He took pains to conceal his true name from those who he cheated and destroyed, that those who sought his death might not be able to return him to Nephilheim, where he would be forced to dwell for a hundred years before returning.

Eventually, the gate through the Rhine closed, and Alberich found himself trapped in the world, unable to go home, and unable to

acquire slaves for his mines. All he was able to do was practice his craft, and make his deals, in order to acquire power and the souls of little children, hoarding them until the day he could return. Then one day, he heard of the legend of a weaver who could spin straw into gold, and hoped that he had found someone else who had escaped the tragedy of Ragnarok. Instead, he found something else after he made the usual deal.

One of the Rhinemaidens had followed him, secretly for years, cursing the deaths of the people Alberich had caused and his mighty curse, and after many years of work and research, she had discovered Alberich’s true name. Alberich discovered the spinner, who was dismayed because the King had demanded that she spin straw into Gold, and Alberich arranged the usual deal, the child of her firstborn. The weaver married the King, and was with child, as the coffers filled with powerful magical gold. Alberich’s gold, charged with the magic of the Rhine. But the Rhinemaiden snuck into the Palace, disguised as the weaver’s godmother, and told her Alberich’s truename. When the dwarf came to claim the prize of the child, the weaver spoke the name “Rumpelstiltskin,” and Alberich stamped his foot in fury, as the black gate to Nephilheim opened up beneath his feet, and swallowed him in a yawning black portal.

That was a long time ago...

Many years passed, while Alberich languished in Nephilheim, swearing revenge upon the mortal spinner and swearing to reclaim his gold, while he crafted items for sinister elves in dark caverns. It would take an unwitting mortal to summon him from the black pits of the broken gulfs of the dark earth, and he had plenty of time, and plenty of work to do.

The call finally came, and he stepped through the portal as he heard the whispers, the calls, of the pretty young women who spoke to him, hearing their desperate needs as he followed their call, making their way to a large mansion on the outskirts of a large city.

They always needed something, but these girls wanted entertainment. They were the best kind of victims, because they didn’t understand the consequences of their actions. He was unsurprised when the little group of cheerleaders accepted the standard deal. They wanted to be superpowered humans, so that they could show off and make money behind the backs of their rich private school parents. What did they know of losing a baby? They were only children. All they had to do was exactly what he said. And they would, too, if they wanted to keep their powers...

Personality/Motivation: Alberich is thoroughly evil, manipulative, and cruel. He enjoys stealing

DIGITAL HERO #40

children and making them work in Nephilheim in the mines. He particularly enjoys siring those children himself, but that requires a great deal of persuasion, manipulation, and rune magic, as most people don't wish to have him as a mate. He wishes to cause suffering for humanity, acquire his gold, and gain as much power in the temporal world as possible before he is forced to return to Nephilheim. Alberich also hates to lose. If defeated by one hero, he will work to make things more difficult for that hero. The thing he enjoys most is destroying the lives of those who are considered beautiful and special. Nothing pleases Alberich more than scarring or humiliating a beautiful or handsome hero.

Quote: "I spit upon your souls, and consign them to the miserable curse of avarice that is your lot. My power is lodged in my craft and my craft is the destruction of all your mortal kind...one at a time..."

Powers/Tactics: Alberich likes to set up walls, slow people down with entangles and runewards, and eliminate weapons before they have a chance to hurt him. His incredible defenses and Variable Power Pool mean that with time, he can defeat any opponent with enough preparation, and Alberich is all about that preparation. His incredible Asgardian invulnerability and natural dwarf toughness make him nearly unkillable, and when opponents are sufficiently slowed down or wounded by his wards, runes, and bolts of Earth Magic, they must still face the mighty dwarf and his Runehammer in hand to hand combat. He is very slow, so he tries to force enemies to come to him, where he can bring his natural combat advantages into play. He can transmit himself through the earth to other points, but he tries not to let people know he has this power, as repeated attacks from range can cause him serious, if nonpermanent, harm. He hardly ever dodges, preferring to fight as a Dwarf should, strong, resolute, and impervious.

Campaign Use: Alberich is a classic rewrite of the character from Wagner's Ring Cycle, melded with some of the more disturbing elements of Grimm's Fairy Tales. Use these things to your advantage. When he's just a magical dwarf, he's nasty. When the PCs find out who he is and what he's done throughout history, they should be terrified on many levels.

Alberich is at best a second tier master villain, because once the PCs figure out his great weakness, the only way to defeat him permanently is to make sure he never returns from Nephilheim. (Difficult, but not impossible.) Another, equally valid way to use the character once the scenario is over is to use him as a villain who equips other villains with magical

gear in much the same way that VIPER equips villains with gadgets and superpowers.

In lower powered campaigns, lower his power pool to 60 points, reduce his damage reduction to 25 percent resistant, and subtract one overall level. Reduce his overall number of skills and knowledges, and make him less knowledgeable and cunning.

In higher-powered campaigns, raise his power pool to 100 points, decrease his PD, ED, and Damage Resistance to 15s, and give him a whopping $\frac{3}{4}$ Damage Reduction, Resistant. Raise his CON to 50, his STR to 40, and give him 100 STUN. Give him 2 additional Combat skill levels, and add additional special defenses to taste. If you wish to play the ring closer to the Wagnerian Version, place a terrible curse on the ring that drives those closest to the wearer to desire the ring above all other things unless that wearer is Alberich. Use Major Transform to achieve this effect.

Appearance: Alberich looks like a stunted, ugly, black haired dwarf, with a thick, braided beard of black studded with gems and jewels. He typically wears dull brown robes, covering thick stubby fingers and blocky, cubical muscles. He has a large, bulging reddish nose, grayish-skinned cheeks, and well-trimmed eyebrows. His fingers and arms are stocky, and he is wide and heavy, even for his race, including a wide, dwarf-sized pot belly. On his feet he wears thick metal boots, and he is often found wearing a heavy leather forgers apron, which he uses when making weapons and items of beauty. He is never without his massive runehammer, which he uses both for forging and as a weapon of terrible power that returns to his hand when thrown.

Alberich. Is there merely a mercenary purpose to this enterprise, or does the crafty dwarf have something more sinister in mind...?

Alberich



DIGITAL HERO #40

Alberich

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes |
|-----|------|------|------|----------------------------|
| 30 | STR | 20 | 15- | 1.6 tons; 6d6 HTH [3] |
| 20 | DEX | 30 | 13- | OCV: 7/DCV: 7 |
| 40 | CON | 60 | 17- | |
| 20 | BODY | 20 | 13- | |
| 18 | INT | 8 | 13- | PER Roll: 13- |
| 25 | EGO | 30 | 14- | ECV: 8 |
| 25 | PRE | 15 | 14- | PRE Attack: 5d6 |
| 6 | COM | -2 | | |
| 20 | PD | 14 | | Total: 20 PD (20 rPD) |
| 20 | ED | 12 | | Total: 20 ED (20 rED) |
| 6 | SPD | 30 | | Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 |
| 20 | REC | 12 | | |
| 80 | END | 0 | | |
| 70 | STUN | 15 | | |

Total Characteristic Cost: 264

| Movement: | Running: | 6"/12" |
|-----------|-----------|----------|
| | Leaping: | 6"/12" |
| | Swimming: | 2"/4" |
| | Teleport: | 20"/120" |

| Cost | Powers | END |
|------|--|-----|
| 135 | <i>Earth, Forging, and Rune Magic:</i> Variable Power Pool, 75-point Reserve, Zero Phase To Change (+1); Requires a Skill Roll (-1/2), Limited Group of Special Effects (-1/4) | |
| 20 | <i>Asgardian Body of Earth:</i> Damage Resistance (20 PD/20 ED) | 0 |
| 60 | <i>Asgardian Toughness:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50% | 0 |
| 10 | <i>Dwarvish Stability:</i> Knockback Resistance 10" | 0 |
| 10 | <i>Asgardian Resistance:</i> Power Defense (10 Points) | 0 |
| 5 | <i>Immortal Asgardian Body:</i> Life Support (Immortality) | 0 |
| 29 | <i>Earthsense:</i> Spatial Awareness, Targeting, 360°, Only versus Targets in Contact with the Ground (-1/2) | 0 |
| 56 | <i>Invisibility Ring:</i> Invisibility to Sight and Hearing Groups, No Fringe, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); IIF (-1/4) | 0 |
| | Perks | |
| 15 | Wealth | |
| | Talents | |
| 21 | Universal Translator | |

Skills

| | |
|----|---|
| 20 | +2 Overall |
| 8 | +1 with All Combat |
| 5 | +1 with Hand-to-Hand Combat |
| 5 | Analyze Runes and Runecrafting 13- |
| 3 | Bribery 14- |
| 3 | Bureaucratics 14- |
| 3 | Climbing 13- |
| 3 | Concealment 13- |
| 3 | Conversation 14- |
| 3 | Deduction 13- |
| 5 | Defense Maneuver II |
| 3 | Fast Draw 13- |
| 3 | Forgery 13- |
| 3 | Interrogation 14- |
| 17 | Inventor (Magic Items) 20- |
| 4 | Language: English (Dwarven is Native) |
| 4 | Language: Austrian |
| 4 | Language: Danish |
| 4 | Language: Elvish |
| 4 | Language: German |
| 4 | Language: Norwegian |
| 4 | Language: Swedish |
| 3 | Mechanics 13- |
| 3 | Navigation (Land, Underground) 13- |
| 3 | Persuasion 14- |
| 23 | Power: Magic Skill 23- |
| 3 | PS: Blacksmith 13- |
| 3 | PS: Engraver 13- |
| 3 | PS: Forge Operator 13- |
| 3 | PS: Jeweler 13- |
| 3 | PS: Miner 13- |
| 3 | Security Systems 13- |
| 3 | Shadowing 13- |
| 3 | Sleight of Hand 13- |
| 3 | Stealth 13- |
| 3 | Survival (Underground and Mountain) 13- |
| 7 | Trading 16- |
| 8 | Weaponsmith, Muscle Powered Melee Weapons 19- |
| 3 | Scholar |
| 3 | KS: Earth Magic 14- |
| 5 | KS: Forging Magic 14- |
| 2 | KS: Magic 13- |
| 2 | KS: Mystic Artifacts 13- |
| 2 | KS: The Occult 13- |
| 5 | KS: Rune Magic 15- |
| 2 | KS: Runecrafting 13- |
| 2 | KS: Runes 13- |

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 573

Total Cost: 837

200+ Disadvantages

- 15 Distinctive Features: Stumpy, Black Bearded, Ugly Dwarf, Concealable with Major Effort, Causes Prejudice (Ugly and Short)
- 10 Enraged, when Romantically Thwarted, 14-, Rec 8-
- 20 Hunted, by UNTIL, 8- (More Powerful, NCI)
- 15 Hunted, by PC Superhero Team, 8- (As Powerful)
- 15 Watched by Norse Gods, 14- (More Powerful, NCI)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Banished to Asgard if "Rumpelstiltskin" spoken by Victim
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Craves Beauty (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Promotes Cruelty and Selfishness (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Vengeful (Common, Strong)
- 10 Vulnerability: 1.5 x Effect from Flashes and other Unusual Light Attacks
- 492 Villain Bonus

Total Disadvantage Points: 837

SAMPLE EARTH, FORGING, AND RUNE MAGIC ABILITIES

(Add the Incantations and Gestures

Limitations to any powers you wish to increase the amount Alberich can do with his pool. Warning: He is very slow and easily stopped from spellcasting)

- (27) *Hammer of Earth*: +8d6 Hand to Hand Attack, OIF (-1/2) any metal or earthen object of opportunity 7
- (60) *Thrown Hammer of Earth*: 12d6 EB, Physical 6
- (40) *Earthen Fist*: 5 DEF, 3d6 Entangle, Takes No Damage from Attacks (+1/2), Indirect (+1/4) (Always from the ground at feet), Only vs. Targets on the Ground (-1/2), Not in Water (-1/4) 7
- (70) *Rune of Lava's Kiss*: 2 1/2 d6 RKA, Area Effect Hex (+1/2), Trigger (+1/4), When passed over by any party. * Warning: Excessive use of Rune style triggered booby traps can be crippling. 7
- (75) *Rune of Passage Defied*: 4d6 Suppress vs. All Movement Powers, Trigger (+1/4), When passed over by any party. 7
- (70) *Rune of Impassable Steel*: 5 DEF, 3d6 Entangle, Trigger (+1/4) When passed over by any party, Area Effect Hex (+1/2) 7
- (60) *Loam of the Mushrooms of the Mad*: 3d6 DEX Drain, Area Effect Hex (+1/2), Trigger (+1/4), When passed over by any party, Returns 5 cp/Minute. 6
- (67) *Searing Fires of the Forges of Nephilheim*: 3d6 AP RKA (+1/2) 7
- (38) *Earthgate*: 15" Teleport, x4 Mass, x 8 Distance, Incantations (-1/4), Gestures (-1/4) 5
- (37) *Wall of Earth*: 10 DEF, 5d6 Entangle, Only to Create a Barrier (-1), Requires Earth or Stone Present, (-1/2) 7
- (40) *Flesh to Stone*: 4d6 Major Transformation Attack, to Stone Statue, OIF Staff of Stone (-1/2) 6
- (50) *Movement of the Earth*: 50 STR Crude Telekinesis, Only vs. Earth-Based Creatures or Targets (-1/2) 7
- (20) *Rune of Unmaking*: 1d6 Penetrating (+1/2) RKA, Area Effect Radius (+1), 2x Area (+1/4), Only vs. Metal or Earth Based Objects (-1) 4
- (20) *Meld with Earth and Stone*: Desolidification, Only Through Earth or Metal (-1), Affected by Earth and Metal when Desolidified. 4

Das Blitzkrieg

Background/History: Carl Richter-Baumann was born in 1919, just after the end of the First World War, to Hans Baumann and Karla Richter. Shortly after his birth, Hans and Karla were married, and Carl grew up in a stoic German home. His family life was difficult, as sometimes it was difficult for Hans to find work, and the rising of Hitler made it difficult for many World War One Soldiers to survive. Carl's father contacted a few of his old friends, and managed to get Carl inducted into the Hitler Youth, which Carl hated. He wanted to be a real soldier like his father.

Carl did not prove to be very useful in the Hitler Youth. He lacked the ideological fervor of many of the others, but he was amazingly athletic for his age, and highly skilled for a child. When he was old enough to join the army, he eagerly enlisted, and they took him due to his physical prowess.

In the army, he also excelled, despite the fact that he was not true Hitler Youth material, and in 1936, when he was still young, the first of the American superbeings, The Cloak, appeared. Nazi Scientists were flabbergasted. They had to close the supergap, and they had very little time. By 1939, the list of failed experiments was very long. Dozens of volunteers had died, largely by electrocution and chemical poisoning.

Carl did not hear this about the project, and so he volunteered, like all the rest of them. He did not believe there was a master race, but he did believe in his country, and he wanted to be a soldier, like his father. If he could become a better soldier, he would lead his country to victory, and then he could go home, and show people his medals. He met Doctor Heinrich Rasmussen, a brilliant scientist who assured him that he would not die like all the others before. Carl knew he would be in over his head.

Carl's dream died screaming in a chemical bath. It burned and seared and wrenched, brilliant lightning coursing through his body, as his eyes flared and his body twitched in top physical condition. He shook and screamed and wilted and shuddered, and the whole metal box in which his body was contained exploded outward in a monstrous wrench of metal and liquids. Then everything turned white and he thought for a brief moment that he was going to die.

He had been unconscious for three months. When he opened his eyes, the nurses smiled at him and asked him if he wanted anything to eat. He reached for a fork, and there was a terrible crackle, as it blasted across the room in a burst of lightning. Heinrich Rasmussen stared from the doorway. Carl had powers. The experiments, at last, were a success.

Carl swiftly became the hero of the German people, gaining the name "Das Blitzkrieg" (The Lightning War). He posed with Hitler, he posed with Goebbels, he was the darling of the Military. No one knew his true identity, for the Germans feared that someone might try to assassinate him before he could enter military action. In 1940, he engaged in police actions against Allied spies while the scientists tested his capabilities, and battled French Resistance fighters. In 1941, he fought the English Superhero Lionheart high in the air as the planes dueled at the Battle of Britain. In 1942 he fought American Superheroes in Africa, and in 1943 in Italy. Sometimes he won, and sometimes he lost, but he was always Nazi Germany's hero. As the bombs began coming down in Dresden, he realized that his country might no longer be around, and began making preparations for his escape. He couldn't be a soldier anymore.

Arranging for the theft of gold reformed by the Nazis, he stole it and fled to America, hiding under an assumed name, until he could deposit the gold in a safe deposit box in the campaign city. Then he began traveling the world, retaining his identity without working for the Nazis. Over the course of time, he became one of the world's most notorious supervillains, working for money and accumulating personal power. Then, sometime in the early 1960's, he realized that he wasn't aging as fast as other people, and quietly disappeared into the woodwork, moving to South Africa, where people who had money had few questions asked of them. Neo Nazis keep trying to find him, and make contact with him so that he will aid their organization, but he has no interest in rejoining them.

Slowly, he made his way into the organization known as VIPER, and secretly assumed a great deal of quiet power within the organization. He had worked for cultists and agencies before, and he would work for them again, training their agents to fight superheroes, manipulating their middlemen and higher-ups, and disappearing into the woodwork when necessary. He battled modern superheroes throughout the eighties and nineties, keeping VIPER secretly on both an even keel and a subtle leash in order to maintain the butter of his bread without making waves. And if he ever needed anything, all he had to do was contact a Swiss Bank Account or withdraw some gold from that secret bank in America. He never needed to do so until it was stolen....

Personality/Motivation: Despite the massive amount of social power and secret manipulation Das Blitzkrieg has performed over the years, he is not a particularly powerful villain. Therefore, whereas in the old days, he would simply trash small groups of superheroes, he has learned that

DAS BLITZKRIEG PLOT SEEDS

Lightning Love: Das Blitzkrieg has fallen in love with a PC. He sends her flowers and commits international crimes, all in her name. He writes poetry, which is pretty good, and threatens her current love interest with a terrible demise. Is this all sincere or part of some sinister plan?

Heil Who?: Das Blitzkrieg has discovered a group of Neo-Nazis who are up to no good. Unfortunately, due to the fact that he is personally related to their leader, he cannot do anything else. Could the heroes please step in and protect his code of honor? Wars are not meant to be fought like this.

Shock to the System: Das Blitzkrieg shuts down power in the PCs' city in order to steal all that electricity for himself. What is he planning to do with it, and what if he can't contain all that energy...?

the modern versions are more cunning and not nearly as gullible. His motive is simply to survive in a world that may have outlived him, a fact that troubles him. As the first Nazi Superman, he may have been unequalled in his day, but he will usually try to negotiate rather than simply beat newer heroes down. He is a ruthless and dangerous opponent who is given both to trickery and to surprise attacks. Having fought with military units, he is eminently familiar with both common and uncommon military strategies. Use them. He who fights and runs away lives to fight another day. It is very important to remember that he is not a Nazi, even though he has a reputation for being one, and that his life might be very different if not for the circumstances of his birth. However, he has no regrets, for each man has only one life to live.

Quote: “Perhaps you should put down your weapons and put up your hands, Ja? It would be a pity if I had to kill you over such an unfortunate incident.”

Powers/Tactics: Das Blitzkrieg tries to soften up opponents from range first, only closing after he has weakened them with area effect attacks and flashes. He is always strategically effective, seeking cover and not remaining out in the open for people to shoot. He tries to create situations where his opponents are in water and he is not, in order to cause maximum damage to the largest number of opponents.

When fighting alongside other villains, he prefers to remain close to the rear, using his high dexterity and combat skill to provide support fire and letting others deal the bulk of the damage. When it becomes necessary to engage in close combat, however, he lets out who he used to be, Das Blitzkrieg, the perfect unstoppable German Soldier, a veteran of more battles than most superheroes will ever fight. Into those battles steps a man crackling with lightning in a skintight costume, wrapped in confidence and schooled in violence.

Campaign Use: Das Blitzkrieg can be used either as is or with many modifications. Prorating his power level to be equivalent to his lifetime creates a nasty second tier master villain, while giving him the Age Disadvantage and lowering his power level makes him a comic relief villain with a lot of contacts.

In a World War II campaign, Das Blitzkrieg is the first Nazi Supervillain, and therefore the mightiest of the lot. Adjust his power level to be two dice above that of the most powerful hero, and leave his defenses where they are. Lower his DEX to 26, and remove many of his combat skill levels, and remove several of the more esoteric slots from his Multipower. Remove his Mental

and Power Defense, and lower his Flash Defense to 8 points.

In a lower powered campaign, use the adjustments for the World War II campaign, lessen his skills total, and lower his CON to 28 and his SPD to 5.

In a high powered campaign, raise his Multipower to 100 points and his defenses to 20/20. Raise the hardened force field to 20/20 and give him 120 END to run his elemental control and Multipower. Increase his Flight to 25”, and add ten points of Mental Defense, six points of Flash Defense, and 5 points of Power Defense.

Appearance: Das Blitzkrieg is a well groomed human male who stands six feet one inch tall. He still wears his hair in a close cropped military style, and has a sharp, angular Aryan jaw, a firm military muscular build, and powerful hands. He can still easily be imagined in the classical German military uniform.

When he is in supervillain ID, and wearing his costume, his face is covered with a three-quarters blue mask. The suit is largely blue and white in color, due to the amount of time he spent in aerial combat during the Second World War. Jagged lightning bolts travel down both arms and both legs, into blue boots and gloves. The main torso and legs of the costume are white, with a blue belt. He has never removed the unit designation from the left side of his chest.

In civilian ID, he wears classic pinstripe and solid suits, with white or checkered shirts and subtle small patterned ties. Everything is custom made.

Das Blitzkrieg



Das Blitzkrieg

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes |
|-----|------|------|------|----------------------------|
| 30 | STR | 20 | 15- | 1.6 tons; 6d6 HTH [3] |
| 30 | DEX | 60 | 15- | OCV: 10/DCV: 10 |
| 33 | CON | 46 | 16- | |
| 15 | BODY | 10 | 12- | |
| 18 | INT | 8 | 13- | PER Roll: 13- |
| 20 | EGO | 20 | 13- | ECV: 7 |
| 25 | PRE | 15 | 14- | PRE Attack: 5d6 |
| 18 | COM | 4 | 13- | |
| 15 | PD | 9 | | Total: 25 PD (25 rPD) |
| 15 | ED | 9 | | Total: 25 ED (25 rED) |
| 6 | SPD | 20 | | Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 |
| 15 | REC | 4 | | |
| 66 | END | 0 | | |
| 50 | STUN | 2 | | |

Total Characteristic Cost: 227

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
 Leaping: 6"/12"
 Swimming: 2"/4"
 Flight: 15"/320"
 Teleport: 15"/30" Megascale

| Cost | Powers | END |
|------|--|-----|
| 75 | <i>Electricity Powers:</i> Multipower, 75-point Reserve | - |
| 7u | 1) <i>Electrical Blast:</i> EB 12d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼) | 3 |
| 6u | 2) <i>Electrical Heartshock:</i> RKA 4d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼), No Knockback (-¼) | 3 |
| 7u | 3) <i>Electric Field:</i> Entangle (8 DEF, 4d6 BODY), Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼) | 3 |
| 7u | 4) <i>Spark Burst:</i> Sight Group Flash 6d6, Area Effect (7" Radius, +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½) | 0 |
| 7u | 5) <i>Grounding Burst:</i> EB 4d6, NND (Electrical Powers or Force Field, +1), Area Of Effect (7" Radius, +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½) | 0 |
| 7u | 6) <i>Waves of Lightning:</i> RKA 2d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Autofire (5 Shots, +½), Reduced Endurance (½ END, +½) | 3@ |
| 7u | 7) <i>Electrostatic Field Burst:</i> EB 7d6, Affects Desolidified (+½), Armor Piercing (+½) | 7 |
| 7u | 8) <i>Neurosynaptic Reaction Burst:</i> Drain DEX and EGO 3d6, Area Of Effect (7" Radius, +1), Ranged (+½) | 7 |
| 17 | <i>Electrical Field Manipulation:</i> Elemental Control, 34-point Powers | - |
| 18 | 1) <i>Electric Shield:</i> Force Field (10 PD/10 ED), Hardened (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½) | 0 |

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 58 | 2) <i>Electrostatic Repulsor Field:</i> Flight 15", 16x Noncombat Multiplier, Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼) | 2 |
| 31 | 3) <i>Electrostatic Transport:</i> Teleport 15", 3 Floating Locations, Megascale (1" = 10 km, +½), Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼); Only from one Electrical Source to Another (-1) | 2 |
| 15 | <i>Electrostatic Toughness:</i> Damage Resistance (15 PD/15 ED) | 0 |
| 10 | <i>Genetic Resilience:</i> Power Defense (10 points) | 0 |
| 6 | <i>Electrostatic Interference:</i> Mental Defense (10 points Total) | 0 |
| 12 | <i>Electrostatic Optical Shield:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (12 points) | 0 |
| 3 | <i>Genetically Enhanced Survival:</i> Longevity (400 year Lifespan) | 0 |

Perks

8 Contact: Neo-Nazi Underground 14-
 10 Money: Wealthy

Talents

9 Ambidexterity (Full)
 4 Environmental Movement: Electricity-Rich Environments

Skills

20 +2 Overall Levels
 5 +1 with Ranged Combat
 4 +2 with Autofire Attack
 5 Defense Maneuver II
 5 Skipover Sprayfire
 3 Acrobatics 15-
 3 Acting 14-
 3 Breakfall 15-
 3 Bribery 14-
 3 Bureaucratics 14-
 3 Concealment 13-
 3 Conversation 14-
 3 Cryptography 13-
 3 Demolitions 13-
 3 Disguise 13-
 7 Electronics 15-
 3 Gambling (Card and Dice Games) 14-
 3 High Society 14-
 3 Interrogation 14-
 3 KS: History of Germany (1500-Present) 13-
 3 KS: Military History 13-
 3 KS: Military Strategies of Great Leaders 13-
 3 KS: Superheroes of the World 13-
 3 KS: Third Reich Military Protocol 13-
 3 KS: Chess 13-
 3 Mechanics 13-
 3 Oratory 14-
 3 Paramedics 14-
 3 Persuasion 14-
 3 Riding 15-
 3 Security Systems 13-

DIGITAL HERO #40

- 3 Shadowing 13-
- 3 Stealth 15-
- 3 Streetwise 14-
- 6 Survival (Arctic, Desert, Mountain, Temperate, Tropical) 13-
- 3 Systems Operation 13-
- 3 Tactics 13-
- 3 Teamwork 15-

- 3 Linguist
- 3 Language: English (Fluent, German is Native)
- 3 Language: Afrikaans (Fluent)
- 2 Language: Dutch (Fluent)
- 2 Language: French (Fluent)
- 2 Language: Portuguese (Fluent)
- 3 Language: Spanish (Fluent)
- 4 Language: Swahili (Native)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 483

Total Cost: 710

200+ Disadvantages

- 10 Enraged: Plans are Thwarted (Go 11-, Recover 11-, Uncommon)
- 20 Hunted: UNTIL 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
- 20 Hunted: Israeli Government 14- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture, Kill)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Overconfident (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Soldier's Code of Honor [Captures Other Officers, Treats Prisoners Well to the Best of his Ability, Won't Leave Troops Behind Unless It's Unavoidable] (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Vengeful (Uncommon, Strong)
- 15 Reputation: Nazi (Extreme, 11-)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Carl Richter-Baumann)
- 10 Unluck: 2d6
- 20 Vulnerability: 1½x STUN and BODY from Water Attacks
- 360 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 710

CALENDAR GIRL PLOT SEEDS

Just a Girl on the Run!: Gianni Orlante has discovered what his daughter has been doing in her spare time, and has put a contract out on her. Can the PCs stop the Orlante Family and save Calendar Girl from sleeping with the fishes?

In Between Days: Someone has kidnapped Calendar Girl, and the characters find out that every day is now February 30th. How did this happen? And who is responsible?

A Taste for Stealing and Romance: Calendar Girl falls in love with one of the PCs, and decides to play a little game with the PC over the course of a year that culminates on Valentine's Day. Calendar Girl hopes that the PC will throw arms around her and kiss her madly, but unfortunately, that likely won't happen when you rob banks, send the hero stolen gifts, and play horrible pranks on the hero's other girlfriends.

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God: Someone has taken control of Calendar Girl's powers and used them to produce more sinister abilities. Can the heroes save the city from ancient

Calendar Girl

Background/History: Catherine Orlante was born to Gianni Orlante and his wife seventeen years ago, a privileged young girl in a house of the rich. The only difference was that since Gianni Orlante was a crime boss, Catherine was treated to the life of a Mafia princess rather than that of other girls. She grew up wanting for nothing, and was generally spoiled, though she wasted a lot of her parents' money on frivolous things and made her father shout a lot. He always took care of his little princess, and Catherine was happy to be a princess.

Catherine struggled to make the cheerleading squad at St. Swithins, as most other girls did in High School, though her passage was somewhat secretly eased by the fact that she was the most popular girl in the catholic school and her father was donating lots of money in a not so anonymous fashion. It was there that she met her closest friends, Debbie, Megan, and Regina, and they slowly formed an inseparable and somewhat socially ruthless clique that approved of who would and would not get to join the cheerleading squad that year.

Catherine never worried about the fact that when she was with her girlfriends, she didn't have time to worry about boys. Boys were temporary, but lifelong friends were forever, and as long as the squad was together, she was very happy. When they chose her to be squad captain, she was exceptionally happy. She didn't have to worry about the things her father did, after all the things she read about him in the newspapers and the things other students said about her behind her back. They had a weekly sleepover, which was always at Daddy's mansion because her father was afraid something might happen to her if she went out.

At one of those sleepovers, Megan brought a Ouija board, and smuggled in two bottles of whiskey. The girls got very drunk, and began playing with the board while Catherine dug out a book of fairy tales. As they continued playing around, a hairy, dirty dwarf, looking unkempt, carrying a hammer hot with the fires of the forge stepped into the room. When he asked them what they wanted, Megan said she wanted superpowers. Catherine thought it was a marvelous idea, Regina yawned woozily and stretched, and Debbie hiccupped.

After two months of runecasting, the girls were magically gifted with their new abilities. Catherine was ecstatic. She could do almost anything, as long as it was the right time of the month. Megan was a catgirl. Regina was a dog woman. But it figured. She was always a hound. Debbie was as beautiful as she always wanted to be. A model. Catherine gave them names, and in the half-drunk stupor, the names stuck. All they

had to do now was get the dwarf his gold back, and then their lives would be fun and games forever.

It was just as much fun when the hangover wore off...

Personality/Motivation: Calendar Girl wants to have as much fun as possible and take all her friends with her for the ride. She has the personality of the typical high school center of attention, and she wants to be the center of attention all the time. She sometimes has to compete with Debbie, but as far as she is concerned, Debbie is much tougher, so she'll get shot more.

Calendar Girl wants to commit flashy crimes for the fun of it, live life fast and have all the splendid things that her father denies her, which in reality is very little, but she doesn't see things that way. After all, she can see the future and the past, how complicated could it be? Killing people isn't part of the game. You can't have fun with dead people. Life's a party.

As much as the girls have a "Leader," Calendar Girl is their team captain and their leader. She reins in Snow Tiger's more vicious moments, Debbie's new vanity, and Hound's vicious defense of all of them. As long as Calendar Girl is in charge, she keeps the other girls from getting out of hand.

Quote: "Well, now. Isn't this fun? All wrapped up and no place to go. Mmm...tasty... (Giggle)"
"Silly hero. Do you know what today is?"

Powers/Tactics: Calendar Girl's tactics are dictated by location, range, and the time of year. She is a very difficult character to run, so get the calendars from several different countries before you start. She is not limited solely to the Gregorian 365 day a year Calendar; she can use any calendar to gain powers or ceremonial abilities. While that isn't widely known, it won't be long before she figures out the Mayan, Aztec, Chinese, and Ottoman Calendars. This will likely make her one of the most powerful people on the face of the planet with some experience under her belt. Be careful with this villain.

Calendar Girl likes to stay at range and teleport around the battlefield where her powers are most useful, hiding behind the three-pronged physical attack of Hound, Snow Tiger, and the Model. They are all her best friends, and count on her to support them in battle, that's what being part of a cheerleading squad is all about.

Campaign Use: In a lower powered campaign, reduce Calendar Girl's power pool to 50 active points and lower most of the powers appropriately. Remove her immortality and lower her defenses to 15 PD and 18 ED respectively.

DIGITAL HERO #40

In a higher powered campaign, the sky's the limit with Calendar Girl. Give her a whopping 105 point Variable Power Pool and remove the seasonal limitations on her powers. Give her 2 combat and 2 overall skill levels, and boost the EC enough to give her a formidable 30 PD and 30 ED in fully resistant defenses. Add special temporal senses to make her exceptionally aware.

Calendar Girl is intended to be used as a semi-lighthearted character that is in way over her head. She's witty, teasing, coy, and brash, usually all at once. Play with the heroes and make fun of them, until one of her friends gets hurt.

Playing Calendar Girl darker is not recommended. If you do choose this option, it is likely that many PCs and DNPCs will die as her murderous calendar themed crimes escalate out of control in a never-ending spiral. While it is possible during certain seasons of the year to bring horrid plagues upon the world, rains of frogs and other such disasters, they really aren't in keeping with the tone of the character.

Appearance: Catherine has long blonde hair falling down to just below her shoulders, a perfect heart shaped face, and crystal clear blue eyes. Her figure is full and luscious, with just the right amount of what used to be called "Va-voom!" She stands about five feet six inches tall, and is perpetually smiling, grinning, or otherwise being cheerful.

As Calendar Girl, she wears a variety of revealing thematic costumes based on the existing month or closest holiday. Hardly bashful, the costumes are designed to show the maximum amount of skin and no shame without being freezing cold. She wears a chain belt made of cold wrought iron.

plagues, rains of frogs, and horrible blights? Who is responsible for this?



DIGITAL HERO #40

Calendar Girl

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes |
|-----|------|------|------|--------------------------|
| 15 | STR | 5 | 12- | Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1] |
| 23 | DEX | 39 | 14- | OCV: 8/DCV: 8 |
| 23 | CON | 26 | 14- | |
| 10 | BODY | 0 | 11- | |
| 18 | INT | 8 | 13- | PER Roll: 13- |
| 23 | EGO | 26 | 14- | ECV: 8 |
| 20 | PRE | 10 | 13- | PRE Attack: 4d6 |
| 24 | COM | 7 | 14- | |
| 3 | PD | 0 | | Total: 18 PD (15 rPD) |
| 5 | ED | 0 | | Total: 20 ED (15 rED) |
| 5 | SPD | 17 | | Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12 |
| 10 | REC | 4 | | |
| 50 | END | 2 | | |
| 35 | STUN | 5 | | |

Total Characteristic Cost: 149

| Movement: | Running: | 6"/12" |
|-----------|-----------|---------|
| | Leaping: | 3"/6" |
| | Swimming: | 2"/4" |
| | Teleport: | 15"/60" |

| Cost | Powers | END |
|----------------|--|------|
| 120 | <i>Calendar Magic:</i> Variable Power Pool, 60-point Reserve, No Skill Roll Required (+1), Zero Phase to Change (+1), Powers Available are Limited by Monthly Theme (Holidays Included) (-1/2) | var. |
| 22 | <i>Eternal Calendar Powers:</i> Elemental Control, 45-point Powers | 0 |
| 28 | <i>Calendar Movement:</i> Teleport 15", 4x Mass, 4x Distance | 5 |
| 23 | <i>Calendar's Shield:</i> Force Field (15 PD/15 ED), Reduced Endurance (1/2 END, +1/4), Hardened (+1/4) | 2 |
| 10 | <i>Shield of Years:</i> Power Defense (10 points) | 0 |
| 10 | <i>Gazing at Time:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points) | 0 |
| 5 | <i>Shield of Years:</i> Life Support: Immortality | 0 |
| Talents | | |
| 3 | Absolute Time Sense | |
| 22 | Danger Sense 14- (Sense, Out of Combat) | |

Skills

| | |
|----|---------------------------------|
| 10 | +1 Overall Level |
| 3 | Acrobatics 14- |
| 3 | Acting 13- |
| 3 | Breakfall 14- |
| 3 | Bureaucratics 13- |
| 3 | Conversation 13- |
| 3 | High Society 13- |
| 5 | KS: Calendars of the World 15- |
| 3 | Oratory 13- |
| 3 | Persuasion 13- |
| 3 | Calendar Tricks (INT-Based) 13- |
| 3 | PS: Cheerleader 13- |
| 3 | Sleight of Hand 14- |
| 3 | Streetwise 13- |
| 3 | Teamwork 14- |

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 297

Total Cost: 446

200+ Disadvantages

| | |
|-----|---|
| 5 | Distinctive Features: Outrageous Costumes Based on Holidays and Months (Easily Concealable) |
| 15 | Hunted: The Mafia 8- (As Pow, Kill) |
| 15 | Hunted: Superhero Team 8- (More Pow, Capture) |
| 20 | Hunted: UNTIL 8- (More Pow, Capture) |
| 15 | Psychological Limitation: Showoff (Common, Strong) |
| 15 | Psychological Limitation: Code versus Killing (Common, Strong) |
| 10 | Psychological Limitation: Fear of Discovery by the Mafia (Uncommon, Strong) |
| 15 | Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Catherine Orlante) |
| 20 | Vulnerability: 2x STUN and BODY from Temporal Attacks (Uncommon) |
| 10 | Vulnerability: 2x Effect from Temporal Attacks that Deal Neither STUN Nor BODY (Uncommon) |
| 106 | Experience Points |

Total Disadvantage Points: 446

SAMPLE CALENDAR MAGIC ABILITIES

- (20) *Happy New Year!:* Major Transformation 4d6 [Adult Human to Baby]; Only on New Years' Day (-2) 6
- (40) *It Snows Hard:* Entangle 3d6 BODY, 3 DEF, Area Of Effect (6" Radius, +1); Only During the Wintertime (-½) 6
- (30) *Running on Ice:* Running +15", Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Only During the Wintertime (-½) 0
- (24) *Be My Valentine:* Mind Control 12d6; Only to Make People Love Each Other (-½), Only in February (-1) 6
- (25) *Happy Groundhog Day!:* Tunneling 10" (Through 10 DEF); Only in February (-1) 5
- (15) *March Goes In Like a Lion!:* HKA 2d6 (3d6 with STR); Only in March (-1) 3
- (30) *But Out Like a Lamb!:* Drain EGO 3d6, Ranged (+½), Delayed Return (5 per 5 Minutes, +½); Only in March (-1) 6
- (30) *Beware the Ides of March! [Wave of Knives]:* RKA 2d6, Autofire (5 Shots, +½), Reduced Endurance (½ END, +½); Only in March (-1) 15
- (25) *Luck of the Irish:* Missile Deflection (All Attacks), Reflection at Any Target; Only in March (-1) 0
- (15) *April Fool! (Pie in the Face):* Flash Sight Group 3d6, NND (No Eyes, Shapeshifting, Treated Helmet, Lots of Water, +1); Only in April (-1)
*Replace this power with any other prank the GM finds appropriate 3
- (40) *April Showers!:* EB 12d6; Only in the Spring (-½) 6
- (40) *Bring May Flowers!:* Entangle 6d6 BODY, 6 DEF; Only against People Hit by "April Showers" (-½) 6
- (30) *Happy Mother's Day!:* Major Transformation 4d6 [Woman to Pregnant Woman or Man to Pregnant Man]; Only in May (-1)¹ 6
- (30) *June Bugs [Swarm of Insects]:* EB 6d6, NND (Self-Contained Breathing, Immunity to Poisons, or Insect Powers, +1); Only in June (-1) 6
- (30) *Happy Father's Day!:* Entangle 6d6 BODY, 6 DEF (Giant Print Tie, or any other useless gift if character is already wearing one); Only in June (-1)² 6
- (25) *Born on the Fourth of July! [Fireworks]:* EB 5d6, Autofire (+½), Penetrating (+½); Only in July (-1) 4
- (40) *Dog Days of Summer:* Drain CON 2d6, Area Of Effect (6" Radius, +1), Ranged

- (+½), Delayed Return (5 per 5 Minutes, +½); Only in the Summer (-½) 6
- (30) *Guns of August:* RKA 4d6; Only in August (-1) 6
- (30) *It's Labor Day!:* Drain END 3d6, Ranged (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Only in September (-1) 0
- (20) *Rosh Hashonah!:* See Happy New Year! 6
- (20) *Yom Kippur:* Drain STR 4d6, Ranged (+½); Only on Yom Kippur (-2) 6
- (30) *Columbus Day!:* Ego Attack 6d6 (Discover All of America at Once); Only in October (-1) 6
- (27) *Happy Halloween!:* Mind Control 12d6 [Say "Boo!"]; One Command only (Stand Still in Stark Terror, -½), Only in October (-1) 6
- (30) *Election Day! [Red Tape]:* Entangle 8d6 BODY, 4 DEF; Only in November (-1) 6
- (30) *Happy Thanksgiving, You Ate Too Much!:* Drain STUN 4d6, Ranged (+½); Only in November (-1) 6
- (40) *Merry Christmas to All!:* Sight Group Flash 6d6, Area Of Effect (6" Radius, +1); Only During the Holiday Season (-½) 6
- (30) *A Christmas Gift for You!:* Entangle 6d6 BODY, 6 DEF (Character is Gift Wrapped Appropriately!); Only During the Holiday Season (-½) 6

NON-AMERICAN HOLIDAY EXAMPLE

- (30) *Remember, Remember the Fifth of November!:* RKA 2d6, Autofire (5 Shots, +½), Explosion (+½); Only in November (-1) 30

NON-DATE SPECIFIC EXAMPLE

- (40) *Every Day of the Year:* Clairsentience to Sight and Sound Groups, Postcognition; Up to One Year in the Past Only (-¼) 5
- (40) *Every Day of the Year:* Clairsentience to Sight and Sound Groups, Precognition; Up to One Year in the Future Only (-¼) 5
- (50) *Picture Perfect:* Images, to Sight Group, -5 to PER Rolls, 16" Radius (+1) 5

¹ Don't think about how this works, it will hurt your brain...
² Yeah, it works on women, too

Gianni Orlande

Background/History: Gianni Orlande is the son of Thomas Orlande, a famous mobster in the local underworld. He grew up all his life in a mafia home, going to Catholic School, and dating his sweetheart Marlene. Gianni was always ambitious, and craved a return to the old days when the Mafia ruled the city from behind the scenes, and they did not have to share power with dozens of other ethnic criminal organizations. Even as a child he knew that when his father died, he would be controlling the family business, and strove to emulate his father in all things.

As Gianni grew older, he watched the other crimelords in the city hack away at the once invulnerable Orlande territory, and knew he would have to settle for less while trying to wrest control of it from the other players in the criminal game. In the late 1970's, Gianni married Marlene, and had the first of many children a few years later. Of these, his daughter Catherine, the youngest, was his favorite. His two sons, some years older, grew up with all of his knowledge of the tough streets of the campaign city.

When Thomas was gunned down in a turf war some years later, Gianni took over his father's organization. His sons became his capos, and he groomed them for positions in addition to the ones that were already there. He made sure they would not fall victim to the spoiled brat lifestyle of many other children involved in La Cosa Nostra. Catherine, however, was his favorite. She was a little golden angel of light. Whatever she asked for, she would receive, and he made sure that his daughter wanted for nothing. His wife Marlene was his pride and joy, for she stayed pretty while he ballooned on pasta and bread. He made sure his family was always taken care of, and even the other crime bosses in the city, particularly the Asians, respected him for it. He made sure of it. He even sent their families birthday presents and made it clear that any targeting of people's families in "his town" would be met with his wrath. He wanted things done the old way.

When the Russian mafia tried to move in, Gianni made sure superheroes found out about it and took them out before they could get a foothold. When one of his soldiers injured a rival crime boss's wife in a case of mistaken identity, he made sure the incident was squared away, made reparations to the Dai-Lo, and presented him with the man's hand in a plastic bag. He preferred things to be done the old way: with respect. The other crime lords preferred Gianni Orlande to be there. He was an important man, a rich man, a dangerous man.

When the bank manager called and said that his father's safety deposit box had been broken into, he had to make sure that his people were respected. He had to make sure his father was respected. He preferred things to be done the old way...

Personality/Motivation: Gianni Orlande is a classic old-school mafia boss who retains his power in a new-school world by being just ruthless enough to remain surprising. He always prefers the old, more classical ways of doing things. Simply shooting someone in the back of the head isn't as much of a reputation calling card as putting someone in cement shoes or leaving a horse head in someone's bed. He tries not to do these things often, after all, he doesn't want anything to be linked to him, and his sloppier thugs are often put out to pasture in distant states like Arizona or Utah, where there are miles of terrain and no witnesses.

Gianni has no idea that his daughter is Calendar Girl. If he did find out, it would break his heart, and he would have to put a contract out on her.

Quote: "What can I say? Deep down in my heart, I'm an old fashioned guy."

"What in the name of the Holy Father did you do, Andy?"

Powers/Tactics: Gianni Orlande has no powers except a bulletproof vest and a good old-fashioned firearm. It was all his father needed, and it's all he needs. If it comes to life or death, he shoots his enemies with the special depleted uranium rounds he got from some of his government contacts.

Gianni Orlande's real power is his control over the criminal element, corrupt judges, and large contributions to the campaigns of wealthy government officials in your campaign city. He should never get into combat unless he's fighting a vigilante hero with a king size mad on. When Gianni Orlande wants someone hurt, he hires somebody. When Gianni Orlande wants someone killed, he has the man killed. When Gianni Orlande encounters super powered trouble, he hires super powered trouble of his own.

Campaign Use: Gianni Orlande is meant to be a behind the scenes foe for superhero campaign use. He is designed on the Competent Normal Level for a superhero game. In a lower powered game, remove the depleted uranium shells from his gun. In a higher- powered game, give him financial access to whatever he needs in terms of weapons, equipment, and thugs in order to challenge the heroes.

Gianni Orlande is the best of the worst, whether in a Dark Champions game or a normal

GIANNI ORLANTE PLOT SEEDS

The Devil You

Know: A new mob boss has come to town, and he's much more ruthless than Gianni Orlande. In fact, he's so ruthless that he's come to town to kill him. Can the PCs save Gianni Orlande's life? What will happen if they fail? What will happen if they succeed?

Invasion from

Within: An all out war is launched within the Orlande family for control by one of his own sons! Can the PCs prevent the damage before innocent people get hurt? What will Gianni Orlande do if he catches up with his own flesh and blood?

Sins of the Father:

Gianni Orlande discovers that one of the priests in a local church has been up to no good, and may, in fact, be a DEMON agent. His good catholic side prevents him from doing anything himself, as the good Father is still good until proven otherwise. Could the PCs please prove wrongdoing and get rid of the offender?

Gianni Orlande



DIGITAL HERO #40

Gianni Orlande

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes |
|-----|------|------|------|--------------------------|
| 15 | STR | 5 | 12- | Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1] |
| 12 | DEX | 6 | 11- | OCV: 4/DCV: 4 |
| 15 | CON | 10 | 12- | |
| 18 | BODY | 16 | 13- | |
| 20 | INT | 10 | 13- | PER Roll: 13- |
| 15 | EGO | 10 | 12- | ECV: 5 |
| 15 | PRE | 5 | 12- | PRE Attack: 3d6 |
| 8 | COM | -1 | 11- | |
| 4 | PD | 1 | | Total: 7 PD (3 rPD) |
| 3 | ED | 0 | | Total: 6 ED (3 rED) |
| 3 | SPD | 8 | | Phases: 4, 8, 12 |
| 6 | REC | 0 | | |
| 30 | END | 0 | | |
| 34 | STUN | 0 | | |

Total Characteristic Cost: 70

| | | |
|------------------|-----------|--------|
| Movement: | Running: | 6"/12" |
| | Leaping: | 3"/6" |
| | Swimming: | 2"/4" |

| Cost | Equipment | END |
|------|---|-----|
| 18 | <i>Depleted Uranium .44 Magnum:</i> RKA 2d6, Penetrating (+½); OAF (-1), 8 Charges (-½) | [8] |
| 6 | <i>Bulletproof Vest:</i> Armor (3 PD/3 ED); OIF (-½) | 0 |

Perks

| | | |
|----|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 6 | Contact: Corrupt Judge | 14- |
| 6 | Contact: Corrupt Judge | 14- |
| 6 | Contact: Proxy Accountant | 14- |
| 6 | Contact: Skilled Lawyer | 14- |
| 6 | Contact: Skilled Lawyer | 14- |
| 55 | Followers: | 128 Skilled Normals |
| 10 | Money: | Wealthy |

Skills

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-----|
| 5 | +1 with Firearms | |
| 5 | +1 with All Interaction Skills | |
| 3 | AK: Campaign City | 13- |
| 3 | Bribery | 13- |
| 3 | Bureaucratics | 13- |
| 3 | Conversation | 13- |
| 3 | Criminology | 13- |
| 3 | Gambling (Card and Dice Games) | 12- |
| 3 | High Society | 12- |
| 3 | Interrogation | 12- |
| 3 | KS: Cosa Nostra Personnel | 13- |
| 3 | KS: Cosa Nostra Protocol | 13- |
| 4 | Language: Italian (Fluent) | |
| 3 | Persuasion | 13- |
| 3 | PS: Businessman | 13- |
| 3 | PS: Crimelord | 13- |
| 7 | Streetwise | 15- |
| 3 | Trading | 13- |

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 192

Total Cost: 262

75+ Disadvantages

| | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 15 | DNPC: Wife [Marlene] (Normal) | 11- |
| 10 | Distinctive Features: Obese (Concealable) | |
| 15 | Hunted: Police 8- (As Pow, NCI, Capture) | |
| 15 | Psychological Limitation: Obeys the Code of Omerta (Common, Strong) | |
| 10 | Psychological Limitation: Fears Arrest (Uncommon, Strong) | |
| 112 | Experience Points | |

Total Disadvantage Points: 262

superhero game. Unlike the Russian Mob, Gianni Orlande will actually tip the PCs off when someone worse comes to town (But he'll usually plan to do something else while the heroes are taking out his competition, unless he has developed a level of respect for the hero he is dealing with, in which case Omerta wins and he loses money.)

Appearance: Gianni Orlande is a middle aged, overweight man with thinning brown hair and sunglasses. He has chocolate brown eyes and some wrinkles under his full eyelids, and his face has grown a little more chunky with age. He has a full belly and always wears custom made Italian suits, that hang elegantly on his wider frame. He is beefy rather than bulbous, and can always be made to smile a little by talking about his family.

HOUND PLOT SEEDS

Dog-Day

Afternoon: The Dogcatchers convention is in town, and Hound shows up to give them a piece of her mind and relieve them of their valuables. Unfortunately, this includes unleashing dozens of angry and confused canines into a room filled with panicked citizenry!

Day of the

Dogcatcher: Hound contacts a hero on patrol while horribly wounded and bleeding. Someone's done something terrible to this villain. As Hound begins to recover, she begins to let clues slip about someone performing terrible experiments on dogs in her delirium. Why? For what purpose?

Wag the Dog: A local politician runs for office, and Hound begins harassing the politician, disrupting his speeches, and making a nuisance of herself. What is she up to? What is the politician up to?

Hound

Background/History: Regina Voorhees was born into a world of privilege and wealth. Her mother and father were dog breeders, and made a great deal of money in greyhound racing before moving into investments and other forms of international banking. Her childhood was largely one of being spoiled, going to dog shows, watching her family take home ribbons and prizes, and taking care of various pooches.

Regina loved dogs much more than her mother and father. Her wall was festooned with pictures of various breeds, mutts, and cartoon canines, including a big stuffed "Roly-Poly Rottweiler" on the bed. When her mother and father were out of town and she was in school, they never worried about the dogs because Regina would take care of them. She had dog sweatshirts, a dog baseball cap, even had little cute doggy slippers that she would wear around the house. She was obsessed. Her parents sent her to therapy, but her therapist assured the two of them that it was just a passing phase that she would grow out of. Eventually, she would discover boys, and everything would be all right.

Regina discovered boys when she was thirteen. Right away, she knew she would have to split her time between this, dogs, and her small circle of friends. Her friends all wanted to join the cheerleading squad, so Regina decided to join, too. There was a lot of power in the cheerleading squad, plus she got the pick of all the cute boys, especially since Cathy and Megan didn't seem too interested and Debbie spent much more time in front of a mirror. She was all right at cheerleading, but she always had to take time out to take care of the dogs, so practices were usually at her house.

One week at the sleepover, Megan brought the Ouija board out to have a little fun. After a great deal of liquor that they weren't supposed to have, they thought it might be fun to contact some of the characters from the old fairy tales. Shortly after that, the dwarf showed up in the room, and asked them what they wanted. Megan wanted superpowers, and at the time, it seemed like a very good idea, so Regina eagerly joined the crowd. She was always a joiner. All she had to give up was her firstborn child, and in her drunken state, she decided she didn't want to be barefooted and pregnant anyway.

Two months later, she had been runically transformed into Hound, spiritually linked to the Fenris Wolf of ages past. She was much closer to dogs now, a true alpha among dogs, but Catherine was always the alpha and she saw no reason for that to change. Her circle of friends was inseparable. The chains that bound them were inseparable. Now if she could just get a date with that actor...

Personality/Motivation: Hound is a follower, plain and simple. She prefers dogs to cats, and fights with Snow Tiger a lot over it, even though they're very good friends and they always make up later. Hound often chases Snow Tiger during their practice sessions now, and Snow Tiger obligingly trees herself for a few minutes. She uses her share of the ill-gotten gains and donates it to animal shelters anonymously, as she really doesn't need the money and otherwise the poor little things will be put to sleep. Hound can sometimes be found attacking the local dogcatcher if there is an abusive animal shelter, or stealing money from associations that give shelter only to cats. She hasn't told Snow Tiger this, as Snow Tiger would be devastated, but a dog has to do what a dog has to do. Hound wants to be everyone's girlfriend and keep them all, which has led to a lot of consternation from The Model, who is usually the first one people look at when the girls walk in. However, Regina is very friendly, and makes herself easier to get to know than most of the others. She is very interested in men to the point of fooling around with as many as she can, and this often leads to a sharp yank on the hair from some of the other girls, especially Snow Tiger.

Quote: "Awoooooo! You're a cute one! Can I have your phone number? I promise not to hit you quite so hard."

"Mmm...you smell like the sort of person that could really give a dog a good run!"

Powers/Tactics: Hound is very much a chaser and a grabber. She likes to move forward into combat and bring people to ground, much as dogs do. Against faster characters, she dodges and evades, waiting for an opening to strike and lay them low for The Model to hit while they're down. Against slower characters, she works as a team with Snow Tiger, bringing them down to the ground for a vicious pounce attack by the dog/cat duo.

Campaign Use: Regina is the sort of person who just wants to be one of the crowd, and probably the easiest to turn away from a life of crime. She is compassionate towards animals, generally pleasant, and easy to get along with. In any group she is with, she gravitates towards following the leader of that group. However, when wounded, a terrible anger of beasts wells up in her, and the character that injures her badly may have breathed his last.

In a lower powered campaign, remove two damage classes from Hound and lower the HKA to 1d6+1. Remove the targeting from her tracking scent and remove her combat skill levels.

In a higher-powered campaign, add four damage classes, raise the HKA to 4d6 and add

DIGITAL HERO #40

several additional martial arts maneuvers. Raise her defenses to 20 PD and ED, and give her ¼ Resistant Physical and Energy Damage Reduction. Add two more combat skill levels.

Appearance: Regina is a cute, stocky dark haired girl with a full figure who stands about five feet four inches tall. Her eyes are blue, her hair is cut in a pageboy, and she wears a great deal of clothing with a dog theme to it. She typically wears jeans, tight shirts, and short skirts to compliment her wide, cheerful smile.

As Hound, she wears a two toned brown costume with a domino mask and a headpiece with floppy beagle ears. She has a beautiful silver dog belt buckle, and her costume descends into solid black boots with thick rubber soles. She isn't as fashion conscious as the rest of the team, and knows it, but she is still a part of their team in her heart and in theirs. She wears a chain belt made of cold wrought iron.



Hound

Hound

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes |
|-----|------|------|------|----------------------------|
| 20 | STR | 10 | 13- | Lift 400 kg, 4d6 HTH [2] |
| 26 | DEX | 48 | 14- | OCV: 9/DCV: 9 |
| 23 | CON | 26 | 14- | |
| 15 | BODY | 10 | 12- | |
| 13 | INT | 3 | 12- | PER Roll: 12-/15- |
| 11 | EGO | 2 | 11- | ECV: 4 |
| 15 | PRE | 5 | 12- | PRE Attack: 3d6 |
| 16 | COM | 3 | 12- | |
| | | | | Total: 20 PD (10 rPD) |
| | | | | Total: 15 ED (10 rED) |
| | | | | Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 |
| 20 | PD | 16 | | |
| 15 | ED | 10 | | |
| 6 | SPD | 24 | | |
| 10 | REC | 2 | | |
| 46 | END | 0 | | |
| 40 | STUN | 3 | | |

Total Characteristic Cost: 161

Movement: Running: 15"/30"
 Leaping: 15"/30"
 Swimming: 2"/4"

| Cost | Powers | END |
|------|---|-----|
| 30 | <i>Teeth of Fenris Wolf:</i> HKA 2d6 (3d6+1 with STR) | 3/5 |
| 10 | <i>Skin of Fenris Wolf:</i> Damage Resistance (10 PD/10 ED) | 0 |
| 18 | <i>Fleetness of Fenris Wolf:</i> Running +9" (15" Total) | 3 |
| 18 | <i>Leap of Fenris Wolf:</i> Leaping +11" (15" Total), Accurate, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2) | 0 |
| 6 | <i>Nose of Fenris Wolf:</i> +3 with Smell Perception | 0 |
| 15 | <i>Nose of Fenris Wolf:</i> Targeting Tracking Scent | 0 |
| 3 | <i>Ears of Fenris Wolf:</i> Ultrasonic Hearing | 0 |
| 5 | <i>Will of Fenris Wolf:</i> +10 PRE; Defensive Only (-1) | 0 |

Skills

| Martial Arts: Hunting Hound Style | | Maneuver | | OCV/DCV | | Notes | |
|---|-------------|----------|----|---------|--|-------------------|--|
| 4 | Block | +2 | +2 | | | Block, Abort | |
| 4 | Dodge | — | +5 | | | Dodge, Abort | |
| 4 | Fast Strike | +2 | +0 | | | 10d6 | |
| 3 | Grab | -1 | -1 | | | 8d6, STR 50 | |
| 4 | Punch | +0 | +2 | | | 10d6 | |
| 3 | Legsweep | +2 | -1 | | | 9d6, Target Falls | |
| 16 +4 Damage Classes (Already Added In) | | | | | | | |
| 1 Use Art with Bite | | | | | | | |
| 16 +2 with All Combat | | | | | | | |
| 5 +1 with Hand-to-Hand Combat | | | | | | | |
| 3 Acrobatics 14- | | | | | | | |
| 3 Acting 12- | | | | | | | |
| 2 Animal Handler (Dogs) 12- | | | | | | | |
| 3 Breakfall 14- | | | | | | | |
| 3 Concealment 12- | | | | | | | |
| 3 Conversation 12- | | | | | | | |
| 5 Defense Maneuver II | | | | | | | |
| 3 High Society 12- | | | | | | | |
| 3 KS: Dogs 12- | | | | | | | |
| 3 KS: Dog Breeds 12- | | | | | | | |
| 3 Language: Dutch (Fluent) | | | | | | | |
| 3 Paramedics 12- | | | | | | | |
| 3 PS: Cheerleader 12- | | | | | | | |
| 3 Stealth 14- | | | | | | | |
| 3 Streetwise 12- | | | | | | | |
| 3 Teamwork 14- | | | | | | | |

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 201

Total Cost: 362

200+ Disadvantages

| | |
|----|---|
| 10 | Enraged: Wounded (Uncommon, Go 11-, Recover 11-) |
| 15 | Hunted: The Mafia, 8- (As Pow, NCI) |
| 15 | Hunted: Superhero Team, 8- (As Pow) |
| 20 | Hunted: UNTIL, 8- (Mo Pow, NCI) |
| 15 | Psychological Limitation: Lecherous (Common, Strong) |
| 15 | Psychological Limitation: Loves Dogs (Common, Strong) |
| 15 | Psychological Limitation: Loyal to her friends (Common, Strong) |
| 5 | Rivalry: Snow Tiger, over Dogs vs. Cats |
| 15 | Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Regina Voorhees) |
| 20 | Vulnerability: 1½x STUN and BODY from Sonic Attacks |
| 17 | Experience Points |

Total Disadvantage Points: 362

The Model

Background/History: Debbie Muldoon was a child of rich catholic parents who confessed all of their numerous sins every Sunday. She had everything a young girl could ask for, except one. Debbie looked in the mirror and saw someone who didn't have very much to offer. She was plain, and her best friends were all pretty. She was athletic, and her friends were all much more attractive, even Regina, who was just much cuter. Whenever she liked a boy, someone else who was prettier or nicer or sweeter or had a talent she just couldn't match. She thought maybe if she were a model, she would be attractive.

Debbie was jealous of everyone, and it made her very sad. Being only mediocre wasn't what her family wanted of her. It wasn't what her parents expected of her. Even if people sort of liked her, everything was always only "Sort-of." Her parents sent her to therapy to help her with her self-esteem, but no matter how hard her therapist tried, Debbie remained unable to dig herself out of the hole she had created for herself. They grew worried that their daughter would never amount to anything.

Debbie's parents tried to encourage her to study harder, and do more, but Debbie was always paying attention to fashion trends, dressing up, and reading Vogue and Cosmopolitan. She knew the names of all the models, all the fashion designers, and all the styles and trends. But no matter how hard she tried to be pretty, someone else was always prettier, or sexier, or more sociable. But Regina, Catherine, and Megan still cared, and shored up her spirits when she was sad. They were all fast friends on the cheerleading squad, and they kept her around because she always knew what to wear. They even let her come to the weekly sleepovers at Catherine's. The Orlantes were nice people, but they were really strange, and had way too many bodyguards. Catherine must have been a really important person.

One night at the sleepover, Megan brought a Ouija board, and the four friends got very drunk, and called Rumpelstiltskin to them. Instead, they got some hairy dwarf who Megan said was from music class. At least, that's what it felt like after that many shots of whiskey. He asked all of them what she wanted, and she knew in her heart what she wanted. She wanted to be pretty and she wanted to be strong. She was an anchor. Catherine stood on her shoulders. And if she could be one of the most beautiful women on Earth, that would be nice, too. Then she hiccupped.

For the next few months, she looked at herself in the mirror, and she grew prettier, taller, more full figured, and stronger. The dwarf gave

her what he promised. All she had to give up was a baby. And who had time for children when you were going to be a famous model. All they had to do was get some gold back. And how hard could that be with super strength and super beauty? Any superheroes would lie at her feet. One way, or the other...

Personality/Motivation: Debbie wants to be where her friends are, be one of the gang, look pretty, and show off. She loves her friends dearly, but the most important thing she feels she can do is distract people with her great beauty and hit things really hard. She loves to throw large heavy objects at opposing supers and then smile prettily at them.

While she's not a tag-along the way Regina is, she always likes to be in front, not because she's the toughest, but because then everyone can see just how pretty she is. Since virtually nothing can hurt her, she very much enjoys the spotlight, and the more spotlight, the better. She tries not to give old people heart attacks, and tries to wear tasteful yet conservative clothing so men can breathe.

Quote: "What's the matter? Aren't I good enough for you?" (Flash a radiant smile)

Powers/Tactics: Debbie is the typical big dumb brick, with a sexy giggle added. She likes to fight things out in hand to hand combat and hurl large heavy objects at people because it shows people how good she looks. The more stylish, the prettier, the sexier the fight she can have, the better. She wears costumes that can tear easily so she can show more bare skin, especially since everything underneath is impervious to harm.

If Debbie can humiliate people and make them look silly, she will do it, only because it allows people to see just how pretty she is. She can often be distracted by a number of compliments about her beauty, and will begin posing prettily about the battlefield if such comments are made. Once her friends are hurt or attacked, though, all bets are off. Debbie has learned how to hit people very hard indeed.

Campaign Use: Debbie is effectively a Rhinemaiden writ large, only she channels the magic in many different ways than Alberich expected. Alberich hoped that by doing this, he would be able to avoid the consequences of his previous Fairy Godmother ending. Fortunately for him, and unfortunately for your PCs, he happened to be correct.

In a lower powered campaign, reduce her STR to 50 and her Defenses to 25/25. Remove her DCV levels, and subtract one HTH combat level. Lower her PRE to 20 and her extra PRE to 10. Remove the half endurance cost on her STR.

MODEL PLOT SEEDS

Eye of the

Beholder: Someone is horribly scarring beautiful women around the city. Is the Model responsible? If she's not, who is? If so, why?

"I Want to Be In Pictures!": This scenario works best if a PC has a boyfriend who is a photographer, but it could just as easily be a relative, or the PC himself. The character is solicited by the Model to take pictures of her, in various scenic locations around the city. As the PCs chase the Model and her photographer, crowds gather, and chaos ensues.

Pardon Me, Boys, But Have You Seen My Sister?: Debbie's sister has gone missing, and the Model is tearing up the town looking for her. Since Debbie isn't terribly bright, and is worried about what might have happened to her sister, kind-hearted heroes may be called upon for help once they realize that she isn't lying.

The Model



DIGITAL HERO #40

The Model

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes |
|-----|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| 60 | STR | 50 | 21- | Lift 100 Tons; 12d6 [3] |
| 18 | DEX | 24 | 13- | OCV: 6/DCV: 6(8) |
| 30 | CON | 40 | 15- | |
| 15 | BODY | 10 | 12- | |
| 10 | INT | | 11- | PER Roll: 11-/16- |
| 15 | EGO | 10 | 12- | ECV: 5 |
| 25 | PRE | 15 | 14- | PRE Attack: 5d6/8d6 |
| 28 | COM | 9 | 15- | |
| 30 | PD | 20 | | Total: 30 PD (30 rPD) |
| 30 | ED | 24 | | Total: 30 ED (30 rED) |
| 4 | SPD | 12 | | Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12 |
| 18 | REC | 0 | | |
| 60 | END | 0 | | |
| 60 | STUN | 0 | | |

Total Characteristics Cost: 204

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Leaping: 20"/40"
Swimming: 2"/4"

| Cost | Powers | END |
|------|---|-----|
| 30 | <i>Picture Perfect:</i> Damage Resistance (30 PD/30 ED) | 0 |
| 16 | <i>First in the Fashion Line:</i> Leaping +8" (20" Total), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Accurate | 0 |
| 15 | <i>Did You See What He's/She's Wearing?:</i> +5 to Sight Perception | 0 |
| 15 | <i>Photogenic:</i> Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼) on 60 STR | 3 |
| 7 | <i>Modeling Pose!:</i> PRE +15, Concentration (0 DCV Throughout, -1) | 0 |
| 8 | <i>Fashion Forward:</i> (Instant Change) Cosmetic Transform 2d6, Any set of clothing into any other (+¼), Limited Target (Clothes) (-½) | 1 |

Talents

2 Environmental Movement: Fashion Shows

Skills

10 +2 with Hand-to-Hand Combat
10 +2 DCV
3 Acrobatics 13-
3 Breakfall 13-
3 Conversation 14-
3 High Society 14-
3 KS: The Modeling World 11-
3 KS: Famous Models 11-
3 KS: Fashion Design 11-
3 PS: Cheerleader 11-
3 Power 12-
3 Seduction 12-
3 Teamwork 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 146

Total Cost: 350

200+ Disadvantages

10 Distinctive Feature: Unearthly Beauty (Concealable, Major)
15 Hunted: The Mafia, 8- (As Pow, NCI)
15 Hunted: Superhero Team, 8- (Mo Pow)
20 Hunted: UNTIL, 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
15 Psychological Limitation: Vain about Looks (Common, Strong)
15 Psychological Limitation: Protective of Friends (Common, Strong)
15 Psychological Limitation: Overconfident (Common, Strong)
15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Debbie Muldoon)
10 Vulnerability: 1½x STUN from Ego Attacks
20 Experience

Total Disadvantage Points: 350

In a high powered campaign, raise her STR to 90 and her Defenses to 40/40. Add 2 Combat Skill Levels, raise her PRE to 40 and her COM to a whopping 60. Add 10 points of Power Defense, 10 points of Mental Defense, and a Multipower of Brick Tricks. Add an area of effect PRE drain if you wish to be doubly nasty.

Appearance: Debbie is a gorgeous blonde with all the right curves in all the right places. Her eyes are a sparkling limpid blue that speak volumes and stoke imaginations. Her smile is of porcelain and ivory, her breath the caress of sweet wind upon the eardrum. Her face is perfectly heart shaped, and her every movement speaks of grace and beauty. Even when she leaps, punches, or throws objects at people brutally, it is a breathtaking display of feminine pulchritude. She wears the latest fashions, culled from her personal stylists, every piece custom made or purchased in Paris. When in villain ID, she prefers a black box hat, a lace mask, and a low cut blouse with a medium length skirt that is almost all slit and no skirt, and thigh high boots. She wears lace gloves on her fingers at these times. In supervillain ID, she also wears a chain belt made of cold wrought iron.

SNOW TIGER PLOT SEEDS

Animal Cruelty: Snow Tiger begins stalking gang members and young children who have a reputation for being cruel to animals, and beating them within an inch of their lives. The gang members come to the heroes for help to protect them from the dangerous supervillain. Can the heroes stop Snow Tiger before she kills anyone?

Sibling Rivalry: A new regenerative treatment is offered by a medical institute, and attempted by Megan's parents. The treatment restores awareness to Megan's brother. Unfortunately, the treatment also destroys his moral centers while giving him superpowers, so the boy turned man becomes obsessed with destroying his sister, and begins hunting her down. Can the heroes stop him? Will the heroes figure out that Megan is Snow Tiger? Who created the treatment, and can anyone stop THEM?

Rescue Mission: Snow Tiger is rescuing pets in large numbers, and trying to find homes for them. Unfortunately, the city frowns upon supervillains taking over abandoned warehouses and running an animal

Snow Tiger

Background/History: Megan Calhoun was always the wild one. While the other girls in her school were good and kind and did all their homework, Megan was the one who still found time to do those things, stay up late, and take care of her four cats. Her parents were well to do, but not overly rich, until when she was twelve, her brother pretended to develop a sudden allergy to her babies. He hated cats.

Her parents decided the cats had to go. Megan was heartbroken, and fought her parents wildly while the cats were taken to a nearby shelter. She cried for two days. One of the cats escaped from the shelter, and returned to the house, where she took him in and hid him in her room. Her brother began to sneeze and choke while she was in the bathroom, and the young boy grabbed the cat and hurled it across the room, the yowling alerting Megan in the shower that something was terribly wrong... The poor creature's neck snapped in an instant. Megan raced from her shower and froze for a second in horror. Then a terrible rage boiled up inside her. Megan almost beat her ten-year old brother to death with a nearby poker. Her parents pulled her off, kicking and screaming, while she sobbed that the little boy deserved to die, that he had killed her kitty.

Megan's walls were covered with cat pictures, cat photographs, and cat calendars. Her mother was troubled, but Megan was already in therapy, and she was struggling in school. She missed her kitten, and she hated her brother. She even told her parents she would kill him if he ever showed his face in the house again. Her brother never came home from the hospital.

Her parents sent her to therapy for four years, but Megan never entirely got over it. After three years of therapy, they sent her to St. Swithins, the strictest girl's school they could find. The cost of sending Megan to school along with her brother's hospital bills nearly bankrupted her parents. Still, they loved their little girl, even if she put her brother in a coma, from which he still hadn't come out. Megan didn't care. He killed her kitty, a kitty that came back for her. Her brother was the animal. He deserved to die. She spent much of her time in animal shelters, caring for the kittens, which she would never let come to harm, especially since her parents would never let her have a kitten in the house again. She became fast friends with Catherine from the first day in school. They didn't know her there, and in Catherine she found someone who understood her, even if all Catherine really wanted was to be popular, even if she was a mafia princess.

When Catherine asked Megan to join the cheerleading squad, at first, Megan wanted

nothing to do with it, but Catherine boldly talked to her parents, who thought it would be good for her. Megan wanted nothing to do with it at first, but Catherine's other friends drew her in, and she grew closer to Regina and Debbie, even if Debbie was a little dumb. Regina liked dogs a little much, but if anything, Megan understood loving pets, and Regina didn't have any allergic relatives.

Megan became the party girl very quickly, and while Catherine was the de facto leader of the cheerleading squad, Megan very swiftly was the instigator who inspired them to do naughty things, get drunk, and do other things that teenagers did. She brought a Ouija board one night, and in their drunken stupor they tried to summon fairy creatures and Grimm's fairy tale characters. All they got was a fat, dirty, lecherous dwarf with a beard. Still, he offered them powers, and she took them, so she could be more like cats. She got more than she bargained for...

Personality/Motivation: Megan is a contradiction. On the one hand, she is wild, playful, happy, and loyal to her friends. She is highly protective of cats, and spends much of her time in shelters when she is not cheerleading, spending time with her friends, or partying. On the other, a terrible anger lurks in the depths of her soul, still associated with what her brother did.

Megan is very fun to be around in secret identity. This works best if the characters don't know who she is. She is cheerful, pleasant, and grinning all the time, but behind that façade lurks a very angry young woman who still can't forgive her brother for killing one of her pets, and the slightest smell of blood of someone or something she cares about sends her into a murderous killing rage.

Of the members of the group, Megan is the most violent, though Catherine can easily control her with a few sharp, well-placed words.

Quote: "Hi, there! I'm Snow Tiger! And you're my new ball!"

"You...hurt...(Fill in appropriate thing)!!! I'll KILL you for that!"

Powers/Tactics: Megan has claws, agility, and other standard powers associated with super powered cat humans. She likes to pounce on her opponents and bat them around, though if injured, enraged, or hurt, she will pounce on an opponent and try to rip them to shreds.

She likes to work with Hound after Hound has dragged someone to the ground, often leaping on them, grappling them, and holding them in place while she either squeezes them or tries to tear them into pieces.

Campaign Use: Snow Tiger is a competent, yet not overly competent, martial artist who fulfills the role of the team's tragic villain. Her tragic

Snow Tiger



shelter. Can the heroes save the kittens from animal control? Can the heroes save Animal Control from Snow Tiger?

Snow Tiger

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes |
|-----|------|------|------|----------------------------|
| 15 | STR | 5 | 12- | Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1] |
| 29 | DEX | 57 | 15- | OCV: 10/DCV: 10 |
| 20 | CON | 20 | 13- | |
| 12 | BODY | 4 | 11- | |
| 13 | INT | 3 | 12- | PER Roll: 15- |
| 15 | EGO | 10 | 12- | ECV: 5 |
| 20 | PRE | 10 | 13- | PRE Attack: 4d6 |
| 24 | COM | 7 | 14- | |
| 15 | PD | 12 | | Total: 15 PD (10 rPD) |
| 15 | ED | 11 | | Total: 15 ED (10 rED) |
| 6 | SPD | 21 | | Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 |
| 10 | REC | 6 | | |
| 40 | END | 0 | | |
| 35 | STUN | 0 | | |

Total Characteristics Cost: 166

Movement: Running: 15"/30"
Leaping: 17"/34"
Swimming: 2"/4"

| Cost | Powers | END |
|------|---|-----|
| 27 | <i>Pounce of the Tiger:</i> Leaping +14" (17" Total), Accurate, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2) | 0 |
| 18 | <i>Speed of the Tiger:</i> Running +9" (15" Total) | 3 |
| 10 | <i>Steel Skin of the Snow Tiger:</i> Damage Resistance (10 PD/10 ED) | 0 |
| 30 | <i>Claws of the Snow Tiger:</i> HKA 2d6 (3d6 with STR) (Retractable) | 3 |
| 5 | <i>Eyes of the Snow Tiger:</i> Nightvision | 0 |
| 20 | <i>Dig In:</i> Clinging (STR 45) | 0 |

Skills

Martial Arts: Snow Tiger Fighting Style

| Maneuver | OCV | DCV | Notes |
|--------------------|-----|-----|---------------------------|
| 4 Block | +2 | +2 | Block, Abort |
| 4 Dodge | — | +5 | Dodge, Abort |
| 4 Punch | +0 | +2 | 10d6 |
| 3 Grab | -1 | -1 | 8d6, STR 50 Grab |
| 4 Crush | +0 | +0 | 12d6, Must Follow Grab |
| 5 Passing Strike | +1 | +0 | 8d6+v/5 |
| 5 Offensive Strike | -2 | +1 | 12d6 |

20 +5 Damage Classes

1 Use Art with Claws

16 +2 with All Combat

3 Acrobatics 15-

2 Animal Handler (Cats) 13-

3 Breakfall 15-

3 Bureaucratics 13-

3 Climbing 15-

10 Defense Maneuver IV

3 High Society 13-

3 Language: German (Fluent w/Accent)

- 3 Persuasion 13-
- 3 Seduction 13-
- 3 Shadowing 12-
- 3 Stealth 15-
- 3 Teamwork 15-

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 222

Total Cost: 387

200+ Disadvantages

- 20 Enraged: Something She Loves Takes BODY (Berserk, Uncommon, Go, 14-, Recover 11-)
- 15 Hunted: The Mafia, 8-(As Pow, NCI)
- 15 Hunted: Superhero Team, 8- (Mo Pow)
- 20 Hunted: UNTIL, 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Loves Cats (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Plays with Her Opponents (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Vengeful (Uncommon, Strong)
- 5 Rivalry: Hound, over Cats vs. Dogs
- 30 Vulnerability: 1½x STUN and BODY from Fire Attacks (Common)
- 42 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Cost: 387

flaw is her rage, and she draws strength from it even though it can cause her great trouble, and others great pain. In a lower-powered campaign, lower her DEX to 26 and her SPD to 5, and lower her damage resistance, leaping, and running.

In a higher-powered campaign, raise her STR to 25, her DEX to 33, add Healing or regeneration type powers, 2 Combat Skill levels, add more EGO, PD, ED, and STUN, and BODY, give her a SPD of 8, and raise her HKA to a whopping 4d6 Base. Add more martial arts maneuvers and 4 more damage classes. Add ten points of Power Defense.

Appearance: Snow Tiger wears a black and white striped leotard in her villain identity, complete with a full Snow Tiger helmet with black and white stripes, black boots, and black finger gloves with holes to allow her retractable claws above her fingernails free rein. She is lithe and graceful, a sinuous sleek killing machine, every movement a prepared, yet subtle surprise. She wears the same chain belt of cold wrought iron.

As Megan, she wears many cat image garments, though she is capable of being truly beautiful and seductive in more upper-class clothes, which she often buys with the profits of her ill-gotten gains. Megan has platinum blonde hair, sky blue eyes, and a slender, athletic figure with long, agile legs.

