DIGITAL HERO #10

MAY 2003
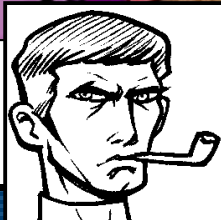
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DIGITAL HERO

CONVENTIONS

Hero Games will be at these conventions. Stop by and visit the booth, and play in some games!

KublaCon
  May 23-26
  San Fancisco, CA
  kublacon.com
PortCon
  June 13-15
  Portland, ME
  portconmaine.com
Origins
  June 26-29
  Columbus, OH
  originsgames.com
GenCon Indy
  July 24-27
  Indianapolis, IN
  gencon.com
ConQuest
  August 29-Sept 1
  Palo Alto, CA
  con-quest.com

When We Last Left Our Heroes…

by Steven S. Long

There's not much news this month, so I'll try to keep things short and sweet, saving a full discussion of *Fantasy Hero* for the next issue.

NANOTECH, WARSTRIDERS, AND STARSHIPS, OH MY!

As of when I write this, I'm in the middle of editing our next *Star Hero* tome, *The Spacer's Toolkit*. Written primarily by our very own webmaster, Ben Seeman, ST is an equipment book for science fiction campaigns. Although it's nominally tied to the Terran Empire setting, it's got lots of good stuff for just about any *Star Hero* campaign.

The first chapter of the book covers personal tech. In addition to a bunch of new weapons, it has robots and androids, computers, nanotechnology, cybersystems, bioware, and much, much more. It's just the thing when you need to outfit your character for a trek into the wilderness or an espionage mission on Mon'da.

The second chapter delves into the subject of ground vehicles. It includes write-ups for about 20 of them, both civilian and military. They range from everyday hoverpads and civilian groundcraft, to tanks, to the feared Thorgon Warstrider (the closest thing to a mech you'll see in the Hero Universe). If you'd like to throw a hovercraft chase into your next *Star Hero* game, this chapter gives you the vehicles you need.

The third, and by far the largest, chapter in the book contains approximately three dozen starship write-ups. Most of these ships are Terran military and civilian vessels, but there are plenty of alien ones to go around. The chapter also has some new ship tech.

Last but not least, there's an appendix with a big price list for all the goodies in the book. Better save up your credits; some of this stuff is expensive. ☺

The Spacer's Toolkit should hit your local game store's shelves sometime in late May, so keep your eyes open!

ORIGINS AWARD WRITE-IN CAMPAIGN

As noted last issue, none of the Hero products we submitted in the nominations round for the Origins Award – the *Fifth Edition, Champions, Star Hero* for graphics, and *Digital Hero* – received a nomination. That's right, not a single one; we were completely shut out. Since we think this is a disgrace (to put it mildly), we're mounting a write-in campaign. We need *your* help to make this succeed. We need you, your gaming group, your friends, your family, anyone you can get to go to the Origins Award website and vote for us. Please visit the Hero Games website's "Origins Award Write-In Campaign" page for more information, including a link to go vote.

The deadline for voting is June 1, so please vote!

Like I said, a slow news month. Next month I'll have lots to say about *Fantasy Hero* and other nifty stuff, so see you in 30!

— Steven S. Long
HERO System Line Developer

HEROglyphs by Steven S. Long

An Earth-Shattering Ka-Boom!

CREATING NUCLEAR WEAPONS USING THE *HERO SYSTEM 5TH EDITION*

Several years ago, I created a *HERO System* write-up for a one megaton (MT) nuclear bomb; it was published in the *HERO System Almanac II.* Since the rules have changed a little bit since then in ways that make it easier to write up a nuke, I thought it was time to update and republish the article. In doing so I have not updated the research in any significant respect, but anyone interested can find a wealth of materials, both in print and on the web, on the subject.

Even more terrifying than biological and chemical weapons are nuclear weapons. Whereas chemical and biological warfare agents may have the capacity to affect everyone in a particular area, nuclear weapons are capable of instantaneously wiping out entire cities and killing tens of thousands of people (or more). The major nations of the world possess enough nuclear weapons to kill most of Earth's population in a very few minutes (and, according to some theories, condemn the survivors to a slow, painful death from radiation or "nuclear winter"). Currently, the United States, several former Soviet states (Russia, the Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan), the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Israel, North Korea, South Africa, and Pakistan have nuclear weapons (or nuclear capability and materials); Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Iran, Iraq, Libya, South Korea, and Taiwan have all expressed strong interest in creating their own nuclear bombs, and some have taken steps toward doing so.

Because of nukes' incredible destructive capabilities, GMs frequently use them as plot elements in *HERO System* scenarios. Therefore, GMs and players alike may find it helpful to have an understanding of how nuclear bombs work, and how to simulate their effects in game terms. Of course, most of the time the exact effects of the bomb don't matter – it's just a plot device and doesn't need a write-up. But occasionally it could matter – for example, when a PC's base of operations is located on the edges of the blast's effect and the GM must answer the question of exactly what happens to him and his vital equipment. For this reason – and because it's intriguing to push the limits of the game system and experiment a little bit – this article presents *HERO System* statistics for the effects of a nuclear bomb.

Much of the information in this section is subject to change depending on many different factors. The weather, the topography, the accuracy of the bomb, and how perfectly it detonates can all affect the actual explosion and the effects it has. Furthermore, a lot of the present information about nuclear explosions remains subject to interpretation and debate. The author has selected what he feels is the best information, and in some cases has altered it slightly to fit the game system better. Players who prefer to rely on other data or interpretations are free to recalculate the effects of the bomb to suit themselves.

How Nuclear Bombs Work

There are two types of nuclear bombs: fission bombs and fusion bombs. Fission bombs work by splitting apart the large atoms of the elements uranium or plutonium. On detonation, the bomb uses high explosives to force two chunks of the fissionable material together, thus splitting one atom, which causes a chain reaction of fissioning atoms and a tremendous release of energy. Scientists refer to the smallest amount of uranium or plutonium needed to achieve this chain reaction as the "critical mass."

Fusion bombs are generally three to four times as powerful as fission bombs. They work by fusing two or more atoms together to form a different element. Usually they fuse deuterium atoms to form helium-3, or deuterium and tritium atoms to form helium-4. To cause this result, a fusion bomb uses a fission bomb as a "trigger."

For either type of bomb, the amount of material needed to produce the nuclear explosion is surprisingly small – approximately 55 pounds of enriched uranium, or a mere 18 pounds of plutonium, are all that's needed to make a bomb as powerful as the one used on Hiroshima (the United States and Russia possess the capability to make a miniature nuke out of as little as six pounds of plutonium, but terrorists and criminals do not have such resources). This makes it easy for the GM to run all sorts of scenarios involving the theft or smuggling of uranium or plutonium (both of which are produced in certain types of nuclear reactors). The actual construction of the bomb mechanism itself is far easier than acquiring the uranium or plutonium – in the past, college undergraduates have designed workable nuclear devices using only declassified United States government documents and readily available materials. It would certainly be possible for clever terrorists, criminal scientists (including former Soviet nuclear scientists hired by criminals), or master villains to do the same. However, the machinery and technological parts needed to build the bomb may not be so easy to

acquire; in many cases they are quite rare, and require highly specialized skills to build or use.

Physicists rate the force of a nuclear explosion by comparing it to an equivalent amount of tons of TNT. A kiloton equals a thousand tons of TNT, and a megaton equals a million tons. The smallest American nuclear explosive is .1 kiloton, and various nations have bombs ranging into the tens of megatons or higher. Nuclear warheads have been placed on every type of launch system, from relatively short-range artillery to intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).

The Effects Of A Nuclear Explosion

This section describes the effects of a one-megaton (1 MT) nuclear bomb using the *HERO System 5th Edition* rules. As stated above, much of the data on nuclear explosions is sketchy or highly debatable. The author has made various assumptions and choices so that he could drive game statistics without major difficulty (erring on the side of increased damage or effect, for the sake of drama). Gamemasters and players should feel free to do their own research and tailor the bomb's effects to suit their own opinions and/or campaigns.

Common Limitations for the nuclear bomb described below include: OAF Bulky (-1½), 1 Charge which Never Recovers and destroys bomb (-4 or less; in some cases this Charge lasts for more than a single Phase); No Range (the launching system must supply the Range for the bomb; -½); and Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½) (total -6½, less with a Continuing Charge).

The effects of a nuclear explosion can be roughly summarized as follows:
☠ initial explosion (immediate release of radiation, thermal blast/flash, electromagnetic pulse [EMP])
☠ blast wave and wind effects,
☠ fires,
☠ and lingering radiation and fallout.

Many of these effects vary substantially, depending upon whether the attack was a "ground burst" (in which some or all of the nuclear fireball touches the ground) or an "air burst" (in which the fireball does not touch ground; for a 1 MT bomb, this means it would have to be detonated about 2,000 feet to half a mile above the ground). For example, a ground burst causes a large mushroom cloud, a crater, and tremors: a 1 MT bomb creates approximately a 200 meter (100") crater 50-70 meters (25-35") deep (in ordinary soil), and its mushroom cloud may be as much as thirteen miles wide and ten miles high. A 1 MT air burst doesn't create a crater or tremors, but has a greater EMP.

Many of the nuclear bomb's effects include the Advantage *Explosion*. For ease of calculation, ignore any other Advantages on the power when calculating the dropoff of the Explosion; just subtract 1 DC per hex (or other indicated distance) as if there were no other Advantages on the power.

FIRST EFFECT: IMMEDIATE RADIATION

First, a nuclear explosion releases tremendous amounts of radiation (in the form of neutrons and gamma rays) into the area. The radiation does not cover as large an area as the heat or blast effects, but is nonetheless deadly (particularly to Desolidified characters who might otherwise survive the explosion). Scientists measure the amount of radiation released in roentgens and Roentgen Absorbed Dose (rads) (which describes the effects of radiation on humans; see *Star Hero,* pages 282-83, for more information). A 1 MT bomb irradiates about a 1-mile (1.6 km, or 804.5") radius area with over 19,000 rads, enough to kill humans instantly (if near the blast) or within minutes or hours (if slightly farther away). However, by 2 miles this has dropped off to about 24 rads, which is not likely to have much effect on humans. Persons caught between one and two miles are likely to absorb enough radiation to cause them a slow and painful death in days or weeks (in game terms, this is a Gradual Effect with reduced value because a larger than normal portion of the damage accrues immediately). Humans lacking special equipment or senses cannot detect radiation (this sort of intense burst doesn't even do STUN), but survivors feel its effects for the rest of their lives (however short those lives may be).

Initial Radiation: Drain BODY 20d6, Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Week; +1¾), NND (defense is Life Support [Safe Environment: High Radiation]; +1), Does BODY (+1), Area Of Effect (One Hex Doubled; +¾), Affects Desolidified (+½), Continuous (+1), Invisible Power Effects (creation of radiation field is perceivable, field itself afterwards is not; +½), MegaArea (each hex is 1 mile wide and broad; +½) (1,600 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), Targets In Outer Ring Of Hexes Take Half Damage (-¼), Gradual Effect (everyone takes half of their damage immediately; and the other half as 1d6 per Day; -1), Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½), 1 Continuing Charge which lasts 1 Hour, Never Recovers, and destroys bomb (-2¼) (total cost: 246 points)

plus Drain CON 10d6, Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Week; +1¾), NND (defense is Life Support [Safe Environment: High Radiation]; +1), Area Of Effect (One Hex Doubled; +¾), Affects Desolidified (+½), Continuous (+1), Invisible Power Effects (creation of radiation field is perceivable, field itself afterwards is not; +½), MegaArea (each hex is 1 mile wide and broad; +½) (700 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), Linked (-½) Targets In Outer Ring Of Hexes Take Half Damage (-¼), Gradual Effect (everyone takes half of their damage immediately; and the other half as 1d6 per Day; -1), Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½), 1 Continuing Charge which lasts 1 Hour, Never Recovers, and destroys bomb (-2¼) (total cost: 100 points). Total cost: 346 points.

SECOND EFFECT: FLASH

When a nuclear bomb explodes, it immediately releases about one-third to one-half of its energy in the form of a blast of thermal energy. The nuclear fireball formed by the explosion of a 1 MT bomb is as hot as the heart of the sun and is more than 300 feet (about 50") wide less than a thousandth of a second after detonation. It continues to grow (and to rise off the ground) until it's about 2,000 feet to half a mile (403") wide. The heat and light energy travel at just under the speed of light, and last for about two seconds.

One of the effects from this release of energy is that persons looking in the direction of the blast suffer flash-blindness or permanent eye damage (retinal burns and possibly total blindness) because of the brightness of the light. Estimates on the reach of this effect range from 13 miles to 27 miles (21 km to 43.2 km) during the day, and 53 miles to 70 miles (112 km) at night (for the effect calculated below, ranges of approximately 50 miles (40,250") at night and 13 miles (10,465") in the daytime have been chosen).

This effect is written up as a Transform that covers a smaller area in the daytime. Victims who take twice their BODY from the effect are permanently blinded. Other victims suffer varying degrees of eye injury (with minuses to Sight Group PER Rolls) and heal from them as they would normally. In game terms, this is represented with the *Partial Transform* Advantage. A victim who undergoes a Cosmetic Transform suffers a -2 to all Sight Group PER Rolls; one who undergoes a Minor Transform suffers a -4 to all Sight Group PER Rolls.

Cost Power

26 *Blinding Flash:* Major Transform 9d6 (sighted beings to blind beings, heals back via eye transplantation or the like), Partial Transform (+½) (202 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), Limited Target (sighted beings; -¼), 1 Charge which Never Recovers and destroys bomb (-4), No Range (-½), Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½)

13 *Daytime Flash:* Explosion (+½) and MegaArea (each hex is 1 km wide and broad; +¼) for Blinding Flash (102 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), Limited Target (sighted beings; -¼), 1 Charge which Never Recovers and destroys bomb (-4), No Range (-½), Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½)

4 *Nighttime Flash:* Increase to Explosion (-1 DC/2"; +¾) and MegaArea (each hex is 1 km wide and broad; +¼) for Blinding Flash (+33 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), Only At Night (-½), Limited Target (sighted beings; -¼), 1 Charge which Never Recovers and destroys bomb (-4), No Range (-½), and Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½)

Total cost: 43 points

THIRD EFFECT: THERMAL BLAST

All of the heat and light described above does more than just blind people. The heat energy can vaporize metals, cause tremendous fires (see below), and inflict burns upon people. The heat travels at just under the speed of light and lasts for about two seconds.

Thermal Blast: RKA 20d6, Explosion (dropoff as indicated by accompanying table; +½), MegaArea (1" = ½ km, or about ⅓ mile; +¼) (525 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), 1 Charge which Never Recovers and destroys bomb (-4), No Range (-½), Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½). Total cost: 70 points.

The exact effects and range of a 1 MT thermal blast are summarized in the following chart, which is based primarily on one found in the book *Weapons,* by the Diagram Group (table on following page).

An object suffers lesser burns if it is colored white (subtract up to 3 DC), and greater burns if it is black (add up to 3 DC). The same applies to people, based on their clothing. For notes on the possible effects of fires, see below (Seventh Effect).

NUCLEAR WEAPON THERMAL BLAST RADIUS

Minimum Range	Maximum Range	Game Range	Damage	Effects
0	2.25 miles	up to 1500"	20-16d6	Metals vaporize
1.8 miles	3.5 miles	1501-2500"	15-10d6	Metals melt
3.25 miles	7.1 miles	2501-5000"	9-6d6	Rubber and plastic ignites and melts
5.1 miles	8.0 miles	5001-6000"	5-4d6	Wood and other flammables burst into flame or char
7.5 miles	10.2 miles	6001-7200"	4-3d6	Skin suffers third-degree burns
9.25 miles	13.25 miles	7201-10000"	3-2d6	Skin suffers second-degree burns
11.5 miles	18.3 miles	10001-14732"	1d6	Skin suffers first-degree burns

FOURTH EFFECT: ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE (EMP)

When a nuclear bomb explodes, the radiation it emits ionizes atoms for many miles around (with some airbursts, for more than 50 miles!). This takes mere fractions of a second, but can generate thousands of volts of radio wave-like energy. This energy does not damage humans, but it plays havoc with electrical circuits, disrupting or destroying them. This is bought as a Dispel that affects electrical circuits.

EMP: Dispel 20d6, all Electrical Circuit powers simultaneously (+2), Area Of Effect (26" Radius; +1), MegaArea (each 1" = 1 km wide and broad; +¼), Indirect (attacks all parts of objects, such as all walls in a building, +¾), Invisible Power Effects (creation of EMP is perceivable, field itself afterwards is not; +½) (330 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), 1 Charge which Never Recovers and destroys bomb (-4), No Range (-½), Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½). Total cost: 44 points.

FIFTH EFFECT: BLAST WAVE

The blast wave is probably the most devastating part of a nuclear explosion. The force of the explosion creates massive amounts of pressure, which travel outward in a wave, accompanied by incredibly strong winds. Sometimes this effect reflects off of the ground, thereby increasing its own power (this is known as a "mach wave"). The blast effect is known as "static overpressure" (SO), and is measured in pounds per square inch (psi) over the standard atmospheric pressure. The extreme increase in pressure can destroy buildings miles away from the center of the blast because it affects all parts of the building and crushes it. Anybody inside when a building collapses is likely to die. But SO has relatively little effect on soft, malleable objects like human beings – as little as 5 psi obliterates the average residential house, but a human can withstand 30 psi before suffering injury. Unless the GM rules otherwise for some

reason, the SO should not affect characters, unless the characters are unusually non-resilient (for example, if they're made of metal or the like).

However, the intense winds, known as "dynamic pressure" (DP), do affect humans. They pick up all of the rubble, shards of glass, bits of metal, and other debris created by the SO and throw it against everything in their path, such as people. They also overturn cars, uproot trees, pull people out of buildings, and slam people against other objects with lethal force. As a result, one way or another a 1 MT blast kills or injures everyone within about five miles.

The effects of the blast wave can last for several seconds, depending upon the size of the bomb; with a 1 MT bomb, they should last no more than half a Turn.

Cost	Power
135	*Blast Wave (Static Overpressure):* RKA 20d6, Explosion (dropoff as indicated by accompanying table; +½), MegaArea (1" = ½ km, or about $^1/_3$ mile, wide and broad; +¼), Continuous (+1), Indirect (attacks all parts of objects, such as all walls in a building, +¾) (1,050 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), 1 Continuous Charge lasting 6 Segments which Never Recovers and destroys bomb (-3¼), No Range (-½), Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½), Little Or No Effect On Soft, Malleable Objects (including living creatures; -1)
155	*Blast Wave (Winds):* RKA 20d6, Explosion (dropoff as indicated by accompanying table; +½), MegaArea (1" = ½ km, or about $^1/_3$ mile, wide and broad; +¼), Continuous (+1), Double Knockback (+¾) (1,050 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), 1 Continuous Charge lasting 6 Segments which Never Recovers and destroys bomb (-3¼), No Range (-½), Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½)

Total cost: 290 points.

BLAST WAVE TABLE

Range	Game Range	Damage	Effects
Up to 1.4 miles	up to 1127"	20-16d6	30 psi/670 mph winds: total destruction
1.5-1.8 miles	1128-1449"	15-11d6	20 psi/470 mph winds: massive structures and reinforced concrete destroyed
1.9-2.0 miles	1450-1610"	10-9d6	15 psi/380 mph winds: multistory buildings damaged and sometimes destroyed
2.1-2.5 miles	1611-2013"	8-7d6	10 psi/290 mph winds: factories and commercial structures destroyed
2.6-3.1 miles	2014-2496"	6d6	7 psi/225 mph winds: residential structures destroyed
3.2-3.8 miles	2497-3059"	5d6	5 psi/160 mph winds: residential and light commercial structures badly damaged or destroyed
3.9-4.8 miles	3060-3864"	4d6	3 psi/116 mph winds: walls of steel-framed buildings blown away, dwellings badly damaged, vehicles overturned, persons in the open killed
4.9-5.9 miles	3865-4750"	3-2d6	2 psi/70 mph winds: wooden buildings and similar structures damaged
6.0-10.0 miles	4751-8050"	2-1d6	1 psi/48 mph winds: little appreciable effect

The table above, also adapted from *Weapons,* describes the effects of a 1 MT blast wave.

SIXTH EFFECT: NEGATIVE PRESSURE

After the explosion creates the static overpressure and winds blowing outward, air has to rush back in to fill the vacuum left by the outrushing winds. This effect, though much gentler than dynamic pressure, can still cause damage due to blown objects and the like.

Negative Pressure: RKA 3d6, Area Of Effect (9" Radius; +1), MegaArea (1" = 1 km wide and broad; +¼), Continuous (+1) (146 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), 1 Continuous Charge lasting 1 Turn which Never Recovers and destroys bomb (-3¼), No Range (-½), Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½). Total cost: 22 points.

SEVENTH EFFECT: FIRES

The tremendous heat generated by a nuclear explosion ignites any flammable objects not destroyed outright. The so-called "fire zone" within which this effect occurs is typically a 5-10 mile radius for a 1 MT bomb. However, the bomb's blast wave may put out many fires (the GM decides whether this occurs, and to what extent it ameliorates the fire damage).

Ignite Flammable Objects: RKA 1 point, Area Of Effect (16" Radius; +2), MegaArea (1" = 1 km wide and broad; +¼), Continuous (+1), Indirect (attacks all parts of objects, such as all walls in a building, +¾), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Sticky (only affects flammables; +¼), Uncontrolled (keeps burning until extinguished or fuel is consumed; +½) (31 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), No Range (-½), No Knockback (-¼), Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½). Total cost: 8 points.

It is possible for the fires to join together in two ways to cause even more damage. First, there could be a conflagration: the fires spread out of control and devastate many square miles of still-standing structures and plant life. Second, and even worse, is the firestorm, in which the fires join in a central area and begin to suck in oxygen. The inrushing oxygen feeds the fire, turning it into a raging, self-sustaining inferno that only ends when it has destroyed everything flammable. No one can accurately predict whether a firestorm will start; Hiroshima suffered one but Nagasaki, which is hillier, only suffered a conflagration.

In game terms, this effect is a Continuous Aid, with a Trigger (the *Ignite Flammable Objects* effect starting) and an Activation Roll (which supplies the unpredictability). The Aid affects both the Killing Attack of the fires and the Aid itself, and it applies to all fires within the defined Area Of Effect. For purposes of the Aid, assume the bomb has SPD 2.

Firestorm: Aid Fire Powers 4d6, two Fire Powers (the RKA and the maximum effect of this Aid) simultaneously (+½), Can Add Maximum Of 60 Points' Worth Of Fire Powers, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Hour; +1), Area Of Effect (25" Radius; +1), MegaArea (1" = ½ km, or about $^1/_3$ mile, wide and broad; +¼), Continuous (+1), Trigger (+¼), Uncontrolled (keeps working until fires burn out or are extinguished; +½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (348 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), Activation Roll 11- (-1), Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½). Total cost: 87 points.

EIGHTH EFFECT: RADIATION, FALLOUT, AND NUCLEAR WINTER

The lingering radiation created by a nuclear detonation can last weeks, months, or years. It has been estimated that 1 MT explosion would force the evacuation of all people in a 4,900 square mile area around the explosion for at least a week (and in the 1,400 square mile area immediately around the explosion for a month or more). As a basic rule of thumb, GMs can use the seven-tenths rule: seven hours after the explosion, the radiation levels drop to one-tenth of what they were one hour after the explosion; 49 (7 x 7) hours afterwards, 1/100th, and so forth. For the effects of radiation, refer to pages 282-83 of *Star Hero.* Remember that in some genres (like *Champions*), radiation can have some unusual effects.

In addition to the localized radiation, the radioactive debris kicked into the atmosphere by a nuclear explosion eventually descends to Earth as fallout. The pattern of fallout from a given nuclear explosion depends mainly on how high it goes and what the prevailing weather conditions (particularly the wind) are like.

Lastly, some authorities believe a large nuclear exchange would kick so much dust and smoke into the air that it would blot out the sun, creating "nuclear winter." In the worst-case scenario, this would mean the extinction of life on Earth as temperatures dropped below freezing and food production became impossible. However, many experts question these doomsday predictions, and in any event, it would require a major nuclear exchange to create this effect (something that's unlikely to happen in most gaming campaigns).

Because the effects of radiation, fallout, and nuclear winter are so unpredictable, no damage statistics are given for them. The GM should adjudicate their effects on his campaign himself.

Cost Summary

So, here are the total costs for a 1 MT nuclear bomb:

Effect	Active Points	Real Points
Radiation burst	2,300	346
Flash	337	43
Thermal blast	525	70
EMP	330	45
Blast, SO	1,050	135
Blast, winds	1,050	155
Negative pressure	146	22
Ignite object	31	8
Firestorm	348	87
Total	**6,117**	**911**

Hero Universe by Darren Watts

Felicitations, fellow explorers of the misty depths of history, to another untold tale of the Champions Universe. When last we met, I told you all of the fateful origin of the Fabulous Five. Please enjoy the second part of their tale, as well as the rest of the character sheets and lovely portraits by Derrick Thomas.

Part III

"Man, I hate these things," Diamond whispered *sotto voce* to Kid Chameleon, as the two stood as far back on the stage as decorum allowed. As usual, Amazing Man, Siren, and Streak were up front, serenely comfortable in the glare of the TV lights and the popping of flashbulbs.

"It'll be over soon," the Kid whispered back. Truthfully, while he had no desire for the spotlight either, he found these press conferences less annoying than his large friend, mostly because they at least did a pretty good job keeping out the packs of screaming young girls that had taken to showing up at every public appearance of the group the press had dubbed the "Fabulous Five." At first, he'd found it amusing and flattering, if a bit unnerving, but their increasing fervor over the last few months had begun to wear on him. Streak's repeated joking offers to "take some of the young ladies off your hands" hadn't helped.

Amazing Man attempted to restore order among the crowd of reporters who were shouting questions. "Please, please, one at a time. We'll get to everybody, I promise." Diamond grumbled again, this time loud enough to be picked up by the microphone. The assembled reporters hesitated, unsure how to take the fairly menacing noise from the fearsome-looking creature standing in the back. Streak adroitly picked up the sudden change in the room's vibe. "But let's move it along. Diamond's missing his afternoon beauty sleep," he grinned, and the reporters joined in relieved laughter. Diamond's frown burned holes in the back of Streak's neck, but no one seemed to notice.

"All right," said Amazing Man. "How about we start with you, Dan?" He pointed to one of the reporters near the front of the crowd.

"Amazing Man, we'd like to know, how did you all escape from Scorpio's castle before the explosion?"

"Well, that's an interesting story. As it turned out, the walls of the dungeon were reinforced with a strange steel alloy…."

Part IV

The return of the crew of the Jules Verne from their successful mission to destroy Comet X was an international event. When it was discovered that the crew had, in the course of their adventure, encountered aliens and then been transformed into superhumans with astonishing powers, the team was dubbed the "Fabulous Five" by some anonymous press wag and rapidly became enormous celebrities. Though there were several active superheroes in America at the time, such as the second Meteor Man, the armored Rocketman, and the Black Mask, none had been as accessible to the media or maintained their public identities.

Michael Renton quickly established the team as a sort of "super-corporation" and hired a small public relations firm, Barton Gardner Smith, to handle the requests for public appearances. Their agent, Jack Gardner, helped the team select superheroic-sounding "code names" and design a uniform for the team to wear. At first, John was only willing to "go along with the superhero silliness" until Michael or other scientists of the time were able to reverse his physical transformation, but their repeated failures and his inability to find acceptance in "normal" society eventually overcame his objections and he remained a valued member of the team.

That first summer of 1959 was largely spent making public appearances, consulting with the US government on the question of responding to possible further contact with aliens, and Renton's efforts to form the group into an effective team while building them an official headquarters in New York City near Central Park. Their very public rescue efforts at a high-rise fire in June garnered them further positive press, and in July, they captured the outlaw scientist Emil Scorpio, who had planned to destroy New York with a massive earthquake-generating device. By the end of that month, no upscale party in Manhattan was complete without one of the Fab Five in attendance, and every glossy magazine in the country could rely on having their circulation boosted with a cover picture of one of the team. Women around the world changed their hairstyles to match Siren's, and teen girls swooned over pictures of the Streak. Even the efforts of the shapeshifting villain Muto to discredit the heroes later that summer only produced a brief backlash, and when the team brought him to justice their stardom was that much more secure.

artwork by Derrick Thomas

Over the next several years, the Fabulous Five remained one of the world's foremost superhero teams. Their primary rivals were the Sentinels, a collection of solo heroes who worked together only in times of crisis and maintained strong ties to the US Department of Scientific Intelligence through members Dr. Phantom and Microman, and the Justice Squadron, a reconstituted team from the 1940s who were largely organized around the powerful hero Vanguard and his close friends.

Unlike those two teams, the Fab Five concentrated more on scientific exploration and menaces than battling supervillains, though occasionally they would wind up in conflict with ordinary costumed criminals like Rockslide or the mind-controlling Guru. More often, however, they spent their time pushing back the boundaries of science and exploring the mysteries of Earth and space; it was the Fabulous Five who reinitiated contact with Atlantis in 1963 after they had withdrawn from the surface world in the late 1940s, and who discovered the existence of the alien Selenites on the moon in 1965, and who battled the tyrant Arvad and his army of mutated Lemurians when they tried to destroy the mysterious Empyrean citadel of Arcadia in 1966. In 1967, they even teamed with the surviving members of the Defenders Of Justice to battle the invading Sirian warriors whose first attempt at conquering Earth in 1938 had led to the older team's formation.

The team itself underwent a few changes over the decade as well. Allen grew to adulthood, finally insisting that the press drop the "Kid" from his name when he turned twenty-one in 1966. Michael and Patty eventually found themselves truly in love, and wed in 1965 in a ceremony that sparked headlines around the globe (and at which several other superheroes were guests; the bachelor party coincided with the return of the villain Typhoon and his Storm Bringers, and the resulting brawl was one of the most spectacular of the decade). Ray married his first wife, actress Betty Hervey, in 1967, though the marriage would only last a few years. And in 1969, Michael and Patty's son Peter was born, which would lead to his parent's retirement and some serious changes in the team's lineup and mission. More next month!

Amazing Man I

Personality: Amazing Man is the brains behind the Fabulous Five, both in the sense that he's one of the world's most versatile and respected scientists, and that he's the member of the team who is most temperamentally suited to thoughtful analysis of a situation while his more aggressive teammates leap into the fray. He enjoys the publicity and status of being a celebrity superhero, inasmuch as it helps him to get access to funding and allows him to spend his time on such fascinating puzzles as the Shadow Zone and the Infraverse. He notoriously does not have a sense of humor; while he's not stern or grim, he is slow to get jokes and is easily distracted. He is fond of all of his teammates, especially his little brother Allen of whom he feels somewhat protective, but his love for Siren is deep and abiding (despite the fact he has never once remembered their anniversary).

Quote: "I thought that creature would be susceptible to a sudden introduction of phosphorous. Now, Diamond, would you carry it back to my lab for some tests?"

Powers/Tactics: Amazing Man can transmute any element into any other, through a subconscious telekinetic manipulation of matter at the atomic level. He generally uses this for simple tasks, such as turning the nitrogen in the air to a tranquilizing gas, or creating crude iron manacles for opponents. However, he is an accomplished chemist and occasionally comes up with a truly creative new use for his power just in time to save the day. His reflexes are low, as are his general defenses; usually he stays at the back of a fight while his flashier teammates take the offensive, shouting instructions and making the team's tactical decisions while deciding where best to apply his unique abilities.

Appearance: Michael Renton is a handsome man with brown eyes and brown hair starting to turn gray. His features are a bit sharp. He wears the basic Fab Five uniform, and tends toward starched shirts and lab coats when out of costume.

Amazing Man I

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	150 kg; 2½d6 HTH [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll: 13-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
18	COM	4	13-	
6	PD	3		Total: 14 PD (8 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total: 14 ED (8 rED)
5	SPD	22		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
6	REC	0		
40	END	5		
28	STUN	3		

Total Characteristics Cost: 105

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

Cost	Powers	END
70	*Transmutation:* Multipower, 70-point reserve	
5u	1) *Knockout Gas:* EB 4d6, No Normal Defense (LS: Self-Contained Breathing; +1), Area Of Effect (4" Nonselective Radius; +¾), Conforming (+½); Not in High Winds (-¼)	6
7u	2) *Create Masses Around Targets:* Entangle 6d6, 5 DEF, Variable Special Effects (+¼)	7
5u	3) *Create Gasses:* Change Environment 4" Radius (-3 PER Roll: Sight Group), Altered Shape (Any Area; +0), Conforming (+½), Varying Effect (+1)	5
5u	4) *Object Destruction:* RKA 1d6+1, Attack Versus Limited Defense (Power Defense, +1½), Does BODY (+1); No Knockback (-¼), Requires A Skill Roll (SS: Chemistry, -¼)	7
5u	5) *Solid into Gas:* Tunneling 10" through 10 DEF	5
5u	6) *Elemental Transmutation:* Major Transform 3½d6 (any nonliving element into another, +¼); Limited Target (-¼), Requires A Skill Roll (SS: Chemistry, -¼)	7
2u	7) *Atmosphere Creation:* Life Support (Expanded Breathing), Usable By Others (up to 4 others simultaneously, +1)	0
45	*Additional Minor Transmutation Effects:* VPP, 30-point reserve, Powers Can Be Changed As A Half-Phase Action (+½); Limited Class Of Powers Available (-½)	
16	*Costume:* Armor (8 PD/8 ED); IIF (-¼), Activation Roll 15- (-¼)	0
48	*Gadget Pool:* VPP, 40-point reserve; Can Only Be Changed Between Adventures (-½), Limited Class Of Powers Available (-½), OIF (-½)	0

Perks

3	Computer Link: UNTIL
4	Contact: Drake Wilson 8- (access to major institutions, significant Contacts of his own, useful Skills or resources)
10	Money (Wealthy)
4	Reputation: Heroic Explorer and Scientist (large group, 11-) +2/+2d6

Talents

3	Lightning Calculator

Skills

6	+2 with Transmutation Attacks
3	Computer Programming 13-
5	Cramming
3	Cryptography 13-
5	Electronics 14-
3	Forensic Medicine 13-
5	Inventor 14-
3	KS: Earth's Superhumans 13-
3	KS: Mysterious Places of the World 13-
1	Language: Atlantean (Basic Conversation)
1	Language: Birdman (Basic Conversation)
2	Language: Russian (Fluent Conversation)
3	Mechanics 13-
6	Navigation (Air, Dimensional, Land, Marine, Space) 13-
3	Oratory 13-
3	Paramedics 13-
9	Power (Transmutation) 14-
3	Scientist
4	1) SS: Astronomy 15-
2	2) SS: Astrophysics 13-
3	3) SS: Biochemistry 14-
2	4) SS: Biology 13-
3	5) SS: Chemistry 14-
2	6) SS: Hyper-Dimensional Physics 13-
3	7) SS: Physics 14-
3	Systems Operation 13-
3	Tactics 13-
3	Teamwork 13-
3	TF: Early Spacecraft, Large Planes, Spaceplanes

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 335

Total Cost: 440

200+ Disadvantages

5	DNPC: Lab Assistant (Russ Durban) 8- (Normal, Useful skills)
20	Hunted: Rogues Gallery 11- (As Pow, Harshly Punish, PC has a Public ID or is otherwise very easy to find)
15	Psychological Limitation: Insatiably Curious (Common, Strong)

Amazing Man I

15   Psychological Limitation: Code vs. Killing (Common, Strong)
10   Psychological Limitation: In Love with Siren (Common, Moderate)
15   Psychological Limitation: Takes Responsibility for Everything (Common, Strong)
20   Social Limitation: Public Celebrity (Very Frequently, Major)
140   Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 440

Kid Chameleon

Personality: Kid Chameleon is the junior member of the Fab Five, and goes through the most changes during the Sixties. At the time of the mission to Comet X, he's a fourteen-year-old boy who is quite bright for his age, hero-worships his older brother, Amazing Man, and constantly gets into scrapes by sticking his nose into dangerous situations. By the time a couple of years have passed, he's grown a bit into his looks (and amassed an enormous fan club primarily consisting of teenage girls), and become much more thoughtful and serious. He's sensitive and empathic, and becomes increasingly reluctant to use violence as he gets older.

Quote: "Why don't you let me take a quick look around as a hawk first?"

Powers/Tactics: Kid Chameleon can take the shape of any terrestrial animal he can think of, though he generally sticks to a range of particularly useful forms such as hawks, tigers, sharks, apes and tiny flying insects. As a general rule, more fantastic or alien forms are beyond him. He usually acts as the team's stealthy scout, attacking from surprise with a sudden form change.

Appearance: Allen Renton is a teenage boy, somewhat short and slender, with brown eyes and dirty-blonde hair that he wears according to the teen fashions of the time. (In the early '60s, for example, he has Beatlesque shaggy bangs, and later that decade he experiments with longer straight hair, and even disastrously flirts with muttonchops.)
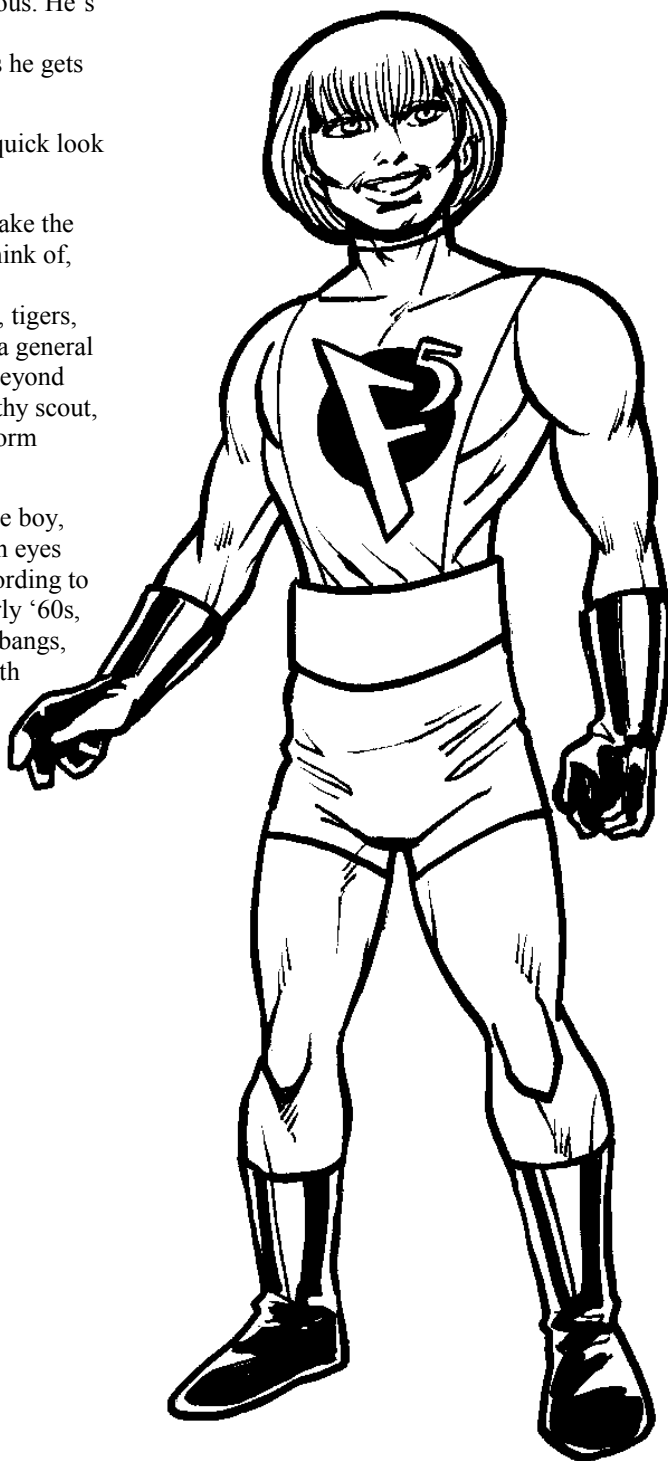
Kid Chameleon

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 HTH [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6 (8)
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll: 12-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
6	PD	4		Total: 14 PD (8 rPD)
5	ED	2		Total: 13 ED (8 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
7	REC	4		
36	END	5		
25	STUN	3		

Total Characteristics Cost: 74

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

Cost	Powers	END
90	*Animal Forms:* Multiform (Up to 300 Character Points) (Instant Change, x32 Number Of Forms)	0
5	*Lucky Kid:* Luck 1d6	0
16	*Costume:* Armor (8 PD/8 ED); Activation Roll 15- (-¼), IIF (-¼)	0

Perks
8 Money (Wealthy)
4 Reputation: Adorable Teen Hero (large group, 11-) +2/+2d6

Skills
10 +2 with DCV

11 Animal Handler (Aquatic Animals, Birds, Bovines, Canines, Elephants, Equines, Felines, Raptors, Reptiles & Amphibians, Ursines) 12-
3 Breakfall 13-
3 Climbing 13-
5 Concealment 13-
3 High Society 12-
3 KS: Animals 12-
2 KS: Dinosaurs 11-
3 Mimicry 12-
3 Riding 13-
4 SS: Zoology 13-
3 Stealth 13-
2 Survival (Temperate/Subtropical) 12-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 178

Total Cost: 252

150+ Disadvantages
25 Hunted: Rogues Gallery 11- (More Pow, Harshly Punish, PC has a Public ID or is otherwise very easy to find)
10 Psychological Limitation: Curious and Nosy (Common, Moderate)
15 Psychological Limitation: Protective/ Won't Harm Animals (Common, Strong)
15 Social Limitation: Celebrity Superhero (Frequently, Major)
5 Social Limitation: Youth (Occasionally, Minor)
32 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 252

You Gotta Have Character by Jason Walters

As long as the pocketwatch moved backwards and forwards in its slow, rhythmic way, the young man with his shirtsleeves rolled to his elbows continued speaking, his voice murmuring as it echoed softly through the rafters of the high-ceilinged clapboard church. Off to one side, a small bald man with bottle-thick glasses worked furiously to transcribe every one of the young man's words as they flowed from his hypnotized lips. The frenzied scratching of his pen provided the only audible counterpoint to the almost spellbinding sound of the young man's voice.

The crowd assembled in the pews below was respectfully silent, having come from farms and neighboring rural communities as much as half a day's ride away to hear the eerie pronouncements of the renounced Poughkeepsie Seer, an uneducated man reputedly able to speak in tongues long lost to history, read newspapers while blindfolded, diagnose illness, and predict the future while under the mesmeric influences of his medium, Mr. William Levingston. They sat sternly in their Sunday best, men in their stiff collars and women in their enormous flower-like bonnets, waiting for a dramatic pronouncement from beyond the known world.

The young man's eyes were rolled back into his head, his pale handsome features covered in sweat. Slowly his voice increased in volume until the entire assembly could clearly hear him speak with an oddly foreign, almost biblical accent.

"In the beginning the Univercoelum was one boundless, indefinable, and unimaginable ocean of Liquid Fire." He declared in an authoritative voice, "The most vigorous and ambitious imagination is not capable of forming an adequate conception of the height and depth and length and breadth thereof. There was one vast expanse of liquid substance. It was without bounds – inconceivable – and with qualities and essences incomprehensible. This was the original condition of Matter. It was without forms, for it was but one Form. It had no motions, but it was an eternity of Motion. It was without parts, for it was a Whole. Particles did not exist, but the Whole was as one Particle…."

> "Life is lived forwards, but understood backwards." — Kierkegaard

Back in the 19th Century, Andrew Jackson Davis, popularly known as the "Poughkeepsie Seer," was one of Victorian America's foremost occultists. A prolific writer of dozens of books on the paranormal, a renowned psychic healer, inspiration for the Children's Lyceum school movement, and a proponent of many American utopian experiments, Davis has been called "the John the Baptist of Modern Spiritualism" as his early writings helped lay the groundwork for the founding of the Spiritualist religion. He anticipated Jazz Age American psychic Edgar Cayce by giving effective medical diagnosis while in a hypnotic trance, and New Age psychic John Edwards by communing with the dead. He claimed to be able to leave his body, journeying both forward and backward in history to return with the wisdom of the ancients as well as the secrets of the future. This "astral time travel" inspired him to mix social idealism with his mystical writings, influencing the thoughts of such better remembered historical figures as crusading urban reformer Albert Brisbane, communal settlement founder Thomas Lake Harris, and early horror writer Edgar Allan Poe.

A NOTE TO MY READERS

Several of you have recently lamented on the Hero Games discussion board that I, your humble author, have failed to provide a "fantastic" or fictional version of an actual historical figure since my write-up of Robert Johnson way back in issue number one of *Digital Hero*. Upon reflection, this seemed like quite a reasonable criticism; so, for your enjoyment, I present a fantasy version of the great Victorian occultist Andrew Jackson Davis, who at least *thought* he had the powers I've outlined below. Enjoy.

Andrew Jackson Davis (The Poughkeepsie Seer)

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 HTH [1]
10	DEX	0	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
15	CON	10	12-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll: 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
15	COM	3	12-	
8	PD	6		Total: 8 PD (0 rPD)
8	ED	5		Total: 8 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	20		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
7	REC	4		
30	END	0		
36	STUN	8		

Total Characteristics Cost: 110

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

Cost	Powers	END
50	*Clairsentience:* Multipower, 50-point reserve	
2u	1) *Clairvoyant Diagnosis:* N-Ray Perception (Analyze, Discriminatory)	0
2u	2) *Precognition:* Clairsentience (Sight and Hearing Groups, Precognition); Precognition/Retrocognition Only (-1), Only Through Dreams (-1)	5
2u	3) *Clairsentience:* Clairsentience (Sight Group); One Sense Only (-¼)	2
70	*Astral Double:* Duplication (350-point form), Altered Duplicates (half of Duplicate's points spent differently; +½); Feedback (Only STUN Damage Feeds Back; -½)	0

Perks

11	Contact: Emanuel Swedenborg 15- (extremely useful Skills or resources, Very Good relationship)	
2	Reputation (Victorian Intellectuals, 8-) +2/+2d6	

Skills

5	Conversation 14-	
4	KS: Hidden History 13-	
4	KS: Literature 14-	
4	KS: The Occult 14-	
5	KS: Philosophy 15-	
3	KS: Spiritualism 13-	
4	KS: Supernatural Evil 13-	
3	Oratory 13-	
3	Paramedics 13-	
5	Persuasion 14-	
3	PS: Writer 12-	
4	SS: Medicine 13-	
3	Seduction 13-	

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 190

Total Cost: 300

200+ Disadvantages

5	Physical Limitation: Nearsighted (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
5	Psychological Limitation: Victorian Eccentric (Uncommon, Moderate)
15	Psychological Limitation: Pacifist (Uncommon, Total)
15	Reputation: Eccentric (Frequently, Extreme)
15	Social Limitation: Cultural and Religious Revolutionary (Frequently, Major)
45	Experience Bonus

Total Disadvantage Points: 300
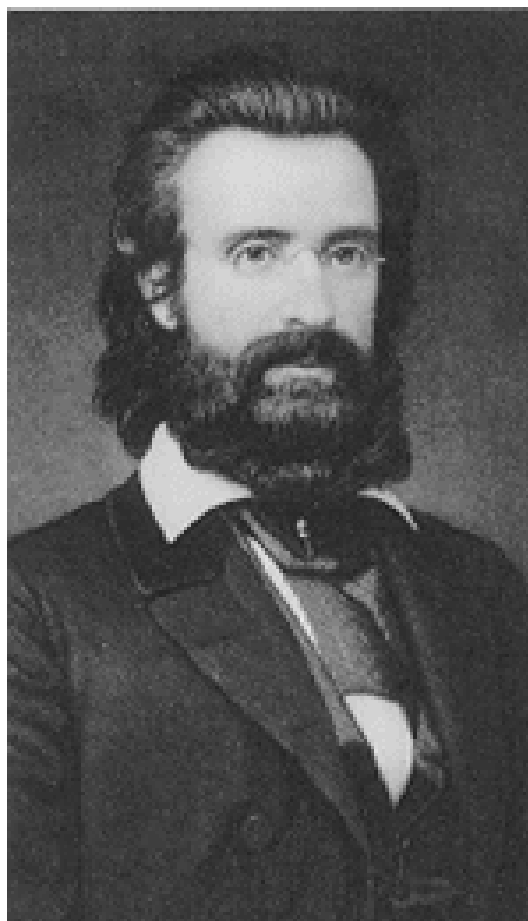
Astral Double

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
0	STR	-10	9-	Lift 25 kg; 0d6 HTH
10	DEX	0	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
15	CON	10	12-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll: 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
15	COM	3	12-	
6	PD	6		Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)
8	ED	5		Total: 8 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	20		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
5	REC	4		
30	END	0		
33	STUN	10		

Total Characteristics Cost: 102

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

Cost	Powers	END
25	*Astral Body:* Elemental Control, 50-point Powers	
17	1) *Clairvoyant Diagnosis:* N-Ray Perception (Analyze, Discriminatory)	0
9	2) *Magical Staff of Healing:* Healing BODY 4d6 (Resurrection); Independent (-2), OAF (-1)	6
29	3) *Astral Flight:* Flight 18", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
36	4) *Astral Form:* Desolidification (Affected by Other Astral Beings), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Always On (-½)	0
27	5) *Time Travel:* Extra-Dimensional Movement (Any Time, Any Location; Travel Through Time); Extra Time (Full Phase, -½)	6
6	*Astral Defense:* Power Defense (6 points)	0
25	*Astral Immunity:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing, Does Not Eat, Does Not Sleep; Safe in High Pressure, High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum)	0

Perks

2	Reputation (Victorian Intellectuals, 8-) +2/+2d6	
11	Emanuel Swedenborg (15-) (extremely useful Skills or resources, Very Good relationship)	

Talents

20	Universal Translator 13-	

Skills

5	Conversation 14-	
4	KS: Hidden History 13-	
4	KS: Literature 14-	
4	KS: The Occult 14-	
5	KS: Philosophy 15-	
3	KS: Spiritualism 13-	
4	KS: Supernatural Evil 13-	
3	Paramedics 13-	
5	Persuasion 14-	
4	SS: Medicine 13-	

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 248

Total Cost: 350

200+ Disadvantages

20	Distinctive Features: Floating Ghost-Like Apparition (Not Concealable, Major Reaction)	
5	Physical Limitation: Near-sighted (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)	
15	Psychological Limitation: Pacifist (Uncommon, Total)	
5	Psychological Limitation: Victorian Eccentric (Uncommon, Moderate)	
10	Reputation: Eccentric 8- (Extreme)	
10	Social Limitation: Cultural and Religious Revolutionary (Frequently, Major, Not Limiting in Some Cultures)	
20	Susceptibility: Locations Devastated By Violence (Common, 3d6 Damage, Instant)	
20	Vulnerability: 2x STUN from Evil Magic (Common)	
58	Experience Bonus	

Total Disadvantage Points: 350

POUGHKEEPSIE SEER PLOT SEEDS

Davis has had a vision of the future in which Takofanes the Archlich destroys much of the city of Boston, transforming its inhabitants into flesh-eating zombie servants. Davis sends his Astral Double to warn the PCs, but what can mere mortals do to stop The Undying Lord?

The Vibora Bay hero known as Robert Caliburn has gone missing, and Andrew Jackson Davis knows exactly why – he's been thrown back in time to the 19th Century! Davis' precognitive powers enable him to understand the true nature of Caliburn's role in the war between Heaven and Hell. While he helps the befuddled mystic get back to the 21st Century, Davis' Astral Double travels into the future to recruit the PCs' help. If they cannot figure out a way to return Caliburn to his rightful time, the war between the Angelic and the Demonic may occur ahead of schedule with disastrous consequences for mankind!

Davis has had a vision of the future in which DEMON has regained control of the dread Basilisk Orb which it lost in the 1960s. To prevent this from occurring, he sends his Astral Double to urge the PCs to retrieve the Orb from its secret hiding place before DEMON's agents once again recover it. Unfortunately, this ancient artifact is currently hidden in Zorgatha's cave on Monster Island.

Davis has had a vision of the future in which the Circle of the Scarlet Moon has managed to gain control of all the cold-powered supers in the world by casting a complex spell at the Earth's south pole. He sends his Astral Double to warn the Trismegistus Council…. but all of them have gone missing! He then goes to the PCs for assistance. Can they rescue the Council while preventing the Circle from dominating some of the world's mightiest mortals?

Background/History: Andrew Jackson Davis was born on August 11, 1826, in the tiny hamlet of Blooming Grove, New York. The son of an uneducated, hard-drinking farmer, weaver, and shoemaker, he was largely raised by his sickly, deeply religious mother who reputedly exhibited strong visionary powers. The Davis family moved frequently from one small upstate New York town to another, enduring a life of miserable poverty. Andrew received only about five months of formal education during his entire childhood. He reportedly heard disembodied voices before he had even reached puberty, showing signs of clairvoyance quite early in life. At the age of 15, he was apprenticed to a shoemaker in Poughkeepsie, New York (which is were his later nickname "The Poughkeepsie Seer" came from). Davis showed little aptitude for the shoemaker's trade, however, and left to work in a general store. He was a failure at the latter job as well.

At age 17, Davis became interested in hypnotism after attending some lectures by "Professor" J. S. Grimes, a mesmerist (hypnotist) visiting Poughkeepsie. Grimes tried to hypnotize Davis, but with no results. Soon afterward, however, he was successfully "magnetized" (hypnotized) by William Levingston, a local tailor interested in mesmerism and trance states. Davis was an extraordinarily adept hypnotic subject, showing such a "rare clairvoyance" that Levingston gave up his tailoring business to devote all of his time to developing Davis' abilities. Using the young man's clairvoyant powers to cure diseases, Levingston and Davis performed effective medical diagnosis while "magnetized." With his "spirit eyes," seemingly in the middle of the forehead, he reportedly could read newspapers blindfolded, see activity in the next room, and predict coming events with a surprising level of accuracy. While in a trance, Davis would see human bodies as transparent, reading the auras of each organ with its own special luminosity, which was greatly reduced in cases of disease. Together the two men opened a successful "clairvoyant" clinic in Poughkeepsie.

Davis served as Levingston's clairvoyant hypnotic subject for two years, a situation which greatly benefited both men. But in March 1844, he had a visionary experience of "psychic flight through space" which was to forever change his life. Overnight he was transformed from a psychic curiosity to an occult philosopher-prophet, charged with the salvation of the human race. Flying freely over the Catskill Mountains, across the Hudson River, then finally through both space and time, Davis' "Astral Double" traveled far into the past to meet with the ancient Greek physician Galen (129-199 A.D.) as well as the 18th Century Swedish visionary and spiritual philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772).

Galen gave Davis a powerful magic staff of healing, while Swedenborg promised to instruct and guide him for the rest of his physical life. Thereafter, Davis considered himself personally guided in his steps by the Swedish mystic.

In 1845, Davis abandoned healing in favor of writing, at first still relying on hypnotism. He began traveling extensively, giving a series of 157 public lectures in New York City alone. These orations, which touched on a wide variety scientific, historical, and philosophical topics, were periodically given in languages that the uneducated young man had no ability to speak, such as ancient Hebrew, Arabic, and Greek. A Bridgeport physician, Dr. S.S. Lyon, was his "magnetizer" at these sessions, while a Universalist minister, the Rev. William Fishbough, served as reporter and scribe, copying down Davis' trance discourses word for word. Edgar Allan Poe occasionally attended Davis' sermons, as did the utopian socialist social reformer Albert Brisbane (the cofounder of Brook Farm), and another utopian dreamer, the religious communal settlement organizer Thomas Lake Harris. All of them were greatly influenced by the powerful, odd young man who seemingly had the ability to commune with the distant past.

In 1847, Davis' trance revelations were published as *The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind*, an exhaustive 800-page anthology of occult history, philosophy, science, and mysticism which echoed with the wisdom of the long dead Swedenborg. *The Principles of Nature* began with a description of the creation of the Universe from "liquid fire," curiously foreshadowing modern "Big Bang" cosmogonies. It then rather shockingly described the history of human religion from God's own perspective. Davis discussed the destiny of the human soul, rejecting the idea of Hell as well as the unique authority of the Bible. In fact, *The Principles of Nature* directly attacked conventional religion, displaying an entirely unique, very radical, social and religious spirit. An incredible success in its day, the book went through 34 editions in less than 30 years.

From 1847 to 1849, Davis published the magazine *Univercoelum and Spiritual Philosopher,* which promoted his views. In 1848, when the Fox sisters of Hydesville, New York, near Rochester, announced the mysterious rapping that launched the Spiritualist movement, Davis immediately interpreted these phenomena in the light of his philosophy, becoming the leading spokesman of this new religion as well as its chief theologian. From 1850 to 1855, Davis labored on his first major work without relying on hypnotism, the massive five volume tomes known as *The Great Harmonia*, providing an

intellectual framework for the phenomena of Spiritualism which gave the new religion much of its phraseology and cosmology. Outside of Spiritualist circles, *The Great Harmonia* had an enormous influence on 19th Century American nonconformist religious, social, educational, and medical beliefs. After physical death, Davis believed, spirits ascend to a level reflecting the degree to which they have lived in harmony with universal Divine Law. They progress through a series of six spheres above the Earth to greater and greater levels of divinity. He called the highest of these spheres the Summerland – a term that was to become the Spiritualist name for heaven. In the same way, too, Davis believed that the Earth was constantly evolving, becoming better and better with passing years. His thoughts reflected the unfailingly optimistic mood of most 19th Century dissident utopian thinkers.

In 1863, Davis gave a lecture in New York idyllically describing the afterlife education of deceased children in garden schools called "Lyceums," a name used by the popular adult education lecture programs of the time. This lecture so motivated some of his listeners that they began to found similar schools here on Earth, starting the Children's Lyceum movement. The Children's Lyceums were based on Davis' conviction that "a child is the repository of infinite possibilities," bearing the "image" of an "imperishable and perfect being." This scholastic belief foreshadowed much later progressive educational theory, such as that practiced in modern Montessori schools, which aims to draw out a child's innate potential rather than forcing knowledge through rote memorization.

Davis exhibited radical views in his personal life as well. In 1848, he married Catherine DeWolfe Dodge, a wealthy divorcée some 20 years his senior, whom he called his "Spiritual Sister." She died five years later, in November of 1853. In 1855, he married another divorcée, Mary Fenn Love, an active Spiritualist and inveterate campaigner for women's rights. She sought escape from an oppressive marriage by embracing Spiritualism, feminism, and…. well, Davis, who promptly claimed that marriage is only valid between soulmates. Those trapped in non-spiritual unions have the right, possibly even the duty, to seek divorce. When genuine soulmates come together, Davis claimed, they have the freedom to determine whether their partnership will be temporal or eternal. These radical views of love and marriage, some of the most controversial in America at the time, were tested in 1884 when Davis sought to divorce Mary on the grounds that he now realized they were not true soulmates. Davis defended his action at length in his autobiography *Beyond the Valley* (1885), but the divorce greatly harmed his

reputation. In 1885, he married a third (and final) wife, Della E. Markham.

Davis published more than 30 other books after completing *The Great Harmonia*, covering such subjects as philosophy, cosmology, health, and the afterlife. Like *The Great Harmonia*, they were no longer written with the aid of "magnetism," showing Davis' desire to distance himself from his original 1840s mesmerism. He also wrote two autobiographies, *The Magic Staff* (1857), and its sequel, *Beyond the Valley* (1885), which explained a great deal about his mystical abilities as well as his beliefs. In 1878, Davis dissociated himself from the Spiritualist movement to form the short-lived First Harmonial Associated Church of New York. Though a failure, this departure from the movement he was fundamental in founding was an expression of his disillusionment with the majority of Spiritualists, whom he felt were more interested in sensational séance room spectacles than achieving philosophical depth. In 1886, Davis took a medical degree from the United States Medical College in New York. He moved to Boston, where he began practicing homeopathic medicine from a small occult bookstore. There, Davis sold books while prescribing herbal remedies to his patients. He became a close friend of Marcellus Ayer, founder of the First Spiritual Temple, serving with Ayer on a committee for promoting the work of Professor Joseph Rhodes Buchanan, a pioneer researcher in psychic object-reading. Davis spent the remainder of his life quietly practicing alternative medicine, dying in his Boston home on January 13, 1910.

Personality/Motivation: Andrew Jackson Davis is the quintessential New England mystic, whose ideas combine the transcendentalism of an Emerson or a Thoreau with the utopian visions of the Victorian period. Like many idealistic philosophers of his time, Davis believes that personal and social activism are inseparable from spiritual growth. He sees the metaphysical realm as continuous with natural, moral law, governed by its own rules and therefore approachable through reason when combined with self-discipline – though as his grasp of both is minimal at best. Like many Victorians, his understanding of the scientific method seems hopelessly muddled when compared to that of our sophisticated modern understanding. Yet a lot of these beliefs, which are so demonstratively false in our age, seemed to work as fact during his own time period.

When he is seized by terrible visions of the future, Davis views it as his spiritual duty to send his Astral Double through time to assist those forces capable of defeating the evil in his dreams *before* those visions come to pass. The double is

THE MAJOR WORKS OF ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS

The Principles of Nature, 1847

The Great Harmonia, 1855

The Penetralia, 1856

The Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse, 1856

The Magic Staff, 1857

The Harbinger of Health, 1861

A Stellar Key to the Summer Land, 1867

Beyond the Valley, 1885

The Children's Progressive Lyceum, 1893

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EMANUEL VON SWEDENBORG (1688-1772)

A Swedish philosopher, theologian, chemist, anatomist, and mystic who was fluent in eleven languages, Swedenborg devoted the first half of his life to scientific investigations. Frustrated, he turned his full attention to theology and metaphysics, exploring the mystical experience through the use of rational scientific method. Among his most popular books are *Heaven and Hell* and *Earths in Universe*. His spiritual writing influenced Emerson, Goethe, Henry James, Dostoevsky, and the romantic poet William Blake. During his life, Swedenborg published more than 50 works. His books have been translated into more than thirty languages.

capable of offering expert advice on a variety of subjects, healing injured PCs, or even traveling back in time to gain the knowledge of great thinkers and sages from the past. He sends his Astral Double back regularly to meet with the great 18th Century Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (who understands the double to be some sort of angel), perhaps the only historical figure Davis is aware of who can advise him on the proper use of his powers.

There are some fundamental personality differences between Davis and his Astral Double. The actual Davis is prone to appetite, infidelity, and bombast – traits which his more noble astral self seems to totally lack. On the other hand, the double lacks not only Davis' "lust for life," but his literary and oratory skills as well. Though both possess the same medical, philosophical, and spiritual abilities, Davis is unable to directly heal injury in the same manner as his double, who in turn lacks the Clairsentience which makes Davis so perceptive. The two are most effective when operating together at the same place and time, though this seldom occurs.

Quote: "It is a truth that spirits commune with one another while one is in the body and the other in the higher spheres – and this, too, when the person in the body is unconscious of the influx, and hence cannot be convinced of the fact; and this truth will ere long present itself in the form of a living demonstration. And the world will hail with delight the ushering in of that era when the interiors of men will be opened, and the spiritual communion will be established."

Powers/Tactics: Andrew Jackson Davis is an early modern mutant, with a variety of sublime yet incredibly useful powers which, when combined with his skills, enable him to effectively diagnose ailments in an age when medicine was almost synonymous with butchery and quackery. His discriminatory N-Ray perception allows him to look inside of a patient to determine the health of each individual organ, while his SS: Medicine and Paramedic roles enable him to prescribe effective medications to treat any diseases he locates. Limited Clairsentience allows him to look through walls or other solid objects up to the distance of his normal, somewhat nearsighted vision, giving him a level of perception far beyond that of normal men. While mesmerized in a trance state, he is able to experience visions of the future, which he can then send his nearly invulnerable duplicate astral body to investigate.

Davis' transparent "Astral Double" can move across the time stream with relative ease, speak any human language, fly through the air, heal the injured, and even resurrect the dead. His

knowledge of the occult, supernatural evil, and the "hidden" history of man is considerable, while his high intelligence level makes him a valuable advisor on nearly any magical or spiritual subject. While invulnerable to most forms of physical and energy attack (save those made by another astral being), the Astral Double is vulnerable to attacks made by evil spellcasters, whom it will generally go to great lengths to avoid. Likewise, its very magical nature is disrupted by the lingering presence of suffering which exists on major battlefields, in concentration camps, and other locations which have endured intense human suffering caused by violence.

Both Davis and his double are pacifists sworn to never raise a hand against another living being, though this does not prevent them from assisting well-intentioned PCs who don't share their beliefs.

Campaign Use: Although certainly useful as an eccentric NPC in any Victorian or *Western Hero* setting, Andrew Jackson Davis is intended to be the harbinger of bad news for any mystically inclined *Champions* campaigns which take place in North America, preferably in New England. His Astral Double's job is to show up, warn the PCs that he has had a vision of terrible supernatural disaster, and then be as helpful as possible during the course of any ensuing adventure. Davis will recall his double for consultation should he conveniently have any further visions, providing the GM with an expedient way of helping the PCs along with more information should they get stuck. He is also able to scout both the past as well as the future, should that prove helpful within the scope of the game.

Davis can also make a valuable contact should a player want some sort of odd "guardian angel" to periodically look over his shoulder. To buy him as Perk, the PC should spend 11 points to get *Contact: Andrew Jackson Davis 15- (extremely useful Skills or resources, Very Good relationship)*.

Appearance: Andrew Jackson Davis is an amiable looking man of a medium build with a full beard, brown shoulder length hair, and a pleasant, almost mischievous smile. He wears a well-made brown suit with a silk cravat, tailored in the early Victorian style, as well as a pair of golden spectacles that glint constantly in bright sunlight. Andrew is prone to making nervous, exaggerated hand movements when he speaks, often slapping the back of his right hand into the palm of his left to punctuate a particularly important point. His semi-transparent astral double is identical in appearance, save for its tendency to hover slightly off of the ground.

Your Horoscope For: Gemini by Allen Thomas

> They are the image of all internal and external opposites….
>
> — *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*,
> Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant
> (Tr. John Buchanan-Brown)

This month's installment of *Your Horoscope For:* presents a new villain named Janus and details a short, one-night scenario concerning his attempt to merge a section of the PCs' world with one entirely opposite.

The twins of Gemini are often considered symbols of dualism and diametrically opposed opposites. In comic books, such dualism is sometimes more than just a metaphor; it is a multiversal, multi-dimensional fact… and the same can be true of your *Champions* campaign! This scenario introduces "Left-Hand Earth," a place where Professor Preserver is the downtrodden's greatest champion against the tyranny of the world's governments, Organitron seeks to create a utopian world where man and machine co-exist peacefully, and the superheroes – including the Left-Hand counterparts of your PCs! – are the protectors of the powerful and crusaders for injustice. At the conclusion of the scenario, the PCs must confront Janus and, in tried-and-true comic book tradition, defeat their villainous opposites from Left-Hand Earth, or else a part of both worlds might disappear forever!

Scene One: A Left-Handed World

The adventure begins with a series of weird happenings. The events can take place anywhere in your campaign city, but work best if the superheroes' base is included in the area. You can get the PCs involved in one of two ways: either have them experience what's going on first-hand while out on the town with a DNPC, while at work or attending class in his Secret Identity, when at the base during a dull eight-hour shift of monitor duty, or during other day-to-day activities; or else you can have an NPC ask them to investigate.

Starting in the morning, the weird happenings should increase in frequency as the day progresses. Listed below are some ideas for the events; you should customize these so they're appropriate to the circumstances. You're also encouraged to come up with some of your own.

– ATM machines give out "funny money." The writing is reversed (as if held up in a mirror). Hamilton appears on twenties, and Jefferson on tens.
– All the doorknobs in a building reverse sides – if the doorknob was on the right, it is now on the left; and vice versa – and the direction a door opens is also reversed.
– All the brand logos on apparel in a department store are upside down.
– Music – whether from a car stereo, while on the elevator, or in a bar – plays in reverse.
– A car accident occurs when a man drives on the wrong side of the road. When police investigate, they discover the steering wheel is on the right side of the car, the floor pedals are in reverse order, and the labels on the gauges are written backwards.
– In one office building, the men come to work wearing white suits, black shirts, and white shoes.
– The wait staff at a restaurant begins to speak in reverse (Left-Handed English), and when seated, diners are asked to pay their check (including tip) up-front.
– All the desks for right-handed students on a college campus are replaced with desks for left-handed students.
– Half of the traffic lights at an intersection light in reverse, red appearing on the bottom and green at the top. The reversal confuses drivers and a multiple car pile-up results.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Janus has begun to merge a section of Right-Hand Earth with that of Left-Hand Earth. The section of city affected is circular with a radius of 1 mile (in three-dimensional space, the area is a stubby cone with an approximate height of 100 feet) and centered on Janus' apartment. As the process gets under way, Left-Hand Earth begins to "bleed" into Right-Hand Earth. Once successfully merged, the areas will disappear from their respective worlds, each pair of opposites becoming a single individual, and an entirely new dimension will be created. At last, Janus will have a home to call his own!

Scene Two: Discovering The Doorway

The PCs should be eager to investigate what's happening in their home city. By plotting the locations of the strange events, the PCs discover that each occurs within at least two miles of another event and boundary of the area

artwork by Robert Cram
cartopgraphy by Dave Mattingly

is vaguely circular. This should be enough to lead them to search the circumference of the area bounded by the Dimensional Harmonic Transmitters described below. If not, allow the PCs a Deduction Roll to determine the information.

Additionally, a PC with SS: Physics (or the like) and the proper equipment can identify an unknown energy frequency permeating the area where the events occur. The PC cannot identify the type of energy without SS: Dimensional Physics. At your discretion, the PC can fine-tune his detection equipment to allow him to identify areas where the energy frequency is strongest, and from there find the Dimensional Harmonic Transmitters.

DIMENSIONAL HARMONIC TRANSMITTERS

Two days ago, Janus installed satellite dishes at six places exactly one mile from Doorway. Each satellite dish is three stories up, whether attached to the side of the building or placed on the roof. Each is one mile, in a straight line, from two others (a distance of approximately 1.04 miles along the circumference of the circular area). The satellite dish's transponder is actually a transmitter, and transmits a dimensional harmonic to a central receiver atop Janus' ten-story apartment building. Working together, the six transmitters and central receiver create a sort of umbrella of dimensional energy. This energy will slowly but surely remove the area from Right-Hand Earth, merge it with the parallel area in Left-Hand Earth, and create an entirely new dimension.

Upon investigation and with a successful Electronics Roll, a PC quickly realizes the satellite dish is in truth a transmitter, but without SS: Dimensional Engineering cannot identify its precise function. By finding two satellite dishes and measuring the angle of the transmitters, the PCs can triangulate the location of the central receiver.

APT. #22

The central receiver looks like an old TV antenna with a vertical shaft of metal and six spokes radiating from the top. A thickly insulated bundle of wires runs from the antenna to a relay unit in apartment #22. The apartment is rented to Janus under the name of "J. Sullivan," and the relay unit is disguised as a television. A successful Electronics Roll while investigating the television reveals that, similar to the satellite dishes disguised as transmitters, the television is not in fact a television. If the PCs enter the apartment without succeeding in a Skill Versus Skill Contest with Doorway's *Security Systems* Skill, alarms sound in Doorway and Janus knows the superheroes are close to discovering his hideout.

Sparsely furnished, the apartment has one bedroom, one bath, a kitchenette, and a front room. A quick investigation reveals the apartment barely seems inhabited: there's no food in the cabinets, no toiletries in the bathroom, no coats in the hall closet, and so on. With a longer search and a successful Concealment Roll, a PC finds cameras hidden in doorframes and wood trim throughout the apartment. The greater the level of success, the more cameras the PC finds, and there are at least two in each room. No wires lead from the cameras; a successful Electronics Roll identifies a transmitter similar in design to the Dimensional Harmonic Transmitters.

In the bedroom is a closet with two mirrored doors. The doors open by sliding on tracks. If the right-hand door is opened (it slides from right to left), a normal closet is revealed. Inside is a single pair of old tennis shoes formerly owned by James Sullivan. If the left-hand door is opened (it slides from left to right), a hallway is revealed. 3" long and 1" wide, the hallway leads to Doorway.

> **GM Warning:** Chances are, when you ask a player, "Which way do you slide the closet door," he's going to know something's up with the closet. If you'd like the closet door to be more puzzling, you should ask similar questions about all the PCs' actions in the apartment. For example: Ask them which kitchen cabinet they open first or which way they slide the shower curtain. By doing this, the closet door seems no more unusual than anything else, and at the same time, the players realize something is unusual about the apartment.

Scene Three: Through The Looking Glass

Unless the PCs have been especially clever, Janus knows they're coming and is prepared. As the PCs enter the hallway leading to the control room, they can glimpse a figure 12" away. In the blink of an eye, six other figures – eerily familiar in size and shape – appear in front of the figure. These are the Left-Hand Earth opposites of the PCs. Janus, who speaks both Right- and Left-Hand English fluently, quickly explains to the Left-Handers that the PCs are extra-dimensional invaders, who seek to topple the government of the United States thereby bringing peace and prosperity to its cruelly treated masses. The Left-Handers' response: Those dastardly do-gooding extra-dimensional slime!

And with that, let the donnybrook commence!

Looking Left-Handed: The exact appearance of the Left-Handers is left in your capable hands, but below are some ideas:

– Reverse the color scheme or darken the colors of a superhero's costume. For instance, the Left-Handed Ironclad, rather than having skin of glimmering silver, has skin that is rusty and corroded. Or the Left-Handed Nighthawk's costume, lacking the silver trim and accessories, is even darker than Nighthawk's own.

– Less costume and more skin. For instance, Witchcraft wears a modest tunic and cloak; her Left-Handed counterpart wears a mini-skirt and see-through blouse similar to Talisman's. This trick can also work in reverse. Something of an exhibitionist, Sapphire wears a tight-fitting costume; her counterpart wears enveloping robes with a cowl that hides her face.

– Skulls and spikes. One sure way of telling how bad the bad guy is: Count the skulls. For instance, rather than Defender's sleek armor with clean lines, his Left-Handed counterpart's armor has spiked gauntlets, spiked elbow and knee pads, spiked shoulder pads, and a helmet shaped like a stylized skull.

– Reverse or otherwise change the logo. For instance, the lightning bolt on Left-Handed Kinetik's costume runs from his left shoulder to his right thigh, and is black rather than white.

Talking Left-Handed: Through the use of Powers, Talents, or just old-fashioned ingenuity, one of the PCs might discover a way to communicating with his doppelganger. If so, the difficulty of convincing him of the truth is up to you… but even if Right- and Left-Hand superteams join forces to attack Janus, once Janus is defeated, both sides are likely to revert to type. The Left-Handers are going to be eager to exploit the newly discovered Right-Hand Earth and its softhearted inhabitants, and only the PCs stand in their way! It won't be long before the Left-Handers betray their new allies… and probably right after Janus is captured.

THE CONTROL ROOM

The fight begins in Doorway's middle level, the control room. The control room is circular with a diameter of 10" and has two levels, the main floor and a walkway. The ceiling is 2" above the main floor. The walkway is 1" above the main floor, and a low railing runs along its edge. Access panels, strange gauges, and warning lights of unknown purpose fill the wall along the walkway. On the main floor, a large display monitor is opposite the hallway. Nearby are the control panels for "piloting" Doorway and two seats. Facing the control panels, those on the left are labeled in Left-Hand English; those on the right, Right-Hand English. A ladder

on the main floor leads down to the engine rooms; another ladder leads from the walkway to the living quarters above.

GM TIPS

First, make sure you get a hold of the players' character sheets before beginning the scenario – preferably a week or two in advance. The Left-Handers, while having opposite personalities, have the exact same powers and Character Points as the PCs. Upon seeing Janus and his Summoned allies, the players may already suspect their character's Left-Hand counterparts are exact duplicates, but no sense confirming their suspicions by asking for their character sheets then and there. Also, there's nothing to stop you from altering the character sheets slightly – maybe changing fire powers to cold powers, changing bludgeons (HAs) to sharp weapons (HKAs), and so on.

Second, this fight is an excellent opportunity to teach the PCs the proper use of tactics. If you've had some ideas about team tactics that could benefit the group, there's no better way to teach them than to show them.

WHAT ABOUT JANUS?

If the fight goes badly for the Left-Handers, Janus attempts to flee. He cannot use Extra-Dimensional Movement while on Doorway; he can only move between Right- and Left-Hand Earth. So he immediately makes for the hallway and exit. Once back on Earth, he moves between dimensions until he escapes.

If captured, Janus tells the PCs his story (see p25-26) with all the dramatic angst he can muster. Maybe the superheroes will help him find his parents; or maybe they'll decide therapy's the best thing for the lonely young man….

LEAVING DOORWAY

There's one exit from Doorway – the hall the PCs walked down from the apartment. The door at the end of the hallway leads to both Right- and Left-Hand Earth. Pressing the "open" button on the left opens the door onto Left-Hand Earth; pressing the button on the right opens it onto Right-Hand Earth.

(Breaking through the door [DEF 8, BODY 10] leads to the inter-dimensional vacuum. Doorway will quickly seal the breach after a couple of seconds, preserving the integrity of its life support systems. Flying off into inter-dimensional space is a bad idea.)

The superheroes – assuming of course they're victorious! – can return the Left-Handers to their Earth in one of two ways: either chuck them through Doorway's exit, or force Janus to Dispel them. Whatever they do, it might be a wise idea to recalibrate Doorway's entrance.

Janus' harmonic transmitters exist in both worlds, and if the PCs could find their way to Doorway, it's safe to assume their villainous counterparts could too!

The Further Adventures

Janus' quest for a home doesn't have to end with the scenario above. Below are some plot seeds for further adventures with Janus and Left-Hand Earth.

Sunaj: Janus believes himself unique, but what if Drs. Janice Sullivan and James Stevens discovered, on the opposite side of the world, a different Doorway? And what if they named their child Sunaj after the Left-Hand Earth's god of doorways? Perhaps Janus is unique, but his opposite exists… rather than amoral, Sunaj swings wildly between Right- and Left-Hand moralities. And what happens when the two meet? Will there be a strange sort of understanding or will they be instant enemies?

Lost and Found: Janus discovers the fate of his missing parents. Doctor Destroyer has captured Dr. Janice Stevens and seeks to exploit Left-Hand Earth; Professor Preserver on Left-Hand Earth entertains Dr. James Sullivan as an honored guest and seeks to recover Sullivan's lover from Destroyer's clutches. Can either world survive when Destroyer and Preserver meet in person? What role will Janus play in their conflict? And let's not forget the PCs!

Summoned: It begins with a tingling sensation, then suddenly the PCs find themselves in an eerily similar world where everyone speaks in reverse. Janus stands before them… and so do their Left-Handed counterparts. The Left-Handers want revenge for their previous defeat, and have forced Janus to summon the PCs through the dimensions, but during the fight, Janus escapes. Now the PCs are stuck and must find a way free of this topsy-turvy world of opposites.
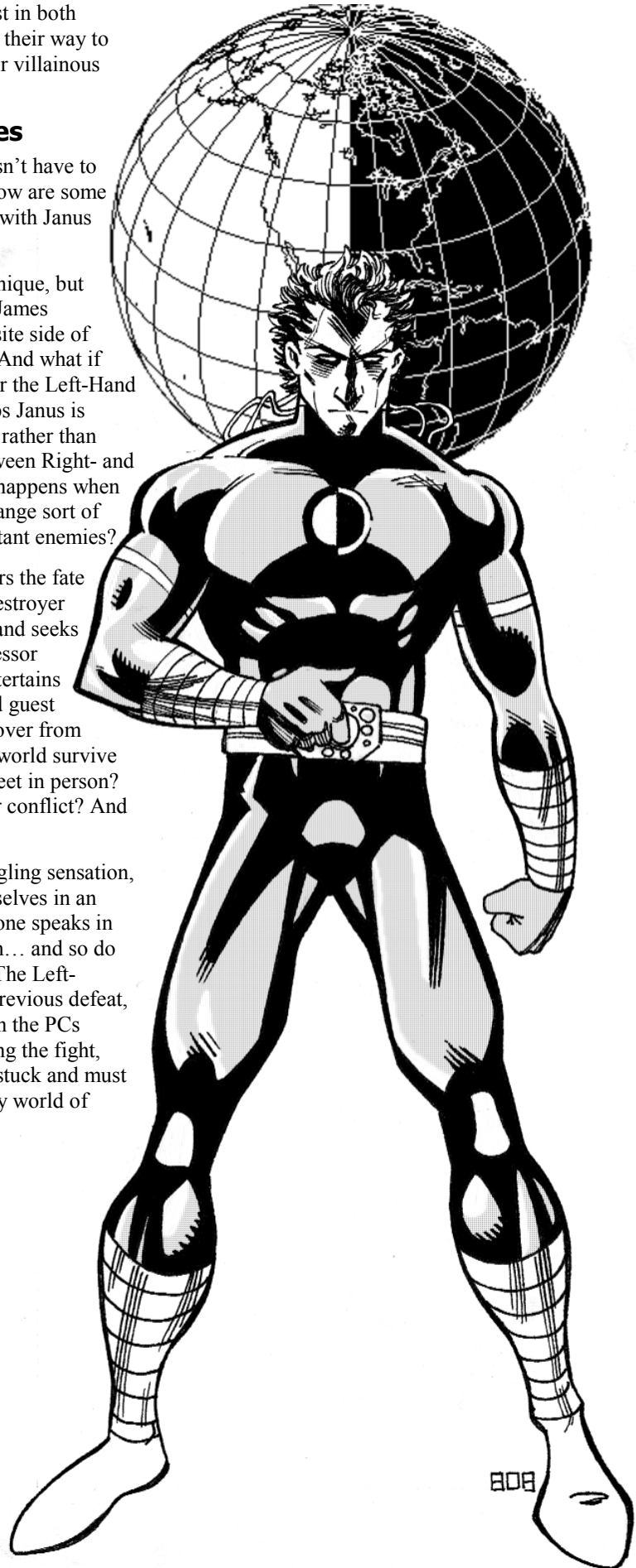
Janus

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
12	CON	4	11-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
23	INT	13	14-	PER Roll: 11-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
15	PRE	5	12-	Presence Attack: 3d6
12	COM	1	11-	
5	PD	3		Total: 11 PD (6 rPD)
5	ED	3		Total: 11 ED (6 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
4	REC	0		
40	END	8		
30	STUN	7		

Total Characteristics Cost: 100

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

Cost	Powers	END
142	*Dimensional Harmonizer Circuitry:* Multipower, 213-point powers, all OIF (dimensional suit; -½)	
11u	*Antipodal Harmony Generator:* Summon 8 350-point "Opposites", Any Sentient Being (+½), Specific Beings (+1); Opposite's Counterpart Must Be Within Line Of Sight (-½), OIF (-½)	21
12u	*Dimensional Interloper Deharmonizer:* Dispel Summon 71d6 (standard effect: 213 points); Only "Dimensional" Summon (-¼), OIF (-½)	21
2u	*Frequency Self-Harmonizer:* Extra-Dimensional Movement (any location in Right- or Left-Hand Earth); OIF (-½)	3
3u	*Single Harmonic Frequency Adjuster:* Desolidification (affected by vibratory and transdimensional attacks), Trigger (when attacked; +¼); OIF (-½)	5
9	*Dimensional Energy Transduction Unit:* Endurance Reserve (50 END, 10 REC); Limited Recovery (only in Right- or Left-Hand Earth; -¼), IAF (-½)	0
10	*Hardened Circuits:* Power Defense (15 points); OIF (dimensional suit; -½)	0
12	*Dimensional Suit:* Armor (6 PD/6 ED); OIF (-½)	0
16	*Unique Psyche:* Mental Defense (20 points total)	0
9	*Harmonic Analyzer:* Detect Dimensional Origin 14- (Sight Group), Discriminatory, Analyze; OIF (-½)	0
	Perks	
4	2 Deep Covers (Janus Sullivan on Right-Hand Earth; Janus Stevens on Left-Hand Earth)	
30	Base: Doorway (see p27)	

	Talents	
9	Ambidexterity (no Off Hand penalty)	
	Skills	
10	+2 with all Intellect Skills	
3	Computer Programming 14-	
3	Deduction 14-	
3	Electronics 14-	
4	KS: Left-Hand Earth History 15-	
4	Language: Left-Hand English (idiomatic, native accent)	
3	Scientist	
4	SS: Dimensional Engineering 16-	
4	SS: Dimensional Physics 16-	
3	SS: Physics 15-	
3	Systems Operation 13-	

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 313

Total Cost: 413

200+	Disadvantages
5	Distinctive Features: dimensional anomaly (Not Concealable; Detectable Only By Unusual Senses)
20	Psychological Limitation: Amoral (Common, Total)
20	Psychological Limitation: Believes Himself Unique And Alone – Oh So, Alone! – In The Multiverse (Common, Total)
20	Social Limitation: Does Not Officially Exist In Either Right-Hand Or Left-Hand Earth (Very Frequently; Major)
5	Unluck: 1d6
10	Vulnerability: 1½x Effect from Mind Control (Common)
133	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 413

Background/History: Janus is a man born of two worlds yet belonging to neither. His story begins twenty years ago when Dr. James Sullivan, a research scientist assigned to a top-secret government project, discovered the extra-dimensional space occupied by the spherical construct later named Doorway. Dr. Sullivan thought it a major breakthrough, and in a way it was – but it wasn't the discovery the government had hoped for. The project's goal was the development of teleportation gates to move military personnel instantaneously from one location to another. Doorway was a gate between two different dimensions: Earth's own, and that of an alternate Earth similar to Dr. Sullivan's world but fundamentally different. Unsure of the government's reaction and believing Doorway wouldn't further the project's goals, Dr. Sullivan kept his discovery a secret.

But that's only half the story….

On the other Earth – a place where the majority were left-handed, people spoke and

wrote backwards, and justice, temperance, and hope were three of the Seven Deadly Sins – Dr. Janice Stevens, a research scientist assigned to a top secret not-for-profit venture, discovered the same extra-dimensional space occupied by Doorway. Dr. Steven's discovery wasn't what the not-for-profit company had hoped for. The project's goal was the development of teleportation gates to move food, medical personnel, and other humanitarian aid instantaneously from one location to another. Unsure of the not-for-profit company's reaction and believing Doorway wouldn't further the project's goals, Dr. Stevens kept her discovery a secret.

And the scientists had an ulterior motive for not revealing Doorway's existence: Both were married and wished to keep their affair secret from respective spouses. They recalibrated Doorway's dimensional entrances to apartments in the city rented unbeknownst to their spouses, and continued their affair. When Janice became pregnant, both scientists "mysteriously" vanished from their respective worlds and took up permanent residence in Doorway. After Janus' birth, the small family lived an idyllic existence for seventeen years, but eventually it would all change.

A year ago, the two scientists disappeared without a trace. Now seventeen-year-old Janus is alone – in his opinion more alone than any man or woman ever to live for he is a dimensional anomaly, at home in neither Right-Hand or Left-Hand Earth and surrounded only by inhabitants of those worlds. Janus has searched far and wide for his parents but found nothing. Without their mediating influence, his amoral nature – an ambiguous moral and ethical code of commingled Right- and Left-Hand Earth – begins to assert itself and loneliness gnaws at his heart. Shortly, the world will feel the effects of Janus' attempts to carve a place for himself.

Personality/Motivation: Janus is the son of Right- and Left-Hand Earth, two diametrically opposed worlds. While in appearance the worlds are very similar, the value systems of their respective inhabitants are entirely opposite. Rather than embodying the antithetical virtues of both places, Janus is totally amoral and lacks any virtue at all. He is not humble, kind, or diligent; nor is he proud, wrathful, or lazy – he stands precisely in the middle, in the end, lacking a value system of any kind, he is only self-serving, placing his own desires before those of any other. On the other hand, his moral equipoise provides him with a coldly analytical and objective standpoint; this is often to his advantage when planning or analyzing a situation.

Currently, Janus obsesses over his solitude and feelings of loneliness. Like most seventeen-year-olds, he seeks a place for himself in the world. Unlike others, he is a unique being. Because of his amoral nature, nothing will stand in his way of "finding himself." With the technology at his command, his attempts will likely have an impact on Right- and Left-Hand Earth. And whether this impact is harmful is no concern to Janus.

Quote: "You are not unique. Your reflection exists in a mirror darkly… and now I will show you that reflection!"

Powers/Tactics: Janus' powers stem from his genius and the dimensional technology derived from Doorway's engines and devices. He wears a body suit woven of thread, which is, in truth, ultra-miniaturized circuitry, and this suit provides him with his personal powers. The difference in spatio-dimensional location between Right- and Left-Hand Earth is based on harmonies. A person's thoughts and feelings – his entire personality in fact – can be modeled as a set of myriad waves and each individual wave has its own frequency. The term, harmony, was coined by Drs. Sullivan and Stevens to describe an individual's set of waves. A person's harmony and how it interacts with the environment determines his dimensional location.

Janus' dimensional suit allows him to analyze and manipulate his own harmonies as well as those of others. By reversing his harmony as it moves to interact with the environment, Janus can move between Right- and Left-Hand Earth. With an ever-so slight adjustment to one of his personal harmonics, he can make himself "out of phase" with respect to his environment. He can disrupt the harmonies of those summoned from extra-dimensional locations, returning them whence they came. He can even summon an individual's opposite, but only when that individual is within his line-of-sight; Janus must study his target's harmony to create its opposite and bring the target's counterpart through dimensions.

In combat, Janus hangs back and uses his Antipodal Harmony Generator to summon allies for himself. These allies are predisposed to help Janus, since he can speak their language (Right- and Left-Hand English are distinctly different, as if listening to the language played in reverse), and most individuals when confronted with a "doppelganger" naturally have an adverse reaction. Janus then uses his Single Harmonic Frequency Adjuster to keep himself safe from harm.

Campaign Use: Plots involving Janus center around his attempts to create a world where he is at home, whether he attempts to merge sections of Right- and Left-Hand Earth or he abducts inhabitants from both worlds hoping to create a new one. Though he lacks Attack Powers and has low Defenses, Janus is not easily defeated, and is even more difficult to capture, thanks to Extra-Dimensional Movement.

To make him more powerful, increase his Armor to 10 PD/10 ED or even 15 PD/15 ED. Also provide him with some sort of attack – an NND Energy Blast, *Dimensional Destabilizer,* is appropriate. To make him less powerful, add an *Extra Time* Limitation on his Extra-Dimensional Movement and remove the Trigger from his Single Harmonic Frequency Adjuster.

Whatever you do, Janus should be able to Summon the Left-Hand counterparts of the entire superhero team since this is his "shtick," and the Left-Hand counterparts are built on the same number of Character Points as the PCs. If necessary, raise the points of the Summoned opposites to match those of the PCs, or increase the maximum number of beings Summoned if there are more than eight members of the team.

Appearance: Janus' dimensional suit covers him from top to bottom. From afar, the suit seems to be a medium shade of scintillant gray, but closer inspection reveals it is composed of black and white pixels. The pixels flash from black to white and back again as Janus uses his powers. At his waist, he wears his Dimensional Energy Transduction Unit, a small box covered with metal discs. Wires run from the box, along his back, and plug into an outlet at the base of his neck.

Doorway

Description: Doorway is a spherical construct made of an unknown alloy, and has a diameter of 10". Located in a small inter-dimensional pocket, it can only be reached via entrances on Right- and Left-Hand Earth. Each entrance, one on each world, is disguised as a closet door in an apartment. Unless bypassed with a successful Skill Versus Skill Contest, the base's security systems notify Janus when either of the other-dimensional apartments has been breached, and Janus can use cameras hidden in the apartments to spy on intruders.

Doorway has three levels: the control room in the middle level (circular with a 10" diameter), living quarters above the control room on the top levels, and the engine room below where the dimensional harmonic generators are located. A single entrance allows access from other dimensions, and the entrance can be attuned to either Right- or Left-Hand Earth (and only these two dimensions). The control panel to the right of the entrance opens the door to Right-Hand Earth; the one to the left opens the door to Left-Hand Earth. The entrances to Doorway can be recalibrated to other locations in the two worlds, but doing so requires both considerable time and dimensional engineering know-how.

Doorway

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
10	BODY	8	
78.5"	Size	10	-7 DCV
8	DEF	18	

Total Characteristic Cost: 36

Abilities & Equipment
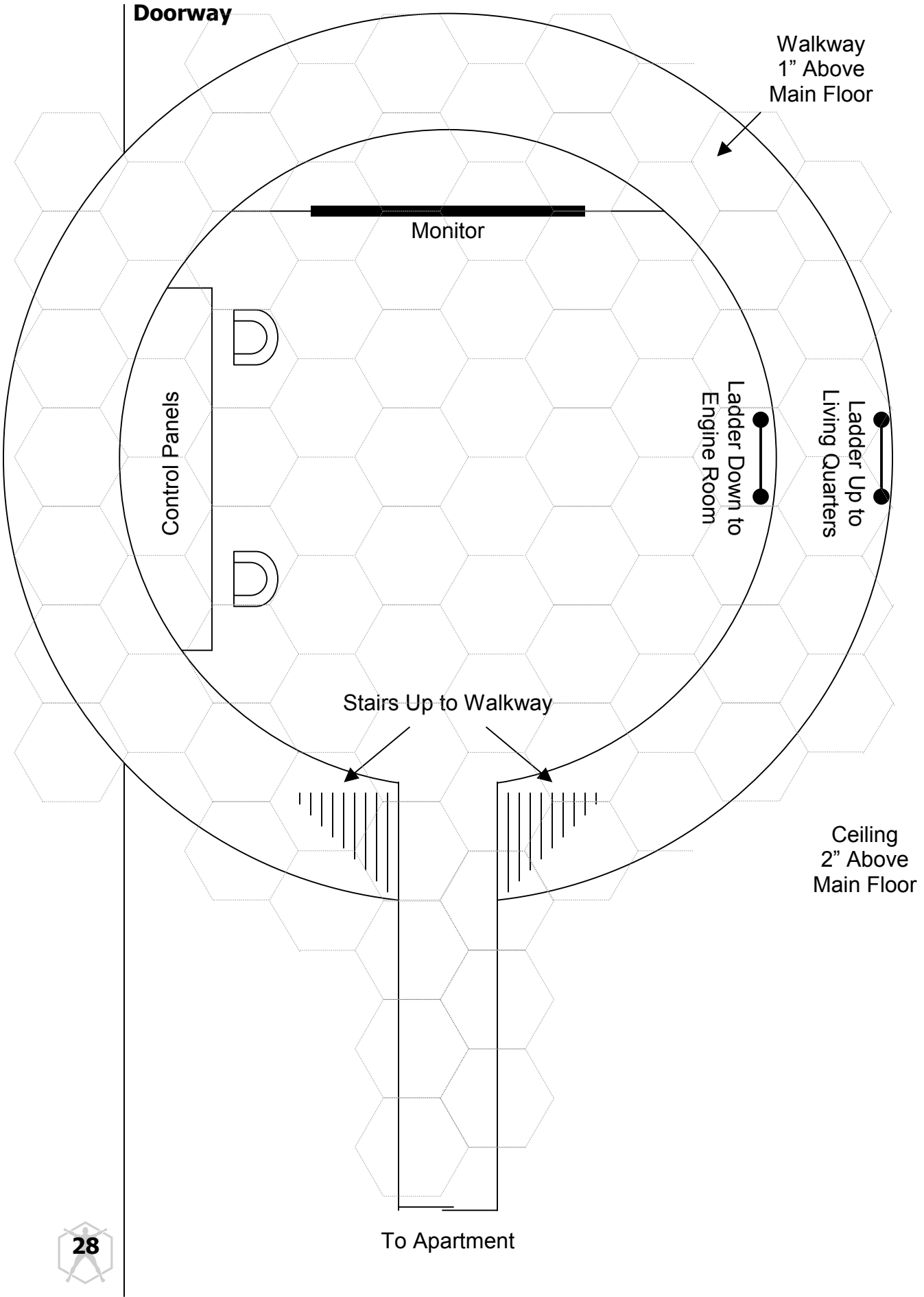
Cost	Power	END
30	*Location:* Another Dimension	0
12	*Inter-Dimensional Entrance:* Extra-Dimensional Movement, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OIF Immobile (-1½)	0
18	*Life Support Systems:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing, Safe Environment: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/ Vacuum)	0
18	*Security Monitors:* Clairsentience (Sight and Hearing Groups), Can See In Right- And Left-Hand Earth (related group of dimensions), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF Immobile (display monitor; -2), Perception Point Cannot Move Beyond Apartments On Right- And Left-Hand Earth (-¼)	0
37	*Security Alarms:* Security Systems 20-, Transdimensional (Right- and Left-Hand Earth; +½)	0

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 115

Total Base Cost: 151

Total Cost: 151/5 = 30

Doorway

Walkway
1" Above
Main Floor

Monitor

Control Panels

Ladder Down to
Engine Room

Ladder Up to
Living Quarters

Stairs Up to Walkway

Ceiling
2" Above
Main Floor

28

To Apartment

Thinking Outside the Lead Box by Jacob Russell

How to Deal With Players Who Spend too Much on Senses

I must confess to something. I like Enhanced Senses. Actually, I love them. The idea that my character can sense things that no one else in the group can is one of the most enjoyable parts about playing a super-hero for me. I get to stop, look off into the distance and cryptically state, "Something's coming…." Love it. To that end, a lot of my characters have had some combination of the following senses:

- N-Ray Sense (usually vision)
- IR, UV, Nightvision, or anything that allows me to see in the dark
- Telescopic Senses (usually sight and hearing)
- Levels with all senses (usually about +4, or enough to net me a PER roll of 17 or less)

I've had more than one GM complain about this proclivity of mine. I even had people on the Hero discussion boards tell me that they would flat out refuse to allow my character in their campaign. The reason stated is that such a character would be able to instantly sense any crime or criminal. He needs no detective work, no Stealth, no Shadowing, no Forensics. He just needs to spend a full phase at half DCV and voila! Clue found, perp caught, case solved. In many of Superman's adventures, particularly on the old George Reeves TV show, the criminals always hid that week's plot device or McGuffin in a lead box. This would never stop a *Champions* player. They'd simply scan the city for lead boxes all the time. Well, let's try to think outside of the lead box.

But before we get too far into this, let me make a couple of points about comparative cost and character concept. First, note that the standard detective skills Stealth, Shadowing, Concealment, Deduction, Forensics, and Criminology cost three points each. The lot of them together cost 18 points. The above list of senses costs about 30 to 40 points, so no one's getting off cheap. The second point of order here is that those skills are not appropriate to purchase unless your character has the appropriate training as part of their background. So if you like to do detective work, but want to play someone who isn't a highly trained investigator, Enhanced Senses is a good way to satisfy both needs.

Still, it's easy to see how a GM might want to make a character actually *work* to solve a case. There's no reason why someone with 30, 40, or even 50 points of Enhanced Senses would not have to work hard for their solutions. They would just have to work in a different way.

Characters with different abilities just require different challenges. The following strategies are offered to help GMs keep characters with lots of Enhanced Senses from unbalancing a game.

SHADOWING

One abuse of Enhanced Senses that I must confess to is how I once used my senses to follow someone without any fear of detection. I told my GM, "I use my N-Ray and Telescopic Vision to keep track of him from four blocks away, and behind a building." The poor GM could not think of any way to stop me without resorting to blatant GM chicanery. What should he have done?

POPULATION SIZE

First of all, he should have made me define the specific geographic area in which I was searching for the character. Second, the GM should have decided roughly how many people are in that area. Once it's figured out how many people are being scanned through, apply modifiers according to the following rough scheme:

Number of People	Modifier
1	-0
10	-2
100	-4
1000	-6
10000	-8

If these modifiers look familiar, it's because they've been taken straight from the Mind Scan modifiers (*HERO System 5th Edition*, p. 134). Characters who wish to purchase Rapid Sight so they can scan through more faces quickly should be allowed to do so. They're paying for it, after all.

VISUAL SIMILARITY

How similar is the target to the rest of the population? Trying to find "Fat Tony" Gambini in the Chinese Quarter should be pretty easy. Trying to pick him out at a plus-sized men's clothing store would be a lot harder.

Population and Target	Modifier
Population is highly varied (carnival, street festival)	-2
Population is very uniform, target is not	+2 to +4
Population is very uniform, as is target	-2 to –4

MOTION

Modifiers can also be applied to uniformity of speed and direction. Someone running through a crowd of people who are only walking will stand out, even if they're all moving in the

same direction. Someone moving the same speed, but in a different direction from the crowd will also stand out more. I think this would mostly come up in subways and at public shows, where people tend to move as a group.

Population and Target	Modifier
Same speed, different direction	-0
Same direction, different speed	-0
Population motion is varied	-2
Population motion is uniform, target is not	+2 to +4
Population motion is uniform, as is target	-2 to –4

DISTRACTIONS

When the character is using N-Ray or Telescopic Senses, he is not focusing on what is right in front of him. It's like reading a book while you're driving a car. While the character is following someone from three blocks away and behind a building, he has to:

- walk down the street without tripping or running into something – or someone
- not walk in front of cars when he steps off of a curb against the traffic light
- deal with people attempting to interact with him on the street
- deal with people and businesses that think he is staring at them, and not through them to his real target – this could lead to a lot of misunderstandings

When it comes to things and events that distract the scanner, an EGO roll might be called for, but some things just have to be dealt with. As soon as the scanner is forced to look away, he should be required to roll again to re-acquire the target.

FINDING AND FOLLOWING

A Perception Roll is a roll to perceive. It is not a roll to follow and keep track of someone. All of the character's efforts to find someone should only allow him to find the target. Once that is accomplished, he should still make additional rolls to follow. Every time the target enters a new crowd, a new environment, or suddenly changes direction, the character should make an additional roll to follow them. The hero should be allowed to have whatever he made the acquisition roll by added into his roll to follow.

THE PURLOINED CLUE

Even if a character with N-Ray Vision has a perfectly common substance that stops his vision, like lead, you can't simply stuff all your clues into a lead box. The concealing substance will always be uncommon enough to stand out from everything else. It's the standing out that makes something hard to conceal. Just like Poe's *The Purloined Letter*, clues are hardest to find when they aren't hidden. Thus a GM should allow characters and NPCs to make concealment rolls to hide something *in plain sight*. No amount of Enhanced Senses should help a character to find an object hidden in this manner. Even an appropriate Detect shouldn't be of any help, if the setting is right. Using Detect: Magic Objects to find a magical bracelet in an ordinary living room should be easy as pie. However, scanning for the same bracelet in the inner sanctum of Doctor Bizarre, the Sorcerer Extreme, is not going to be so easy.

WHAT WAS THAT NOISE?

Another complaint I received from a GM about one of my enhanced-sensing characters is that he could hear anything, and thus no major crimes could take place without him noticing. There's no reason why many of the same modifiers listed above couldn't be applied in some form to people with various types of enhanced hearing. Yes, most crimes generate noise – but so does *most* human activity.

BLAM, BANG, BOOM!

The only noise that crimes regularly generate that can be considered at all unique, or unusual, is gunfire. Guns are loud – *very loud*. But they are not the loudest things in a city, or the only ones that go "bang" (and let's not forget silencers). Of course, crimes generate other noises that are also quite loud, and even attention-grabbing. Screams, impacts, and security alarms are all sounds with which criminals must concern themselves. The following events are common to any modern city setting and loud enough to cover virtually any crime that doesn't involved large amounts of explosives. This is especially true if the noisy event is taking place closer to the enhanced-sensing character than the crime it conceals.

- Construction noises: Hammering in the first beams of a new building (you can feel it in your fillings from two blocks away), jack-hammering, and riveting
- False Security Alarms: car alarms, burglar alarms, etc.
- Garbage trucks
- Leaf blowers

The following list of events, while not common in modern cities, are not unheard of and are often announced well in advance – allowing criminals to make their schedules accordingly.

- Fireworks displays
- Aerial stunt shows (i.e., the Blue Angels)
- Building demolition
- Military ceremonies which include "21 Gun Salutes"
- Outdoor concerts

That is not to say that every crime needs to be orchestrated like the climax of "The Man Who Knew Too Much" (where an assassination is planned to take place during a dramatic cymbal clash in a concert to conceal the sound of the gunshot). However, these ideas can be used to conceal important, major criminal events or at least allow a GM to explain to a player why they cannot simply pick up on every crime in the city.

THE SCANNER AND THE CRIMINALS

If a superhero regularly patrols a city and sniffs out crime with Enhanced Senses, then the criminal community will take appropriate steps. In the real world, criminals do very similar things to deal with increasingly advanced police surveillance techniques. Mobsters may start wearing very similar clothes, even padding them in key places for additional conformity. A gangster fleeing the scene of a crime may "suddenly" walk into a crowd of men all his size and wearing the exact same clothes. Much as you would like to, you can't bust a guy for wearing plaid.

With an enhanced-sensing hero running around town, criminal groups might switch their criminal activities from crimes which require fixed locations and equipment (like counterfeiting, smuggling, or "chop shops") to crimes which are more mobile, like selling drugs and running numbers. They may also change their operations from a few really large operations to several small operations. It may be an administrative headache for the cartel to run, but when Captain Infrared busts a drug runner, it's less than 1% of the day's revenue.

Any criminal organization in a world with superheroes would operate in very different ways in order to combat things like Enhanced Senses. Imagine entire conversations and planning sessions between criminals done entirely on paper, so that Enhanced Hearing is effectively useless. "Are they planning a crime, or making out a grocery list?" Imagine lead-based paint being applied in *thick* coats in a lot of warehouses.

Mobs under super-surveillance may also take to shipping items that are not, in and of themselves, illegal, but which were obtained and or shipped illegally. Illegal shipping methods bypass lots of middlemen (like customs agents), which illegally reduce the prices of the shipped items. Goods like furs and diamonds get marked up by 800% or more, so illegal shipping of these goods can be very profitable. If a crime cartel works something out with local shippers and truckers' unions, they can have crates filled with contraband mixed in with perfectly legal goods. All the Enhanced Senses in the world don't give you the patience to check endless amounts of shipping manifests – or the skill necessary to spot illegitimate ones.

THE EGO PRINCIPLE

I am speaking about the human Ego, not the characteristic EGO, but the part of our minds devoted to sorting all of the brain's input into something usable. All of us are constantly bombarded by sensory input (even those who live in the country). Every photon of light, every vibration of sound, has to be put in its proper place. Do we know the source and meaning of everything that comes in to us? Not always. What do most of us do with sensory input that we don't understand, or know the source of? Most of the time we ignore it. If the input is minor in scale, like a quiet conversation that you can hear but not make out the words of, or a sign too far away to read, we usually assume it doesn't concern us and ignore it. We have to; otherwise, we would never be able to progress in our lives for all of the distracting sensory input. So it would have to be for people with super-human senses. A hero with Radio Hearing might not notice that a stranger across the street is emitting a regular radio pulse. Lots of things in cities emit radio pulses. The stranger could be carrying a cell phone, a radio, or even an anti-theft tag from a clothing store.

PAYING FOR BLINDNESS

A friend of mine once told me about a GM who insisted that characters with N-Ray Vision could not see anything. This was back in the ancient days of the third edition *Champions* when N-Ray Vision cost 25 points and wasn't blocked by anything. His thinking was that if N-Ray Vision is not stopped by anything, then it sees through everything, including what the N-Ray Vision-user is looking for. My friend's response was, "So, I'm paying 25 points to be blind?" This is the sort of thinking that we want to avoid when thinking about setting up these challenges for our enhanced-sensing heroes. A character with Radio Hearing can still scan for someone who emits a radio pulse. However, no character should expect what they seek – whatever that should be – to be delivered to them by virtue of how they spend their points.

The $50 Million Dollar Man by Michael Surbrook

The Solider of the Year 2025

Recently the Massachusetts Institute of Technology was awarded a five-year $50 million dollar grant to develop new technologies for the next generation of United States armed forces infantry. This grant was used by MIT to create the Institute for Soldier Nanotechnologies, which hopes to design and develop new, lightweight materials and technologies in order to create new uniforms and equipment for the 21st Century fighting man.

Although a lot of the ideas being expressed at the ISN sound like science fiction (such as a uniform which responds to injuries received by its wearer), both the ISN and the United States Army is quite serious in its intent. Already news detailing some of the Institute's research subjects has come to light, allowing for some speculation as to the final results. This is where this article comes in.

The ideas and goals of the ISN are very reminiscent of the sort of "super gear" used by many comic book and comic book RPG agencies, both lawful (such as UNTIL) or criminal (such as VIPER). The difference is that the ISN creating devices to be used in the real world, and in real combat situations, not on the pages of a comic book. However, this shouldn't stop anyone form adapting these ideas to their own superhero campaigns (or near-future campaigns for that matter). This article will attempt to take some of those ideas and present them in *HERO System* terms, so that GM and players can adapt and use these ideas in their own campaigns.


Weapons Pod

The Gear

Much of the equipment the ISN hopes to create will be based around various applications of nanotechnology – devices and materials far smaller (and much lighter) than anything made now. In theory, electrical nanotechnological components would be one-millionth of a meter in width, or only about ten times larger than a single atom. Similar advances made with microengineering would result in mechanical devices built on the scale of microchips. The objective is to make the soldier's gear both stronger and lighter. In this case, the weight-load of a fully kitted soldier would be roughly 30 pounds, 42 if he carries the assault rifle described below. Compare that to the 90 pounds of equipment a modern solider currently carries.

A theoretical breakdown of the future soldier's kit is as follows:
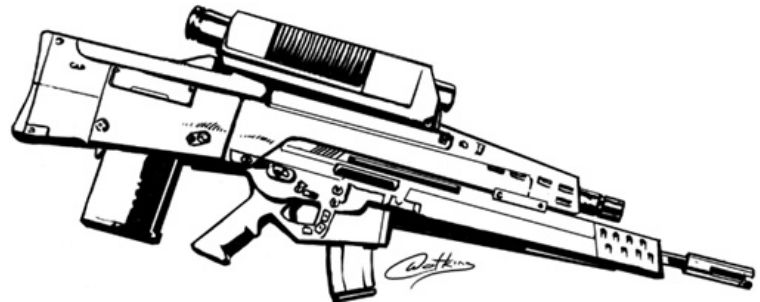
SABR Rifle

SABR (ALLIANT TECHNOSYSTEMS SELECTABLE ASSAULT BATTLE RIFLE)

Also known as the Objective Individual Combat Weapon (or "OICW"), this weapon combines a 5.56mm carbine with a 20mm munitions launcher in a compact over-and-under configuration. Designed to replace the M-16 assault rifle/M-203 grenade launcher weapons system used by the current armed forces, the SABR allows a wide variety of options on the battlefield due to the variable ordinance available for the munitions launcher. For gaming purposes, however, the launcher's variable munitions can easily be simulated by the *Explosion* Advantage, and the *Indirect* Advantage, which simulates the ability for rounds to detonate at a set point (like after passing through a closed window).

The SABR comes with an integral laser sight and a high-resolution infrared targeting scope. The former is used when the soldier is on the move, while the latter is normally used to place rounds fired by the munitions launcher.

artwork by Chris Watkins

A mere 33" long and weighing only 12 pounds, the OICW is due to enter service in the year 2009.

COMBAT PISTOL

This large gunmetal handgun has four barrels arranged in a square, with a fifth over it. The lower barrels carry rocket-propelled rounds. Fired through use of a conventional trigger, the weapon is voice-activated, and can't be used by an enemy if the soldier is killed or captured (making the pistol a Personal Focus). The rocket rounds lock on to their target's heat signature, and can make course corrections in mid-flight (hence the Advantage *No Range Modifier*). The rockets have a range of 1,000 meters, which actually exceeds the maximum range of the device as written (which is roughly 670 meters). GMs may want to apply the *Increased Maximum Range* Advantage to make up the difference.

Combat Pistol

The fifth barrel is a 4.6mm firearm with a 300-meter range. Such a weapon would do about 1d6+1 of Killing damage, although such details as OCV, Range Modifiers, and Charges are difficult to determine at this point. The write-up is based off of the 9mm pistol in the *HERO System Rulebook*.

Photographs show the Future Soldier with rocket rounds slipped into pouches on the chest and leg. A rough estimate gives the soldier 34 to 40 rounds. GMs may wish to take this into account when setting the number of Charges for the weapon. For what it's worth, it's highly unlikely a soldier would carry this weapon *and* the SABR, but this write-up includes both for completeness' sake.

COMBAT KNIFE

This is the standard military combat knife. Some versions of this knife can be thrown, and should have the *Ranged* Advantage added to reflect this.

BODY ARMOR

The future soldier's body armor is made from a lightweight multilayered fabric covering the entire body with the exception of the face. It is reasonably bulletproof, and can stop most small arms fire and fragments. Aside from its

protective qualities, other systems are built into the suit, which are detailed below.
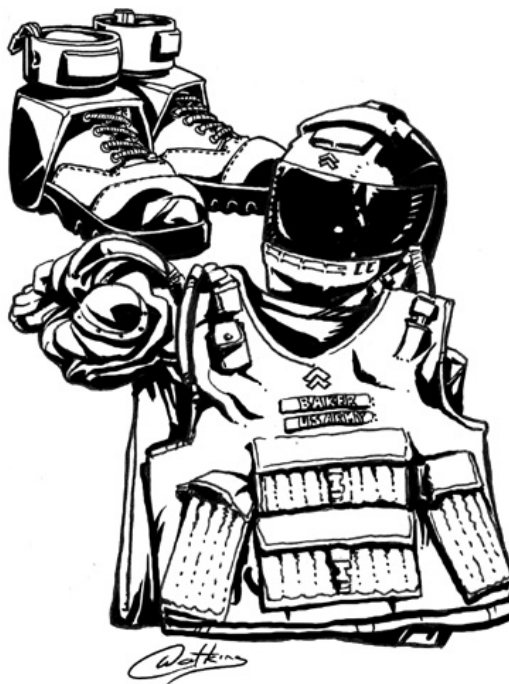
Body Armor, Helmet, and Boots

HELMET

Resembling a motorcycle helmet (complete with faceplate), the future soldier's headgear is designed to protect the face and eyes from all manner of threats, ranging from physical to energy to biological. Additional systems are built into the helmet, as defined below.

SUPERCHARGED FOOTGEAR

One of the aims of the ISN is to develop an exoskeleton for the future soldier, so he can carry more, lift more, and move farther. One such application would be the ability to leap great distances, such as clearing a 20-foot wall with a single bound.

HELMET-MOUNTED DISPLAY

The future soldier's helmet is central to his ability to outfight the enemy. Aside from its protective qualities, it also has a built in video processor, which can transmit what one soldier sees to the rest of his squad. This power has been bought as Clairsentience, as it allows a soldier to see remote images easily. However, this power shouldn't be considered a form of "all-seeing eye" in which any one soldier can see everything on the battlefield. The Clairsentience cannot be activated by a soldier who wishes to see something at a distance, but instead a soldier must decide to transmit an image he feels is important enough for the rest of his squad to look at (A hidden enemy is one such example.). The image transmitted is also under control of the transmitting character and anything seen will

Helmet Display

be from his point of view, regardless of his squadmate's wishes. On the other hand, if the man transmitting the image is wounded or killed, his helmet will continue to work, at least until the power supply runs out or the helmet is destroyed.

HELMET MICROPHONE

Internal pickups in the helmet will let the soldier hear in a full 360° arc around his body.

STEALTH SUIT

One of the layers of the future soldier's uniform/armor will have the ability to alter its coloration, allowing the soldier to blend in with the background. Naturally, this process won't be instantaneous and the coloration won't be able to adapt fast enough to hide a moving soldier. However, it will aid in concealing a soldier who has gone to ground and is either attempting to avoid and escape enemy detection or setting up an ambush.


Stealth Suit

The future soldier's uniform will also utilize a layer of coolant to hide the soldier's infrared signature. As written, this ability only works if the character is not moving, so GMs may wish to give the soldier two different forms of

Invisibility. One would be the "chameleon effect" and only affect Normal Sight, while the other would affect Infrared Perception and work at all times.

MICROCLIMATE CONDITIONING

The future soldier's belt will have an environmental subsystem built into his belt, which will serve to warm the soldier in cold weather and cool him when it is hot. This belt-mounted device will connect to one of the underlayers of the soldier's armor.
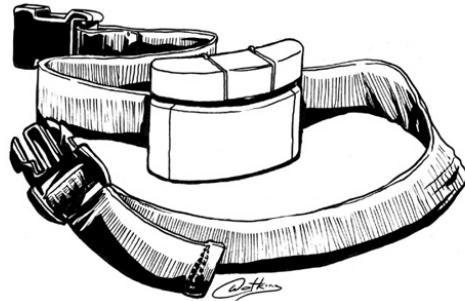
Microclimate Belt

HELMET RECEIVER

Another helmet-mounted system will be a radio receiver/transmitter. Using a bone-induction link, the radio will be effectively inaudible to any nearby listener, hence the *Invisible Power Effects* Advantage.

ZOOM CAMERA VISOR DISPLAY

For viewing and targeting distant objects, the helmet has a camera with zoom lens with sufficient power to be able to view human-sized objects at distances of 1,000 meters clearly. This zoom lens is highly useful when combined with the wrist-fired munitions and the display function, allowing a soldier to engage targets at great distances, as well as show such targets to the rest of his squad.

OPTIONAL SYSTEMS

The systems described here really only scratch the surface of what is theoretically possible and probable for the future soldier. Several articles on the future soldier program comment on how the soldier's uniform will react and respond to outside stimuli, such as chemical attacks. The uniform will also contain sensors which constantly transmit data back to a central command point, letting a unit commander know the soldier's status at all times. At the same time, the soldier's helmet will contain an internal communications system (beyond what is already described) that allows the soldier to receive information and data from a number of sources, such as his squadmates, other squads in the area, central command, or even remote sensors and drones.

To fully simulate this effect, each helmet could be built with its own internal computer. This computer would have all the appropriate senses (such as High Range Radio Perception and Infrared Perception) and even a Mind Link to all of the other computers on the local network (and even the computer in a remote command and control vehicle and/or base). This would allow for secure communications and broadcast of images from computer to computer (and thus, from soldier to soldier).

This internal computer could have other duties as well. The ability to detect biological and chemical hazards could be a form of Detect while the response systems would be a form of Life Support (such as internal filters in the helmet itself). In addition, the computer will monitor the soldier's health and will activate certain measures if the soldier is wounded. This would be defined as the Paramedics skill, while the uniform's ability to detect bleed and apply pressure could be defined as either Paramedics, or a limited form of Healing which can only counteract BODY loss due to bleeding.

Aside from the computer, there are a number of other systems that could be built into the future soldier's helmet. Life Support (such as air filters) has already been mentioned, and it seems likely that every helmet will come with either *Extended Breathing* or *Self-Contained Breathing*. The former version of Life Support would be defined as air filters and would allow the soldier to resist the effects of smoke and/or tear gas. The latter version would require some sort of air-supply (either in the helmet or in the soldier's backpack) and allow the solider to operate in heavy smoke, thick gasses, or even underwater. In addition to Life Support, Flash Defense seems a likely option. A polarized faceplate would provide Sight Group Flash Defense against such weapons as "flashbang" grenades, as well as more mundane effects as flashlights and spotlights. Since the helmet fully encloses the head (much like a motorcyclist's helmet), ear protection is another logical choice, as Hearing Group Flash Defense would protect against "flashbang" grenades as well as loud explosions and the effect of firing a weapon to close to another soldier's head and ears.

A final note on END usage. All of the future soldier's equipment will run of electricity and will require some sort of power source. However, since one article about the Future Soldier program described a microturbine with a *six-day* supply of fuel (along with rechargeable three-hour battery backups), it seemed simpler to apply the *Reduced Endurance* Advantage at the *0 Endurance* level than try and build an Endurance Reserve that would act in the manner described.

The Character

The following write-ups represent various generic soldiers, fully equipped for the battlefield of the 21st Century. The stats are taken from those of the Skilled and Competent Normals on page 224 of the *HERO System 5th Edition* rulebook, while the skills were developed using various *HERO System* resources. Although meant to be soldiers in the United States Army, the characters can easily be adapted to be a member of any number of superagencies, or even turned into an independent superhero/villain character (with a little modification). GMs who decide on such a course of action might want to change the Killing Attacks to Normal Attacks, however.

Three write-ups are presented. The first is a 200-point "basic" soldier, with above-average characteristics and a simple assortment of equipment. The second is a 250-point soldier, and represents a "standard" infantryman of 2025. The third write-up is for a 350-point "experienced" (or "super-") soldier, with many of the optional systems included.

Basic Soldier

Basic Soldier

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	150 kg; 2½d6 HTH [1]
11	DEX	3	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll: 11-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
11	PRE	1	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
10	COM	0	11-	
4	PD	1		Total: 12 PD (8 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 11 ED (8 rED)
3	SPD	9		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	0		
26	END	0		
24	STUN	0		

Total Characteristics Cost: 25

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

Cost	Powers	END
22	*Alliant Technosystems Selectable Assault Battle Rifle (SABR):* Multipower, 60-point pool; OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Two Hands Required (-½)	
1u	1) *5.56mm Carbine:* RKA 2d6-1, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), 30 Charges (+¼); Beam (-¼), STR Minimum 12 (STR Doesn't Add Damage; -1) **plus** +2 OCV, +2 RMod	[30]
1u	2) *20mm Munitions Launcher:* RKA 2d6, Explosion (+½), Indirect (+¼); 6 Shots (-¾), STR Minimum 12 (STR Doesn't Add Damage; -1) **plus** +1 OCV, +1 RMod	[6]
8	*SABR Scopes:* Multipower, 17-point pool; All OAF (-1)	
1u	1) *Laser Sight:* +1 OCV, +1 RMod; Limited Range (64") And Limited Use In Smoke, Rain, Snow (-¼)	0
1u	2) *Scope:* +4 RMod; Only If Braced Or Set (-½) **plus** IR Vision; Only If Braced Or Set (-½)	0
5	*Combat Knife:* HKA 1d6-1 (1d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum 6 (-½)	0
10	*Body Armor:* Armor (8 PD/8 ED); Activation Roll 15- (-¼), OIF (-½), Half Mass (-½), Real Armor (-¼)	0
8	*Helmet:* Armor (11 PD/11 ED); Activation Roll 8- (-2), OIF (-½), Half Mass (-½), Real Armor (-¼)	0
2	*Move Soldier!:* Running +1" (Total 7")	1
35	*Helmet-Mounted Display:* Clairsentience (Sight Group), x8 Range (800"), Persistent (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OIF (-½), Only Through The Senses Of Others (-½)	0
3	*Helmet Microphone:* Increased Arc of Perception (360° Perception) (Normal Hearing); OIF (-½)	0
20	*Stealth Suit:* Invisibility to Sight Group; Persistent (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Extra Time (Full Phase; -¼), IIF (-¼), Chameleon (-½)	0
3	*Microclimate Conditioning:* Life Support (Safe Environment: Intense Cold, Intense Heat); OIF (-½)	0
12	*Helmet Receiver:* HRRP (Radio Group), Invisible To Hearing Group (+½); IIF (-½)	0
12	*Zoom Camera Visor Display:* Telescopic (+12 versus Range) (Sight Group); OIF (-½)	0

Skills

5	+1 with Ranged Combat
3	Climbing 12-
3	Concealment 12-
2	KS: Army History And Customs 11-
1	KS: Ceremony And Drill 8-
2	KS: Military World 11-
1	KS: Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Warfare Procedures 8-
1	KS: Weapon Identification 8-
3	Navigation 12-
1	PS: Forward Observer 8-
2	PS: Soldier 11-
1	Systems Operation 8-
6	WF: Small Arms, Grenade Launcher, HMG, Knife, Rocket Launcher

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 178

Total Cost: 200

100+ Disadvantages

5	Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealable)
10	Hunted: The Enemy 8- (As Pow)
10	Hunted: US Army 8- (More Pow, NCI, Watching)
15	Psychological Limitation: Sense Of Duty (Common, Strong)
20	Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
40	Experience Points (or choice of Disadvantages)

Total Disadvantage Points: 200

Standard Soldier

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

Total Characteristics Cost: 39

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
Leaping: 6½"/9"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
22	*Alliant Technosystems Selectable Assault Battle Rifle (SABR):* Multipower, 60-point pool; OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Two Hands Required (-½)	
1u	1) *5.56mm Carbine:* RKA 2d6-1, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), 30 Charges (+¼); Beam (-¼), STR Minimum 12 (STR Doesn't Add Damage; -1) **plus** +2 OCV, +2 RMod	[30]
1u	2) *20mm Munitions Launcher:* RKA 2d6, Explosion (+½), Indirect (+¼); 6 Shots (-¾), STR Minimum 12 (STR Doesn't Add Damage; -1) **plus** +1 OCV, +1 RMod	[6]
8	*SABR Scopes:* Multipower, 17-point pool; All OAF (-1)	
1u	1) *Laser Sight:* +1 OCV, +1 RMod; Limited Range (64") And Limited Use In Smoke, Rain, Snow (-¼)	0
1u	2) *Scope:* +4 RMod; Only If Braced Or Set (-½) **plus** IR Vision; Only If Braced Or Set (-½)	0
21	*Combat Pistol:* Multipower, 67-point pool; OAF (-1), STR Minimum (STR Doesn't Add Damage; -1), Real Weapon (-¼)	
1u	1) *4.6 mm Pistol:* RKA 1d6+1, 20 Charges (+¼); Beam (-¼), STR Minimum 7 (STR Doesn't Add Damage; -1)	[20]
2u	2) *Heatseeking 15mm Munition:* RKA 2d6, Explosion (-1 DC/2"; +¾), No Range Modifier (+½); 4 Charges (-1), STR Minimum 12 (STR Doesn't Add Damage; -1)	[4]
5	*Combat Knife:* HKA 1d6-1 (1d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum 6 (-½)	0
10	*Body Armor:* Armor (8 PD/8 ED); Activation Roll 15- (-¼), OIF (-½), Half Mass (-½), Real Armor (-¼)	0
8	*Helmet:* Armor (11 PD/11 ED); Activation Roll 8- (-2), OIF (-½), Half Mass (-½), Real Armor (-¼)	0
3	*Supercharged Footgear:* Leaping +4" (6½" forward, 3" upward), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OIF (-½), No Noncombat Leap (-¼)	0
2	*Move Soldier!:* Running +1" (Total 7")	1
35	*Helmet-Mounted Display:* Clairsentience (Sight Group), x8 Range (800"), Persistent (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OIF (-½), Only Through The Senses Of Others (-½)	0
3	*Helmet Microphone:* Increased Arc of Perception (360° Perception) (Normal Hearing); OIF (-½)	0
20	*Stealth Suit:* Invisibility to Sight Group; Persistent (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Extra Time (Full Phase; -¼), IIF (-¼), Chameleon (-½)	0
3	*Microclimate Conditioning:* Life Support (Safe Environment: Intense Cold, Intense Heat); OIF (-½)	0
12	*Helmet Receiver:* HRRP (Radio Group), Invisible To Hearing Group (+½); IIF (-½)	0
12	*Zoom Camera Visor Display:* Telescopic (+12 versus Range) (Sight Group); OIF (-½)	0

	Skills	
5	+1 with Ranged Combat	
3	+1 with SABR	
1	Breakfall 8-	
1	Bureaucratics 8-	
3	Climbing 12-	
3	Concealment 12-	
2	KS: Army History And Customs 11-	
1	KS: Ceremony And Drill 8-	
2	KS: Military World 11-	
1	KS: Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Warfare Procedures 8-	
1	KS: Weapon Identification 8-	
3	Navigation 12-	
1	Paramedics 8-	
1	PS: Forward Observer 8-	
3	PS: Soldier 12-	
1	Systems Operation 8-	
1	Tactics 8-	
1	TF: Wheeled Military Vehicles	
6	WF: Small Arms, Grenade Launcher, HMG, Knife, Rocket Launcher	

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Total Powers & Skills Cost: 211

Total Cost: 250

150+ Disadvantages

5	Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealable)
10	Hunted: The Enemy 8- (As Pow)
10	Hunted: US Army 8- (More Pow, NCI, Watching)
20	Normal Characteristic Maxima
15	Psychological Limitation: Sense Of Duty (Common, Strong)
20	Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
20	Experience Points (or choice of Disadvantages)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 250**

Standard Soldier

Experienced Soldier

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	2		Total: 13 PD (8 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 12 ED (8 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
30	STUN	2		

Total Characteristics Cost: 56

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
Leaping: 6½"/9"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
22	*Alliant Technosystems Selectable Assault Battle Rifle (SABR):* Multipower, 60-point pool; OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Two Hands Required (-½)	
1u	1) *5.56mm Carbine:* RKA 2d6-1, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), 30 Charges (+¼); Beam (-¼), STR Minimum 12 (STR Doesn't Add Damage; -1) **plus** +2 OCV, +2 RMod	[30]
1u	2) *20mm Munitions Launcher:* RKA 2d6, Explosion (+½), Indirect (+¼); 6 Shots (-¾), STR Minimum 12 (STR Doesn't Add Damage; -1) **plus** +1 OCV, +1 RMod	[6]
8	*SABR Scopes:* Multipower, 17-point pool; All OAF (-1)	
1u	1) *Laser Sight:* +1 OCV, +1 RMod; Limited Range (64") And Limited Use In Smoke, Rain, Snow (-¼)	0
1u	2) *Scope:* +4 RMod; Only If Braced Or Set (-½) **plus** IR Vision; Only If Braced Or Set (-½)	0
21	*Combat Pistol:* Multipower, 67-point pool; OAF (-1), STR Minimum (STR Doesn't Add Damage; -1), Real Weapon (-¼)	
1u	1) *4.6 mm Pistol:* RKA 1d6+1, 20 Charges (+¼); Beam (-¼), STR Minimum 7 (STR Doesn't Add Damage; -1)	[20]
2u	2) *Heatseeking 15mm Munition:* RKA 2d6, Explosion (-1 DC/2"; +¾), No Range Modifier (+½); 4 Charges (-1), STR Minimum 12 (STR Doesn't Add Damage; -1)	[4]
5	*Combat Knife:* HKA 1d6-1 (1d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum 6 (-½)	0
10	*Body Armor:* Armor (8 PD/8 ED); Activation Roll 15- (-¼), OIF (-½), Half Mass (-½), Real Armor (-¼)	0
8	*Helmet:* Armor (11 PD/11 ED); Activation Roll 8- (-2), OIF (-½), Half Mass (-½), Real Armor (-¼)	0
7	*Protective Helmet:* Sight Group Flash Defense (5 points), Hearing Group Flash Defense (5 points); OIF (-½)	0
3	*Supercharged Footgear:* Leaping +4" (6½" forward, 3" upward), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OIF (-½), No Noncombat Leap (-¼)	0
2	*Move Soldier!:* Running +1" (Total 7")	1
35	*Helmet-Mounted Display:* Clairsentience (Sight Group), x8 Range (800"), Persistent (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OIF (-½), Only Through The Senses Of Others (-½)	0
11	*Automatic Injury Response:* Healing 1d6 BODY, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½), Trigger (soldier takes BODY damage; +¼); OIF (uniform; -½), Only Works On Cuts, Punctures, And Similar Injuries (-½)	0
3	*Helmet Microphone:* Increased Arc of Perception (360° Perception) (Normal Hearing); OIF (-½)	0
3	*Helmet Visor:* Infrared Perception (Sight Group); OIF (-½)	0
20	*Stealth Suit:* Invisibility to Sight Group; Persistent (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Extra Time (Full Phase; -¼), IIF (-¼), Chameleon (-½)	0
6	*Chemically Treated Uniform:* Life Support (Immunity: All Terrestrial Poisons And Chemical Warfare Agents); OIF (-½), Chemical Warfare Agents Only (-¼)	0
3	*Microclimate Conditioning:* Life Support (Safe Environment: Intense Cold, Intense Heat); OIF (-½)	0
12	*Helmet Receiver:* HRRP (Radio Group), Invisible To Hearing Group (+½); IIF (-½)	0
12	*Zoom Camera Visor Display:* Telescopic (+12 versus Range) (Sight Group); OIF (-½)	0
	Talents	
1	*Electronic Compass:* Bump of Direction; OAF (SABER; -1)	
17	*Years Of Combat Experience:* Danger Sense (out of combat, sense, intuitional) 12-	
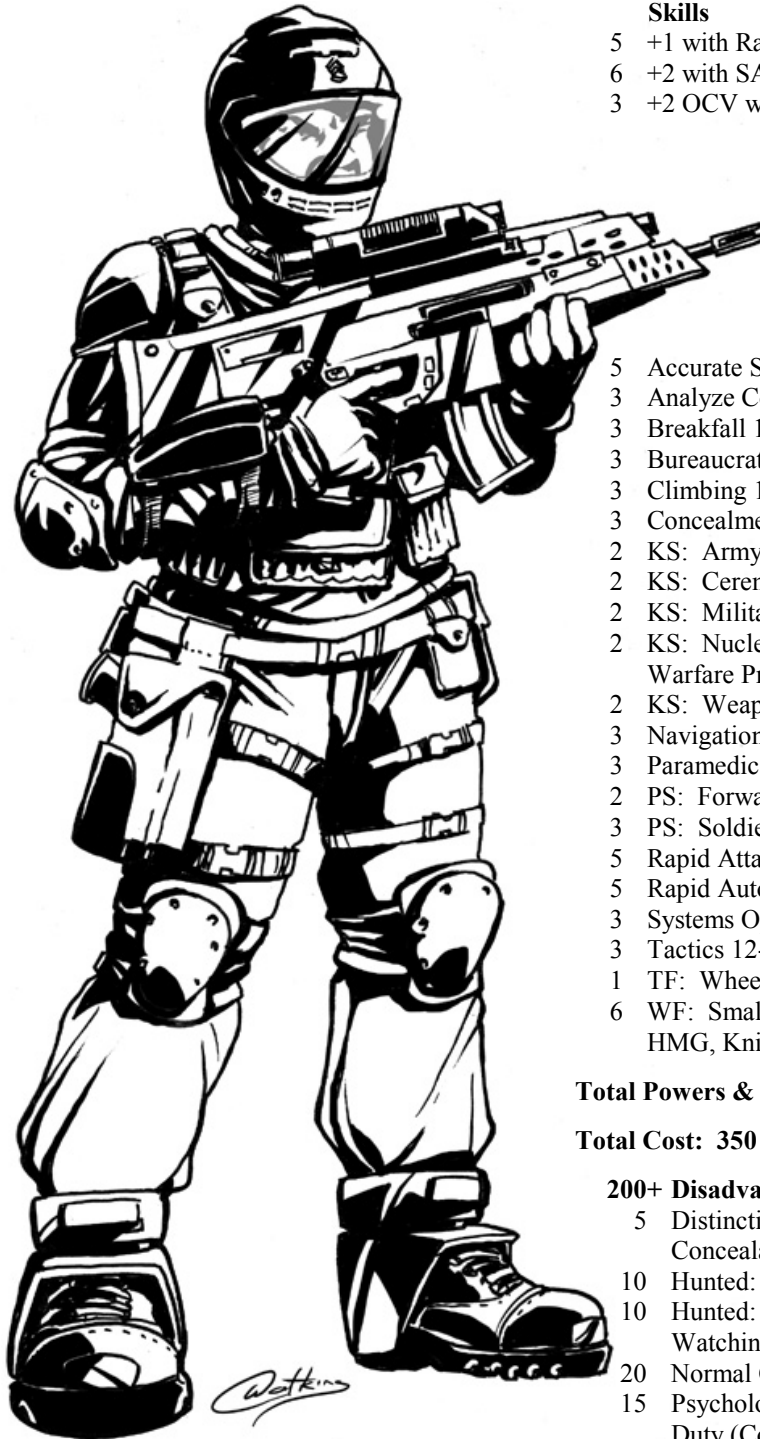
Skills
5 +1 with Ranged Combat
6 +2 with SABR
3 +2 OCV with Autofire

5 Accurate Sprayfire
3 Analyze Combat Technique 12-
3 Breakfall 12-
3 Bureaucratics 12-
3 Climbing 12-
3 Concealment 12-
2 KS: Army History And Customs 11-
2 KS: Ceremony And Drill 11-
2 KS: Military World 11-
2 KS: Nuclear, Biological, Chemical
  Warfare Procedures 11-
2 KS: Weapon Identification 11-
3 Navigation 12-
3 Paramedics 12-
2 PS: Forward Observer 11-
3 PS: Soldier 12-
5 Rapid Attack (ranged)
5 Rapid Autofire
3 Systems Operation 12-
3 Tactics 12-
1 TF: Wheeled Military Vehicles
6 WF: Small Arms, Grenade Launcher,
  HMG, Knife, Rocket Launcher

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 294

Total Cost: 350

200+ Disadvantages
5 Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily
  Concealable)
10 Hunted: The Enemy 8- (As Pow)
10 Hunted: US Army 8- (More Pow, NCI,
  Watching)
20 Normal Characteristic Maxima
15 Psychological Limitation: Sense Of
  Duty (Common, Strong)
20 Social Limitation: Subject To Orders
  (Very Frequently, Major)
70 Experience Points (or choice of
  Disadvantages)

Total Disadvantage Points: 350

Experienced Soldier

Incomplete Character Rules by James Jandebeur

Introduction

It all started with spirits. Back when the first *Hero Almanac* came out for *HERO System 4th Edition*, it contained the Spirit Rules, an optional system for dealing with the disembodied. While they did cover the subject, they were a departure from the normal character creation rules, adding completely new rules to the system rather than using (or broadening) existing powers to accomplish the goal. Now, this was really nothing new, since Automatons, Computers, Vehicles, and Bases had done this for years. Still, it seemed that it might be useful to have one set of rules unifying all of these concepts, one a bit closer to normal character creation rules. This line of thought began the project that became the Incomplete Character Rules.

All of the "characters" mentioned above, including those using the Spirit Rules, do have one thing in common: they lack one or more of the characteristics that go into normal character creation, making them "incomplete". For instance, the standard Automaton lacks Ego and possibly Stun. Therefore, most of the Incomplete Character Rules are guidelines for what happens when each characteristic is deleted from a given character. A few rules are added or modified outside of this, in order to unify the various systems.

WHY DO THIS?

There are three advantages to having one set of rules for all characters:

1. Simplicity. While more complex than, for example, Vehicles, the Incomplete Rules are in some ways simpler than the Vehicle, Computer, and Automaton Rules taken together.

2. Consistency. By having all characters use one set of rules, balance issues are fairly straightforward.

3. Flexibility. It is quite possible to use the Incomplete Rules to create more character types than currently exist without having to work from scratch. In fact, just about anything can be written up as one form of Incomplete Character or another, from important items such as foci to trivial things like rocks or cereal bowls.

The Rules

For the remainder of this article, the term Incomplete shall be used to refer to any character that lacks one or more Characteristics. Like most *HERO System* character creation rules, the reasons for a character to be an Incomplete can vary by special effect. For example, Lacks Presence can be used when representing a computer, or may indicate a person so detached from his feelings that he can neither be impressed nor have real emotional impact on others.

Modifications

In order to unify the character creation rules for all characters, some modifications to the rules need to be made. While these modifications apply to general character creation, they should be strictly regulated by the GM, in effect having the Stop Sign notation: they can cause problems if used for regular characters rather than Incompletes, but may still prove useful in some circumstances.

AUTOMATON SPECIAL POWERS

The Automaton Special Powers should be considered regular powers, with the exception of Does Not Take Stun, which is replaced by Lacks Stun (see the Removing Characteristics section). In particular, the options Does Not Bleed and No Hit Locations are appropriate for some characters. The former could be used to simulate part of the ability of a regenerating character or one able to psychically regulate his own blood flow, while the latter can be for horrible protoplasmic forms and the like (see the *HERO System Bestiary*, page 190). Cannot Be Stunned is free for an Incomplete which Lacks CON, and should rarely be taken by regular characters.

PACKAGE DEAL DISADVANTAGES

While it is not normally appropriate, the Disadvantages from Package Deals can be considered to not count against the total or category maximums. Instead, they subtract from the overall cost of the Package. This should only be done if the abilities in the Package are considered to redefine the basic character, rather than increasing his overall power level.

> **Example:** *An alien race senses radio waves, giving it High Range Radio Hearing and Radar, 25 points worth of powers, but is Blind for a 25 point Physical Limitation. The GM decides that this simply replaces one sense with another, and so the race costs 0 points. In a Standard Heroic game, a member*

INCOMPLETE HISTORY

Originally, the Incomplete Rules did not provide or cost points. This has been modified, both to bring them closer to the standard rules and because some of the Characteristics never quite balanced properly. If lacking a Characteristic is a Disadvantage, it is still very appropriate to balance it with an equal cost ability, but the specifics are left in the GM's (or, rarely, player's) hands.

of the race could still take 25 points in Physical Limitations and 75 points in total Disadvantages.

Lacks Stun is a 45 point Power in these rules. Many Automatons take the Physical Limitation: Loses Functions When Taking Body (Frequently, Greatly Impairing) to reduce this cost to 30. Disadvantages allowing the Automaton to be incapacitated could also subtract from this total, as it is simply replacing the ability to be rendered unconscious by taking Stun with other methods.

ADVANTAGE/LIMITATION PAIRS

Similarly to the Package Deal Disadvantages option above, sometimes it may be appropriate for Advantages and Limitations to cancel each other out. This is done in much the same way as Nonselective subtracts from the cost of Area Of Effect powers, rather than being considered a normal Limitation. For example, the Advantage Usable By Others, allowing one other to use the Power for a +1/4, could be cancelled out by Only By Others, to create a weapon or system for a Vehicle.

INCOMPLETE SECONDARY CHARACTERS

Characters often purchase Disadvantages that cause others to be associated with them in some way. Any of these can be an Incomplete with the GM's approval. For example, a character can be Hunted by powerful Automaton programmed to kill him, or have a DNPC that is an ancient family heirloom.

A Duplicate can be an Incomplete, but if it belongs to a different character type than the main character it usually need some level of the Altered Duplicate Advantage. If everything is the same other than it being an Incomplete, it is the +1/4 Advantage, increasing for other differences as usual. However, if the GM decides the Duplicate is simply a part of the whole character, this restriction can be waived.

Example: *An Evil High Priest is able to separate his Spirit from his Body, effectively splitting himself into two Incompletes. This is purchased as Duplication (see Astral Form on page 101 of the* Hero System 5th Edition*). Because the Duplicate is a portion of the main character, and is otherwise identical, the GM rules that it does not require Altered Duplicate.*

With the GM's permission, Summon can also be used with Incompletes, allowing a wide variety of item creation powers or "conjuring up" a distant item. This is an alternative to Transform (for creating items) and Teleport (for conjuring

them), so it should be watched closely if allowed at all. Many Incompletes require the use of the Amicable Advantage on the Summon Power. For example, conjuring up a weapon requires at least Friendly (it will not turn on the conjurer, but it could be taken and used against him), while creating water would probably require Slavishly Loyal (it is useful and unlikely to be used against its creator).

Finally, it can be appropriate for a Follower to be any kind of Incomplete. This can remove the need for a separate Vehicle or Base Perk. Thus, a character could purchase four 100 point Followers: a sidekick, a house, a car, and a computer. This would cost 30 points. Alternatively, different Incompletes could also be different Perks, much as they are in the official rules, requiring them to be purchased individually.

Additions

When creating an Incomplete, the Characteristic(s) to be removed are simply crossed off the character sheet. Usually, the benefits and drawbacks are considered to roughly balance, resulting in no cost. In some cases, it is primarily a drawback to lack a Characteristic, in which case a Disadvantage is given for it, but not all Incompletes qualify for the extra points.

Example: *A standalone Computer Lacks Strength, a Physical Limitation normally worth 15 points. However, if that same computer were integrated into an Automaton or a Vehicle (and not simply considered part of the other character), it would no longer get the points for this Disadvantage.*

Stun is the only Characteristic that actually costs points to remove.

An Incomplete may purchase any deleted Characteristic as a Power. This should not be done often, especially if it is bought without Limitations, as it usually indicates that a regular character is more appropriate. If this is done, the Base Characteristic is considered to be 0 for calculating the total. If lacking the Characteristic is normally a Disadvantage, the value should be reduced or eliminated entirely. Some characteristics, like Recovery and Stun, make no sense to buy back.

Example: *Standard Automatons are immune to Presence Attacks, but can be quite intimidating themselves. Under these rules, this is done by the Automaton taking Lacks Presence and then buying Presence as a Power.*

An Incomplete lacking one or more Primary Characteristics can only purchase Skills based on

them with GM's permission. All such Skills have a starting roll of 9- (unless the Characteristic is bought as a Power and is applicable), though they may be bought up normally. This is how laboratories are purchased for Vehicles and Bases. If the Incomplete is using the Skill itself, it will generally fail at any but the most rudimentary tasks, however much the roll is made by. This is especially true in Skill vs. Skill contests. The GM has the final say on this matter.

For purposes of calculating Figured Characteristics, the deleted ability is considered to be 0. Since the deleted Characteristic is not a part of the Incomplete, it cannot be altered by Adjustment Powers. If bought back, the Power can be altered, but the Incomplete will never acquire the penalties of having a negative score.

NEW POWER ADVANTAGE: RIGID DEFENSE▲

This Advantage is applied to Defense Powers, though it is most useful when applied to PD and ED or similar abilities. A Power with this Advantage stops all Stun damage if the Body done does not exceed it, in exactly the same way as a Force Wall. Unlike a Force Wall, it is not destroyed or damaged when this happens, and it does not prevent attacks from being thrown through it by the character. This is a +2 Advantage. If the defense is broken when it is exceeded by an attack, it is reduced to a +1. Rigid Defense must be taken on all Defense Powers, PD, and ED by any Incomplete which Lacks Stun, unless the GM decides otherwise.

Rigid Defense Cost Multiplier: +2 if the defense does not drop when exceeded by the Body of the attack; +1 if it needs to be re-established when it is exceeded by the Body.

Removing Characteristics

This is the most important part of the Incomplete Character Rules, what gives them the name. Lacking each of the fourteen Characteristics is defined, but these are only example definitions. If the GM should decide that these definitions are inappropriate, either for a specific use or in general, they should be changed to something more suitable. In particular, Lacks Body, Physical Defense, Energy Defense, or Stun can be unbalancing and should be tightly controlled. All Disadvantages assume that having the Characteristic is useful, but not vital, to the character, and should be adjusted up or down accordingly.

LACKS STRENGTH

The Incomplete without Strength is incapable of exerting physical force. Usually, it should sell back its base Running and Swimming, since these abilities often depend on some form of physical power, but this is not necessary. Movement Powers should take Cannot Be Used For Move By/Move Through (-1/4), if applicable. Computers and AI's Lack Strength, and this might also be appropriate for cyberspace personas and spirits, among other things. Lacks Strength is usually a Physical Limitation, Frequent, Greatly Impairing, for 15 points.

LACKS DEXTERITY

The Incomplete without Dexterity cannot react to the physical world. Attacks targeted with OCV generally will not hit, though the GM can allow them to be used at OCV 0. Because of this, it usually can only use OCV targeted attacks that are Area Of Effect at no range. If it is using Mental Powers exclusively in a phase, it may act normally at its Ego. If doing anything that uses Dexterity for initiative, action is declared at the top of the phase and performed at the end, allowing normal characters to escape before the action is completed. While no characters in the standard rules Lack Dexterity, it might be used in the creation of creatures of pure mind or certain devices not needing Dexterity to function. Lacks Dexterity is usually a Physical Limitation, All The Time, Greatly Impairing, for 20 points.

Example: *For a Space Opera style campaign, a number of characters in the Galactic Defense Force are in possession of Psi Crystals, semi-sentient creatures capable of boosting their owners' psychic abilities. They also act to some extent on their own. They are given Lacks Strength and Lacks Dexterity, which would normally be a total of 35 points in Physical Limitations. However, since they only need to operate psychically, the Lacks Dexterity is considered Frequent, Slightly Impairing, reducing its value to 10 points.*

LACKS CONSTITUTION

The Incomplete without Constitution is not a living creature, at least in the normal sense. It has no normal biological processes. It gains Cannot Be Stunned for free, because it does not go into shock from pain. At the GM's option, it will also react differently from living characters when deprived of its needs, shutting off rather than taking damage. Life Support can be bought normally, removing needs like fuel (Diminished Eating) and maintenance (Longevity).

Example: *A car is created that Lacks Constitution. If it runs out of gas, it doesn't take damage from not having "food", it just stops running. It does not die in the desert heat, but may very well*

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COMPUTERS

While Computers in the rules technically do not have Body, PD, or ED by the rules, this is because they are generally a part of something else, whether another Incomplete (such as a Base Computer) or a Focus. Therefore, they do not follow the rules presented here for these three Characteristics. If building a standalone Computer, it should have them, or have Defense and Body.

stop, and if thrown into an active volcano (which is considered an attack) will still melt.

The primary drawback for Lacks Constitution is that it is 0 for purposes of Figured Characteristics. Because of this, if bought back as a Power it must take the Does Not Add To Figured Characteristics Limitation. Vehicles are an example of Incompletes that Lack Constitution. Lacks Constitution is considered to be worth no points.

LACKS BODY ⚠

The Incomplete without Body cannot be killed or destroyed by normal means. An alternate means of destroying it must be defined. Frequently, another characteristic must be reduced to negative its normal value to cause the Incomplete's destruction. All attacks must take the Affects Physical World Advantage unless the GM determines otherwise. The Incomplete does not actually have Desolidification: it cannot move through objects, and Affects Desolidified attacks are not able to do Body to it. This is not considered a Disadvantage or a Power. There are no real examples of this in *HERO System 5th Edition*, the best example still being the previous edition's optional Spirits, which were destroyed by reducing their Ego score.

Example: *At some point in the past, a Pulp Era campaign world was somehow crossed with a universe in which cartoons existed, and the world was never the same. These creatures cannot be permanently harmed by ordinary means, though they can be rendered unconscious or Stunned. They can only be killed using some form of excessively strong paint thinner or the like.*

LACKS INTELLIGENCE

The Incomplete without Intelligence is incapable of processing information or perceiving for itself. Instead, an operator is needed to give it orders. Some form of control system should be defined for each of the Incomplete's abilities. Usually, this requires some form of physical contact, like a car's steering wheel and pedals, but with the GM's permission it can respond to one normal sense, though this gives it no perception beyond receiving orders (*e.g.,* voice control). More esoteric forms of control (radio control or even Mind Link) may be purchased as Powers. To give the Incomplete the means to respond to more than one form of control, give it a Knowledge Skill: Control Type, for each one after the first, as well as any required Powers. Any abilities the Incomplete does not somehow perform itself should be bought with Usable By

Others or, more often, through a Universal Focus.

Example: *The Movement Powers for a Vehicle are used by it, though at the direction of a pilot. They work at its initiative and on its Phases, and move the Vehicle itself. However, a vehicle mounted weapon might be fired by a gunner, independently of what the Vehicle is doing, and should be bought in such a way as to allow this.*

The Incomplete's controller can give it directions only on his Phases. Because of this, it usually acts on the lower of the controller's or its Dexterity (or Ego for Mental Powers) and Speed. If appropriate, it can act on its own, but it will simply repeat what it did when last given orders, even if the action is useless or even detrimental. See the *Hero System 5th Edition*, pages 321-322, for the basics of controlling this type of character. Vehicles are the primary example of this type of Incomplete, though any device that needs to be controlled from outside to function could also be built this way. Lacks Intelligence is a Physical Limitation, All The Time, Greatly Impairing, for 20 points.

LACKS EGO

The Incomplete without Ego is incapable of original thought. Unlike a character with a low Ego, it is not weak-willed, but has no will at all. It is unaffected by most Mental Powers, and cannot possess them without GM permission. If affected by a Mental Power that works against its class of mind, Intelligence may be substituted for Ego for both ECV and effect, at the GM's discretion. The precise results in this case depend on common sense and dramatic sense, as well as the effect roll: Mind Controlling a computer may not have the same results as doing so with a self-willed creature.

In order to function without outside instructions, the Incomplete needs "programs", which are bought as Knowledge Skills. These are usually bought for some very specific task, and do not normally require a roll. With the GM's permission, broader skills can be purchased, with a higher roll to compensate for the complexity.

Example: *A starship computer has the program KS: Attack Enemy Ship, at 8-, for 1 point. This is very straightforward, and once an "Enemy Ship" is identified for it and the order given, the computer can carry out the task with some competence. This will not normally require a roll. This is the typical program, and is equivalent to the official rules.*

On the other hand, a human emulation program for a spy android could be much more complex. If allowed as a single skill, it should be bought up quite a bit, perhaps to 18- or even higher. Rolls against this skill will be needed fairly often, sometimes with penalties, to pass unnoticed in human society.

In addition to the standard examples that Lack Ego (including Computers and Automatons), a creature that is purely instinctive might also. For example, insects actually have fairly simple behaviors that can be programmed into computers, so they might be built this way. Due to the immunity granted to most Mental Powers, as well as such things as torture and other methods of coercion based on Ego, Lacks Ego is not considered a Disadvantage. However, it should be made one if Mental Powers that can affect it are particularly common in the campaign.

LACKS PRESENCE

The Incomplete without Presence is unable to feel or inspire an emotional response. This renders it immune to Presence Attacks. It is also immune to Interaction Skills used to influence its behavior, but they could still be used against it in other ways. For example, it is generally immune to Seduction, but it could be convincingly lied to with Acting. The Incomplete is always noticed when in a social situation, effectively giving it a Distinctive Features (Concealable). The specifics should be defined when the Incomplete is created, but it is usually obviously emotionless (monotone voice, never gets excited, and so on). Automatons and Computers are among the usual examples of this type of Incomplete. Because of the immunity to Presence Attacks and skills, Lacks Presence is considered to be worth no points.

LACKS COMELINESS

The Incomplete without Comeliness creates no emotional response from its physical appearance. It is not ugly, but is also not really average or attractive: it is just there in the background. Most everyday things fall into this category, as do Vehicles, although optionally these things can have a Comeliness score to represent artistic merit or luxury. Since Lacks Comeliness has no significant game mechanical effect, it is not a Disadvantage.

LACKS PHYSICAL DEFENSE ⚠

The Incomplete without Physical Defense does not interact with the material world. It ignores attacks targeted against PD, and passes through barriers composed of matter. This is largely similar to Desolidification, but PD targeted attacks will not harm it even if bought Affects Desolidified. However, this lack of interaction renders the Incomplete deaf, mute, and without smell, taste, or touch, as these senses rely on physical contact. The senses can be bought back at the normal costs (see *Hero System 5th Edition*, pages 227-229) and with the GM's permission. It is usually appropriate to purchase Invisibility to the senses listed except for Touch (it is considered Desolid for this purpose as well). It generally cannot purchase physical attacks, and other attacks require the Affects Physical World Advantage. Spirits from 4th Edition are the only examples of this type of character. Lacks Physical Defense is considered to be worth no points.

LACKS ENERGY DEFENSE ⚠

The Incomplete without Energy Defense does not interact with forms of energy, most obviously electromagnetic energy. It ignores energy based attacks and can pass through most Force Walls. This is largely similar to Desolidification, but energy attacks will not harm it even if bought Affects Desolidified. However, this lack of interaction renders the Incomplete blind, as it cannot perceive light. Sight may be bought back at the normal costs. It is usually appropriate to buy Invisibility to the Sight Group. It generally cannot purchase energy attacks, and other attacks require the Affects Physical World Advantage. Spirits from 4th Edition are the only examples of this type of character. Lacks Energy Defense is considered to be worth no points.

LACKS SPEED

The Incomplete without Speed can never take actions. It cannot activate powers, so only Persistent powers work for it normally. These should also usually be Inherent, if this makes sense for the power. It can be given powers for others to use, either because it also Lacks Intelligence, by making them Usable By Others, or putting them in Universal Foci. This is obviously not a playable character, but Bases are a standard example of such Incompletes. Lacks Speed is a Physical Limitation, All The Time, Fully Impairing, for 25 points if taken on its own. Lacks Speed is worth no points if the Incomplete Lacks Dexterity and Ego, as it can already take no actions.

LACKS RECOVERY

The Incomplete without Recovery does not have any form of renewable energy, and does not heal from wounds. Instead, it must be recharged and healed (or repaired) by others. If its abilities are reduced by an Adjustment Power, it does not recover the points normally. For example, most non-living things, including Vehicles and Bases,

PRESENCE

While an Incomplete that Lacks Presence cannot normally make Presence Attacks, its actions may warrant one. In this case, it only gets the bonus dice for the circumstances, unless it has purchased Presence as a Power.

STUN

Because Lacks Stun is being separated from Cannot Be Stunned, the cost has been reduced from the official Does Not Take Stun Power. Very often the two will be taken together, or an Incomplete that Lacks Stun will also take Lacks Constitution. However, the option is there to not take both.

have no Recovery score. Lacking Recovery is normally considered to be a Physical Limitation, Frequent, Greatly Impairing, for 15 points. Alternatively, Recovery can be reduced to 0 if this would be worth more points (and if no other Figured Characteristic has been reduced), but this is still considered to be a Physical Limitation. Usually, Incompletes taking Lacks Recovery should also take Does Not Bleed, canceling out the Disadvantage, but this is not necessary.

LACKS ENDURANCE

The Incomplete without Endurance has no natural reserve of energy. It cannot use Stun as Endurance, and cannot Push. It must use other means of fueling all of its abilities, whether through the Reduced Endurance Advantage, Charges, or an Endurance Reserve. This is not actually considered a Disadvantage, but the characteristic can be sold back to 0 normally.

LACKS STUN ⚠

The Incomplete without Stun cannot be knocked out, though it can still be Stunned. The benefit of this is obvious, but the Incomplete must purchase all defenses with the Rigid Defense Power Advantage, paying for this even on its starting defenses (or with the GM's permission dividing them by 3). Also, as the only obvious way to stop the Incomplete is to destroy it, that is what many opponents will try to do. Many Automatons are an example of Incompletes that Lack Stun. Usually, this is worth 45 points.

A number of circumstances should be taken into account when determining the final cost of Lacks Stun. Disadvantages related to the Incomplete's nature should reduce its cost. If it is little or no more difficult to incapacitate it than a character with Stun, the Rigid Defense Advantage can be reduced or eliminated entirely. Finally, in some campaigns it may not be much of a benefit to Lack Stun, perhaps because highly lethal attacks are common and Entangles and similar powers are rare. Of course, there is also the possibility that of the cost being increased in some campaigns.

> **Example:** *The Amorphous Assassin Android, or AAA, is an Incomplete with Lacks Stun, costing it 45 points. While it can never be Knocked Out, if hit hard enough it needs a Phase to reform itself. Therefore, it does not take Cannot Be Stunned and has a Constitution score.*
>
> *A somewhat friendlier android, named Facts, is being constructed as an Incomplete that Lacks Stun and Cannot Be Stunned (it is designed to simulate a living thing, so it has a Constitution), for a total of 60 points. It loses*

functions if damaged (15 points), it can be turned off with a hidden switch (15 points), and it is Susceptible to certain forms of electromagnetic radiation (3d6 INT Drain per Turn, 25 points). These reduce the cost of the overall Package, the final cost of which is 5 points. The GM further chooses to reduce the Rigid Defense Advantage to +1, because it is not much more difficult to disable Facts than a normal character in his campaign.

Adding Characteristics

When creating new character types, it may be decided that new Characteristics are required. For example, standard Bases have a Size Characteristic, and their Body score somewhat differently from that of a normal character. These can often be developed from existing abilities, in much the same way as new Powers are sometimes added (see *HERO System 5th Edition*, page 354, for examples of creating new Powers from existing ones).

After figuring what would normally be the Real Cost of the power, simply make that cost the Active Cost for the new Characteristic. It can then be bought as a Characteristic or as a Power, as appropriate. It may be necessary to fudge a bit to get a straightforward Characteristic cost, and some adjustment should be done if necessary to get a cost the GM feels is fair.

> **Example:** *The writer of a* Digital Hero *article sits down to re-create the three Characteristics for Bases from existing powers. Because the Body is spread out over the Base, he decides to use Entangle as the base power. After a bit of work, he finds that buying up the Defense and Body of this Entangle and then doubling its area comes out to be 6 Real Points, so he assigns 3 points of that to Defense, 1 to Body, and 2 to Size.*

DELETING ADDED CHARACTERISTICS

In some campaigns, the GM may add new Characteristics to the game (see *HERO System 5th Edition*, page 351, for some examples). These become part of normal characters, and so are different from adding Characteristics to Incompletes. In this case, it may be appropriate to define what lacking these new Characteristics might mean.

> **Example:** *In a horror campaign, the GM has added the Characteristic, Sanity (SAN), as a measure of how stable a character is at any given time. He decides to define Lacks Sanity to mean that the Incomplete has a different*

world-view from normal characters: perhaps it is one of the Things Man Was Not Meant To Know, or has an unshakable belief system that cannot be altered by experience. As this is both beneficial and detrimental (while it can never go insane, it is less flexible than most characters), Lacks Sanity is considered to be worth no points.

Examples

This section describes several possible ways to use the Incomplete Character Rules. They are written up as Package Deals, and assume that Disadvantages will be subtracted from ability costs. An Incomplete is usually meant as a redefinition of the base character, so all of these examples have a total cost of 0. For example, it does not cost anything to be a Vehicle or an Automaton, so it is likewise free to be a Spirit or a Net Persona.

EXISTING INCOMPLETES

The Incomplete Character Rules are largely derived from character types currently in the rules. For example, Lacks Stun and Lacks Ego are both directly developed from the Automaton rules. During the updating of these rules for the *Hero System 5th Edition*, all of the existing "character" types were designed and balanced to 0 points. They are not included here because, useful as they were in the development process, they will not add anything to most people's games. After all, these character types are already perfectly well done in the regular rules.

4TH EDITION SPIRITS

The Spirit Rules first appeared in the *HERO System Almanac* and later in *Horror Hero*, both 4th Edition books. They were not only the impetus for the Incomplete Rules, but are also the reason that certain things work as they do. Specific ideas drawn from the Spirit Rules were Lacks Body, Lacks PD, and Lacks ED.

Spirits as written existed in the Spirit World, a universe that exists "next to" the physical world and works by its own laws. All Spirits received the advantages and disadvantages of existing in that realm. This idea has merit for a number of concepts, but is beyond the scope of this article. What is presented here is the design of the Spirits themselves.

Two assumptions are made about the nature of the Spirit Realm. One is that physical force is meaningless, and so Lacks STR is not worth a Disadvantage. Similarly, the cost of Lacks Stun is waived, along with the need for taking Rigid Defense, because such damage is virtually unknown there.

SPIRITS PACKAGE DEAL	
Ability	**Cost**
Lacks CON	0
Lacks BOD	0
Lacks PD	0
Lacks ED	0
Lacks STUN	0
Disadvantage	**Value**
Physical Limitation (Lacks STR)	0
Lacks END	0
Total Cost Of Package:	**0**

Because they Lack Body, Spirits are destroyed when their Ego is reduced to the negative of its normal score. They have a Recovery, and so will regain points lost from Drains normally, but its base is 0 (they Lack both Strength and Constitution) and should not be bought up. Because of the drawbacks of Lacks PD and Lacks ED, most Spirits cannot perceive the world around them, and either drift aimlessly or (for ghosts of the dead) go through some routine they had in life, and never truly understand their current state. Spirits buying normal Senses might see the physical world, while Detect Spirits might be used to see their own reality, but this depends on the rules the GM has developed for the Spirit World.

ALTERNATIVE VEHICLES

In the *Hero System 5th Edition*, characters that are naturally larger or smaller than humans are given a Physical Limitation for their size and abilities to simulate the advantages of being that size. This could also be applied to the building of Vehicles, in which case the Size Characteristic is removed. For every doubling of mass, it would need 5 points of Strength, which should take Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) to carry itself and Knockback Resistance for -1". While it might also take an extra point of Body, there are several reasons not to (*e.g.,* low structural integrity).

DETAILED FOCI

The idea of certain types of Foci being purchased instead as an Incomplete has been around for a while. Specifically, Powered Armor suits have sometimes been presented as Vehicles (see *The Ultimate Vehicle*, page 83). This allows some extra options and a greater level of detail. It can be abused, with the low cost combined with the way Vehicle Defenses work, but it is a valid option if carefully used.

Other items can also be purchases as Incompletes. This would use the Follower Perk, but different items should be purchased separately rather than as multiples of Followers. Multiple items of the same type could be bought that way. This gives an added degree of control at the cost of complexity. For example, here are

EXISTING INCOMPLETES

If there is an interest in seeing the test write-ups for the existing character types, the author can be contacted at *james@gamephil.com*

POWERED ARMOR AND VEHICLES

As an option specifically for the Vehicle as Powered Armor, it may be useful to have its Defenses work as normal Armor for the occupant, rather than working as Rigid Armor. The Defense works as usual for protecting the Vehicle/Armor itself.

Nebula's Duress Gauntlets, from *Conquerors, Killers, and Crooks*, written up as a Follower. They are 39 Real Points, so are a 195 point Follower. Because are not inconvenienced by the Characteristics they Lack, the Disadvantages are worth 0 points.

Nebula's Duress Gauntlets

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
1	BODY	-18	
0	PD	0	Total: 0/12 PD (0/12 rPD)
0	ED	0	Total: 0/12 ED (0/12 rED)

Total Characteristics Cost: -18

Cost	Powers	END
75	*Duress Gauntlet Powers*: 60-point Multipower, Only Usable By Nebula (+0), Usable By Other (+¼)	
36	*Durable Focus*: Armor (12 PD / 12 ED)	0
22	*Durable Focus*: Healing 1 BODY (Resurrection), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Extra Time (Regeneration-Only) (1 Turn; -1¼), Only If Being Repaired (-½)	0
50	*Purchased Focus*: Luck 10d6, Only For Being Found By Nebula (+0)	0
29	*Inaccessible Focus*: Clinging (100 STR), Only To Stay With Nebula (+0); Can Be Overcome In A Turn Out Of Combat (-½)	0

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 212
Total Cost: 194

The *Purchased Focus* Power is based on the principle that Foci tend to return to their owners eventually. This gives a device roughly equivalent to a Durable OIF, but can be refined very easily. For example, Luck can be sacrificed for Body, meaning that they will be harder to break but if stolen can be harder to find. The Regeneration was bought on the assumption that Nebula could fairly quickly repair the item in a shop, but the Time Delay could be increased, rare materials could be used up as an Expendable Focus, and so on. The item could also completely change its nature: change *Purchased Focus* to *Wishes To Return To Dark Master*, give it Lacks Body instead of Regeneration, and drop the *Inaccessible Focus* power and it becomes the Scepter of a Demon Prince, banishing those offensive to him to Hell.

QUICK OR TRIVIAL EXAMPLES

The typical inanimate object has Body, PD, and ED (or Armor), and Lacks all other Characteristics. Load-bearing objects, such as bridges or tables, could also have STR, with Reduced Endurance and Persistent, Only For Supporting Weight (-1), to determine exactly how much it can hold before it starts taking damage.

A Net Persona, existing only in Cyberspace, could be developed in a similar manner to Spirits. It exists in the "dimension" of Cyberspace rather than the Spirit World, with a different set of rules to follow. An additional option is to give it back a STR score, but only for carrying "equipment," or programs, which would be given a weight and Defense and BODY scores of their own. Thus, STR would become the new Characteristic, Memory (MEM), and the Persona would be restricted in how much it could carry based on this.

Acknowledgements

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Variations on Areas Of Effect by Dave Mattingly

## Alternate Shapes for AOEs

Areas Of Effect don't have to be limited to just lines, cones, and circles. There are many other ways to use the existing rules to affect more interesting shapes.

With GM's permission, these variations on Area Of Effect can be used for powers. As always, use what works best for your campaign.

AREA OF EFFECT (RICOCHET)

By taking the Advantage *Area Of Effect (Line)* with the *Conforming* modifier, an attack can continue in a straight line until it hits a surface, then will "bounce" and continue until the Line's distance is used up. If the *Reduced By Range* Limitation is used a power with these Advantages, it can be determined at the time of purchase that the power loses a DC for every bounce, instead of every Range Increment.

An attack power with these Advantages will bounce any time that it hits an object with greater DEF + BODY than the DC in the attack (otherwise the attack would destroy the object, and continue through). Against a "soft target" such as a person, the attack will bounce if it does not knock the target down.
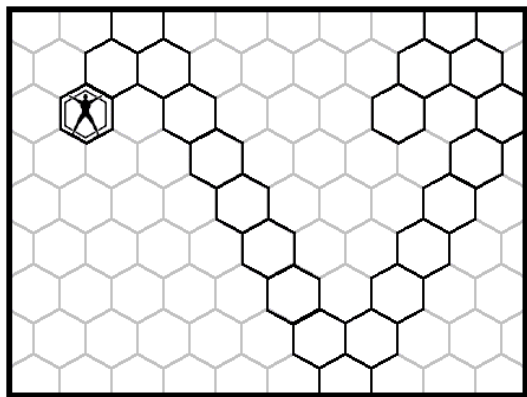
Area Of Effect (20″ Ricochet)

AREA OF EFFECT (TRAIL)

To attack targets in a straight line by running (or otherwise moving) past them, Area Of Effect (Line) can be linked to a Movement Power, as has already been done in *Ninja Hero* (Charging Slash option 3, page 38), *The Ultimate Vehicle* (Smoke Generator on page 25), and others.

But if the character doesn't want to limit his movement to a straight line, by adding the *Conforming* modifier (and the *No Range* Limitation, if it's normally a ranged attack), an attack will continue along the character's path, no matter what turns he might take. The area affected cannot be longer than the character's movement during that Phase.

This can be useful for vehicular smoke trails, oil slicks, and other effects that follow behind a vehicle. It can also be useful for speedsters that leave sonic booms, undertows, and other effects behind them. Many speedsters will also need to buy area doublings for the Area Of Effect, so that all of their inches of movement will be covered.

Example: Bullet Train has 24" of Running, and creates a wind tunnel behind himself when he runs, so that everything he runs past gets sucked into his path, and trails behind him for a time. This is bought as Telekinesis 15 STR, Area Of Effect (24" Line, Conforming, three area doublings, +2¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½) (82 Active Points); No Range (-½), Linked to Running (-½), Only To Pull Objects Behind Him (-1), Gestures (throughout, -½) (total cost: 23 points). Once he stops running, everything that he's been towing will drop. Sure, he may not have a lot of muscles, but by running past a crowd of bystanders, he can clear an entire room all at once, since each of the hexes behind him can lift/pull two men.

As a GM's option, for simpler bookkeeping, this package of Advantages and Limitations can be grouped into a single +1 Advantage – *Area Of Effect (Trail)*.

Example: Bullet Train has 24" of Running, and Telekinesis 15 STR, Area Of Effect (24" Trail, three area doublings, +1¾), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (71 Active Points); Only To Pull Objects Behind Him (-1), Gestures (throughout, -½) (total cost: 28 points).

AREA OF EFFECT (RANDOM)

By taking the Advantage *Area Of Effect (Radius)* with the *Non-Selective* modifier, and the Limitation *Limited Conscious Control* (-1), an attack will move from target to target randomly, until a target is missed. The effect will begin its journey on the target that was first indicated (so that the attacker can control the general area in which the attack will begin), but once the first target has been struck, the attacker has no choice where the attack will strike next.

After the first target, the attack will strike the nearest target that has not already been struck. If there is a choice of targets at the same distance, roll randomly.

If the *Reduced By Range* Limitation is used on a power with these Advantages, it can be determined at the time of purchase that the power loses a DC for every hit, instead of every Range Increment. Or, it can be determined at the time of purchase that the power loses 1 OCV for every hit, instead of every Range Increment. Both of these versions of *Reduced By Range*

DECOUPLING DISTANCE AND POWER

The Advantage *Area Of Effect (Line Of Sight)* is set at a +2 for the length of the cone. Instead of basing the length on the Active Points of the Power, since this Area Of Effect is supposed to cover the field of vision (or other sense), a flat +2 can be assumed to cover the necessary distance, regardless of the points in the power.

This can change, if there are Enhanced Senses bought for the appropriate Sense Group. 360° Vision will change the shape from a Cone to a Radius; Telescopic will need a +¼ for Area doublings for every +2 Telescopic; and so forth.

Limitations can be purchased for the same power.

For an additional -¼ Limitation, *Slow Spread*, the attack will start on the attacker's initiative, and then take an extra initiative point to move from target to target. So, for every target after the first, characters with a DEX score 1 lower may then act. If a target leaves the area before the attack gets to him, he's no longer a viable target. Conversely, if a target enters the area before the attack has petered out, he *becomes* a viable target.

Example: Arkelos has a Lightning Chain spell defined as RKA 2d6, Area Of Effect (3" Radius, non-selective, +¾) (52 points); Limited Conscious Control (-1), Reduced By Range (loses 1 OCV per hit, -¼), Slow Spread (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Gestures (-¼), Requires A Skill Roll (-½), Concentration (½ DCV, -¼), OAF (-1), 6 Charges (-¾) (total cost: 10 points). He casts it into a group of five adjacent goblins. The first goblin is struck on Arkelos' DEX of 14 and OCV of 7. The goblins don't get to move until their DEX of 11 comes up. So, on 13 and 12, two more goblins get attacked by the lightning, the first with an OCV 6, and the second with an OCV 5. Both attacks hit. On DEX Count 11, the remaining two goblins scatter, leaving Arkelos and his party as the nearest remaining targets. Uh oh. Arkelos is attacked on 11 with an OCV of 4, and is hit (curse that Concentration Limitation!). On 10, with an OCV of 3, the lightning attacks the nearest target to Arkelos, which is Chiron. Thankfully, Chiron's DCV is enough to evade the 3 OCV attack, and he lightning spell fizzles out, now that it has missed.

Depending on the special effects of the power, the attack might be diverted before it misses. For example, a lightning strike might be just as likely to hit an anvil as a person, if they were equal distances apart.

As a GM's option, for simpler bookkeeping, this package of Advantages and Limitations can be grouped into a single +½ Advantage – *Area Of Effect (Random)*.

Example: Arkelos' spell is defined as RKA 2d6, Area Of Effect (Random, +½) (45 points); Reduced By Range (loses 1 OCV per hit, -¼), Slow Spread (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Gestures (-¼), Requires A Skill Roll (-½), Concentration (½ DCV, -¼), OAF (-1), 6 Charges (-¾) (total cost: 11 points).

AREA OF EFFECT (LINE OF SIGHT) 🛑

According the rules, by taking the Advantage *Area Of Effect (Radius or Cone)* on a Mental Power, all targets within the area can be affected, whether the attacker can see them or not.

But if the character wants to mentally attack everyone within Line Of Sight, not just those within a certain distance, he could instead buy Area Of Effect (16x Length Cone, +2); No Range (-½), Requires Line Of Sight (-¼), Flash Defense Adds to Mental Defense (-¼), Takes Perception Penalties (-½).

The attacker must be able to see (or perceive with some other Targeting Sense) each target clearly. This power will not work through Mind Scan, unless the Mind Scan also was bought Area Of Effect.

Perception Penalties, such as coverage and concealment modifiers, apply. If one target were partly hidden behind another, the attacker would be at a penalty to hit the partly hidden target. When facing a crowd of people, generally, the first line of faces can be hit with no penalty, the second line at a -2, the third at a -4, the fourth at a -8, and so on. So, usually, this Advantage only really extends to the first two or three people deep.

Attacking from above with this Advantage begins at a -4 OCV, since (standing) people beneath an elevated character are considered Prone compared to the attacker's position.

Example: Morpheon can induce sleep with but a thought. *Sleep Beams:* 3d6 Ego Attack, Area Of Effect (64" Cone, +2) (90 Active Points); No Range (-½), Requires Line Of Sight (-¼), Flash Defense Adds to Mental Defense (-¼), Takes Perception Penalties (-½), Not versus Targets with Life Support: Never Sleeps (-¼). Total cost: 33 points.

When infiltrating a VIPER nest, and seeing two dozen agents 12" away at the end of the corridor, he attacks them with his Sleep Beams. Since the corridor is wide enough for three agents, he's able to get the first three at his ECV versus their ECV. The second row has partial coverage, and is at an additional -2. This third row is at a -4 for coverage. So, he's able to get a total 9 agents with his blast. Half of them are Stunned by the attack, and stagger aside, so the next time, he'll still be able to see them, plus a few more that are no longer hiding behind them.

Some time later, Morpheon is up against Gargantua. Since Morpheon can easily see Gargantua from two blocks away (Gargantua's PER bonus for being so large counteracts any distance penalties for perception), Morpheon is able to attack against Gargantua's normal ECV, minus 2 for partial coverage from some buildings (he's only visible from the waist up at this angle).

As a GM's option, for simpler bookkeeping, this package of Advantages and Limitations can be grouped into a single +½ Advantage – *Area Of Effect (Line Of Sight)*.

This Advantage has a Big Ol' Stop Sign. 🛑

AREA OF EFFECT (PERCEPTION)

Instead of basing the Area Of Effect on those that the attacker can perceive, as in *Area Of Effect (Line Of Sight)*, some special effects need to be based on those targets that can perceive the attacker.

By taking the Advantage *Area Of Effect (Radius)* with three levels of range doublings (for a total of +1¾), an attack will hit everyone within a large area. Applying the Advantage *Personal Immunity*, and the Limitation *No Range*, will center the effect on the attacker. Adding the Limitation *Requires A Skill Roll* (with the modifiers No Active Point penalty to Skill Roll and RSR Skill is subject to Skill Versus Skill contests, -¼) will require each defender to succeed at a PER Roll, or else escape the effect. Adding a final -¼ Limitation, *Flash Defense Applies*, allows the defenders to deduct Flash Defense (of the appropriate sense) from their PER Roll.

Example: The Minstrel has Ego Attack 3d6, Area Of Effect (32" Radius, three area doublings, +1¾), Personal Immunity (+¼) (90 Active Points); No Range (-½), Requires A Skill Roll (Hearing PER, -¼), Flash Defense Applies (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Gestures (-¼), OAF (lute, -1) (total cost: 26 points). He sings this lullaby while on stage in an auditorium. The acoustics were designed so that every seat in the house could hear well, so every member of the audience must *fail* a Hearing PER Roll (which the GM rules is at a +4 due to excellent acoustics) in order to avoid the effects of his sonic attack. His minions are wearing earmuffs (8 points of Flash Defense), so would get a -8 on their PER Rolls (for a total of -4) against his song. Singing this song a few more times will be enough to ensure that they can loot the entire audience before anyone wakes up. If The Minstrel were to sing this same song on a crowded street corner, he'd have to compete with the background noise, so the GM might rule that the crowd has a -4 PER Roll (making them less likely to hear, and thus be affected by, his song).

As a GM's option, for simpler bookkeeping, this package of Advantages and Limitations can be grouped into a single +1½ Advantage – *Area Of Effect (Perception)*.

Example: The Minstrel has Ego Attack 3d6, Area Of Effect (Hearing Perception, +1½), (75 Active Points); Incantations (-¼), Gestures (-¼), OAF (lute, -1) (total cost: 30).

AREA OF EFFECT (SHAPE)

By taking *Area Of Effect (Any Hexes)* Advantage with a ¼ less Limitation, the shape can be set as predefined shape (like the letter Z, a crescent moon, or a treble clef).

Example: Arkelos is trapped in a large cavern with over a dozen goblins. He casts his deadliest spell, The Penny Loafer Of God, which is defined as the shape of a shoe that covers 48 hexes (which is exactly the size of the shoe that Arkelos' player wears), roughly in a 6 by 10 inch block. The player takes off his own shoe, and places it on the map, to show which hexes are about to get stomped on. If the cavern weren't large enough for the entire shoe to fit, Arkelos wouldn't be able to use this spell (unless the Foot was powerful enough to also Stomp through the walls, as well).
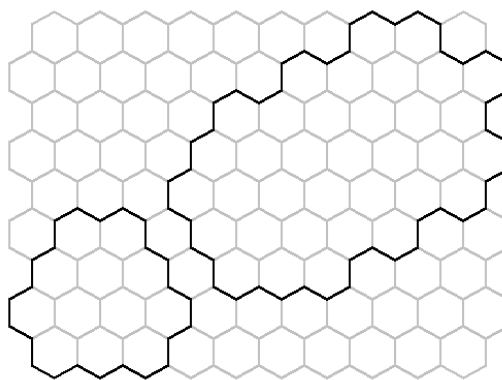
Area Of Effect (48" Fixed Shape)

It is recommended that the shape, at the desired size, be handy during game time. If the shape is that of a human skull (complete with eye- and nose-holes that aren't affected), it helps to have one that's already cut out at the desired shape and size, which can be just laid down on the map to show what area is covered.

AREA OF EFFECT (CAGE)

The *Champions* book (page 14) shows how to construct an Energy Cage, by combining the Advantages *Area Of Effect (One Hex)* and *Continuous* with the Limitation *Targets Only Take Damage If They Touch Cage Or Move Into/Out Of The Affects Hex (-½)*.

By increasing the Advantage to *Area Of Effect (Radius)*, a larger cage can be constructed, which deserves a consequently larger Limitation since the targets have much more space to move around in – the -½ Limitation increases to a -1.

Some of the Entangle and Force Wall Advantages and Limitations can also apply. Since Cage constructs must be Constant (either through the power's default duration, or the *Continuous* Advantage), there must be a way to shut off the power. In many cases, this will be by doing a specified amount of damage to the cage itself.

Takes No Damage From Attack can specify that certain types of attack will not harm the Cage. A Cage made of electricity, for example, might not take any damage from electrical or insulated attacks.

Cage And Character Both Take Damage will make it dangerous for those on the outside to free their trapped friends. Sure, Captain Spigot can put out the Fire Cage in a deluge of water, but his friends inside might drown if he does so.

Cannot Be Escaped With Teleportation is certainly a nasty surprise for teleporters who expect an easy way out.

Opaque can block senses from passing in and out of the Cage (but doesn't stop senses within). A Cage like this can be made soundproof, for example, while still allowing full view inside and out, but those within could still speak to each other – it's only the Cage wall itself that would stop sound.

Transparent can allow the attacker to encircle *himself* in a Cage, and attack from within, if he buys the Cage as being Transparent to his normal mode of attack. A Cage like this might have "bars" that can be seen through and attacked through (ranged attacks only, since hand-to-hand attacks would trigger the damage), without "tripping" the attack.

Does Not Prevent The Use Of Accessible Foci will still allow those within the cage freedom of movement, including the use of gadgets.

Cannot Form Barriers will prevent the cage from forming a "net" that could, for example, block a hallway – the cage has to form an entire unit.

Susceptible or *Vulnerable* will make the cage easier to destroy or escape from. Cages with some sort of lock will often have one of these Limitations against the *Lockpicking* Skill.

All of these Modifiers can be appropriate to a Cage. *Personal Immunity* is also very handy.

Example: Arkelos has been trapped in a Fire Cage (RKA 2d6, Continuous (+1), One Hex (Cage, +½)). He can see through it, cast spells through it, but if he were to try to touch the cage, or escape, he'd get burned.

a 2″ Radius Cage

SMALL EXPLOSION

The new +½ Advantage *Small Explosion* splits the difference between the Advantages *Explosion* and *Area Of Effect (One Hex)*. A small explosion power covers one hex at full power, the surrounding six hexes at half power, and stops there. This Advantage is a good choice when an explosion would work well against a group of enemies, but when there are too many friendly targets within the normal blast radius.
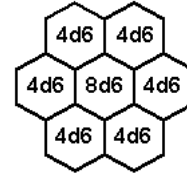
an 8d6 Small Explosion

EXPLOSIVE CONE

By applying the Limitation *Reduced By Range* to an attack with the *Area Of Effect (Cone)* Advantage, the character can define the power as power losing Damage Classes not on the distance from the attacker, but from the centerline of the Cone.
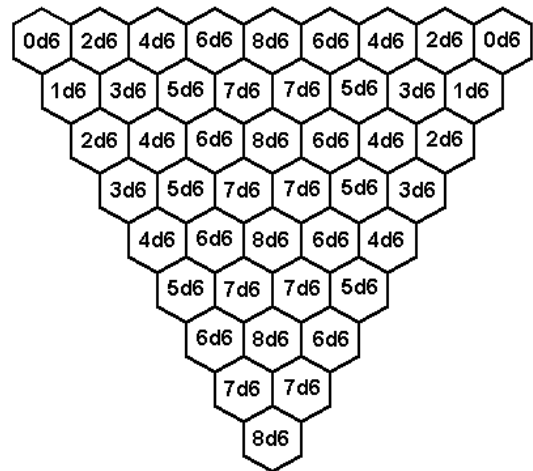
an 8d6 Explosive Cone

Force Fields Enhanced by W. Jason Allen

Force Field has long been a staple power of many genres. Supers wield personal force fields like a second skin. Wizards cast force fields around themselves when they fear the charging orcs may cause some injury. Massive starships raise their shields when some powerful alien vessel challenges them.

Yet, there are only a few options for Force Field presented in the *HERO System* rulebook. This article will present an explanation of how some Advantages can enhance the Force Field power, as well as by adding a few new options specifically for Force Field. Only those Advantages not normally applied to Force Field are detailed here. Those whose effects are self-explanatory are omitted.

STANDARD ADVANTAGES

Affects Desolidified (+½): By itself, this advantage offers no benefit to a Force Field. Coupled with the Area Of Effect advantage, it creates a field of energy that Desolidified characters cannot pass through.

Area Of Effect (+½, +1): More often associated with attack powers, Area Of Effect can be applied to Force Field, creating a bubble of energy with the character in the middle. Any of the Area Of Effect shape options can be used, though One Hex, Radius, and Line would be the most common choices. Applying this advantage turns the Force Field into a barrier that cannot be torn down, but can be penetrated. To penetrate, the attacker must do enough BODY to pierce the Force Field. Once breached, a hole in the Force Field is created that lasts until the owner of the Force Field takes a Half Phase action to repair the torn Force Field. Until the hole is repaired, objects can pass freely through the hole. If the Area Of Effect Force Field is the character's only defense, he is defenseless against attacks from inside the Force Field. However, this advantage is useful in protecting multiple people or objects that would not fit inside a normal Force Field, and can also act as an effective barrier. Note that Desolidified characters can pass through an Area Of Effect Force Field unless the special effect of the Force Field is one that will affect the Desolidified character, or the Force Field is bought with the Affects Desolidified advantage.

Does Knockback (+¼): This advantage normally applies to attack powers that do not do Knockback. When applied to Force Field, it can simulate a sort of "repulsor shield" that protects the wielder and can also force back those who come in contact with it. Since Force Field is not a power based on dice, the mechanic for determining Knockback is as follows: for each 5 points of defense in the Force Field (rounding down), the character gets 1d6 for the purpose of doing Knockback. For example, a 10/10 Force Field would get 4d6 of Knockback, while an 18/18 Force Field would receive 7d6. After determining the number of dice, roll them as damage, counting Body to get the number of Knockback inches. Then subtract 2d6 inches as per normal Knockback rules.

Double Knockback (+¾): This advantage can only be purchased in conjunction with the Does Knockback advantage. Otherwise, its effect is as detailed in the *HERO System* rulebook.

New Options

ADVANTAGES

Adaptable (+½): This advantage represents a Force Field that can be strengthened against either physical or energy damage by lowering the other on a one-for-one basis. It takes a Half Phase action to shift defense points, regardless of the number of points shifted. No more than half of the Force Field's physical or energy defenses (rounded down) can be shifted.

For example, a cybernetic villain has Adaptable Force Fields. In the course of a battle, he realizes his opponents are relying almost entirely on energy attacks. He adapts his 15 PD/15 ED Force Field to have greater defense against energy attacks. Taking a Half Phase to do so, he shifts his defense to the maximum allowed, making his Force Field 8 PD/22 ED.

Variable Harmonics (+½): This advantage simulates Force Fields that operate on a specific frequency that can be altered at the character's option. Altering a Force Field's frequency has the effect of adding +5 Defense versus the special effect of the last attack that got through the character's Force Field. For example, if a character is damaged by a punch, he can alter his Force Field harmonics to match punching damage, gaining an extra +5 Defense against punches. It takes a half phase action to alter a Force Field's harmonics.

This advantage can also be applied to attack powers. Doing so enables that power to gain an extra Damage Class versus the last special effect the character was able to do damage against.

It is possible for opponents to have their Variable Harmonics Force Fields and attack powers at matching frequencies. The effects do not change; they each have +3 Defense and +1 Damage Class against each other.

LIMITATIONS

Regenerating Shields (-½): This limitation simulates Force Fields that get weaker as they are hit. Unlike Ablative, which causes defenses to have an Activation Roll as they take damage, Regenerating Shields causes Force Field to lose Defense as it takes damage. Many space vessels have Force Fields with this limitation.

When a Regenerating Force Field is hit and damage done to the character, the Force Field loses Defense. For each 1 BODY and/or 5 STUN that gets through the Force Field, 1/1 Defense is removed from the Force Field. For example, if a 12/11 Force Field is hit with an attack that does 13 BODY and 26 STUN, then the Force Field will lose 1/1 DEF from the BODY damage and 3/3 DEF from the STUN damage. The 12/11 Force Field becomes an 8/7 Force Field. Note the character's other defenses (such as natural PD and ED or Armor) do not add to the Force Field's defense for this purpose; the Force Field's defense is considered to be "on top," meaning it protects the character against damage first, before any other defenses. If anything gets through the Force Field to be applied against the character's other defenses, then the Force Field loses defense.

The Force Field regenerates 1/1 Defense at the beginning of each phase the character acts. For example, the character whose FF was just reduced to 8/7 has a 23 DEX and 5 SPD. On segments 3, 5, 8, 10, 12 the character's FF will regenerate 1/1 DEF at the beginning of his action at DEX 23 until the Force Field reaches full defense. This regeneration occurs automatically, with no effort required from the character, as a zero phase action before the character takes any other action during his phase.

Only Against (Special Effect) (var): This limitation restricts the Force Field to only protecting against the indicated special effect. The value is based on the commonality of the special effect – -¼ for Very Common, -½ for Common, -1 for Uncommon.

Mathias Aromak by David Storch

"Wolf-one-six-actual, this is wolf-one-four, I have the enemy in my sights, over."

"Excellent, call in the strike. Give them a full spread; line up shockers at the perimeter."

Commander Hargbin triangulated the targets' position. In mere seconds, the enemy would be crushed by the raining death of heavy artillery. He radioed the forward observer from 1st Dragon Battalion, "Forty targets in the open. Range three zero, left one five. Willie P in effect. Over."

"Acknowledged, wolf-one-four. Willie P in effect. Out."

Moments later, high explosive rounds from guns positioned some fifteen kilometers away showered the area. A mixture of White Phosphorous smoke and tear gas surrounded the enemy. As the enemy left, they were gunned down from heavy gauss rifle fire set to full automatic.

"Was the information secured?"

"Yes, Minister. I myself have it with me," Commander Hargbin said, tapping his breastplate. Mathias flipped the control panel of his chair's console, toying with the button.

"And the rebels? They've been... relocated?"

"Yes Minister. Shall I bring you the data now, or transmit it to you?"

"No thank you, Commander, that really won't be necessary." Mathias said, pressing the button on the console. Commander Hargbin's body exploded where he stood, in the middle of town square.

Background/History: Decades ago, the planet Sirex was a cesspool of corruption and anarchy. Warlords came and went with the flow of the tides. Mikel and Jalnette Aromak were as lucky as anyone in the world could hope to be: Mikel had a steady income and a newborn son who would someday take over his father's job. Jalnette taught their son, Mathias, how to read, write, and do arithmetic. An exceptionally bright child, Mathias clung to everything his mother could teach him. He wanted to be a teacher, like her, once he finished his schooling. Sadly, he never got that chance.

The Killswords, a group of off-world mercenaries, had been hired to kill everyone in their area that resisted them in an effort to goad the local leaders into a war. Jalnette never saw the bullets coming. Her bloody corpse fell on Mathias, sheltering him to a degree. Mikel took days to find him, but when he did, they left quickly. They gathered up what they could, and Mathias paid special care to grab his mother's precious books. Mathias looked back on his home from the hilltop, not to return until after several years had gone by.

Mikel and Mathias decided to make the most of things. They were strong, like their ancestors had been. Mikel had been a traveling merchant for years. All he needed to do was adapt his business. He and Mathias decided to play one warlord against the other. Mikel wasn't very well suited to this, however, and was forced to make Mathias leave. Killswords shot his father in the head moments after.

Having seen both his parents murdered drove him nearly insane, but Mathias truly was resilient. He learned to channel his anger and use it to drive him to action after, rather than before thought. He learned everything he could from then on about revenge. Mathias turned his father's business into a front for information gathering for different warlords and petty criminals. He learned the secrets of military tactics. He learned how to survive.

One of the places his mother was going to show him, right before she died, was an abandoned library in the ruins of what used to be a capital city. Mathias spent months looking for the place. When he got there, he was awe-struck. Books were everywhere, just as his mother had said. He found all sorts, but his favorite was a Pre-Collapse book titled *The Prince* by some being called Machiavelli. Mathias read the book religiously.

Over the next few years, Mathias began to come into his own, and thirsted for power. He wanted to destroy those responsible for destroying his life. He vowed to rid his planet of all destructive elements. A resourceful man, Mathias built upon each of his successes, eliminating anyone who got in his way and consolidating business ties with those who didn't. He quickly found others who shared his dreams of ridding the world of its problems. Replete with success, he and his associates proposed setting up a State, one that would change the face of their world. With everything he did, Mathias began to extend his reach....

Mathias rose to power, slowly at first, then with increasing speed. In the period of a few short years, he was able to gain the support of the common people who supplemented a few of

artwork by Asbjorn Scholtens

MATHIAS AROMAK PLOT SEEDS

Gift Bearer: Trade negotiations on the campaign homeworld have broken down. The local space lanes have been attacked by a group of pirates. The attacks seem unusually orchestrated at times, particularly those around Russick Drift; a prominent trading station in low geosynchronous orbit above the campaign homeworld. "Fortunately," Minister-General Aromak of Sirex is there to provide military security….

Apartheid: Several Sirexan locals have smuggled themselves on board a freighter bound for the campaign homeworld. They have come seeking political asylum from "inhuman violation of basic sentient rights, and torture." They're members of a splinter

the anarchists still plaguing Sirex. With each triumph, he gained more and more support. Those who opposed him were quickly dealt with by any means necessary and with amazing efficiency. He proved to be as competent a military commander as he was an economic genius. Those he couldn't buy, he simply destroyed.

Today, Mathias has the planet Sirex under his boot, and is "Big Brother" incarnate. Following his career of Unification, he was legally elected as the Chancellor of the Assembly. He has been reelected during every election. Mathias is in theory nominally responsible for answering to the Assembly, and ultimately, the People. In reality, Aromak is a full-blown dictator who holds the planet Sirex under his boot. A true megalomaniac, he is in complete control and he knows it.

Personality/Motivation: Mathias Aromak is intelligent, well loved, and well aware of it. He is calculating, methodical, and very good at convincing people of what they want. He stops at nothing to get people to do what he feels is in their best interests, whether they like it or not. Mathias loves to hear himself talk and hates to be interrupted.

Mathias sees himself as the savior of his planet. He genuinely believes he has their best interests at heart. His selection of whom he is protective of is a bit twisted, however, as is his definition of "protection." In his mind, he sees absolutely nothing wrong with forcibly relocating people, surveying their private lives, and monitoring everything about them. For the most part, he leaves the citizens alone, provided of course they do what they're told and follow his vision. Dissidents, criminals, and freethinkers are a constant annoyance to him, and he has vowed to deal with them.

Mathias poses as the benevolent leader of a productive trade world, and projects this image to all who deal with his planet. Whatever he does must be the best for his people. Mathias knows people wouldn't support him if his intentions were made known, and because of this, he has become somewhat withdrawn. This, in turn has increased his inclination for violent action.

Mathias loves his son. He feels somewhat responsible for the death of his parents even to this day, and because of this, Mathias always treats his son to the best life has to offer at the expense of all else. He also loves books, thanks to his mother, and is always looking for new information on whatever holds his interest. He especially prefers books on sociology and history, and his library contains ancient books describing various empires throughout history. In particular, his favorite ancient texts include but are not limited to: *"The Prince," "Rise and Fall*

of the Third Reich," "The Republic," "and Utopia," and *"The Communist Manifesto."* He tries whenever possible to model his state after these examples.

Quote: "You and your kind are viewed with some distaste here. For your safety, I think it prudent that you be relocated."

"Captain, escort our 'guest' to its new 'quarters.'"

Powers/Tactics: At the heroic level, Mathias Aromak possesses no powers, as all of his "powers" are bought as equipment, with money. He prefers to use his guile and overwhelming intelligence to manipulate, rather than fight. Mathias never runs from a fight, however. Whenever he can, he has his Personal Guards fight in his stead, wearing an opponent down if not killing him outright. His intelligentsia normally keep an eye out for his enemies, but if a character should prove particularly troublesome, he conducts surveillance himself.

Mathias for the most part, leaves most of his minions alone to do as they please, provided they also do as they are told. However, he keeps his enemies and potential threats nearby. If the Player Characters are viewed as even a vague threat, they will receive his utmost attention and hospitality. This falls in line with his axiom of "keep your friends close and your enemies closer."

Assassination is his favorite weapon, with mind control running a close second. In regards to the general public, he keeps most of his people in line through power of suggestion. The exact means for this can vary with the power level of the campaign (see campaign uses). Mathias never leaves a trace when pulling a sensitive mission, especially one meant to extend his economic reach.

Mathias keeps himself in top physical condition, having mastered several martial arts he employs whenever he is forced into physical combat.

Campaign Use: Mathias was designed for use as the main villain in a *Star Hero* campaign. His best use is as a direct antagonist trying to disrupt events on the PCs' homeworld. He could also be used as an employer. When hiring PCs, they will most likely be used in a covert operation, with Aromak working behind the scenes. It should be very difficult to trace any link back to him. Should the PCs figure out his true nature, Mathias should hunt them down with every available resource to prevent them from "outing" him. The GM could also use him as a Hunted either for PCs or NPCs right from the start.

Mathias Aromak is recommended for use in a *Star Hero* campaign with PCs built on a 100-point base with 100 points of Disadvantages. For low-level campaigns, leave him as he is. This serves to make him more dangerous. For a truly low-powered campaign, one with say 25 Character Point PCs, reduce all non-figured characteristics by 3, leave figured characteristics as they are, and reduce skill levels to base roll levels, accordingly. For something a little more high-powered, buy up his STR, DEX, and INT. You may also want to consider giving him some more PD and taking his SPD up to 5 or 6.

Mathias is a megalomaniacal dictator, with dreams of empire. It's suggested he be used as the main villain or one of a group of recurring villains. When he's encountered, he always has with him at least four of his Personal Guards either right next to his person or in the immediate vicinity. GMs are advised to play up his outwardly friendly demeanor, while making his plans as diabolical as possible. Also, GMs should remember to have an explanation for his population being so docile and compliant. Suggestions for this include some form of Mind Control device bought as equipment, or as a Power bought with a Focus (as in high point level campaigns). In campaigns where the PCs will be on just one world, instead of Sirex being an entire planet, scale it down to a continent, hemisphere, or a large country.

Appearance: Mathias Aromak is a thirty-eight year-old male, approximately 5'10" in height. He has black, straight hair cut in a "high and tight" military style. He usually wears finely woven silk shirts and the finest suits (or whatever clothes your campaign calls for). He is also fond of military dress, especially when appearing in public and when addressing the Assembly. He is in top physical shape, never has anything on his clothes out of place, and is generally considered to be extremely handsome.

Aromak's Personal Guards

15 STR	15 DEX	20 CON	15 BODY
10 INT	10 EGO	15 PRE	10 COM
3 PD	4 ED	4 SPD	
7 REC	40 END	32 STUN	

Abilities: +1 with Ranged Attacks; Access; Ambidexterity (no Off-Hand penalty); Combat Sense 11-; Danger Sense (immediate vicinity, out of combat) 11-; Breakfall 12-; Combat Driving 12-; Fast Draw (Small Arms) 12-; PS: Bodyguard 11-; Security Systems 11-; Systems Operations 11-; Teamwork 12-; TF: Common Ground Vehicles; WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Small Arms

75+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed, Extreme Reaction, Noticed and Recognizable); Psychological Limitation: Protective Of Mathias Aromak (Uncommon, Total); Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major [character suffers punishment for disobedience])

group of radicals that have broken away from the ghettoes and refused to undergo "re-education…."

The Banks of the Styx: Aromak, a few members of the Sirexan Assembly, and various military leaders, all of whom are loyal to him, have gathered for a meeting in an undisclosed location. They've decided a "Final Solution" should be developed to solve the "Dissident Question." Rumor has it that those not in support of the current regime and their "Great Plans" will be asked to relocate to somewhere on the barren southern continent….

Mathias Aromak (Minister-General Of Sirex)

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

Total Characteristics Cost: 91

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

Cost	Powers			END

Martial Arts: Generic

Cost	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Abort
5	Kick	-2	+1	7d6 Strike
4	Punch	+0	+2	5d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0	+1	STR + v/5; Target Falls

Perks
- 45 Followers: 50 Personal Guards (75 Character Points Base each)
- 10 Fringe Benefit: Head of State (planet Sirex)
- 15 Money: Filthy Rich

Talents
- 9 Ambidexterity (no Off-Hand penalty)

Skills
- 16 +2 with All Combat
- 3 Acting 14-
- 3 Bureaucratics 14-
- 3 Combat Piloting 14-
- 3 Computer Programming 14-
- 3 Conversation 14-
- 3 Disguise 14-
- 2 Gambling 14-
- 3 High Society 14-
- 3 Interrogation 14-
- 6 Navigation (Air, Land, Space) 14-
- 3 Oratory 14-
- 3 Scholar
- 6 1) KS: Economics 15-
- 9 2) KS: Government Administration 18-
- 5 3) KS: Military Theory/History 14-
- 2 4) KS: Pan-Galactic History 11-
- 2 5) KS: Philosophy 11-
- 9 6) KS: Politics 18-
- 3 Systems Operations 14-
- 3 Tactics 14-
- 3 Teamwork 14-
- 4 TF: Small Ground Vehicles, Personal Military Spacecraft
- 6 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons, Small Arms

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 205

Total Cost: 296

100+ Disadvantages
- 5 DNPC: Mikel Aromak II (Aromak's son) 8- (Slightly Less Powerful; Fully aware of his father's position)
- 15 Enraged: when leadership questioned (Uncommon, go 14-, recover 14-)
- 25 Enraged: when empire or interests attacked (Very Common, go 8-, recover 8-)
- 20 Hunted: Rebels 14- (Less Pow, NCI, Kill)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Needs To Be In Control (Common, Strong)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Vengeful (Very Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Hates Non-Humans (Very Common, Moderate)
- 76 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 296

Mathias Aromak

Stonework by W. Jason Allen

Background/History: Unfortunately for Peter Goldstein, there isn't much of a market for cave-wall paintings. However, he fulfilled his childhood dream when he bought some land with natural caves near Atlanta, and began exploring the caves and painting the walls. It was just for fun; he made paintings in all sorts of styles, including the classic "cave painting" style. He even copied some of the more famous cave paintings from France.

Some news stories had been done about his work, and a lighting system he set up in the caves near the surface displayed his work to the tourists who came to visit. After a few years, Peter had explored fairly deeply into the cave system.

One day, while exploring deep in the caves, nearly half a mile below the surface, Peter came upon a small chamber that had obviously been carved and shaped. While examining the chamber, he accidentally tripped a hidden switch, and a cleverly hidden door opened. Passing through the door, he found the most amazing thing he had ever seen. Here, deep within the earth, was an enormous abandoned city!

Exploring cautiously, Peter found what seemed to be a library, and a book that, surprisingly, was in English. Reading the massive, dust-covered tome, he learned about the city, once called Nargoria, and its former inhabitants, the dwarves of the Nar-Gorath nation. He also learned the book was magical in nature, translating itself into the language of the reader. Recorded within its pages was the history of the dwarves who once lived here. The entire nation left the city to fight against Takofanes, the Undying Lord. Those few who returned after the war could not maintain the city, and eventually abandoned and sealed it, to join dwarves who lived in the west. Only the king stayed behind, in case others returned.

The palace of the dwarven king was even more extraordinary. Sitting on the throne was the statue of a dwarf, wearing a crown made of a silvery metal with blue highlights. When Peter approached the statue, however, it moved and spoke, nearly scaring him out of his wits!

"Who are you, human?" Peter had a little trouble making out what the king said, but understood his words. After calming himself, as the statue made no aggressive move, he answered.

"My name is Peter. I'm an artist. What – are you?"

"I am Kilarn, last king of Nar-Gorath. Stay, and speak with me. Long has it been since last I spoke with another living soul. I would learn what has become of my people."

Peter and Kilarn spoke for a long time of many things, and Kilarn was saddened to learn that not only had Takofanes been freed from his tomb, but the dwarves had vanished and become nothing but legend.

"Peter, you seem a good and kind soul. The time of my people has passed, and I now wish to join my ancestors. I would give you that which has kept me alive for so long. Bear it well, and do what good you can with it."

Kilarn's stone body shifted, and became flesh. He was an old dwarf, his hair thin and white, joints twisted with age.

"I am not long for this world, my friend. I give you the Heart Stone, an ancient ruby gifted with Dwarven Earth magic. Use it wisely and well, and it can preserve you for ages, should you choose. I ask only this: search for signs of my people. Though they have likely all perished, some may yet survive in other hidden cities. Read through my private library on the third floor; much lore is recorded there. Learn of our ways and make them yours, and you will prosper. Seek out my people. If you find them, tell them that Takofanes has returned, and to make themselves known to the new world. After all they sacrificed, they have a right to coexist with men.

"Peter, I make you my heir, and by dwarven law, that appointment may not be refused nor denied. Take this, my royal crown, as your own. It is made of Dwarven silversteel, and will not tarnish. If any ask you what right you have to it, tell them, 'by right of adoption, by the will of Kilarn.' Say that, and they will know you speak true. You are the first human to be so honored, but I have no choice. At least, now that I pass on, Nar-Gorath still has a king. If you can, bring the dwarves back to glory. If not, be content to live well."

Kilarn passed quietly from life, and Peter, though sad, was determined to do everything he could to find the dwarves.

Unfortunately, life got in his way. After joining with the Heart Stone, and realizing it gave him extraordinary power, he decided that being a superhero would be a good way to help people while trying to find the dwarves. Calling himself Stonework, he foiled a VIPER theft, and, finding their agents rather easy to defeat, continued to interfere with their operations.

It didn't take long for VIPER to figure out who Stonework really was. They threatened to kill his sister, Marla, unless he joined VIPER. At first he refused, but when they brought Marla in, blindfolded and crying, he gave in. He spent a

artwork by Derrick Thomas

year working for them before he could no longer tolerate the guilt of villainy, and turned himself in to a hero team he had fought against several times. The heroes tried to rescue his sister, but they were moments too late. Stonework fled, cursing the heroes, himself, and VIPER. Her death haunts him to this day.

Stonework has removed himself from the hero scene, and concentrates on finding the dwarves. He doesn't know what will happen if he should find them, and frankly, he doesn't care. He couldn't keep his promise to keep Marla safe, so keeping his promise to find the dwarves, and occasionally tormenting VIPER, is all he has left.

Personality/Motivation: Once a happy-go-lucky hero, confident in himself and his ability to trash the villain and rescue the world, Stonework has fallen hard. VIPER threatened his family, forced him into villainy, and beat down his spirit until he couldn't take it anymore. When he finally tried to resist and turned himself in, his sister got killed.

Tortured by his conscience, Stonework is for the most part unwilling to risk being a hero again. If he stumbles across someone in immediate need of help, he'll do what he can, but he doesn't go out of his way to help people anymore. Why bother? He's still wanted for the crimes he was forced to commit. The one time he tried to come clean, his sister was murdered and the judge at his trial refused to believe he had been coerced. His only reason for living now is to find the dwarves and get revenge on VIPER, two goals he pursues incessantly.

Given to quiet brooding, Stonework can sometimes be found in various parks across Campaign City, imitating a bench or statue, or sitting in a bar somewhere, brooding with a drink in hand. If he were to learn his sister still exists, even as a ghost, he would cheer up considerably. Until then, it would take tremendous sympathy and goodwill from someone who truly cared about him to make him want to be a hero again.

Quote: "Leave me alone! I've lost enough already thanks to 'heroes' like you!"

Powers/Tactics: The Heart Stone is a magnificent ruby the size of a human heart, enchanted with ancient dwarven magic. It has joined with Peter, enabling him to transform into living stone. He will keep these powers until he willingly gives the Heart Stone to another or someone manages to kill him and remove the stone from where his heart would be. As Stonework, Peter can shape his stone body at will, able to become any shape and stone imaginable.

This gives Stonework several remarkable talents. He can shape his body to create several different effects: fists the size of small boulders,

sharpened into granite picks or formed into diamond axe blades, and arm shields of amethyst to deflect attacks that can cleave most barriers. By forcing the crystalline structure in his arms to grow at a phenomenal rate, he can effectively stretch his arms several meters, reabsorbing the crystals to shrink them back.. A similar method is used to meld his legs and feet into the ground to resist being knocked back by an impact. Melding completely with the earth allows him to travel underground, leaving little trace of his passage. His stone body protects him from damage and harsh elements, and gives him practical immortality (he does age, but so slowly he can live, as Kilarn did, for tens of thousands of years).

After reading more about the history of the Heart Stone in Kilarn's library, Stonework learned how to breach the barrier between dimensions and cross into the Elemental Plane of Earth. He also found a spell that enabled him to summon an earth elemental, loyal to his commands. Though he had no training as a wizard, the Heart Stone absorbed the spell, making it a part of Stonework's natural abilities.

The silversteel crown provides magical protection against various life-draining and altering effects, though not in any obvious way. Stonework molds his head to keep the crown securely in place.

In combat, Stonework will normally fight toe-to-toe, until it becomes clear that other tactics may be more effective. When faced with an opponent that fights from the air, or one that manages to evade him while stretching, he will resort to the classic tactic of Throwing Things Around. If Stonework has no way of affecting a target, he will change targets, or flee by tunneling. If he is pursued by another tunneler, he will most likely escape to the Elemental Plane of Earth.

The Boulder Fist and Diamond Pick Hand powers both require GM permission, as they are naked Advantages inside a Multipower. If you prefer not to allow that, either replace them with a Hand Attack with the same Advantages, or simply ignore them.

Campaign Use: No longer desiring to be a hero, Stonework focuses almost entirely on finding the dwarves. He knows that an ancient Dwarven city once existed beneath the Rocky Mountains somewhere near the San Francisco area, and concentrates most of his efforts there. Several other Dwarven cities were once located across the continent, and he searches for them when his efforts in Bay City are frustrated. He has been spotted in New York, Millennium City, and <Campaign City>. The city of Nargoria has remained a secret, and Stonework still owns the land with the cave entrance leading to the ancient city, somewhere in the mountains of Georgia.

Trying to find any lead he can on a Dwarven city that once thrived in what is now the mountains of New York, Peter spends a few days browsing several of New York City's museums. While at the American Museum of Natural History, he recognizes a Viking sword 'of unusual design and material' as being made of Dwarven silversteel! He learns it was donated by an English family descended from Vikings whose family lore holds the sword was found during an expedition to America with Eric the Red. Unwilling to let such an artifact lie in the hands of the ignorant, Stonework returns that night to claim the sword in the hopes of researching its true origins.

While nursing a drink in a bar, he overhears two VIPER agents talking about an upcoming mission. He follows them, beats more detail from them, and tries to stop their plan. PCs arrive in the middle of the fight.

Unable to coerce Stonework to work for them, the Circle of the Scarlet Moon decides on the direct approach – a spell binding him to their service, forcing him against his will to do

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as they command. What dark deeds have they in mind for him? Will he find a way to thwart them, or will his sanity snap at the horrors forced upon him?

Stonework

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15+35*	STR	33	12-(19-)	200kg (25 tons); 3d6 (10d6) HTH [1(5)]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
15+15*	CON	34	12-(16-)	
15+5*	BODY	18	12-(13-)	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll: 12-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 5
15+10*	PRE	13	12-(14-)	PRE Attack: 3d6
16	COM	3	12-	(5d6)
5+30*†	PD	16		Total: 30 PD (30r)
5+30*†	ED	20		Total: 30 ED (30r)
3+1*	SPD	8		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6/16†	REC	0		(3, 6, 9, 12)
30/60†	END	0		*: OIHID (-¼)
31/60†	STUN	0		†: includes figured characteristics from OIHID characteristics

Total Characteristics Cost: 186

Movement: Running: 10"/20"
Leaping: 12"/24"
Tunneling: 8"/16"

Cost	Powers	END
20	*Stone Body Shaping:* Multipower, 25-point reserve; all slots OIHID (-¼)	
2u	1) *Boulder Fist:* Area Of Effect (1 Hex; +½) for 50 STR (see text); OIHID (-¼)	2
2u	2) *Granite Pick Hand:* Armor Piercing (+½) for 50 STR (see text); OIHID (-¼)	2
2u	4) *Diamond Axe Hand:* HKA 1½d6 (3d6+1 with STR); OIHID (-¼)	2
1u	3) *Amethyst Shield Arm:* Force Wall (5 PD/5 ED); No Range (-½), OIHID (-¼)	2
1u	5) *Crystalline Arm Growth:* Stretching 5"; Limited Body Parts (arms only; -¼), No Noncombat Stretching (-¼), OIHID (-¼)	2
1u	6) *Earthen Foot Melding:* Knockback Resistance -7"; OIHID (-¼), Costs Endurance (-½), Only When In Contact With The Ground (-¼), Visible (-¼) **plus** Clinging (normal STR); OIHID (-¼), Costs Endurance (-½), Linked (-½), Only To Earth/Stone (-½), Only When In Contact With The Ground (-¼), Visible (-¼)	2
12	*Stone Powers:* Elemental Control, 15 points; OIHID (-¼)	
20	1) *Stone Passage:* Tunneling 8" through 8 DEF, Fill In; OIHID (-¼), Only Through Earth/Stone (-½)	5
14	2) *Self-Sculpting:* Shape Shift (Sight Group, any stone form), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent	

(+½); OIHID (-¼), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½) 0

7	3) *Planar Shift:* Extra Dimensional Movement (one location in the Elemental Plane of Earth), x250 mass (25 tons); OIHID (-¼), 1 Charge (-2), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Increased Endurance Cost (x2; -½), Only When In Contact With The Ground (-¼) [1]/10
15	4) *Earthen Ally:* Summon 377-point Earth Elemental, Loyal (+½); OIHID (-¼), Activation Roll 14- (-½), 1 Charge (-2), Concentration (0 DCV; -½), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Delayed Extra Phase; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When In Contact With The Ground (-¼) [1]/11
20	*Stone Skin:* Damage Resistance (30 PD, 30 ED); OIHID (-¼), Visible (-¼) 0
40	*Stone Body:* Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality); OIHID (-¼) 0
8	*Silversteel Crown:* Power Defense (10 points); IIF (-¼) 0
8	*Heavy:* Knockback Resistance -5"; OIHID (-¼) 0
6	*Swift Runner:* Running +4" (10" Total); OIHID (-¼) 2
4	*Perceive Thermal Energy:* Infrared Perception (Sight Group); OIHID (-¼) 0
5	*See Through Earth:* N-Ray Perception (Sight Group); Only To See Through Earth/Stone (-½), Limited Range (25"; -¼), Nonpersistent (-¼) 0

Talents
3 Bump Of Direction

Skills
10 +2 with Hand-to-Hand Combat

3 Climbing 13-
3 Concealment 12-
3 Conversation 12- (14-)
3 Jack of All Trades
1 1) PS: Artist 11-
2 2) PS: Cave Artist 12-
2 3) PS: Painter 12-
2 4) PS: Sculptor 12-
1 5) PS: Spelunker 11-
2 Language: Dwarven (fluent conversation)
3 Power (Stone Powers) 13-
3 Power (Strength Tricks) 13-
3 Scholar
1 1) KS: Art World 11-
2 2) KS: Cave Art 12-
1 3) KS: Dwarven Art and Artifacts 11-
1 4) KS: Dwarven Culture 11-
1 5) KS: Dwarven History 11-
2 6) KS: Paintings 12-
2 7) KS: Sculptures 12-

1 SS: Archaeology 8-
2 SS: Geology 11-
3 Stealth 13-
3 Streetwise 12- (14-)
4 Survival (Mountains, Temperate/
   Subtropical) 12-
3 Traveler
2 1) AK: Bars & Parks 12-
2 2) AK: Caves 12-
1 3) AK: Dwarven Cities 11-
1 4) AK: Elemental Plane of Earth 11-
2 5) CK: Atlanta, GA 12-
1 6) CK: Campaign City 11-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 267

Total Cost: 453

200+ Disadvantages
10 Distinctive Feature: Mystic Aura (Not
    Concealable; Detectable Only With
    Unusual Senses)
15 Hunted: Circle of the Scarlet Moon 8-
    (Mo Pow, Imprison/Enslave)
15 Hunted: VIPER 8- (Mo Pow, Kill/
    Imprison)
10 Hunted: Law Enforcement Agencies 8-
    (As Pow, Imprison)
15 Physical Limitation: Weighs 3200kg
    In Heroic Identity (Frequently, Greatly
    Impairing)
15 Psychological Limitation: Brooding,
    Feels Guilty Over Sister's Death
    (Common, Strong)
15 Psychological Limitation: Code
    Against Killing (Common, Strong)
20 Psychological Limitation: Obsessed
    With Finding Dwarves (Common, Total)
10 Reputation: ex-VIPER villain, 11-
15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity
    (Frequently, Major)
10 Vulnerability: 2x STUN from Sonics
    (Uncommon)
93 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 453

Occasionally, Stonework sets off to attack VIPER installations or operations, after brooding over his sister's death. Such attacks often spill into the streets, causing massive property damage and sometimes casualties. He is also still wanted by the FBI and other law enforcement agencies.

A minor member of the Circle of the Scarlet Moon happened to observe Stonework shifting from park bench to human form one evening. The Circle has been observing Stonework discreetly since, hoping to find the source of his powers or a way to force him to work for them. Their one attempt to 'recruit' him was a miserable failure; he thrashed them soundly, nearly killing two of their members and leaving one of them owing a serious debt to a demon lord.

Allowing Stonework to learn of his sister's continued existence could reform him, turning him from his morose brooding and occasional larceny back to the road of heroism.

Stonework has noticed that several of his abilities are similar to those of Temblor, of the Crowns of Krim. He suspects that the Heart Stone was made specifically to counter the Stone Crown, but has so far found little evidence to support this theory.

Appearance: Peter is a handsome man in his mid-twenties, well-built and tall. His black hair is long, usually worn in a ponytail. His eyes are a vibrant hazel green, but often reflect a deep sadness.

Stonework is a man made of stone with emerald green eyes. He can appear to be made of any stone, and can take any shape, so recognizing him for who and what he is may be difficult.

Stonework