

# DIGITAL HERO #12

AUG 2003



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Issue #12 (August 2003)



# When We Last Left Our Heroes...

by Steven S. Long

Summertime may be vacation time for most folks, but not for Hero Games! Since the last issue of DH, we've been working on lots of projects. First, we got *Fantasy Hero* finished and off to the printer so it would be ready in time for GenCon. Second, we got *Champions Battlegrounds* completed and off to the printer too, and though it won't be on the game store shelves until early August, you can read more about it below. Last but not least, we've done the preliminary work on *VIPER: Coils Of The Serpent*, which should be in layout and playtesting by the time you read this.

## CHAMPIONS BATTLEGROUND

Since you got to read about FH last issue, here's the skinny on *Champions Battlegrounds*. CB is an epic adventure in five parts for *Champions*. You don't have to run it as a serial adventure; each part stands on its own. You could run one or two parts and ignore the others, or you could intersperse some of your own adventures into the mix so the connections between the five adventures become harder to discern.

As the book's name indicates, its scenarios focus on places as much as events. Each of the chapters includes detailed maps and a complete description of a location you can use in other adventures as well — a city park, a shopping mall, an amusement park, a construction site, and a master villain's lair are all great places to stage a fight scene or dramatic encounter in many different types of games and genres.

The basic premise behind the adventures is simple: there's a new supervillain in town, a cyborg mastermind called Interface. He has plans for a master weapon, a massive particle-beam cannon able to destroy satellites in orbit. But unlike most supervillains, Interface is cautious by nature. Having seen previous so-called "master criminals" brought down by the local superheroes, he wants to avoid making the same mistakes. Instead, he takes methodical steps to learn everything he can about the heroes, their tactics and powers, and *especially* their weaknesses. Once he's gathered the data he needs, he can destroy them.

In Chapter One, *A Walk In The Park*, Interface begins by hiring Utility, the well-known criminal gadgeteer, to put together a band of mercenaries to test the heroes with a "fake" bomb scare in an urban park. (The bomb's explosion, though not destructive, coats the heroes with difficult-to-detect, mildly radioactive particles that allow Interface to track them for the next several days.) Interface doesn't expect to defeat the heroes so easily; he just wants to size them up.

Continuing his plans in Chapter Two, *Let's Go To The Maul*, Interface manipulates the demented villain Foxbat and the sneaky break-and-enter team GRAB to rob a local shopping mall while he observes the proceedings through the mall's own security system. Once again, Interface assumes the heroes can survive his plot; he only wants to see how they handle the chaotic situation and the pursuit of the crafty thieves.

Working behind the scenes in Chapter Three, *Fatal Attractions*, Interface monitors the madman Black Harlequin while everyone's favorite homicidal maniac wreaks revenge on the judges of the Daytime Soap Opera "Sudsy" Awards. The judges have again failed to properly honor Black Harlequin's favorite villainous actress, and to teach them a lesson about villainy, the Terrible Toymaster sabotages Opening Day at a new amusement park based on the superhero-themed soap, *To Save The World*.

Interface wraps up his reconnaissance in Chapter Four, *Under Construction*. Wishing to observe how the PCs deal with raw power, the cyborg mastermind enlists the aid of the mutant villain Holocaust. Holocaust chooses a construction site for the location of his battle with the superheroes... but the Institute for Human Advancement takes steps of their own to protect the site and dispatches Minutemen robots to kill Holocaust, catching the PCs in a deadly crossfire.

In Chapter Five, *Down In The Hole*, Interface lets slip a few clues that lead the heroes to his secret base in an abandoned warehouse just outside of town. Unfortunately for the PCs, he's rigged the warehouse to deposit the heroes in a series of ghoulish death-traps specially designed to thwart their powers and exploit their weaknesses. ::insert fiendish chuckle here::

We're really looking forward to seeing how well *Champions Battlegrounds* does in the market. Adventure products don't always sell as many copies as other types of sourcebooks and supplements, but we're hoping to buck that trend. If the sales of CB are good, we have plenty of other ideas for adventure products — not just for *Champions*, but for *Fantasy Hero* and *Star Hero* as well. If the sales aren't good, we're going to have to shelve those plans for the time being. So, if you like published adventures, be sure to tell us so by picking up a copy of CB!

— Steven S. Long  
HERO System Line Developer



# HEROglyphs by Steven S. Long

## The Need for SPD

### OPTIONAL SPEED CHART RULES

As just about every *HERO System* player knows, the SPD Chart is one of the most interesting features in the game. A unique (to my knowledge) rule amongst the panoply of roleplaying games, it lies at the heart of a lot of other *HERO System* rules (such as how Adjustment Powers work, holding your breath, and taking Recoveries). For many people, it's a key, defining element of the system, one the game can't do without.

And yet, many gamers, even those who on balance love the SPD Chart, find it a little frustrating. It creates a level of predictability that makes it easy for "power gamers" and rulesmongers to exploit the system in ways that diminish the fun of the game, and it tends to introduce an element of "sameness" into every combat.

Over the years many Hero gamers have developed or adopted many optional, variant, and new rules for SPD and the SPD Chart, and I though it might be fun and interesting to present and discuss some of them here. I can't claim credit for all of them; many of them were devised by other gamers (usually more than one, since Hero players are a creative lot!) and passed on to me through various means; others attempt to simulate the way actions and initiative work in other roleplaying game systems. If the SPD Chart isn't entirely to your liking, perhaps you'll find an option here that suits you better. :)

### ROLL WITH IT, BABY

One variant for the SPD Chart that gets rid of at least some of the predictability mentioned above is to have characters roll to see if they get a Phase in each Segment. If they succeed with the roll, they get a Phase, in the normal order of DEXes.

The main issue with this system is how to roll. The GM needs to evaluate the possible methods carefully to ensure balance within his group. Some possibilities include:

1. Get a twelve-sided die (d12) from That Other Game. Each Segment all characters roll a d12; characters who roll less than or equal to their SPD get a Phase on that Segment. On the average, that should give each character the same number of Phases per Turn that he normally gets... but they won't occur in predefined Segments.

You could substitute 2d6-1 instead of 1d12, but the bell curve that results from rolling two dice means characters will get far fewer actions than normal (or have to spend a lot more points on SPD).

The benefit to this method is that it eliminates predictability. The drawback is that it does such a good job of eliminating predictability that it may leave a character action-less for a long period of time. If a player happens to get a string of unlucky rolls, his character just has to stand there, unable to do anything, which may not make much sense and certainly leaves the player feeling frustrated.

2. At the beginning of each Turn, each character rolls 1d6 and adds his SPD, to a maximum of 12. This indicates the number of Phases the character gets in that Turn. The GM may assign those Phases to the Segments indicated by the SPD of the same number, or use some other method of allocation (see below).

The benefit to this method is that it creates variability; a character can never count on having more Phases per Turn than his SPD plus one. However, it also causes several potential problems. First, it gives all characters +1 SPD, which isn't unbalanced (everyone gets it, after all) but can slow the game down. Second, sometimes a relatively slow character may get more actions than a relatively fast character – in fact, in a game where the slow and fast characters aren't separated by more than a point or two of SPD, this could happen frequently. That result may not be very satisfactory; it may mean the dice are more important than the SPD the character paid for. The same "the dice are better than the SPD" problem can result in Heroic games with characters who have low average SPDs (3-4).

3. Each Segment, every character rolls 2d6-1 and adds it to his SPD. If he gets a 12 or better, he gets a Phase that Segment. Characters with SPD 12 thus automatically get a Phase every Segment, and characters with SPDs of 9 or above will usually get one every Phase thanks to the bell curve of the 2d6 roll.

The benefit to this system is that it should allow every character roughly the same number of Phases per Turn, but not in predefined Segments. The drawback is that it tends to give some characters more Phases than normal, which may slow down combat.

One drawback all of these methods have is that they may increase the time it takes to run a combat. They add in some extra die rolling and number-tracking in place of the SPD Chart's relative ease of use.



## VARIABLE PHASES

Instead of changing the number of Phases a character has, you can change which Segments they occur in.

The easiest way to do this is to declare that all characters get a number of Phases per Turn equal to their SPDs – but they can use those Phases in any Segments they wish. For example, a SPD 5 character could choose to take his Phases on Segments 2, 3, 7, 9, and 12 during one Turn, and on Segments 2, 4, 5, 10, and 12 the next Turn. To keep characters from abusing this rule (by, for example, acting in Segments 1-4 and then acting in Segment 5 to Martial Dodge with all Combat Skill Levels in DCV), the GM may require characters with SPDs below 7 to skip at least one Segment between Phases (really low SPDs, such as 2-3, may have to skip two or more Segments).

Another possibility is to use the same distribution pattern for a character's Phases, but randomly determine which Segment they start on. At the beginning of each Turn, every character rolls  $\frac{1}{2}d6$ ; the number rolled indicates the Segment the character's Phases begin on. For example, if a SPD 5 character rolled a 1, his Phases would occur on 1, 3, 6, 8, and 10 – the same pattern as SPD 5, but on different Segments. If necessary, the GM may need to alter the distribution pattern to ensure every character gets his full number of Phases per Turn.

## COUNTDOWN

Some roleplaying games use a “countdown” system for initiative. Each character has a certain number of initiative dice; the faster the character, the more dice. At the beginning of a combat round, all characters roll their initiative dice. Starting with the highest number rolled, the GM counts down to 0. Each character gets one action on his highest number rolled, and *another* action every X steps below that. Thus, the higher the number a character rolls, the more times he gets to act in that round.

To simulate this sort of initiative in the *HERO System*, you need to do two things: (a) decide how many dice to roll, and how characters buy them, and (b) how to count down (*i.e.*, how many points to subtract between actions). For example, perhaps characters roll a number of initiative dice equal to their SPD, and then you subtract 4 points between actions. That would yield a number of actions per Turn roughly equal to the character's SPD, but with the possibility of sometimes going more or fewer times. If you wanted to allow more actions, you could reduce the subtractor; to allow fewer actions, increase it.

**Example:** *Andy decides to use a “countdown” system for initiative in his Champions game. Every character rolls dice equal to his SPD to get an “action total.” A character gets a Phase on his action total, then gets one more Phase every 4 points below that. A character can Hold his Action to a later point in the countdown, but must use it before his next number comes up. If two characters have a Phase on the same number, the one with the highest DEX goes first; if DEXs are tied, highest INT goes first; if INTs are tied, the highest PRE goes first; if PREs are tied, neither character gets an action because Andy is now incredibly annoyed at both of them.*

*At the start of a battle, Defender (SPD 5) and Ankylosaur (SPD 4) roll initiative dice. Defender rolls 5d6 and gets 16; Ankylosaur rolls 4d6 and gets 19. Ankylosaur clearly has the upper hand in this battle in terms of initiative!*

*The combat starts on 19, and Ankylosaur gets an action. He also acts in 15, 11, 7, and 3 – he gets one more action than he could expect on the average since he rolled well. On the other hand, Defender goes in 16, 12, 8, and 4, so he doesn't act quite as often as he normally would.*

## OBTAINING EXTRA PHASES

Many gamers like the SPD Chart as a concept, but find it somewhat rigid and inflexible in a rules system that otherwise has a high degree of flexibility and customizability. They want to provide an option for characters to take extra Phases, or move their Phases to different Segments, at the cost of some penalty.

One such system focuses on CV. A character can move a Phase down the SPD Chart (*i.e.*, take his Phase earlier) for a -1 CV penalty per Segment (this applies to both OCV and DCV). The penalty lasts until the character skips a future Phase (*i.e.*, does nothing, not even taking a Recovery). If a character takes multiple Phases early, the penalties are cumulative, and he must skip one Phase per penalty to remove the penalties.

**Example:** *A character with SPD 5 decides he wants to take his Phase in Segment 5 in Segment 4 instead. He does so, suffering a -1 CV penalty. He keeps that penalty until the end of the Turn, unless he skips one of his Phases (in Segment 8, 10, or 12). If he decides to take his Segment 8 Phase in Segment 6, he suffers another -2 CV penalty for a total of -3 CV. He skips his Phase in Segment 10, which reduces the penalty to -2.*

A character can still Abort to a defensive action using the normal rules. This has no effect on CV, but of course forces the character to do nothing in his next Phase.

On the other hand, at the GM's option a character who delays his Phase by one Segment gets a +1 CV bonus per Segment delayed. This is *not* the same as Holding an Action. Holding gains no such bonus, but lets the character act whenever he wants to or a specified condition occurs; a delayed Phase can only be taken on a future Segment at the character's DEX in the initiative order.

Additionally, a character may take *extra* Phases if he wants to, but the penalty is more severe: -3 CV per extra Phase. If a character takes multiple extra Phases, the penalties are cumulative; extra Phase penalties are also cumulative with early Phase penalties. Characters cannot remove this penalty; it lasts until the combat ends or the GM decides it vanishes.

**Example:** *Continuing the example from above, after skipping his normal Phase in Segment 10, the character decides he needs to take an extra Phase in Segment 11. This adds -3 to his CV penalty, for a total of -5 (remember, he eliminated one -1 penalty by skipping his Phase in Segment 10). Good luck!*

At the GM's option, all penalties may disappear when the Turn ends. This could encourage character to add or advance Phases late in the Turn, though, so consider this rule carefully before implementing it.

Of course, CV isn't the only thing a system like this could penalize. The rule could instead impose a DEX reduction (say, -2 DEX per early Phase or -4 per extra Phase), for example. The GM may also want to include other restrictions, such as not allowing the use of Optional Combat Maneuvers or multiple-Power attacks on early or extra Phases.

The GM should examine carefully any Skill Levels (of any type) bought to counteract the early/extra Phase penalties. The proper way for a character to obtain more Phases with points is to buy more SPD, not to eliminate the early/extra Phase penalties.

## RELATED RULES CHANGES

If you change the way SPD works, you may need to change the way some other rules work. For example, you may want to eliminate the Post-Segment 12 Recovery, or change the way the points gained/removed by use of an Adjustment Power fade/return. As with any other major new rule introduced into the game, be prepared to change or abandon it if it proves unworkable.



# Hero Universe by Darren Watts

Ahoy there, Hero fanatics, and welcome back to Hero Universe, the column that details the fantastic history of our superheroic setting! Let's get straight to the point this month, namely, wrapping up the history of the Fabulous Five!

Yup, this is in fact the last of this particular series, but fear not, true believers, because next month we once again jump all the way back to the dawn of the Silver Age to tell the story of the senses-shattering Sentinels! So stay tuned, y'hear?

*Live with Barry and Lisa*

*Official Transcript, Episode 11f23, originally broadcast June 14th, 1979  
3xc42 Excerpt Begins...*

Barry McLaughlin: Hello, and welcome back to *Live with Barry and Lisa*. Our guest today is one of the most well-known superheroes in America, a legend who has helped save the world over and over again. Won't you please help me welcome Ray Briggs, the Streak!

<Applause. Ray Briggs comes on stage, kissing Lisa on the cheek and shaking hands with Barry.>

Ray Briggs: Thanks. Thank you all very much, that's very kind.

BM: Good to see you, Ray.

RB: Thanks. Good to see both of you.

Lisa Beene: It's kind of unusual to see you out of costume like this. That's a nice suit.

RB: You like it? Thanks! Honestly, I'm reaching the age where spandex just isn't such a good idea for me anymore. And that's a lovely blouse you're wearing, too.

BM: Well, you've been doing the superhero thing, the crimefighting thing for a long time now.

RB: Since 1959.

BM: And there have been a lot of rumors floating around recently...

RB: That's kind of why I'm here.

LB: So, can you give us an official statement?

RB: Yes, Lisa. In fact, I've come to officially announce that the Fabulous Five are formally retired and broken up. <Crowd buzzes and oohs.>

RB: It's been twenty years; the team's been through a number of changes and a few tragedies, as you all know. The loss of Allen at the hands of a madman a few years back really hurt, and Scirocco's own struggles with mental illness also were a blow. We've tried to keep the group together the last few years,

working with a couple of great kids in Draco and Dart, but recently we've come to the conclusion that the time has come to hang it up. We had our last team meeting a week ago, and made it official. Not only is the group formally retiring, but I myself am also retiring my active career.

<Crowd bursts into spontaneous applause.>

RB: Well, thank you very much, that's very kind.

LB: Well, this is pretty sad news to many of us who grew up hearing about your adventures, but I guess nothing lasts forever. Will you find it hard to walk away from being a full-time superhero?

RB: Sure. I mean, there's still menaces out there, people and beings full of hate that want to hurt others, but the good news is there are more young people out there now than ever before, taking up the mantles and fighting the good fight. I met a number of them recently, some when the Gadroon attacked and more when the Slug was turning people here in New York City into monsters a couple of months ago. Knowing that there are young heroes out there like Dr. Scarab, Goblin, and the Black Owl make the decision easier. And like I said, frankly I'm getting older and starting to slow down. It's the legs that are first to go, they always say.

BM: So what do you plan to do now?

RB: Well, the good news is, I'm happy to announce that I've signed a deal for next year to host my own evening talk show right here on ABC! We haven't worked out all the details yet, but I'll



have a bunch of guests, both in the superhero business and other people too, have 'em on to talk and, you know, show the world the real people behind the masks and capes. I'm really looking forward to it. My dear wife, Raelene, that's her in the audience, she'll be co-producing the show. Hi honey!

LB: That sounds great! So, what about the other members of the team?

RB: Well, as you probably heard, the island Kestrel's people live on was nearly destroyed by Typhoon a while back, and the city itself suffered a lot of damage. So Kestrel has moved back to live with her people and help rebuild. As for Draco and Dart, they're both moving back to Arizona. Dart's going to go to college out there, and I think Draco's taken a security job with a high-tech firm in Phoenix. And Diamond, well, I don't think he's made up his mind yet, but I hear the Sentinels are on another recruitment drive, so you never know. He's not really the retiring type.

BM: And how about catching us up with your other retired teammates? We had your sister on a few months ago to talk about the British Superhuman Registration act...

RB: Yeah, Patty's still working for the UN as an advisor on Superhuman Affairs, and Michael mostly putters around the lab. Their son Peter, he's ten now, and he's inherited his father's powers. Kid's a pistol, he's going to be a great hero someday himself.

LB: So Ray, throughout your career you've been linked, at least in the media, with a number of superheroines and female celebrities. Now that you're retiring...

RB: Hey, my wife's right there!

<Audience laughs.>

BM: So no confirmations or revelations for our audience?

RB: Are you trying to get me in trouble? No, let's just say that those stories have always been greatly exaggerated. Once the press gets hold of an idea, it's tough to change the image, you know?

<Rumbling noise from offstage, becoming louder.>

LB: Hey, what is that?

BM: Dammit, are we going to have to

shoot this again? Find the

<unintelligible>...

<A piece of the lighting scaffold comes crashing down onto the set. Several cameramen and technicians scatter. The crowd begins to become agitated, and a couple of screams are heard.>

BM: What the...

LB: Everybody, please don't panic! I'm sure <unintelligible>...

RB: Oh, hell. <unintelligible> the damn time...

<A figure in green armor floats onto the set. Screams from the audience.>

BM: Hey, you can't...

Unknown Figure: Streak! You thought I'd let you slip away into the night before matters were settled between us, like the cowardly, craven dog you are? Never! I'll show this audience and the world which of us is the true superior man!

<He fires a projectile of some sort in Briggs' general direction, but Briggs grabs Barry and dashes out of the way. The couch is incinerated.>

UF: By the way, Lisa, it's a real thrill to meet you. I'm a big fan of the show! And that's a lovely blouse.

LB: Umm...thank you.

RB: Oh, brother! Listen, tall, dark and demented, why don't we take this outside, just you and me?

<Briggs leaves the stage, with the armored figure in hot pursuit, firing wildly. A blast of energy strikes one of the main cameras.>

<Screen changes to a bright ABC logo, with the message "Technical Difficulties, Please Stand By.">

End transcript...

## Draco

**Background/History:** Scott Gilbert was born in 1960 in a small town near Phoenix, Arizona, to a pair of technicians at a local power plant. Sadly, both of his parents were killed in a car crash in 1968, and both he and his younger sister were placed in an orphanage. Scott was a rambunctious and moody child, though rarely mean or spiteful, and the orphanage found it difficult to place the kids for adoption (and there was no question of splitting the two kids up, as they were very close.)

In the winter of 1972, Scott's previously undetected genetic mutation kicked in, and overnight he was transformed into a vaguely reptilian creature, with dark green and scaly skin, sharp hollow teeth that secreted a paralyzing but non-lethal venom, and a long, forked tongue. Terrified, he ran away from the orphanage, living on the streets of Phoenix for several weeks. After coming to terms with his changes, he visited his sister in the orphanage one last time, then set off for New York City, a place he had always heard was full of oddities like himself and perhaps a place where he might find a way to fit in.

He quickly found a life for himself among the street gangs and sewer urchins of Manhattan, living in an abandoned subway tunnel and becoming a familiar figure among the denizens of the Bowery. Though he occasionally ran with some of the gangs of juvenile delinquents (and didn't mind using his fearsome features to intimidate people when necessary), those who got to know the strange creature now called Draco soon learned he was far too goodhearted to actually harm anyone, and even the local cops came to regard him as no worse than an occasional nuisance.

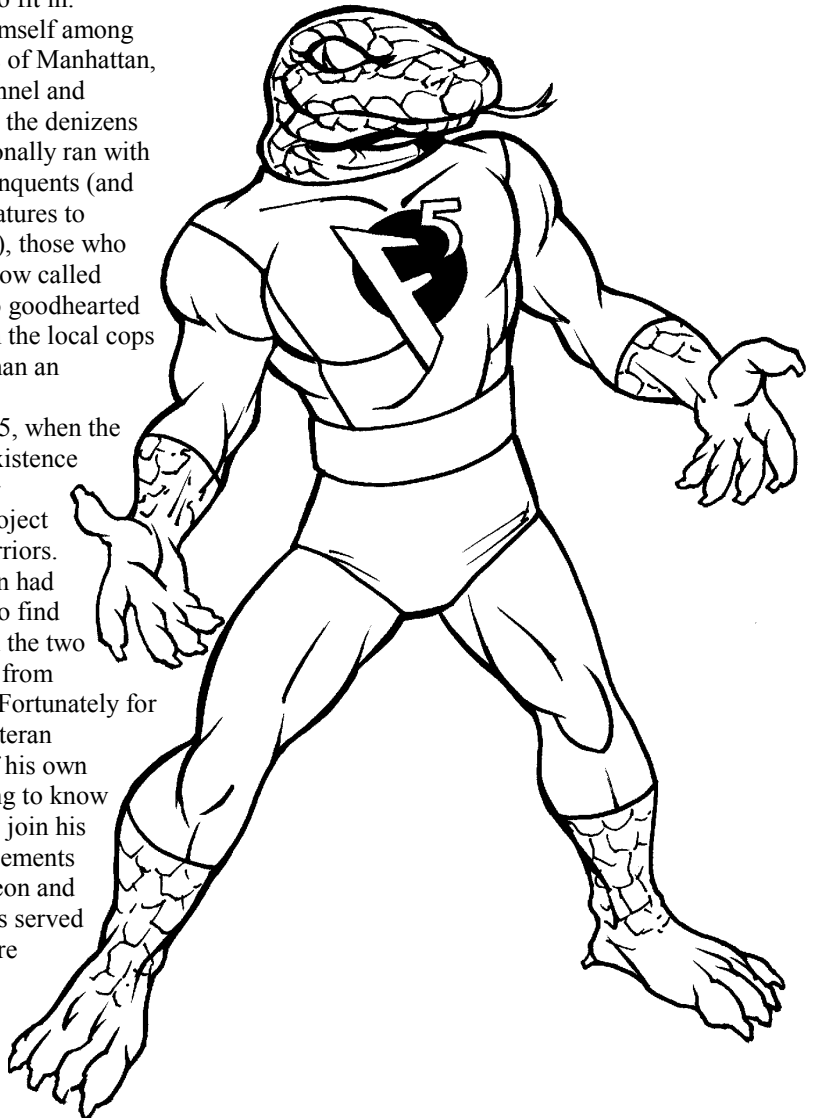
His life changed again in 1975, when the local Viper Nest discovered his existence and determined to capture him for dissection, to aid their ongoing project of developing reptilian hybrid warriors. At the same time, his sister Allison had made her own way to New York to find him, and after their happy reunion the two soon found themselves on the run from VIPER's cadre of mad scientists. Fortunately for them, they were rescued by the veteran superhero Diamond during one of his own battles with Viper, and after getting to know the kids, Diamond invited them to join his team, the Fabulous Five, as replacements for the recently deceased Chameleon and departed Scirocco. The two heroes served the team well, though the Five were much less active during their membership, and when the team finally dissolved in 1979 the siblings returned to Phoenix.

Draco took a job as Security Chief for Pharos' Phoenix headquarters, and continues to work for them in various capacities today.

**Personality/Motivation:** Draco maintains a tough "outside shell," but it doesn't take long for most people to realize he's generally kindhearted and protective of his friends. Working with the legendary Fab Five brings out the heroic instincts in him, and Draco is usually the first one at the side of any bystanders or innocents who have been hurt or menaced.

Draco is also incurably nosy, and deeply fond of eavesdropping. He does this almost instinctively, blending into the shadows while overhearing any number of conversations he wouldn't be welcome in. He won't reveal secrets or gossip, but anything he learns this way will be quietly filed away in case he needs it later.

He's also fiercely protective of his "little sister," and will go out of his way to try to keep her out of dangerous situations (a fruitless task, as she's just as stubborn as he is.) Of course, no potential suitor for Allison will ever be good enough, either....



## DIGITAL HERO #12

### Draco

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes                      |
|-----|------|------|------|----------------------------|
| 13  | STR  | 3    | 12-  | Lift 150kg; 2½d6 HTH       |
| 22  | DEX  | 36   | 13-  | OCV: 7/DCV: 7              |
| 18  | CON  | 16   | 13-  |                            |
| 10  | BODY | 0    | 11-  |                            |
| 12  | INT  | 2    | 11-  | PER Roll: 11-              |
| 9   | EGO  | -2   | 11-  | ECV: 3                     |
| 15  | PRE  | 5    | 12-  | PRE Attack: 3d6            |
| 8   | COM  | -1   | 11-  |                            |
| 8   | PD   | 5    |      | Total: 14 PD (6 rPD)       |
| 8   | ED   | 4    |      | Total: 14 ED (6 rED)       |
| 6   | SPD  | 28   |      | Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 |
| 9   | REC  | 4    |      |                            |
| 38  | END  | 1    |      |                            |
| 29  | STUN | 3    |      |                            |

**Total Characteristics Cost: 104**

**Movement:** Running: 8"/16"  
Leaping: 2½"/5"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

| Cost | Powers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | END |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 45   | <i>Bite:</i> HKA 3d6 (4d6-1 with STR)                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 4   |
| 43   | <i>Paralyzing Venom:</i> Drain DEX 3d6, Personal Immunity (+¼), Delayed Return Rate (5 Points per Hour; +1), No Normal Defense (Defense is Life Support: Poisons, +1); 8 Charges (-½), Bite Must Do BODY to Target (-½), Linked to Bite (-¼) | [8] |
| 18   | <i>Scaly Skin:</i> Armor (6 PD/6 ED)                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 0   |
| 17   | <i>Regeneration:</i> Healing 2 BODY (Can Heal Limbs), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Extra Time (Regeneration-Only, 1 Turn; -1¼), Self Only (-½)                                                                            | 0   |
| 4    | <i>Quick:</i> Running +2" (8" Total)                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 2   |
| 11   | <i>Sensitive Tongue:</i> Enhanced Perception (+3 to Smell; Discriminatory)                                                                                                                                                                   | 0   |

#### Martial Arts: Snake Fighting

##### Maneuver OCV DCV Notes

|   |                  |    |    |                                     |
|---|------------------|----|----|-------------------------------------|
| 4 | Choke Hold       | -2 | +0 | Grab One Limb; 2½d6 NND             |
| 5 | Defensive Strike | +1 | +3 | 4½d6 Strike                         |
| 4 | Dodge            | —  | +5 | Dodge, Abort                        |
| 3 | Sacrifice Throw  | +2 | +1 | 3½d6 Strike; You Fall, Target Falls |

#### Talents

|    |                  |
|----|------------------|
| 15 | Combat Sense 11- |
| 4  | Double Jointed   |
| 3  | Lightsleep       |

#### Skills

|    |                                         |
|----|-----------------------------------------|
| 15 | +3 with DCV                             |
| 6  | +3 with Bite                            |
| 9  | +3 with Concealment, Shadowing, Stealth |

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 3 | Acrobatics 13-        |
| 3 | Breakfall 13-         |
| 5 | Climbing 14-          |
| 3 | Concealment 11-       |
| 3 | Contortionist 13-     |
| 3 | AK: New York City 12- |
| 5 | KS: Sewers of NYC 14- |
| 3 | Shadowing 11-         |
| 3 | Stealth 13-           |
| 3 | Streetwise 12-        |
| 2 | Survival (Urban) 11-  |

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 246**

**Total Cost: 350**

#### 200+ Disadvantages

|    |                                                                                                                      |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 15 | Distinctive Features: Snake-Man (Not Concealable)                                                                    |
| 15 | Hunted: New York City's VIPER Nest 8- (Mo Pow)                                                                       |
| 5  | Hunted: Assorted NYC Street Criminals 11- (Less Pow, Limited Area)                                                   |
| 10 | Physical Limitation: Somewhat Lethargic in Cold Weather: -1 to All DEX Rolls when Below 30° F (Frequently, Slightly) |
| 10 | Psychological Limitation: Likes to Ferret Out Secrets, Nosy (Common, Moderate)                                       |
| 20 | Psychological Limitation: Protective of Innocent and Helpless (Common, Total)                                        |
| 15 | Psychological Limitation: Slow to Trust People He Doesn't Know (Common, Strong)                                      |
| 10 | Unluck: 2d6                                                                                                          |
| 5  | Vulnerability: 1½x STUN from Cold/Ice Attacks (Uncommon)                                                             |
| 45 | Experience Points                                                                                                    |

**Total Cost: 350**

**Quote:** "Get your hands off of her, scuzz, if you want to keep them!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Draco is mostly a quick hand-to-hand fighter, and he has a healthy sense of his own limitations. He'll take advantage of his high DCV to taunt opponents and draw fire, setting up his teammates' attacks and looking for an opening to use his paralyzing venom to slow down the opposition. Of the Five, he's certainly the sneakiest, and will frequently be sent on "scouting" missions to size up situations in advance.

**Appearance:** Draco is a reptile/human hybrid, standing about 5'10" and weighing 160 pounds. His skin is dark green and scaly, and his face has a serpentine shape. He has a forked tongue that he can use to "smell," and his eyes are large and yellow. He wears the standard "Fab Five" jumpsuit on missions.

## Dart

**Background/History:** Allison Gilbert was born in 1963, and like her brother was placed in the Murphy Square Orphanage after their parent's death. Always the "baby" of the family, she was protected and cared for at the orphanage by Scott until his transformation and disappearance in 1972. Not long afterwards, she was placed with kindly foster parents the DeVrys, and lived happily with them for a couple of years. A gifted student, she caught up with and even passed most students in her grade very quickly. Her own mutation manifested in 1975, giving her the power to fly and generate "packets" of bioelectricity, which she could fire in the form of small glowing "needles" of energy, or cloak herself in as a protective field. Determining to track down her brother, she ditched her classmates on a field trip to New York City and soon found herself caught up in the affairs of Viper and the youth gangs that were helping Draco, and along with him befriended Diamond and eventually joined the Fabulous Five in their final lineup. (She did eventually reconcile with her foster family, who had been searching for her since she "disappeared" on the school trip, and remains close to them today.)

After the team broke up in 1979, she got an early admission to the University of Arizona and graduated from there in 1983. Though she helped the rest of the Five when they briefly reunited during the Secret Crisis, superheroing in the end wasn't the career she was looking for, and she settled down in a suburb of Phoenix where she still teaches high school history and only rarely uses her powers at all. She married a local real estate salesman and has three children, none of whom have yet manifested any mutations.

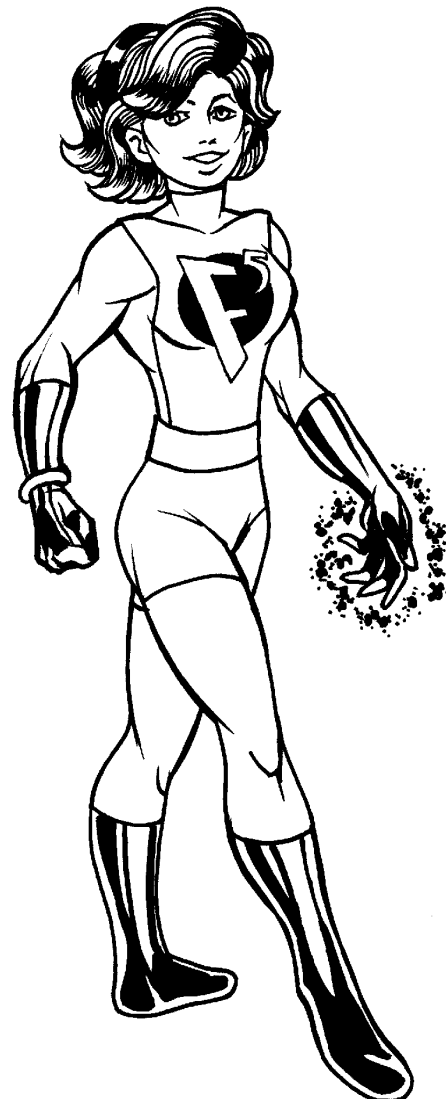
**Personality/Motivation:** Dart, like her brother, is smart and inquisitive, but with a much better ability to "fit in" and make friends. She became a heroine to protect her brother, and while she definitely believed in using her powers to help people, she was dismayed by the violence and danger inherent in a career as a costumed crimefighter. By her late teens, she would only use her powers in an emergency.

**Quote:** "There's no need for us to fight. Tell us what you're looking for, and maybe we can help you!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Dart's powers made her the most effective member of the Five at range, and she was usually employed as an airborne sniper, either firing her "darts" to stun or blinding the opposition with bioluminescence. Her ability to discern bioelectric signatures at range made her an effective tracker as well. Diamond and Draco were both prone to try to keep her out of

harm's way whenever possible, and she was regularly torn between her dislike of violence and her natural stubbornness about being "left out."

**Appearance:** Allison is a teenage girl, with wavy brown hair and brown eyes, standing about 5'3 and weighing 120 pounds. Her figure was naturally slim, and she had the build of a runner or gymnast. She wore the standard Fab Five jumpsuit, but was prone to "enhancing" it with bracelets, necklaces, or various hair accessories.





## DIGITAL HERO #12

### Dart

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes                      |
|-----|------|------|------|----------------------------|
| 10  | STR  | 0    | 11-  | Lift 100 kg; 2d6 HTH [1]   |
| 23  | DEX  | 39   | 14-  | OCV: 8/DCV: 8              |
| 18  | CON  | 16   | 13-  |                            |
| 10  | BODY | 0    | 11-  |                            |
| 20  | INT  | 10   | 13-  | PER Roll: 13-              |
| 12  | EGO  | 4    | 11-  | ECV: 4                     |
| 19  | PRE  | 9    | 13-  | PRE Attack: 3½d6           |
| 18  | COM  | 4    | 13-  |                            |
| 6   | PD   | 4    |      | Total: 16 PD (10 rPD)      |
| 7   | ED   | 3    |      | Total: 27 ED (20 rED)      |
| 6   | SPD  | 27   |      | Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 |
| 8   | REC  | 4    |      |                            |
| 40  | END  | 2    |      |                            |
| 26  | STUN | 2    |      |                            |

**Total Characteristics Cost: 124**

|                  |           |          |
|------------------|-----------|----------|
| <b>Movement:</b> | Flight:   | 20"/320" |
|                  | Running:  | 6"/12"   |
|                  | Leaping:  | 2"/4"    |
|                  | Swimming: | 2"/4"    |

| Cost | Powers                                                                                                       | END |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 25   | <i>Bioelectric Energy Control</i> : Elemental Control, 50-point Powers                                       |     |
| 25   | 1) <i>Bioelectric Darts</i> : EB 5d6, No Normal Defense (Non-"Living" Targets or Alien Metabolisms, +1)      | 6   |
| 30   | 2) <i>Flight</i> : Flight 20", 16x Noncombat                                                                 | 5   |
| 25   | 3) <i>Bioenergy Field</i> : Force Field (10 PD/20 ED), Protects Carried Items, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) | 2   |
| 25   | 4) <i>Bioluminescence</i> : Flash 8d6 (versus Sight Group), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)                    | 2   |
| 20   | <i>Bioelectric Sense</i> : Detect Living Beings 13- (Range, Targeting Sense)                                 | 0   |

### Martial Arts: Basic Self-Defense

| Maneuver           | OCV | DCV | Notes               |
|--------------------|-----|-----|---------------------|
| 5 Defensive Block  | +1  | +3  | Block, Abort        |
| 5 Defensive Strike | +1  | +3  | STR Strike          |
| 3 Defensive Throw  | +1  | +1  | Block, Target Falls |
| 4 Dodge            | —   | +5  | Dodge, Abort        |

### Perks

|   |                                                                       |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9 | Contact: Kids at Murphy Square Youth Center 12-, Organization Contact |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Skills

|   |                                        |
|---|----------------------------------------|
| 6 | +3 with Flight                         |
| 6 | +3 with Bioelectric Darts              |
| 3 | Acrobatics 14-                         |
| 3 | Breakfall 14-                          |
| 3 | Conversation 13-                       |
| 5 | Defense Maneuver: I-II                 |
| 1 | AK: New York City 8-                   |
| 3 | KS: History (INT-based) 13-            |
| 3 | KS: Literature (INT-based) 13-         |
| 1 | KS: Sewers of NYC 8-                   |
| 2 | Language: Spanish: Fluent Conversation |
| 3 | Lockpicking 14-                        |
| 3 | Shadowing 13-                          |
| 3 | Stealth 14-                            |
| 3 | Streetwise 13-                         |
| 2 | Survival (Urban) 13-                   |

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 226**

**Total Cost: 350**

### 200+ Disadvantages

|    |                                                                                 |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 15 | Dependent NPC: Foster Parents Joe and Charlotte DeVry 8- (Incompetent)          |
| 15 | Hunted: NYC VIPER Nest 8- (Mo Pow)                                              |
| 20 | Psychological Limitation: Code versus Killing (Common, Total)                   |
| 20 | Psychological Limitation: Protects the Weak and Needy (Very Common, Strong)     |
| 15 | Social Limitation: Secret ID (Frequently, Major)                                |
| 10 | Social Limitation: Teenager in the State Foster Care System (Frequently, Minor) |
| 10 | Vulnerability: 1½x STUN from Electrical Attacks (Common)                        |
| 45 | Experience Points                                                               |

**Total Disadvantage Points: 350**

## Green Grenadier

**Background/History:** Randy Dandridge, born in Oklahoma in 1948, joined the Army Rangers in 1967 and served three terms in Viet Nam as a helicopter pilot. When he left in 1973, he was unable to find a job back home and eventually fell in with a small band of mercenary soldiers that were based in Austin. The team was hired by the notorious villain called The Mocker as muscle for a raid on a PRIMUS base in Louisiana. The attack did not go well, and during the resulting firefight, Dandridge sought cover in an apparently empty shed. There, he came across an experimental battlesuit designed by PRIMUS' Tech Division. With dollar signs dancing in front of his eyes and the sounds of PRIMUS troops making their way towards his position, Dandridge did the only reasonable thing; he put the suit on and awkwardly flew away, abandoning his team.

Once back in Oklahoma City, Dandridge set to work figuring out how his new toy worked. With a few days of training, he had mastered the systems well enough to use it to rob a local bank. A few weeks after that, the word started to spread that a new mercenary villain was available for any tough but high-paying jobs; the Green Grenadier! It wasn't long before Randy was clashing with superheroes on a fairly regular basis. He didn't win very many battles, though, and spent most of the next two decades in and out of prison. In 1993, he sold the suit, and the name, to a Dallas mobster, and retired. There have since been at least two other people who have used the name and modified versions of the suit.

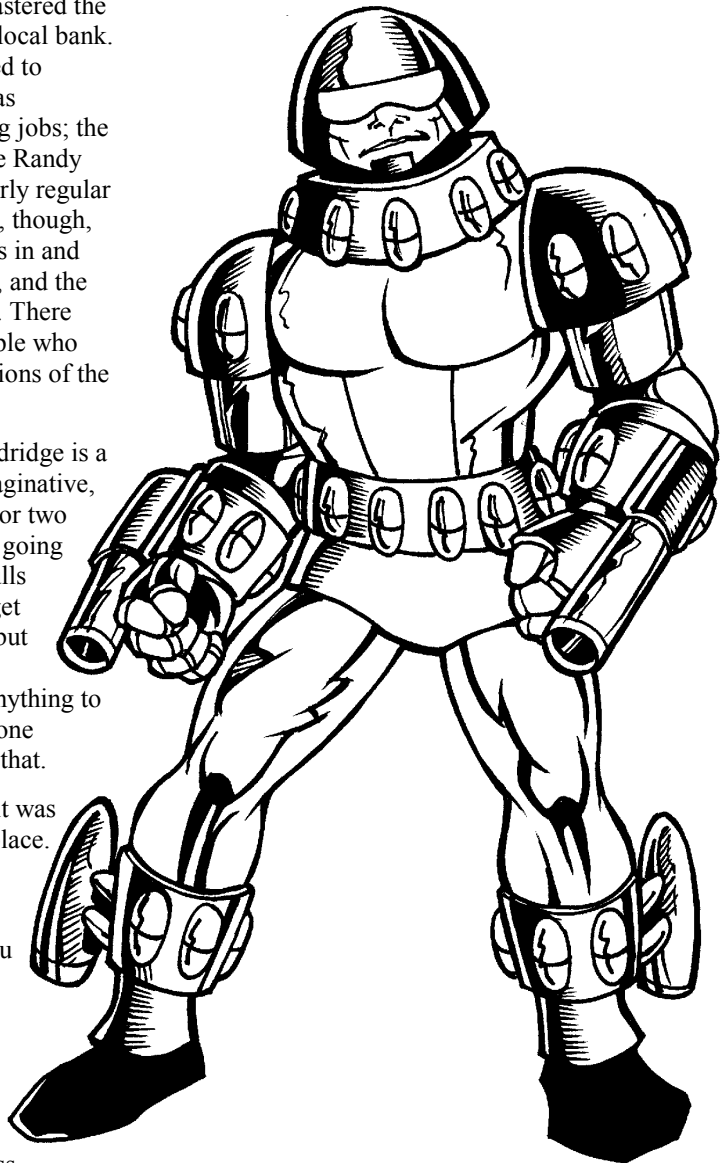
**Personality/Motivation:** Randy Dandridge is a thug, through and through. He's unimaginative, loud, and violent, and always just one or two jobs away from the "Big Score" that's going to set him up for life. He frequently pulls very public jobs or otherwise tries to get press in order to boost his reputation, but despite his best efforts has remained a third-rate villain. He'd do just about anything to be rich and/or famous, and more than one smarter villain has taken advantage of that.

**Quote:** "When you wake up, tell 'em it was the Green Grenadier that robbed this place. And make sure you spell it right!"

**Powers/Tactics:** When the Green Grenadier shows up, the two things you can count on are noise and property damage. Dandridge, though not a bad tactician, believes strongly in overwhelming displays of force and will not hesitate to blow things up while using Presence Attacks on any normals in the area (especially the press

or any celebrities.) Then, he'll target the most well-known member of the opposition and let loose his variety of ranged attacks. The suit itself increases his strength somewhat, but he prefers to keep out of close-quarters combat.

**Appearance:** Green Grenadier's armor is fairly sleek and streamlined in appearance, with articulated joints and a wide helmet. The armor is painted in two shades of green, with the darker shade on the extremities and helmet and the lighter on the main torso. Large jets are prominent on the boots, and around each forearm are prominent grenade launchers carrying his various projectiles. Out of armor, Randy stands 5'11", weighs 180, and has brown hair and eyes.



## DIGITAL HERO #12

### Green Grenadier

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes                   |
|-----|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| 15  | STR  | 5    | 14-  | Lift 800kg; 3d6 HTH [1] |
| 20  | DEX  | 30   | 13-  | OCV: 7/DCV: 7           |
| 16  | CON  | 12   | 13-  |                         |
| 12  | BODY | 4    | 11-  |                         |
| 15  | INT  | 5    | 12-  | PER Roll: 12-           |
| 18  | EGO  | 16   | 13-  | ECV: 6                  |
| 10  | PRE  | 0    | 11-  | PRE Attack: 2d6         |
| 10  | COM  | 0    | 11-  |                         |
| 7   | PD   | 4    |      | Total: 25 PD (18 rPD)   |
| 5   | ED   | 2    |      | Total: 23 ED (18 rED)   |
| 5   | SPD  | 20   |      | Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12 |
| 8   | REC  | 4    |      |                         |
| 38  | END  | 3    |      |                         |
| 29  | STUN | 1    |      |                         |

**Total Characteristics Cost: 106**

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

| Cost | Powers                                                                                                                                                                                       | END  |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 70   | <i>Battlesuit Grenade Array:</i> Multipower, 70-point reserve                                                                                                                                |      |
| 4u   | 1) <i>Main Grenade Launchers:</i> RKA 2d6 (vs. ED), 32 Charges (+1/4), Area Of Effect (4" Radius; +1); OIF (Battlesuit, -1/2)                                                                | [32] |
| 3u   | 2) <i>Web Grenade:</i> Entangle 7d6, 7 DEF; 8 Charges (-1/2), OIF (-1/2)                                                                                                                     | [8]  |
| 4u   | 3) <i>Flashbang Grenades:</i> Flash 6d6 (versus Hearing and Sight Groups), 16 Charges (+0), Area Of Effect (3" Radius; +1); OIF (-1/2)                                                       | [16] |
| 4u   | 4) <i>Smoke Grenade:</i> Darkness to Sight Group 5" Radius, Personal Immunity (+1/4); 8 Charges Lasting 1 Minute (-0), OIF (-1/2)                                                            | [6]  |
| 36   | <i>Battlesuit:</i> Armor (18 PD/18 ED); OIF (-1/2)                                                                                                                                           | 0    |
| 5    | <i>Armor Bonus:</i> +10 STR; OIF: Armor Suit (-1/2), No Figured Characteristics (-1/2)                                                                                                       | 1    |
| 6    | <i>Armor Bonus:</i> +6 CON; OIF (-1/2), No Figured Characteristics (-1/2)                                                                                                                    | 0    |
| 30   | <i>Suit Jets:</i> Flight 20", 4x Noncombat Movement; OIF (-1/2)                                                                                                                              | 4    |
| 14   | <i>Battlesuit Environmental Systems:</i> Life Support (Safe in High Pressure, Safe in Intense Cold, Safe in Intense Heat, Safe in Low Pressure/Vacuum, Self-Contained Breathing); IIF (-1/4) | 0    |
| 12   | <i>Battlesuit Radar:</i> Radar; IIF (-1/4)                                                                                                                                                   | 0    |
| 8    | <i>Battlesuit Radio:</i> Radio Perception/Transmission; IIF (-1/4)                                                                                                                           | 0    |
| 6    | <i>Polarized Lenses:</i> Flash Defense (Sight Group) (8 Points); IIF (-1/4)                                                                                                                  | 0    |

### Perks

3 Contact: Mercenary Handling Agency 11- (Significant Contacts of His Own)

### Skills

5 +1 with Hand-to-Hand Combat  
9 +3 with Grenades  
  
3 Combat Piloting 13-  
3 Demolitions 12-  
3 Electronics 12-  
3 Mechanics 12-  
2 Navigation 12- (Air)  
3 PS: Mercenary 12-  
3 Systems Operation 12-  
3 Tactics 12-  
2 TF: Small Planes, Helicopters, Parachuting

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 244**

**Total Cost: 350**

### 200+ Disadvantages

10 Distinctive Features: Oversize Green Battlesuit (Easily Concealed, Major Reaction)  
20 Enraged: When Cheated or Shown Major Disrespect (Common, go 11-, recover 11-)  
20 Hunted: PRIMUS 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)  
15 Psychological Limitation: Egotistical and Insecure (Common, Strong)  
15 Psychological Limitation: Greedy (Common, Strong)  
15 Psychological Limitation: Prone to Grand, Dramatic Displays (Common, Strong)  
5 Reputation: Frequent Loser, 8-  
5 Rivalry: Other Power-Suited Supers (Professional, More Powerful, Seek to Outdo, Embarrass, or Humiliate Rival, Rival Unaware of Rivalry)  
10 Unluck: 2d6  
35 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 350**



## THE COURT OF LOVE

Eleanor's court was the trendsetter of the medieval Christian world. Known for its sophistication as well as its luxury, Aquitaine's court was heavily influenced by the Spanish courts of the Moors. It sponsored poets and encouraged the art of the troubadours, some of whom were believed to be in love with their patron. In an effort to shed her retainers of their unruly ways, she made up mock trials in which the court ladies sat on an elevated platform so that they could judge the knights, who read poems of homage to women and acted out proper courting techniques. They were expected to dress elaborately in tunics with flowing sleeves, don pointed shoes, and wear their hair long.



# You Gotta Have Character by Jason Walters

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

The sun slowly drifted downwards towards the horizon, casting the long, final shadows of the afternoon upon the valley. It was an orderly, picturesque place seemingly lifted from the pages of a child's storybook, with an impossibly lovely castle complete with high, blue roofed towers dominating a landscape of well-tended farmland. A series of carefully maintained yet dusty roads cut across its face like crowfeet emanating from the eyes of a kindly aunt, linking together a series of small whitewashed villages. Down below, farmer's carts moved lazily among the fields and vineyards, seemingly in no particular hurry to take their occupants home from a hot day working outdoors or their wares to the marketplace.

Out on the balcony of one of the ornate fortresses' highest spires a slender, well-dressed woman gripped the railing in front of her in a white-knuckled fury, her face a mask of rage. Behind her, a tall, handsome man dressed in the finery of a wealthy baron suppressed a sinister chuckle – though with his mother's back turned, there was really no reason to deny himself a well-earned smile. Silvery, sentimental music trickled incongruously up the stairwell behind them.

"It's really no secret to anyone who is anyone back in England, Mother," he crooned, "although God knows you would never hear anything down here in Aquitaine. Anyone who was silly enough to spill the beans would end up on Father's executioner's block the second he got wind of it. In any case, I suppose there's nothing new about the imperial goat going a-rutting... except that he's doing it in front of the farmhouse rather than in the barn.

"Go on, dearest Geoffrey, tell Mother all about it."

He always marveled at how controlled her voice was, even at times when hatred must have gnawed at her sole like rats in a granary. There was still much to learn from darling mother, even after a lifetime of living around the edges of her daily intrigues. From the depths of his cold and blackened soul, Prince Geoffrey still marveled at the remarkable person he so lightly called "mother."

"Well, if you must know, he is taking this Rosamond Clifford – 'Darling Rosamond' he calls her – everywhere he goes. He dresses her in the royal purple of the monarchy, allows her to sit at his side as if she, not you, were Queen of England, all the while talking about having yet more sons. Better sons, he says."

The Queen snorted loudly, sounding less angry than amused. For a brief moment Geoffrey's heart, or what was left of it, froze in his chest. He hadn't come all this way looking to amuse or entertain his mother. Far from it.

"More sons? Better sons, even? Half of the entire damn country is descended from Henry's loins; there's barely a dairymaid between Brittany and Scotland who hasn't had her bottle opened by the royal corkscrew. No, no, my lovely soulless scion, my dearest consort is simply sending me a message that he has grown bored. It's time for me to leave my beloved Aquitaine so that I can once again venture north to that cursed land of bad cooking, wet winters, and oafish bastard royal children that they optimistically call England."

His mother suddenly spun to fix her stare directly upon him. Like most people, Geoffrey could not for long bear up under that withering, seemingly omnipotent glare. Her eyes seemed to sear right through your flesh into the very darkest corners of your soul, directly to the place where you kept all of your best, most secret secrets. The smile faded from his face as he involuntarily took a step back, cringing away from her like a dog backing away from a loud noise.

"Let's not get any ideas, my horrible little prince; I'm not going to kill your father for you," she growled, adjusting her thin, sliver crown as she moved towards the stairwell. "That's a son's job, not a wife's - you and your two terrible siblings will have to work on that without me. This unfortunate Rosamond creature, however, is fair game for a wife who has been publicly turned into a cuckold."

Geoffrey's mother chuckled darkly, almost sadly as she swished past her son, a storm of expensive eastern silk.

"It's time I reminded everyone up in the rainy north that there is a price to be paid for making light of Eleanor, Baroness of Aquitaine, Queen of France, Sovereign of Brittany, and Queen of England!"

Eleanor of Aquitaine was heiress of the duchy of Aquitaine, one of the greatest fiefs in medieval Europe with lands extending throughout southwestern France. A handsome, regal queen who was also widely regarded as a devious, witty, and intelligent statesman, Eleanor's court was a trendsetter in the medieval world, known for its sophistication and luxury. Heavily influenced by the Spanish courts of the Moors, it gave patronage to poets and troubadours, becoming the prototype "Court of Love" which helped spawn the 12<sup>th</sup> Century French medieval renaissance.

After an unsuccessful marriage to King Louis VII of France (they quarreled over military tactics during The Second Crusade), Eleanor married the handsome young Prince Henry of Anjou, who shortly thereafter became King

Henry II of England. The only woman to ever become both the queen of France and England, she bore Henry six children, notably King Richard "the Lionhearted" of England and the infamous King John "Lackland" of England. After a falling out with her husband, Eleanor led several rebellious sons in an abortive uprising, which resulted in a fifteen-year imprisonment inside of various fortified nunneries. After his death, she embarked on a dizzying series of journeys to cement her enormous family's control over the royalty of Western Europe through arranging marriages for her numerous royal grandchildren. Widely respected as "The Grandmother of Europe," Eleanor died comfortable and content at the abbey of Fontevrault in 1204 at the age of 82.

### **"LOUIS HAD A SEIZURE AND I DAMN NEAR DIED OF WINDBURN... BUT THE TROOPS WERE DAZZLED."**

There is a famous, or rather infamous, legend about Eleanor's visit to the Holy Land. While it is a well chronicled fact that she, as well as her ladies-in-waiting, dressed up as "amazons" for much of the journey, wearing specially designed plate armor and bearing lances (though it is generally agreed upon that they never saw combat), there is a completely unconfirmed rumor that she galloped ahead of the troops bear-breasted as they approached the gates of Jerusalem. While it's not inconceivable that the indomitable queen might very well have pulled such a stunt (perhaps to gall her pious husband), it is far more likely that it is an unfounded historical rumor. All the same, this lovely little legend (which has proven hard to kill) is attributed to Eleanor in an amusing speech given by Katherine Hepburn in her immortal film *The Lion in Winter*.



**Eleanor of Aquitaine:  
the effigy at Fontevrault**

## ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE PLOT SEEDS

The PCs are on their way back from the Holy Land with Richard the Lionhearted when they're ambushed by forces loyal to Duke Leopold, a noble whom he had publicly insulted in the course of their adventure. Although they manage to escape, Richard is turned over to Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI to be held for ransom. They PCs return to England to face his mother Queen Eleanor with the ransom demands. Will she raise the money, or send them on a daring rescue mission?

King Henry II, who is having trouble with several of his vassals in Brittany, approaches the PCs with a generous offer of newly conquered lands in Ireland as well as gold if they will "pacify" a couple of unruly barons for him. If they agree, he will then ask them to perform a little "favor" for him along the way – transport his wife Eleanor from his castle at Chinon to the abbey of Fontevault. Without, he emphasizes, ever letting her out of their sight!



16

## Duchess Eleanor of Aquitaine, Queen of England (and France!)

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes                    |
|-----|------|------|------|--------------------------|
| 10  | STR  | 0    | 11-  | Lift 100 kg; 2d6 HTH [1] |
| 13  | DEX  | 9    | 12-  | OCV: 4/DCV: 4            |
| 18  | CON  | 16   | 13-  |                          |
| 14  | BODY | 8    | 12-  |                          |
| 19  | INT  | 9    | 13-  | PER Roll: 13-            |
| 13  | EGO  | 6    | 12-  | ECV: 4                   |
| 18  | PRE  | 8    | 13-  | PRE Attack: 3½d6         |
| 18  | COM  | 4    | 13-  |                          |

|    |      |   |                     |
|----|------|---|---------------------|
| 8  | PD   | 6 | Total: 8 PD (0 rPD) |
| 6  | ED   | 2 | Total: 6 ED (0 rED) |
| 3  | SPD  | 7 | Phases: 4, 8, 12    |
| 8  | REC  | 4 |                     |
| 40 | END  | 2 |                     |
| 30 | STUN | 2 |                     |

**Total Characteristics Cost: 83**

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

**Cost Powers** **END**

10 *Fortunate:* Luck 2d6

### Perks

- 15 Fringe Benefit: Head of State, Member of the Aristocracy/Higher Nobility
- 15 Money: Filthy Rich
- 9 Reputation (large group; 14-) +3/+3d6
- 10 Contact: King Henry II of England 14- (Access to Major Institutions, Significant Contacts of His Own, Extremely Useful Skills or Resources)
- 7 Contact: King Louis of France 12- (Access to Major Institutions, Significant Contacts of His Own, Very Useful Skills or Resources)
- 11 Contact: Richard the Lionhearted 15- (Significant Contacts of His Own, Useful Skills or Resources, Slavishly Loyal)
- 6 Favor: Any Six Powerful European Noblemen

### Skills

- 3 Acting 13-
- 3 Bureaucratics 13-
- 5 Conversation 14-
- 3 Cryptography 13-
- 3 Disguise 13-
- 7 High Society 15-
- 4 KS: Poetry 14-
- 4 KS: Literature 14-
- 4 KS: Music 14-
- 5 Riding 13-
- 9 Persuasion 16-
- 1 Tactics 8-
- 5 Seduction 14-

- 3 Linguist
- 4 1) Language: French (idiomatic; literate)
- 2 2) Language: Latin (fluent conversation; literate)
- 3 3) Language: Italian (completely fluent; literate)
- 1 4) Language: German (basic conversation)
- 3 Traveler
- 2 1) AK: Spain 13-
- 4 2) AK: Aquitaine 15-
- 3 3) AK: France 14-
- 3 4) AK: England 14-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 167**

**Total Cost: 250**

### 150+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: High Aristocracy (Easily Concealed, Major Reaction)
- 15 Enraged: When Her Husband Cheats Publicly (Common), go 11-, recover 14-
- 5 Hunted: Potential Husbands 11- (As Pow, Watching)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Ambitious (Very Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Lustful (Common, Strong)
- 10 Reputation: Scandalous Queen, 11-
- 20 Social Limitation: Woman in Medieval Society (Frequently, Severe)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 250**



**Background/History:** Eleanor of Aquitaine was born in 1122 in the castle of Belin near Bordeaux in that loose collection of baronies, principalities, and kingdoms which we now call France. Her father was Duke William X “the Toulousan” of Aquitaine, the son of Eleanor’s living grandfather the infamous, fun-loving Duke William IX “the Troubadour.” Her mother Aenor de Rochefoucauld was, somewhat surprisingly, her father’s stepsister, the daughter of William IX’s third wife, the infamous “Dangereuse” Vicomtesse de Rochefoucauld.

Properly speaking, Eleanor’s name was Alia-Aenor, which properly means “the other Aenor.” This rather casual name demonstrates not only the usual royal disinterest surrounding a firstborn daughter but, perhaps, also the irregular nature of her scandalously eccentric, slightly inbred family. Her birth was followed in 1125 by that of an equally casually named younger sister Petronella (which is Latin “younger sister”). Yet, the duke and duchess longed for a son to continue their family name.

Finally, in 1127, William and Aenor got what they were praying for with the birth of their son William. Unfortunately, both young William and his mother died in 1130, leaving Duke William X a widower with no male heirs. Traumatized by her death, it wasn’t until 1136 that he made plans to remarry. Unfortunately, William’s vassals had grown rather fond of having a weak, despondent lord on the throne of Aquitaine, a vast realm that stretched from the river Loire to the Pyrenees. Thus, when he went to collect his bride to be, one Emma of Limoges, he found that she had been kidnapped and “married” (i.e. raped) by the Count of Angouleme. Enraged yet essentially powerless against his own bondsmen, William went off with his neighbor Count Geoffrey of Anjou to make war upon the Dukes of Normandy (a popular French hobby of the time), where he died of food poisoning after eating a bad eel pie.

This left a vulnerable 15-year-old Eleanor the sole heiress to the wealthy semi-nation of Aquitaine. With more success than was usual in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, the unlucky duke’s men managed to keep his death a secret from his treacherous vassals as they hustled her north towards Paris, where they hoped she would be safe from sudden violent “marriage” at the hands of an ambitious nobleman. King Louis “the Fat” sat (or more accurately lay; he never left his bedchamber) on the throne of France at this time. Though nominally their liege-lord based on the allotment of land and titles made after the great King Charlemagne’s death several hundred years earlier, the dukes of Aquitaine traditionally thumbed their noses at the far-less-powerful Capetian kings of then far-smaller France. Yet Louis was nobody’s fool; alerted by Aquitaine’s

advance men, he could see that fortune had dropped a tasty apple into his meaty palms. HE would be the one who selected the next Duke of Aquitaine, and it would *definitely* be one of his own sons.

Unfortunately, Louis’ most “promising” heir Prince Philip Capet had suffered an untimely death, trampled by a herd of swine while drunk in the gutters of Paris. This left his younger son, who had been raised by the Church since birth, to continue the family line. Louis dispatched him south directly from his monastery, along with the King’s crony the Abbot of Saint-Denis, to meet Eleanor’s entourage in route. She was married into the French royal family before they even arrived at court.

Right from the beginning, the young king and his new queen proved to be temperamentally mismatched. Eleanor was strong-willed, spirited, and independent, while Louis VII was quiet and religious to the point that many considered him a living saint (though nobody ever mistook Eleanor for a saint). Only a few days after their wedding, Louis the Fat passed away, leaving his timid, unprepared son to rule France. Fortunately for the kingdom, Eleanor proved herself an extremely enthusiastic Queen. Louis, who quickly grew to respect his new bride’s intelligence, consulted her frequently on matters of state. During this period she frequently visited her holdings in Aquitaine, consolidating control of her vassals while she began cultivating a unique new ideal which would in short order seize the imagination of educated Europeans everywhere: the court of love.

In 1144, the Middle Eastern Christian city of Edessa fell to Muslim forces. As a result, its entire population was lost, either massacred or sold into slavery. Inspired by this event, as well as the preaching of the militant monk St. Bernard of Clairvaux, both Louis and the German “Emperor” Conrad III organized their own separate military expeditions to the holy land. Neither the French nor the Germans had any interest in cooperating with each other; still, their combined effort is historically referred to as The Second Crusade.

Not one to be left at home while there was adventure to be had, Eleanor offered her husband the services of a thousand well-trained men from Aquitaine – on the condition that she, as well as 300 hundred of her ladies-in-waiting, could accompany the expedition. Though the young king was less than thrilled, he couldn’t afford to reject the military assistance. Thus the King and Queen of France set out for the Holy Land at the head of a small army, doggedly determined to drive back the Muslim tide. When they reached Antioch, they were greeted by Eleanor’s uncle, Raymond de Poitiers, who had become ruler of the city through marriage. Only a few years older

The PCs are men-at-arms in the employment of Duke William X “the Toulousan” of Aquitaine, a good-natured if somewhat bumbling nobleman. Unfortunately, word has just reached them that Duke William has died, leaving his vulnerable 15-year-old daughter Eleanor the sole heir to his vast (if unruly) domain. If word gets out, every petty knight in Aquitaine will be out to kidnap and “marry” the young baroness – a fate to which she is understandably opposed. Their only hope is to smuggle her north to the holdings of King Louis “The Fat,” alternately sneaking and fighting their way across central France.

With King Richard off in the Holy Land, various factions, including those loyal to his brother John, are plotting to seize the English throne for themselves. A besieged Queen Eleanor, who is acting as regent in her son’s absence, has come up with a desperate plan to save the kingdom from civil war. All she needs is a few heroic adventurers to pull it off....

**“I’VE SNAPPED  
AND PLOTTED  
ALL MY LIFE.  
THERE’S NO  
OTHER WAY TO  
BE ALIVE, KING,  
AND FIFTY ALL  
AT ONCE.”**

Henry II, first of the Angevin kings, ranks as one of the most effective of all England’s monarchs. He came to the throne amid total anarchy created by a running civil war between his predecessor King Stephan and his mother, the self styled “Empress” Matilda. He promptly collared the nation’s errant barons, reformed the chaotic Norman government, and created a capable, self-standing bureaucracy. His energy was equaled only by his ambition and intelligence. Henry survived wars abroad, rebellions at home, and a controversial marriage to successfully rule one of the Middle Ages’ most powerful kingdoms.



than Eleanor, he was far more interesting and handsome than Eleanor’s husband. Raymond entertained the crusading French in grand style, paying special attention to his flirtatious niece. Although Raymond had a reputation for being a faithful husband, Eleanor’s reputation was less spotless, and gossip about their relationship soon began to fly about Europe. These rumors were to follow Eleanor for the rest of her life.

As the French crusaders prepared to leave, Raymond pleaded for Louis’s help in defending his city. He insisted that the best strategic objective for the French was the recapture of Edessa, thus protecting the Western presence in the Holy Land. Though Eleanor took his side, Louis refused to assist Raymond, insisting instead that his forces move on Jerusalem. Infuriated, Eleanor declared that she wanted their marriage annulled. Angry and hurt, Louis left Antioch, forcing Eleanor to go with him. She never saw her uncle again; in 1149, he was killed in a battle against the Muslims. His severed head was sent to the caliph in Baghdad.

The Second Crusade ended in total failure, largely because of its constantly squabbling leadership. Unable to take Jerusalem, a bitterly defeated Eleanor and Louis returned to France in separate ships. On their way home, they stopped in Rome, where an exasperated pope Eugene III persuaded them to continue their association for the good of their country. Although her marriage to Louis continued for a time (she bore him two daughters, Marie and Alix) their relationship was basically over. In 1152, the Pope tiredly agreed to an annulment. Eleanor’s vast estates reverted to her control, making her once again an extremely eligible bachelorette.

Eleanor wasn’t destined to stay single for very long. Within a short time, she threw herself into a stormy new marriage with Henry of Anjou, an ambitious young Norman baron eleven years her junior who was also the grandson of England’s King Henry I. Though their eccentric, ambitious temperaments were well matched -- as were their prodigious land holdings -- their marriage scandalized contemporary observers. Eleanor, it was rumored, had previously had an affair with Henry’s father (amongst others). According to a contemporary writer, Gerald of Wales, Henry’s father warned him not to go anywhere near Eleanor, “both because she was the wife of his lord and because he had known her himself.” Henry had “presumed to sleep adulterously with the queen of France, taking her from his own lord and marrying her himself. How could anything fortunate, I ask, emerge from these copulations?”

One of the first fortunate things to emerge was, ironically enough, Henry of Anjou’s ascent to the English throne in 1154, making Eleanor of

Aquitaine the first (and only) woman to be both Queen of France and England during her lifetime. Henry proved to be an extremely dynamic and capable ruler, quickly forcing the chaotic empire of his great-grandfather William the Conqueror into a semblance of order. The second fortunate thing was the production by Eleanor in rapid succession six children: Henry, Matilda, Richard (known as *The Lionhearted*), Geoffrey, Eleanor, Joan, and John (known as *Lackland*), two of whom (Richard and John) were destined to become kings of England. Through a combination of military prowess, clever alliances, and the utilization of a horde of ambitious children, Henry and Eleanor created an empire that rivaled Charlemagne’s in wealth as well as size.

By 1173, however, the two powerful nobles had drifted apart. With his children grown, Henry embarked on a series of affairs, quietly at first, then with increasing insensitivity to his wife’s feelings. He began a very public relationship with a young noblewoman named Rosamond Clifford, which seems to have been the proverbial straw that broke the camel’s back. Legend has it that an enraged Eleanor confronted the luckless lady with a dagger in one hand and a cup of poison in the other, then forced her to choose which way she would die. Rosamond was found dead a short time thereafter.

With their volatile marriage spinning out of control, Eleanor led her three of her four sons in a surprise rebellion against Henry. In her eyes it was justified: after two decades of bearing him children, putting up with his infidelities, and, perhaps worst of all, having to share her independence and power, Eleanor seems to have been fed up. Her goal may have been the right to rule a sovereign Aquitaine with her beloved third son Richard.... and without Henry, who put down her insurrection with his usual ruthless efficiency. The royal conspirators were forced to flee to France. Eleanor tried to follow disguised as a man, but was captured by Henry’s forces and dragged back before the king.

At 55 years of age, Eleanor was banished from his court, destined to be imprisoned in various fortified buildings for the next sixteen years. Her sons continued to war against her husband; in the end, even Henry’s favorite son, John, turned against him. Finally, in 1189, Henry II died. With the oldest son, Henry, already dead, Eleanor’s favorite, Richard the Lionhearted, became king. Richard soon went away on the Third Crusade (he only spent six months out of his 10 year reign in England), leaving his mother as regent. “He issued instructions to the princes of the realm, almost in the style of a general edict, that the queen’s word should be law in all matters,” wrote a contemporary chronicler, Ralph of Diceto.

She proved to be an able ruler. When Richard was taken hostage by the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI, Eleanor arranged for his ransom. She also stood up to Richard's scheming brother John, who constantly plotted to seize the English throne. She even managed to get Richard and John to reconcile after Richard's return to England. When Richard died in 1199, John became king. Like Richard, King John respected (though didn't necessarily like) his mother, generally heeding her advice on matters of state. She, in return, supported him against his numerous enemies.

Though now quite elderly by the standards of her time, Eleanor continued to lead an active life, working hard to maintain the loyalty of her English subjects, cement alliances for her enormous family, and manage her considerable estates. She also traveled through Europe arranging marriages for her grandchildren, who by now were so numerous that she was known far and wide as the "Grandmother of Europe." She traveled to Spain to collect her 13-year-old granddaughter Blanche of Castile so that she could become the bride of King Louis VIII of France.... the grandson of her first husband Louis VII! At the age of 70, she rode over the Pyrenees to claim her candidate to be Richard's wife, Princess Berengaria of Navarre. She traversed the Alps, traveling all the way down the Italian peninsula, and brought her to Sicily so that she could travel to Cyprus, where Richard married her in 1191.

Finally, in 1202 Eleanor retired to the abbey of Fontevrault, a religious community where older aristocratic women and noblemen's battered wives came to find spiritual comfort, sympathy, and a place to recover from the traumas of existence. She spent the remaining two years of her life there, passing away quietly in 1204 at the age of 82. Her body was buried on the grounds, where it lays to this day under an effigy that still captures the faintest shadow of her majestic beauty.

**Personality/Motivation:** Eleanor of Aquitaine was the very picture of a dynamic, successful medieval queen: ruthless, plotting, brave, cunning, amoral, and deeply passionate. While ambitious to a fault, she never lost sight of the fact that her own legacy could only be assured by the success of her descendants, a project to which she carefully devoted the final decade of her life.

Eleanor was an independent person with an almost innate ability to skillfully maneuver the stormy seas of medieval politics. Although her role was somewhat mitigated by her gender, she achieved levels of political power undreamt of by most noblewomen of the time through a combination of audacity, willpower, and

educated risk taking. At different times in her life, she ruled Aquitaine, France, and eventually England with a firm, wise hand. She was certainly one of the most astute political operators of her day.

Well known as one of history's great romantics, Eleanor was a patron of the courtly arts of poetry, music, and unrequited, idealized love. In the midst of barbarity and violence, she managed to create (at least for a time) a chivalric subculture which embodied the very best that medieval man had to offer. When most of us think of a noble, virtuous knight in shining armor on his great steed, saving the innocent from the predations of the wicked, we are but feeling the reverberations of Eleanor's work shivering down the corridors of the past. Even though this society of the "court of love" was completely destroyed with the coming of the Black Death in 1348, it remains influential in modern fiction, film, and popular culture as the embodiment of all we find noble in our otherwise chaotic and bloodthirsty ancestors from the middle ages.

**Quote:** "We've got the King right where we want him. Of course, he'll betray us all: but only if he thinks we think he won't."

**Powers/Tactics:** Eleanor of Aquitaine is a schemer, a peddler of influence, and a backroom, behind-the-throne political maneuverer who occasionally got the chance to run the show, determining the fate of entire nations. Though there is little evidence that she was taught swordsmanship or ever even became involved in a direct physical confrontation, Eleanor certainly had a good grasp of military tactics, logistics, and equipment (she had her own well-run army). In many ways, she is far more dangerous an opponent, or valuable a friend, than any warrior no matter how skilled or brave. She almost always seemed to get her way in the end.

**Campaign Use:** Eleanor is the very model of an ambitious, capable queen, suitable as an NPC in any campaign setting that needs a powerful political figure. Though she seems most appropriately (and obviously) useful in a fantasy or medieval historical venue, there is no reason why she couldn't be used in a science fiction, Victorian, or other setting which calls for a powerful, highly skilled woman. She can be used as a villainess, a hero, or (more realistically) a combination of the two, depending on circumstance.

Queen Eleanor was a woman of extreme passions who deeply loved her sometimes-horrible husband and sons, even while scheming against (or with) them for power and influence. Thus, it would be for them to tread a fine line when dealing with her family regardless of any offhand statements she may make. PCs would be

## THE LION IN WINTER (1968)

It's Christmas time at English crown's winter court in Chinon, Brittany. To quell suspicions among his gossiping, rebellious barons, King Henry II (*Peter O'Toole*) has decided to let his scheming wife Eleanor (*Katharine Hepburn*) out of her decade-long confinement. He has also permitted his two surviving insurgent sons – Richard and Geoffrey – attend the festivities, where they join their more "loyal" sibling Prince John. Soon this charming group is joined by French King Philip II, who has come to visit his sister Alais, ward of the English king as well as the intended bride of Richard.

This gathering of squabbling, ambitious nobles proves to be more sordid – and entertaining – than any daytime soap opera could ever hope to be. Henry, who has been sleeping with Alais since she was almost a child, has no intention of giving her hand to Richard, who in turn has been having a homosexual affair with her brother Philip. Both John and Geoffrey lust after the throne, while Eleanor plots revenge on her husband for her 12-year imprisonment. Philip is simply there to stir up as much

trouble for his overbearing neighbors to the north as he can manage. It's a family drama at its most vicious, with brilliant dialogue performed by an inspired cast at the height of their acting powers.

most likely to come into contact with her by serving as crusader knights with her son Richard the Lionhearted, who was quite the adventurer in his own right, or by working for her ever dynamic husband Henry II, who had an eternal need for skilled warriors who were willing to help him deal with his squabbling, rebellious vassals in Brittany.

The Duchess of Aquitaine makes a dangerous, implacable foe. To purchase her as an enemy, a player should buy the 25-point Disadvantage *Hunted: Eleanor of Aquitaine 11- (Mo Pow; Harshly Punish; Extensive Non-Combat Influence)*. If, on the other hand, they are on her good side, her favor can be purchased as the 7-point Perk *Contact: Eleanor of Aquitaine 11- (Access to Major Institutions, Significant Contacts of Her Own, Extremely Useful Skills or Resources)*.

**Appearance:** By all accounts Eleanor of Aquitaine was a tall, thin, incredibly beautiful woman who kept her good looks throughout much of her long life. She wore only the most expensive, flattering clothing available in western Europe at the time, generally flowing silk or linen gowns with elaborate headgear ranging from heart-shaped headdresses to Italian turbans.

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# Your Horoscope For: Leo

by Allen Thomas

In a follow-up to the article on Leo's Bar that appeared several months ago in the pages of *Superworld Magazine*, we sent Dirk Heimthrid back to the henchman hang-out....

I ducked out of the rain and into Leo's. The place hadn't changed much in six months: same pool tables with the same threadbare felt, same juke box with the same sad-sack country songs. Fred, the henchman I'd interviewed in my first article, leaned against the bar. The guy next to Fred – a very scary looking guy holding a pool cue – wasn't happy to see me.

"Fred!" he said. "What we tell you 'bout that reporter guy? We don't want him comin' around here no more."

Ryan, the bartender and owner of Leo's, added, "Yeah, Lyle's right. After that article appeared we had Nightwind, then Nighthawk, Nightwind again, then Kodiak and Technique in here – Feds for chrissake! I don't need that kind of grief – it'll chase away my clientele. They'll take away my liquor licence."

Fred shrugged. "Sorry guys... I needed the dough...."

Pages 81 and 82 of *Millennium City* describes Leo's Bar, a special sort of watering hole for a special sort of person. Leo's is a bar where henchmen hang out and trade stories about previous bosses, while waiting for their next job. Also described on those pages are two regulars at Leo's, Fred and his agent Albert "The Weasel" Tudberry. This month's installment of *Your Horoscope For* adds a few more henchmen to local fauna holding down barstools at Leo's while looking for their next gig. You can use these characters to increase the already considerable character of Leo's Bar, or maybe add some personality to the henchmen soundly thrashed by your PCs time and time again.

## Plot Seeds for Leo's

In addition to the plot seed described on page 105 of *Millennium City*, you can use the ideas below as the basis of an adventure or sub-plot in your campaign.

**Hunted By A Henchman:** Lyle Spark determines one of the PCs knows something about his father's death or is his father's killer, and decides it's time for revenge. He hires on with one of the PC's Hunters and waits for the moment to strike. (This idea works especially well if the PC is a legacy hero and his predecessor was at the Battle for Detroit.)

**Rotterkin's Big Idea:** Rotterkin, the demonling inhabiting Jared Lackless, has a great idea. He finally realizes he has the perfect hiding place. Whenever he's in the Material World, he commits strange and foul crimes – spray painting diabolic runes on the sides of churches; robbing the graves in a cemetery. A mystical pattern guides the crimes – will the PCs realize in time that Jared Lackless, looking like some wayward drunk who didn't make it home the night before, always seems to turn up at the crime scene? Or will the pattern be completed and if so, what happens then?

**Jared's Last Hope:** Small horns emerge from Jared's forehead, and Jared knows this is more than just a symptom of chronic alcohol abuse. None of his villainous contacts will help him – they know Rotterkin is finally taking over his vessel and they find Rotterkin far more useful than Jared Lackless. When Jared turns up on the PCs' doorstep, are they willing to help the henchman? And if so, can they discover where Rotterkin goes when not in the Material World, travel there, and somehow return the demonling to the Netherworld?

**The Ghost Of Frank Mooney:** The ghost of Frank Mooney begins to haunt Leo's Bar. It starts innocuously enough: the juke box only plays Patsy Cline songs. Even when unplugged, it just plays Frank's favorite songs, "Crazy" and "Walkin' After Midnight," again and again. When bottles of a certain brand of beer – Frank's least favorite brand – start to explode, the crew at Leo's begins to worry. Not trusting supervillains, they call the PCs for help. What unfinished task binds Mooney's ghost to the Material World? Or is it not a task at all... could it be the ghost wants revenge on the Black Harlequin?

**A Blast From The Past:** A bizarre crimewave rocks Millennium City. Some time-traveling or dimension-hopping villain, maybe Dr. Macabre from *Champions Universe*, is the mastermind. The crimewave is exactly the same as one that took place thirty years ago, but no records exist about how it was stopped. Only one person involved back then is still alive – Joe Paluka. Will Joe remember the specifics of the crimewave, and if so, what will the PCs have to do to convince the old henchman to help them?

**Bar Crawl:** One of the members of the Alpha Alpha Alpha ("tri-Alph") fraternity at Millennium City University is turning twenty-one, and his brothers decide it's time for a bar crawl. They plan to have a shot in every bar in

## LEONINE INSIGHT

Leo is the second of the Fire Signs, along with Aries and Sagittarius. Its symbol is ♌ and traditionally the sign is depicted as a lion.

the city... including Leo's. One of the tri-Alph brothers is the son of someone important in the city. When the henchmen at Leo's find out one of the obnoxious kids in the bar is the son of wealthy man, they decide a kidnaping and ransom demand is in order. Showing rare cunning, they forge a note from a powerful supervillain (maybe Dr. Destroyer or the Ultimates) and wait for the pay-off....

## Jared Lackless

**Background/History:** Jared Lackless graduated from Millennium City University with a degree in General Studies and a thorough understanding of Aleister Crowley's *The Book of Thoth*.

Fancying himself an occultist and magician, he found work as a henchman for mystical villains and soon got a gig with Talisman. The last thing he remembers about that job: Talisman performed some kind of ritual summoning. During the summoning, the Champions burst into her hideout. A demon appeared in the middle of a pentacle. Nighthawk punched Jared in the face and sent him flying into the pentacle. And that's it.

Jared next found himself face down in the gutter. He brushed off the cigarette butts and other trash, wiped his hands on his jeans, and went to Leo's to have a few beers.

Since then, Jared has suffered blackouts. He thinks it's because he's an alcoholic, but every time he stops drinking the blackouts become more frequent. And they almost never happen when he's drunk. So he keeps drinking and hiring himself out to small-time mystical villains. Eventually in the course of his henching, he sobers up just long enough to panic and then comes another blackout. Afterward, he wakes up again face down in the gutter, always at a sunrise, and it starts all over again.

**Personality/Motivation:** The blackouts have started to get to Jared, and he is a slowly but surely turning into a basketcase. In conversation, he comes across as hopeless and glum, just another barfly drowning his sorrows at Leo's. To make matters worse, his tendency to "disappear" whenever superheroes show up has given him a bad reputation with supervillains – Albert "the Weasel" Tudberry refuses to represent Jared anymore. Despite his reputation, some mystical villains continue to hire him as a henchman (they know he's a vessel for a demonling, but of course haven't told Jared what they know). Despite his meager knowledge of the occult and the persistent smell of rotten eggs lingering around him, Jared has no clue he is the vessel for a demon – of course, it could be a higher (or lower, as the case may be) power is meddling in the affair and keeping Jared in the dark.

**Quote:** "I don't know what to do, Ryan... I have these blackouts, y'know. But only when I'm *not* drinking. I just don't know what to do."

**Powers/Tactics:** Unknown to Jared, he's the host for a Netherworld demonling called Rotterkin. The demonling was summoned by Talisman during the ritual. Before their dealings could go any further, the Champions broke up the summoning and Rotterkin took advantage of the situation when Jared was knocked into the pentacle. Since then, Rotterkin has been biding his time. The demonling can only take over when Jared's fight or flight instinct kicks in – Jared not only flees the scene but the material world entirely, allowing Rotterkin to take over – but the demonling is sure he can fix that with the right mystical help. Jared only returns when the sun rises the next day or if the demonling is Knocked Out.

A couple of things worry Rotterkin though. First, he has a sneaking suspicion some demonic power arranged for Jared to become his vessel, and Rotterkin knows a demon does nothing without some mischief in mind. Second, Rotterkin can't figure out where he goes when Jared returns to the Material Plane. He has no recollection of his time away, and nothing seems to happen to him wherever he goes... but still, Rotterkin would be more comfortable if he knew exactly what happened to him.

**Campaign Use:** You can use Jared to add a little chaos and uncertainty to a fight with a mystical supervillain. When the PCs bust in and Jared turns into Rotterkin, just what is going on anyhow? The obvious plot hook for Jared: why is a Demon Prince watching him and manipulating events. Is it part of a larger plot? Or is the infernal being just having some fun with a mortal? And how is Talisman, Rotterkin's original summoner, tied up in the plot? Also, mystical villains have been using Rotterkin as a source of information about the Netherworld – they hire Jared, make him panic, and then put their questions to Rotterkin. Maybe the PCs can use Jared in a similar way. Finally, when DEMON becomes active again in Millennium City, the group is sure to find a use for Jared and Rotterkin.

**Appearance:** Jared has a bland appearance with pasty skin and dishwater blond hair. A little under 6' tall, he's developing a beer belly from all his drinking. The demonling, Rotterkin, is about 3' tall with puce colored skin, small horns, a long tail with a barbed tip, and a perpetual toothy smile.



## DIGITAL HERO #12

### Jared Lackless

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes                   |
|-----|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| 8   | STR  | -2   | 11-  | Lift 75kg; 1½d6 HTH [1] |
| 10  | DEX  | 0    | 11-  | OCV: 3/DCV: 3           |
| 8   | CON  | -4   | 11-  |                         |
| 8   | BODY | -4   | 11-  |                         |
| 10  | INT  | 0    | 11-  | PER Roll: 11-           |
| 10  | EGO  | 0    | 11-  | ECV: 3                  |
| 8   | PRE  | -2   | 11-  | PRE Attack: 1½d6        |
| 8   | COM  | -1   | 11-  |                         |
| 2   | PD   | 0    |      | Total: 2 PD (0 rPD)     |
| 2   | ED   | 0    |      | Total: 2 ED (0 rED)     |
| 2   | SPD  | 0    |      | Phases: 4, 12           |
| 4   | REC  | 0    |      |                         |
| 16  | END  | 0    |      |                         |
| 16  | STUN | 0    |      |                         |

**Total Characteristics Cost: -13**

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

| Cost | Powers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | END |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 10   | <i>Unwilling Vessel:</i> Multiform (involuntarily change into 233-point Demonling [see page 51 of the <i>HERO System Bestiary</i> ]); Reversion (When Knocked Out or at Sunrise; -1), No Conscious Control (Only When Accidental Change Occurs and Only Changes Back in Special Circumstances; -2), Different Personality in Demonling Form (-½) | 0   |
|      | <b>Skills</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |     |
| 2    | CK: Millennium City 11-                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |     |
| 1    | KS: Superheroes 8-                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |     |
| 5    | KS: Arcane & Occult Lore 12-                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |     |
| 2    | PS: Henchman 11-                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |     |
| 1    | Streetwise 8-                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |     |
| 1    | WF: Small Arms                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |     |

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 22**

**Total Cost: 9**

### -20+ Disadvantages

- 15 Accidental Change: When Jared Panics 11- (Common)
- 15 Hunted: Demon Prince 14- (Mo Pow, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Multiform Amnesia (Uncommon, Total)
- 10 Unluck: 2d6

**Total Disadvantage Points: 35**



## Lyle Sparks

**Background/History:** Born and raised in Lansing, Michigan, Lyle Spark never knew his father. He never asked his mother about him – he had known the topic was off limits since he was a boy, so he never bothered to ask. It was an open secret his father lived in Detroit and that was all Lyle needed to know. In 1994, he graduated from High School and left town the next day on a bus headed for Millennium City. He had a photo stolen from his grandmother's house and his father's name: Louis Jacobs.

After six months of searching, Lyle came into Leo's Bar. There he discovered a couple of things. First, his father – called Pittsburgh Lou by the other henchmen – had made a living henching for supervillains. Second, Pittsburgh Lou had died in the Battle of Detroit. Finally, rumor had it he died fighting superheroes and most of the regulars at Leo's assumed a superhero killed him. With so many superheroes in Detroit at the time and the city in chaos, no one knew who killed Pittsburgh Lou or even why. Lyle swore he'd find out who – he didn't care about the why – and when he did find out, he'd even the score.

Since then, Lyle has worked as a henchman always keeping an ear open for information. Over the years he's developed a reputation for violence, and only supervillains who don't care about excessive violence employ him as a henchman. Despite his years of henching, he still doesn't know who killed his father.

**Personality/Motivation:** Lyle has a police record that dates back to his teens when he was picked up for shoplifting. Since coming to Millennium City, he has moved on to henching full time and done that, between prison terms, for nearly a decade. At first, he only wanted to find out who killed his father and figured working for supervillains would turn up the clues he needed. Since then, he's come to like the job – so long as the employer has a taste for indiscriminate violence. He is by far one of the more violent characters in Leo's, and when superheroes come looking for information, Lyle's the one who often starts the fight.

Lyle doesn't know why he's obsessed with finding his father; to his violent mind-set, it just seems like the right thing to do. Someone killed his father, now Lyle needs to kill someone in revenge.

Lyle's nagging worry is that Shadowboxer, the famous protector of Detroit who died fighting the supervillain Glacier, is responsible for his father's death. If that's true, he's not sure what he'll do, but figures Shadowboxer might have had a family he can hurt. A son or a wife... or even a brother... it makes no difference to Lyle Spark.

**Quote:** "Tell me something, hero.... Where were you on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1992?"

**Powers/Tactics:** Lyle's pretty tough for a henchman, but he's been in the business long enough to know he can't handle a superhero by himself. When bored, so long as he knows the hero dislikes killing, he picks fights with the ones who come into Leo's, hoping to catch the hero off-guard or get in a lucky shot.

When working as a henchman, Lyle waits until his employer takes a superhero out of the fight. If the superhero was around in 1992, Lyle does what he can to get the superhero alone... just the incapacitated hero, Lyle Spark, and his switchblade.

Lyle's Vehicle, a white '78 Corvette detailed with blue flames, was a formerly his father's. Lyle "convinced" the previous owner to sell it cheap.

**Campaign Use:** You can use Lyle to add some menace to the usual group of hapless henchmen. In some cases, like when working for villains such as Mechassassin or Lazer, Lyle might even be more prone to violence than his employer.

Lyle hunts any superhero he believes connected to his father's death, however tenuous that connection. As a hunter, Lyle is a bit more threatening than he appears at first glance. Though henchmen rarely take advantage it, they know quite a bit about superheroes and Lyle takes full advantage of his "information network." As well as knowing a superhero's *modus operandi*, the henchmen know which supervillain hates which superhero and usually why. Lyle first determines this, then finds employment with that supervillain as a henchman, and finally waits for his opportunity to get the superhero alone.

**Appearance:** Tall and lean, Lyle Spark stands 6'3" tall, and he often wears cowboy boots to make himself seem even taller. Balding, he keeps his black hair long and unkempt, and usually sports a mustache. His watery blue eyes are intense and a little bit insane. When in Leo's, he dresses in blue jeans and tee-shirts, and can be found shooting pool (and complaining about the tables).

**Lyle Spark**

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes                    |
|-----|------|------|------|--------------------------|
| 10  | STR  | 0    | 11-  | Lift 100 kg; 2d6 HTH [1] |
| 13  | DEX  | 9    | 12-  | OCV: 5/DCV: 5            |
| 12  | CON  | 4    | 11-  |                          |
| 10  | BODY | 0    | 11-  |                          |
| 10  | INT  | 0    | 11-  | PER Roll: 13-            |
| 13  | EGO  | 6    | 12-  | ECV: 5                   |
| 13  | PRE  | 3    | 12-  | PRE Attack: 2½d6         |
| 10  | COM  | 0    | 11-  |                          |
| 4   | PD   | 2    |      | Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)      |
| 4   | ED   | 2    |      | Total: 4 ED (0 rED)      |
| 3   | SPD  | 7    |      | Phases: 4, 8, 12         |
| 5   | REC  | 2    |      |                          |
| 30  | END  | 3    |      |                          |
| 25  | STUN | 4    |      |                          |

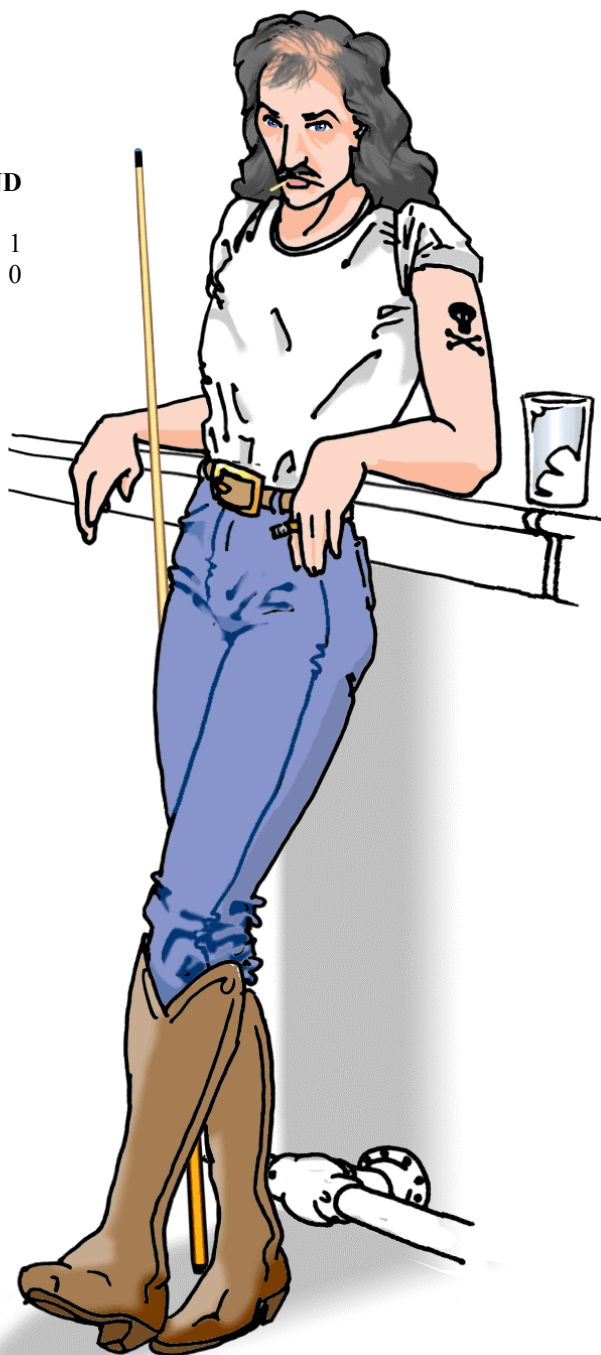
**Total Characteristics Cost: 42**

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

| Cost          | Powers                                                                                                 | END |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 4             | Switchblade: HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)                                      | 1   |
| 6             | Alert: +2 with PER Rolls                                                                               | 0   |
| <b>Perks</b>  |                                                                                                        |     |
| 3             | Reputation: Violent (among other henchmen) 11-, +3/+3d6                                                |     |
| 11            | Vehicle: '78 Corvette Convertible (see Two-Door Automobile on page 45 of <i>The Ultimate Vehicle</i> ) |     |
| <b>Skills</b> |                                                                                                        |     |
| 4             | +2 OCV with Switchblade                                                                                |     |
| 4             | +2 OCV with Pool Cue                                                                                   |     |
| 5             | Bribery 13-                                                                                            |     |
| 2             | CK: Millennium City 11-                                                                                |     |
| 3             | Combat Driving 13-                                                                                     |     |
| 5             | Concealment 13-                                                                                        |     |
| 5             | Interrogation 13-                                                                                      |     |
| 7             | KS: Superhuman World 14-                                                                               |     |
| 2             | KS: Supervillains 11-                                                                                  |     |
| 7             | Mechanics 14-                                                                                          |     |
| 3             | PS: Henchman 12-                                                                                       |     |
| 3             | Sleight Of Hand 12-                                                                                    |     |
| 5             | Streetwise 13-                                                                                         |     |
| 4             | WF: Common Melee Weapons, Small Arms                                                                   |     |

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 83****Total Cost: 125****50+ Disadvantages**

- 15 Psychological Limitation: Obsessed With Finding Father's "Killer" (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Sadistic (Common, Strong)
- 5 Reputation: violent criminal, 11- (Only MCPD)
- 15 Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Frequently, Minor)
- 25 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 125****WHAT THE BARTENDER SEZ**

Ryan, Leo's bartender, doesn't usually have much to say. He keeps his mouth shut because he knows that's how his clientele likes it. But on a quiet afternoon, early in the day when the bar is empty, he happily shares his views about the henchmen for a sawbuck or two.

**Fred:** "Fred's alright. Not a bad guy for a henchman. Dumb as a box of rocks though... someday he's going to get himself hurt."

**Albert:** "If I said it once, I said it a million times... you don't need no agent to be a henchman. This ain't Hollywood – what's the Weasel do for you? Negotiate you a better contract, is that what? That Weasel's got himself a good scam going."

**Lyle:** "Ain't saying nothing bad 'bout him, you get what I'm saying, but don't mess with Lyle. He's a couple cans short of a six-pack and if you were around in '92, best not mention it."

**Jared:** "He needs AA if you ask me. I ain't never heard of a lush so far gone he thinks bein' sober causes blackouts."

**Joe:** “Poor Joe... they really need a retirement plan for henchmen. Some kind of union maybe or something. A man just can’t live on Social Security.”

**Sonny Young:** “Don’t wanna talk about it... like watchin’ a car wreck. Boy’s gonna collide with the real world on his first job and it ain’t going to be pretty.”

**Frank Mooney:** “I ain’t one to talk bad about the dead, y’know what I’m saying... but if you hire out to the Black Harlequin, better not be telling Nighthawk anything ’bout it.”

## Other Barflies

During lulls, when supervillains are all in jail or plotting their next scheme, Leo’s can get pretty crowded. Below are few more regulars the PCs can find at the bar on most nights.

### JOE PALUKA

Every corner bar has one of these: the guy who thinks Jim Brown was the best running back ever, Wilt Chamberlain and Jerry West were the best basketball players ever (maybe Pistol Pete, but he didn’t have much of a pro career), and The Highwayman, retired for many years, was the best supervillain employer ever. In Leo’s, that guy’s name is Joe Paluka. At sixty-three, Joe’s too old to hench, but that doesn’t stop him from telling anyone who will listen what it was like in the old days. Joe can be found in Leo’s Monday through Friday between 3:00 PM and 8:00 PM (he spends the weekends with his granddaughter and her family) at the end of the bar nursing a beer. Though inclined to ramble on, he is a font of information about supervillains... so long as they were active thirty or forty years ago.



### SONNY YOUNG

Sonny Young is the new guy trying to break into the henchman profession. Most everyone in Leo’s has tried to convince Sonny not to become a full-time minion, but he continues to think it’s the glamorous life (at which Ryan just rolls his eye and wipes clean another mug). Sonny’s filled to the brim with advice from Joe Paluka (sadly most of that advice concerns supervillains who retired thirty or so years ago) and he spends most of his time trying to convince Albert the Weasel to promote him as an “up-and-comer.”



### FRANK MOONEY

Frank is dead and has been for about two years. His name still comes up quite a bit in Leo’s though... mostly in the context of “Remember what happened to Frank,” or “You don’t want to end up like Mooney.” Frank had a gambling problem and always needed money. He would work for any supervillain, and snitch to any superhero for the right price. Then he ratted out the Black Harlequin. No one is willing to discuss how Frank died; all they do is shudder and refuse to talk about it. Whenever a henchman starts to say too much to a superhero, that’s when the warnings about Mooney come out.





# Miniature HERO, Part One

by William Keyes

## Superhero Miniatures

"Phase five. Doctor Lightning, it's your turn."

"I blast Armadillo with my Shock Bolt."

"You can't see him. He's in the alleyway next to a building."

"Which building? The bank or the diner?"

"The bank."

"Then I should be able to see him, since I'm across the street."

"You'd have to move about 30 meters up the road to get a good shot at him."

"OK, never mind. Can I see Wyvern?"

Does this exchange sound familiar?

Superhero battles are complex things that range from one end of a city block to the other. Heroes throw cars at their enemies, villains rip telephone poles out of the ground to use as clubs, snipers hide on rooftops, and innocent bystanders always seem to get in the way. How can a GM – much less his players – keep everything straight?

Using miniatures to represent your superhero battles is the perfect way to keep track of where each hero, villain, and NPC stands. It also helps gamers to devise tactics, plan strategies, and win battles. Putting miniatures on the tabletop allows players and GMs to visualize the position of characters, enemies, bystanders, and local features like buildings, trees, fire hydrants, and vehicles. Not only that, but miniatures also make it much easier to measure ranged attacks, Explosions, and Areas Of Effect. They make your battlefields less static, your scenarios more vivid, and your super-brawls much more exciting.

However, it has traditionally been difficult to find miniatures for superhero games. Finding models for fantasy and science fiction games has always been relatively painless – wizards, warriors, elves, dwarves, and barbarians are readily available. But spandex-clad superheroes? Good luck!

Luckily, more and more companies are coming out with miniatures lines specifically designed for the superhero genre, making it much easier to find a great model for Doctor Lightning or Justice Girl. But what if, even after searching through a dozen on-line catalogs, you still can't find the right figure?

Sometimes, no matter how hard you look, you can't find the perfect model. Superheroes are a notoriously eclectic bunch. Two heroes with the same powers may look completely different – one may wear the classic spandex, boots, mask, and cape of the Golden Age while another might dress in an Iron Age leather duster and shoulder pads. No miniatures company can anticipate the needs

of every player, and that's only to be expected. But there is a way around this problem – find a miniature that's close to your ideal, and then convert and paint it to fit.

We'll discuss conversion and painting methods in a later article, but for now let's talk about tracking down that perfect (or nearly perfect) figure. There are a lot of companies that make miniatures these days. Some of them you know – you've seen them on the shelves of your favorite hobby store. But there are many others that you may not yet be aware of, and sometimes the best figures come from the most obscure places.

One thing to keep in mind while you're looking for your figure is the scale of the model. From the earliest days of fantasy miniature gaming the standard scale has been 25mm, but in the last decade or so that has changed. Most of the largest miniatures companies have moved to a new scale, called "Heroic 25mm." Heroic scale figures actually use a 28-30mm standard. Three to five millimeters don't sound like much, but compare two differently-scaled miniatures side-by-side and you will notice a considerable disparity. I've always found it looks best on a tabletop if all the major characters are the same scale.

## Miniatures Companies

Many of the traditional superhero character staples like archers, knights-in-shining-armor, and sci-fi powersuits are readily available from a variety of companies, and these can be found with little trouble at your neighborhood gaming store.

Are you playing Darkshadow the Ninja or Miyomoto the Samurai? Look for the Clan War™ line of figures from AEG© ([www.clanwar.com](http://www.clanwar.com)). Since Clan War is a spin-off of the very popular Legend of the Five Rings™ game, this is an easy line of miniatures to find. These 28mm figures are very well sculpted and look great on the table. The only problem is they generally come in packs of up to five figures, so to get the one you want you may have to buy a small batch. I've never found this to be a problem, since it's not too hard to find someone willing to trade for the ones you don't want – and if all else fails, you can always use the extra models to create other characters or to do conversions!

What if you're playing a fantasy-type superhero like a sorceress, an archer, or a sword-wielding barbarian? Check out Reaper Miniatures© Dark Heaven™ and Warlord™ 28mm figures ([www.reapermini.com](http://www.reapermini.com)). Reaper is the biggest miniatures company on the market right now, and their catalog of figures is mind-boggling – both in terms of the number of miniatures available and in the quality of those miniatures.

Powersuit players might have some luck looking through Games Workshop's© ([www.games-workshop.com](http://www.games-workshop.com)) 28mm Warhammer 40k™ line, where you'll find a variety of science fiction figures in a bewildering array of styles. Note that Games Workshop figures are beautifully sculpted, but they often come with some assembly required – which makes it easy to customize your own hero but can be frustrating if you were hoping for a figure you could just take out of the package, set on the table, and play.

And what about the spandex-and-cape wearing crowd? Luckily for *Champions* gamers, several companies have in recent years come out with figures specifically designed for the superhero genre. Most ubiquitous are WizKids'© ([www.wizkidsgames.com/heroclix](http://www.wizkidsgames.com/heroclix)) HeroClix™ miniatures, which are inexpensive and very easy to find. HeroClix are a line of plastic 28mm figures that feature many of the great Marvel and DC heroes and villains, and come pre-painted. Also take a look at WizKids' Mage Knight™ figures – a lot of them might fit your superheroes nicely.

The only real problem with HeroClix is they come in sealed packages of four to eight random characters, so there's no way of knowing which figures you're going to get. However, with the game growing so popular it shouldn't be difficult to find other players who would be willing to trade you for specific models. Some stores might be willing to break open boxes for you or have individual figures for sale, but don't count on it – your best bet to find a specific figure is to find someone in your local HeroClix league who'd be willing to swap, or to look on the eBay ([www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)) online auction site.

If you'd like to try your hand at painting your own hero, you can remove HeroClix paint (or almost any paint, for that matter) by dipping the figure in Pine-Sol for about 10 minutes, and then scrubbing vigorously with an old toothbrush and some soap and water. Repeat if necessary. A word of caution: don't soak your figure for too long, or it will melt! HeroClix models are also very easy to modify; before you start to work on it just leave the figure in the freezer overnight.

West Wind Productions© has put out a line of 28mm superhero models called SuperFigs™ ([www.superfigs.net](http://www.superfigs.net)). Though many of the figures are specific to their own campaign setting, there are a number of great looking spandex-wearing heroes available, with more on the way. Dark Reaper is producing a line of 28mm superheroes for the Silver Age Sentinels© game ([www.guardiansorder.com](http://www.guardiansorder.com)). Like the SuperFigs line, these figures are specific to the Guardians of Order universe, but they are generic enough that a good paint job will turn them into your own favorite characters.

There is a line of 25mm superheroes called Living Legends™ from Lance & Laser© ([www.lance-and-laser.com/livinglegends/index.html](http://www.lance-and-laser.com/livinglegends/index.html)). These figures were originally from the old Villains and Vigilantes™ game, and are quite nice – though they are much smaller than most current figures.

Still not finding the miniature you're looking for? There are many lines that are particularly well suited to the superhero genre, even though they are not specifically designed for supers. Some of these are more obscure companies (at least in the US), and you might have to pester your local retailer to order them for you, or you can go online to seek them out.

I-KORE's© ([www.i-kore.com](http://www.i-kore.com)) 28mm Void™ line, designed for their science fiction skirmish game, is great for superheroes – especially powered armor and gun-toting vigilante types. I particularly like their Archangels, and have used them for my own superheroines and villainesses with minimal conversion. I-KORE's Celtos™ line has some cool figures as well (though perhaps not quite as suitable for “classic” superheroes).

If you're playing an Egyptian hero (or villain – Anubis, anyone?), check out the 28mm Wargods of Aegyptus™ line at Crocodile Games© ([www.crocodilegames.com](http://www.crocodilegames.com)). If you're looking for something a little more in the *Horror Hero* vein, try West Wind Productions' ([www.westwindproductions.co.uk/gothichorror/figures.asp](http://www.westwindproductions.co.uk/gothichorror/figures.asp)) Vampire Wars™ 28mm line. Do you play in a *Golden Age Champions* game full of private eyes, damsels in distress, and villainous Nazis? Take a peek at Pulp Figures© 28mm miniatures ([www.pulpfigures.com](http://www.pulpfigures.com)).

Shadowforge Miniatures© ([www.shadowforge.com.au](http://www.shadowforge.com.au)) specializes in female models and has a wide variety of fantasy, sci-fi, fantasy football, and even some female monsters! Anime fans might get a kick out of their “big-eyes manga” line, which might be suitable for a comedic *Champions* campaign. Shadowforge Miniatures are 28mm in scale, and one other thing to mention is many of the models are intended for mature gamers, so be prepared if you visit their site.

Need figures for your *Dark Champions* game? The Foundry's© Street Violence™ ([www.wargamesfoundry.com](http://www.wargamesfoundry.com)) line is made up of gangsters, SWAT teams, and corrupt corps. Along the same lines, Copplestone Castings© ([www.gisby.org/copplestone.htm](http://www.gisby.org/copplestone.htm)) has a line called Future Wars™, any number of which can be used for *Cyber Hero* and *Dark Champions*. Excalibur Miniatures© ([www.excaliburminiaturen.de](http://www.excaliburminiaturen.de)), a German company, puts out a number of 28mm figures that would fit well in a *Dark Champions* game. The 28mm miniatures 1999™ line at Cell Entertainment© ([www.cellentertainment.se](http://www.cellentertainment.se)) might make some creepy *Dark Champions* models as well. These Websites and some of the



models aren't always entirely kid-friendly, so view with discretion.

If you're looking for reporters, SWAT teams, mechanics, rioters, children, fire fighters, or mobsters, check out Ground Zero Games© ([www.gtms.co.uk/gzgstore](http://www.gtms.co.uk/gzgstore)) and Eureka Miniatures© ([www.eurekamin.com.au](http://www.eurekamin.com.au)) Street Level Figures. These models are only 25mm, but superheroes have always towered over mere mortals so in this case the scale difference shouldn't matter as much.

Finally, for those gamers on a budget, Steve Jackson Games© ([www.sjgames.com](http://www.sjgames.com)) once put out a supplement called Cardboard Heroes™ for superhero games. Modern and Fantasy Cardboard Heroes are still available and are quite a good deal – each package comes with over 400 characters, all for under \$25. Unfortunately, there is no word on whether or not the superhero line will ever come back into production.

“OK, all those small white six-sided dice are the VIPER agents. The big red 20-sided die is Pulsar, and the smaller blue 12-sided is Lady Blue. Those d4s are all innocent bystanders. Doctor Lightning, which one are you?”

“I'm the yellow d6, and Harlequin's Kiss is the speckled d20 next to me.”

“That's not right. Harlequin's Kiss is the gray d20. The speckled d20 is Emerald Admiral.”

“No, Emerald Admiral is the green d4.”

“You can't use a four-sided die for your character. All the civilians are d4s!”

“Well, I guess I'll have to use this orange d12, instead.”

“All right, who is the speckled d20 supposed to be then?”

## Conclusion

Using miniatures to represent your heroes is a great way to avoid this kind of discussion, and the perfect way to keep your complicated superhero battles under control. No more shooting at a bystander because you thought he was a VIPER agent, no more mistaking Howler for Defender, no more getting blasted in the back because you weren't sure if that d6 was a villain or just a die someone dropped on the table.

While finding miniatures to represent your character can sometimes be challenging, when you see how much more exciting they make your battlefields, you'll know they are well worth the effort of tracking down. And these days, with the wide variety of miniatures lines available and with the magic of the Internet, it is becoming easier and easier to find the perfect figure.

And what if you find a figure that is almost – but not quite – perfect? In the next article, I'll discuss ways of turning that “almost works” into a “perfect fit!”



## EDITOR'S NOTE

The contents of this article are *not* "official" Champions Universe material, and as such have no effect on the events and characters depicted in published Hero Games *Champions* products.

## IT'S NOT A BLIMP?

The Bayside Blimp is actually a rigid dirigible, not a blimp. Lang encourages the *Queen*'s misnomer to keep people from associating it with the *Hindenburg*.

All airships (whether blimp or dirigible) are basically giant, steerable balloons. However, the blimps you see flying over sporting events are very different from the rigid dirigibles that crossed oceans and continents in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

First, rigid dirigibles were much larger, some measuring over 245 meters long and 40 meters in diameter. The Goodyear Blimp is only a fourth that size.

Blimps have only one or two gas-filled bladders

# The Bayside Blimp by Ray Lowery

*"I figured since it looks regal, most people would stick with calling it 'The Queen of the Bay.' But 'QB' or 'The Queen' work for me, too.... Heck, as long as you buy a ticket, you can call it 'The Bayside Blimp' as far as I'm concerned."*

Samuel Lang  
Online interview, 1/25/02

## History

Nobody knows where Samuel Lang came from or what he did before arriving in Vibora Bay in 1980. The soft-spoken man simply showed up at City Hall one day and announced his plan to build an airship to fly over the city. It would be part casino and part tourist attraction, a unique city icon like the St. Louis Arch or Seattle's Space Needle.

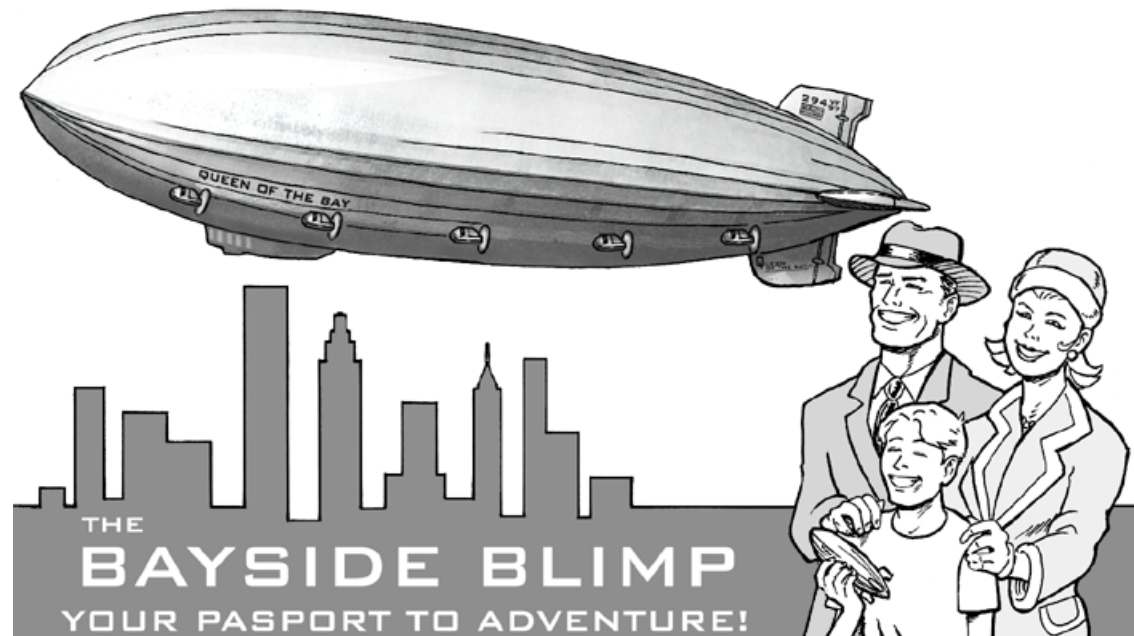
City officials were initially hesitant to support his idea, but Lang eventually won them over and received a permit to operate a flying casino. He formed Queen City Amusements with other businessmen (including key members of the city council) to oversee the airship's construction and operation. Arranging funds to build the airship was difficult – the final price tag was over \$350 million – but eventually investors were found and construction begun.

Unfortunately, the airship was not built without incident. There were several accidents during construction, including a scaffolding collapse that killed two workers. Several crewmen claim to have seen the workers' ghosts walking the catwalks, but they're strongly discouraged from talking about such things.

Fearing the *Hindenburg* disaster would taint his airship, Lang took great pains to show its safety. Even though the airship used inert helium instead of flammable hydrogen, Lang made sure the outer coating included flame-resistant ballistic cloth. (In fact, he held a press conference prior to the airship's launching where reporters watched men in jetpacks attack the airship with flame-throwers and submachine guns, all with little effect.) The *Queen of the Bay* was completed in time to fly over the city during the tercentennial celebration.

Lang's vision of a city icon was on target. People were entranced by the airship, often stopping to watch it float grandly overhead. Going aboard, they marveled at the luxurious appointments and spacious passenger areas. Tourists gladly paid to take aerial tours of the city, eat in the airship's four-star restaurant, and gamble in her casino. Several people have even gotten married on the *Queen of the Bay* – an increasingly popular status symbol among the city's elite.

And despite the airship's given name, almost everybody refers to her affectionately as the Bayside Blimp.



artwork by Blaine Taggart  
cartography by Dave Mattingly

**Queen of the Bay****Val Char Cost Notes**

|    |      |     |                                     |
|----|------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| 19 | Size | 95  | 126"x21"; 156 tons; -21 KB; -14 DCV |
| 90 | STR  | -15 | Lift 64 kilotons; 18d6 HTH [0]      |
| 5  | DEX  | -15 | OCV: 2/DCV: 2                       |
| 31 | BODY | 0   |                                     |
| 6  | DEF  | 12  |                                     |
| 1  | SPD  | -5  | Phases: 7                           |

**Total Characteristics Cost: 72**

**Movement:** Ground: 0"/0"  
Leaping: 4"/256"

**Abilities & Equipment**

| Cost | Powers                                                                                                                                                                                       | END |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 3    | <i>Reinforced Gondola:</i> Armor (3 PD/3 ED); Partial Coverage (36 hexes; -2)                                                                                                                | 0   |
| 30   | <i>Fire-Resistant Outer Skin:</i> Energy Damage Reduction, 75% Resistant; Only vs. Fire (-1/2), Only From External Attacks (-1/2)                                                            | 0   |
| 20   | <i>Gas Cells:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, 50% Resistant; Partial Coverage (2,000 Hexes; -1/4), Activation 15- (-1/4)                                                                      | 0   |
| 8    | <i>Helium Gas:</i> 2" Flight, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2), Persistent (+1/2), 4 Levels of Difficult to Dispel (+1), Only to Provide Lift (-1/2)                                          | 0   |
| 13   | <i>Engines:</i> 4" Flight, 64x Noncombat; 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily-obtained fuel; 3 Days; -0), OIF Bulky (-1), Limited Maneuverability (Only 1 turn per phase at combat speed; -1/2) | 0   |
| -12  | <i>Can Only Fly:</i> Ground Movement -6" (0" total)                                                                                                                                          | 0   |
| -2   | <i>Can Only Fly:</i> Swimming -2" (0" total)                                                                                                                                                 | 0   |
| 4    | <i>Heating &amp; Air Conditioning:</i> Life Support (Safe Environments: Intense Heat, Intense Cold)                                                                                          | *   |
| 8    | <i>Luxurious Appointments:</i> 16 COM                                                                                                                                                        | 0   |
| 2    | <i>Low-Light Video System:</i> Nightvision; OIF Bulky (-1)                                                                                                                                   | *   |
| 6    | <i>Communications System:</i> High Range Radio Perception; OIF Bulky (-1)                                                                                                                    | *   |
| 3    | <i>Morse Code Radio:</i> Radio Perception/Transmission; OIF Bulky (-1), Can Only Transmit and Receive Signals on a Single Frequency (-1)                                                     | *   |
| 1    | <i>Compass:</i> Bump of Direction; OIF Bulky (-1)                                                                                                                                            | 0   |
| 5    | <i>GPS:</i> Detect Exact Position on Earth 16- (Radio Group); OIF Bulky (-1)                                                                                                                 | *   |
| 5    | <i>Secure Data Transmission:</i> Variable Power Pool, 4 Base + 2 Control Cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only One "Language" At A Time (Used for ATM Transfers, -1)                                    | *   |
| 13   | <i>Navigational Radar:</i> Radar (Radio Group), Telescopic (+4 versus Range),                                                                                                                |     |

|    |                                                                                                                                                               |   |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
|    | Increased Arc of Perception (360°); OIF Bulky (-1)                                                                                                            | * |
| 30 | <i>Internal Cameras:</i> Clairsentience (Sight Group), 32x Range (4,000"), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2); IIF Bulky (-3/4), Partial Coverage (1,250"; -1/2) | * |
| 9  | <i>Infirmiry:</i> Paramedics 12-                                                                                                                              | 0 |
| 3  | <i>Restaurant:</i> Life Support (Diminished Eating: no need to eat); 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily obtained; 1 Day; -0)                                    | 0 |
| 2  | <i>Airdock Docking Arm:</i> Extra Limb (1); OAF Bulky (-1 1/2)                                                                                                | 0 |
| 9  | <i>Airdock Docking Arm:</i> 4" Stretching, 0 END (+1/2); OAF Bulky (-1 1/2), Always Direct (-1/4), No Velocity Damage (-1/4), Gradual Effect (1 minute; -1/2) | * |

\* These powers are dependent upon electricity. Even though they don't cost END or were bought to 0 END, they have a -0 Limitation that they don't work if power is cut off (either intentionally or if the generator is damaged).

**Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 160****Total Vehicle Cost: 232****0+ Disadvantages**

|    |                                                                                 |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 15 | <i>Giant Airship:</i> Distinctive Features (Not Concealable, Recognizable)      |
| 15 | <i>Closely Monitored:</i> Hunted: FAA 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)               |
| 15 | <i>Publicly Known:</i> Social Limitation: Public Identity (Frequent, Major)     |
| 15 | <i>Structural Weakness:</i> Susceptibility (2d6/Turn) in intense gravity fields |

**Total Disadvantage Points: 60****Total Cost: 172/5 = 34****Elevator**

Travels 3" up or down at SPD 2. See *The Ultimate Vehicle*, p. 167 for details.

**Total Cost: 1**

held in a polyester "shell" coated with rubber or weatherproofing chemicals. The only rigid parts of a blimp are the gondola and engines. Rigid dirigibles, on the other hand, have frameworks of girders to hold over a dozen lighter-than-air gas cells. An outer skin attached to this frame provides an aerodynamic shape.

Dirigible frames allow them to carry much more (tons of cargo and over a hundred passengers and crew, versus a ton of equipment and only 6-10 passengers for most blimps). Two 1930's US Navy dirigibles, the *USS Akron* and *USS Macon*, even carried specially equipped planes that could be launched and retrieved in midair – inspiring the *Queen of the Bay's* airdock.

## DIRIGIBLE TERMINOLOGY

*Forward:* Toward the front of the airship

*Aft:* Toward the rear of the airship

*Port:* To the left (as facing forward)

*Starboard:* To the right (as facing forward)

*Gondola:* The control cabin on the underside of the airship

*Gas Cells:* Giant balloon-like bags holding helium or hydrogen

*Rings:* The circular girders in the dirigible's framework

*Catwalks:* Narrow walkways along the airship sides and between gas cells

## Nav Comp "Mary"

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes         |
|-----|------|------|------|---------------|
| 15  | INT  | 5    | 12-  | PER Roll: 12- |
| 10  | DEX  | 0    | 11-  | OCV: 3/DCV: 3 |
| 2   | SPD  | 0    |      | Phases: 6, 12 |

### Total Characteristics Cost: 5

#### Cost Skills & Talents

- 4 Navigation (air) 13-
- 5 System Operation 13-
- 5 CK: Vibora Bay 14-
- 3 KS: Archived News 12-
- 4 KS: Current News 13-
- 3 *Digital Clock:* Absolute Time Sense
- 5 *Optical Disc Storage:* Eidetic Memory
- 3 *Calculations:* Lightning Calculator

#### Cost Programs

- 1 Plot Distance and Travel Time Between Locations
- 1 Travel from Point A to Point B at Specified Altitude
- 1 Monitor Internal Cameras, Report Anomalies
- 1 Monitor Radar System, Report Anomalies
- 1 Search Reference Material for Information
- 1 Transmit Emergency Call
- 1 Launch Plane from Airdock
- 1 Retrieve Plane into Airdock

### Total Skills Cost: 40

### Total Computer Cost: 45

#### 0+ Disadvantages

- 15 *Electricity-Dependent:* Physical Limitation: Shuts Down Without Power (Infrequent, Fully)
- 15 *Publicly Known:* Social Limitation: Public Identity (Frequent, Major)

### Total Disadvantage Points: 30

### Total Cost: 15/5 = 3

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Size and Partial Coverage values are based on the Expanded Vehicle Size Table from *The Ultimate Vehicle* (p. 9).

The Physical Damage Reduction simulates the fact that bullets or knives cause relatively small holes in huge gas cells, doing minimal damage overall. The Activation Roll determines if an attack hits a girder instead of a gas cell.

Partial Coverage on Internal Cameras is used to simulate blind spots and areas without camera coverage. If you prefer, use an Activation Roll of 14- instead (it has the same Limitation value). This could also be used for Skill Versus Skill contests to avoid being seen on camera.

Internal lighting and external navigation lights are being treated as Everyvehicle Equipment.

## Dimensions and Major Features

The Bayside Blimp is 252 meters long and 42 meters in diameter, making it the largest vehicle ever flown. The control gondola on the bottom of the airship increases the total height to 45 meters. Fifteen gas cells hold a combined 228,000 cubic meters of helium, lifting the airship's 156 metric tons with an additional 58 tons of passengers and supplies (fuel, water, and food).

The *Queen*'s maximum capacity is 275 people. She normally carries 80 crew and 150+ passengers.

Hatch doors on the underside of the airship (about 75 meters aft of the gondola) open to the airdock where specially modified airplanes can come and go from the *Queen of the Bay* while she's aloft. Retractable docking clamps are operated manually or by computer to launch and recover planes.

The airship's frame is made of carbon fiber, both stronger and lighter than the wood or aluminum structures of early dirigibles. The fire- and bullet-proof outer skin attached to this frame can support up to 100 kg on any given spot. Eight vents along the top of the airship can be used to release helium if the airship needs to make an emergency landing.

The tail fins are strictly for aesthetic value; the *Queen* relies on 20 hull-mounted ducted fans (ten per side) to maneuver, accelerate, and decelerate. These engines can rotate 360°, giving the Bayside Blimp more maneuverability than older-style dirigibles.

## TICKETS & TOURS

The Bayside Blimp's official home is outside Vibora Bay where a huge hangar is nearing completion. However, she usually lands at a special facility on the waterfront five times daily (at around 7:00 a.m., 11:45 a.m., 4:30 p.m., 9:15 p.m., and 2:00 a.m.). Passengers board while the airship is re-supplied with fuel, fresh water, and food before taking off again. (This usually takes about 45 minutes.)

While the airship is aloft, passengers may also come and go via airplane (with a large additional charge).

Passengers usually buy tickets for four-hour aerial day and evening tours of the Queen City. They can also purchase overnight or 24-hour tickets, both of which include a small two-person stateroom (or, for a higher fee, a first-class stateroom).

Generally speaking, day tours are tourist- and family-oriented. Passengers wander on their own or take guided tours of the airship that include brief forays onto the crew catwalks (among the gas cells) and into the airdock's observation room.

Evening and overnight passengers are primarily VIPs and couples, most enjoying dinner and dancing to a live band. The open-air

## DIGITAL HERO #12

promenade is usually pretty crowded at sunset, after which many passengers head either to the casino or to La Cour Royale for dancing.

### Airship Layout

In addition to the gondola, there are three passenger-access levels on the *Queen of the Bay*. From bottom to top, decks are officially labeled A, B, and C but more commonly known by their nicknames: Entry, Promenade, and Casino.

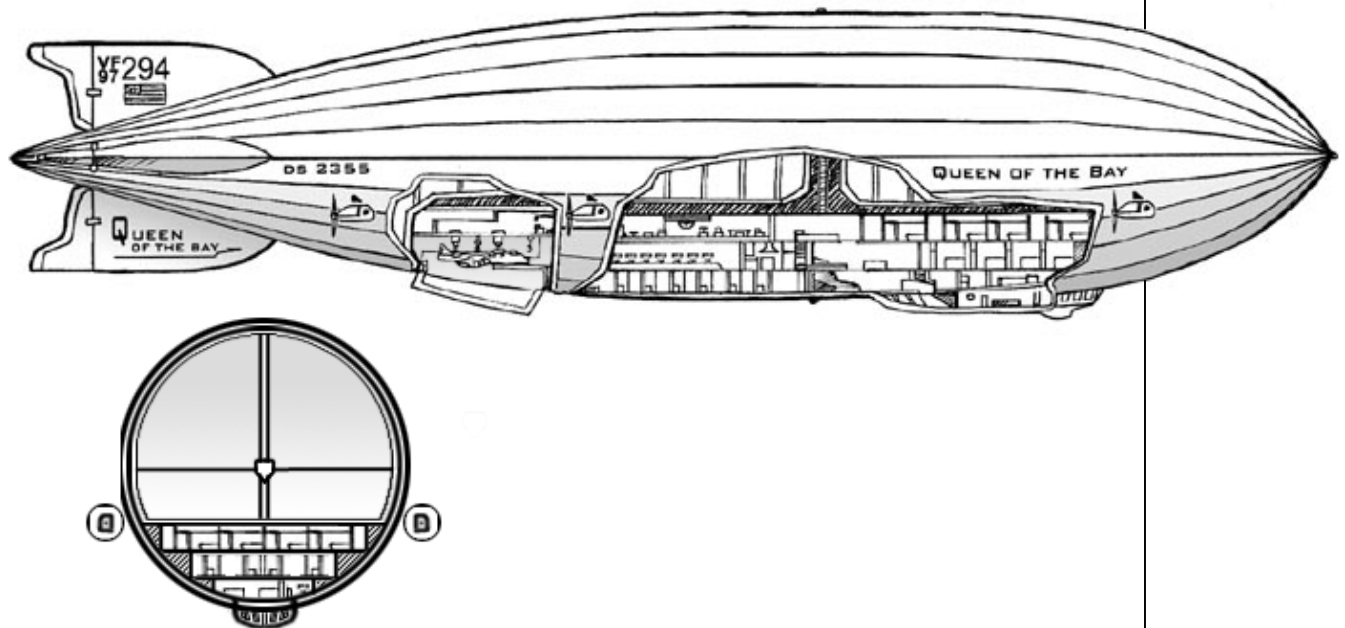
Crew-only catwalks and ladders among the gas cells are labeled with their deck, gas cell number, and either “Mid,” “Port,” or “Starboard,” depending upon whether they’re on the airship’s middle, left, or right side. Areas above C-Deck’s level are given a virtual deck designation, D through N, every 3 meters. Thus, a catwalk 16 meters up running along the right side of the tenth gas cell is considered E-10 Starboard.

### GONDOLA

Passengers enter the airship through doors on each side of the gondola. Some passengers stay here to view takeoff through the large windows, but savvy passengers go to the open-air walkways on the Promenade Deck.

A small elevator and two staircases lead up to the rest of the ship, while a door forward leads to the bridge. This door can be locked and barred from the inside (giving it 9 DEF and 9 BODY).

Three crewmembers are always on duty on the bridge, controlling the airship with help from a state-of-the-art navigational computer (nicknamed “Mary” by the crew). An alcove houses the computer and communications equipment, and there is a small lavatory for the bridge crew.



**A-DECK (ENTRY DECK)**

The most well-known feature of this deck is the burgundy-carpeted grand staircase going up to the Promenade Deck. Many people, especially evening passengers in formal wear, like to pose on the staircase for souvenir photographs.

A gift shop, purser's office, infirmary, and a pair of bathrooms are located forward of the elevator and stairs down to the gondola. Coach-class staterooms are found aft of the grand staircase, along with a pair of walk-in coat closets.

The gift shop has typical postcards, shirts, mugs, and other souvenirs for sale. (There is a larger gift shop at the waterfront landing site.) A little-used but interesting feature is the ability to send a telegram from the gift shop. A retro-tech feature that never really caught on, this is of note because it operates on its own Morse code radio, completely separate from the rest of the airship's communications.

The infirmary is not usually staffed, but many crewmembers are trained in advanced first aid and can help in an emergency. The room has a few beds separated by curtains, a sink, and cabinets containing first-aid supplies such as bandages, splints, and over-the-counter pharmaceuticals (including a large supply of airsickness medicine). A locked metal cabinet contains stronger painkillers and some surgical supplies.

The purser's office is usually staffed by a crewmember to give directions and answer questions. A small safe is available for valuables, but it is not used very often.

Each coach stateroom has a pair of pull-down single beds (one above the other), a fold-down writing desk, and a small bathroom. An antique-style radio is mounted in the wall near the door, with a wide selection of in-flight music. These rooms are somewhat cramped (a little over three meters long and two wide), but most passengers don't spend much time in them.

Doors aft open to the cargo hold and catwalks leading to the airdock; these doors are normally locked. A door in the infirmary opens onto the forward catwalks.

**B-DECK (PROMENADE DECK)**

The middle level has several key features. First are the open-air promenades (on either side of the airship) from which this deck got its nickname. They are frequently packed with passengers, especially during takeoff and landing.

Inside, a balcony overlooks the grand staircase, with hallways going forward (to VIP and first-class staterooms) and aft (to the airship's restaurant). A large crystal chandelier adds plenty of light to the entry area. Spiral staircases and the elevator lead up to the Casino Deck; a pair of restrooms is aft of the grand staircase.

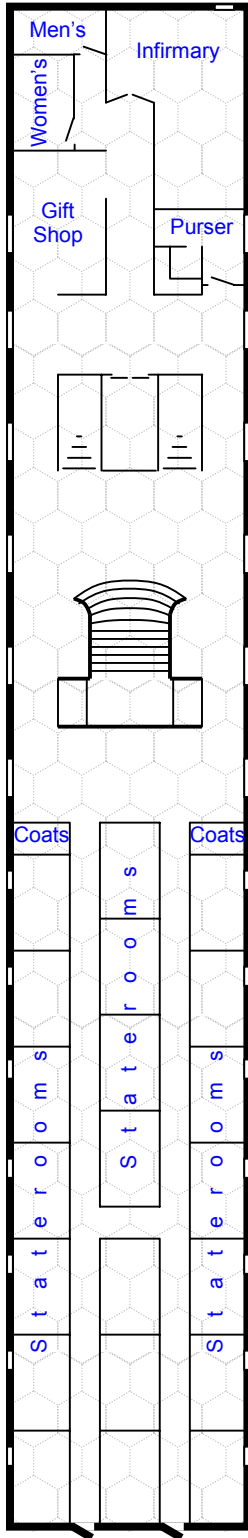
Each first-class stateroom has a queen-size bed, dresser, and small bathroom with shower. Eight VIP staterooms also have private balconies. Ornate woodwork and polished brass fixtures add old-world charm; the Promenade Deck staterooms look similar to first-class cabins on transatlantic ships from the early 1900s.

The four-star restaurant La Cour Royale (The Royal Court) occupies a large split-level space at the Promenade Deck's aft end. Both sides of the dining area have large windows providing breathtaking views of the city below. La Cour is very popular for anniversary and other celebratory dinners.

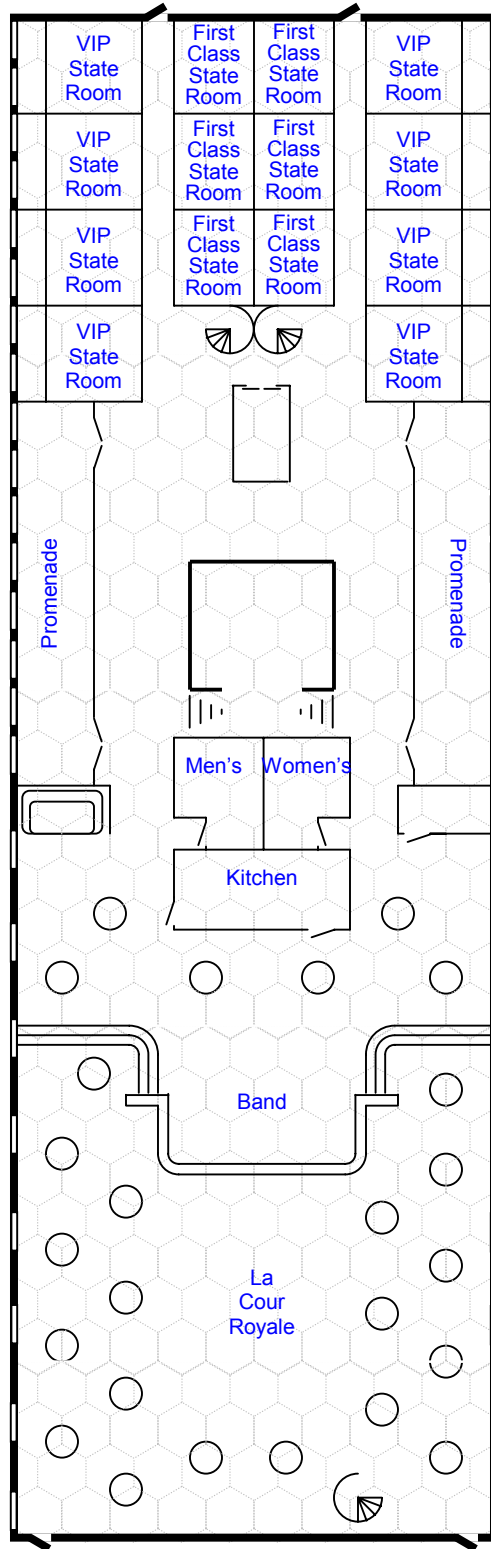
During the day, tables and chairs fill both levels. Passengers often end up here to enjoy coffee or tea and enjoy the view. In the evening, part of the lower level is cleared for dancing. Formally dressed waiters serve fine cuisine while a string quartet or small band plays on the platform over the dance floor.



### A Deck



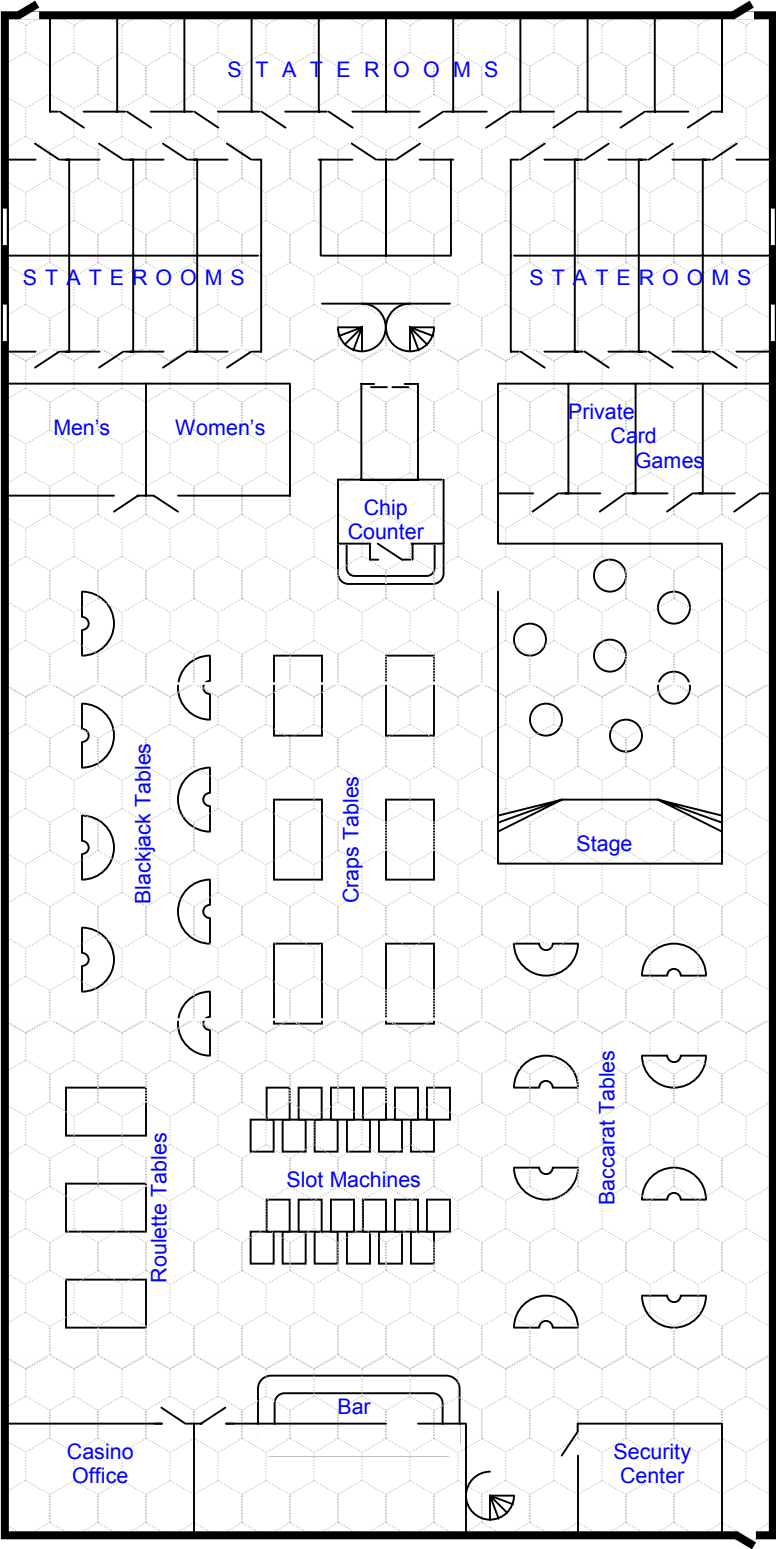
### B Deck



### Gondola



C Deck



### C-DECK (CASINO DECK)

The forward area of the Casino Deck is taken up by coach-class staterooms, as well as restrooms, the elevator, and two spiral staircases down to the Promenade Deck. Locked doors forward lead into the gas cells.

The largest single area on the airship, the Queen City Casino is a scaled-down version of a regular casino. Like other casinos, it has no windows but is brightly lit and noisy. It has typical tables for blackjack, baccarat, craps, roulette, and other games of chance, with slot machines located near the bar. A side hallway leads to rooms for private high-stakes card games.

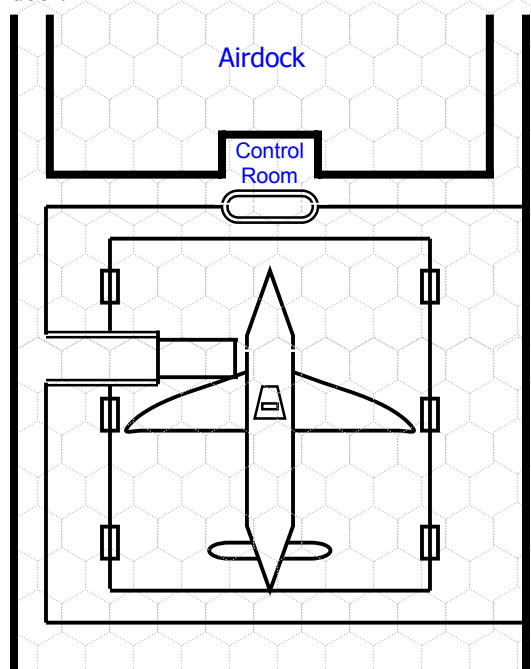
Casino employees monitor cameras from the security center and patrol the casino. Anybody caught cheating is taken aside and quietly asked to leave the casino. If they refuse, they are held in the casino office until they can be escorted from the airship after landing.

There are shows every evening in a cozy (cramped) lounge that seats several dozen. Most performers are local singers or comedians, though QCA occasionally books famous headliners.

The casino doesn't keep much cash on hand, no more than \$50,000 at any given time. Players can electronically transfer funds from their bank accounts to purchase chips. When they leave, passengers are encouraged to cash in their chips for cashier's checks or direct transfers to bank accounts.

### AIRDOCK

An unusual feature of the Bayside Blimp is the airdock, which can hold one airplane. This room is 10 meters tall and has an adjoining observation and control room. The upper third of the airdock contains machinery to raise and lower the airplane. A retractable walkway extends to the plane's side door.



Queen City Amusements owns three small aircraft modified with special rooftop latches for docking with the airship. Each aircraft seats six (including the pilot) and has a small cargo space for luggage. Pairs of seats can be removed for cargo or stretchers to carry injured people.

Both docking and dropping require assistance from either the airship's computer or the airdock control room. In low winds, it takes three minutes to open the hatch doors, lower the airplane, get the plane's engines up to speed, and then release the latches to drop from the airship. This requires a straight Combat Piloting roll. If somebody were to release the docking latches without lowering the airplane out of the airdock, they must roll Combat Piloting at -4 to avoid smashing into the airdock walls on the way down. In any case, failure means loss of control and/or damage to the airplane.

In moderate weather, it takes 5 minutes or more for an airplane to latch on securely and get raised into the airdock. This assumes the *Queen's* crew is cooperating and heading into the wind at full speed. Docking in these conditions requires Combat Piloting at -1 per attempt, or -4 without the crew's knowledge or cooperation. Taking longer than five minutes can reduce or eliminate these penalties, while rushing makes the roll even more difficult (double the penalty). The airdock's doors can be opened well beforehand, but it takes several minutes for secondary latches to engage and raise the airplane. Failing the Combat Piloting roll can mean the airplane simply misses the docking latch, or it may cause damage to both airplane and airship.

In high winds, it takes twice as long to drop safely, with all Skill Roll penalties doubled. Aerial docking in high winds is almost impossible (-4 or more to Combat Piloting, with other Skill Roll penalties doubled).

### NON-PASSENGER AREAS

Access hatches and locked doors on each level (except the Gondola) lead into the bulk of the airship. Crewmembers can access the helium gas cells, engines, and even the top of the airship via a maze of narrow catwalks and ladders. Despite location signs like "D-3 Port," it is easy to get lost in this area. Relatively few crewmembers walk the catwalks; you could wander for an hour without encountering anyone, though you might show up on security cameras.

There are a few crew-only rooms along the underside of the airship. These include a bunkroom, a private cabin for the captain, a generator room, and cargo holds. (In case the casino idea failed, Lang planned to convert the *Queen* into a freight carrier.)

Also scattered about are water ballast tanks, waste storage tanks, and fuel tanks for the engines. Pipes and automated pumps on the undersides of catwalks help maintain level flight by moving water ballast around the ship.

### GOLD CHIPS

The Queen City Casino has a unique feature for big winners: solid gold chips, redeemable at the casino for \$1,000 each. Their value in gold alone is \$500. However, some consider them good luck charms and keep one or two instead of cashing them in.

## Key Personnel

### EDWARD ROSS

The captain of the *Queen of the Bay* is a warm and outgoing person, and a consummate professional in a crisis. Captain Ross is a large, barrel-chested man with a full beard. He rarely wears casual clothing, appearing most often in his ship's uniform (an impressive navy blue outfit with gold piping and buttons).

One thing he doesn't advertise is that he is a grandson of Lt. Cmdr. Herbert Wiley, who survived the crash of the *USS Akron* in 1933 and then captained the *USS Macon* until its loss two years later. Much of his practical knowledge of airships comes from stories his mother and grandfather told.

Captain Ross has a private cabin aft of the passenger areas and practically lives on the airship.

#### Captain Edward Ross

|    |      |    |     |    |      |
|----|------|----|-----|----|------|
| 13 | STR  | 10 | DEX | 12 | CON  |
| 11 | BODY | 13 | INT | 10 | EGO  |
| 14 | PRE  | 12 | COM |    |      |
| 3  | PD   | 2  | ED  | 2  | SPD  |
| 5  | REC  | 24 | END | 24 | STUN |

**Abilities:** Bump of Direction; Environmental Movement (no penalty on ladders and narrow catwalks); Fringe Benefit: License to Pilot Airships; +1 with Hand-to-Hand Combat; +1 Sight PER; CK: Vibora Bay 12-; Combat Piloting 12-; High Society 12-; KS: Airships 13-; KS: Bayside Blimp 14-; Navigation (Air) 12-; Persuasion 12-; PS: Airship Pilot 13-; TF: Balloons & Zeppelins; TF: Small Planes.

**25+ Disadvantages:** Age: 40+ (real age 53); Hunted: FAA 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching); Psychological Limitation: Concern for airship, crew and passengers (Common, Strong).



### CHARLES FERRETTI

Ferretti is the chief of security aboard the Bayside Blimp. He is responsible for security throughout the airship, but he spends most of his time in the casino. He is a former police officer and PRIMUS recruit (he washed out of training after fighting with other recruits), so he is well versed in both combat and investigation.

Ferretti's Armani suits and patent-leather shoes don't distract anybody from his rodent-like looks or irritable disposition. Behind his back, many of the crew put the emphasis on the first syllable of his name instead of the second – a fact of which he is painfully aware. Despite this, Ferretti is dedicated to his job. He will put his life on the line to protect the airship and her passengers. He's actually a pretty good guy, but few people get to know him well enough to discover this.

#### Charles Ferretti

|    |      |    |     |    |      |
|----|------|----|-----|----|------|
| 15 | STR  | 13 | DEX | 14 | CON  |
| 10 | BODY | 13 | INT | 13 | EGO  |
| 15 | PRE  | 8  | COM |    |      |
| 4  | PD   | 3  | ED  | 3  | SPD  |
| 7  | REC  | 30 | END | 28 | STUN |

**Abilities:** Combat Luck; Lightning Reflexes: +2 DEX with All Attacks; Lightsleep; Resistance (3 points); +1 with Sight PER; +1 with All Combat; Breakfall 12-; Concealment 13-; Criminology 12-; Fast Draw (Pistol) 12-; High Society 8-; Persuasion 12-; PS: Security 13-; CK: Vibora Bay 12-; KS: Bayside Blimp 12-; KS: Police Procedures 12-; KS: Known Criminals 12-; WF: Small Arms.

**75+ Disadvantages:** Hunted: PRIMUS 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching); Psychological Limitation: Protective of Innocents (Common, Strong); Psychological Limitation: Easily Irritated (Common, Moderate).



## DIGITAL HERO #12

### MARIA OLIVERA

Maria Olivera is the ship's purser and chief tour guide. As purser she is nominally responsible for passenger's valuables, though hardly anybody checks valuables into the ship's safe. She is a tomboy and loves to explore the airship during her off-hours, giving her quite an extensive knowledge of the Queen's layout.

A single mother, Olivera frequently has her son Carlos aboard the Bayside Blimp when working. Most crewmembers like Carlos and treat him like one of the crew. Unfortunately, he has a knack for getting into trouble.

#### Maria Olivera

|    |      |    |     |    |      |
|----|------|----|-----|----|------|
| 11 | STR  | 14 | DEX | 12 | CON  |
| 10 | BODY | 15 | INT | 10 | EGO  |
| 13 | PRE  | 12 | COM |    |      |
| 2  | PD   | 2  | ED  | 3  | SPD  |
| 5  | REC  | 28 | END | 24 | STUN |

**Abilities:** Environmental Movement (no penalty on ladders and narrow catwalks); CK: Vibora Bay 13-; High Society 12-; KS: Bayside Blimp 15-; Oratory 13-; Persuasion 12-; PS: Tour Guide 13-.

**25+ Disadvantages:** DNPC: Carlos (12 year-old son) 11- (Normal); Psychological Limitation: Concern for Passengers (Common, Strong).



### ANNE HOLLISTER

Anne Hollister was the only child of industrialist Ethan Hollister. When her parents died in a car crash, Anne became wealthy but had no idea how to use this wealth. She indulged several whims, including an interest in psychic and mystic phenomena, eventually becoming an amateur psychic investigator.

Hollister learned of ghost sightings and other odd incidents aboard the Bayside Blimp (including rumored in-flight disappearances of passengers and crewmembers). She's made it her life's goal to figure out what is going on aboard the dirigible. (Whether something really *is* going on is up to the GM.)

She's a frequent passenger and a growing irritant to the crew. Her pet theory is that the airship is trying to trace a giant pentagram in the air over the city. Who knows what will happen if the pattern is perfected....

#### Anne Hollister

|    |      |    |     |    |      |
|----|------|----|-----|----|------|
| 9  | STR  | 11 | DEX | 10 | CON  |
| 10 | BODY | 12 | INT | 14 | EGO  |
| 13 | PRE  | 14 | COM |    |      |
| 2  | PD   | 2  | ED  | 2  | SPD  |
| 4  | REC  | 22 | END | 21 | STUN |

**Abilities:** Luck 1d6; Money: Well Off; CK: Vibora Bay 11-; KS: Mystic Phenomena 11-; KS: High Apostolic Church 11-, KS: Bayside Blimp 11-.

**25+ Disadvantages:** Psychological Limitation: Curiosity (Common, Strong).



## QUEEN OF THE BAY PLOT SEEDS

**Pulp Hero:** The heroes are flying on the *Queen of the Bay* when pirates hijack the airship. Can the unarmed heroes learn the pirates' plans and defeat a superior number of foes in time to save the day?

**Dark Champions:** To finance construction of the Bayside Blimp, Lang made a deal with Russian crimelords. They're now calling in the debt, enlisting Lang's assistance to lure one or more heroes into a trap aboard the airship.

**Champions:** Gravitar learns of the *Queen of the Bay*'s structural weakness and decides to attack while the President is aboard taking an aerial tour of the city. The heroes must find a way to stop her, protect the President, and save a few hundred innocent people.

## Other Noteworthy Personnel

### SAMUEL LANG

Lang is CEO of Queen City Amusements and is a well-known (and well-connected) public figure. He is tall (over six feet) but not a very imposing figure. However, Lang's self-assurance gives him undeniable presence when he speaks.

Note that Lang's background is left intentionally vague. The GM can make him almost anything – a normal businessman, a VIPER frontman, or even an immortal that survived the crash of a 1930s airship.



### OLIVER J. LEE



"Ollie" Lee is the ship's chief cook and runs the La Cour kitchen like he owns it. He is not a culinary school graduate but has an instinctual understanding of food that almost guarantees he'll produce an excellent meal.

### ALBERT EISLER

The airship's chief mechanic, Eisler treats the ship's engines as if they were his children. He is a natural brawler, having spent time as a semi-successful boxer. He also has a drinking problem he's kept hidden from the crew, but it's just a matter of time before somebody catches him drunk on the job.



## Campaign Use

The Bayside Blimp can serve as a backdrop for many adventures for superhero, super-agent, or modern spy campaigns. It can be even be adapted to a 1930s Pulp Hero campaign (see following section).

Moving the Bayside Blimp to your campaign city is as simple as changing the name and a few minor points in her history. It doesn't even matter

if casino gambling is illegal in your city. Simply have Lang in partnership with a nearby Native American tribe, with the airship *officially* operating off the reservation (though it only visits its "home" once a month).

It would be tempting for criminal agencies and villains to rob the casino or kidnap VIPs riding the airship, drawing heroes into any number of plots. Or it could be the key to a villain's plot (the location of a hidden mind-control ray, for instance), leading to a confrontation 2,000 feet over the city.

The potential for aerial super-crime brings up an interesting possibility: Lang may contact a group of heroes and offer them space aboard the *Queen of the Bay* to use as a small mobile base in exchange for security services. The airship can serve as a way station during modern spy or super-agent adventures, with vital information being passed in the casino or restaurant.

The *Queen* can also be used simply to add flavor to the city, appearing in a secondary role in adventures. The heroes might hear that a group of criminals used the Bayside Blimp to transport them to the scene of a break-in. Characters might attend a party on the airship with VIPs and NPCs. Or it could just pass overhead, blocking moonlight at an opportune (or inopportune) time.

## Pulp Hero Conversion

It doesn't take much to convert the *Queen of the Bay* to a 1930s pulp campaign. Considering that dirigibles were the "big thing" back then, it's actually easier to justify in that setting. Changing the history to give Lang connections (financial or otherwise) to Prohibition-era gangsters also provides many adventure possibilities.

Remove modern technology (such as the computer, radar, low-light video, and security cameras) from the airship, and change a few other things. The outer skin would not be bullet- or fireproof, instead being simple weatherproofed cloth. The airdock could be removed entirely or might hold a two-seat biplane that would only be used in an emergency. And the gift shop would probably be replaced with an enclosed smoking room. (Don't laugh – the *Hindenburg* had one.)

Keeping the airship's layout the same requires either a slight twisting of reality or some underhandedness on Lang's part. A modern airship could be built with light but strong high-tech materials, but the frame and furnishings of pulp-era dirigibles would be heavier aluminum and wood. However, if Lang replaced helium with hydrogen (which has over 15% more lift than helium), that fixes some of the weight difference and adds drama besides.





# Unearthed Mechana

by Bob Pennington

## GM Notes

*Unearthed Mechana* is a *Champions* adventure written for a group of 3 to 6 starting *Champions* characters. The adventure notes assume that the PCs are built on 350 points and are within the guidelines given for a standard superhero campaign in both the *Hero System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Rulebook* (page 15) and *Champions* (page 58). Characters with earned experience may require some minor adjustments to the power level of the villains. Notes on how to adapt the adventure for varying power levels or number of heroes is given along with each encounter and in the villains' descriptive text.

If you are using the Effectiveness Rating (ER) given in *Digital Hero #3*, the suggested power level for the heroes is between 75 and 95. If the party is composed of several characters over or above this number, you will have to make adjustments. This adventure is not appropriate for cosmic level characters or characters with an ER over 100.

The adventure takes place in Millennium City using the *Champions Universe* official setting. The adventure also uses two villains from *Conquerors, Killers, and Crooks*.

The adventure text is written with a starting Gamemaster (GM) in mind. If you are an experienced *Champions* GM, you may skip over these sections. I do strongly suggest that all GMs read this section, as even experienced GMs may find material here useful in running future *Champions* adventures.

The adventure text also assumes that the characters are part of a superhero team. If this is not the case, please run an adventure before this one that puts the characters together. A good initial scenario is found in *Champions Universe*.

If you are a player, you need to stop reading now. All further information is for the GM only.

## What You Will Need To Play

*Champions* is a game of "supers," and "supers" love to fight. Having the right tools to assist you in running a good fight helps convey the excitement and energy of the game. I greatly suggest the use of figures and/or stand-up counters. These should be placed on a hex battlement or megamat. Chessex and Crystal Caste make excellent products. A marker designed for overhead projectors (a *Vis-à-vis*, for example) can be used to mark the map with the proper scenery. Cut-out markers for autos are also helpful. The old cars from *Autoduel Champions* are a resource. Another car collection was published in the July 2002 *Dungeon/Polyhedron Magazine*. The article is called *Thunderball Rally*, and there are numerous car counters included. Copy these to cardstock and cut them out for your bricks to toss around the battlefield. If you do not have access to either, use index cards cut down to car scale. Mark them "car" with the car's DEF and BODY on the bottom side. This allows for easy play. Numbered chits are also useful for agents. If you do not have chits, mark old pennies or figure bases with numbered stickers. These become agents and "normals" in the crowd.

Everyone should have dice of at least two colors, in case of half dice or killing attacks. Each player should have access to enough dice to cover his best attack damage plus 6d6. This allows for wild maneuvers, haymakers, and pushes. As an experienced GM, I can tell you that you will never have too many dice. Each player should have a tally sheet. The GM should have a tally sheet for each battle. At the end of the adventure, I give examples of how to create and use a tally sheet in your own games. A calculator with a square root function is quite useful for calculating range with different elevations. Some GMs like to use a screen like the one provided in the *Hero System Resource Kit*. I recommend the product for the maps and for the forms contained within. I personally use the agent control sheet whenever I have lots of agents in my game.

Lastly, all GMs should be familiar with every Player Character. Pay particular attention to what we call *campaign disadvantages*. A campaign disadvantage is a Disadvantage that has a potential to affect the plot of a game outside of play. These include: DNPC, Hunted and Watched, and Social Limitations. A description on how to handle campaign disadvantages is given for beginning GMs in the first section of the adventure text.

## Plot Synopsis

The adventure begins with the characters coming together as discussed in the prologue. This section will be the transition from a prior adventure, a new story arc, or the start of a new campaign. GMs are urged to read the prologue section if inserting this adventure in a current campaign. Following the prologue, the GM will move the characters into Chapter One, where one of the PCs will be a guest on Janet Jennings Show, a daytime talk show on WRJK-TV in Millennium City. The show is being taped in front of a live studio audience. The characters will learn of recent thefts before becoming involved in a dangerous surprise. Deadly toys on the set will begin attacking the members of the panel and audience. The characters will be forced into action to defend the guests. They should have little trouble stopping the threats.

Following this scene, the characters will gather clues from the attacks. PRIMUS will send over an investigative team to help collect clues if the characters do not have the necessary skills. They may suspect that this attack and the robberies are somehow connected. Regardless of how the investigation goes, either the characters or PRIMUS will ascertain that the toys appear to be the work of supervillain Black Harlequin. Further investigation will lead the characters to determine that he is not the only villain involved, and may have an ally in Armadillo.

The investigation will continue throughout the day. Later that evening, the characters will learn of an attack at the Remote AutoStar control center. When they arrive on the scene, a hostage situation will have evolved. The characters will break the hostage situation, and should be able to capture one of the villains. Interrogation will lead the characters to learn of Black Harlequin's plot and the muscle working for him.

From here, the characters will storm the headquarters of the villain team. The team includes Black Harlequin, Armadillo, Speed Pounder, and some low powered agents. The bad guys have taken up residence in an abandoned Mechanon repair base. They will be forced to fight through tough defenses and minions until reaching the lowest level. In desperation, Black Harlequin and his minions will bring the facilities fully back online. Immediately, the heroes and villains will find their lives in danger.

Even as the base floods with dangerous chemicals and the weapons systems begin firing at random, a more sinister evil begins formation in the assembly room. During the battle with the villains, Mechana, a servant of Mechanon, is constructed in the assembly chamber. Mechana will attack both hero and villain alike. The characters must fight for their lives, and possibly the lives of the villains.

## Prologue

The start of this adventure depends on numerous factors. The author ran this adventure as part of an serial ongoing campaign. For some of you, this will be the same. For others, this adventure will be the first in a new campaign. This section helps determine how you start the adventure, regardless of your prior history or campaign type.

### STEP 1: ROLL CAMPAIGN DISADVANTAGES AND DETERMINE THEIR USE

As a GM, you have freedom to roll campaign disadvantages and execute them, roll them and "save" them, or ignore them altogether. I generally make this decision based on the following factors:

- Will the campaign disadvantages add or subtract from the story?
- Will executing the disadvantage take too much time or involve splitting up the party for an extended period?
- Can the disadvantage be used as "fill" for the next session or as the start of a new story arc?
- Is there a chance that a character will be taken out of play by the disadvantage?

For most new GMs, I suggest rolling the campaign disadvantages secretly and noting them in a notebook. From here, I would evaluate how they fit into the story and choose to either execute them or save them. Saved disadvantages are listed in my campaign notes and then made ready for the transition for my next big game. In my playtest session, for example, the following campaign disadvantages were generated. I have them listed by playtest character and how I choose to use or save them.

*Quasar:* Quasar's Public ID rolled up. I choose to have him be contacted for the show in Chapter One as the guest. In addition, I made it so that the team's publicity agent made sure that Quasar would take the free press.

*Stalker:* Although Stalker has several disadvantages, none rolled up.

*Archangel:* Strangely two campaign disadvantages rolled up for Archangel. The first was Hunted by Green Dragon. The second was his Secret ID as Dr Gabriel Galileo. Green Dragon had been defeated and nearly killed in our last gaming session. At the end, he was transported to The Millennium City PRIMUS HQ. Seeing a good possible plot, I had Dr. Galileo receive a summons for jury duty next week. During the next gaming session, he will learn that he has been selected to the jury that will try his enemy! Can the honorable Archangel protect both his Secret ID and his Code of Honor?

*Hardcore:* Although Hardcore has several campaign disadvantages, only one was rolled up: Hunted by The Sisters of Pain. I decided that with a linear plot, there was no room for a fight with a supervillain group as tough as the Sisters in this adventure. I decided to save the Hunted for the next game session. I saw that there was a possible trial to roleplay, and figured that word got out that Hardcore would be a witness at the trial. The Sisters will decide to crash the trial and attempt to take out Hardcore once and for all. In addition, they hope to find some assistance from Green Dragon, who certainly doesn't want to go back to Stronghold.

As you can tell, my next adventure is writing itself while not jeopardizing the story at hand. I challenge the young GMs to try the same while rolling campaign disadvantages. If you need assistance, I suggest using the boards to communicate with other GMs.

### STEP 2: ESTABLISH THE OPENING SCENE

Some groups have several good roleplayers. Others have just a few. Pick one of your better roleplayers to establish the opening scene. Your goal is to assemble the characters in a manner that allows the opening of Chapter One and possibly to clarify an executable campaign disadvantage. A group with a base or headquarters makes this easy enough. The GM can open the scene by having a meeting at headquarters, or possibly a false alarm that assembles the group. Whatever device is used, the GM should interrupt the rendezvous with the invitation as noted in Chapter One. Allow some roleplaying before the interruption. This builds plausibility into the plot and helps eliminate metagame thinking: *"Is this the plot, or was it what we got together for?"* Another benefit of this freedom is to allow characters to clean up loose ends from the prior gaming session. As a GM, this is also a great opportunity to listen to the players' ideas. In free form roleplaying, characters often express a goal or a fear that may prove to be a future plot seed.

### STEP 3: PROPEL THE GAME FORWARD

Establishing a pace to the adventure is like sounding the keynote. How you dictate the pace, a feel of the adventure, is how it will run. Make NPC dialogue sharp and believable. Set a tone for roleplaying, insisting that players speak in first person and call each other by character name. By only speaking narratively when necessary, you start a chain reaction that will result in an explosion of good roleplaying. I strongly suggest that you read this adventure at least twice before running it. I also suggest that you reread the character sheets of all of the villains involved, especially the Psychological Limitations. Make sure that your tally sheets and notes are in order.

Have your supplies at your side and ready so that valuable game time and mood are not wasted. Nothing spoils a fight scene more than describing the villains and then taking five minutes looking for the right figures to place on the board. When all is ready, begin with Chapter One.

## Chapter One: The Janet Jennings Show

Following the prologue, David Fields, a booking agent for The Janet Jennings Show, will contact one of the characters. David is a friendly fellow from Hollywood that has relocated to Millennium City. The Janet Jennings show is in the middle of their sweeps week, and David needs some rating points. *"You're fabulous, baby, I need you on this show!"*

David is persistent and won't take no for an answer. As the GM, you should select a character whose personality warrants the spotlight as David's target. A character with a *Psychological Limitation: Show-Off* or *Glory-Hound* is a perfect choice. If none of the characters has an appropriate psychological limitation, look for a character with a rivalry. *"Well, if you can't do it, I understand. I guess I'll have to call Ironclad."*

The show tapes at 10:00 AM the next day. The character will be asked to show up an hour early for makeup and prep work. David can provide studio audience tickets for friends of the guest. The topic of discussion is, "My kid thinks he's a superhero!"

David explains that the guest is to talk to the children and explain the dangers of crimefighting. The guest will be one of three on a panel of discussion, along with three children who want to be or believe they are superhuman. The other two panelists are Candy Baylo, an investigative reporter from SNN, and Dr. Theresa Madden of The Institute for Human Advancement. If the selected hero objects about either of the guests, David will respond with Hollywood glibness, *"Hey, every show needs a guy to chuck chairs at!"*

**GM Notes:** If your characters are being extremely reluctant to go on the show, do not use a forceful hand. Nothing ruins the suspension of disbelief as much as a heavy-handed GM. If characters do not feel that they are in control, they will not have fun. Instead, have one of the characters receive an anonymous tip later that day from a laughing voice. The call will be untraceable. *"Gonna miss the fun and games tomorrow, I hear. All crimefighting and no fun makes <name> a dull <boy/girl/robot>. I never miss a party, especially a SURPRISE party! Hehheheheh!"* If this does not work, allow the characters to investigate the aftermath of the events detailed below.

After the characters arrive, move quickly to the start of the show. Do not allow the characters easy access to the other guests. Consult the layout on the stage map, placing everyone where appropriate. Candy will sit between Theresa and the hero. A brief description of the attendees, their appearance, their personality, and their agenda is

given below. The map (#1) and its key are located at the end of the adventure. Janet Jennings will personally thank the guest before taping. The director will check the sound and the equipment. The studio audience will get coaching on the cue cards and their use. The taping will begin promptly at 10:00.

| Name                  | Appearance                                                                                             | Personality                                                                                                                       | Agenda                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Janet Jennings        | Thin semi-attractive white female with brown hair and bright blue eyes.                                | Upbeat coffee house intellectual that feigns being “hip” by using urban slang.                                                    | Conduct a good show while sparking controversy. Show up pretty guest Candy Baylo.                                                                                            |
| Candy Baylo           | Blonde bombshell with green eyes. Dressed to impress.                                                  | Ambitious, funny, and flirtatious. She is a natural on the TV and is likely to steel the show                                     | General self-promotion without appearing too ambitious. Generally on the side of the superhero community.                                                                    |
| Theresa Madden        | Average looking woman with red hair and blue eyes. Dressed like a power lunch attorney.                | Intellectually arrogant with a mouth full of sound bites.                                                                         | Promote the IHA agenda by blaming anything and everything bad on Mutants and Mutant kind.                                                                                    |
| Billy Smitz           | Large chubby 16 year old with shaved head and a magic marker tattoo of bulldozer on his arm.           | Read Bulldozer from CKC.                                                                                                          | Act a fool and possibly start a fight with another kid.                                                                                                                      |
| Mrs. Brenda Smitz     | Chubby housewife with bad hair and a look of worry.                                                    | Feels bad for her kid but blames society for his behavior.                                                                        | Take out her frustration on the PC.                                                                                                                                          |
| Carla Thomas          | 16 years old with a young adults body. Hair dyed 3 colors. Blue eyes. Nose ring and belly button ring. | Thinks she is Sapphire.                                                                                                           | Really looking for attention and a new boyfriend.                                                                                                                            |
| Michelle Thomas-Reitz | Very attractive conservative woman with the look of wealth.                                            | Embarrassed of her daughters behavior and truly concerned about her dress. Brings up that her husband left her at least 10 times. | Legitimately her for help, but can’t help but get some shots in on her ex “if the no good jerk is even up yet after boozing all night with some good for nothing bar tramp!” |
| Paul Young            | Athletic looking 14 year old black boy.                                                                | Frightened and shy. Obviously uncomfortable.                                                                                      | Wants to hide that he really is developing super powers. Already has 30 Strength and 10 Resistant PD.                                                                        |
| Dr. Marvin Young      | Looks like a distinguished and concerned father dressed in a sweater and designer jeans.               | Educator. Writes textbooks for Millennium University. Reserved when speaking.                                                     | Get off this show once he sees that it’s not really about his son.                                                                                                           |

The GM should prepare some dialogue for each guest. A sample for each participant is given below. Exaggerate each personality so that everyone is memorable. Certain dialogue is necessary to the plot and is shown in bold type. Once the characters begin slowing down on the roleplay, or 20 minutes have passed, move on to the combat element of this story. Make sure to

have a few zingers on hand as questions from the crowd, as this is a great roleplaying opportunity.

**Janet: “We in Millennium City have got to get used to seeing men fly overhead. Three supervillain bank heists were reported in this week alone. How can we be surprised when our children emulate what they see on TV?”**

Candy: "I've been covering the paranormal beat for five years now, and I love it. Not only are most of the heroes super powerful, but they are generally super people inside as well."

Theresa: "There will come a day when you look back at this show and say – She was right! The youth followed Hitler in the same manner!"

Billy: "Yo, Candy. If that superwimp over there is botherin' you, I'll smash his face in for ya. Heck, I might even take my shirt off for you girls if you promise to not fight over me."

Brenda: "No wonder he acts this way. You super people are always fighting!"

Carla: "Listen, grandma. You'd dress like this if you weren't afraid to show the world your cottage cheese thighs!"

Michelle: "I don't blame you supers. I blame Jerry, my ex-husband. He always fawned over those women in their skimpy costumes. He loved you, Miss Baylo, that's for sure. No wonder my daughter dresses like a tramp. That's what it takes to keep a man these days."

**Paul: "Umm, I think those toys over there are unwrapping themselves!"**

Marvin: "I thought that you said that this show was about helping my son!"

Following the conversation, transition to the combat scene when Paul gives his highlighted text. What Paul sees are some devious toys left here for the kids as a gift from Black Harlequin (CKC page 123). They will unwrap as a ½-Phase Action in Segment 12, and then perform a Half Move to spread out among the crowd. The toys are designed to appear normal to casual inspection. There are three toys in all. Each is described below. GMs dealing with N-Ray Vision should not worry. Only a character with N-Ray Vision and specific skills could determine that these toys are actually weapons. Other powers such as a large amount of Danger Sense can be more problematic. As the GM, you can rule that the toys were not dangerous until activated, or that as a plot device the toys were undetectable to the Danger Sense. It is assumed that these toys are modified versions of Black Harlequin's normal toy chest. They somehow operate outside of his direct control. To compensate for this, I have adjusted the toys to have CVs, DEXes and SPDs. This is not exactly correct by *Hero System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*, but, as a GM, your job is to tell the story, not rewrite the rules.

*Super Tank RC*: RKA 1d6 (versus PD), +1 STUN Multiplier (+¼), Indirect (Any origin, any direction; +¾), Continuous (+1) (45 Active Points); 1 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-1¼), OAF Durable (-1); Real Cost: 14.

- *Super Tank RC* looks like a fast tracked tank with a shiny oversized gun turret. The tank will position itself for a clean shot and fire its

metal projectile. Once locked onto a target, it will continue with that target until its batteries wear out. It operates at SPD 4 (3, 6, 9, 12) with a 15 DEX. It has an OCV of 5 and a DCV (size modified) of 8. It has 9 DEF and 1 BODY.

*Space Shuttle*: EB 3½d6 (versus PD), Indirect (Any origin, always fired away from attacker; +½), Explosion (Expanded Radius) –1d6/3"; +1) (45 Active Points); 1 Charge (-2), Extra Time (1 Turn (Post-Segment 12); -1¼); Real Cost: 11

- The *Space Shuttle* comes unnamed. On Segment 12, it will begin a 10-second countdown accompanied with the sounds of a real shuttle launch. On 10, the ignition will lift the shuttle into the air. It will acquire a target and explode next to it at the bottom of 12. During the countdown, the shuttle is DCV 3 at range and 0 at Hand-to-Hand. It has 9 DEF and 1 BODY, but if tipped over, will not fire properly, instead blowing up where it lies.

*Chip Parsec*: EB 3d6 (versus ED), Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Indirect (Any origin, any direction; +¾), Continuous (+1) (45 Active Points); OAF Durable (-1), 2 Clips of 6 Charges (-½); Real Cost: 18.

- *Chip Parsec* is a space hero doll with a clear helmet and a silvery rocket-powered spacesuit. He has a wrist blaster that shoots a shocking blue arc of electricity. He chants "This is a job for Chip Parses!" and "To Infamy and Beyond!" Chip moves fast. He fights as a 5 SPD with a 20 DEX. His OCV is 7 and his DCV (size modified) is a 10. Once all of his bolts are shot, he runs out of power and collapses to the ground. He also has 9 DEF and 1 BODY.

Following the battle, the characters will want to know who or what was behind this. Characters with an appropriate skill such as KS: Supervillains will gather that the toys fit Black Harlequin's "MO." Janet Jennings (if uninjured) will explain that the toys were donated by charity called "Let's Play Toys." She has a shipping address for the company and a letter from the donor. A follow up investigation shows that the donor and the address are false and that the company has long been out of business. The toys themselves appear to be extremely complicated devices. Proper analysis in a lab will reveal that some of the parts are made with a strange chrome alloy. The alloy is the same one used by Mechanon. Characters are free to investigate in other ways, but nothing else will be learned. Their investigation will get its break in the next scene.



## Chapter Two: Hostage Crisis at AutoStar

After a fruitless day of investigating, the characters will be called into action as a team. AutoStar, a wholly owned subsidiary of Duchess Industries, helps the Millennium City D.O.T. run the magnificent highway system that has made the city of tomorrow so famous. Inside the city limits, cars drive themselves, and the AutoStar system is the reason why. Three well-placed geo-stationary satellites track computer chips inside of each vehicle. Using GPS and a proprietary software system, AutoStar can actually drive all of the vehicles simultaneously. The system is a technological wonder, and is constantly kept under very tight security. Unfortunately for the people of Millennium City, that security system has been breached.

Sly Fortune, a roving soldier of fortune, and a band of well-trained mercenaries have taken over a remote AutoStar control center. This center is a redundant center, as the main system is in downtown Millennium City. If anything were to happen to the main center, this one could serve as a temporary backup.

Sly has been hired to image the backup mainframe located on the premises. The computer system holds the emergency codes that take control of the system if the main station were to go offline. The system also stores a database of registered computer chips, allowing the cars to be tracked along the highways. Sly does not want to gain control of the system, just to image the drives.

Sly is aware that the security systems will automatically alert the law upon breaching the facility. He is quite skilled at disabling such devices, but this would fail logistically given the number of men under his command. Instead, Sly is content with holding hostages until the imaging is complete, and battling out if necessary at the end. Black Harlequin, his employer, has set explosive dolls loose elsewhere in the city to keep the authorities busy. The heroes will be the only forces able to respond in time to stop the villains' escape. The imaging will be 98% complete when the characters arrive. The rest of the imaging will take three combat turns. Local law enforcement has arrived, but has not engaged the superiorly armed units inside. UNTIL has a battle unit en route but that will arrive too late.

The current situation requires reference to Map #2. Details about the map are given in the key at the end of the adventure. Sly and two men are in the Control Center. Two others are in hallway near the elevator, while the four remaining are in Customer Service with the eight hostages.

Sly started the operation about 10 minutes ago, with the assault on the facility. Once the law arrived a few minutes later, he began the hostage phase to gain time. Using a PA system and

speaking in broken English with an Arabic accent, he informed the law outside that they were not to approach. He identified himself as the leader of The Sword of Allah. He denounced the devil US government and the mockery that is Millennium City. He told the police that he has taken eight hostages, and that he is willing to release four hostages upon delivery of a SWAT APC loaded with \$2 million in unmarked bills. He pledges to release the other four upon safe transport to the international airport where he will be allowed to board a charter jet to Cuba where fellow sympathizers await him. He then stated that he is prepared to die and even more ready to kill the infidels he has in his grasp. He vowed that any trickery would result in bloodshed.

Sly, of course, knows that this plan is foolish, but he hopes that the ploy buys him enough time to get out without a big fight. He is certainly capable of defeating the police force outside of the compound presently, but is concerned that other forces may arrive. He is counting on Black Harlequin's diversions to keep The Champions away, as he feels superheroes are the only real threat to him. He is unaware that the Player Characters are on the way.

The characters will learn of the events through a local law enforcement contact. The GM should choose an appropriate contact from a prior adventure, or one from the earlier investigation. They will be told that a band of terrorists calling themselves The Sword of Allah have taken hostages at the backup AutoStar facility. The police have blocked access to the road leading to the AutoStar compound. The police will inform the characters of all that they know so far. They have received word from UNTIL to delay meeting the demands to allow the arrival of reinforcements. The local sheriff informs the characters that he feels that this will only lead to the death of the innocents inside and pleads for their help.

**GM Note:** Characters with bad reputations may affect the pleas of the Sheriff. Hardcore, a brick from our playtest group has a *Reputation: Thinks with His Fist*. If the Sheriff had rolled this Rep, he may have changed his tune and not called for the characters' intervention. "*That hothead will get those people killed. I'm in charge here, and you people are jeopardizing lives.*" Also, note the time of roleplaying, as it will only take a few more moments for Sly and his team to have what they need. The disk imager is about the size of *The Hero System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* rulebook, and is made of black metal with retractable wires. It has 6 DEF and 1 BODY. Sly will keep it in a backpack, should he have time to run.



Sly will order his men to battle the heroes if necessary, but is mainly interested in making a run for it. He has two vans parked at the rear of the building. He has already secretly cut the rear fence to allow his team to run out of the compound around the access road. He will use a human shield if necessary, and is unafraid to waste a normal to make his point to the superheroes. Sly does not care about his men, just his job. If he feels that he can win, he will take a risk and remain in the fight. Once things go against him, which they should, he will make a run for it, covering his back with a hostage and a flash grenade.

The Player Characters should be able to win the day, as the agents are not so tough. Use the stats for agents listed in *Champions* (page 178) under Master Villain's Agent. GMs should use the *Minion Control Sheet* from *The Hero System Resource Kit* if they have it available. The agents are aware that their employer is a real nut job that calls himself Black Harlequin. They know that he works with Speed Pounder, Sly, and with an armored guy called Armadillo. They have a headquarters in an old underground lab beneath a junkyard in the outskirts of the city. They believe that the base has some weird alien tech, and looks like robots were made there. Sly knows that the base houses some strange tech. He believes it once belonged to aliens, Dr. Destroyer, or perhaps Mechanon. Sly will not talk, but under telepathy he knows that Black Harlequin is crazy and plans on using this technology along with the imaged data to do something terrible to the people of Millennium City. He claims (truthfully) to be in this only for this job and that he does not know the full extent of the mad toy maker's plans.

The characters should gather enough information after this battle to locate the ruined base. If the characters look for information on the villains, they will find very little. The GM should tell them only what is generally known about each of the bad guys as given in their backgrounds. Characters with specific knowledge skills may gain more information. This may be a good time for the GM to allow a break to get ready for the final assault of the villain base.

## Chapter Three: The Old Mechanon Base

The Player Characters will arrive at an old junkyard that matches the description given by the agents from Chapter Two. A casual search is very unlikely to uncover anything. The secret entrance to the elevator is Concealed by 7 (a -7 to Perception Rolls). This Concealment is negated by N-Ray Vision and certain other senses. Once discovered, the hidden shaft leads down about 20 meters to an elevator platform. At the platform is a set of armored blast doors (DEF 15, BODY 10). A hidden camera (Concealed at -5) tracks the characters' progress. The agents on duty in location 12 monitor the camera. Regardless of the camera, breaching the door will sound an alarm unless the door alarm is disabled as well (Security Systems by 3 or more). A description of the locations in the base is given at the end of this adventure. The villains' locations and their battle plans are listed below.

- Speed Pounder has been moving equipment around in the warehouse room (location 11). He will move to guard his employer, going to the doors at location 12.
- Armadillo has been assisting Black Harlequin in the control center (location 12), and will move out to join Speed Pounder to defend the base.
- Black Harlequin will attempt to activate the main power. This requires a Security Systems check at -5. He has a 14- roll, and will make an attempt each Phase after the characters sound the alarm. As a plot device, he will automatically succeed by the time the characters reach area 10.
- Sly Fortune is likely captured at this point. In the event that he is not, he will battle the heroes along with his agents in areas 1, 2, and 3. He will begin in area 9 where he is tending to his equipment.
- The Agents number six in all, not counting any from the assault mission prior. Two will be playing pool in area 1. One will be in the hallway (area 2). Three others will be in area 3. They will attempt to gun down the heroes from cover and withdraw to the elevator in area 6.

Once the base comes alive, the real fun begins. Black Harlequin believes that bringing the base online will allow him control of the numerous defensive systems located within the base. What he does not understand is that once activated, Mechanon will become aware of the old base and quickly gain control of all systems within. A series of deadly devices will be activated, ensuring the doom of those intruding on Mechanon's property. The devices and their abilities are detailed below. They activate and are run as a 5 SPD and with a 30 DEX.

- *Nerve Gas*: RKA 1d6, No Normal Defense (Force Field; +1), Does BODY (+1), Area Of Effect (18" Radius; +1½), Conforming (+½) (75 Active Points); 1 Continuing Charge Lasting 1 Minute, Charge Never Recovers (-3), Activation Roll 11- (-1), No Range (-½), No Knockback (-¼). Real Cost: 13.
- *Questionite Blast Doors*: Force Wall (18 PD/18 ED; 2" Long and 2" Tall, Opaque to Sight Group), Hardened (+¼), Inherent (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½) (260 Active Points); OAF Expendable (Extremely Difficult to Obtain New Focus; -2). Real Cost: 87.
- *Energy Bolter Pop Turret*: EB 10d6 (versus ED), Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1) (112 Active Points); OAF Immobile Durable (-2), Beam (-¼). Real Cost: 34.

The nerve gas will be sprayed from hidden spots in all upstairs and downstairs rooms. This occurs on Segment 3.

The Turrets will activate when there is any target in range. It will fire randomly at full autofire. It will not target Mechana. The turrets upstairs have an 11- Activation Roll as they are damaged from the Dr. Destroyer blast that rocked Detroit. The downstairs turrets are not damaged, and will fire on the villains.

The blast doors will fall in the hallway marked 14, sealing off the room to allow Mechana's construction. This takes one full Turn once the base is powered up. She will then emerge to battle the characters.

Mechana will fight tactically, taking out characters in order of how much of a threat they are to her. If in doubt, she will attack whomever she can take out, focusing on one target at a time until they are out of the fight. Mechana has no mercy on organics. She will pursue any fleeing hero or villain and attempt to terminate all involved. If the characters are defeated by Mechana, the GM should have a backup plan not to kill outside of combat

**GM Notes:** Killing out of combat is generally in bad form in the superhero genre. Killing in combat is rare due to the power level of the characters. A villain, even a bloodthirsty one, is unlikely to kill outside of combat while the characters are helpless. Instead, they will generally set a devastating deathtrap, confident that the hero will be finished off in grand fashion.

Mechana and Mechanon are a little harder to deal with, as they hate everything that lives. Their mechanical coldness makes deathtraps and other inefficient means of termination highly unlikely. In my playtest, the heroes won the day, but for some, this fight will definitely go the wrong way. Mechanon will order that the heroes be gathered for interrogation to determine how much was learned about his base. He will have Mechana destroy the base and bring everyone back to his new base for examination, interrogation, and eventually termination. If this solution does not work for you, prepare another. I caution GMs to allow for solutions where the characters save themselves. It is okay to occasionally have an NPC follow the characters into battle and save the day. But use this device too often, and the characters are no longer heroic.

## Epilogue

The tone and manner of the epilogue depends greatly upon the ending of the adventure. I have provided a sample wrap-up for several possible endings to this adventure. There does exist the possibility that none of the author's predicted endings result. As a GM, this becomes your responsibility. If in doubt, you can always make this week's epilogue the transition for next week's game.

- *The Characters are Wildly Successful Defeating and Capturing Everyone:* Although unlikely, this can happen. The appropriate law enforcement and news media will want the full story. The characters should receive a congratulatory phone call from another superhero team and enjoy the thanks of PRIMUS and/or UNTIL. There could be a reward from AutoStar or another appearance on *The Janet Jennings Show*.
- *The Characters Win the Day, but There are Costs:* This is the more likely result. The nerve gas is extremely deadly, and in my playtest nearly killed a character. It is quite likely that either Armadillo or Speed Pounder will get away. Armadillo can Dive for Cover with Tunneling and try to get away, and Speed Pounder is very hard to catch if on the run. Mechana is very powerful, and could beat an entire superhero team if the agents and supervillains have weakened them in battle. The Black Harlequin is lucky, and this may also be a factor.

Regardless of how or why the characters end up partly successful, react as if they were wildly successful. This adventure is challenging, and reinforcing their success is much better than dwelling on their failures. That said, a good GM will remember this result and plan future consequences for his heroes based on the negative aspects of this scenario. In my playtest, for example, Armadillo and Speed Pounder escaped. Armadillo since has hooked up with a group of villains and is looking for revenge. PRIMUS will want access to the old base, and Mechanon will want revenge!

- *Mechana is Defeated but the Other Villains are Not:* Although unlikely, this could happen. If so, the Black Harlequin will strip the old base of supplies and parts for his future toys. He would almost certainly rig the now active reactor to explode, and leave the characters to die in atomic fire. This deathtrap is believable, as it is "funny" from Black Harlequin's viewpoint. The GM would need to determine how terrible the explosion would be and the effects on the characters. It should be deadly, but not so deadly that all of

the characters are sure to die. The heroes should wake up just in time to have a chance to stop the countdown.

- *Mechana Wins:* Please consult the text from the adventure above. This very easily could happen, and a GM should be prepared for this eventuality. Mechana would most certainly capture as many heroes and villains as possible for interrogation by Mechanon. Mechana will blow up the base, making sure to destroy any and all of Mechanon's technology left inside. The explosion should, in this case, at least destroy any evidence of the base and ruin any and all equipment inside. The characters are in big trouble.

## Experience

Guidelines for Experience Point awards are given on page 346 of *The Hero System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* rulebook. This is my interpretation of the proper award for this scenario. Adjust this to fit your campaign taste.

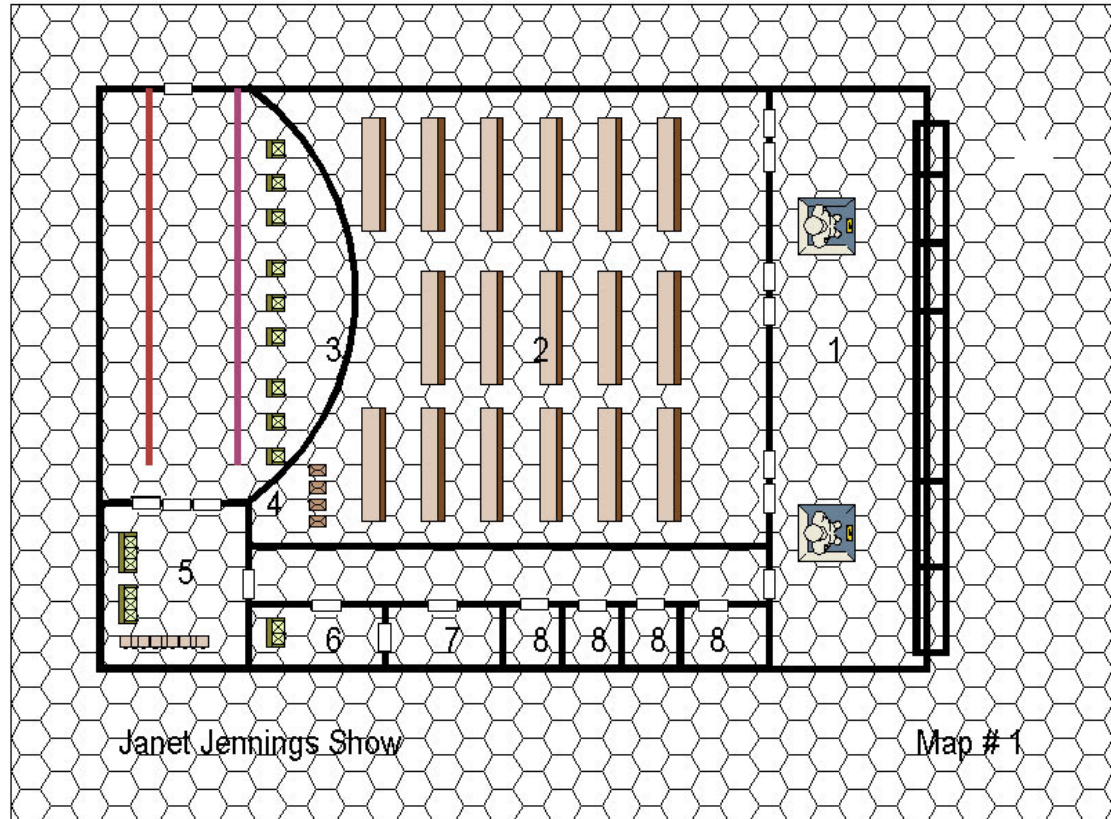
I awarded the 1 point base for being in the game *plus* 2 for being in a very long or involved adventure (several phases of game play) *plus* 1 for the adventure being difficult. This gives a tentative total of 4 Experience Points. The GM can then add or subtract any Experience Points for success, roleplaying, or terrible failure. This reward is optional.

In my playtest, we took two sessions to complete the game, as there was quite a bit of roleplaying. I do not wait until the end of an adventure to dole out Experience Points, but reward it at the end of each session (This is our house rule). In this case, the players all roleplayed well. I awarded 2 at the end of the first session, as it was not yet challenging or long. The characters were mildly successful in our playtest, and received 3 more for the second session, as it was difficult and they roleplayed well.

## Map Keys

*Champions* adventures are rarely site-based like a level-based system "dungeon." That said, the environment can add a great element to any combat. I specifically remember the *Combat in Christopher Park* scenario contained in the old *VIPER's Nest* adventure from *Champions 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. My character had to deal with multiple VIPER agents, and he had little in the way of defense. I remember taking cover and using the environment to drive VIPER back into the tree line.

Examine these maps with the players in mind. Allow the villains to use the environment to add a new challenging element to the text. If you find something missing on the map, adjust to your taste.



### The Janet Jennings Show (Map #1)

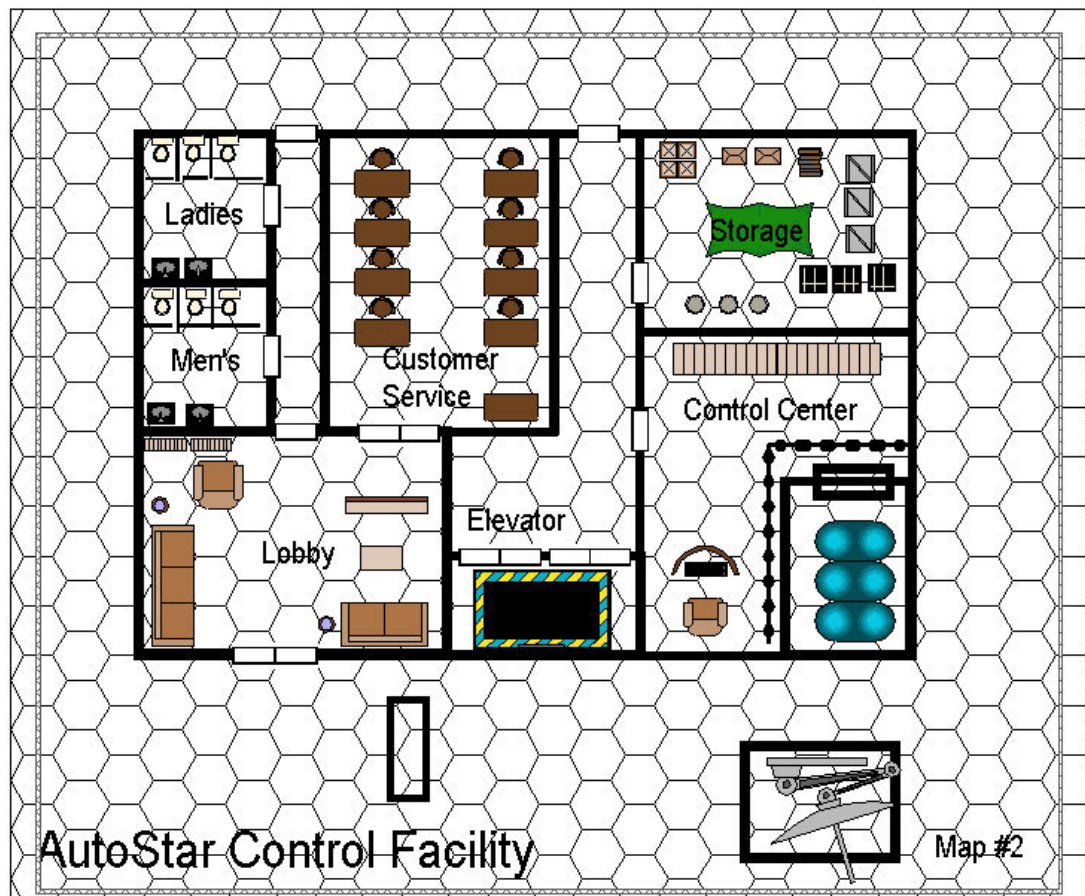
The building in which the Janet Jennings show is filmed is located on a studio lot in the suburbs of Millennium City. The entire complex is surrounded by a tall steel fence and is patrolled by a small security force of four. Additional unarmed security is available in each studio to protect the talent. The Janet Jennings show has three such security personnel.

The building itself is made from reinforced concrete block (DEF 8, BODY 5) with an aluminum roof (DEF 6, BODY 4). The roof is 5" high by game scale. The front doors are Plexiglas (DEF 5, BODY 3), with metal fire doors (DEF 5, BODY 5) in the back. The interior walls are standard sheetrock and plaster (DEF 3, BODY 3). Below is a numbered key to the interior building.

1. The lobby is decorated with two large statues made to look like golden awards. The truth is The Janet Jennings' Show has never won a daytime award. There are three sets of wooden double doors that enter the theater. The lobby ceiling is 4" high. The floor is stone tile. One of the security guards will be stationed at the far door that leads to the cast member areas.
2. This small auditorium is set up to seat approximately 150 people. The characters will have a full house for this show. The ceiling of the auditorium is lined with bright lights and sound equipment. Two key grips work the lights and camera from a suspended

workstation not shown on the map, but at the center of the main room. The floor has a slight grade to it so that those seated at the rear can see the stage well.

3. This is the stage area. The guests will sit here while Janet shuffles back and forth between audience and stage. The stage is elevated by ½". Two heavy curtains cover the lights and equipment used in the show. Motors, not ropes and sandbags, manipulate the curtains.
4. The "toys" are set here wrapped with shiny paper and decorated with large elaborate bows. A small rope separates this area from the guest seating.
5. This backstage area is where the cast and guest wait until cued. There is a wet bar set out, along with juice, coffee, and pastries. Another security guard works here.
6. This is the ladies' room.
7. This is the men's room. The janitor's door between the two restrooms is metal and is kept locked (DEF 5, BODY 5).
8. These are dressing rooms for the talent. Each is outfitted with a vanity and plenty of makeup.



## The AutoStar Control Facility (Map #2)

The remote AutoStar control facility is a two-story glass block and brick building (DEF 7, BODY 7) with a modern appearance. Only the lower level of the building is detailed. There is a basement level in addition to the upper floors. The roof is flat with white gravel laid across. A barbed wire fence that is 2" high surrounds the entire compound. In front of the main entrance is a large brass mural of a satellite with a stone marquee noting the company's name and address. Small vanity lights surround the marquee. A detailed description of the facility follows.

**Lobby:** Numerous chairs and magazine racks are set up to make this lobby guest-friendly. A locked Plexiglas double door separates the lobby from the customer service center.

**Men's and Ladies' Restrooms:** These go without explanation, with no unique features. There are no exterior windows in these rooms.

**Customer Service:** The eight hostages will be against the far wall (away from the lobby doors). Although not indicated on the map, a half hex hole has been blown in the far wall with a shape charge to allow the customer service side of the building access to the normally secure technical facility. As noted in the text, there are four agents watching over the hostages.

**Elevator:** Two additional agents guard the main hallway and the elevator. Sly has deactivated the lift and fragged the controls, so the agents do not expect an attack from this direction.

**Storage:** This area is unguarded, and is filled with supplies and technical equipment. Characters with Luck may find something of value here to help them in a pinch. Otherwise, the room is just a cluttered space.

**Control Center:** Sly begins here with two other agents. The control center includes a bank of mainframe computers and high-tech servers. There is a complex control seat set up to aim the satellite dish and coordinate data with the main facility if necessary.



## The Old Mechanon Base

The entrance into this damaged base is described in the adventure text. Before delving in to the particulars of the base, it is important to note how this base was once used, and how it came to be in its present condition.

Mechanon constructed this base in Detroit under a junkyard in late 1990. The base was used as a construction zone for the Northern US and Canadian border operations. Mechanon selected the location based on the amount of technical activity he observed in the area. Mechanon suspected that this activity was somehow related to the machinations of Doctor Destroyer, but grossly underestimated the destructive forces being set in motion. His base was almost totally destroyed in 1992 along with most of Detroit. The base's destruction led to a drastic shift in Mechanon's construction strategy.

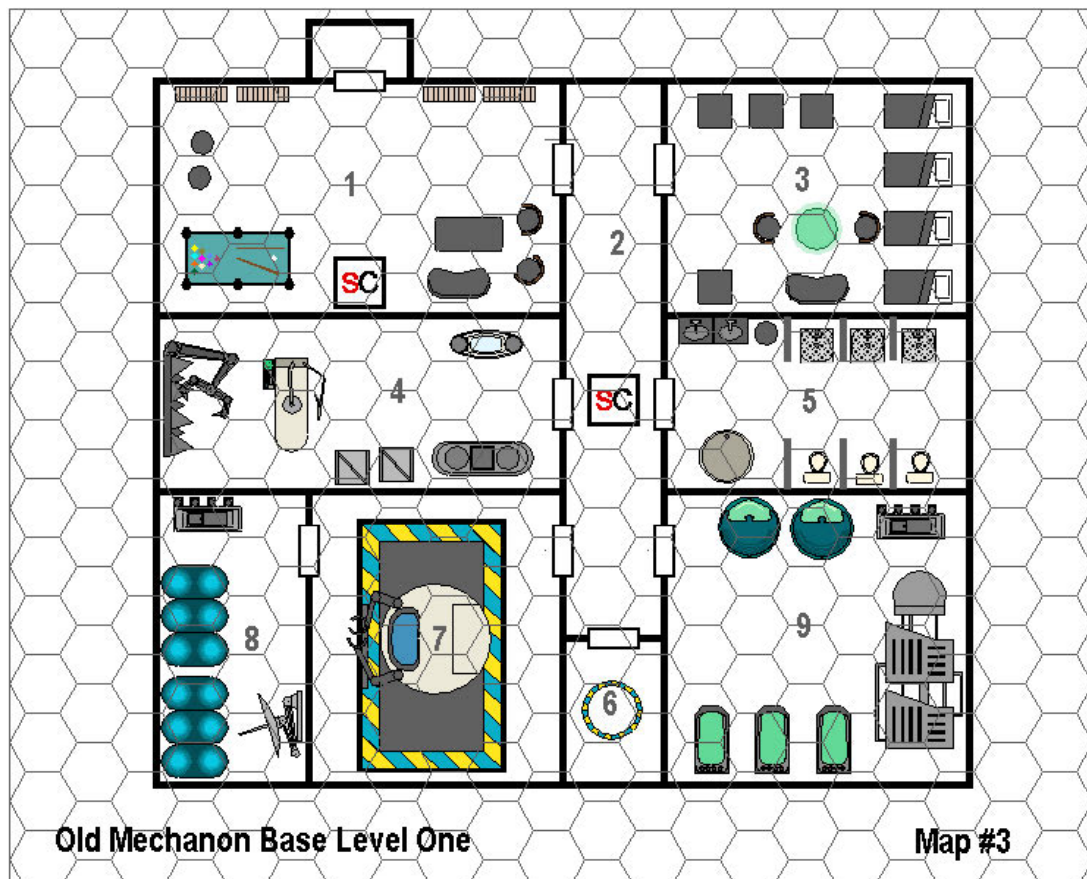
This base was one of a hundred to be built in and around urban locations. Since the destruction of this base, Mechanon has since chosen more remote locals for his rebuilding centers. Although each requires more extensive travel by his head, the possibility of their discovery and/or destruction is greatly reduced. Mechanon's newer bases are far fewer in number, and far better armed and equipped. Mechanon is presently developing Meson Transmitters that will allow data from his body to be beamed anywhere on earth for rapid reconstruction without the risk of "Head Time."

The base lay silent for twelve long years, until discovered by Armadillo during a bank robbery. Armadillo was happily tunneling along with his loot until he ran into a hard substance that resisted his efforts to penetrate. He explored the area, eventually finding a small lift shaft.

Armadillo explored the shaft, eventually gaining entrance to the old plant. Armadillo suspected that the technical equipment he found there, although mostly ruined, could be used to improve his armor systems. He quickly sought help in the supervillain community.

Eventually he met up with The Black Harlequin. Although he was crazy, the Harlequin did seem to have the necessary technical expertise to help Armadillo meet his goals. They quickly struck up a partnership. The black Harlequin agreed to improve Armadillo's armor as long as Armadillo did a few favors for him. Those few favors involved stealing the material needed to activate the reactor and computer systems found at the base.

Armadillo soon found himself taking orders in this partnership. Harlequin was quite bright, and had managed to hire and train agents and secure the services of a mercenary brick called Speed Pounder. Armadillo had heard of Pounder, but this guy was different. He began to feel confident that his new and improved armor was on the way. With the outfitting of the base and the hiring of Sly Fortune, the stage was set for a new era of success for Armadillo's supervillain career.



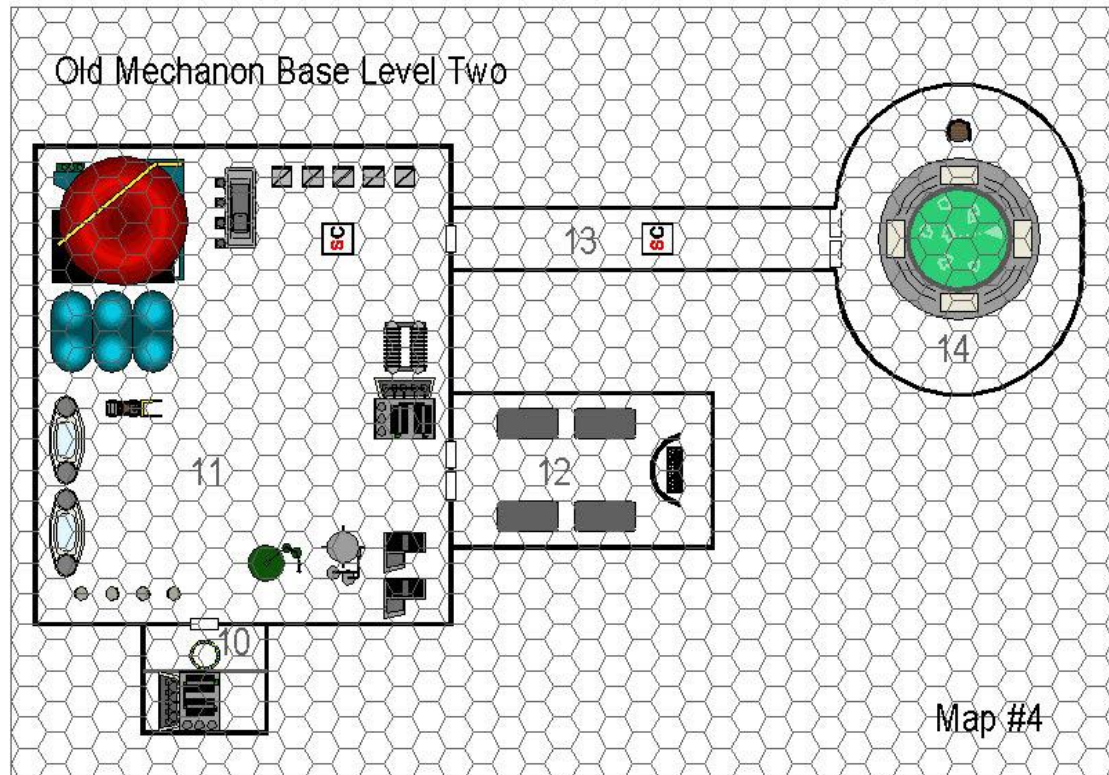


### OLD BASE LEVEL ONE (MAP #3)

The upper level of the base has been cleaned thoroughly, but is still in terrible condition. All of the devices described on this level have an Activation Roll. High watt lamps attached to generators light the entire level. The generators burn gasoline and are vented out of area 8, although the entire level still smells of gasoline and burnt rubber. All of the interior walls have sustained immense damage. The walls are DEF 12 with 1d6+2 BODY in each hex. The exterior walls are backed by stone (19 BODY per hex).

1. As noted in the text, there will be agents here. Please read the text to determine the villain battle plan. There is a pop turret in this room. If the base becomes active, the turret will randomly target heroes and agents alike. Remember that the turret is on an Activation Roll, as it was seriously damaged by Dr. Destroyer's assault on Detroit. The room is furnished with several milk-crate style bookshelves, an old Scandinavian sofa, a few bar stools, and a pool table.
2. The most notable feature to this hallway is the damaged pop turret. This particular turret is also fitted with a nerve gas canister. Both fire like a multi-power attack. Roll the Activation Roll for the gas separately from the turret. If the heroes are having too easy of a time in this area, fudge the Activation Roll for the nerve gas. This will raise the danger level immensely! The doors have no power, and are all jammed open iris valve style doors.
3. Several triple bunk beds make up this barracks room. Some lawn furniture finishes the makeshift bedrooms until better equipment is stolen.

4. This old assembly room has been cleaned, but is completely without function. Black Harlequin has boxed and cataloged some of the parts in steel crates. None of the electronic equipment is reparable, and the device functions are quite alien in appearance.
5. This is the head. The water is supplied through a big pump tank brought in by Armadillo from a prior theft. There is no evidence as to what the room used to be. It does appear that the floor was repaired with new sheet metal.
6. This is the lift. It works slowly, using a simple motor and chain. It takes a full turn to travel between levels. Jumping down the shaft leads to a fall of 5", which is also the height of the lower level's ceiling.
7. This room holds a damaged non-operational vehicle of some sort. The GM is free to determine its past function or the possibility of its repair. There is no obvious means of egress for the vehicle, and no clue as to how it would leave the base.
8. This area is completely destroyed. It appears to have held a high-tech computer system, and a strange receiver of some sort. None of the equipment is reparable.
9. This room has been completely cleaned, and appears to have survived mostly intact. Three coffin-like tanks are on one wall while two large tubes line the other wall. The room appears to have had a medical or biological function at one time. All of the machines are now silent, save for the hum of the gasoline generators stored here.



#### OLD BASE LEVEL TWO (MAP #4)

10. The makeshift lift opens into the main chamber of the base. In the room beyond, the main battle will take place.
11. Large “Kirby”-like Machines modified with strange whirling gadgets line the room walls. There is an operational turret in this room. It is likely that the villains will have taken out this turret before the heroes make their way onto this level. Once the reactor (the large red object) is activated, the base will come under Mechanon’s control, and Mechana will begin forming in location 14 (see text).

The GM is free to determine what would happen to characters that bust or break the reactor. This should be difficult to do (DEF 20 Hardened, BODY 18, Lack of Weakness -10 for Normal and Resistant, Power Defense 10, Resistant and Hardened). A foolish hero who does such a thing deserves a terrible fate. The villains are not so foolish, but Mechana may try if completely desperate. (A suggested result is a 10d6 Killing Explosion with -1 DC per 3”, combined with a 10d6 All or Nothing Transformation Attack for Blindness.)

12. This is the control center. Gasoline generators power the temporary controls used by Black Harlequin prior to the reactor’s activation. It is likely that this will not be the case by the time the characters arrive.

13. This hall of doom sports a fully operational turret with a fully charged nerve gas canister. The doors at the end of the hallway are Questionite and described in the text. Mechanon will intelligently target with this turret, attempting to delay entrance to the Mechana rebuilding center (area 14). He will never fire on Mechana. Since Mechanon is working this turret, it fires as a 7 SPD with an OCV of 15.

14. In this area, Mechana will form. This high-tech molting station is actually a slow and complicated form of teleport technology. Mechana is sinking into a similar bath at another location and emerging here, reconstructed atom by atom. The process takes a full turn from the time Black Harlequin activates the security systems. Given the defense systems Mechanon has set up, it is unlikely that the heroes or villains can halt her formation. I leave it up to any devious GM to devise the effects of submersion in the chemical bath. I suggest 3d6 Killing, NND (+1), Does Body (+1). Mechana would be immune to such an attack.

## Sly Fortune

**Background/History:** Sylvester Fortune started his military career at West Point. After graduation he was selected to represent a new American contingent in UNTIL. His extreme mental and physical capabilities lead to his rapid promotion to the upper ranks of the UNTIL organization. Sylvester should have been proud of his accomplishments, but instead focused on the negative aspects of his chosen career; namely the lack of substantial income.

Sly, as he was known for his card playing prowess, took to gambling to increase his income. For a while, luck was on his side and the money came easy. Ever the risk taker, Sly went for broke on a big gambling binge in Dubai. He spent his entire savings and then some, upside down to a powerful Arab noble to the tune of \$85,000 US. The noble explained that the debt could be repaid in other ways, and informed Sly that he was a member of VIPER. This was the beginning of Sly's career as a double agent.

For two years Sly served VIPER and UNTIL, making minor busts on VIPER defectors and trading top secret UNTIL documents and technology to VIPER. Eventually, this too became inadequate, and Sly decided to jump ship. By now, he had made a lifelong friend in Ahmad bin Sunni, the Arab noble, and numerous contacts in the mercenary world. He served with Terror, Inc. for several months until he saw the writing on the wall and left for America.

Presently, Sly is looking to build his own organization or join forces with the Warlord's Shadow Army. He has established a cover ID in America that allows for travel to numerous world hotspots without arising suspicion with US intelligence. His position as a stringer (freelance writer) with *Mercenary Today* allows a great cover along with a source of information for his day job!

**Personality/Motivation:** Sly is a money motivated adrenaline junkie. There is never enough action or money in his life to satisfy him. He travels the world wanting to prove that he is the best. He knows that if he does this, he will get more exciting and higher paying jobs. His favorite job is to take on paranormal opponents. He knows that they have powers, but he has skill. In his mind, they'll never have a chance!

**Quote:** (*Mimicking Steve Martin*) "I get paid for doin' this!" RATATATATATATAT! (*Automatic machine gun fire*).

**Powers/Tactics:** Sly Fortune carries a versatile arsenal of high-tech grenades and a personalized auto pistol with high stopping power. He supplements these tools with an uncanny level of skill developed under the tutelage of the world's greatest teachers. His fighting style includes

constant movement and exacting katas derived from the study of numerous martial arts styles. Sly practices the *cher-chin-do* art of body discipline, allowing him to block out much of the pain he feels in combat. This, coupled with the high-tech polymer battle fatigues that he wears, allows Sly to stay up in most fights under the barrage of superpowered opponents.

Sly is a very smart fighter. Play him to win. Sly generally fights with his levels in defense, using his grenades to set up his opponents. Once he has the advantage, he goes full bore with called shots and rapid autofires. Sly knows that his damage is low, and so generally focuses on one super at a time, or at least the most hurt or vulnerable target. One unconscious hero is worth two hurt heroes in his book.

**Campaign Use:** Sly Fortune is an interesting opponent. In future scenarios, place Sly in advantageous positions based upon his expert grasp of tactics and knowledge of his opponents. If Sly should be incarcerated, it should not be for any significant amount of time. His VIPER contacts often assist him with the best legal team that money can buy. It is also unlikely that he would be placed in Stronghold, as he has no known paranormal abilities. This allows for an easy breakout scenario.

Sly does not make a good Hunted, as there is little money involved in vendettas. He is too much the professional for this sort of unhinged hatred. He could work for a Hunted as a mercenary sent to kill, capture, or humiliate a superhero. He is also a good choice to find out a hero's Secret ID, leading to a great blackmail scenario.

If Sly is too powerful for your campaign, reduce his SPD to 5 and/or remove his *Pain Resistance* power. Reducing him much further makes Sly an agent, and this runs against his character concept. If Sly Fortune is too weak, increase his weapons array to include two multipowers allowing for devastating Multi-powered attacks. In addition, you can increase his STUN to 50 representing a very advanced form of *cher-chin-do* body discipline.

**Appearance:** Sly appears to be an athletic man in peak physical condition. He is 38 years old, and stands 6'2". He weighs 197 pounds, and carries little to no body fat. His back is scarred from a nasty gunshot wound. He keeps his hair cut in a military style and stays perpetually tan. His skin tone is the olive color of a true southern Italian. His eyes are dark brown, and seem to always glare with intensity. Sly wears a black and green camouflage uniform with a silver and black bandolier while adventuring.

**Sly Fortune**

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes                      |
|-----|------|------|------|----------------------------|
| 20  | STR  | 10   | 13-  | 400 kg; 4d6 HTH [2]        |
| 20  | DEX  | 30   | 13-  | OCV: 7/DCV: 7              |
| 20  | CON  | 20   | 13-  |                            |
| 15  | BODY | 10   | 12-  |                            |
| 13  | INT  | 3    | 12-  | PER Roll: 12-              |
| 18  | EGO  | 16   | 13-  | ECV: 6                     |
| 20  | PRE  | 10   | 13-  | PRE Attack: 4d6            |
| 16  | COM  | 3    | 12-  |                            |
| 8   | PD   | 4    |      | Total: 19 PD (11 rPD)      |
| 8   | ED   | 4    |      | Total: 19 ED (11 rED)      |
| 6   | SPD  | 30   |      | Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 |
| 8   | REC  | 0    |      |                            |
| 40  | END  | 0    |      |                            |
| 35  | STUN | 0    |      |                            |

**Total Characteristics Cost: 140**

**Movement:** Running: 7"/14"  
 Leaping: 4"/8"  
 Swimming: 5"/10"

| Cost | Powers                                                                                                                                                                                                              | END |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 16   | <i>Flashbang Grenades:</i> Flash 7d6 (Sight and Hearing Group), Explosion (+½); 2 Charges (-1½), OAF (-1), Range Based on Strength (-¼) [2]                                                                         |     |
| 20   | <i>Commando Knife:</i> HKA 1d6+1 (2½d6 with STR), Armor Piercing (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1) 0                                                                                                    |     |
| 30   | <i>High Tech Slug Thrower:</i> RKA 2d6, +1 Autofire (5 shots; +½), STUN Multiplier (+¼), 4 Clips of 16 Charges (+¼); OAF (-1) [16]                                                                                  |     |
| 5    | <i>Another High Tech Slug Thrower</i> [16]                                                                                                                                                                          |     |
| 16   | <i>Stun Grenades:</i> EB 8d6 (versus ED), STUN Only (+0), Explosion (+½); 2 Charges (-1½), OAF (-1), Range Based on Strength (-¼) [2]                                                                               |     |
| 16   | <i>Tanglewire Grenades:</i> Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, Explosion (+½); OAF (-1), 2 Charges (-1½), Range Based on Strength (-¼) [2]                                                                                        |     |
| 20   | <i>Advanced Combat Suit:</i> Armor (8 PD/8 ED), Hardened (+¼); OIF (-½) 0                                                                                                                                           |     |
| 5    | <i>Clear Earpiece:</i> Radio Perception/Transmission; IAF Fragile (-¾), Flashed as Radio and Hearing (-¼) 0                                                                                                         |     |
| 2    | <i>Fast:</i> Running +1" (7" Total) 1                                                                                                                                                                               |     |
| 22   | <i>Pain Resistance:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; STUN Only (-½), Must Be Aware of Attack (-½) <b>plus</b> Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25%; STUN Only (-½), Must Be Aware of Attack (-½) 0 |     |
| 6    | <i>Resistance Training:</i> Mental Defense (10 points total) 0                                                                                                                                                      |     |
| 20   | <i>Shape Charges:</i> RKA 3d6 (versus PD), Time Delay (+¼), Armor Piercing (+½);                                                                                                                                    |     |

2 Charges (-1½), OAF (-1), No Knockback (-¼), Cannot Be Used with Multiple-Power Attacks (-¼) [2]  
 6 *Ultra Tech Goggles:* Nightvision; OIF (-½) **plus** Sight Group Flash Defense (5 points); OIF (-½) 0  
 3 *UNTIL Seal Training:* Swimming +3" (5" Total) 1

**Martial Arts: Snake Fighting**

| Maneuver       | OCV | DCV | Notes                               |
|----------------|-----|-----|-------------------------------------|
| 4 Block        | +2  | +2  | Block, Abort                        |
| 4 Choke Hold   | -2  | +0  | 1 Limb; 3d6 NND                     |
| 4 Chop         | -2  | +0  | HKA 1d6                             |
| 4 Disarm       | -1  | +1  | 40 STR Disarm                       |
| 4 Dodge        | —   | +5  | Dodge, Abort                        |
| 4 Escape       | +0  | +0  | 45 STR Escape                       |
| 4 Eye Poke     | -1  | -1  | Flash 6d6                           |
| 3 Grab         | -1  | -1  | 2 Limbs, 40 STR Hold                |
| 5 Kick         | -2  | +1  | 10d6 Strike                         |
| 4 Nerve Strike | -1  | +1  | 3d6 NND                             |
| 4 Punch        | +0  | +2  | 8d6 Strike                          |
| 3 Throw        | +0  | +1  | 6d6+v/5, Target Falls               |
| 8              | +2  |     | Damage Classes (already figured in) |
| 1              |     |     | Use Art with Blades                 |

**Perks**

7 Contact: VIPER Commander in Dubai 11- (Access to Major Institutions, Significant Contacts of His Own, Extremely Useful Skills or Resources, Limited by Identity, Good relationship)  
 2 Deep Cover: Anthony Portofino, Stringer for *Mercenary Life*  
 6 Fringe Benefit: Concealed Weapon Permit, International Driver's License, Passport, Press Pass, Weapon Permit  
 5 Money: Well Off  
 3 Reputation: Elite Mercenary 11- (medium-sized group) +3/+3d6

**Talents**

6 Combat Luck  
 15 Combat Sense 12-  
 5 Resistance: +5 versus Interrogation

**Skills**

20 +2 Overall  
 16 +2 with All Combat  
 5 Accurate Sprayfire  
 3 Acrobatics 13-  
 3 Analyze Combat Technique 12-  
 3 Breakfall 13-  
 3 Bribery 13-  
 3 Bugging 12-  
 3 Climbing 13-  
 3 Combat Driving 13-  
 3 Combat Piloting 13-  
 3 Concealment 12-  
 5 Concentrated Sprayfire

## DIGITAL HERO #12

- 5 Cramming
- 10 Defense Maneuver IV
- 3 Demolitions 12-
- 3 Disguise 12-
- 3 Fast Draw 13-
- 2 Forgery 12-
- 2 Gambling 12- (Card Games)
- 3 Interrogation 13-
- 3 Lockpicking 13-
- 3 Mechanics 12-
- 3 Oratory 13-
- 3 Paramedics 12-
- 3 PS: Mercenary 12-
- 3 PS: Secret Agent 12-
- 3 PS: Terrorist 12-
- 5 Rapid Autofire
- 3 Shadowing 12-
- 5 Skipover Sprayfire
- 3 Stealth 13-
- 3 Streetwise 13-
- 10 Survival 12- (Arctic/Subarctic, Desert, Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical, Urban)
- 3 Systems Operation 12-
- 9 Tactics 15-
- 3 Teamwork 13-
- 18 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Combat Aircraft, Hang Gliding, Helicopters, Large Planes, Large Rowed Boats, Parachuting, Advanced, Parachuting, Basic, Rafts, Riding Animals, SCUBA, Skiing, Small Motorized Boats, Small Planes, Small Rowed Boats, Snowmobiles, Tracked Military Vehicles, Wheeled Military Vehicles
- 10 Two-Weapon Fighting (HTH)
- 10 Two-Weapon Fighting (Ranged)
- 11 WF: Blades, Emplaced Weapons, Flamethrowers, General Purpose/Heavy Machine Guns, Grenade Launchers, Off Hand, Shoulder-Fired Weapons, Small Arms, Thrown Knives/Axes/Darts
- 3 Linguist
  - 1 1) Language: Arabic (Fluent)
  - 1 2) Language: French (Fluent)
  - 1 3) Language: German (Fluent)
  - 1 4) Language: Japanese (Fluent)
  - 2 5) Language: Portuguese (Completely Fluent with Accent)
  - 2 6) Language: Spanish (Completely Fluent with Accent)
- 3 Scholar
  - 2 1) KS: Paranormals 12-
  - 2 2) KS: Mercenary Groups 12-
  - 2 3) KS: Military Equipment 12-
  - 5 4) KS: UNTIL Procedures 15-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 535**

**Total Cost: 675**

### 200+ Disadvantages

- 20 Hunted: UNTIL 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
- 15 Hunted: Eurostar 8- (Mo Pow)
- 10 Hunted: Interpol 8- (Less Pow, NCI)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: All about the Benjamins (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Driven to Be the Best (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Adrenaline Junkie (Common, Strong)
- 15 Reputation: world-traveling soldier-of-fortune 11- (Extreme)
- 10 Rivalry: Bullet of Bullet's Raiders, Professional, Rival Aware of Rivalry
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret ID, Anthony Portofino (Frequently, Major)
- 345 Experience Points

**Total Cost: 675**

Sly Fortune





## Speed Pounder

**Background/History:** Bobby Holcomb, the Pounder, was a two-time loser, having spent four of the last six years in Stronghold. Yeah, he was strong, and a decent fighter, but always some martial artist would toss him on the ground, and then lights out. This new gig with DEMON was the ticket. A Morbane by the name of Dalmon Kerr had recruited him for a special mission. Dalmon had a reputation even among other Morbanes as a wizard who never failed. Pounder felt great about this assignment, as it verified that his supervillain career was not a total failure. That was until Dalmon spoke.

“Pounder, your past record has been far from exemplary. You have failed to ever win a battle against paranormal opposition. I am afraid that although strong and rather tough, your lack of mobility and slow reaction time are to blame. I will cure this, but at a cost. I demand unfailing loyalty from my servants, and if you are to serve me, you will be my eternal slave. Am I clear on these conditions?”

Pounder opened his mouth to object but found he could not. Staring at the Morbane, he found his head nodding in agreement. “Good, then we are agreed!” Dalmon allowed himself a disturbing chuckle.

Pounder underwent alchemical and magical treatments more akin to torture than aid. At several points, he pleaded for his life and begged that the treatments end. The emotionless Dalmon continued without mercy for over two weeks.

When Pounder awoke, he was lying on a stone table in the center of a clearing. Cold rain beat down on his face. His master stood before him along with three DEMON mechagents, and four others armed with assault rifles. He was naked, but not cold, as he rose to his feet. Immediately, he could tell that he had changed. His movements were graceful and clean. He could move his arms and legs with uncanny speed. To him, the rain appeared to stop as he moved. He looked at those around him, still seething with anger from his weeks of torture. Dalmon’s voice boomed to him like thunder. “Dead to the world is Pounder. My fellow servants of evil, I give you Speed Pounder. Let the world tremble in fear at the might of Dalmon Kerr!”

Suddenly, a blue light lanced into the back of the Morbane. Sapphire appeared over the tree line, followed by a cluster of charging heroes. The Champions had arrived! Seeing his chance, he rushed to finish off the downed Morbane. He moved to strike, only to find his body locked and rigid. He could not attack! A bolt from Defender brought him back to his senses. It hurt some, but not as much as it would have hurt Pounder. He was not only faster, but more powerful as well. He hopped to his feet, and before Ironclad could

close, sprinted off into the woods. He would not end up in Stronghold again. No, Speed Pounder was here to stay.

**Personality/Motivation:** Speed Pounder is excited about his newfound power. He loves a good brawl where his superior speed and power can come to the forefront. Even as Pounder, he was a thrillseeker, but as Speed Pounder, he has the power to come back in one piece.

Speed Pounder fears no man, but he does fear DEMON. His terror is partly due to the tortures he went through, but also partly due to the geas spell placed on him by a host of Morbanes upon his induction to DEMON. Speed Pounder has three primary motivations; get rich, stay out of jail, and have plenty of fights!

Speed Pounder has an acute form of A.D.D. He takes medication to quiet his nerves, but due to his paranormal physiology, he always seems slightly undermedicated. He can’t seem to sit still, and frequently goes out looking for fights.

**Quote:** “Remember when your Daddy told you that there was always someone stronger and faster than you? Well guess what? Your Daddy was talking about me!”

**Powers/Tactics:** Speed Pounder does not like to lose, and with his new suite of powers, he is pretty hard to beat one-on-one. He closes with his opponents and holds, counting on spoiling anything they do with his Fast Draw. He will often follow up this “hold” with an Autofire attack. Against other bricks, he often waits until he has a free phase (usually Segment 6) and does a Rapid Fire Sweep hitting his opponent up to 10 times! In team battles, Speed Pounder uses his mobility to single out opponents for a Rapid Fire beat down. Speed Pounder often uses his Flying Dodge to escape if the fight is not going his way. Speed Pounder is an expert in using his Autofire Strength, suffering few penalties due to the three levels he has with Autofire attacks. Although durable, Speed Pounder often fights defensively. He only uncorks when he is sure to land several good shots, or he is sure that the opposition can’t hurt him.

**Campaign Use:** Speed Pounder is best used as muscle for a mastermind villain. His A.D.D. keeps him from developing his own plots. He’ll start on an idea, only to become bored and move on to the next goal. He knows how to get hired, and is relatively good at marketing himself to the brainy villains out there. Speed Pounder can be a good fit for any villain team needing a little muscle.

Speed Pounder makes a great Hunted for a speedster, a brick, or a martial artist character. Since he loves to fight, Speed Pounder is likely to attack any time he feels he can get away with it. Being a thrillseeker, he is likely to take great risks to beat on his Hunted.

If Speed Pounder is too tough for your campaign, reduce his defenses to the mid-20s, and remove his Levels with Autofire and his Lightning Reflexes. If he is not tough enough, raise his Autofire ability to cover higher DCs. Also, make his levels with All Combat to maintain a high DCV to range, as well as Hand-to-Hand. If this is not enough, raise his STR and SPD to 60 and 7, respectively.

**Appearance:** Speed Pounder is 7' tall, and weighs over 400 kg. He wears a black body costume with silver leggings that look metallic. His boots have big treads like tires on the bottom. He wears a half mask that is also black with silver trim around the eye slits. His chest emblem is a silver lighting bolt that ends in a fist.

## Speed Pounder



**Speed Pounder**

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes                      |
|-----|------|------|------|----------------------------|
| 50  | STR  | 40   | 19-  | 25 tons; 10d6 HTH [5]      |
| 28  | DEX  | 54   | 15-  | OCV: 9/DCV: 9              |
| 30  | CON  | 40   | 15-  |                            |
| 15  | BODY | 10   | 12-  |                            |
| 10  | INT  | 0    | 11-  | PER Roll: 11-              |
| 15  | EGO  | 10   | 12-  | ECV: 5                     |
| 25  | PRE  | 15   | 14-  | PRE Attack: 5d6            |
| 14  | COM  | 2    | 12-  |                            |
| 30  | PD   | 20   |      | Total: 30 PD (15 rPD)      |
| 30  | ED   | 24   |      | Total: 30 ED (15 rED)      |
| 6   | SPD  | 22   |      | Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 |
| 16  | REC  | 0    |      |                            |
| 60  | END  | 0    |      |                            |
| 55  | STUN | 0    |      |                            |

**Total Characteristics Cost: 237**

**Movement:** Running: 7"/14"  
 Leaping: 4"/8"  
 Swimming: 5"/10"

| Cost | Powers                                                                                                       | END |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 50   | <i>Speed Pounding:</i> Autofire STR (5 shots; +½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +½)                             | 2   |
| 4    | <i>Big and Heavy:</i> Knockback Resistance -2"                                                               | 0   |
| 5    | <i>Enhanced Physiology:</i> Life Support (Extended Breathing, Safe in Intense Cold, Safe in Intense Heat)    | 0   |
| 15   | <i>Hard Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (15 PD/15 ED)                                                            | 0   |
| 5    | <i>Permanancy:</i> Power Defense (5 points)                                                                  | 0   |
| 5    | <i>Tough Guy:</i> Lack Of Weakness (-5) for Normal Defense                                                   | 0   |
| 5    | <i>Combat Visor:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (7 points); OIF Durable (-½)                                  | 0   |
| 63   | <i>Super Speed:</i> Running +14", 8x Noncombat, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼), Rapid Noncombat Movement (+¼) | 2   |

**Martial Arts: Way of the Quick Brick**

| Maneuver       | OCV | DCV | Notes                       |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----------------------------|
| 4 Charge       | +0  | -2  | STR +2d6 +v/5 Strike, FMove |
| 5 Flying Dodge | —   | +4  | Dodge, Abort, FMove         |
| 5 Flying Grab  | -2  | -1  | 2 Limbs, 60 STR Hold, FMove |
| 4 Block        | +2  | +2  | Block, Abort                |
| 4 Escape       | +0  | +0  | 65 STR Escape               |

**Talents**

- 11 Lightning Reflexes: +7 DEX to Act First with All Actions

**Skills**

|    |                              |
|----|------------------------------|
| 20 | +4 with Hand-to-Hand Combat  |
| 6  | +3 versus Autofire Penalties |
| 3  | Acrobatics 15-               |
| 5  | Accurate Sprayfire           |
| 3  | Breakfall 15-                |
| 2  | CK: Millennium City 11-      |
| 5  | Concentrated Sprayfire       |
| 9  | Fast Draw 18-                |
| 2  | KS: Mercenary World 11-      |
| 2  | PS: Mercenary 11-            |
| 5  | Rapid Attack (Hand-to-Hand)  |
| 5  | Rapid Autofire               |
| 5  | Skipover Sprayfire           |
| 3  | Streetwise 14-               |
| 3  | Tactics 11-                  |

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 263****Total Cost: 500****200+ Disadvantages**

- 10 Distinctive Features: Spaz! Manic and Hyper-kinetic Mannerisms (Concealable)  
 10 Distinctive Features: Detects as Magically "Hasted" to Discriminatory Detect Magic (Not Concealable, Unusual Senses)  
 25 Hunted: DEMON 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Public ID)  
 20 Hunted: PRIMUS 8- (As Pow, NCI, Public ID)  
 10 Physical Limitation: Attention Deficit Disorder, Medicated (Frequently, Slightly)  
 15 Physical Limitation: Under Geas – Cannot Battle a Morbane from DEMON (Infrequently, Fully)  
 15 Psychological Limitation: Likes to Fight (Common, Strong)  
 15 Psychological Limitation: Thrillseeker (Common, Strong)  
 15 Social Limitation: Public ID: Speed Pounder, Supervillain/Mercenary (Frequently, Major)  
 15 Susceptibility: 1d6 per Phase from Anti-Magic Field or Effect (Uncommon)  
 150 Experience Points

**Total Cost: 500**

## Mechana

**Background/History:** Mechana came online November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2001 at 3:40 AM. Ever since, “she” has been serving Mechanon’s plan of Carbon-Based Genocide as a caretaker of the master villain’s expanding assets. Mechana is a lesser to Mechanon in nearly every way, save that she has Mechanon’s newly improved servo-systems for increased manual dexterity. Her first sighting came at the now famous massacre on the PowerSoft Campus in Washington State on January 14<sup>th</sup> of 2002. The reasons for the attack are unknown, but 183 PowerSoft employees were killed and numerous others severely injured.

Mechana has yet to face superpowered opposition, so her power level is relatively unknown. Scientific analysis of footage gathered from the PowerSoft massacre seem to point to power levels above standard paranormal, but below elite threats like her creator or Dr. Destroyer. What is known is that she appears to be constructed of the same armor alloy as the most recently encountered Mechanon. She has demonstrated the ability to fly and launch an impressive array of energy projections.

Mechana has proven to be a topic of great discussion amongst scientist in the artificial intelligence field. Does Mechanon have feelings? Does he need companionship? Most believe this creation is more a demonstration of Mechanon’s sense of power. Man needed God to create a suitable helpmate. Mechanon needed only himself!

**Personality/Motivation:** Mechana’s personality (or lack thereof) is in direct contrast to Mechanon’s. Mechana is fully self-aware like her creator, but unlike him she is not fully self-directing. Her sole purpose is to serve her master. She does this to her full capability, but rarely makes leaps of creativity to do so in original ways. Her fanatic loyalty inhibits any chance of fully utilizing her vast intellect for creative or destructive pursuits. Mechana shares Mechanon’s desire to eradicate all organic life. She does not share Mechanon’s need to carry out this mission in inefficient grand schemes. She is perfectly fine with efficiently eliminating living things one at a time. This may well signal a change in the master villain’s future motivation, but this is considered highly unlikely.

**Quote:** “Target is known as Defender. Threat to this unit is considered minimal. Estimated time required for termination – 4.35 seconds.”

**Powers/Tactics:** Mechana’s powers are much like Mechanon’s, but on a smaller scale. She does not possess the secondary weapons array of her builder, and hence rarely uses multiple power attacks. She prefers ranged combat to hand-to-hand combat, targeting enemies capable of hurting her first before enemies with low damage. Against multiple foes, she will get in the air and spread her Energy Bolt attack. She will attempt to rapid fire or haymaker this attack if she has a speed advantage. Mechana will use terror in her favor, following up a Disintegration Beam or Shredder Attack with a Presence Attack. This is most violent when targeting a low defense organic!

All but two of Mechana’s attacks originate from her hands. The two exceptions are the Disintegration Beam, which comes from her eyes, and the Synaptic Stunner, that originates from her stylized headpiece.

**Campaign Use:** Mechana can be used as a poor man’s Mechanon. Her powers make for a formidable opponent for a team of starting heroes. In campaigns of a higher power level, she makes for a great backup for Mechanon himself. Her presence alongside Mechanon should be enough to intimidate even the toughest of hero teams. If Mechana is too powerful for your campaign, lower her SPD to 5 or reduce her Levels with All Combat from 3 to 1. It does not make sense to reduce her defense or attack DCs, as this runs contrary to her conception and the goals of her designer. It is highly recommended that you do not reduce her power level in standard superhero campaigns. If Mechana is not tough enough, give her a secondary weapons array like Mechanon’s and add a targeting computer system that adds three 5-point Ranged Combat Levels with a 14-Activation Roll. Do not increase Mechana’s powers in any way that would eclipse Mechanon’s, as this runs contrary to her conception.

**Appearance:** Mechana appears as a large “female” android of similar design to Mechanon. Her outer shell is a shiny chrome alloy with gold fibers that look like striated muscle. She has a glowing red set of eye slits and a stylized headpiece that crackles with white-hot energy. Her build is as voluptuously female as Mechanon’s is remarkably male. Her hands have a single golden disc in the palms from which originate various bolts of destructive force. Mechana’s movements are more fluid than those demonstrated by her male counterpart. Mechana’s voice is much like the computer’s voice from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

## DIGITAL HERO #12

### Mechana

| Val | Char | Cost | Roll | Notes                      |
|-----|------|------|------|----------------------------|
| 60  | STR  | 50   | 21-  | 100 tons; 12d6 HTH [6]     |
| 25  | DEX  | 45   | 14-  | OCV: 8/DCV: 8              |
| 40  | CON  | 60   | 17-  |                            |
| 15  | BODY | 10   | 12-  |                            |
| 25  | INT  | 15   | 14-  | PER Roll: 17-              |
| 15  | EGO  | 10   | 12-  | ECV: 5                     |
| 35  | PRE  | 25   | 16-  | PRE Attack: 7d6            |
| 12  | COM  | 1    | 11-  |                            |
| 30  | PD   | 18   |      | Total: 30 PD (30 rPD)      |
| 30  | ED   | 22   |      | Total: 30 ED (30 rED)      |
| 6   | SPD  | 25   |      | Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 |
| 20  | REC  | 0    |      |                            |
| 80  | END  | 0    |      |                            |
| 65  | STUN | 0    |      |                            |

**Total Characteristics Cost: 281**

|                  |           |          |
|------------------|-----------|----------|
| <b>Movement:</b> | Flight:   | 20"/160" |
|                  | Running:  | 10"/20"  |
|                  | Leaping:  | 12"/24"  |
|                  | Swimming: | 2"/4"    |

| Cost | Powers                                                                                                                                      | END  |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 75   | <i>Weapons Array:</i> Multipower, 75-point reserve                                                                                          |      |
| 7u   | 1) <i>Disintegrator:</i> RKA 5d6 (ED)                                                                                                       | 7    |
| 7u   | 2) <i>Energy Bolt:</i> EB 15d6 (ED)                                                                                                         | 7    |
| 7u   | 3) <i>Meson Bolt:</i> EB 10d6 (ED), Armor Piercing (+1/2)                                                                                   | 7    |
| 5u   | 4) <i>Pain Ray:</i> EB 15d6 (PD), STUN-Only (+0); Only versus Organics (-1/2)                                                               | 7    |
| 7u   | 5) <i>Shredder:</i> RKA 2d6 (versus PD), Autofire (3 shots; +1/4), +1 STUN Multiplier (+1/4), 64 Charges (+1/2), Armor Piercing (+1/2)      | [64] |
| 6u   | 6) <i>Synaptic Stunner:</i> Entangle 5d6, 5 DEF, Takes No Damage From Attacks (+1/2); Cannot Form Barriers (-1/4)                           | 7    |
| 51   | <i>Built Mechanon Tough:</i> Hardened PD and ED (30/30) <b>plus</b> Damage Resistance (30 PD/30 ED), Hardened (+1/4)                        | 0    |
| 45   | <i>Android Body:</i> Life Support (Full)                                                                                                    | 0    |
| 10   | <i>Adaptive Sensors:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points)                                                                              | 0    |
| 10   | <i>Flawless Engineering:</i> Lack Of Weakness (-5) for Normal and Resistant Defenses                                                        | 0    |
| 6    | <i>Inertial Stabilizers and Mass:</i> Knockback Resistance -3"                                                                              | 0    |
| 10   | <i>Neural Dampeners:</i> Mental Defense (13 Total)                                                                                          | 0    |
| 10   | <i>Reactive Nanites:</i> Power Defense (10 Points)                                                                                          | 0    |
| 75   | <i>Boot Rockets:</i> Flight 20", 8x Noncombat, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2)                                                              | 0    |
| 8    | <i>Robotic Legs:</i> Running +4" (10" Total)                                                                                                | 1    |
| 29   | <i>Advanced Sensors:</i> Infrared Perception <b>plus</b> Ultraviolet Perception <b>plus</b> Increased Arc Of Perception (360°, Sight Group) |      |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |       |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
|    | <b>plus</b> Enhanced Perception (+3 to PER Rolls for All Sense Groups)                                                                                                                                                                                      | 0     |
| 10 | <i>Internal Communicator:</i> Radio Perception/Transmission                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 0     |
| 21 | <i>Shielded Radio Link:</i> Mind Link (Specific Group of Minds; No LOS Needed, 8x Number of Minds), Invisible Power Effects (Fully Invisible, +1/2); Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Flashed as Radio and Hearing Groups, not Mental Group (-1/2) | 0     |
| 32 | <i>Internal Computer:</i> Absolute Range Sense <b>plus</b> Absolute Time Sense <b>plus</b> Bump Of Direction <b>plus</b> Lightning Calculator <b>plus</b> Universal Translator                                                                              | 14- 0 |
| 57 | <i>Self Destruct Mechanism:</i> RKA 7d6, Trigger (Radio Signal from Mechanon or Base) (+1/4), No Normal Defense (ED Force Field, +1), Does BODY (+1); 1 Charges which Never Recover (-4), Self Only (-1)                                                    | [1]   |

### Skills

|    |                            |
|----|----------------------------|
| 24 | +3 with All Combat         |
| 6  | +2 with Weapons Array      |
| 3  | Computer Programming 14-   |
| 3  | Cryptography 14-           |
| 3  | Deduction 14-              |
| 3  | Demolitions 14-            |
| 3  | Electronics 14-            |
| 3  | Lockpicking 14-            |
| 3  | Mechanics 14-              |
| 3  | Systems Operation 14-      |
| 3  | Security Systems 14-       |
| 3  | Tactics 14-                |
| 3  | Scientist                  |
| 2  | 1) SS: Chemistry 14-       |
| 2  | 2) SS: Nuclear Physics 14- |
| 2  | 3) SS: Physics 14-         |
| 2  | 4) SS: Robotics 14-        |

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 559**

**Total Cost: 840**

### 200+ Disadvantages

|     |                                                                                                   |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 20  | <i>Distinctive Features:</i> Large "Female" Version of Mechanon (Not Concealable, Major Reaction) |
| 15  | <i>Hunted:</i> UNTIL 8- (As Pow, NCI)                                                             |
| 25  | <i>Psychological Limitation:</i> Must Destroy All Organic Life on Earth (Very Common, Total)      |
| 25  | <i>Psychological Limitation:</i> Must Obey Mechanon (Very Common, Total)                          |
| 15  | <i>Reputation:</i> Mechanon's Killing Machine Frequently 11- (Extreme)                            |
| 20  | <i>Vulnerability:</i> 2x STUN from Gravitic, Magnetic, or Force Attacks (Common)                  |
| 520 | Experience Points                                                                                 |

**Total Cost: 840**

Mechana

