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IMPROBABLE TALES



**AWESOME
2ND
ISSUE**

ICONS
SUPERPOWERED ROLEPLAYING
COMPATIBLE



PRIMAL POWER

BEWARE HIS FIERY RAGE! BEWARE...VIRUNGA

FAINTING GOAT GAMES

PRESENTS



PRIMAL POWER

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Introduction

Primal Power is designed to be a fun and fast-moving, action-oriented scenario. It offers a premise, enemies and playtested advice how to use them to the best effect. It can be played alone as a very short episode or inserted into a longer game.

411 for the GM: Here is what's going on

Plot Points

- 1) The local zoo is invaded by gorillas acting with a disturbing degree of intelligence and coordination.
- 2) It's soon revealed that a supervillain, Lord Virunga, is mind-controlling the gorillas to cause a distraction while he launches an attack on a nearby top-secret government lab.
- 3) (Optional) Virunga uses his mind control abilities to force a superhero to help him escape.
- 4) If Virunga escapes from the lab, he tries to make his getaway via a hijacked freight train.

Enemies

- Mind Controlled Gorillas
- Lord Virunga (supervillain genius ape)
- Virunga's Lieutenants (mutated gorillas – fiercely loyal)
- Mind Controlled civilians
- Mind Control superhero (Lone Star)

Important NPCs

- Endangered zoo personnel
- Endangered civilians
- Lab researchers and security
- Memphis Belle - reasonable superhuman agent of P.A.T.R.I.O.T.
- Lone Star - arrogant and cocky superhuman agent of P.A.T.R.I.O.T.

Action Scenes

- Scene 1: Chaos at the Zoo
- Scene 2: Stop that Ape!

Set-Up:

How the Heroes Get Involved

The PCs are going about their daily routines or are relaxing in their HQ when they are contacted by an agent of the government super-agency P.A.T.R.I.O.T. (Primary Anti-Terrorist Regional & International Operations Taskforce).

The operative who contacts them is Memphis Belle – a liaison agent who helps coordinate superhuman vigilante cooperation with the local government. Belle is a seasoned and reasonable agent and also has her own superpowers (superstrength and flight).

After introducing herself, she gives the PCs the following briefing:

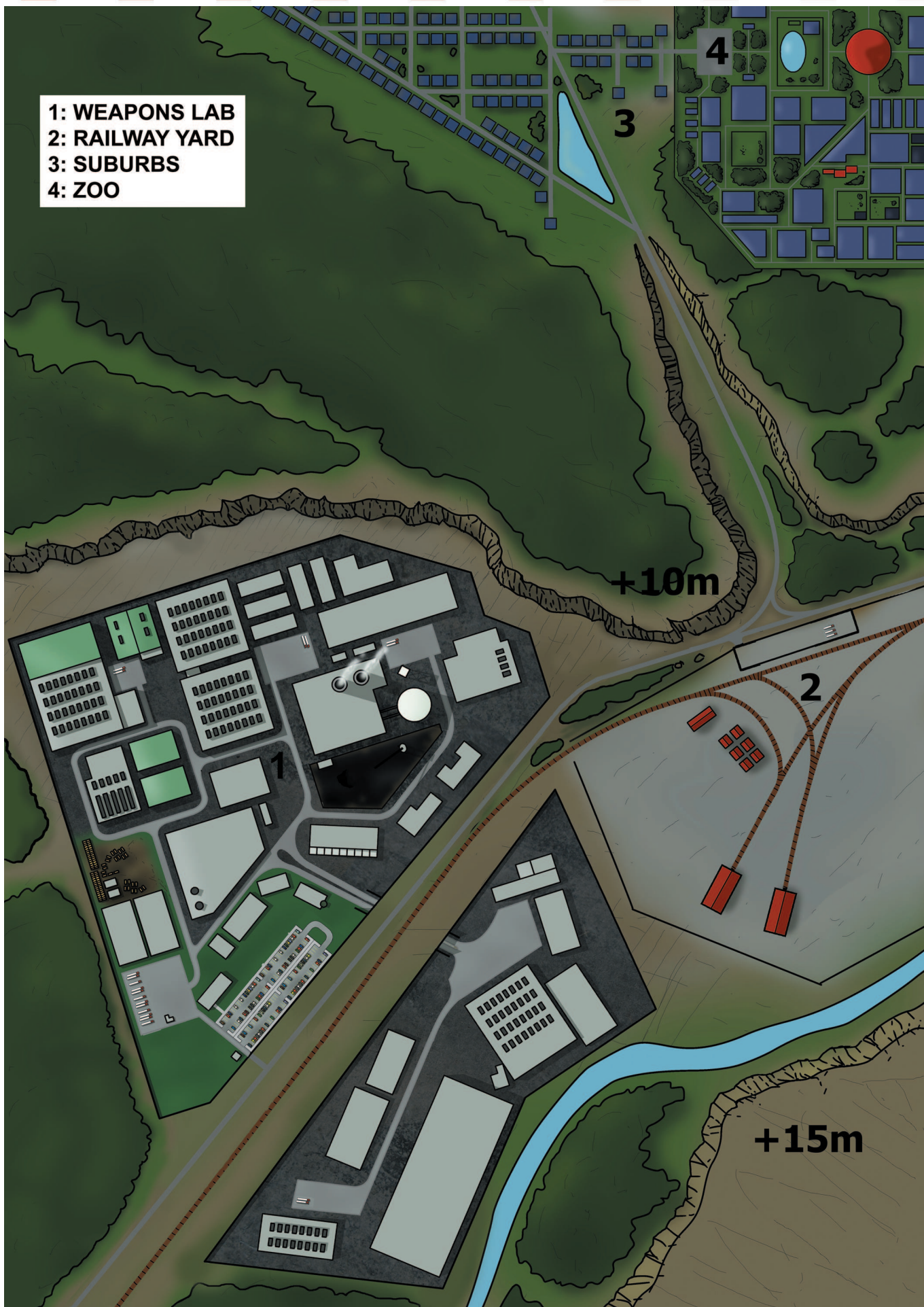
"As registered meta-humans, you've been deputized to assist with a crisis in your vicinity. The zoo in your city has been overrun by gorillas who are acting with unusual intelligence and coordination.

We suspect supervillain involvement – most likely of a psychic nature. For your own safety, you're being issued electronic wristbands that project a mental shield. This should offer you some protection against mental attacks. (In game terms, these wristbands offer Mind Shield 7.)

Time is of the essence – your briefing will be completed by law enforcement on the scene. Good luck".

(The PCs can be transported to the scene by a P.A.T.R.I.O.T. helicopter if they lack transport powers or their own vehicles.)

- 1: WEAPONS LAB
- 2: RAILWAY YARD
- 3: SUBURBS
- 4: ZOO



Action Scene 1: Chaos at the Zoo

Introduction: When the PCs arrive at the zoo they are met by Lt. Danforth, the police officer in command of the security perimeter. He introduces himself and launches into this short briefing:

"Because of the strong possibility of the involvement of a meta-criminal with mind control capabilities, conventional police have been kept at a distance. We've evacuated the zoo and established this perimeter.

Here's what we know: The zoo staff are being held hostage by an unknown number of apes in the office pavilion. We've spotted several gorillas who have taken up defensive positions near the office. We need you to intervene and resolve the situation with a minimum of bloodshed. Best of luck".

Enemies: Several mind-controlled gorillas (use Gorilla from Creatures section in ICONS). The gorillas are armed with tranquilizer dart guns looted from the zoo security office. The dart guns effectively have a ranged Paralysis attack with a rank of 3. Optionally, you may include one of Virunga's Lieutenants to increase the difficulty.

NPCs Present: Zoo employees and police (use Bystander and Police Officer stock characters from ICONS)

Scalability: We suggest you use the minion damage rules from ICONS. If that goes too easily for your taste, chuck the minion rule. For a much tougher encounter, add in one or two of Virunga's Lieutenants (see NPC section).

Situation: We suggest one gorilla per PC on guard outside and the same number inside the office.

When the PCs approach, they will encounter gorillas guarding the front and back of the office wielding tranquilizer dart guns. There's another gorilla hidden on the roof with a tranquilizer dart gun.

Inside the office, the PCs will encounter a large group of gorillas walking patrol. The zoo employees have been herded into an inner office and are all

guarded by a single gorilla.

Villain Tactics: The gorillas will make their first attack from a range and behind cover; they've taken up positions behind overturned picnic tables. When they run out of ammo (3 shots), they'll charge the PCs and attempt bashing attacks. After $\frac{3}{4}$ of their Stamina is gone, they'll attempt to retreat back into the zoo office.

In the zoo office, the apes will attempt to escape after half their number is defeated.

NPC Actions: The police and hostages will both wait for the PCs to resolve the situation. However, if the hostages see an opening, they try to escape during the combat. At least one gorilla will attempt to chase them.

Animal Mayhem Montage:

If the initial combat goes too quickly for your taste, here are some options for spicing up the first act of the adventure. After the zoo employees are freed - the police may ask the PCs for help with a variety of other calls that came just before they were ambushed.

Several animals have been released by the gorilla attackers and are running amok.

1) A freed rhino is attacking a package delivery truck in the zoo parking lot. The truck's engine is smoking from where the rhino has shattered its radiator. The driver is behind the wheel of the disabled vehicle, unsure of what to do next and looking petrified. (Use the stats for the rhinoceros from the *Creatures* section of *ICONS*.) A Willpower test (at difficulty 2) will be required to attempt to gently coax the rhino away. With a massive success, the PC establishes a rapport with the animal and can guide it back to its cage. Attacking the rhino will result in it attacking the character who antagonized it with its gore attack.

At the GM's discretion, an intrepid NPC zoo-keeper could happen by and give the PCs some extra strong tranquilizer dart rifles. Perhaps he also imparts the following advice:

"Right! The armor is weakest behind the shoulder. So aim for there. One shot with this baby that hits home there will drop that beast like a ton of bricks. Crikey! I'd take the shot myself - but my nerves are still shot from being held hostage by those feisty primates!"

A shot just behind the shoulder armor requires a major success on a test of the PC's Coordination against the rhino's Coordination (which is 2.) Aiming for a full page gives a +1 to the result.

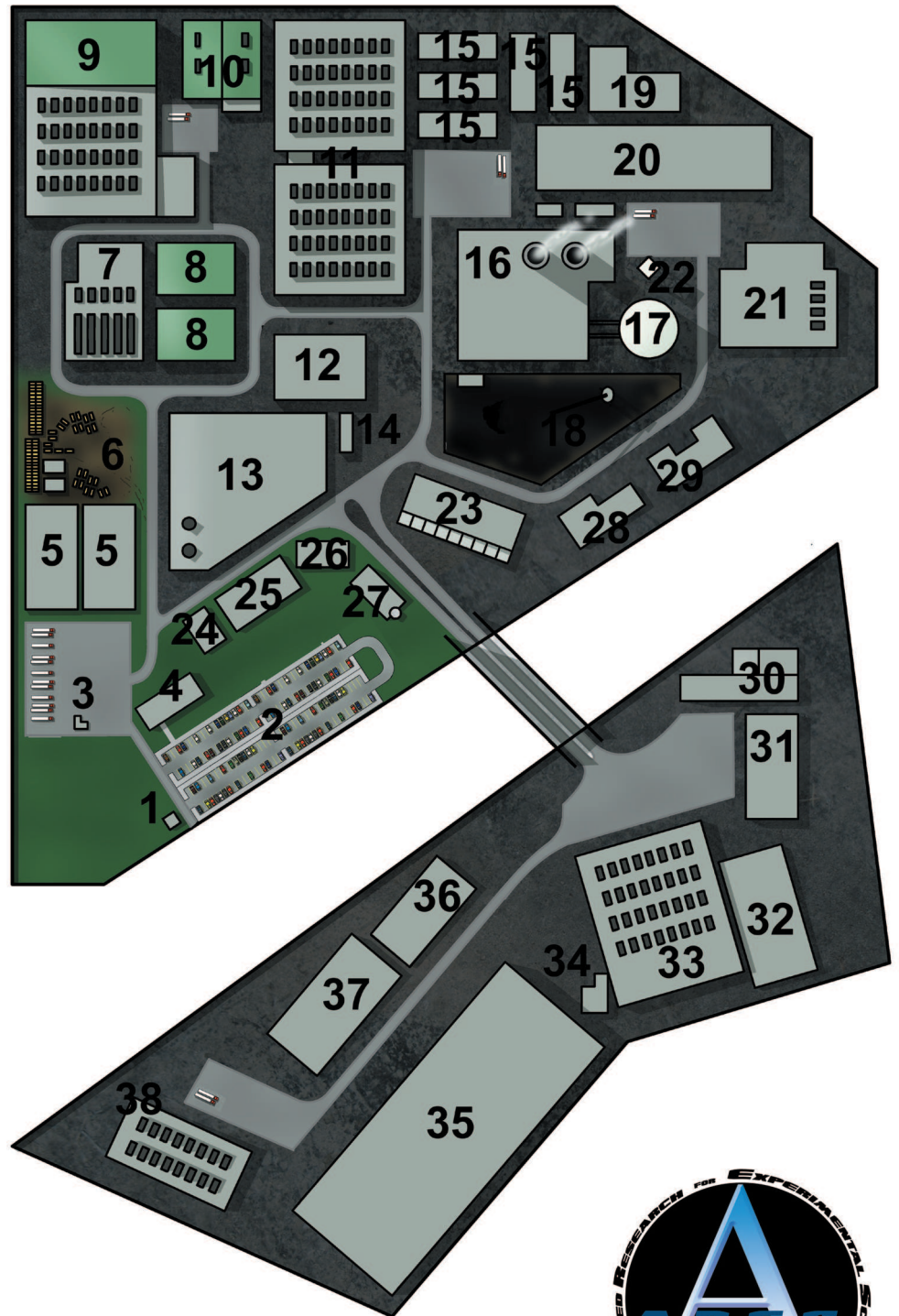
2) A polar bear has been freed from its enclosure. It has scared a tourist group who are taking shelter in the snake enclosure. The bear is persistently clawing at the snake enclosure door. It is not clear what its intentions are at this time. But the tourist group is very scared and the bear needs to be returned to its enclosure.

A Willpower test (at difficulty 2) is required to persuade the bear to follow the PCs. With a massive success, the PC establishes a rapport with the animal and can guide it back to its enclosure. Using meat or some kind of food (there's a hot dog cart and a taco stand nearby) gives a +2 to this test. As with the rhino in encounter 1, the PCs will have access to tranquilizer dart rifles at the GM's discretion.

3) A pack of mind-controlled gorillas (one less than the number of PCs) is rampaging through the zoo - smashing displays and ripping open cages as they go. (The escaped rhino and bear were their fault.) They're in the process of tearing open the gate to the elephant enclosure when the PCs encounter them.

A.R.E.S. WEAPONS LABORATORY

- 1: SECURITY CHECKPOINT
- 2: CAR PARK
- 3: TRUCK PARK
- 4: CAR PARK
- 5: STORAGE WAREHOUSE
- 6: SHIPPING CRATES
- 7: MISSILE MANUFACTURING A
- 8: MISSILE RESEARCH
- 9: MISSILE MANUFACTURING B
- 10: MISSILE PARTS STORAGE
- 11: FUTURE WEAPONS MANUFACTURING
- 12: FUTURE WEAPONS R&D
- 13: ANTI-PERSONNEL DEVICES
- 14: WEATHER MODIFICATION
- 15: RAW MATERIALS STORAGE
- 16: POWER PLANT
- 17: FUEL
- 18: COAL YARD
- 19: EXOTIC MATERIALS STORAGE
- 20: SMELTER
- 21: WASTE STORAGE
- 22: WATER TOWER
- 23: ADVANCED ROBOTICS
- 24: VEHICLE MAINTAINANCE
- 25: SECURITY BUILDING
- 26: GENERAL MAINTAINANCE
- 27: TACHYON GENERATOR
- 28: PSI WEAPONS RESEARCH
- 29: TIME DILATION LAB
- 30: TELEFORCE POWERPLANT
- 31: WEATHER MODIFICATION
- 32: AMMUNITION STORAGE
- 33: SMALL ARMS MANUFACTURING
- 34: RANGE OFFICERS HUT
- 35: BALLISTICS TESTING/ SHOOTING RANGE
- 36: THEORETICAL PHYSICS WORKSHOP
- 37: STORAGE
- 38: AI DEVELOPMENT



Action Scene 2: Stop that Ape!

Introduction: After wrapping up Action Scene 1, the PCs receive a call from Memphis Belle.

"Thanks for handling that situation, heroes. Unfortunately, it appears that may have been just a diversion.

We've gotten an alert from a secure government weapons research lab near your location. They're being looted by a meta-criminal matching the description of Lord Virunga – a genius gorilla of massive strength with psychic abilities and pyrokinetic powers.

According to the distress call, Virunga has stolen an experimental psychic power amplifying helmet. Virunga's mind-control powers have always been

limited to other primates. With this device, we estimate that he'll be able to dominate the thoughts of every human in a 10 mile radius.

P.A.T.R.I.O.T. is requesting your immediate assistance to defeat Virunga before he can escape.

Unfortunately, he's mind controlling the scientists and security personnel at the lab and using them as his cannon fodder. Make sure to pull your punches when engaging these civilians.

Also – please note that Virunga has an Achilles Heel of sorts. A close analysis of encounters with Virunga has indicated that an enemy who taunts Virunga repeatedly can enrage the ape to the point that he loses sight of his primary goal".

All These Wonderful Toys

The PCs are in the middle of a government weapons lab. In a world of mad scientists and super-intelligent gorillas, it's likely there are some super-science weapons in the nearby buildings that would be handy.

If the PCs can find a scientist (or, at the GM's discretion, if one sneaks onto the battlefield to get their attention) he or she can lead them to a weapon storage locker in a nearby building.

Also, a clever PC might simply search a building looking for something useful.

Feel free to think up some devices on the spot - or roll on the following table to determine what is available.

Random Exotic Device Table

- 1) Stealth Harness. Adjustable metallic harness with a built-in battery pack. (Invisibility 6)
- 2) Phasing Ray. Rifle-sized weapon with a dish-shaped emitter. (Alteration Ray 6 - Phasing)
- 3) Shrink Ray. Large bazooka-sized weapon that requires a tripod for aiming and firing. (Alteration Ray 5 - Shrinking)
- 4) Brain Blaster. Small, sleek handgun that looks like a stream-lined blaster pistol from a 1950s science fiction movie. It is attached by a steel cord to a sturdy metal headband (Mental Blast 6). A labeled switch on the side of the weapon will change the weapons effect from Mental Blast to Illusion (at the same power rank).
- 5) Mind Control Helmet. Very similar to a motorcyclist's helmet except that it's stainless steel. (Mind Control 6)
- 6) Time Control Belt. Highly-polished, brass belt buckle with an ornate dial attached to a study leather belt. (Time Control 5 with Super-Speed and Fast Attack effects.)

When the PCs arrive at the weapons lab campus, they get an urgent transmission from Memphis Belle with the sounds of combat in the background.

"I am on the scene with a squad of agents. We're pinned down between buildings 12 and 16 and we're engaging Virunga and his minions. Please assist as soon as possible. Situation deteriorating".

Enemies: Mind-controlled scientists and security guards (use Bystander from the Stock Character section of ICONS), several mind-controlled gorillas (use Gorillas from ICONS creature section), Lord Virunga (see NPC section) and a handful of Virunga's Lieutenants (optional)

NPCs Present: Scientists and security at the weapons lab that are not mind controlled and are seeking cover from the battle

Scalability: We suggest the minion damage rules from ICONS for the mind-controlled gorillas, scientists and security personnel. For a tougher encounter, don't use the minion rule and toss in one or two of Virunga's Lieutenants (see NPC section). (We recommend 3 or 4 minion level enemies per PC in addition to Virunga.)

To add color, consider giving Virunga or his minions some of the weapons from the *All Those Wonderful Toys* section.

If the battle goes badly, Virunga can use his psychic powers to recruit more mind-controlled minions from the groups of civilians seeking cover in the surrounding buildings.

To increase the challenge a lot more, see the optional Mind-Controlled Hero section.

Situation: Virunga has raided Building 12 (Future Weapons R&D) and is attempting to flee the scene with a silvery metal helmet under his arm when the PCs arrive and intercept him. He has an entourage of mind-controlled apes, scientists and security guards in tow.

Memphis Belle and a team of jump-suit clad P.A.T.R.I.O.T. agents are outside of the power plant

(Building 16) and are trading fire with Virunga who has taken cover behind some cars in front of building 12. Virunga is using the mind-controlled minions (human and ape) in charging attacks on the P.A.T.R.I.O.T. agents. Memphis Belle and the agents are in imminent danger of being overrun by a horde of these minions when the PCs arrive on scene.

At the GM's discretion, heroes with the Mind Control power can attempt to break Virunga's hold on the apes and civilians by doing Mind Control test with the difficulty of Virunga's power level (7). If successful, the hero will wrest control from the super-genius gorilla. He or she can opt to control the apes and humans herself or simply allow their free will to return.

Villain Tactics: The mind-controlled apes and scientists will attempt to charge and grapple the PCs. Virunga and his lieutenants (if present) stay at a distance and launch fire blast attacks. If half of his apes are knocked out or if the heroes are defeated or momentarily overrun, Virunga attempts to flee towards the rail yards.

NPC Actions: Besides the mind-controlled civilians, a number of scientists and security guards are hiding in the various building on campus. They've been trained to seek cover and lock themselves in during terrorist attacks. They don't realize that this makes them readily available reinforcements for a powerful psychic like Virunga.

A brave researcher (perhaps with tin foil wrapped around his head) might attempt to help the PCs with some of the exotic weapons from the lab's inventory. See the *All Those Wonderful Toys* section.

Mind-Controlled Hero (optional)

If you want to increase the challenge and add some variety to this encounter – have Virunga mind control an allied super-hero to cover his escape.

The scene unfolds something like this:

Memphis Belle radios the heroes and lets them know that backup is coming.

"With all these mind-controlled civilians, we've got

another P.A.T.R.I.O.T. agent coming in to provide some backup”.

Lone Star, a flying meta-human, lands near Memphis Belle and the PCs. Belle immediately notices that something is wrong.

“Lone Star – why aren’t you wearing a Mind Shield Projector?”

Lone Star shrugs. “I never had any faith in all that high tech gar....”.

The Texan hero never finishes that sentence. Virunga grins darkly as he sees Lone Star isn’t psychically shielded.

Lone Star turns towards the PCs, his eyes glowing sickly amber. Without a word, he snarls and hurls lightning blasts at the heroes.

Characters with Mind Control power can attempt to break Virunga's hold by doing tests with his Mind Control power as the difficulty (7).

A moment of impassioned role-playing might also break the gorilla's mental grip, at the GM's discretion

Resolution:

Victory: If the PCs best Virunga, they are hailed as heroes. Memphis Belle will approach about becoming full-time agents of P.A.T.R.I.O.T. Virunga swears vengeance as he's being led away in power-dampening manacles to a meta-criminal prison. The PCs are not allowed to keep any devices from the weapons lab as the defense company that owns the facility is grateful - but not quite that grateful.

Defeat: If the PCs are defeated, they revive after Virunga has escaped (with half their stamina). They are informed that he’s racing towards the rail yard and if they give chase they likely can intercept. Virunga has had a group of mind-controlled apes hijack a train and they’re waiting at the rail yards for him. (There will be one ape per PC.) At the GM's discretion, the PCs either catch him right before he boards the train - or immediately after it has started moving.

Virunga is too large to fit inside the train and will ride on top of the freight cars, guarded by his mind-controlled ape minions. (At least one ape is manning the train's engine.)

Note that any combat on top of the train has the danger of falling off the moving vehicle - particularly if an attack results in a slam outcome. PCs that are slammed on top of the train can (at GM's discretion) make a successful Coordination test to cling to the edge and keep from flying off. Falling off the train causes damage of 3.

Virunga has his base of operations in a cave in the woods northeast of the town. He plans on jumping off the train in a few miles and withdrawing to the safety of his cave.

If the PCs are defeated on the train, they are revived (with half their Stamina) by agents of P.A.T.R.I.O.T. who are tracking Virunga back to his lair and they invite the PCs to join them.

If the PCs corner Virunga at his cave, he will fight until defeated, initially using his flame powers to defend himself, but changing to hand-to-hand attacks after he loses half of his Stamina and flies into a rage.

NPC Section

Lord Virunga

Prowess 5
Coordination 4
Strength 8
Intellect 5
Awareness 3
Willpower 3

Stamina 11

Specialties

Acrobatics
Wrestling
Electronics
Science (Biology)
Mechanics

Powers

Growth 1 - Permanent
Elemental Control 6 (Fire)

-Creating
-Attacking (Blast)

Animal Control 7 (limited to apes, gorillas, monkeys and other lower primates)

Mind Control 7 Device – Psi Power Force Amplification Helmet (P.P.F.A.H.)

Qualities

Motivation : Revenge against humanity

Motivation : Longs to return to his homeland

Epithet : Psychic Simian Mastermind

Challenges

Enemy : Humanity

Enemy : Gorilla Nation in Africa

Social : Hates humanity with an undying passion

Social : Lonely – considered a freak by humanity and an outcast in the Gorilla Nation

Description

The Gorilla Nation is a community of several hundred huge, sentient and highly intelligent apes which live in a lush and massive underground ecosystem on a hidden island off the coast of west central Africa.



Virunga attempted to conquer the Gorilla Nation and turn their advanced technology towards world conquest.

Exiled as punishment for his treason, Virunga has been biding his time, pulling off heists to finance his operation and raiding weapons labs whenever possible. He hopes to accumulate an arsenal of advanced weapons to aid in his eventual invasion of Gorilla Nation.

He has developed bio-engineering methods for mutating mundane gorillas into highly intelligent primates capable of speech and with some measure of psychic abilities. He does not consider them his equals, but they help ease his great loneliness.

For a heist such as this, he will use his powerful mind-control abilities (fortunately limited to gorillas) to raise a small force from a zoo or wildlife refuge. He prefers his front line troops unquestioningly loyal and unable to spill his secrets when they're captured.

Mind Games

So, you'll notice that we included a powerful NPC for the express purpose of being an ally who is mind-controlled by Virunga.

This is because, for most players, it's no fun to have your PC mind-controlled. We suggest you use Virunga's Mind Control power as a way to increase the challenge by having Lone Star attack the PCs.

If (and only you can be the judge of this) you've got a player who is a particularly good sport who happens to have a PC with a reasonably high Willpower (i.e., they've got a good chance to be able to break free eventually) you might consider having Virunga attack them with his Mind Control power.

One fun way to handle this is as a contest between the combatants played out in the mental realm with each new Willpower test serving as another "round" in the combat.

As everything is metaphorical in the mental realm, you could have the contest be something that's relevant and important to the PC. For example, if the character is an expert swordsman, it could be a fencing match in the mental realm that characterizes the willpower struggle.

Depending on the character involved, it could be something more surreal - like a fishing competition, pie eating contest or rap battle.

Memphis Bell

Prowess 7
Coordination 6
Strength 8
Intellect 4
Awareness 3
Willpower 3

Stamina 11
Determination 2 (if used as a PC)

Specialties

Science Expert (Biology)
Martial Arts

Powers

Flight 4
Invulnerability 3

Qualities

Connections : High ranking P.A.T.R.I.O.T. agent
Top flight scientist turned superhero
Motivation : To Serve and Protect

Challenges

Social : Her strength often intimidates her peers
Bad Luck: While not cursed, Kucera often stumbles into the worst situations
Enemy: Super-criminals

Description

Jennifer Kucera was a scientist employed by the US government's secret super-soldier program. She was busy trying to reconstruct the meta-man formula of a nearly insane bio-engineer from the 1930s when her lab was bombed by a neo-Nazi supervillain.

While she was being dug out of the explosion, Jen was shocked to find that she was unharmed - despite being buried beneath hundreds of pounds

of rubble. In fact, she was now nearly invulnerable, in addition to possessing super-strength and the power of flight. Somehow, the explosions had provided the missing element to the serum and Kucera had gained super-powers.

Although the process unfortunately proved impossible to duplicate, Kucera has continued to research it - even after being inducted into P.A.T.R.I.O.T. as a super-human field agent.

A scientist at heart, Jen is very uncomfortable with everything involved in being a superhero - from the ridiculous uniform to the government-mandated code name. She attempts to rise above the silliness and handle it with the same dignity and professionalism she brought to her lab work.



Lone Star

Prowess 4
Coordination 4
Strength 5
Intellect 3
Awareness 3
Willpower 5

Stamina 10
Determination 3 (If used as PC)

Specialties

Aerial Combat
Martial Arts
Military

Powers

Flight 3
Elemental Control 6
-Creating
-Attacking
Force Field 2

Qualities

Connections : Mid-level P.A.T.R.I.O.T. agent
Motivation : Use his super-hero celebrity to cash in
Motivation : To Serve and Protect

Challenges

Personal : Supremely overconfident
Enemy : Super-criminals

Description

Derek Lawler was an unremarkable weekend warrior in the Texas Air National Guard until the weekend when his plane was engulfed in a mysterious cosmic energy cloud while investigating a UFO report.

While his superiors have never been sure exactly what happened, the results were clear: Lawler had gained the power of electricity control. He was quickly recruited into P.A.T.R.I.O.T. and given a code-name that highlighted his home state.

Lawler gets a big kick out of being the only "official" superhero of the Lone Star state and hopes his notoriety will help him launch a chain of car

dealerships or possibly Bar-B-Q restaurants in the near future.

Lawler comes across and generally chooses to charge into combat.

Train with Mind-controlled Ape as Engineer

Prowess 2
Coordination 2
Strength 8
Intellect 3
Awareness 3
Willpower 3

Stamina 11

Powers

Super-Speed 3
Invulnerability 2

Notes

Requires Strength of 8 to lift
Train is made of steel which has a Strength of 8.

Virunga's Lieutenant

Prowess 4
Coordination 4
Strength 7
Intellect 3
Awareness 3
Willpower 3

Stamina 10

Specialties

Acrobatics
Wrestling

Powers

Elemental Control 4 (Fire)
-Creating
-Attacking (Blast)

Qualities

Motivation : Revenge against humanity
Motivation : Loyal to Virunga



Challenges

Enemy : Humanity

Description

Powerfully lonely after his exile from the Gorilla nation, Virunga kidnapped and mutated several apes from wildlife preserves to serve as his companions and lieutenants. He has blended his DNA with their own, creating hybrid, mutant apes who are sentient and able to communicate but who possess less intellect and reduced versions of his powers.

A.R.E.S.

(Advanced Research for Experimental Sciences)

Originally founded in the late 1960s, A.R.E.S. laboratories were primarily a small arms manufacturer that worked on government contracts to improve weapons during the Vietnam war.

In the early 1970s, after the war ended, two changes took place that transformed A.R.E.S. from a



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run-of-the-mill defense contractor into one of the leading forces in advanced weapons research. The first was the appointment of a new CEO, Dr. Robert Wright, who was well known for delving into exotic areas of research. The second change was A.R.E.S. winning a secret contract to deconstruct alien technology that had been found at a crash site in Coyame, Chihuahua in 1974. (This stunning victory was largely due to Wright's reputation as a scientific maverick.) That contract kickstarted the lab's research department and allowed A.R.E.S. to explore dozen of highly diverse and experimental fields such as energy manipulation, bio-engineering, psychic weapons and chrono-engineering.

However, even with A.R.E.S. new and exiting directions, the company never stopped work on the mundane weapons that provided the bulk of its profits.

Since the late 1990s, A.R.E.S. has fallen under control of Wright's daughter, Dr. Karen Wright. The younger Wright is a strictly businesslike woman whose life is focused on pushing the boundaries of

science. She follows her father's footsteps by increasing the range of the lab's areas of expertise and research.

A.R.E.S. is intended to be used as one of the super science labs that show up in comic books to provide story opportunities or backgrounds for both heroes and villains. A technology-based hero could be a scientist or merely use equipment that came from an A.R.E.S. lab. Alternately, a villain could be a disgruntled ex-employee or an escaped experiment. Just as easily, the labs could be somewhere the players go to research unknown tech or get a super science device to stop a villain's schemes.



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