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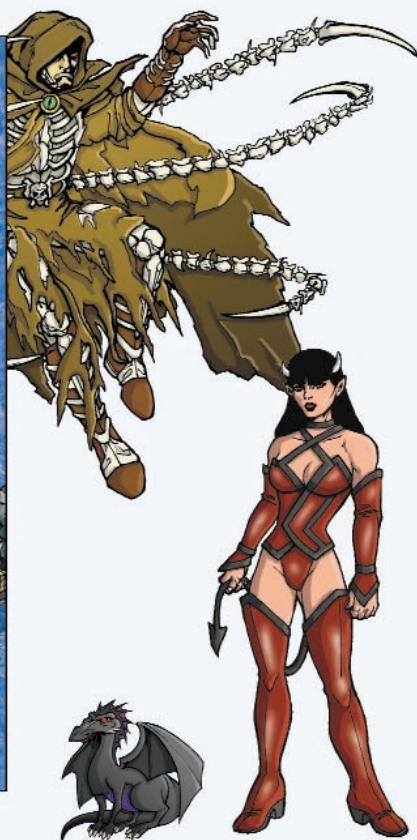
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SUPERLINE

Issue 2

June, 2005

www.roninarts.com

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INTRODUCTION

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

In this, the second issue of the *Superline* series, Ronin Arts brings you three complete single-session adventures and three monsters that can be used to create adventures of your own.

While the adventures are designed in the spirit and at the pace of superhero comic books and cartoon episodes, the GM can easily expand each with a little work.

Each of the adventures is presented in the following general format:

Summary: A paragraph on what the adventure is about.

Set-Up: How the heroes can be introduced to the adventure.

Adventure: The actual adventure, including boxed text for such things as specific plot points, vehicle statistics, and villain tactics.

Follow-Up: Options for what might happen after the heroes complete the adventure and suggestions for rewarding (or punishing) the heroes.

Supporting Cast: Information and statistics on minions and other minor characters.

Main Villain(s): Detailed background, information, and statistics about the major bad guy(s) of the story.

ADJUSTING THE DIFFICULTY

One of the nice things about M&M is the ease with which the difficulty of adventures and monsters can be adjusted.

Since everything works on the power point system, all that is needed to create a more powerful supervillain or creature is to add Power Levels (and the standard

15 power points per Power Level) until the opponent is a match for the heroes.

Conversely, if the opponent is too powerful, simply drop the opponent's Power Level (and the 15 power points) until the heroes can handle the challenge.

The same can, of course, be done with minions.

That pretty much covers it. Thanks for purchasing the second issue of *Superline* and enjoy!

ABOUT THE CREATORS

Michael Hammes

Michael Hammes has been freelancing in the role-playing industry since 2001. Starting small, he has steadily built his repertoire, and reputation, by working for such companies as Ronin Arts, Alderac Entertainment Group, Dark Quest Games, and E.N. Publishing. He is currently trying to balance his writing schedule with his role as stay-at-home father. To catch the latest from Michael's Imagination, please visit:

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TRIPLE THREAT

Summary

Gangs are a problem in every major city and the heroes' is no exception. Of course, it is very likely that most of the time the heroes pay little attention to what the gangs are doing (that's what the police are for, after all), but when reports of gangs committing robberies using sophisticated weaponry hit the news, it's time for the heroes to get involved.

Set-Up

A trio of duplicates each calling itself Mr. Brown is supplying three of the city's more notorious gangs, the Dukes, the Eastsiders, and the Pit Bulls, with very high-tech weaponry.

The Mr. Brown duplicates that have been sent by the original Mr. Brown (who is nowhere near the heroes' city) at his employer's behest.

Mr. Brown's employer desires a field test for the weapons prior to offering them for sale on the world market, as well as an opportunity to generate publicity for what the weapons can do.

Having supplied the weapons, the trio of Mr. Browns now ostensibly remains with their gangs to train members on the weapons' use and repair any malfunctions.

In reality, the duplicates are there to note any design deficiencies in the weapons (for correction prior to mass

A Trio of Weapons

Each of the gangs is using a distinct high-tech weapon, which in turn is supplied by a different Mr. Brown duplicate.

Although the weapons look very different, a fact due to each one unleashing a different kind of energy, the weapons are all manufactured using the same basic technology.

This fact can be revealed if a hero knowledgeable in technology gets hold of two or more different weapons and takes them apart. The DC of making the comparison depends on the skill used:

Skill	DC
Craft (weapon systems)	15
Craft (mechanics, electronics, or any other craft the GM considers appropriate)	20
Repair	25

The weapons and their statistics are:

Oscillating Resonator [Energy Blast (vibration) +9; *Extra*: Multifire; *Flaw*: Device, Full Effect; *Power Stunts*: Penetrating Attack; *Source*: Super Science; *Cost*: 11 pp].

Positron Differentiator [Energy Blast (electricity) +9; *Extra*: Multifire; *Flaw*: Device, Full Effect; *Power Stunts*: Penetrating Attack; *Source*: Super Science; *Cost*: 11 pp].

Propulsion Precipitator [Energy Blast (kinetic) +9; *Extra*: Multifire; *Flaw*: Device, Full Effect; *Power Stunts*: Penetrating Attack; *Source*: Super Science; *Cost*: 11 pp].

The GM can assign each type of weapon to whichever gang he or she wishes or simply use the following list:

Gang	Weapon
Dukes	Positron Differentiator
Eastsiders	Oscillating Resonator
Pit Bulls	Propulsion Precipitator

production) and to gather all of the media reports (i.e. tape news programs, clip newspaper articles, etc.) for a subsequent advertising campaign by their employer.

The gangs, whose territories are in different parts of the city and separated by the territories of other gangs, are unaware of the duplicity, each believing that they are Mr. Brown's sole clients.

Adventure

The adventure begins whenever the heroes decide to take action to get these weapons off the streets. They can either take this action on their own or the local authorities can ask them to intervene once the gangs begin putting the weapons into play.

Ultimately, in order to be successful in getting all the weapons off the streets, the heroes will have to have a final showdown with each of the gangs and their respective Mr. Brown duplicates at the various gangs' hangouts.

Before such a climactic battle, however, the GM should engineer a number of encounters between the heroes and gang members armed with the weapons. Here are some possibilities:

- Members of the various gangs are using the weapons to commit robberies (jewelry stores, banks, electronic stores, etc.). It's up to the GM to decide in such encounters whether the police arrive before the heroes. If they do, they'll find themselves heavily outgunned and unable to do anything more than keep the gang members pinned down until the heroes arrive.
- With the advantage of the new weapons the gangs are settling some old scores with rival gangs (not necessarily with each other). Although this sort of thing may consist more of drive-bys (which the heroes would only encounter

if they happen to be in the area), it is quite possible that they would evolve into a pitched battle around some other gang's hangout or even in the middle of a neighborhood.

- Some drunk, high, or otherwise judgment-impaired members of a gang are going on a shooting spree with the weapons, shooting at cars, buildings, and maybe even people just for the fun of it, and causing considerable panic in the area.
- Having gotten wind of the fact that the heroes are after them, some ambitious gang members attempt to set up an ambush for the heroes (usually by faking one of the above encounters).

Each of these encounters should have enough gang members to give the heroes a bit of a challenge but should not place them in any real danger.

Exactly how many gang members (and what type) are required is up to the GM, but a good number is two for every hero involved.

Under no circumstances should a gang's leader or a Mr. Brown duplicate be met in such a preliminary encounter

Gang Member Tactics

In general the gang members have been emboldened by the new weapons. This makes them take risks and engage in activities that they normally wouldn't (i.e. daylight robbery, shooting spree, etc.).

Further, unlike they usually would, gang members armed with the high-tech weapons don't simply run from the heroes. This bravery only lasts so long as the weapons appear to be working against the heroes; once the heroes start winning, the gang members will attempt to flee, surrender, or bargain.

(although the heroes may hear of them if they interrogate captured gang members); these individuals should only be encountered during the final showdown at each gang's hangout.

While each of these encounters gives the heroes a chance to get some of the high-tech weapons off the streets, no matter how many weapons they remove in this way each gang will always have enough weapons left for the inevitable showdown at the gangs' hangouts (this can be considered a plot device).

The final showdown between the heroes and the gangs at the gangs' hangouts should pose a significant challenge to the heroes. Not only will they have to deal with the gang leaders

and any remaining gang members (a good number is two senior and four average gang members per hero), but they'll also have to deal with the Mr. Brown duplicates.

The GM should decide the nature of each gang's hangout. Typical locations used as hangouts include:

- A bar or nightclub
- An abandoned warehouse or industrial building
- The gang leader's home

Follow-Up: Since the original Mr. Brown does not supply any new weapons during the adventure, once the

Villain Tactics

Unless the heroes have some extraordinary means of tracking down the original, they will only be facing the Mr. Brown duplicates in this adventure, since the original is in a secure location far from the heroes' city.

During the heroes' investigation, and before the final showdown, each Mr. Brown duplicate does its best to remain behind the scenes, staying in seclusion (i.e. the basement, an empty room, etc.) at their gang's hangout.

Of course, once discovered by the heroes, each duplicate will do its best to silence the heroes.

The duplicates' tactics are simple: use the gang members and their Mental Blast's Force Field extra to protect themselves while simultaneously having the gang members to finish off any heroes that the duplicates' have rendered unconscious using their Mental Blast.

Because they are duplicates, the Mr. Browns do not flee or surrender; they fight until the death or until the original Mr. Brown wills them out of existence.

Please note that the Mr. Brown duplicates do not communicate with each other or with the original during this adventure. The original trusts its duplicates to do what is necessary to complete the job and communication, which has to rely on normal technology, would be too risky.

That is not to say that the original doesn't keep track of his duplicates. The original Mr. Brown's Mental Link with his duplicates allows him to keep track of their condition and general state of health even if it doesn't give him any knowledge of their location or activities.

Due to this Mental Link, Mr. Brown is cognizant when any of his duplicates are under duress. As a result, the original will be well aware of when the heroes are engaging one of his duplicates.

In order to be sure they can't be traced back to him, the original Mr. Brown wills away any duplicate the moment its status is unconscious or dying/dead.

heroes have defeated the three gangs and their Mr. Brown duplicates and confiscated or destroyed the weapons, the threat is ended.

Of course, the GM can always decide that one or two of a gang's weapons fall into the wrong hands (perhaps they were stolen, sold, lost, etc.). If this happens sooner or later such weapons will appear in the hands of other less-than-desirable individuals and groups.

Should the heroes have confiscated rather than destroyed the weapons and not turned them over to the proper authorities then they will shortly have a visit from the Patriot Squad (see **Superline #1** and p. 27 of this issue).

The Patriot Squad representatives will demand that the heroes turn over all weapons to them for further investigation per jurisdictional precedence (the Patriot Squad has jurisdictional precedence over all super-powered criminal investigations).

Finally, unless the heroes have some extraordinarily clever means of tracking down the real Mr. Brown (if they even realize that the three Mr. Browns were duplicates), they will not be able to locate the original.

Since both Mr. Brown and his employer expected a result like this to happen, neither one of them is disappointed. Mr. Brown will simply move on to his next assignment (and the heroes will undoubtedly meet his duplicates again) while his employer sets about improving the weapons and preparing for their worldwide release.

Rewards: If the heroes succeed in getting the experimental weapons off the streets, whether they defeat the Mr. Brown duplicates or not, they receive the standard awards that the GM usually grants for adventures; the danger is not so great nor the enemies so difficult that any further award is necessary.

Should the heroes fail to defeat the gangs they will quickly find their repu-

tations tarnished. After all, what kind of heroes can they be if they can't defeat some two-bit gang members? It will definitely take a while, or a spectacular success or two, for the heroes to live this down.

In the meantime, the gangs continue to use the weapons until the military, the Patriot Squad, or some other heroes defeat them.

Supporting Cast

Average Gang Member: PL 2; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 12 (+1 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +2 melee (+1S, punch or +3L, knife), +2 ranged (6L, advanced assault rifle or +3L, light pistol); SV Dmg +3, Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9 Cha 10.

Skills: Drive +2, Innuendo +1, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (streetwise) +1, Spot +1

Feats: Toughness

Equipment: Knife (+2 lethal damage), Light Pistol (+3 lethal damage), Advanced Weapon [Energy Blast (vibration, electricity, or kinetic) +9; *Extra:* Multifire; *Flaw:* Full Effect; *Stunts:* Penetrating Attack; *Source:* Super Science; *Cost:* 11 pp].

Notes: The knife and/or light pistol (GM's decision) are standard equipment for gang members; the advanced weapons the Mr. Brown duplicates have given them are not. The 11 pp the rifles cost plus 7 pp additional (to represent experience) raise the PL of the gang member by +1.

Description: These individuals are typical young gangbangers trying to make their mark in the gang, a fact that leads them to occasionally take foolish or unnecessary risks. Some of these individuals may or may not remain with the gang as they get older.

Senior Gang Member: PL 3; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 13 (+2 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +4 melee (+2S,

punch or +4L, knife), +3 ranged (6L, advanced assault rifle or +3L, light pistol); SV Dmg +3, Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12 Cha 10.

Skills: Drive +3, Innuendo +2, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (streetwise) +2, Spot +3

Feats: Toughness

Equipment: Knife (+2 lethal damage), Light Pistol (+3 lethal damage), Advanced Weapon [Energy Blast (vibration, electricity, or kinetic) +9; *Extra:* Multifire; *Flaw:* Full Effect; *Stunts:* Penetrating Attack; *Source:* Super Science; *Cost:* 11 pp].

Notes: As Average Gang Member.

Description: These individuals are veterans of the gang and are considered “hardcore”; their membership is effectively for life.

Having survived the streets for as long as they have, they’ve learned a few things along the way and often act as mentors to the younger gang members.

Some of the senior gang members serve as bodyguards for the gang leader.

Gang Leader: PL 4; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 14 (+3 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +5 melee (+2S, punch or +4L, knife), +4 ranged (6L, advanced assault rifle or +3L, light pistol); SV Dmg +3, Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 14 Cha 10.

Skills: Drive +4, Innuendo +3, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (streetwise) +4, Spot +5

Feats: Toughness

Equipment: Knife (+2 lethal damage), Light Pistol (+3 lethal damage), Advanced Weapon [Energy Blast (vibration, electricity, or kinetic) +9; *Extra:* Multifire; *Flaw:* Full Effect; *Stunts:* Penetrating Attack; *Source:* Super Science; *Cost:* 11 pp].

Notes: As Average Gang Member.

Description: Gang leaders tend to be the most ruthless and ambitious

members of the gang; not only have they survived the streets, they’ve also survived the power struggles within the gang itself.

Of course, as leaders of the gang they are also responsible for the gang’s overall well being and, as a result, gang leaders are often willing to negotiate for mutual advantage with others in positions of strength.

Mr. Brown Duplicates (3): PL 8; Init +4 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 15 (+5 base, +0 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +5 melee (+0S, punch), +11 ranged (+10S, mental blast); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +11; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 10.

Skills: Computers +6, Craft (weapon systems) +6, Listen +10, Repair +6, Read Lips +6, Sense Motive +10, Spot +10.

Feats: Assessment, Attack Focus (mental blast), Blindsight, Improved Initiative, Indomitable Will, Iron Will, Photographic Memory, Psychic Awareness, True Sight.

Powers: Mental Blast +10 [*Extras:* Force Field (*Extra:* Immunity (cold, critical hits, electricity, fire, gravity, kinetic, magnetic, radiation, sonic, vibration), Mental Shield), Multifire; *Flaw:* Obvious; *Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 5 PP], Super Wisdom +4 [*Source:* Alien; *Cost:* 3 PP].

Weakness: Disturbing (see the Mr. Brown write-up).

Equipment: N/A

Notes: Even though their Mental Blast power is higher than their listed PL, the Mr. Brown duplicates are listed as PL 8 opponents based on the total number of power points they possess.

The Mr. Brown duplicates are considered minions for purposes of taking damage. They do not suffer hit, stun, or disabled results. Anytime a Mr. Brown duplicate fails its Damage save it is either knocked out (for stun attacks) or dead (for lethal attacks). Successful attacks can only have a lesser effect if the duplicate’s attacker pulls his or her punch.

The duplicates have no villain points of their own but can use the original's villain points for their actions.

Mr. Brown

Quote: "Brown. Mister Brown."

First Appearance: Superline #2.

The individual known as "Mr. Brown" is actually an alien being from an advanced civilization far removed from Earth.

Mr. Brown was one of four crewmembers manning an alien exploration vessel that crashed in Iowa in 1997 when its propulsion drive failed; Mr. Brown was the sole survivor.

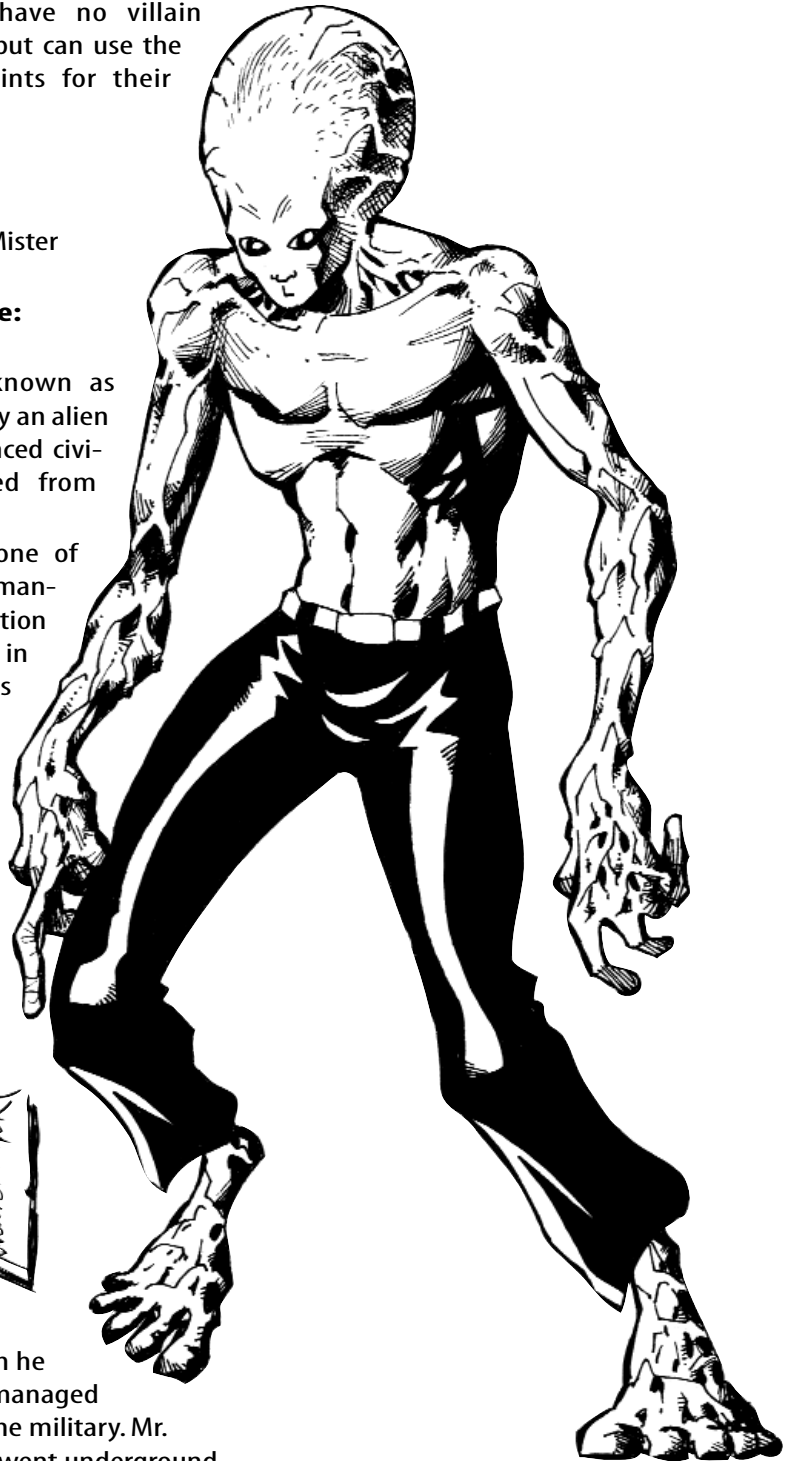
As is usual in such situations the U.S. military transported Mr. Brown, his dead shipmates, and their destroyed spaceship to Area 51 after sanitizing the crash site.

After several months in Area 51, Mr. Brown managed to escape using his mental powers, which he had until that point managed to keep secret from the military. Mr. Brown subsequently went underground and the military lost track of his whereabouts.

Mr. Brown resurfaced during the 1999 Kosovo crisis where he sold arms to both sides of the conflict. Since that time he has been reported in numerous loca-

tions across the world, sometimes simultaneously, dealing in everything from illegal arms to drugs and exotic species.

Mr. Brown does not work at his own behest but rather for an unknown employer.



It is speculated that Mr. Brown's employer is the same individual sponsoring Arctic Blast (see **Superline #1**), but this has not been proven.

Mr. Brown is an obviously alien biped of indeterminate age. He is relatively tall at 6'6" but very gaunt in every aspect, weighing a scarce 120 lbs. and having stick-thin arms and legs.

Mr. Brown's skin is a pale, almost translucent white that clearly reveals the veins and arteries coursing through his body. His fingers are very long and skeletal.

Mr. Brown's most prominent feature is his skull, which features an overly large cranium and a disproportionately small, soft-featured face dominated by two small, jet-black eyes in which sit starkly white pupils. A tiny nose and thin slit of a mouth that sits above just the barest hint of a chin round out his facial features.

Mr. Brown disguises himself to pass among humanity. At such times he invariably wears a gray business suit (complete with monochrome silk shirt and tie) tailored to make his frame look fuller (which it does, although he is still obviously thin), over which he usually wears a long, black trench coat.

A pair of form-fitting black leather gloves disguise his hands and Mr. Brown always keeps his face in the shadow of a broad-brimmed black felt hat he wears low over his brow.

Whenever possible Mr. Brown prefers to do business at night and/or in places with poor lighting (i.e. dingy alleys, nightclubs, old warehouses, etc.).

If forced to conduct business in bright light or during the day, Mr. Brown always holds a monochrome silk handkerchief (which matches his shirt and tie) in front of his face, claiming a cold, allergies, or hygienic reasons.

During meetings Mr. Brown does as little talking as possible, preferring to make small gestures with his hands. When he needs to speak he does so in a

very quiet whisper and says only the minimum words necessary in a noticeably clipped English.

Mr. Brown's personality is one centered on intellectual control. Every action, every choice, every word is carefully calculated to produce the desired effect and done with no more effort than necessary. He has never been seen to reveal any emotion.

Mr. Brown's duplicates mimic his behavior perfectly.

Mr. Brown: PL 12; Init +4 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 15 (+5 base, +0 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +5 melee (+0S, punch), +11 ranged (+12S, mental blast); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +11; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 10.

Skills: Computers +6, Craft (weapon systems) +6, Listen +10, Repair +6, Read Lips +6, Sense Motive +10, Spot +10.

Feats: Assessment, Attack Focus (mental blast), Blindsight, Improved Initiative, Indomitable Will, Iron Will, Photographic Memory, Psychic Awareness, True Sight.

Powers: Duplication +12 [*Extras:* Innate, Mental Link; *Source:* Alien; *Cost:* 4 PP], Mental Blast +12 [*Extras:* Force Field (*Extra:* Immunity (cold, critical hits, darkness, electricity, fire, gravity, kinetic, light, magnetic, radiation, sonic, vibration), Mental Shield), Multifire; *Flaw:* Obvious; *Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 5 PP], Super Wisdom +4 [*Source:* Alien; *Cost:* 3 PP].

Weakness: Disturbing

Equipment: N/A

Notes: To give Mr. Brown some better melee options at the risk of increasing his vulnerability, drop the Innate extra from his Duplication power and use the 12 pp to increase his Strength and Dexterity or just increase his base attack bonus.

IT CAME FROM THE LATE SHOW

Summary

In this adventure the heroes get to end the crime spree of the supervillain Mirage and his gang of toughs, but not before they take in a little entertainment at the local Cineplex.

Set-Up

The supervillain Mirage, together with his sidekick Ed and a handful of thugs, has put together a little gang to do some robbing of armored trucks.

Their methods are simple but very effective, relying on Mirage's Illusion

powers to bring the trucks to a halt and Ed's Super Strength to break out the loot while the thugs help get the stuff out of the area before someone investigates.

While no one, including the guards, has gotten hurt in these forays, unless the heroes put a stop to Mirage's activities it's only a matter of time before things get out of hand.

Adventure

The adventure can begin any time that the heroes encounter Mirage and his gang in the act of knocking off an

Inside Job

We've all seen armored trucks. They go to the grocery stores, they go to the malls, they go to the banks, etc. They tend to follow established routes so that if you or I wanted to, we could easily find out when a given armored truck stops at a specific location and even follow it as it makes its route.

Using this method, it wouldn't be much of a problem for Mirage to pick his targets; he simply follows several trucks over a period of some weeks, keeps track of their routes and, presto, he's got himself a nice little hit list.

More interesting, however, is to have Mirage get his information from an inside source (i.e. someone that works at the armored truck company, a bank, a jeweler, etc.). This source could provide Mirage not only with the routes, but also alert the supervillain as to when a particularly lucrative cargo (i.e. a large amount of money, jewels, etc.) is being transported.

Using an inside source greatly increases the possibilities inherent in running the adventure by making it more cerebral rather than a simple slugfest.

For example, not knowing where Mirage is going to strike next, the heroes set a trap (perhaps they plan to trail an armored truck or two or hide inside one that they consider a likely target). With an inside source, Mirage is alerted and the trap comes to naught. Of course the heroes will realize that there is an inside source, but how to ferret him (or her) out?

Alternately, the heroes could discover that Mirage has an inside source without either Mirage or the source realizing that the source has been discovered. In this way they could set a trap for the supervillain by having the source relay information that some sort of valuable shipment is on a particular truck. Of course, when Mirage shows up to rob the truck, the heroes will be ready.

armored truck. While it sets the mood a bit better to allow Mirage and his gang to rob a few armored trucks prior to the heroes becoming involved, nothing says that the heroes can't encounter the villains in the act the very first time they rob a truck (i.e. the heroes are on their usual patrol).

Mirage's operation is simplicity itself. He, his sidekick Ed, and a small group of hired muscle (which are there primarily to help Mirage make the loot disappear before the police or heroes arrive) wait at a predetermined location for the armored truck they've targeted.

Mirage prefers to set their ambush in some relatively isolated location (i.e. the financial district before the opening bell, the warehouse district after closing time, the waterfront at night, etc.) but if they have to, they'll strike wherever they need to.

As the armored truck approaches the ambush location Mirage uses his power to create some sort of illusion to get the driver of the truck to stop or even turn the truck over. Here are some suggested illusions:

- Having a pedestrian of some sort cross the truck's path.
- Showing a roadblock complete with signs and a policeman waving the vehicle down.
- A two-vehicle accident blocking the lanes.
- A paving crew that's blocking the road.

Once the truck has stopped Mirage sends Ed to turn it over (to delay the guards' response) and rip open the truck's doors. Since the most common armored trucks weigh between 20 to 25

Escalation

It's not going to take too many ambushes for the armored truck companies to figure out what's going on. After all, each ambush is carried out in the same manner.

Naturally the armored truck companies will begin to take countermeasures. This will include altering routes and times (another reason to give Mirage an inside source), sending out dummy trucks, putting more guards on the trucks, and ignoring anything that might be an illusion (which could lead to all sorts of mayhem).

The main danger in all this is that by escalating their tactics the chance for a violent encounter increases exponentially.

Currently the guards are a bit bruised and shaken (no pun intended) after their encounter with Mirage and his gang, but if they put up too much resistance, they could be off much worse (as could any innocent bystanders).

tons this is not a problem for Ed (up to 68 tons are a light load for Mirage's sidekick). If the truck has already been turned over (i.e. the truck's driver overreacted) then Ed simply rips open the rear doors.

Once Ed has ripped the rear doors open, he picks up the truck and shakes its contents (money, jewels, guards, etc.) out.

The remaining members of Mirage's team are simple thugs (one PL 2 thug for each hero with a minimum of four; for quick statistics see the Minion Archetypes in M&M, p. 154). Their job is to disarm the guards, tie them up, and then help load the truck's contents into waiting cars (there is one car for every two people; Mirage and Ed have one car, the thugs use the others).

Once the money is loaded the cars drive circuitous routes to a predetermined location (i.e. a local park, the countryside, an abandoned warehouse, a junkyard; whatever the GM feels would work for the adventure) where the loot is divided.

Villain Tactics

Although Mirage is not much of a combatant (the gun he carries is really more for show than anything else), this does not make him any less of a foe for the heroes.

The GM should keep in mind that Mirage can create multiple illusions over a wide area (although a single illusion cannot be greater than a 5 ft. x 5ft. x 10 ft. area), thus effectively allowing him to create any sort of environment he chooses.

While in the Cineplex Mirage spends much of his time trying to impress the heroes and entertain himself and Ed with his ability to recreate things from the movie screens, he actually has a number of other tactics at his disposal to deal with superheroes:

- Imitate the sensory components of a hero's, or heroes', powers. Mirage especially enjoys doing this with obvious and spectacular powers such as Element Control, Energy Blast, Energy Control, or Sorcery. Not only do heroes that cannot discern the Illusions for what they are believe that they are being attacked by those powers (and suffer actual, if not necessarily appropriate, damage), but they are very likely to assume that Mirage has some version of the Mimic power.
- Create the illusion of an audience member being endangered, such as a child about to get hit by the bricks from a wall that was damaged by a hero, or

an elderly individual running into the path of a charging hero.

- Create illusory duplicates of one or more of the heroes, thus effectively having the heroes fight themselves or using the duplicates to lead the heroes astray ("Hey, Lizardboy, where'd Mirage go?" "He went that way").
- Create illusory duplicates of themselves to confuse the heroes.

The GM should remember that during all of this there will be audience members panicking, getting in everyone's way, and generally being a nuisance.

While Mirage creates his illusions his sidekick Ed does his best to keep the heroes and any audience members from getting to Mirage.

Unless directed otherwise by Mirage, Ed simply fights whatever heroes come closest to Mirage, using his Super Strength to hurl objects at distant heroes and pummeling those he can reach.

If Mirage judges that the heroes are getting too close, he'll have Ed smash an opening in a theater wall and move to the next theater.

Ed will only use his Shockwave without Mirage's prompting if it looks as though the heroes are going to get to Mirage or Mirage is taken out of the fight, at which point Ed will try to knock down as many heroes as possible while blasting an opening somewhere and carrying Mirage to safety.

Unless the heroes have some way of catching Mirage between crimes, the GM should make sure that the heroes only encounter the supervillain and his gang while they are carrying out an ambush.

The exact specifics of any encounters with Mirage and his gang will have to be determined by the GM based on how the adventure has developed to that point (i.e. are the heroes simply arriving on the scene, did they set an ambush, etc.).

As soon as the heroes arrive on the scene Mirage will flee with Ed in tow, whether they have the loot or not; Mirage does not want to fight the heroes out in the open where they have the advantage and he also expects the police to arrive shortly.

Mirage will use illusions to cover the duo's escape while Ed picks up the occasional car, dumpster, etc. to hurl at heroes that get too close.

With the heroes in pursuit Mirage will flee to the nearest handy location: the local Cineplex (the GM should consider it a plot device that Mirage and Ed make it to a Cineplex since that is where the climactic battle of this adventure will take place).

Mirage will enter the first theater he comes to. This particular theater is showing "Battle of the Universe, Episode II", the seventh in the popular "Battle of the Universe" franchise and, as the heroes enter the theater, Mirage creates an illusionary squad of royal shock troopers, replete with their electro-sabers, that pour from the screen to do battle with the heroes and panic the audience.

As Mirage, still with Ed at his side, flees from theater to theater to escape the heroes, he'll always draw the inspiration for his illusions from what is happening on the screen. The GM can come up with any appropriate movies he or she desires, or can draw from the following list of fictional (but strangely familiar) films:

■ "Ruler of the Pearl – The Heroes Unite" the story of the struggle between good and evil in the fantastic realm of Aghane. Mirage creates a war party of goblins that pour off the screen on their war-wolves, swinging their axes and chanting war songs.

■ "The Man From The East" – A martial-arts epic from famed director Quinlan Woo. Mirage creates a small group of samurai to battle with the heroes.

■ "Returning Home" – The heartwarming story of an estranged mother and daughter reuniting after many years of absence. Mirage gets out of the theater as fast as he can, but not before having an entire women's sewing circle rush from the screen to attempt and stab the heroes with their needles.

■ "Extreme Partners" – A buddy picture based on the usual good cop/bad cop formula. Here Mirage has the two major characters drive their modified '72 'Cuda off the screen and into the theater, shooting at the heroes while yelling that they are all under arrest.

The GM should make up as many other scenarios as will keep the heroes engaged (after all, there's movie theaters with 20 or more screens around).

The GM should keep in mind that while Mirage's primary goal is to get himself and Ed to safety, if the heroes are having trouble dealing with his illusions and the panicking audience he'll quickly decide to stay and toy with the heroes, leading them from theater to theater and keeping the game going by canceling his illusions if it looks like the heroes may get taken out too easily or early.

Follow-Up: If Mirage and Ed escape, Mirage will be filled with enough confidence to keep at his little game, considering it great sport to battle the heroes.

If only one of the two escapes, either Mirage or Ed, then the other will do everything within his power, depending on the outcome of the combat, to come to rescue the other or seek revenge upon the heroes.

Once Mirage, and by extension Ed, is defeated, the duo will be taken into custody by the local authorities. Mirage and Ed will both end up being transferred to Watchgate (see **Superline #1**).

Ed and I

If the GM wishes to add some drama to the follow-up proceedings, and create a more complex relationship between Mirage, Ed, and the heroes, have the authorities try to split Mirage and Ed apart, with only Mirage going to Watchgate while Ed is taken to a local high-security mental institution.

This situation would be quite traumatic for both Mirage and Ed, with much crying on Ed's part while Mirage pleads with the authorities not to split them up saying that Ed will be lost without him.

If the heroes help keep the duo together they'll find that both Mirage and Ed will be indebted to the heroes. While this doesn't mean that in the future they won't fight the heroes, it just means that they will do so reluctantly and will try to inflict only minimal damage.

On the other hand, if the heroes allow them to be separated, then both Mirage and Ed will blame the heroes for their situation and, when they get out, will make it their priority to take revenge on the heroes.

Rewards: The heroes will not get any rewards until they have successfully put a stop to Mirage's crime wave.

If they defeat only one of the pair, either Mirage or Ed, then the crime wave will stop and the heroes receive the standard awards for completing an adventure.

If the heroes defeat both Mirage and Ed then they receive a bonus power point for their success.

Supporting Cast

N/A

Mirage

Quote: "Take a look at this!"

First Appearance: Superline #2.

Malcolm Griffin always wanted to be a successful director in television or the movies and he appeared to be well on his way. Having worked at a number of menial jobs for several years, Malcolm had finally saved enough to pursue his

dream and enrolled in film school.

Upon graduation Malcolm thought for sure that he would have no trouble landing a job in the industry, but he was a terrible interview without industry connections and his film skills were not enough to overcome that. It didn't help that he thought very highly of himself, an opinion that was not backed up by his work at school.

As a result, with his savings depleted, Malcolm found himself right back where had been. But he wasn't about to give up.

He bought a police scanner with the idea of traveling to the scenes of major accidents and emergencies with his video camera. There he hoped to catch that one piece of footage that he would be able to sell to the media outlets for enough money to fund his further projects.

One could argue that fate had it in for Malcolm. While visiting his first accident, a tremendous industrial fire, he was electrocuted by a melted power line that fell into the puddle Malcolm was standing in.

When he finally returned to consciousness, Malcolm found that three of his fingers and two of his toes had blown off as a result of the thousands of volts that had coursed through his body.

But while the electricity had taken some digits, it had given Malcolm a much more important gift: it had unlocked the creativity of his mind to the point where he found that he could create actual images of his visions.

Mirage is a clean-shaven African-American male in his early 30's. He is 5'11" tall and a less-than-athletic 200

pounds. Having had issues with a receding hairline since his mid-20's Mirage prefers to keep his head covered.

Mirage dresses like the mythical directors of the movies' golden era; cavalry boots, jodhpurs, a loose white shirt, and a beret are his clothing of choice.

Mirage's dominant personality trait is that of a show-off. He is rather impressed with his own Illusion ability and will often play with his opponents or victims, seeking to show them the full extent of his genius by creating elaborate illusions and mind-boggling effects rather than dealing with them in a more direct manner.



At least initially, in every encounter Mirage seeks to entertain himself and his sidekick Ed as well as impress his opponents rather than deal seriously with the situation, especially if his opponents are obviously unable to easily see through his illusions.

This is also his *raison d'être* for committing crimes. While he, like anyone else, can use the money, he is far more interested in the public acknowledgment of his genius and ability than in gaining the loot.

Although his Illusion power can cause damage, the most it can do is knock people out. Which is fine with Mirage; while he may be a criminal, he is not a killer.

Despite the fact that he is a supervillain, Mirage does not treat Ed as a tool to be used on a whim. In fact, Mirage is genuinely fond of Ed and treats Ed like a younger brother, finding his sidekick's lack of guile and honest appreciation for his illusions to be refreshing.

Mirage would never do anything to intentionally hurt or otherwise injure Ed nor would he ever leave Ed since Ed would be lost without him.

Mirage (Malcolm Griffin): PL 11; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 20 (+8 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +5 melee (+0S, punch), +7/+9 (mental attacks) ranged (+5L, heavy pistol or +11 Mental Blast); SV Dmg +2/+7 (Evasion), Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +9; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 18.

Skills: Bluff +8, Concentration +6, Drive +4, Escape Artist +4, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (trivia) +6, Listen +7, Spot +7, Taunt +8.

Feats: Assessment, Dodge, Evasion, Indomitable Will, Sidekick, Psychic Awareness, Startle, True Sight.

Powers: Amazing Save +5 (Willpower) [*Extras:* Reflex; *Source:* Training; *Cost:* 2 PP], Illusion +11 [*Extras:* Area, Damaging (as Mental Blast); *Source:* Psionic; *Cost:* 5 PP].

Weakness: Quirk (flattery) – Mirage works hard to create good and entertaining illusions, and he wants to be recognized for it. As a result, Mirage can easily be distracted if his opponent acknowledges Mirage's work in a positive way (i.e. by paying him a compliment or stating to him how real it seems). Mirage can try to ignore such comments or flattery, but it requires a Villain Point for him to do so for the remainder of that encounter.

Equipment: Heavy Pistol (+5 lethal damage),

Notes: To improve Mirage's survivability in combat, the Assessment, Startle, and True Sight fees can be dropped and the resultant six power points added to improve his base Defense bonus.

Ed (Mirage's Sidekick)

Quote: "Hello. My name is Ed."

First Appearance: Superline #2.

Ed has always been just Ed, at least as far as he remembers. In fact, Ed's earliest memories are of being an adult living in and out of homeless shelters.

It was at one such shelter that Ed met Mirage (who was still calling himself Malcolm at the time) after Mirage had been forced out of his apartment for failure to pay the rent (a result of the hospital bills he incurred after his electrocution).

At that point Mirage was just beginning to test out his Illusion powers, making small images when he thought no one was around. One night Ed caught him at this and somehow the two made a connection; they have been inseparable since then.

Mirage has found Ed to be an invaluable and loyal protector as well as an appreciative audience while Ed, who is effectively a child in a man's body, has found an older brother who takes care of him.



Ed is a mountain of a man, standing 7'2" and weighing almost 400 lbs. Ed appears to be in his late 20's, but he has no idea of his actual age.

Ed has the build of a powerlifter along with Scandinavian facial features and strawberry-blond hair. Ed prefers to wear loose jogging pants (they're so comfortable) and t-shirts (usually with cartoon or anime characters on them).

Ed's reasoning ability is much like that of a young child. He always looks to Mirage for guidance and, if Mirage leaves his side, Ed is likely to panic.

Much like a young child, Ed has difficulty making judgments, including ethical judgments, which is why he doesn't see why what Mirage is doing is wrong; all he knows is that Mirage is trying to make their lives better.

Ed is completely devoted to Mirage as Mirage is one of the few people in Ed's memory to have treated Ed kindly.

Ed (Sidekick): PL 10; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 22 (+10 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +15 melee (+15S, punch), +12 ranged (+17L, random small objects); SV Dmg +7, Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills: Intimidate +10, Listen +4, Spot +5.

Hints of Ed's Origins

Unbeknownst to both Ed and Mirage, Ed was at one point Tor Olafson, a perfectly ordinary young Icelandic fisherman aboard the trawler *Baldur*.

The *Baldur* and its crew were presumed lost at sea seven years ago during a fierce storm after which no sign of the ship or crew was ever found.

The heroes might find this out if they do some digging into international missing persons.

Such a search can be narrowed down quite substantially since Ed has very definite Skandinavian/Icelandic features and a DNA test would certainly place him as an Icelander.

Or, in a stroke of luck, perhaps someone that knew Tor Olafson sees a news broadcast about the capture of Mirage and Ed and recognizes the man.

Although the heroes won't be able to find out any more about Ed's origins at this time (this is a plot device for information to be revealed in a later edition of **Superline**; not even Telepathy will uncover the information), the heroes will be able to determine that since that storm Ed has gained six inches in height, 150 pounds of super-powered muscle mass, and has had his mental abilities (and memories) seriously abridged.

Feats: Durability, Penetrating Attack (unarmed), Power Attack, Throwing Mastery, Toughness.

Powers: Super Strength +10 [Extras: Leaping, Protection, Shockwave; Source: Mutation; Cost: 7 PP].

Weakness: Naive

Equipment: N/A

Notes: To make Ed tougher drop his base Defense bonus and add one Immunity for every point of base Defense bonus dropped.

SORE LOSER

Summary

In this adventure the heroes encounter a young lady very upset at having been voted off a reality show. While it is perfectly natural for an individual to be upset that her 15 minutes of fame are over, this particular individual happens to have super powers, and she's not afraid to take her complaints directly to the show's celebrity judges. If she isn't stopped, she is going to show everyone what "reality" television is all about.

Set-Up

One of the top-rated shows in the heroes' city is "Pop Star", a live-broadcast reality show where hopeful contestants vie for a major record label contract.

The show's format is simple. The program goes through a number of weekly rounds. Each round the show's three celebrity judges give their opinions on the competitors' performances, which are then followed by viewer voting to determine which contestant leaves the show. This process continues until a winner is determined.

In the most recent episode the number of contestants was reduced from three to the final two: Maria, billed as a cute girl with attitude, and Alex, advertised as a clean-cut, sincere young man.

Now as everyone is gearing up for the finale, with the judges and contestants doing the talk shows amid a full media blitz, disaster is about to strike.

Unbeknownst to everyone, a new supervillain calling herself Superstar, who is actually a former "Pop Star" contestant, has targeted the show's judges.

If the heroes don't succeed in stopping Superstar from taking her revenge then not only are a lot of innocent people going to get hurt, but we'll never find out whether it is spunky Maria or down-to-earth Alex who becomes the next "Pop Star".

Adventure

This adventure is not designed to be static. The various events of the adventure take place over a period of days and, depending on when the GM decides the heroes become involved, particular events may or may not occur and/or involve the heroes.

This is my favorite show!

This adventure will be much more fun if one or more of the heroes is a fan of "Pop Star" as they will be quite familiar with the three judges and the various contestants and should have a considerably heightened interest in the adventure (in fact, if the heroes are familiar enough with the show, they will undoubtedly recognize Superstar as a previous contestant when they finally meet her).

As a result, the adventure is unlikely to develop exactly as set forth in the timeline (see below) since it is very likely that once they become involved, the heroes' actions will cause Superstar to modify her plans.

The following timeline assumes no involvement on the heroes' part in the events taking place; it is written as if the heroes did not get involved in the adventure at all. Obviously, once the heroes do become involved, the GM will have to modify the events accordingly.

The timeline is based on the number of days remaining before the airing of the "Pop Star" finale, which will be televised live from a local theater (i.e. Day 3 means three days before the finale while Day 0 is the day of the finale):

Day 3 — Superstar assaults Alicia Lopes, one of “Pop Star’s” celebrity judges, as she is at home getting ready for her appearance on a local morning talk show. Her production assistant will discover Alicia after the judge is a no-show at the show.

Assuming Alicia is not killed, the GM may wish to have Alicia be in a coma or otherwise incapacitated and unable to help reveal her attacker for the duration of this adventure (this is a plot device designed to prevent the heroes from learning about Superstar right away and to make it easier for Superstar to make her move on the other judges).

Having learned of the assault, the show’s producer hires several bodyguards for the remaining two judges and asks for police protection.

Day 2 — Superstar assaults Earl “Big E” Johnson, another of the show’s celebrity judges, and several bodyguards while Earl is busy doing some late night work at his studio.

Again, assuming that Earl and/or the bodyguards are not killed, the GM may wish to have them incapacitated (from shock, in a coma, due to post-surgery sedation, etc.) and be of no help in identifying their attacker.

If this is seen as a bit heavy-handed, the GM can allow Earl to identify Superstar as Summer Nakai, a recently eliminated contestant and even share the fact that she has vocal powers. Of course, the heroes won’t be able to locate Superstar since she hasn’t been home since the day before and her parents don’t know where she is.

Later that day the mayor, correctly assuming that the show’s sole remaining celebrity judge, Sylvie Cauchon, will be next on the assailant’s hit list, has her placed under heavy police protection and hidden in a local hotel (if the heroes aren’t involved in the adventure at this point, the mayor or some other authority likely contacts them at this time).

Day 1 — Although the police do their best to keep things quiet, it is inevitable that news of Sylvie Cauchon’s location in a prominent downtown hotel comes to the attention of Superstar.

Superstar spends the day scouting the hotel but decides that security is too tight for her to risk attacking Sylvie (especially if the heroes are obviously present) and decides to make her move the next day during the finale, assuming that she will be able to blend in with the crowd and enter the theater unnoticed.

Day 0 — Despite heavy security on the night of the finale, Superstar joins a live audience of thousands (how she does this is not really important since she can do everything from simply walk in to using her vocal powers to create a hole in the theater’s wall).

After both Maria and Alex have performed, Superstar makes her way to the stage to confront Sylvie and take her revenge (which is the latest point at which the heroes can become involved and have any hope of salvaging the situation).

The heroes may become involved in the timeline at virtually any point, including before the timeline starts.

For example, if the GM wishes to have the heroes become involved early on, Superstar may make threats to one or more of the judges (something such as a series of nasty notes or e-mails, all signed Superstar of course, should do the trick).

This could result in the show’s producer asking the heroes to protect the judges, an action that would force the heroes to split up and act as bodyguards for the three judges as they go through their daily scheduled events.

Or the heroes might not become involved until after the assault of Earl “Big E” Johnson, when it becomes clear that ordinary protection is obviously not enough. The GM should choose whatever fits his or her game the best.

Villain Tactics

Superstar's primary motivation is taking revenge on the show's three celebrity judges, whom she blames for her elimination.

Throughout the adventure she focuses her efforts on harming the judges, using her vocal powers to remove any obstacles between her and the judges (she doesn't actually want to hurt anyone else, but if they get in the way, oh well).

How far her desire to harm the judges goes is up to the GM, although he or she should think hard before turning Superstar into a cold-blooded or obsessed killer.

Although her desire for revenge is strong, Superstar is neither a fanatic nor stupid. She scouts locations ahead of time and avoids any encounters (at least until the finale when she must act) with the heroes or anyone else where she is obviously at a disadvantage.

For example, if the heroes get involved after the assault on Alicya Lopes and act as bodyguards for the other judges, Superstar will more than likely avoid a direct confrontation with the heroes at that time unless she feels confident of gaining surprise or can cause a distraction to draw the heroes away (by destroying a railroad bridge or something equally devastating to a large number of innocents).

Of course, once the day of the finale arrives Superstar will have to act, because if she doesn't she'll have to wait until next season.

In combat Superstar relies exclusively on her skill with controlling sonic energy. She is quite talented in that area and, as a result, has a number of options at her disposal:

- Deliver her Sonic Blast (a horrendously powerful scream) with either surgical precision at a single individual or carpet an entire area.
- Change the modality of her Sonic Blast (to a subsonic rumble) and cause objects (i.e. doors, floors, walls, automobiles, etc.) to disintegrate. As with her scream, she can target the disintegration either at a single object and/or cover an entire area (thus potentially bringing down a large section of a building's ceiling).
- Change the modality of her Sonic Blast (to a high-pitched shriek) to short-circuit her opponents' nervous systems, paralyzing them. Again, Superstar can target this effect either at a single individual and/or an entire area.
- Her Energy Control (sonic) makes Superstar very sensitive to sound, effectively giving her Blindsight. She may use her Sonic Blast to create a dark environment (i.e. blow out a building's lights or destroy the power supply) in hopes of gaining an advantage.

When fighting opponents, Superstar prefers to simply Sonic Blast them out of the way. However, when she is in trouble and needs to escape, Superstar uses her Disintegrate power stunt to bring down ceilings, break through floors, etc. in order to create obstacles and/or escape routes.

Although she tries not to hurt innocent individuals, when trying to gain her revenge all bets are off. As a result, especially during the finale, Superstar has no problem bringing down the entire theater if it means she'll be able to get at the judges. Although she will simply threaten to do this at first (i.e. either the heroes hand over the judges or she'll do it), she is not bluffing (something a DC 15 Sense Motive check will reveal) and she is just confused and angry enough that she will do this even if it means she may be injured or worse.

The Show Must Go On

While it might be tempting for the heroes to gather any remaining judges together at their headquarters, to try and get the final show delayed or cancelled, or any of dozens of other possible actions that creative heroes are capable of devising, neither the judges nor the show's producer will go along with such actions (and if the heroes try to force them to, well, then they aren't being very heroic).

There is just too much at stake in terms of reputation, money, ratings, sponsorship, etc. for the judges not to make their scheduled appearances or for the show to be delayed or canceled. If the producer and judges can't convince the heroes of that, then the mayor or some other higher authority will (think of the tourism dollars!).

Ideally, even if they have earlier encounters with Superstar, the heroes will have a final showdown with her during the finale, where thousands of innocent bystanders can get in the heroes' way and the heroes will have to spend as much time saving the innocent as protecting Sylvie and defeating Superstar.

Follow-Up: If Superstar is thwarted in her revenge but escapes, or if she succeeds in getting even with all three judges and escapes, she goes into hiding for several months, possibly with the aid of her friend Ilsa (see p. 27). In that time she will further explore her powers and realize that they are good for more than revenge on celebrity judges.

When Superstar re-emerges it will be as a full-fledged supervillain who uses her powers to amass personal wealth and build a reputation of infamy; she will be a thorn in the side of heroes everywhere for the rest of her life.

If the heroes manage to stop Superstar, she will sooner or later be transferred to the custody of the Patriot

Squad (see *Superline #1*) for imprisonment (and study) on their base *Freedom's Eye*. What happens from there is up to the GM, although it is a good bet that the Patriot Squad is interested in her because of the mystical source of her powers.

In any case, "Pop Star" and its celebrity judges will reap massive publicity from these events, assuring that the show and its judges will be on the air for years to come.

Rewards: Saving such high-profile celebrities, especially if it is done on live television, gains the heroes the Fame feat (if they don't

already have it) or two bonus power points (the basic equivalent of the Fame feat) that they can spend in any way they choose.

Furthermore, the heroes will have the opportunity to make the talk-show circuit, especially the entertainment-focused shows, for weeks (something that may interfere with their crime-fighting duties).

Of course, such fame can come at a price. If the heroes become celebrities in their own right then they will find their steps increasingly dogged by paparazzi, and if some heroes become celebrities and others don't, this could drive a wedge between teammates.

I always wanted to be a celebrity!

If the GM desires, an interesting reward for the heroes would be to have one of the judges offer a hero with a good voice a chance to audition for the show or even a recording contract.

Another interesting option would be to have the show add a fourth judge for the next season: the hero who had the most to do with saving the judges from Superstar (the GM should let the heroes decide who that individual would be).

Enter the Patriot Squad

The GM decides when Superstar enters Patriot Squad custody. The most likely scenario being after the heroes have turned her over to the authorities.

In this case Superstar will be transferred from whatever prison she has been put in to *Freedom's Eye*, something the heroes may or may not become aware of.

Of course, if the GM wants to make the Patriot Squad a more tangible presence, a team of Patriot Squad volunteers can arrive to take her into custody the moment the heroes have defeated her. This should raise some interesting questions on the part of the heroes such as:

- How did the Patriot Squad arrive so soon?
- What right does the Patriot Squad have to take Superstar into custody over the local authorities?
- Just who, or what, is the Patriot Squad?

The whole point of having the Patriot Squad appear is to get the heroes to ask questions, but not to get answers.

When the Patriot Squad team arrives it is composed of four Volunteers bringing with them a pair of high-tech handcuffs in the form of arm sleeves (see below) and a decidedly low-tech gag.

Arm Sleeves: Drain - Powers +15
[Extra: Duration x3 — Continuous;
Flaws: Device; Source: Super-Science;
Cost: 60 pp]

The arm sleeves have Hardness 15. Without the proper unlock sequence, the Drain power can be turned off with a Disable Device (DC 35) check while the sleeves can be unlocked and slipped off with an Open Lock (DC 35) check.

Patriot Squad Volunteer: PL 7;
Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Defense 20 (+5 base, +4 Dex, +1 Dodge); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +8 melee (+2S, punch), +10 ranged (+5L, heavy pistol); SV Dmg +3, Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills: Drive +6, Gather Information +7, Intimidate +7, Profession (law enforcement) +7, Search +5, Sense Motive +5, Spot +5.

Feats: Assessment, Chokehold, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Equipment: Bulletproof vest (+5 Armor, Cost: 5pp), Taser (+5 Stun, DC 20; Cost: 5 pp), Heavy Pistol (+5 lethal damage, Cost: 5pp).

Notes: The Volunteers are the Patriot Squad's field agents, performing investigations into super-powered crimes.

Volunteers are recruited from similar federal agencies (i.e. FBI, CIA, ATF) as well as the military (usually special forces).

Description: Patriot Squad Volunteers maintain the standard federal dress code including grooming standards and the wearing of a suit and tie. Although they look like any other federal agents, Patriot Squad Volunteers always wear an American flag lapel pin.

By the same token, should they fail to protect the judges, especially on live television, each hero will gain the Infamy feat (and lose the Fame feat if he or she has it).

This particular instance of the Infamy feat will most likely not provide any advantages since it is gained because the heroes have basically proven themselves incompetent, a trait not particularly celebrated among either superheroes or supervillains.

Supporting Cast

Bodyguard: PL 4; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Defense 15 (+3 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +6 melee (+3S, punch), +5 ranged (+4L, medium pistol; +5L heavy pistol); SV Dmg +2, Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Intimidate +6, Profession (bodyguard) +5, Search +5, Spot +5.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Improved Pin, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot.

Equipment: Medium Pistol (+4 lethal damage) or Heavy Pistol (+5 lethal damage), Commlink [Radio Broadcast, Radio Hearing], Nice Suit, Sunglasses.

Notes: If the GM allows, a Bodyguard's ranks in Profession (bodyguard) can stack with the Bodyguard's Spot checks (the bodyguard is trained to notice problems before they develop) in appropriate situations (i.e. while on the job).

Description: Bodyguards can come in all shapes and sizes. Government and corporate bodyguards dress in suits while private bodyguards dress however their client expects (i.e. as a member of a rap star's posse). Private bodyguards may or may not carry weapons.

The Bodyguard can represent everything from a member of the Secret Service to elite corporate and private security; the bodyguard is also handy for the "muscle" of underworld figures such as crime lords or drug kingpins.

Alicya Lopes: PL 3; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 13 (+0 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +1 melee (+1S, punch), +3 ranged (N/A); SV Dmg +2, Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills: Acrobatics +7, Balance +5, Drive +4, Jump +2, Knowledge (music business) +2, Perform (dancing) +7, Perform (singing) +5, Profession (dancer) +3, Profession (singer) +3.

Feats: Attractive, Fame, Talented (Acrobatics and Perform (dancing)).

Equipment: N/A

Notes: Alicya is one of the celebrity judges on "Pop Star". She is a former dancer turned singer who had a string of hits in the 1980's but was living in relative obscurity until her agent got her cast as a judge on "Pop Star".

Alicya abhors violence and will attempt to flee from violent confrontations. If she cannot flee, she screams and cowers.

Description: Alicya is a high-energy Latina who never has a bad thing to say about anyone, firmly believing that "if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all". Thanks to her years of dancing, she is still in good shape and likes to wear outfits that show off her legs.

Earl "Big E" Johnson: PL 3; Init +0 (Dex); Defense 11 (+1 base, +0 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +3 melee (+2S, punch), +1 ranged (N/A); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills: Diplomacy +4, Drive +1, Knowledge (music business) +7, Perform (singing) +6, Profession (singer) +6, Profession (record producer) +9, Taunt +4

Feats: Fame, Skill Focus (Knowledge (music business)), Skill Focus (Profession (record producer)), Talented (Perform (singing) and Profession (singer)).

Equipment: N/A. At the GM's option, Earl may have access to a licensed light pistol (+3 lethal damage) that he keeps in a nearby location (i.e. a drawer in his desk).

Notes: Earl is one of the judges on "Pop Star". He is a former moderately successful R&B artist from the 1970's and is currently a very successful record producer and the owner of the "14th Street Records" label.

Although not particularly brave, Earl will defend himself as best as he can if he has to.

Description: Earl is a heavy-set African-American male (his girth is the source of his nickname) with a gold-record earning baritone voice. Earl is a snappy dresser, always wearing custom-tailored suits and expensive Italian shoes.

Sylvie Cauchon: PL 3; Init +0 (Dex); Defense 10 (+0 base, +0 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +0 melee (+0S, punch), +0 ranged (N/A); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +3, Diplomacy +6, Drive +1, Gather Information +3, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (geography) +4, Knowledge (music business) +9, Language (English, French, Spanish), Profession (businessperson) +7, Sense Motive +6.

Feats: Assessment, Endurance, Fame, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Profession (businessperson)), Talented (Diplomacy and Sense Motive).

Equipment: N/A. At the GM's option, Sylvie may have access to a can of pepper spray (+5 Dazzle (sight), DC 15; *Cost:* 5 pp) or a taser (+5 Stun, DC 20; *Cost:* 5 pp) that she keeps in her purse.

Notes: Sylvie is one of the celebrity judges on "Pop Star". She is a major record company executive and was largely responsible for creating the "boy band" phenomenon in the late 1990's. She is the most critical of the three

judges on the show, her acerbic comments given an extra edge thanks to her cultured French accent.

Sylvie doesn't take anything from anyone (it's how she got ahead as a record company executive) and has no problem defending herself if threatened.

Description: Sylvie is a slender, chain-smoking Frenchwoman who prefers to dress in slacks and blouse combinations. Although she naturally has an accent, it has become rather weak after years of living abroad; she plays the accent up for tapings of the show.

Superstar

Quote: "Let me sing you a song."

First Appearance: Superline #2.

Summer Nakai was an ordinary teenage girl leading an ordinary life. The sole child of a pair of loving middle-class parents, she had everything she could want.

Of course, like all teenagers, Summer had a dream: she wanted to become a singer. So when "Pop Star" announced auditions Summer, like thousands of others, felt her chance had come. And, unlike most of the others, Summer was selected to become one of fifteen finalists for the show. She was finally on her way!

Summer just knew she was the complete package. She had the look, she could sing, and she was willing to work harder than anyone to make it; the thought of not winning never crossed her mind.

As a result Summer was utterly devastated when she was eliminated in the third round. In an unforgettable television moment that would be replayed hundreds of times, upon hearing the news, Summer broke down crying and had to be helped off stage.

For the next few weeks Summer was inconsolable, crying constantly and

refusing to come out of her room. During that time she did nothing but think about the show. And she came to one conclusion: the judges were to blame. Especially that Euro-witch Sylvie Cauchon who had made fun of her, but also Alicya and Earl; it was all their fault. But what could she do about it? Nothing. So she finally decided to go to a party to see if she would feel better.

At the party Summer ended up meeting a girl named Ilsa (the youngest member of the Coven from **Superline #1**).

Sensing an understanding soul Summer told Ilsa everything. And she was not disappointed. Not only did Ilsa understand perfectly where Summer was coming from, she even knew what she could do about it.

The two of them went to Ilsa's apartment where Ilsa produced what she claimed was an old magical tome, one that contained a ritual that would not only allow Summer to take her revenge, but also to become the best singer in the world.



Of course Summer didn't believe it, but she went along with the ritual anyway just because she thought it might make her feel better. She had no idea.

Whether something went wrong with the ritual, or whether Ilsa simply didn't know what she had, at the ritual's conclusion Summer had become imbued with an incredible amount of mystical energy that, although it didn't make her a better singer, made her voice a powerful weapon.

Realizing she had everything she needed to gain her revenge, Summer renamed herself Superstar, a title she felt she had been due anyway, and set about getting even.

Summer Nakai is a slender and cute Asian-American woman in her late teens/early 20s. She stands 5'4" and weighs in at 105 lbs. She has a somewhat prominent inch-long scar under her chin from a bicycling accident when she was 8.

Here Comes The Cavalry, But Not Ours.

If Superstar isn't enough challenge by herself, or the final encounter isn't chaotic enough, the GM might want to have Ilsa (or even the entire Coven) show up at an opportune moment to even the sides.

Summer is very cognizant of how she looks to others and enjoys playing up a demure naïveté and innocence; she has found that most people will do almost anything for her when she does this.

But people who know her know this is all a ruse. Summer's true personality is that of a very manipulative, conniving, and demanding young woman who, if she doesn't get what she wants, makes life miserable for everyone around her (and with her new powers, that is very miserable indeed).

As her parents know only too well, Summer can change her personality from "sweet and innocent" to "vicious and mean" at the flick of a switch, a transformation usually brought on when someone won't give her what she wants when she is being "nice."

Normally Summer dresses rather conservatively since it fits other people's idea of her better, but as Superstar (a role she is becoming more and more comfortable in) Summer likes to wear outfits like the ones worn by her favorite singers on television.

Superstar (Summer Nakai): PL 10; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Defense 21 (+8 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +9 melee (+1S, punch), +11 ranged (+10L, Sonic Blast); SV Dmg +2, Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills: Acrobatics +4, Balance +4, Drive +4, Escape Artist +4, Hide +4, Move Silently +4, Bluff +4, Gather Information +4, Listen +2, Perform (singing) +4, Spot +2, Taunt +4.

Feats: Improved Initiative.

Powers: Energy Control (sonic) +10 [*Extras:* Energy Blast (*Extras:* Deflection, Explosive Blast)]; *Power Stunt:* Blindsight, Disintegration, Improved Critical, Paralysis, Point Blank Shot, Ricochet Attack; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 6 PP].

Weakness: N/A

Equipment: N/A

Notes: Superstar can be made more dangerous by giving her less control over her powers through the addition of the Full Effect flaw and using the additional points to boost her Attack Bonus and/or replacing the Improved Initiative feat with the Power Immunity feat, thus allowing her to bring her Energy Blast/Explosive Blast down on herself.

MONSTERS

In this section we introduce some creatures for the GM to torment the heroes with. Since the theme of this issue of **Superline** is "Reel Life," we thought we'd throw in some creatures based on famous (or not so famous) monsters that have found their way to movies and on television.

SENSHUHA

Quote: A loud, grating screech of challenge.

First Appearance: Superline #2.

The origins of the creature known as Senshuha (a word meaning "tyrant teeth") are the cause of endless speculation in scientific circles. The most accepted theory is that Senshuha is a sea lizard of some kind, most likely a marine iguana, that was mutated by one of the numerous atomic tests that took place in the Pacific Ocean from the mid-1940's to the mid-1950's and beyond.

The creature was first sighted in 1955 by a Japanese destroyer searching near the Kuril Islands for a string of missing fishing boats (the disappearance of which would subsequently be credited to Tranjin). Fortunately, the encounter was a brief one, with the creature eventually disappearing beneath the waves in response to the warship's firing.

Senshuha next appeared in late 1958 on the Japanese island of Hokkaido where, according to survivors, it laid waste to several small fishing villages along the island's northern coast before returning to the sea.

Subsequent investigation on the island by Japanese scientists revealed massive dinosaur-like footprints and radioactive craters which corroborated the villagers' descriptions of the creature's size and its use of a breath weapon.

At the time Japan argued that the creature's appearance was a direct result of continued nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands by the United States, an opinion the United States disputed. However, testing in the area was suspended shortly thereafter and, since Senshuha has not made an appearance since then, the dispute died down.

Since then there have been numerous unconfirmed sightings of the creature, including a couple near Tokyo Bay, but nothing concrete has ever been established.

As a result, Senshuha appears to have followed the Loch Ness Monster and Bigfoot into legend and there are many in the scientific community that dispute the very existence of the creature, claiming that the Kuril Island incident was an attempt by the Japanese government to cover up its own nuclear testing.

True believers, however, point to the appearance of Senshuha only after atomic tests and believe that the creature exists in a state of suspended animation until awakened by radiation.

The actual home and current whereabouts of Senshuha are as much of a mystery as the creature's origins. Some scientists believe that the creature is almost exclusively marine, living its life in the water, while others believe it claims any of a number of uninhabited Pacific islands as its home.

Senshuha is a massive bipedal carnivorous lizard that appears as a cross between a marine iguana (especially in its frilled back and longer arms) and a tyrannosaurus rex (its upright stance, balancing tail, and large teeth-filled mouth).

Senshuha's scales are a dull dark ash, the monotony of which is only broken by the occasional strand of seaweed or debris clinging to its massive body.

Senshuha is estimated to be some 165 feet tall and weighing in excess of 20,000 tons. Aside from its sheer bulk, its primary weapon appears to be a blast of radioactive gas.

Although clearly not of human intellect, based on its encounter with the Japanese destroyer, wherein at times it appeared to alternately stalk and examine the ship before being driven off, Senshuha is believed to possesses intelligence far above that of ordinary animals and to be capable of tactical adaptability and planning.

Analyzing the sketchy sonar recordings of the time, there is argument in some circles that the creature is capable of a basic level of communication, much like whales and dolphins.

Senshuha: PL 20; Init +5 (Dex); Defense 4 (+15 base, +5 Dex, -16 size); Spd 80 ft. (Swim 80 ft.); Atk +4 melee (+25L, bite or +25S, tail slap), +4 ranged (+20L, radiation blast); SV Dmg +5, Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 20, Con 20, Int 4, Wis 17, Cha 10.

Skills: Listen +10, Spot +10.

Feats: Amphibious, Durability, Immunity (critical hits, disease, pressure, radiation), Scent.

Powers: Growth +20 [*Extras:* Continuous, Energy Blast (radiation), Immovability, Mental Protection, Protection (*Extra:* +10 Impervious), Super Strength; *Flaw:* Permanent; *Source:* Mutation; *Cost:* 8.5 pp]

Weakness: N/A

Equipment: N/A

Notes: It is assumed that Senshuha's base speed while swimming is equal to its base speed while on land as the Amphibious feat allows a human hero to swim at his or her base speed.

Although Senshuha is written up to be a powerful creature, the GM may wish to make Senshuha a plot device requiring extraordinary measures beyond those available to any heroes (another plot device) encountering it to defeat.

THE CREATURE FROM IMRI SWAMP

Quote: A deep, burbling moan.

First Appearance: Superline #2.

John Sexton was just an ordinary individual trying to make a living by dumping toxic waste into a local swamp when fortune turned on him.

One night while making his usual run John's truck became stuck in the mud as he pulled up to his usual dumping spot. While trying to free it, the truck tipped over and John was pinned under the truck, which suddenly began to sink. Screaming uselessly for help, John was slowly pushed under the muck.

As his mouth and nose filled with mud, John's life ended, but another life also began. The latent spiritual energy of the swamp, which had been the scene of secret pagan rituals for centuries, merged with John's body and soul, creating a new creature made up of the flesh and blood of John Sexton and the residual magical energy of the swamp. The result was something that would become known as the Creature of Imri Swamp by those that caught glimpses of it in subsequent years.

The Creature is close to 7 feet tall and weighs around 500 pounds. It has a general humanoid form that appears to

be made entirely of plant matter in varying states of growth and decay. Thick, trunk-like legs and massive arms give a sense of great power. A glistening sheen of moisture covers its entire body.

The Creature's head is vaguely oval-shaped and features a set of deep, green pupil-less irises. A set of black slits in the middle of its face and set above a rough gash of a mouth suggests a nose.

Although the creature is effectively a transformed John Sexton, the fact is that John Sexton as he was before the transformation no longer exists. Rather, the soul of John Sexton has been reborn into the Creature and remembers nothing of its time before.

The Creature's primary motivation is to protect its habitat, the Imri Swamp, and it does this in the most straightforward manner. It deals swiftly and without warning with all that defile the swamp through trespassing or would use it for their own base ends, usually by making them part of the swamp as plants.

Given that few people venture into the swamp, and fewer still with good purpose, the Creature is largely seen as a local legend. However, assuming recent sightings of the Creature in farms adjoining the swamp are accurate, the Creature has begun to expand its territory.

While the motivation for this expansion is unclear, if true, it is certain to bring the Creature into conflict with the local communities with inevitably disastrous results for everyone involved.

Creature From Imri Swamp: PL 15; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 17 (+5 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30 ft. (Swim 30 ft.); Atk +12 melee (+9S, punch), +10 ranged (N/A, plant snare); SV Dmg +5, Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Intimidate +14, Listen +7, Spot +7, Survival +7.

Feats: Amphibious, Darkvision, Durability, Immunity (Aging, Critical Hits, Light, Exhaustion), Scent, Startle.

Powers: Amazing Save (Damage) +10 [*Extra:* Fortitude; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 2 pp], Plant Control +10 [*Extras:* Plant Elementals, Regeneration; *Power Stunt:* Photosynthesis; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 4 pp], Super Strength +5 [*Extra:* Protection; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 5 pp], Transformation +10 [*Extras:* Continuous, Inanimate, Mental; *Flaws:* Limited – plants only, Range – Touch; *Source:* Mystical; *Cost:* 4 pp].

Weakness: Mute – The Creature can utter only soggy moans and burbles.

Equipment: N/A

Notes: If the GM wishes to make the Creature more of a mindless force of nature its Intelligence can be reduced to – and the 12 points used to increase its various powers.

SPACE SLUGS

Quote: N/A.

First Appearance: Superline #2.

The scourge of an hundred worlds, space slugs are an interstellar phenomenon of occasionally epidemic proportions.

Traveling to populated star systems from the dark depths of deep space, the origin of space slugs is a mystery. Among those species that have encountered them there is much speculation as to the slugs' exact origins, with theories touting everything from natural phenomenon to alien genetic experiment finding favor at one time or another.

What is known is that the slugs spend their time in space traveling in chrysalises able to withstand the worst of deep-space radiation and atmospheric entry.

Once arriving on a planet the predatory slugs immediately set about eating everything organic they can find. While they will devour plants, they appear to prefer meat in all its variety, especially intelligent creatures that can be hunted down. If given the chance, space slugs will denude a planet of all forms of life, leaving it a bare husk.

A space slug's blob-like gray body is roughly 15 feet long and 5 feet in diameter. Aside from its size, a space slug's most impressive feature is its massive maw filled with razor-sharp teeth the length of a man's forearm. A space slug uses these teeth as both weapon and tool; the slug's teeth enable it to tunnel through earth at a substantial pace.

Space slugs are hermaphroditic. Thus, all it takes is a single space slug to begin a colony of the abominations. Given that space slugs are prolific breeders, especially if there is an ample food supply, the creatures can quickly overrun a given area.

Space slugs possess a rudimentary intelligence that places them a step above normal animal predators. They are able to not only employ rudimentary tactics (such as having one slug chase prey to a waiting group or setting an ambush), but also to adjust to their prey's tactics in the moment and even anticipate what prey might do.

Space slugs communicate among themselves using a low-frequency vibration which is quite sophisticated, even allowing the space slug to share basic ideas and concepts (such as how a particular piece of prey acted).

All these factors combine to make the space slug a very dangerous nuisance and, at least on those worlds where they are known, every available resource is mustered to deal with the creatures the moment one of them is discovered.

Space Slug: PL 9; Init +0 (Dex, -1 size); Defense 10 (+6 base, +0 Dex); Spd 30 ft. (Tunnel 30 ft.); Atk +8 melee (+12L, bite); SV Dmg +6, Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 4, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +11, Listen +8, Spot +8, Survival +10.

Feats: Blind Fight, Durability, Great Fortitude, Immunity (pressure, suffocation), Scent, Skill Focus (Survival), Toughness.

Powers: Growth +6 [*Extra:* Continuous; *Flaw:* Permanent; *Source:* Alien; *Cost:* 6 pp], Natural Weapon +6 [*Source:* Alien; *Cost:* 2 pp], Tunneling +6 [*Source:* Alien; *Cost:* 2 pp].

Weakness: N/A

Equipment: N/A

Notes: A space slug's size provides it with Immovability +6, Protection +6, and Super Strength +6.

A space slug can tunnel 30 feet as a half action, 60 feet as a full action. While tunneling, a space slug does not leave a tunnel behind for others to follow.

To increase the danger presented by the space slugs simply make them larger or give them an energy blast of some sort.

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