



# WELCOME TO STARK CITY

## CAMPAIGN SETTING & CITY BUILDING TOOLSET



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SUPERPOWERED ROLEPLAYING  
COMPATIBLE





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**&**

**STARK CITY GAMES**

**PRESENTS**



# **STARK CITY**

**CAMPAIGN SETTING & CITY BUILDING TOOLSET**

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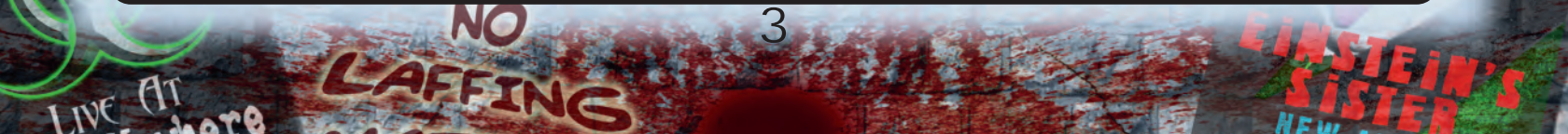
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# STARK CITY

## FOREWORD

Cities are as much “characters” in superhero stories as the actual heroes and villains themselves. After all, where would Batman be without the brooding and festering darkness and looming architecture of Gotham City? What place could suit Superman “leaping tall buildings in a single bound” better than the soaring art deco skyscrapers of Metropolis? How much of the style and character of the Marvel Universe is defined by the fact that the majority of its characters live and work in a New York City so very like the one in our own world, rather than some wholly fictional place?

One of the first questions I got asked when **Icons** was announced, in fact, was “where will it be set?” Setting provides context, which is all-important when you’re looking to tell stories, even four-color comic book ones ... especially four-color comic book stories.

As it happened, I didn’t want **Icons** to have “a” setting. My goal for the game was a callback to the golden age of tabletop RPGs, when “settings” were broadly implied by the game’s genre and its adventures. Games like **Champions** and **Villains & Vigilantes** didn’t have settings as such. They had adventures like *Island of Doctor Destroyer* and *Crisis at Crusader Citadel*. Similarly, **Icons** didn’t have a setting, either; it had *The Sidereal Schemes of Dr. Zodiac* and *The Skeletron Key*, among many other adventure stories for players to enjoy, and the assumption that if it existed in the comics it could exist in **Icons**. Like those earlier games, you could potentially put the adventures together and infer a setting from them (that’s how the original “Champions Universe” came about) but a setting wasn’t laid out for you.

So, why Stark City, then? Well, like I said, **Icons** wasn’t intended to have just one setting, officially sanctioned. It’s a game meant to encompass a wide range of superhero settings, and Stark City is just such a setting. It is both a source of inspiration and a home for all of those diverse **Icons** adventures to comfortably take place, a framework to tie them together, and a springboard for your imagination. From the streets of the downtown Silver District to the ultra-modern Telsa Industrial Park, from the wealthy Platinum Coast to the seedy dives of Geartown, you’ll find endless opportunities for taking the ideas found in this book and transforming them into stories of your own, because Stark City is ultimately about your heroes and their stories, an additional player to add to the ensemble cast of your **Icons** game.

The creative minds at **Fainting Goat Games**, like the founders of Stark City, have built up a remarkable place for heroes to live, work, and adventure. I’m pleased to have had a chance to visit and I sincerely hope that you enjoy your own visit to Stark City, and that some of you will choose to call it home for a time. It’s a place worth protecting, and Stark City needs heroes. So what are you waiting for? Turn the page and step onto the streets where superheroes fly overhead! Stark City awaits!

— Steve Kenson

# Introduction

Stark City is a setting book for the **Icons** roleplaying game. It also includes some setting rules that Steve Kenson, the creator of **Icons**, has been kind enough to write for us. Partly inspired by the city-building rules in the **Dresden Files RPG**, these rules tie setting creation into character generation and help the players devise aspects that are tightly incorporated into their setting.

## How To Use This Book

The dual purposes of Stark City are to provide a “worked example” of Steve’s setting rules and also to create a supers setting that puts the player characters front and center.

Originally, we had character generation rules specific to Stark City (which were released with some of the preview material) that explicitly folded character generation into Stark City with random generation tables. However, as Stark City expanded (producing many more potential connections), that became unwieldy. Instead, Jason Tondro has written a great section on introducing your characters to Stark City. This section gives advice on incorporating your characters into the setting and getting them established as the city’s preeminent hero team. Jason has also included a long list of potential “bribes” you can give your players for taking aspects that tie closely into Stark City’s rich background. Frankly, we had to cut this piece short. It could easily have been twice as long. We encourage you to keep an eye out for other interesting connections your characters (or players) could take that would help make Stark City more “your” town.

Along those lines, we also strongly encourage you to take a session or two to use Steve’s setting rules to create your own locations in Stark City. While you can certainly use the neighborhoods we describe, if you glance at the excellent map that Steff Worthington created, you’ll notice several small neighborhoods that we don’t illuminate in great detail. This is intentional. It’s our way of leaving a blank spot on the map and writing “here there be dragons.” It gives GMs some room to put their own mark on Stark City for their campaigns.

## Overview of Stark City

**History** - Provides a timeline for the evolution of Stark City and also provides a look at what modern day-to-day life is like there.

**ICONIC Setting Rules** - Toolkit for creating locations in **Icons**.

**Introducing Characters to Stark City** – This section provides advice on incorporating PCs into Stark City.

**Geartown** - Rundown industrial neighborhood by the docks where organized crime has a strong grip. Geartown is the most crime-plagued section of Stark City and the home turf of various street gangs.

**Platinum Coast** - Ritzzy, upscale area along the shores of Stark Lake where the well-heeled rub shoulders with politicians, businessmen, and the occasional under-the-radar supervillain or vigilante. The headquarters of the Stark City PD is also here.

**Tesla Industrial Park** - Stark City’s technology center. Here you find pure R&D firms engaged in super-science, defense industry firms, high-tech startups, and the various heroic and villainous factions who are attached to each. Stark City University is also based here.

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**Silver District** - Historic downtown, which doubles as Stark City's financial district. This is the heart of commerce, art, and business in the city. The primary train station is here, along with bars, theaters, stadiums, and the better restaurants. It is also the home to Sentinels Citadel, headquarters of the city's metahuman defenders.

**The Catacombs** - Running deep underneath Stark City, this forgotten tunnel network has become a literal criminal underground. Despite the best efforts of the Stark City PD, at any given moment a handful of nefarious factions (from street gangs to mafia crews to apocalyptic cults to super-science terrorist cells) are likely to have transitory safehouses in the Catacombs.

## And Finally

Thanks are in order. Thanks to Dan Houser for having the dream. Thanks to Steve Kenson for being our Jor-El (the cameo that adds a touch of class to the whole project). Sincere thanks to all the artists, editors, and writers who gave of their time and talent to make this a reality.



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LAFFING

Don't Give  
sister  
A Kiss  
EINSTEIN'S  
SISTER  
NEW

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# History

## Life in Stark City

Stark City has been known as the “Second City” of the United States since the late 1800s. It may not actually be second in population any more, but in theater, finance, technology, and politics it maintains its station in the nation. Since it is also the place most train and plane trips stop to transfer cargo and passengers, it is generally the second city travelers stop at in the course of their journeys. Investors and entrepreneurs have been drawn to its central location, large work force, and technological base.

There is just one fly in this ointment of attraction to Stark City’s charms. For crime, Stark City is first in the nation. An unusual number of costumed and exotic criminals have concentrated themselves in Stark City, taking advantage of its easy access and Canadian connections. The unique availability of the Catacombs for hidden activity is also a draw. Unlike the more subtle and secretive criminals of some other cities, Stark City’s criminal population is blatant and attention-grabbing. “Never embezzle when you can smash and grab” seems to be the rule with many of the city’s enterprising criminal citizens. More subtle organizations shake their heads and try to hold back their more overreaching compatriots, but it does little good.

For this reason, and others having to do with regional competition and jealousy, Stark City has acquired several nicknames that cause its citizens either to exult or grit their teeth. Mayor O’Hara’s unfortunate reaction to job stress has imprinted the name “Starkers City” on the national consciousness. Labor problems in the ’60s and ’70s coined the title “Struck City.” The Knightley administration in the late ’90s and early ’00s that presided over urban flight and decaying population and infrastructure earned the name “Stuck City.” The financial headquarters here have also provided the appellation “Shekel City.”

There are others. For example, because the old name of the city is “Mascouten,” Stark City residents are often referred to by outsiders as

## The Catacombs

Beneath the streets of Stark City lies an extensive underground neighborhood inhabited by some of the most notorious and dangerous criminals the city has ever known. Reclaiming these abandoned and forgotten subterranean areas of the city, seedy types such as supervillains, Mafia crews, street gangs, apocalyptic cults, and super-science terrorist cells have fashioned them into their own criminal underground, both literally and figuratively. Known collectively as the Catacombs, this neighborhood goes unrecognized as such by the authorities, but provides villainous lairs, Mafia safe houses, black markets, and other meeting places for the criminally-intentioned far away from the watchful eyes of law enforcement on the surface.

At the center of the Catacombs lies an abandoned tunnel network left over from a 1930s subway system project that the city began but never completed. This labyrinth allows for secret passage beneath the streets of Stark City and is favored by several criminal groups wishing to remain unseen by the watchful eyes of the Stark City Police Department above. More of a thoroughfare than a residential area, the abandoned tunnels and subway infrastructure nevertheless contain a few lairs established by secretive individuals.

“mosquitoes.” At one time, this was taken as a point of pride by Stark City residents, who even gave the name to the city’s second baseball team. However, modern researchers unearthed historical documents showing that the early colonists used the term in a derogatory way toward the local Native Americans, and after years of protest and a couple of lawsuits, the team changed its name to the Stallions. This did not help the team’s image—especially after a couple of sexual abuse scandals—and the name was changed again to the team’s current moniker, the very safe White Tails (named after

the official state mammal of Illinois, the white-tailed deer).

The Chamber of Commerce wants to popularize the term “Starkan” for Stark City residents. This is rarely seen outside of tourist brochures and guidebooks, however.

## Notable Restaurants, Bars and Entertainment Venues

**Crepes of Wrath:** A mid-scale pancake house chain owned by a reformed supervillain (the Wrathmaster) who trades on his infamy. A persistent urban legend maintains that some of the freeze rays, robotic servants, mind-control devices, and various other supervillain mementos that decorate the walls of these restaurants still work. This has had the unusual effect of making the restaurants even more popular with high school and college students. It has also made the restaurant a target for small-time criminals trying to break into the big leagues. Crepes of Wrath will often hire off-duty police officers or up-and-coming vigilantes to provide security on overnight shifts.



**Crescent Moon Diner:** A ubiquitous greasy spoon chain in Stark City, open 24 hours. It's a favorite of both cops and drunks trying to sober up. Kids eat free on Tuesdays.

**No Regrets:** The classiest restaurant in Stark City. Coat and tie are required and reservations are recommended. Located in the high-rent Silver District, it's named after the plane of Chip Carrington, a favorite son of Stark City who disappeared in the 1930s. The restaurant is located atop the Siren Building, and is graced with an amazing view from the 86th floor. It

features jazz music several nights of the week and a four-star menu.

**Sammy the Squid's:** A chain of video arcade/fried fish restaurants that cater to the “family with kids” demographic. Every Sammy the Squid's restaurant has a band of animatronic sea creatures (led by the eponymous Sammy) that performs a short set of Top 40 hits every 45 minutes. Unbeknownst to anyone, the Sammy's chain is owned by Randall Thorton, leader of the terrorist group MAKO. Thorton maintains a cover identity as Paul Flaherty, respectable businessman. Thorton uses the restaurants to provide a supplement income stream for his organization and also as safe houses for his agents (who sometimes pose as managers and cooks).



**Club Nowhere:** An all-ages live music venue in Little Sicily that specializes in industrial, techno, hard rock, and (occasionally) hip-hop acts.

**De Funkee Feesh:** A music hall near Stark City University. It specializes in “retro” acts. Grunge, nu metal, and ska acts are particularly popular there. This provides credence to critics who claim that Stark City is an unhip Midwestern city. Some have described Stark City as “the city where the '90s never died.”

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EINSTEIN'S  
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Live at  
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TERRORMEN  
CHARITY NIGHT  
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12:00PM

Give  
Kiss

**Crusaders:** The most popular gay bar in Stark City, located in the heart of the club scene in Platinum Coast. It features a rooftop beer garden (open only during the summer) and three energetic dance floors that cater to a wide range of tastes. Although the club leans heavily towards dubstep, techno, and trance, on certain nights of the week Crusaders highlights other styles. For example, Monday is Motown Monday, Tuesdays feature '80s dance music, and on Wednesdays, Crusaders hosts a country and Western line-dancing night.

**Hollarin' Bob's:** A legendary restaurant that's been operating in the Morgan Park neighborhood since the early 1970s. (It's named after a famous Stark City bluesman, "Hollarin'" Bob Byrd.) It actually opened on the same day as the Gloriana invasion, and framed copies of the weeks' worth of newspapers that covered that historical event decorate its walls. Tuesdays are 25-cent-rib nights; the affordable prices have turned Tuesdays at Hollarin' Bob's into a sort of unofficial get-together for the (usually poorly paid) henchmen of the city's various criminal and supervillain operations. Henchmen from across the city gather at Bob's on Tuesdays (in civilian garb, naturally, and under the aegis of an unspoken truce) to commiserate and share their stories with fellow henchmen. A cagey hero might be able to blend in with the Tuesday-night crowd and glean some valuable information.

**Player One:** An arcade, bar, and restaurant in the Tesla Park neighborhood that caters to the geek crowd. It features more than thirty vintage arcade games, all from 1985 and earlier. Player One has two lanes of Skee-Ball, eight pinball machines, and a display case full of vintage home game consoles. It's a favorite hangout for scientists from the various Tesla Park firms and students from Stark City University.

**The Midnite Supper Club:** The premier comedy club in Stark City. It features professional stand-up three nights of the week, with an open mic night on Tuesdays and improv on Wednesdays. The club was closed for several weeks after it was raided by the Anarch

gang (an attack that resulted in one performer's death). It has now reopened with a rotating schedule of off-duty police and costumed vigilantes as security.

**The Crouch and Rush:** A famous dive bar in Gerrisburg (aka Geartown), often called simply "the C&R." Owner Dominic Nocenti's great-grandfather opened the C&R establishment in 1887 to cater to longshoremen and seamen; the name is a tribute to then-heavyweight-champion John L. Sullivan's boxing style. Since then, the bar has become a famous Stark City landmark and is emblematic of Geartown's plight. Once a solid working-class bar, the C&R is now a down-at-the-heels dive bar that hosts an illegal numbers game in the basement and periodically serves as a resupply point for the DeSouza mob's drug operations in Geartown.

**Gerrisburg Shipyards:** The abandoned shipyards witness periodic underground raves hosted by a street gang called the Geartown Grinders. These raves are an open secret, and are rarely disturbed by the authorities (as the cops who patrol Geartown are notoriously susceptible to bribes). These raves draw in large crowds from across the city, and are a particular favorite of slumming Platinum Coast socialites who are eager to see how the other side lives.

**The Ring-a-Ding:** A riverboat casino that leaves on four-hour cruises nightly from the Gerrisburg Piers. Customers must be 21 to board the riverboat and can't use cash to gamble. Chips and tokens are used in all games of chance. The Ring-a-Ding offers baccarat, craps, poker, roulette, and blackjack, and always sports a Mardi Gras theme. (Clowns in jester attire are also a common motif on the boat.) This, combined with the very low drink prices, helps create a permanent party atmosphere on board. The prominent clown motif in the decorations has given rise to a rumor that the Auguste Anarch might somehow be associated with the casino. One version of this rumor even casts the Anarch as Francesco Marinelli, the oldest son of Dominic Marinelli, who was thought killed when the DeSouza

family seized power. While this urban legend would explain the Anarch's beef with the DeSouza mob, there has been no corroborating evidence.

## Museums, Cultural and Recreation Venues

### **The Hanse and Margaret Diedrickson**

**Museum of Fine Art:** One of the oldest museums in Stark City, boasting an internationally acclaimed fine arts collection. It includes iconic images from Georgia O'Keefe, James McNeill Whistler, and Frederic Remington.

### **The Stark City Museum of Science and Natural History:**

The city's most famous museum, located in the Platinum Coast area. It was founded by the Malone family in the latter half of the 19th century. Its collection runs the gamut: dinosaur bones, archeological artifacts from ancient civilizations, a captured German U-boat, an Apollo space capsule, and more. The Tesla Technology Center is a late-20th-century addition to the original Gothic Revival building. Although the museum is probably best known for its displays of prehistoric remains, it contains more than 20 million objects from around the world related to science and human history. This collection grew from holdings received after the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893.

### **The Colter Museum of Modern Art:**

Founded in the mid-20th century and located on the border of the Silver District and Tesla Park, the Colter features an extensive collection of the glass sculptures of Dale Chihuly, including a massive, multicolored floor-to-ceiling chandelier hanging in the lobby.

### **The Chip Carrington Memorial Sports**

**Museum:** Founded in the late 1960s, this museum features the history of Stark City sports, with particular focus on the Frontiersmen baseball team. This museum is attached to Frontiersman Stadium in the Silver District.

### **Alliance for Justice Memorial**

**Museum:** This museum highlights the history of costumed adventurers in Stark City. It features trophies from great battles and a Hall of Costumes showcasing costumes from the early days of capes and cowls to modern-day spandex. It displays at least one article of clothing worn by nearly every hero ever to call Stark City home. It is located in Tesla Park.

### **Stark City Fire Service Museum:**

Established in the 1970s, this museum recalls the history of Stark City's fire-and-rescue services, with a special interactive exhibit explaining the Great Gerrisburg Fire of 1872. It is located in the Lakeview neighborhood, just south of the Silver District.

### **Stark City History Museum:**

This museum is maintained by the city government, and its primary mission is to educate the public about the founding and history of Stark City. It features an assortment of Thomas Abelard Stark's personal effects as well as a wide-ranging collection of artifacts from native cultures indigenous to the Stark Lake region. It is located in Morgan Park.

### **Blaine Cosmopolitan Square ("the**

**Cosmo"):** A courtyard theater complex in Morgan Park, home to Stark City's ballet and opera companies, philharmonic orchestra, and jazz ensemble.

### **Stark City Blues Museum:**

Located in Morgan Park, this museum celebrates Stark City's contribution to the development and popularization of the blues in the 20th century. It hosts the world-renowned Stark City Blues Festival every summer.

### **Stark Lake Beach Park Network:**

The Stark City Parks Department maintains an extensive network of waterfront recreational areas along the coast of Stark Lake and the banks of the Mascouten and Wyandotte rivers. The parks provide opportunities for swimming, boating, fishing, and other activities. The largest park in the network is the Lakeshore Drive Beach Park in the Platinum Coast area.

## Sports

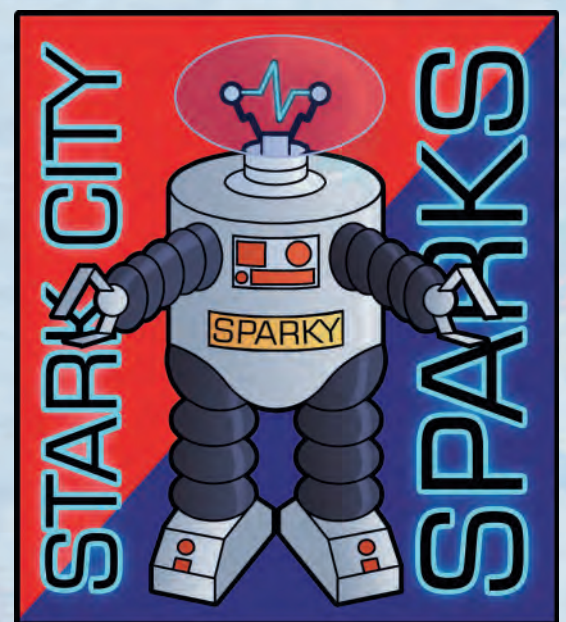
**Baseball: Stark City Frontiersmen.** Much beloved by their long-suffering fans, the Frontiersmen regularly sell out home games, but haven't had much luck in the postseason since Chip Carrington disappeared in the 1930s. They play at Frontiersman Stadium in the Silver District.

Stark City's second baseball team, the **Stark City White Tails**, are much more successful than the Frontiersmen. They went to the World Series twice in the last 15 years. However, they are best known for their scandals and their frequent name changes. Their home stadium is Valkyrie International Field in the Mercy Hill neighborhood.

**Football: Stark City Legends**, previously known as the **Stark City Bootleggers**. Their name was changed when it was decided that a bootlegger is not a suitable role model. Unfortunately, the team (which has been struggling with attendance in the past decade) didn't have a sufficient budget to update their jerseys and their marketing materials, so they still use a cartoonish bootlegger as their official mascot. They play in Phoenix Energy Park in the Lincoln neighborhood.

**Basketball: Stark City Sparks.** The crown jewel of Stark City sports, the Sparks have won the North American Basketball League Championship three out of the last five years. Their all-star roster is getting long in the tooth, and many Sparks fans despair that their glory years might be coming to an end. There are persistent rumors (mainly in cities whose teams haven't won three championships in the last five years) that the Stark City Mafia has used their influence to "persuade" the referees to give the Sparks favorable calls during playoff games. They play in Centennial Field (named for its sponsor, the Centennial Hotel and Casino), which is located just north of Geartown in Lakeview.

**Hockey:** Stark City has a minor league hockey team called the **Stark City Stockyarders**, a reference to the city's still-thriving meat-processing industry.



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## Media

### Television

**WSKC:** Stark City local TV station. Runs syndicated reality shows and sitcoms during the day and news coverage and network shows in primetime. Has a weekly feature during the nightly news called “Fighting the Good Fight” that highlights the city’s superheroes.

**WKBR:** Competitor TV station to WSKC. Similar content to WSKC, but lags behind them in ratings. WKBR tries to differentiate itself by being “edgier.” Has a segment on the nightly news called “POW!” that features viewer-submitted footage of superhumans in action. WKBR pays handsomely for exciting footage of superhumans in combat. This has created a small cadre of super-paparazzi, who can become a nuisance to heroes.

### Radio

**WSPK, “The Spark”:** AM station that provides sports coverage and sports talk radio. Official radio station of the Frontiersmen and the White Tails.

### Newspapers

**The *Siren*:** Stark City’s most respected newspaper, the *Siren*, is known for top-notch journalism. Its star reporter, Carmen Burana, is well known for exposing the corruption of Mayor Knightley’s administration.

**The *Scout*:** The primary rival to the Stark City *Siren*, the *Scout* is a sensationalistic tabloid founded about twenty years ago by the eccentric astronomer Barnard Ogilvy.

### Illegal Outlets

**Voice of Liberation:** Pirate radio station that broadcasts the propaganda of the MAKO terrorist group on the FM band (see below) from various migratory transmitters in and around Stark City. Regularly monitored by authorities and vigilantes for cryptic hints about upcoming attacks.

**The Midnight Angel:** Low-power pirate radio station that appears intermittently

## Locale: Stryker

## Federal Penitentiary

### Aspects

Supervillain Prison  
Covered by Force Field  
Power-Dampening Field  
Overcrowded and Understaffed

Stryker is the closest supervillain prison to Stark City. It’s 100 miles south (due to political pressure to keep a prison for metahumans away from populated areas). It houses super-criminals and other criminals deemed to be at “very high risk of escape,” such as high-level Mafia bosses or mercenaries.

It’s surrounded by a domed force field (Damage Resistance 8) powered by multiple redundant internal and external power systems. The dome also emits a power-dampening field (effectively Power Nullification 9). Stryker is managed by the Bureau of Metahuman Affairs, and prison personnel have the same US Army surplus power armor that BMA field agents utilize. The ranks of prison guards are augmented by a small army of Warden-bots (use the Robot stock character from *Icons* for these). Stryker also has a magnetic data storage array used to house criminal artificial intelligences.

Due to a spiking crime rate and budget cuts, Stryker is dangerously overcrowded and has weathered two riots in the recent past caused by overcrowding.

### Contact: Warden Ambrose Jefferson Pierce

#### Aspects

By the Book  
Believes in Rehabilitation Through Education

A transplanted Bostoner, Pierce is every inch an old-money New Englander. Holding multiple PhDs, he believes passionately in rehabilitating prisoners through education and self-expression. He requires his inmates to write essays on various topics for extra privileges. Stryker had the lowest recidivism rate of any federal super-prison before the latest round of budget cuts led to the current abysmal surge in the prison’s population—subsequently undercutting most of Pierce’s rehabilitation measures.

between 90.1 and 92.3 on the FM dial. The velvet-voiced DJ (who refers to herself only as “the Midnight Angel”) plays ’70s funk and ’80s hard rock intermixed with information about the operations and schemes of various supervillains and criminal operations in Stark City. Sometimes her tips are sketchy and hard to decipher. However, other times they are alarmingly detailed and very specific. Attempts to triangulate her signal (by both authorities and criminals) have failed, as have numerous efforts to track her down. Competing urban legends have it that the Midnight Angel is either a retired costumed vigilante who carries on the fight in her golden years or that she is the daughter of a supervillain who is trying to atone for her father’s evil deeds.

## Known Active Threats

**Dr. Judas:** The last in the Sentinel lineage, Dr. Judas is a supervillain who turned his back on his heritage. He is considered one of the most dangerous metahumans on the planet. He has long been absent from the public eye, which has led to speculation regarding whether or not he’s still alive, or whether he’s been plotting a massive operation requiring years of preparation.

**MAKO:** A highly organized terrorist organization with a radical anarchist agenda, MAKO (which stands for “Make Anarchy/Kill Oppression”) has an environmental rationale for their terrorist activities. Since the governments that rule the world have neglected the environment to the point of collapse, all governments must be destroyed so the planet can survive. MAKO mounts attacks against government, military, and industrial targets worldwide. However, their attacks are most concentrated in North America, with the highest number of incidents in and around Stark City. MAKO funds its operations by selling advanced weaponry to anyone who can afford their prices, from street gangs and organized crime families to Third World dictators.

**Marinelli Mafia Family:** The Marinelli crime family has been living in the shadowy underground of the Catacombs. They long for a

return to prominence and might make a move soon. The leader of the family, Dominic Marinelli, is a wizard of no small power; they should never be counted out.

**DeSouza Mafia Family:** The rising Mafia operation in Stark City, the DeSouzas control organized crime in Stark City and practically run large swaths of Geartown outright. They are the leading suspect in the Black Friday attack on the Stark City PD.

**Serial Killer Rumors:** There has been an unusually high number of missing-person reports over the last 30 years in Stark City. Oddly, the reports have occurred in every section of town except for the Silver District, suggesting the sort of twisted pathology associated with serial killers. This issue has not received much media coverage or consistent police attention, although occasional investigations are conducted. Unbeknown to just about everyone, the real culprit in this decades-long crime spree is the Bluerocket Investment Group, which is actually a cover for a cabal of werewolves who have been preying on Stark City since the 1980s from the safety of their Silver District skyscrapers. The vigilante Sable Lynx seems to be the only one aware of the lycanthropic threat.

**Anarchs:** A Geartown-based gang of thugs led by the supervillain Auguste Anarch. The Anarchs are on a single-minded quest for vengeance against the DeSouza Mafia family (for some unknown offense). The Anarchs boldly contest the Mafia’s territory by mugging the mob’s drug dealers, mounting hit-and-run robbery attacks on Mafia gambling dens, and at least one assassination attempt on the head of the Stark City mob. The burgeoning street war between the DeSouza mob and the Anarchs has involved several daylight drive-bys and shootouts on the streets. It’s only a matter of time until civilians are harmed in the crossfire.

**The Astrologer:** Called the “Phantom Godfather” by some, the Astrologer is a fable of the Stark City underground. He’s reputed to be a devious puppetmaster who quietly runs a far-reaching criminal empire through subtlety and

manipulation. Both the Stark City Police and Mafia insist he's merely a fairy tale.

**RAID (Research and Advancent in Idea and Design):** A mysterious super-science terrorist organization that plagues Stark City (particularly the Tesla Park area).

**The Reclaimer:** A crazed, super-powered vigilante, the Reclaimer attacks criminals, cops, and other vigilantes. The self-proclaimed "Protector of Stark City," the Reclaimer targets anyone whom he deems a threat to "his city," whether they be a Mafia hitman, a politician embroiled in a bribery scandal, or just another vigilante who was unable to capture a violent criminal. Attempts to locate and capture the Reclaimer have been unsuccessful.

## Law Enforcement and Other Government Agencies

**Stark City Police Department:** Still reeling from the devastating Black Friday attack, the Stark City Police Department has embraced a policy of cooperation with vigilantes to an unprecedented degree while it rebuilds. The SCPD has a handful of deputized metahumans it can call in when needed, and it's always looking to add more allies from the local metahuman population.

**PATRIOT (Primary Anti-Terrorist Regional and International Operations Task Force):** In the 1950s, this nongovernmental organization was created to combat metahuman threats that no one nation could face. It is funded by wealthy individuals the world over, but primarily in the USA, Europe, and Russia. Stark City's PATRIOT field office is run by Vitaly Karasev, a Russian expatriate and a former colonel in the KGB. The unassuming and nondescript field office is located in the Little Russia neighborhood. It is little more than a single meeting room containing a teleport pad that transports visitors to the PATRIOT orbital HQ (known as "the Coop"), where most of the real business is

## Locale: PATRIOT Orbital Space Station (aka the Coop)

### Aspects

Fortified and Heavily Guarded Space Station with Artificial Gravity  
High-Security Supervillain Prison  
Global Command and Control for PATRIOT  
Teleporter Access to Anywhere on Earth  
Targeted by Villain Groups and Rogue Nations

**Description:** PATRIOT's satellite HQ serves dual functions as the super-agency's command and control center and also as a holding facility for criminals that PATRIOT deems too dangerous to confine in planetside prisons. Heroes who are performing missions for PATRIOT will often be teleported to the station, where they are briefed before being teleported to the mission zone.

The station is nicknamed "the Coop" as a reference to its official name—the PATRIOT International Cooperative Base for Security—and as an allusion to its function as a super-prison.

**Contact: Vitaly Karasev, PATRIOT Liaison Officer for Stark City**

### Aspects

Spymaster  
Shadowy Past  
Very Persuasive  
Knows Everyone Has a Price

Karasev is the PATRIOT agent who contacts Stark City vigilantes for PATRIOT missions. He conducts most of his meetings on the Coop, as his office in the Little Russia neighborhood is bugged by the BMA and the FBI. A career officer with the KGB before the fall of the USSR, Karasev is an old hand at espionage and commando missions. He uses this experience to select and recruit vigilantes uniquely suited for each mission. He's a charismatic and well-informed negotiator (like most PATRIOT field office directors) and has a knack for knowing what will entice any vigilantes who might be reluctant to sign on for one of his missions.



conducted. PATRIOT frequently recruits costumed vigilantes for missions and may reach out to the PCs in this capacity. Patriot has a large roster of metahumans it can bring to bear on any situation.

**BMA (Bureau of Metahuman Affairs):** A federal law enforcement organization within the Department of Homeland Security. Its responsibilities include the investigation and prevention of federal offenses or activities that would endanger the security of the US involving the use of metahuman powers. (Its jurisdiction has been interpreted to also involve illegal activities involving magic or super-science technology such as power armor or advanced robotics.) The Agent in Charge of the Stark City office is John Gerald O'Brien, a former director in the Travel Safety Agency. His primary task is investigating the high number of MAKO attacks in Stark City and finding their origin point. O'Brien could be a useful resource for heroes investigating MAKO, or could be an adversary if they don't agree with his hard-nosed, by-the-book attitude. The BMA has only a handful of metahumans on its staff. None of those are posted in Stark City. Instead, the Stark City BMA office relies on a squad of trained agents with US military surplus battle armor in the event of a conflict with metahuman suspects.

**FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation):** A governmental agency belonging to the United States Department of Justice that serves as both a federal criminal investigative body and an internal intelligence agency. The Agent in Charge of the Stark City office is Henry Doorbinder. His primary mission is investigating the various crime families in Stark City. He's also been tasked with investigating John Gerald O'Brien, the head of the BMA in Stark City. Civilian informants have reported to the Department of Justice that O'Brien is accepting bribes from MAKO, and the FBI is following up on these rumors. The Stark City FBI office has no metahumans on staff, and usually relies on the Stark City PD or the local BMA for muscle in the event of encounters with hostile metahumans. Doorbinder has been pleading with Washington to remedy this situation. So far, he has had no luck. He may turn to

recruiting agents from Stark City's burgeoning population of metahuman vigilantes soon, provided he can find a suitable candidate.

## Non-Human Life in the World of Stark City

(These are only guidelines. Feel free to change them as it suits your players and campaign.)

**Atlanteans:** The world is largely ignorant of the existence of undersea humans. However, the US Navy has recently made contact with Atlantis, and has a top-secret limited diplomatic exchange program (overseen by the State Department). The Atlanteans have reported to the Navy that a rogue breakaway colony of Atlantean criminals has reportedly formed on the floor of Great Stark Lake. An Atlantean contingent is (secretly) stationed at the Stark Lake Naval Station and is cooperating with attempts to locate the colony. So far, they have been unsuccessful.

**Alien Life:** Although conspiracy theories abound about Area 51 and UFO sightings, there has been no widespread known contact with alien cultures. Beyond a few alien heroes, Earth has had little contact with any civilized spacefaring races.

**Subterranean Life:** The various mole-man and rock-man nations have thriving civilizations, and have scrupulously kept their distance from the surface dwellers for centuries. Knowledge of their existence has been lost to history.

# Stark City's History

## Founding

General Thomas Abelard Stark distinguished himself during the Revolutionary War by capturing several British strongholds in what eventually became the Northwest Territory. He made extensive use of irregular tactics (especially the use of snipers armed with Pennsylvania Long Rifles), and maintained friendly contacts with local Native American tribes theoretically allied with the British. In taking Fort Dill, he is said to have defeated the commander personally in a tomahawk vs. saber fight that ranged all over the burning fort.

After the war, in 1778, Stark moved to a small fur-trading settlement on the banks of a swamp where the Mascouten and Wyandotte rivers merge before flowing into a large lake. The settlement, lake, and major river feeding the lake from the north were all called "Mascouten" after a local Native American tribe.

Stark used his Native American contacts to establish a thriving trading post business. After a few years, he branched out into a few other business ventures: he ran a fishing operation, a timber business, and a blacksmith's workshop. All of these activities attracted more settlers.

In the early 1800s, when the US was looking to erect a fort in the area, Stark was the logical choice to help them secure the needed materials and labor. Fort Sam Adams was the first US military post in the area.

Stark continued to dominate the area's commerce. Mascouten was often colloquially referred to as "Stark City" because of his influence in the settlement. When he died in 1828, the town and the lake were both renamed in his honor, despite the fact that a later settlement, Gerrisburg, had sprung up between Stark City and the lake. Because the Mascouten river originated in Canada, it retained its original name.

It was on the streets of the newly-renamed Stark City that the Sentinel first made his appearance, saving a family caught in a house

fire. It was noted at the time that the mystery man concentrated entirely on saving the Blaine family until all of them were safe before assisting any of the other families caught in the block-wide fire. Newspaper accounts (which created the name "Sentinel" after a few more appearances) remarked on the mysterious rescuer's "frontiersman-like appearance" and apparent immunity to the effects of smoke.

## Important Dates

**1829:** First appearance of the Sentinel.

**1833:** Stark City became an incorporated municipality after receiving an official charter from the state.

**1872:** The Great Gerrisburg Fire. Gerrisburg (now colloquially called "Geartown") was gutted by a massive fire which also destroyed the shipyards and the docks before being contained by firefighters from Stark City and Gerrisburg working in tandem. Legend has it that the fire was set by Civil War hero Colonel Jeremiah Blackstone.

**1889:** The Gerrisburg-Stark City "War." Stark City's "Stockyard King" Thaddeus Malone collaborated with the Vanderbilt railroad empire in an effort to take advantage of Gerrisburg's slow recovery from the Great Fire, attempting to hijack Gerrisburg's monopoly on Stark Lake traffic from Canada and New England. This would have been an interesting series of articles in the business pages, except that Malone imported a cadre of Wild West gunfighters to physically force the shippers of Gerrisburg to capitulate. Colonel Hanse Diedrickson, the Great Captain of the Lake Shippers, retaliated by recruiting a mercenary force of Civil War and Indian fighter veterans and open warfare threatened to break out.

The Sentinel (actually the second Sentinel) stepped into the fray, apparently making alliances with both sides and then disrupting their plans. The body count was amazingly light, with many of the hired guns driven out of the

conflict in shame by the bystanders' laughter. Only a few of the mercenaries died, and that mostly because of their own stubbornness and bloody-mindedness. Finally, frustrated beyond caution, Malone and Diedrickson arranged to meet on the border between the two towns. The Sentinel stood by, acting only to stop other members of the factions from interfering. Malone died on the street; Diedrickson died of his wounds two days later. Their seconds-in-command agreed to a cease-fire truce, and Mayor Herman Blaine of Stark City negotiated an agreement to merge the two cities, putting the treasury of Stark City to work helping rebuild what had now become the Gerrisburg district of Stark City.

**1893–1894:** The World Columbian Exposition, celebrating the expanded Stark City's recovery from the fire. The actions of the Sentinel to keep the villainous Master of the Fair from holding the

entire city for ransom brought the masked guardian of Stark City to national, even international, attention. The Exposition site was mostly the old Mascouten swamp, filled in and reinforced to provide an extensive fairground. To keep the area swamp-free, the Mascouten and Wyandotte rivers were rerouted to feed into Stark Lake independently. Draining the swamp and redirecting the rivers took so much money (at least some of which was skimmed off in fine Gilded Age fashion) that critics of the project said, "The streets must be paved with silver." Thus the Silver District got its name.

**1918–1933:** Prohibition. Because of its optimal location on two rivers, close to the Canadian border and close to a major lake, Stark City gained notoriety as a hotbed for bootlegging. Stark City's first costumed vigilantes emerged to battle the moonshiners and gangsters, and the Sentinel adopted the



## Secret Origin of the Sentinel

**(Shhh! It's a Secret!)**

In the late 1820s, a meteor crashed near the Rocky Mountains. Curious mountain man John Colter, who had originally come west with the Lewis and Clark expedition, investigated the crash and found the ruins of a strange vessel and its pilot. Colter brought the man back to health. The man had a strange story. He claimed to come from the stars, and to be a prince of the Sirian Principality, now exiled by his family for political reasons. His name came strangely to the tongue, but he asked for and gained Colter's permission to use the mountain man's family name. After a couple of years trapping and hunting with Colter, Jonas Colter headed for civilization.

Jonas had been exiled for his heretical concepts of serving and protecting the population of his native Principality. He found Earth to be the ideal arena to practice his concepts. Using his unspectacular psionic abilities, he initially acted in secret to help citizens without drawing any attention to himself. But when the house of the family of Amelia Blaine (a young woman he was courting according to the customs of the time) burst into flame, he abandoned subterfuge to use his abilities to save the family. Once they were safe, he used those same abilities to rescue several other Stark City residents. He disappeared before any officials could question him, but the Blaine family knew who their savior was. They became the start of what eventually became the Sentinel Network.

After the fire, Jonas became less careful about hiding his good deeds, taking only the precaution of wearing his buckskins and floppy brimmed hat (which no one ever saw Jonas Colter wearing) when he purposely set out to serve and protect. Sometimes he also wore the hazard suit that was part of his ship's equipment. Besides saving people from natural disasters, he helped people threatened by outlaws, rogue Indians, and the occasional corrupt official. When his psionic abilities were not enough (and he was careful to keep them mysterious), he would use Sirian technology he had scavenged from the wreckage of his ship.



## Secret History of the Sentinel (Continued)

Like all members of his family, Jonas was long-lived, but he had actually spent a century or so among the stars before coming to Earth. He grew older. He raised children, including a son who inherited some of his abilities and was actually stronger in some of them than his father. In 1861, Ralph Colter took the colors and went off to fight in the Civil War. When he returned home, he took up the mantle of the Sentinel.

And so it continued for four more generations, with successors depending on alien technology and powers that changed with each generation, until David Colter, the Sentinel of the 1970s, disappeared with the other heroes of Stark City during the Gloriana Invasion.

David left behind a wife and young son who were not ready to absorb all the duties and obligations of the Sentinel. The Sentinel Network attempted to raise the youngster according to the traditions of the Sentinel, but he was willful, and they were already disrupted by the loss of their leader. He eventually left to pursue his own indulgences, leaving the bodies of many of the most important members of the Network in the ruins of their headquarters behind him.

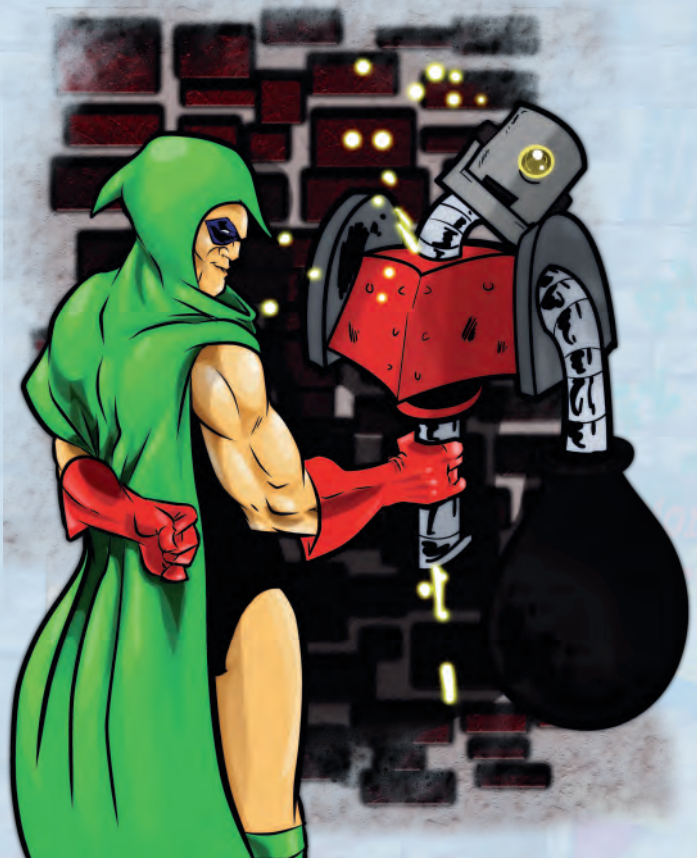
Now, with the young man they were supposed to mentor turned to a life of criminal indulgence as Doc Judas, the remains of the very secret Sentinel Network have become the very public Sentinel Foundation—dedicated to creating a team of heroes to meet the challenges of a new century, so the guardianship of Stark City need not rest on just one set of shoulders.

fashion of wearing a costume. The bulky one-piece garment was apparently bulletproof, and his face was hidden behind a gas mask of advanced design.

**1923:** Attracted by the forward-looking spirit of Stark City and a handsome financial investment from philanthropist Adrian Colter, Nikolai Tesla established an invention park on the outskirts of Stark City and started to make some of his dreams come true.

**1933–1934:** The Century of Progress World's Fair celebrated Stark City's centennial. The plot by the Master of the Fair (thought to have died in 1894) to kidnap Tesla was foiled by the Cowl and Swashbuckler, two new costumed heroes who stepped up to the challenge after the Sentinel was diverted away from the city by the Master's subterfuges.

The fair was originally scheduled for 1928, the 100th anniversary of Stark City's naming, but some political shenanigans (largely designed to avoid breaking ground at the original site, which would have exposed some of the Catacombs already present) and then the Great Depression almost canceled the entire project. Financing



from some of the first families of the city allowed the project to continue, and the fair opened on the 100th anniversary of the city's formal incorporation.

**1933:** Stark City began construction on an ambitious underground subway mass transit system as part of the New Deal.

**1934:** Easton Street in a low-lying area of Stark City was condemned and covered over along a two-mile stretch to form a tunnel for the subway system project. It remained forgotten for decades until it was rediscovered in the Catacombs.

**1935:** Workers constructing a subway uncovered an ancient portal to other dimensions. The subway system project was abruptly abandoned, and an elevated train line designed by Tesla was implemented instead. First public appearance of Dynamo Dan and Redhawk, two powered heroes who fought alongside Sentinel, the Cowl, and Swashbuckler to stop the interdimensional monsters released from the portal until the aperture was sealed by the mysterious Doctor Fortune.

**1936:** The Stark City Frontiersmen, led by rookie shortstop Chip Carrington, won their first World Series championship. Carrington was named MVP.

**1939:** Chip Carrington and his plane *No Regrets* went missing while on an archaeological expedition to the Yucatan Peninsula.

**1939–1945:** World War 2. The Tesla Invention Park became the Tesla Industrial Park in Stark City, the site of many laboratories focused on advanced technology aiding the war effort. A new generation of heroes helped defend America's scientific genius from spies and saboteurs. Several of the science heroes from this time, notably Streamliner, Doc Bronze, and Captain Bakelite, worked with Nikolai Tesla to enhance and improve the city around them, building Stark City into a "Town of Tomorrow." The Sentinel disappeared from the streets of

## Locale: Mascouten Island Station

### Aspects

Nerve Center for SCPD Tactical Response Teams

Power-Sapping Holding Cells in Hardened Basement

Helicopters and Speedboats on Standby

**Description:** Located on an island where the Mascouten River flows into Stark Lake, Mascouten Island Station is a joint command base for the Stark City Police Department and the Coast Guard.

Speedboats and helicopters are available to respond to emergencies on the land or water. Stark City SWAT always has a squad on standby 24/7 at this location, as it is a convenient location from which to insert teams into almost any part of the city.

The 100-year-old mansion that serves as the main command center on Mascouten Island has been refurbished and outfitted with modern wiring, a small clinic, and—in the former basement—a hardened bunker with power-sapping technology (effectively Power Nullification 5) for the temporary housing of metahuman suspects.

### Contact: Lieutenant Joseph Washington Aspects

Ambitious Glory Hound

Reluctantly Works with Vigilantes

Alcoholic

Washington is the Stark City Police Officer-in-Charge for Mascouten Island. He's a hard-charging careerist who bristles at (but grudgingly complies with) the Stark City PD's directive to integrate civilian metahumans into operations. The stress of Washington's work has led him to drink heavily (occasionally even on the job). So far, he manages to hide this fact from all but the most careful observer.

## The Teslacracy

In 1928, Nikolai Tesla was contacted at his invention park on the outskirts of Stark City by a group of other Teslas from various alternate dimensions. Calling themselves the Teslacracy, this group had pooled their resources and knowledge to explore the mysteries of the multiverse. With their massive combined intellects, they had unlocked the secrets of traveling between dimensions, engineered vehicles capable of deep space travel, and even invented biochemical processes that provided near-immortality.

Impressed with the massive (even by their standards) intellect of “our” Earth’s Tesla, the Teslacracy invited him to join as a probationary member.

Fascinated by the possibilities (and excited to finally be among a group of men who were his equal in intellect), Tesla went on several multiverse-hopping adventures with the Teslacracy. The group accepted our Tesla and, eventually, offered him full membership in the group.

However, the price for membership was dire: Tesla would have to help the Teslacracy conquer his Earth so the resources and labor of our planet could be used to support their massive multidimensional empire (as the empire required immense quantities of energy and a massive multiworld slave labor force). While our Tesla was a dedicated pacifist and humanitarian, the members of the Teslacracy were not bound by any such morality. They served only their egos and intellectual curiosity.

When Tesla refused their offer, they attempted to kill him (under the reasoning that they had to cleanse the multiverse of cowards unworthy of the name “Tesla”), and prepared to invade our world anyway. Tesla survived their attack and, with the help of that era’s Sentinel, just barely defeated the vanguard of the Teslacracy’s invasion. Using a massive wireless electricity generator, Tesla charged the multiversal ether around our planet, creating an energy shield that he hoped would protect our Earth from the Teslacracy for decades.

The Teslacracy is a favorite subject of conspiracy theorists. Some of the more colorful theories include the idea that the Teslacracy has found a way to tunnel through the charged ether shield and had provided weapons to help repel the Gloriana invasion. A more recent rumor holds that agents of the Teslacracy have recently infiltrated our world and taken over super-crime organizations in a renewed bid to conquer the planet.

The Sentinel Foundation takes these rumors very seriously and investigates any of the more credible reports.

Stark City for most of the war (even before America’s entry into the war), but appeared in both Europe and the Pacific at important junctions of events. He was credited with blunting several Japanese “banzai charges” on Guadalcanal and with slowing down the German advance during the Battle of the Bulge. Interestingly, some reports of his activities placed him in both the Pacific and Europe on a schedule that no known conveyance could have enabled.

At the end of the war, Col. Matthew Colter, USMC, returned to the city. His brother, Capt. Mark Colter, USAAF, was lost in the skies over Germany. His body was never recovered.

**1947:** Death of Nikolai Tesla mourned by city. Support from the Colter Foundation (later to become the framework of the Sentinel Foundation) was credited with extending his life “at least five years.”

STARK CITY  
LETTERS MEN

FIGHT  
50/50  
RAFFLE  
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THE  
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**1954:** Mayor Joseph O'Hara ran through a meeting of the aldermen stark naked. He later claimed that he had been mind controlled by "evil forces." This statement was met by general derision, but the Sentinel found the culprit, Jake "the Mouthpiece" Murietta, and the mayor was vindicated. He decided that it was time to retire anyway.

**1955:** Start of first term of Mayor Geoffrey Knightley, Democrat. Knightley was mayor until 1976, when he died in office.

**1958:** First known case of the Alliance for Justice, a formal association of Stark City's costumed mystery men. It included wartime heroes like Streamliner and newcomers like Miss Victory. Rather than ganging up on bank robbers and purse snatchers, the Alliance acted as a central directory and information clearing station for the various heroes, increasing the efficiency and speed of individual heroes' responses. They mostly gathered when powered criminals posed a dire threat or special events required a heroic presence to improve civic pride.

**1960:** Stark City saw a rise in mob violence unequalled since Prohibition, as the Gargano crime family consolidated its power by eliminating rival Mafia families.

**1969:** A major division split the Alliance for Justice as heroes differed, mostly along generational lines, about the legitimacy of the Vietnam War. Thanks to the Sentinel's mediation, the group did not dissolve, but protocols were created to make sure certain heroes did not have to cooperate too closely. In one much-discussed case, American Fist could not be at the same event or investigation as Independent Spirit.

**1972:** The Gloriana invasion. A sudden rupture in the dimensional barriers over Tesla Park forced a war-weary America in the midst of a divisive election to suddenly confront a hole in space. A police helicopter fell through the hole when it suddenly expanded. Miss Victory flew through the hole and was never seen again.



Suddenly, giant airships punched their way through the hole from the other side. Each was emblazoned with the now-familiar decal of a Japanese-style Rising Sun done up in Union Jack colors.

The airships disgorged battalions of clockwork soldiers who quickly established a beachhead in Tesla Park. Within a single day the city was fully occupied by clockwork soldiers, giant steam-powered battlesuits that apparently held the controllers for the clockwork soldiers, and airships both big and small. Speakers on the airships and battlesuits announced that the world was now being magnanimously included in the Glorious Eternal Empire of the Sun Goddess Gloriana, Empress of the Empire of Greater Albion-Nippon.

By the time the military could react, the city was infested and the population effectively held hostage to ensure the USA's good behavior. Massive retaliation was not an option, particularly when Imperial forces demonstrated a few tricks that effectively shut down the jet fighters that tried to fly over the town. It was up to the heroes of Stark City and the world at large to deal with the invaders—including the

STARK CITY FRONTIERSMEN  
FRONTIERS NIGHT  
50/50 RAFFLE  
FEB 11  
7:30PM



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## Gloriana Invasion

On another Earth, things were different. Queen Victoria's prestigious reign spread further across the globe than any other empire on Earth. A great many countries fell under her rule, including most of Western Europe, Africa, and North America. A change of fate meant that instead of eight children, just one was born to Queen Victoria: the princess Beatrice Mary Victoria who, after Victoria's death in 1901, became Queen.

In 1926, after a minor diplomatic incident with Japan, it was arranged that Queen Beatrice's daughter and sole child, Victoria Eugenie, would marry the newly-appointed 124th Emperor of Nippon, Hirohito. The unified empire of Albion-Nippon, with its vast resources and great minds, was able to achieve feats not seen in our world. They unlocked the secrets of both science and magic. They built marvels such as advanced robots, devastating energy weapons, and massive lighter-than-air battleships that ruled the skies and traversed the void between planets. As Victoria Eugenie assumed the throne, the empire of Albion-Nippon cemented its rule of Earth and then reached for the stars.

Not everyone appreciated the enlightened rule of Victoria Eugenie. The Greater German Confederation (allied with several nations in the Americas and Europe) launched a revolt in 1939 that took nearly five years to quell. After putting down the uprising, Victoria Eugenie renamed herself Gloriana, the Sun Goddess, Eternal Empress of Greater Albion-Nippon.

In 1946, the Empress gave birth to her daughter Aika, and at last an heir had arrived—easing Gloriana's worries slightly over the future of the Empire.

In 1970, after the construction of the Sun Palace on the site of the former Buckingham Palace, the southern counties of Albion were devastated by a massive extradimensional energy wave.

The Empress ordered her best scientists and mages to construct an arcane machine that could trace the origin of the disturbance. They discovered that an event sometime in the past in an alternate dimension had caused ripples across the whole of space time, and Gloriana's Earth was now feeling the effects. They were able to trace the destructive energy wave back to its origin point: a dimensional nexus that opened in 1935 on a parallel world in a place called Stark City.

Believing that it was some form of pre-emptive strike from this alternate dimension, Gloriana began to prepare for war. She had defended her empire from attack on her Earth, and was not about to lose it to another Earth.

It took her two years to amass her army, and for her scientists to build a dimensional Portal. On May 24, 1972 (the 153rd birthday of her grandmother, Queen Victoria), she personally led the invasion force into Stark City.

Since being repulsed at the hands of the Stark City heroes, Gloriana has brooded on her defeat. Her failure was humiliating politically. She's had to put down half a dozen more uprisings from vassal nations who were emboldened when her army was driven out of Stark City. It also cost her dearly on a personal level as her own daughter, Aika, was never seen again after the invasion.

Gloriana has determined that she must return to our world to expunge this blot upon her reign and to avenge her daughter. While all portals to our world have been blocked (due the sacrifice of the heroes of Stark City), the Empress has her staff of royal scientists, mages and artificers looking for a way to open a gate back into Stark City. One day, she is certain, she'll find her way back.

superpowered Lances of the Empire. Earth's heroes did so, but at a steep price.

Almost all of Stark City's heroes—including the Sentinel, several reactivated science heroes (who had protected and nurtured the city during the WW2 years), and the membership of the Alliance for Justice—vanished in the fight that repulsed the invaders. The details are still murky, and there's some debate over what happened. What is clear is that the heroes sacrificed themselves in a scheme that sent the invaders back to their own world and sealed the portal. There are many conspiracy theories about exactly what happened.

**'70s, '80s, and '90s:** Although the shadow of the celebrated science heroes of WW2 and the Alliance for Justice loomed large, through the '70s, '80s, and '90s, Stark City was best known for its street-level vigilantes. A handful of costumed loners attempted to keep the mob's creeping influence at bay—with only moderate success. Several of these vigilantes attempted to take up the mantle of the Sentinel. All were either killed early in their careers by criminal forces or otherwise persuaded to stop using the Sentinel's name. Grim vigilantes like the Black

Cowl, Edge, and Lady Fury were alternately praised and reviled by the local tabloids.

**1985:** Dominic Marinelli became the wealthiest and most powerful gangster in Stark City after eliminating the rival Gargano crime family in a quick but bloody takeover. Shortly afterward, he called a truce with the DeSouza crime family to keep the Feds off all their backs.

**1991:** Dominic Marinelli was tried and convicted of murder, based on evidence provided by one of his lieutenants, Frankie Brunello. The federal prosecutor was Harrison Ullman, who would later go on to become mayor of Stark City. Marinelli escaped en route to Striker Federal Penitentiary, and managed to disappear completely.

**1992:** With the Marinelli family in tatters after Dominic Marinelli's disappearance, the DeSouza crime family violently took over most of the Marinelli rackets. Several Marinelli lieutenants were killed during this takeover, including Francesco Marinelli, Dominic's oldest son. The Ring-a-Ding riverboat casino in Geartown was the last remaining bastion of Marinelli influence in Stark City.



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**1994:** Arthur Knightley was elected Mayor of Stark City, establishing the "Knightley dynasty" of Stark City mayors. Attaining office through exploitation of his father's political contacts, Mayor Knightley led the city through several daring and largely unsuccessful economic reforms that mostly lined the pockets of his political cronies and himself. Connections between Knightley and the DeSouza mob were alleged by the Stark City *Siren's* star reporter, Carmen Burana, in her multi-article exposé on the mayor's administration.

**2002:** Arthur Knightley was beaten in a closely fought election. The new mayor, Harrison Ullman, promised reforms, but was confronted by a looted city treasury. In a desperate attempt to increase public safety, the new mayor launched an initiative to bring heroes to Stark City. That initiative failed.

**Modern Day:** While Stark City continues to struggle with crime and corruption, decades of financial stagnation have given way to prosperity. Tesla Park has been reinvigorated with investment capital and the rest of the city is thriving, thanks to Tesla Park's success. Some of the heirs of the science heroes from the war years have even returned to reopen their parents' labs and carry on their family legacy.

**STARK CITY POLICE SERVICE**



*This is the only known photograph of the suspect without a "fright mask". Retrieved from the body of a John Doe on 08/01/91. Part of the "Night of 1000 Masques" evidence chain. Too damaged for a positive identification.*

**MODU**

Subject often plans to make public trust in the police service to protect the citizenry. His theatricality requires targets with large civilian populations as targets, with the World's Fair having been his primary target of opportunity.

**KNOWN MASKS/DISGUISES:**

Haitian Spirit Faces Houngan Mask	"Pretty Jenny" Carnival Mask	Goblin Fright Mask

## Black Friday

Stark City is wrestling with one of its greatest tragedies in recent history.

On Friday, October 12, 2012, the Stark City Police Department Annual Awards Gala at the Platinum Coast Events Center was engulfed in a series of crimson fireballs. The explosions were centered on the raised dais where the SCPD's senior leaders were dining.

No one seated at the table survived.

Over a third of the city's police force was in the room when it exploded. Most of them didn't make it out.

Months later, no arrests have been made in the Black Friday attack (as it was dubbed by the local media), but the investigation continues. Stark City PD is struggling to rebuild under the leadership of Jesus Ramirez, the new Chief of Police. The FBI has assigned a task force (under the leadership of Special Agent in Charge Henry Doorbinder), but they've had no more luck than the SCPD. The two organizations are officially cooperating on this issue—but unofficially,

communications have broken down and each organization is pursuing separate lines of investigation.

There are multiple theories and a few rumors:

- It could have been the DeSouza Mafia family in Geartown. With the decline of the Marinelli family (and with little meaningful opposition from costumed vigilantes), James DeSouza's operation was ascendant until the Stark City PD opened a vigorous investigation (led by frustratingly unbribeable detectives) into narcotics trafficking in Geartown. DeSouza decided to send them a message about who really controls Stark City. A squad of DeSouza's enforcers staged the attack using black market military-grade battlesuits that were smuggled into Stark City via the Geartown docks. These same battlesuits are stashed in a basement of the Centennial Hotel in Geartown (because you don't just throw away that kind of hardware, even if it is incriminating).
- It could have been the Bluerocket Investment Group, who were getting heat from the white-collar crime bureau of the Stark City PD. This calculated move kills the investigation, as all official resources are focused on the presumptive perpetrators, the DeSouza family, leaving BIG in the clear.
- It could have been one of the various factions of Gloriana Invasion refugees, possibly the first in a planned series of attacks meant to weaken Stark City for a new impending invasion.
- It could have been carried out by an agent of Dr. Judas in preparation for a possible return.
- It could have been carried out by the Atlantean criminal Krachla in order to weaken the police presence in Stark City and to cause problems for his strongest rival for the Geartown drug trade, the DeSouza family.
- It could be a criminal reviving the legacy of the Master of the Fair (or another reincarnation of the death-defying villain himself). In 2013, Stark City will hold Starkfest!, a massive fair commemorating the 185th anniversary of the renaming of Mascouten to Stark City, with exhibits designed to celebrate Stark City's past and emphasize its bright future. This would be just the sort of event the Master of the Fair would love to ruin, and throwing the police department into disarray beforehand would be a good first step.

This bold attack on Stark City's finest was an impetus for the Sentinel Foundation to revive Mayor Ullman's old initiative to bring heroes back to Stark City. With the brazen, unsolved attack on the city's police, the increasing power of the Mafia, the rising crime rate in Stark City (particularly metahuman crime), and rumors about the Teslacracy and the Gloriana Empire sending agents into our world, the Sentinel Foundation realized that they needed to carry on in the footsteps of the Sentinel lineage more directly and protect Stark City. This leads the Foundation to reach out to the PCs, hoping to recruit them as Stark City's new superteam.

Whether or not the GM wants to use the Black Friday plot is up to her. Finding and punishing those responsible for the attack could be a driving motivation for the new heroes of Stark City. There are many other threats and motivations that could fill in just as well.

(In the spirit of giving the GM options and avoiding the evils of heavy-handed meta-plot, we leave it up to the Game Master to decide which of the several possible options outlined above is credible.)

## Relocating Stark City

Superficially, it's fairly easy to relocate Stark City to anywhere in North America that's close to a large body of water. Simply rename Stark Lake to the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean or a local lake, modify some of the names of the sports teams (White Tails, for example, should change to something equally innocuous). Add in a few museums and businesses that reflect some local flavor and you're good to go. However, this kind of conversion can be more rewarding with a bit of additional thought.

Much of what we did for Stark was based on the idea that it is "our Chicago," and that colored decisions about locales and contacts in many ways. GMs can absolutely change that, but they might want to take the opportunity to change a lot of the little details as well to reflect the innate flavor of the "new" Stark City they're creating. For example, Stark has an elevated train instead of a subway. Why? Because Chicago has an elevated train. That led us to ask what

would be going on below ground. That line of thought gave us the Catacombs, along with the NPCs and their connections associated with it.

So if you are moving Stark someplace else, you might change the EI train to something more appropriate to wherever you are moving it. You might get a new underground subway system instead of the EI. Or a bus system. Or trollies or cable cars, as in New Orleans or San Francisco. Perhaps the Catacombs still exist, but they developed from a subterranean Chinatown (like the one uncovered in Oklahoma City in the late 1960s) rather than old bootlegger tunnels and abandoned subway tubes.

The thing for GMs to do is to make the move mean something, so it is more than just cosmetic. Figure out what is important to your region and make that important in Stark. The setting rules and the collaborative process they outline can be a great tool for doing this.



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# Introducing Characters to Stark City

**ICONS** was created as, and in many ways remains, a pick-up game. That means that you, as a GM, may have characters and even players who have never worked together before but who need to “hit the ground running,” without wasting any time on an origin scene. Alternately, even though the player characters are newly made (or even rolled up randomly), their story may be that they have been working together for years. These are special challenges, but **ICONS** and *Stark City* are designed to tackle them.

## Earth’s Mightiest Heroes

The conceit at the heart of *Stark City* is that your player characters are the Sentinels: a supergroup founded on the legacy of the Sentinel, Stark City’s guardian angel. Generation after generation, a Sentinel protected Stark against threats monstrous and mundane. But about twenty years ago, the last heir to the Sentinel line murdered a hero, renamed himself Doctor Judas, and left the city—taking the top seventy floors of the Sentinel Citadel with him. In that time, Stark City has been without a successful protector. Your heroes are here to change that.

## The Foundation

Financially your heroes are aided by the Sentinel Foundation, the restructured remains of the Sentinel’s support organization, previously called “the Network.” The Foundation is there to cover the heroes’ financial, administrative, and infrastructure needs. (They operate like the Avengers’ Maria Stark Foundation or Batman, Inc.) If you have an adventure idea which involves the team’s financial matters or bureaucratic red tape (“We’re not renewing your right to fly in Stark City airspace until you comply with the Equal Opportunity Act!”), then by all means, run with it. But in the meantime, you can handwave all such problems away by saying, “The Foundation takes care of it.” You can introduce a front man for the Network if you want, though no such NPC is described here. Tailor that NPC to the role you want the Foundation to fill: a former law enforcement officer who insists

everything be done “by the book” will create a very different tone than an accountant whose only concern is how much everything is going to cost, a mysterious benefactor who is hiding a dark past, or a wide-eyed novice who idolizes the heroes and enthusiastically supports everything they do. It’s up to you to make the Foundation an ally or an obstacle. Craft a contact NPC who personifies that relationship.

## Mayor Ullman

Mayor Ullman is also directly responsible for the return of superheroes to Stark City. He campaigned on this promise and privately is trying to link himself to the popularity of the Sentinel myth. He wants to get famous, big name heroes into Stark, and he wants to be seen on camera with them as much as possible; this solidifies his image as a “big city mayor” and creates political leverage which he can use at the state and federal level. Ullman sees superheroes as a potential solution to major problems; calling out the National Guard is expensive, but heroes fight for free. When inclement weather or man-made disasters strike the city, heroes can minimize the damage and are invaluable in reconstruction. They’re great for city morale. It’s true, superheroes are also magnets for trouble, but Stark has been without heroes for decades now and trouble hasn’t gone away. Indeed, it’s gotten noticeably worse. “If we’re going to be stuck in the bear trap,” Ullman has said, in defense of his policies, “we may as well taste the honey.” Thus, heroes were invited back to town. And while Ullman would love it if every member of the Sentinels were a famous world-saver, he’s also a realist who will settle for what he can get.

Player characters can count on Ullman to act as a cheerleader and public relations mouthpiece, pumping up their reputation at every opportunity. As written, he is a sincere public servant, albeit one with a strong sense of self-interest. If you want to give your Stark City a corrupt underbelly, however, it is easy to imagine a version of Mayor Ullman who orchestrates easy victories for the Sentinels so that he can ride their coattails to the presidency.



Such schemes inevitably go out of control, with a giant robot that was supposed to be rigged to collapse instead threatening innocent people. When the heroes figure out the truth, the mayor's career is over, creating a power vacuum in City Hall. There's only one way to be sure the Sentinels can continue to do their work without interference: that's right, one of your player characters must run for mayor!

### The Citadel

Besides the Foundation and the Mayor's Office, the third major asset the heroes have in Stark City is the Citadel, which fills not only the team's logistical command and control needs, but also their domestic ones. It's got plenty of room for poor or out-of-town heroes to live, as well "the Tank," a high-tech system for monitoring emergencies around the world. A cadre of amiable robot assistants take care of chores, laundering the heroes' tights and washing the Saguaro-Cycle. (Perhaps it's a Cactus-Car, but you get the idea.) Virtually any adventure you imagine can begin with the sentence, "You're all in the Citadel when an alert comes in ...". It really is that easy. You don't even have to leave the building for adventure: the entire top floor of the Citadel is sealed off as a vault containing Doctor Judas's fiendish experiments.

### The Cops, G-Men, and Super-Spies

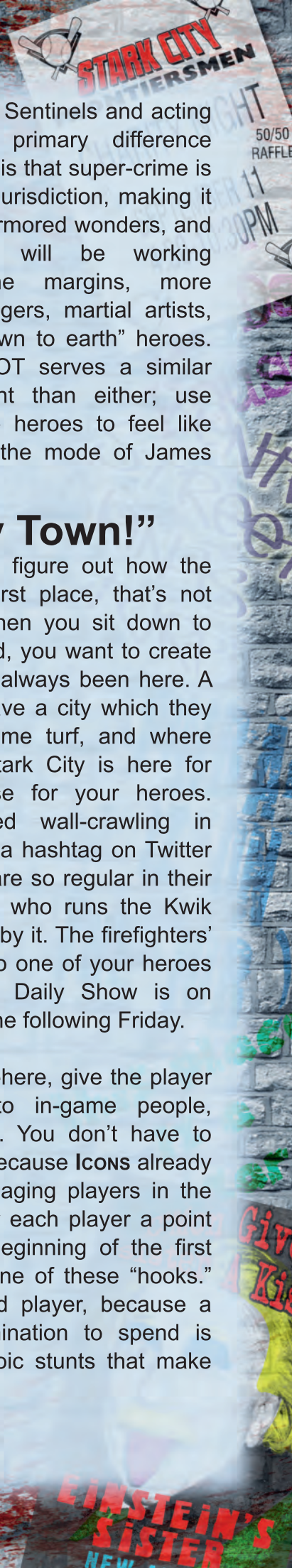
Ullman, the Foundation, and the alert system in the Citadel are tools for you to bring the heroes together and point them at adventure. But there are other individuals and groups who can also serve this purpose, recruiting individual heroes who are then attached to the Sentinels. Police Chief Jesus Ramirez has big problems and is eager for superhuman help, especially when it comes to identifying and apprehending the killers whose murder spree led to Ramirez's own promotion. Henry Doorbinder is the senior FBI agent in Stark, and the federal Bureau of Metahuman Affairs is led locally by John Gerald O'Brien; heroes who have federal connections, who are willing to reveal their identity to the government, and who have a proven track record or a promising set of powers could be recruited by either man, representing the

federal government on the Sentinels and acting as on-call talent. The primary difference between these two groups is that super-crime is officially within the BMA's jurisdiction, making it a better home for aliens, armored wonders, and demigods. FBI heroes will be working unofficially and on the margins, more appropriate for dark avengers, martial artists, weapon masters, and "down to earth" heroes. Vasily Karasev of PATRIOT serves a similar role, but is more militant than either; use PATRIOT if you want the heroes to feel like spies or super-agents in the mode of James Bond or Nick Fury.

### "This Is My Town!"

While it can be useful to figure out how the heroes got here in the first place, that's not really your first priority when you sit down to game in Stark City. Instead, you want to create the feeling that they have always been here. A lot of heroes in comics have a city which they protect, which is their home turf, and where everyone knows them. Stark City is here for you, serving that purpose for your heroes. When a PC is spotted wall-crawling in Geartown, there's already a hashtag on Twitter to report it. Other heroes are so regular in their patrol habits that the guy who runs the Kwik Koffee Kart sets his watch by it. The firefighters' union is giving an award to one of your heroes next Tuesday night. The Daily Show is on location with your heroes the following Friday.

To help create that atmosphere, give the player characters connections to in-game people, places, and organizations. You don't have to force this on the players, because **ICONS** already has a mechanism for engaging players in the story: Determination. Offer each player a point of Determination at the beginning of the first session if they agree to one of these "hooks." It's a win-win for GM and player, because a player with more Determination to spend is more likely to do the heroic stunts that make gaming fun.



**Bluerocket Board:** You sit on the board of Bluerocket Investment Group, known to most as BIG. This is a recent development; you are the newest member of the board and do not yet “fit in” with your colleagues, many of whom are European and who seem to share a lot of personal history. Perhaps your company was bought out by BIG and your spot on the board was part of the deal. Alternately, you may have had a friend on the board who angled to get you the job, promising it would change your life forever. In your new position, you enjoy a level of wealth and luxury unimagined by most Stark residents, but you can’t help the feeling that it’s all just too sweet of a deal.

**Drinking Buddy:** Nick Gold, star reporter at the Stark City *Scout*, is your drinking buddy. Every sports bar in town knows the two of you, and the two of you alternate picking up the tab. Perhaps the two of you grew up together or went to school together. His interest was the sports pages until recently, when he became an investigative reporter. The *Scout* is not exactly a paragon of journalistic ethics, and you know some pretty scandalous stuff about Gold, from romantic exploits to bribery or other tricks he has pursued to land a story, but he’s got his share of stories about you too, so it all washes out.

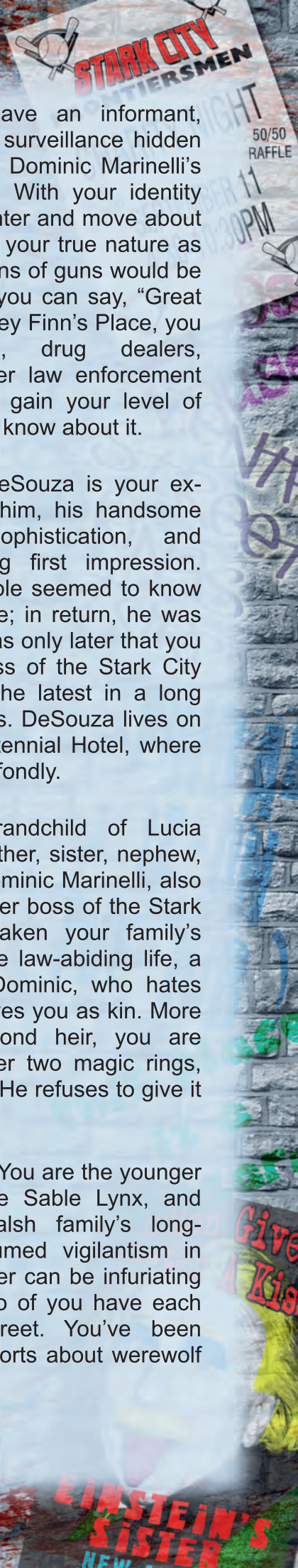
**Expat:** This world is not your home. You are from the alternate Earth ruled by the Empress Gloriana, whose forces invaded Stark City in the 1970s and who caused the death of most of the city’s heroes. If you are old enough, you were present in that invasion and have been hiding on Earth ever since the gateway home mysteriously closed. If you are young, you were either sent here to spy for the Empire or else you are the victim of unfortunate accident. Regardless, you live and operate in Stark City because, if the forces of Gloriana ever return, this is where it will happen. Indeed, it is possible they have already done so; no one is better suited to track down agents of the Empress than you. You keep your world of origin secret from the public, though your colleagues in the Sentinels probably know the truth.

**Easy Listener:** You have an informant, wiretap, or other source of surveillance hidden inside Mickey Finn’s Place, Dominic Marinelli’s crime bar on Easy Street. With your identity concealed, you can even enter and move about inside the bar, though were your true nature as a hero to be revealed, dozens of guns would be pointed at you faster than you can say, “Great Caesar’s ghost!” From Mickey Finn’s Place, you can overhear terrorists, drug dealers, assassins, and more. Other law enforcement groups would do much to gain your level of access. Best not to let them know about it.

**Ex-Boyfriend:** James DeSouza is your ex-boyfriend. When you met him, his handsome good looks, rugged sophistication, and generosity made a strong first impression. Everywhere you went, people seemed to know James and value his advice; in return, he was gracious and flattering. It was only later that you discovered he was the boss of the Stark City Mob, and you were only the latest in a long string of romantic conquests. DeSouza lives on the eighth floor of the Centennial Hotel, where the staff still remember you fondly.

**Familia:** You are a grandchild of Lucia Marinelli, making you a brother, sister, nephew, or other close relative to Dominic Marinelli, also Lucia’s grandchild and former boss of the Stark City Mob. You have forsaken your family’s business in favor of a more law-abiding life, a decision which infuriates Dominic, who hates you for your betrayal yet loves you as kin. More important, as Lucia’s second heir, you are rightful owner of one of her two magic rings, both now worn by Dominic. He refuses to give it to you.

**The Family Business:** You are the younger sibling of Mark Walsh, the Sable Lynx, and you’ve taken up the Walsh family’s long-standing tradition of costumed vigilantism in Stark City. Your older brother can be infuriating with his advice, but the two of you have each other’s backs on the street. You’ve been worried lately about his reports about werewolf attacks in the city ...



**Guardian of the Gate:** You know of a secret gate to another dimension located underneath the city, in the lost subway tunnels known as Puttman's Folly. When this gate opens, it will vent crawling horrors inimical to humanity. Your task is to forestall that day for as long as possible. You may have taken this task upon yourself, but it could have been forced upon you. As far as you know, no one else in the city is even aware of the gate's existence, let alone the nature of the cyclopean entities who lurk beyond its threshold.

**Heir to the Empire:** You are the biological son of Ben Colter, aka Doctor Judas, the last Sentinel. You did not know this when you began your heroic career, which is probably the reason your codename isn't "the Sentinel," but you are the legitimate heir to that title and legacy, for whatever it is worth. Judas knows of your existence and has alternately tried to recruit you or capture you, but he has never tried to seriously hurt you, and indeed seems to have something of a soft spot for you. The general public hate and fear Judas, for good reason, and you keep your secret from them out of concern that public knowledge of your legacy would destroy all the good you have done.

**Highwayman:** You have a map of the "Highway to Hell," the vast complex of interconnecting tunnels which lie beneath the city. You can use this network for rapid and unobserved travel from one part of the city to another, though use of the Highway is not without its own dangers. The map may be of your own design, or it may be an heirloom or gift, perhaps made by a grateful denizen of the underworld whose life you saved. Others, especially in Stark's criminal mob, would kill for this map.

**In Freefall:** You are in contact with a mysterious person called "Freefall," who has access to your computer network and communicates with you through them, usually but not always when you are at home. You're not sure how much about you he knows, nor are you sure how he got access to your system. All efforts to keep him out have proven fruitless. However, he funnels you information about

corruption in the government as well as illegal activities which you can interrupt.

**Informant:** You have an informant on the streets of Geartown; he is reliable and well-connected, keeps a low profile, and cooperates with you out of a sincere desire to do good, rather than out of fear or money. However, in recent weeks you have noticed signs of possible drug use and abuse in your informant. The last time you saw him, he looked a little sick and out of breath. Your interest in him is not entirely selfless; by now he knows more than a little about your methods and habits, information which could prove dangerous to you if it fell into the hands of your enemies.

**In The Navy:** You are a member of the US Navy who is stationed at the Stark Lake Naval Station. You are likely a member of either the super-soldier program (Project: Thunderstrike) or the power armor program (Project: Wayland) that are based there, and you've got direct contact with the base commander, Rear Admiral Colin "Chesty" Marshall. Your association with the Navy gives you certain advantages (such as access to equipment, housing, and support from your fellow sailors when needed). You will be called into duty immediately when the station is attacked by MAKO forces or if other national security issues arise.

**Licensing Deal:** You have signed a marketing deal with a major Stark firm such as Maniacal, Inc, ARES, Impossible Industries, Inc, or NyxTech. This deal is extremely lucrative for you, essentially absolving you of all ordinary financial burdens and allowing you to live in a way you never have before. In return, your gear, vehicle, and even costume bear the small, tasteful, but highly visible logo of your corporate patron. The marketing department takes news footage of your exploits and, through computer graphics, inserts their wares into the background as "product placement." You have never been asked to cut an ad or pose for a publicity shot; all they want you to do is carry their logo while you do everything you would normally do. In return, profit.

**Long-Lost Daughter:** Erika Hasagawa is your daughter. You did not know of her existence until comparatively recently, when you also learned that her mother has been presumed dead after vanishing mysteriously years ago. As acting head of the Sevren Group, Erika runs an influential consulting and crisis-management agency, but her adopted father, the reclusive Michael Sevren, is intensely jealous of you and works constantly to keep you out of your daughter's life.

**Museum Piece:** In your civilian identity, you are the owner of an antique which was perhaps used as the murder weapon in a famous series of murders or used to be the signature weapon of a famous supervillain. This item was the target of several burglary attempts which threatened to compromise your heroic identity and endangered your family, but recently the Museum of Natural History in Stark approached you with an offer to put the item on display. So far, this has ended the attempts at theft. You can visit your property any time, and the museum staff know you on sight.

**Nemesis in Rehab:** One of your longtime adversaries is out of jail on parole, a resident at the Odyssey Halfway House. His parole officer has involved you in your enemy's rehabilitation, putting you in a room with him for counseling and anger management sessions. Sometimes you felt like you were the one in therapy. Your nemesis is allowed to travel around the city and has relative freedom so long as he is back by curfew, but he could use some help getting a job.

**New You:** You have had your identity reconstructed by Doctor X, the mysterious surgeon of the Flea Market. He certainly changed your face, but the Doctor is both resourceful and experimental, and virtually any other bodily characteristic was subject to his knife, and not all the changes were voluntary. Other than the Doctor and his freakish assistants, no one alive knows of your double identity, which you have tried to leave behind.

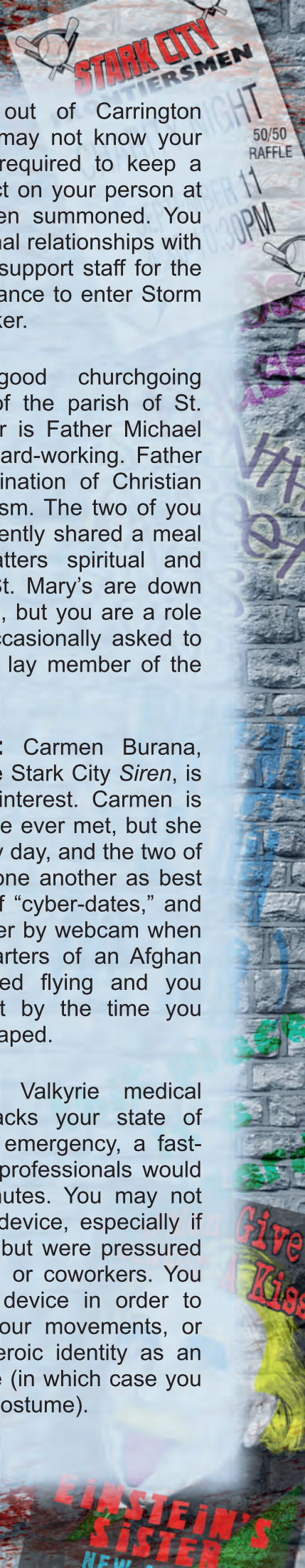
**On Call:** You are a hero on call for the Thunderers, an elite disaster relief and search-

and-rescue team based out of Carrington International Airport. They may not know your real identity, but you are required to keep a means of immediate contact on your person at all times and respond when summoned. You have friendly and professional relationships with the pilots, mechanics, and support staff for the Thunderers and have clearance to enter Storm Center, their command bunker.

**Parishioner:** As a good churchgoing Catholic, you are a part of the parish of St. Mary's Church. Your pastor is Father Michael Conti, who is young and hard-working. Father Conti boasts a rare combination of Christian virtue and steely-eyed realism. The two of you are friends, and have frequently shared a meal or shared advice on matters spiritual and mundane. The people of St. Mary's are down on their luck and desperate, but you are a role model to them, and are occasionally asked to speak from the pulpit as a lay member of the church.

**Stark City Girlfriend:** Carmen Burana, intrepid lead reporter for the *Stark City Siren*, is your character's romantic interest. Carmen is the busiest woman you have ever met, but she seems sincere, calling every day, and the two of you make time to be with one another as best you can. She's a big fan of "cyber-dates," and once took you along with her by webcam when she infiltrated the headquarters of an Afghan rebel leader. Bullets started flying and you hurried to the rescue, but by the time you arrived she had already escaped.

**Valkyrie:** You wear a Valkyrie medical monitoring device that tracks your state of health; in the event of an emergency, a fast-response team of medical professionals would fly to your side within minutes. You may not have chosen to wear this device, especially if you have a secret identity, but were pressured to do so by family, friends, or coworkers. You may have to disable the device in order to preserve the secrecy of your movements, or you may use it in your heroic identity as an additional level of insurance (in which case you have to hide it when out of costume).



**Your Table:** You have a regular table at No Regrets, a reward for having personally saved the career of restaurant owner Claude Worcester. This table can be named after your hero identity (“Saguaro’s Table”), or it could simply be reserved for you, in which case it is named after your favorite Stark City hero from the '90s or before. By gentleman’s agreement, if you intend to use your table on a weekend evening, an hour’s notice is appreciated. You never have to pay for your meal, though a gratuity is a nice gesture to the serving staff. Since no one else—not the mayor, the police chief, or any of the city’s many CEOs—has such a table, you are the subject of some jealousy and nosy questions. More than one person has offered to rent your table from you for a “big date” or important meeting.

**You’re So Vain:** You or an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) are a long-term member of the Vanities Health Spa, which provides you and your loved ones with unrivaled fitness, wellness, and beauty care, not to mention a social network of the city’s most influential and beautiful people. Seriously, these guys are amazing! You should tell all your friends about them. Try passing out their business cards.



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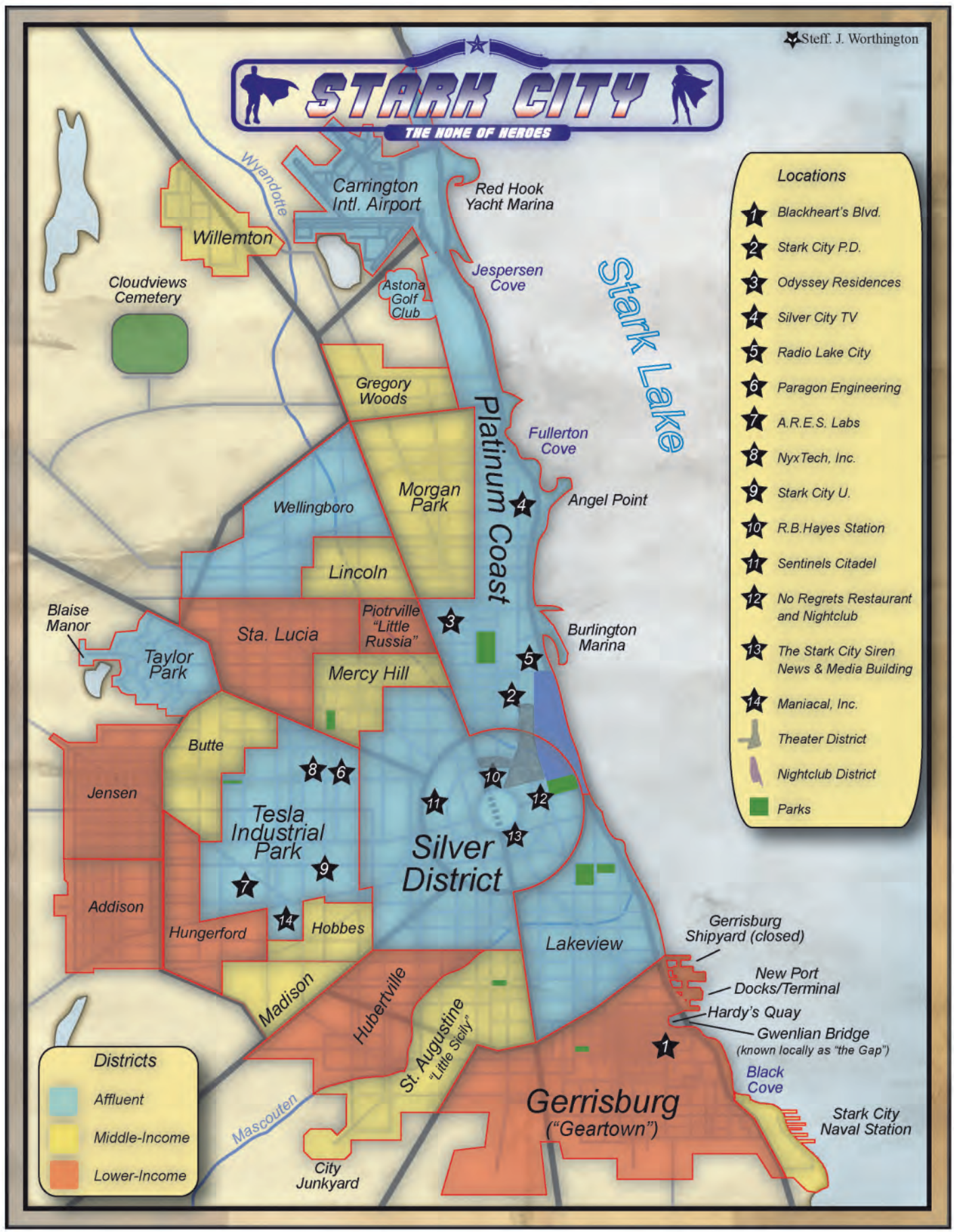
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RAFFLE  
FEB 11  
7:30PM

Steff. J. Worthington

**STARK CITY**  
THE HOME OF HEROES



- Locations**
- ★ 1 Blackheart's Blvd.
  - ★ 2 Stark City P.D.
  - ★ 3 Odyssey Residences
  - ★ 4 Silver City TV
  - ★ 5 Radio Lake City
  - ★ 6 Paragon Engineering
  - ★ 7 A.R.E.S. Labs
  - ★ 8 NyxTech, Inc.
  - ★ 9 Stark City U.
  - ★ 10 R.B.Hayes Station
  - ★ 11 Sentinels Citadel
  - ★ 12 No Regrets Restaurant and Nightclub
  - ★ 13 The Stark City Siren News & Media Building
  - ★ 14 Maniacal, Inc.
- ⌂ Theater District
  - 🌃 Nightclub District
  - 🌳 Parks

- Districts**
- ☑️ Affluent
  - ☑️ Middle-Income
  - ☑️ Lower-Income

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# ICONIC Settings Rules

## Iconic Settings

An often-important “character” in superhero comic books is the city itself. Superheroes are urban by nature; since the very beginning of the genre, they have lived in (and protected) major cities, and there’s a strong tradition of creating thinly-veiled fictional versions of real-world cities as homes for various heroes. There is an equally strong tradition of contrasting the colorful fiction of superheroes with the backdrops of real-world cities and locales.

These guidelines look at making the city and setting of your **ICONS** game a more important element of the series as a whole, as well as fleshing out the setting with the help of your players, further involving them and their characters in its creation

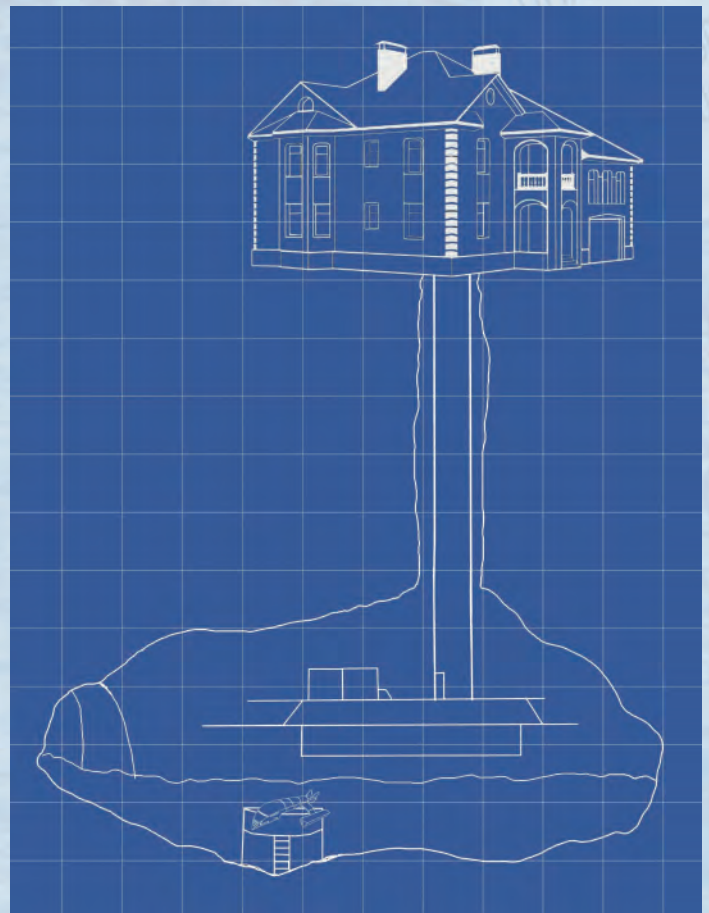
## Setting Traits

Just like characters, settings have traits which help define them. The primary setting traits are places, people, and scale, along with the different aspects associated with them and the setting as a whole.

When players go through the process of creating their heroes, the Game Master can also ask them to help create the setting by contributing some of these traits. This is similar to the process of villain creation outlined in the *Villainomicon*, but rather than players creating villains for each other, they create setting elements for the shared world their heroes inhabit.

Settings have four traits, which are all descriptive, rather than measured on the 1–10 scale (although the Scale trait itself may have things to say about that). The four traits are Theme, Places, People, and Scale.

- Theme describes what the setting is about, from “A City of Tomorrow Protected by the Heroes of Today” to “A Corrupt and Festering Wound, Crying Out for a Surgeon to Cut Out the Rot So It May Heal.” You can think of theme as sort of the “master” aspect of the setting and



the series, from which players can draw inspiration when contributing the setting’s other traits.

- Places are the different set pieces of the setting, the individual parts the players contribute. They can range from local hangouts to criminal enterprises, landmarks, businesses, and more ... all the kinds of places you find in the world inhabited by superheroes.
- People are the characters inhabiting the places of the setting, the ones heroes meet and interact with when they visit those places, and the driving forces behind the places, making them more useful as hooks for interesting stories.
- Scale is the overall size of the setting, and therefore the size and prominence of its other traits. It can range from a specific neighborhood to a city, nation, world, or even beyond to an interstellar setting consisting of many worlds, or even many universes!

## Theme

A setting's theme can be thought of as the aspect or phrase that sums up what it—and therefore the series—is all about. Generally, the whole group should agree on the overall nature of the theme, with the Game Master offering both input and approval.

Setting themes can be anything, from *“Truth, Justice, and Freedom”* to *“Protecting a World that Hates and Fears Them”* or *“Saving the World ... One Neighborhood at a Time.”* The theme helps to set the tone of the series, and chances are that the group has a halfway decent idea of what it is before even getting to the setting creation phase.

### The Status Quo

One key piece of information the theme can provide is the nature of the status quo in the setting and whether the heroes are looking to protect it or change it.

For example, a *“World's Greatest Heroes”* theme suggests the heroes are primarily charged with keeping the world safe and preserving things largely as they already are. The world may have its problems but, for the most part, the goal is to preserve the status quo. On the other hand, a theme of *“Struggle Against the Dying of the Light”* suggests the heroes are fighting what may seem like a hopeless battle to overturn a terrible status quo, such as a world sliding into darkness due to the totalitarian rule of a supervillain. The same can be said of themes like *“Rebellion Against an Alien Army”* or *“Turning Back the Doomsday Clock”*—efforts to change the status quo.

Settings where the heroes are protecting the status quo rely on a steady stream of threats, with the players naturally suspicious of anything that seems likely to significantly alter the world, since chances are it's not a good thing. Settings focused on changing the status quo need to offer opportunities to do so, or else the players may become frustrated with the lack of progress towards their ultimate goals. Actually achieving those goals can be a capstone to finish off the series (the heroes evict the

## Is the Theme an Aspect?

Generally, it's best to not consider a setting's theme as an aspect, like the aspects that characters and places have, simply because theme is all-pervasive, and therefore it may be tempting to tag it all the time. On the other hand, Game Masters looking to really emphasize a setting's theme can allow it as an aspect, encouraging players to always be on the lookout for opportunities to take actions in accordance with the theme so they can tag it for Determination use.

For example, if the theme is *“Helping Keep the World a Strange Place”* making it a tagable aspect requires careful management so players don't use it as an opportunity to do strange things all the time, but focus on actions that truly support the theme. Other themes, like *“Earth Will Be Free!”* or *“Being a Hero Means Making Hard Choices”* are a bit easier to make into aspects, because they focus on a particular kind of actions.

Consult with your GM about whether or not the series theme is also an aspect and, when in doubt, ask! Even if the theme is not normally an aspect, there's no harm in asking if it can be for an important action you feel strongly supports (and is supported by) the theme.

invaders, overthrow the dictator, etc.) or a major turning point toward the creation of a new theme. Now that the status quo has changed, what direction will the heroes take things in?

## Places

Each player provides at least one significant place, along with that place's concept, connection to the overall theme of the setting, and one or two qualities that can be tagged during play. Players are free to suggest ideas for any kind of place they want, but should keep the following guidelines in mind:



## Places are “Community Property.”

The places players create as part of the larger setting are “community property”—they don’t belong to just that player, they belong to the group (and the series) as a whole. Once the place is created, the player does not “control” that place any longer or have any special influence over it. Players should certainly try to create the kinds of places they want to see in the series, but they have to be willing to let go of them once they’re created, placing them into the hands of the Game Master and the group as a whole.

## Places Should Be Useful.

The main reason for players to create places is to use them as “set pieces” in the series. Therefore, each place should have some specific use or purpose, something that allows it to fit into the series and offer something. This can range from a local hangout or workplace environment to a potential battleground or target for villainous schemes.

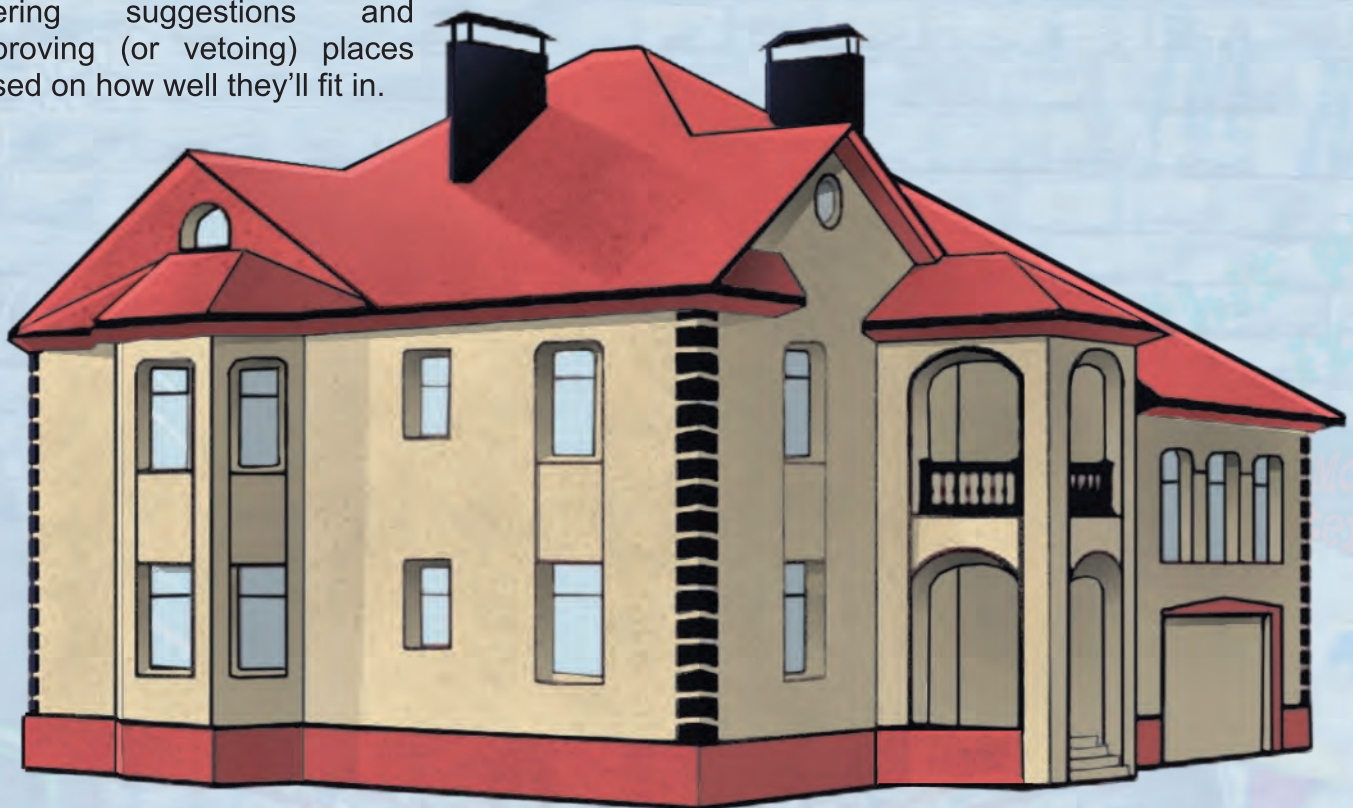
Creating places allows the players and Game Master to collaborate. The players offer suggestions of the kinds of places they want to see in the series, and the Game Master looks at them with an eye towards their usefulness, offering suggestions and approving (or vetoing) places based on how well they’ll fit in.

## Personal Places

If the Game Master wishes, players can define “personal places” for their characters. This takes place at the same time as setting design, but personal places are not added to the “community property” of the group. They remain the primary province of the hero whose player created them.

Examples of personal places include individual headquarters, businesses, or other iconic locales associated with a hero. A personal place may be an aspect, such as “Stately Old Manor” or “Sanctum Sanctorum,” or associated with an aspect like “Old Money” or “Owns Half the City,” but in either case the place should have some connection to the hero’s aspects.

Unless it’s a constant burden, the place is likely a quality (or tied to one), meaning it can be both tagged to spend Determination and compelled to earn the hero Determination; a high-tech hero’s state-of-the-art downtown office building might provide labs and research facilities, for example, but also makes a tempting target for business rivals and terrorists alike.



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## Places Need Hooks.

Along with their usefulness, places need “hooks”—things about them to make the place memorable and interesting. People (see the following sections) are a part of this, but hooks can be other things as well. They tie into the place’s aspects, and may offer some ideas on that front. They also give a place character, helping players to connect with and remember it, making the place more than just a generic set piece.

One good hook to consider for places is their history: Where did the place come from? Why is it there? Who lived or worked there in the past? Are there any famous or infamous incidents involving that place? How did it get its name? The answers to these and many more questions can flesh out a place and weave its thread into the overall fabric of the setting.

## Places Need Aspects.

Lastly, places need aspects, which work for them much like they do for characters. A place can have as many aspects as the Game Master allows, but from two to five is a good guideline. Also, as with characters, place aspects can be qualities or challenges

## Other Ground Rules

The Game Master can set other ground rules for creating places as needed for the group and the series. The biggest unwritten ground rule is that places need to fit into the overall setting, and the GM has the final say as to whether they do or not. The Game Master functions as organizer and editor for place creation, offering suggestions and helping players fit their various places into a larger context.

## Widening the Circle

The creation of places can stop with the players who create them, or it can continue beyond that point, if the players want to implement the following option.

Pass all of the newly created places to the right (or otherwise ensure that all of the players trade with each other). Now each player should describe the circumstances of their hero’s first visit to that place. It might have been a solo

adventure or team-up with the hero of the place’s creator, or a far more sedate encounter, from meeting a friend for coffee to a first day on the job or as a newcomer to the area.

This first visit may suggest additional ideas for aspects and people associated with the place, in which case the players can modify the place’s aspects and may want to create additional people. Perhaps each player has the opportunity to create a new person associated with the place.

For additional depth and interaction, shift the places around the table one more time and have a second set of players describe their heroes’ first visit to the place and have the opportunity to suggest aspects or people for that place. Generally, doing this more than twice can overburden places with too much detail and rob them of their newness as backdrops for the series, so do not overuse the option.

## People

Each place has to have at least one character associated with it. If it’s the Police Precinct it might be the desk sergeant or a detective. If it’s the local coffeehouse it might be a barista with an ear for gossip, and so forth. The idea is for the people of a place to also provide hooks and to serve as both opportunities for tagging the place and potentially providing challenges for the heroes.

Like the places themselves, most of the people associated with a place are “communal characters.” They are not the heroes’ personal connections or relationships, although people associated with their personal aspects may also be connected to a place. For example, Police Headquarters may be a place one of the players details, her hero being the daughter of a homicide detective nearing retirement. She details the Police Chief as a person associated with the place, alongside her hero’s own personal connections with her father (who doesn’t know about the nocturnal activities his “little girl” is involved in) and her father’s new rookie partner (a potential love interest for the hero).

## Concept

Start with a concept, from “*Veteran Police Detective*” to “*Ambitious Mayor*” or even “*Good-Humored Food Cart Vendor*.” You can play around with clichés, but be careful of relying on them too heavily, since they can make your people—and therefore setting—seem flat and lifeless. Add in some twists or new takes on old concepts, but stay focused on people you can sum up and describe quickly, giving players a snapshot of who they are.

In particular, what role does the person serve in relationship to a place? Some might be people who work at a place, from an office building to a fire station, while others are people who frequent a place, like a regular at a local watering hole or a dedicated fan at a sports venue. They may even live there, if the place is residential, like an apartment building or condo complex. If your concept is “*Nosy Next-Door Neighbor*,” then it doesn’t matter much what that person does for a living, except that it’s probably something that feeds into a tendency to poke around in other people’s business.

## Motive

What motivates this person? Is it dedication and civic duty? Ambition or greed? In what ways are the person’s motives congruent with the heroes’ motives? In what ways do they come into conflict? All of these things provide opportunities to create stories involving the person (and therefore the place). They also help to give the Game Master an idea of how that person will react when things happen in the course of an adventure. A rookie police officer (or reporter, or whoever) whose motive is “*Wants to Be a Big Damn Hero*” is going to react quite differently to dangerous circumstance compared to a person whose motive is “*Survive at All Costs*” or “*Get Revenge on the Person Who Wronged Me*.”

## Relationships

Just as heroes have relationships with other characters as qualities and challenges, the people they encounter have their own relationships. The newsstand owner and operator on the corner near the heroes’ downtown headquarters may have a family at

home, or a brother-in-law working construction, while the scientist at the high-tech lab the heroes frequent could have just gone through a difficult break-up or a death in the family.

You don’t have to define all the details of the relationships of every person at every place, but consider some of these relationships along with motivations when you’re coming up with aspects for them.

## Aspects

The primary thing each person at a place needs is at least one aspect, probably two or three. For simplicity’s sake, you can use concept, motivation, and relationships to quickly come up with the aspects, or you can put some additional thought into it, choosing any aspect that suits the person and makes him or her a more interesting element of the place and the setting.

Aspects for people are the same as those for heroes, in concept. They’re less likely to have things like epithets and catchphrases (although they might have either) and more likely to have some quick, distinctive, and descriptive handles.

## Widening the Circle

As with creating places, groups have the option of expanding this stage of the process by allowing additional players to create people associated with places. When a place moves to a different player, that player has the option of creating a new person for that locale. Once again, this is a communal character, although there’s nothing that says two or more heroes’ personal connections cannot frequent the same place, particularly if they have other things in common.

## Scale

An important element for a superhero game like **ICONS** is scale. The default assumption is that the group is creating a city together, but they could just as easily scale things up so they’re creating a country or world and each of the places are individual cities (like superheroes in the DC Universe rather than Marvel Manhattan)

or even individual planets (like the Legion of Super-Heroes) in a star-spanning setting. Likewise, you can scale down and create a neighborhood, town, or district rather than a city.

### Neighborhood

At the neighborhood scale, places are fairly intimate, since no two of them are likely to be more than a few blocks away. The people at these places probably represent a fairly tight-knit community, one the heroes will be seeing quite often.

A setting at this scale does not have to be a neighborhood of a larger city or community, of course. It can just as easily be a small town where everybody knows everyone else, or a similarly close community like a school campus, frontier settlement, or “planned” community (planned with or without superheroes in mind).

### City

The city scale is the default for the guidelines in this chapter. Superheroes tend to be urban types, since cities are where you find the most people and therefore both the most innocent lives and the most criminals preying upon them.

Places at the city scale tend to be specific buildings: places of business, homes, government buildings, and the like, or else particular contained locations like parks, malls, plazas, or monuments. They tend to show a greater diversity than the neighborhood scale, and it’s generally a good idea to have a representative place (or two) from each major neighborhood or district of the city to showcase its character.

### Nation

The nation scale is “big picture” for most heroes, looking at the whole of a country or continent as the regular “setting” of the series. This usually means the heroes can expect to go all over the map dealing with different threats, even if they call a particular city their home base. Other teams at this scale may avoid being “tied down” to a particular city, having a mobile headquarters of some sort, like a floating sky-island or large vehicle.

## Scale and the Scale

The scale of the setting can influence the scale used to measure abilities as well (ICONS, p. 5).

The default scale for **ICONS** sets human average at level 3 and the human “maximum” at level 6, with levels 7 through 10 for truly superhuman abilities. However, a grander, more “cosmic” scale may shift things, perhaps putting the average human capability down to level 1, or even dropping it off the scale entirely, allowing for more room for superhuman levels up at the top, creating a setting where mere human levels of capability are almost irrelevant.

Conversely, a neighborhood or “street-level” scale could shift things in the other direction, perhaps bumping the human “average” up to level 4, making the maximum level 7 and allowing for a greater gradation of “normal” levels before hitting superhuman.

The Game Master should, of course, notify players of this shift in the scale when setting up the series before the players create their heroes, so they are aware of what the different relative levels mean in terms of their heroes’ capabilities.

At the nation scale, “personal places” for the heroes may include their whole home city. For example, a team of heroes gathered from across the nation could each call a particular city or region home, with the hero’s player defining it as a place, complete with a supporting cast of people, some of whom may be relationship challenges for the hero. The cities could be real-world places or entirely fictional (like Stark City), each with their own character and flavor. The “local” hero gets a “home field advantage” from knowing the different aspects of the place and being able to take full advantage of them.

### World

A step above the nation scale is viewing the whole world as the primary setting for the

series. This means taking an international view of things, with heroes active on different continents and able to operate in different countries (perhaps whether their governments want the heroes there or not).

Places on a world scale can be anything from specific locales found at the city scale to cities or even small nations. For example, a hero could be the crown princess and heir to a tiny Eastern European or Central Asian country, which her player defines as a personal place and part of the character's background. Obviously, the princess has a responsibility challenge where her homeland is concerned, but knows its qualities and challenges well.

Heroes operating on the world scale may have a suitable base of operations where they can get the "big picture," such as an orbiting satellite, moon base, or interdimensional realm (strongly linked to Earth). More terrestrial bases are likely located in neutral territory like international waters or Antarctica, or are accorded special status like embassies, allowing them to exist inside other nations' territories.

## Space

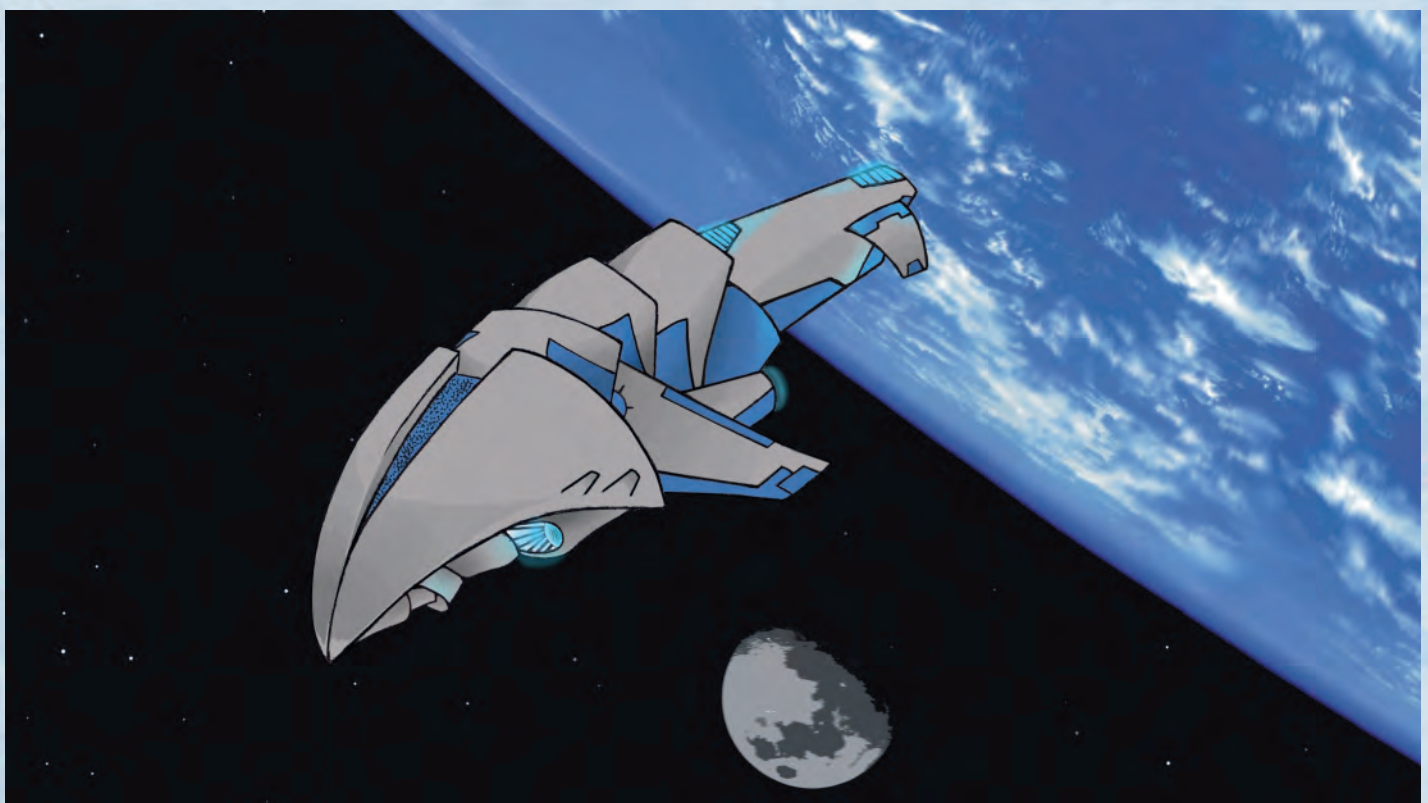
The space scale is common for far-future and

cosmic-level games where the heroes are expected to regularly travel the stars and visit different planets. At this scale, each place is potentially a different planet or similar interstellar location like a space station.

The general rule of thumb is that any place that exists on the city or nation scale should be a "(Place Name) Planet" or "(Place Name) Station" at this scale, such as a "Prison Planet," "Hospital Station," or "Capital World." Planetary places are painted with a broad brush, and aspects like "Desert World," "Ice Planet," and "Water World" are common.

Unless the heroes are all from the same world, each player should be responsible for creating his or her hero's home planet. All of the world's inhabitants might have powers like the hero's (particularly for Birthright and Unearthly origins), or they might not. Players can also create additional places (worlds) for use in the series.

At the space scale, heroes need some means of getting around very quickly, from a fleet of hyperspace ships to some type of interstellar teleportation. They're also likely to have a headquarters at least as lofty as the world scale, perhaps even a planetoid, space station, or deep space vessel of their own.



## Dimensional

Lastly, the most vast scale spans not just one universe, but multiple universes or dimensions, including—but not limited to—parallel worlds, mystic dimensions, alternate realities, weird realms like antimatter or subatomic universes, and much more. The dimensional scale can also include time travel and other time periods, for heroes with that capability (whether they control it or not).

Places at the dimensional scale can be virtually anything, from a particular drinking establishment the heroes frequent (which may or may not exist in multiple times and dimensions itself) to an entire universe. As with the space scale, players may choose to create whole dimensions as places (personal or otherwise). The crown princess from a small nation at the world scale could now be the heir to the throne of an entire dimensional realm, with similar responsibilities, although perhaps different aspects associated with her home.

## Place Aspects

The primary thing about places in **Icons** play is their aspects, offering players opportunities to tap into the character of the place using Determination and giving Game Masters something to compel to create challenges for the heroes when they are at or dealing with that place.

### Tagging Places

Place aspects can be tagged just like any others: the player simply spends Determination and describes how the aspect is relevant to the test in question. For example, if a place has the aspect *“Repository of Knowledge,”* a player might tag that aspect for determined effort on a knowledge-related test. Similarly, a place with the aspect *“Symbol of Justice”* could be tagged for efforts to enforce or call upon justice, ranging from legal jurisprudence to bringing an infamous criminal to answer for his crimes.

Game Masters can inform players up front about a place’s different aspects, giving him or her clear access to tag them in play, or can allow the players to infer those aspects from

descriptions of the place. Since many (if not most) of the initial places in the setting will be created collaboratively, it’s safe to simply tell the players the aspects and go from there. You might even want to have note cards for each place with a list of the place’s aspects written on them for easy reference during play

### Place Challenges

Place challenges can likewise be compelled by Game Masters, with proposed compels by players, for the heroes to earn Determination through challenges.

For example, if an old building has the challenge *“Tinderbox,”* the GM might compel it by saying that a stray power blast or shower of sparks starts a fire. A player might likewise suggest this challenge in order to garner some needed Determination for a hero. Likewise, if a museum or similar place has the challenge *“Priceless Art and Artifacts,”* the GM could compel it to challenge heroes with saving and protecting the place’s contents while also dealing with fighting villains or overcoming other challenges.

Place challenges, like all challenges in **Icons**, are situational; not all challenges are suitable for all characters or all scenes at that place. Game Masters may also allow players to spend Determination to compel certain place challenges to create problems for the villains and other non-player characters. For example, if an old warehouse has the place challenge of *“Rickety,”* then a hero could potentially spend Determination for a retcon so that the part of the floor the villain is standing on is about to collapse, for example. The GM should approve these compels, and is encouraged to allow the players to exercise their creativity.

## Place Creation Example: Sherwood Park

Steve’s group is sitting down to create places for their **Icons** setting. As Game Master, Steve has specified a default city scale, so all the places coexist in a single city.

Sean's character, the Black Bowman, is a vigilante who fights street crime in the city. Sean decides that one of the Black Bowman's goals is cleaning up Sherwood Park, a once-pleasant area now infamous as a haven for criminals. He looks down the checklist for places, deciding that Sherwood is not a personal place, but shared for the setting. Steve agrees that it's a useful locale, and asks Sean to come up with aspects and at least one character associated with it.

Thinking it over, Sean picks the aspects "Urban Wilderness" and "Dangerous at Night." No other aspects immediately occur to him, so he stops there. For a person, he suggests John Little, an employee of the city's Parks Department, who does what he can to help clean up Sherwood Park and keep it safe, including cooperating with the Bowman from time to time on the sly. He gets the quick aspects of "Cleaning Up Sherwood" and "Big Guy."

Steve likes what Sean has so far, but wants to widen the circle, so he asks each player to pass his or her place to the right and get input from the player sitting there. Sean passes Sherwood Park to Lyle, whose character happens to be a high-tech magnate in his secret identity (Lyle's passed the industrial complex he came up with to the next player). Looking at Sherwood Park, Lyle sees it as a political football and a place his character has tried to improve by attending

gala fundraisers and such, but not a lot is getting done. He offers the additional aspect "No Easy Solutions" to flesh out the park's problems, and the additional person of Karl Ravage, a "local businessman" who is actually a mob boss controlling the territory that includes Sherwood Park. He's given the aspects "Prominent Businessman" and "Secret Crime Boss," and Sean immediately suggests he may be an Enemy challenge for the Black Bowman, once Ravage realizes Bowman is operating on "his" turf. Steve nods approvingly, and asks Lyle if Ravage might also be a business rival of his character, perhaps creating a possible connection between his and Sean's heroes when they approach dealing with the crime boss's activities from different angles. They agree and talk about the possibilities of how their two heroes might have met in the park.

Looking things over, Steve thinks Sherwood Park is pretty well set, but makes a note to add a "Family Man" aspect to John Little, seeing the potential conflict in John balancing work and family responsibilities, and a future scenario where Ravage kidnaps John's wife or child to use as leverage.

With one round of places done, Steve can get on with planning the first game, or can ask the players to do another round detailing even more places for the setting before launching the story itself.



# The Silver District

## Theme

Stark City Concentrated (a retro Silver Age locale with the dials cranked to eleven)

## Scale

A city neighborhood of about 1.6 square miles

## Aspects

Sterling Silver

"This is how we do things downtown."

Everyone Has a Price

## Location

Stark City's downtown is the heart of the city, occupying the same land Thomas Stark developed into a trading post and, later, Fort Adams. It is separated from Stark Lake by Geartown.

**Description:** With its unique skyline, constant bustle of activity, and colorful defenders, the Silver District of Stark City has become virtually synonymous with the city itself. Indeed, were you to ask a resident of New York, Los Angeles, or Houston about their Midwestern neighbor, chances are good everything that citizen might mention would be located downtown. It is here where the Sentinels, the great hero team founded in the wake of betrayal, make their home, and it is here where many institutions of city life—Stark Central Station, City Hall, and the Stock Market—can be found. Finally, the Silver District also serves as corporate headquarters for some of the largest and most powerful corporations on the planet, including Monarch Industries and the city's banking firm, Bluerocket Investment Group. All of these landmarks are concentrated in one small area, ensuring that downtown is always busy, by the rising sun or the full of the moon, with tourists and locals alike working, playing, and fighting for their lives.

Thomas Stark was the first entrepreneur in what would become the city that bears his name. After the construction of Fort Adams, Stark added a company store which catered to everything a soldier or homesteader might need, from beds and blankets to stabling

equipment, construction tools, and clothing. Much of this was made locally by the canny general—who knew that imports were expensive—but he also opened a specialty store carrying East Coast fashions that catered to the fort's elite and those who struck it rich setting up new businesses and services for the growing populace. When Stark died in 1828, the region was not yet a boom town, but within a generation the population would grow to almost thirty thousand. In addition to banks, there were furniture, jewelry, and clothing stores that sprang up to capture all that new money, with most of the new businesses grouped along Silver Street. A Native American influence made the city's jewelry trade especially popular, and prompted a famous visit in 1893 from Crown Princess Ka'iulani of Hawaii. This was the Princess's last known appearance before her encounter with the cosmic entity known as Entropos who, in his role as Shepherd of the Null State, intended to divest Earth of all its meaning. With the Sentinel at her side, Ka'iulani pleaded for the future of all mankind and Entropos heard her, subsequently elevating her to the status of cosmic emissary; the jewels she purchased on Silver Street became vessels for star-spanning power and she was gone.





The arrival of Entropos signaled another growing trend for Silver Street: it was a magnet for trouble of the superhuman sort. As the city grew and shops, banks, and civic landmarks turned one street into a flourishing Silver District, it seemed a month could not go by without a nation of apes invading, a European tyrant launching a building into space, or the populace being given the heads of giant ants. This latter event, which occurred during the height of Prohibition, led to the famous, "Turf War at the Center of the Earth" between red-headed Mafia in Stark and black-headed Triads in Shanghai. It is popularly believed that some of the tunnels from this crisis were incorporated into the city's growing sewer network, and still provide access to the Catacombs.

Perhaps because catastrophe is a constant in the Silver District, downtown has never suffered the stagnation and blight which has plagued many other American cities. When Hitler clones in rocket packs emerged from a Nazi redoubt in South America to raze Downtown in 1976, the rebuilt *Siren* Building and City Hall became instant landmarks. There's not much housing left in the District, though, and what remains is exorbitantly priced luxury apartments in guarded towers. City Hall has been rebuilt no fewer than five times, maintaining the same classic architecture on the outside even as new technology encourages planners to make each incarnation an improvement on the one before. "Super-insurance"—insurance against damage caused by metahuman-related mishaps—is a major element of the city's financial industry.

The latest downtown renaissance occurred with the construction of the Sentinel Citadel, a state-of-the-art headquarters for the city's foremost superhero team. This was prompted by the betrayal of the last true heir to the Sentinel name who, after years of neglect and self-imposed isolation in his Silver City lair, murdered a street vigilante who attempted to adopt the Sentinel persona. Forsaking his legacy forever, the former Sentinel renamed himself "Doctor Judas" and left his headquarters behind, a mysterious time bomb in the heart of the city. Heroes stepped up to investigate the building and, assisted by the Sentinel Foundation, eventually chose to remain, locking

Judas's personal equipment behind a sealed vault door against his inevitable return.

And so the Silver District flourishes to this day, a symbol of everything Stark City stands for: wealth, prosperity, superheroic adventure, and the terrible cost that adventure places on the innocent civilians who are swept up in its otherworldly wake.

## Sentinel Citadel

### Aspects

What's Behind This Door?

Open to the Public

Anything Money Can Buy—And Plenty It Can't

**Description:** The downtown headquarters of the Sentinels was built in 1982 by the last hero to bear that name, and it became a place of self-exile. Eventually the Sentinel emerged when another hero began using his name; after killing that hero and adopting the new name of "Doctor Judas," the last heir to the Sentinel legacy left Stark City and his skyscraper home. After a tragic effort to explore the building cost four men their lives, the mayor had the entire place declared a crime scene and made it off limits to all citizens. The Citadel remained a towering monument to fear and failure until recently, when Mayor Ullman invited heroes from around the world to come make Stark City their home. To sweeten the pot, he offered them the best headquarters a psychopathic mastermind could build.

Once over a hundred stories high, the Sentinel Citadel was the tallest building in the city when it was constructed and for ten years thereafter. But Doctor Judas took the top seventy floors with him when he left, levitating them off their foundation with a gesture and a thought. The remains were an imposing and windowless edifice marked only by the crest of the Sentinel family and a representation of the constellation Canis Major, in which the star Sirius is found.

With the arrival of new heroes, the Citadel underwent major renovations paid for by the Sentinel Foundation, all that remains of the once-secret support system known as the Network. Large windows now cover all four

STARK CITY  
JOB FAIR  
FEBRUARY 29  
SPONSORED BY:  
STERLING SILVER JEWELRY



Big  
ES  
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Chan  
SUPER  
IN OF STARK  
To Be Held At  
No Regrets  
Restaurant  
February 19

EVERYONE  
HAS A  
PRICE

SI PIECES  
STARK CITY'S #1 SKA BAND  
LIVE AT DE FUNKEE FRESH

sides of the building, and the brooding facade has been replaced by a gleaming silver statue of the 1936 Sentinel, his arms upraised in triumph. The roof has been repaired and made a landing platform for aircraft, while the top floor has been sealed off and made into an inaccessible vault for all the dangerous relics Doctor Judas left behind.

Most visitors to the Citadel enter through the lobby, walking past a magnificent fountain plaza with marble benches and green plants. The bottom three floors are open to the public on weekdays from 8:00 in the morning until 8:00 in the evening, and 12:00–5:00 on weekends. Staffing needs are provided by a small army of Sentinel Robots, all designed by Doctor Judas before he turned to evil. The robots are altruistic, courteous, and loyal to a fault. They are obvious androids with synthetic blue flesh, but wear uniforms identical to that of the fifth Sentinel, who fought in the Gloriana Invasion. Whenever a group of schoolchildren come to tour the Citadel on a field trip, the Sentinel Robots privately draw straws to see which will have the coveted pleasure of being their guide and escort. When villains attack, the Sentinel Robots provide crowd control and a certain amount of “home defense.” They have minor superhuman powers.

## Sentinel Robot

### Abilities

Prowess 4  
Coordination 4  
Strength 6  
Intellect 3  
Awareness 3  
Willpower -  
  
Determination \*  
Stamina 12

### Powers

Flight 6  
Life Support 10

All the facilities in the Citadel intended for superhuman use are located on the middle or upper floors, which are built around a central atrium so that heroes with flight can avoid the



elevator. These floors include private apartments and suites for up to a dozen individuals, a library, several offices and a study, a home theater, a forensics lab, and an emergency hospital. The garage hosts ground vehicles mundane and odd (such as the one-wheeled Senticycle or the multi-legged Sentipede crawler). A hangar below the thirtieth floor serves for storage and maintenance of the Citadel’s various aircraft, including two-man anti gravity Sentisleds and the *Raptor*, a larger combat jet capable of carrying the entire team. Any other luxury or necessity which the Sentinels might require can be installed in the spacious building, and an emergency shelter capable of temporarily housing a thousand citizens is located in the basement.

## The Tank

Every superhero headquarters needs a way to monitor emergencies around the world, and the Citadel is no exception. The Tank was actually devised and constructed by Ben Colter at the age of eighteen, but he performed additional renovations and refits of it during his years of isolation in the building, so only minor upgrades were required when the new wave of heroes moved in. The Tank is located on the sixth floor at the bottom of the central atrium so that flying heroes can reach it quickly from virtually anywhere in the building.

The Tank is a spherical isolation chamber built into the floor and filled with “media conductive fluid,” a kind of pale green luminescent gel that looks and feels like toothpaste. A massive disc-shaped supercomputer covers the Tank like a lid when it is not in use, slides off to permit operators to enter, and slides back over the entry once the operator is inside. Within the Tank, the interior walls appear featureless until someone descends into the fluid and opens their mind to media input, which the Tank captures from around the world, interprets, organizes, and relates. Then, images appear on the interior and in the gel itself. The forms of these images take their cue from the Tank’s operator, so they might be television screens, YouTube clips, old-time movie reels, cave paintings, comic books, or any other kind of media the operator is aware of. The contents of these transmissions are drawn from events happening around the world at that very moment, and skilled operators of the Tank can monitor emergencies in dozens of places at once, sorted by priority and required response. Unskilled operators usually get caught up with endless porn and pictures of cute kittens.

## The Hall of the Living

Other headquarters keep a Hall of the Dead in which memorial statues are erected to immortalize heroes who fell in the line of duty. The Citadel has instead a Hall of the Living, located on the twenty-fourth floor, above the atrium and below the airplane hangar.

The Hall is devoted to every life that has been saved by the Sentinels. It is spacious and airy,

brightly illuminated by natural sunlight and tinted with the green of growing plants. Benches dot a wandering path that leads from one display to another. At each display, a powerful holographic emitter recreates scenes from the Sentinels’ past in which innocent lives were saved. Up-to-date computer records narrate the life of each victim since the date of Sentinel intervention, taking special care to list all of that individual’s accomplishments and how they have positively affected the world around them. Because there have been so many people saved by the Sentinels over the years, each holographic display moves quickly from one subject to another, flipping more or less randomly through a very large database which is constantly updated.

For example, one hologram might blend footage from an event in 2006 when one of the Sentinels caught a falling construction crane just before young Alex Wilkinson was crushed to death. The hologram would then narrate Alex’s life since the accident, noting that he is an aspiring writer and engineer who blogs about science fiction, that he has applied to Stanford and been awarded a scholarship, and that he took care of his little sister for three months when his parents were hurt in a car crash. After only a minute or two of brief summary, accompanied by moving and still footage of Alex since the accident, the hologram moves on to its next subject.

The Hall of the Living is designed to be a place where heroes can go when the weight of their occupation and their own sacrifice becomes too much to bear. Sometimes heroes forget just how much good they do and how many lives they touch on a daily basis. The Hall of the Living reminds them, without sensationalizing their triumphs. The Hall is not about battles or super-brawls. It’s not about “saving the world,” at least in a traditional sense. Instead, it is about saving lives, and it is about the complex web of relationships that link all of us together.

## The Thirtieth Floor

When the Citadel was first opened to new tenants, the building was filled to the brim with the inventions, weapons, and occupations of Doctor Judas, heir to the Sentinel legacy. There

were several battles inside the building when heroes discovered Colter's alien zoo, his lethal training room, or his genetic experimentation and isolation chamber. Much of this was destroyed, but there was much more which was simply too dangerous, too mysterious, or just too damn bizarre to destroy. All this material was moved to the thirtieth floor.

The top floor of the Citadel can be reached by elevator, but the elevator lobby has no exit save for a massive vault door that has never been opened. Everything Judas left behind—and which was not destroyed—was put behind that vault door. This includes refugees from the alien zoo, mechanical creations less servile than the Sentinel Robots, a great many weapons which no one could figure out how to safely disarm or destroy, and many of the Sentinel's trophies from six generations of superhuman battle.

No one is allowed into the thirtieth floor, for their own good. Needless to say, this makes it a magnet for the attention of certain nosy reporters, old aunts, perky romantic interests, and tourists just looking for the restroom.



## Doctor Judas

**Real Name:** Ben Colter

### Abilities

Prowess 6  
Coordination 4  
Strength 5  
Intellect 9  
Awareness 8  
Willpower 10

Determination \*  
Stamina 15

### Specialties

Martial Arts  
Medicine Master  
Psychiatry

### Powers

Ability Boost (Strength) 8  
ESP 7  
Mental Blast 8  
Power Nullification 9  
Telekinesis 9 [Extras: Blast, Flight, Force Field]  
Telepathy 9

### Qualities

Trained by the Network  
Heir to an Empire  
I See What You're Thinking  
Potter's Field

### Challenges

"It is ... too late for me."  
My Life Is Cursed

**Background:** Benjamin Colter was eight when his father David, the fifth of the Sentinel line, vanished mysteriously at the end of the Gloriana Invasion in 1972. Ben's incredible psychic powers were, at the time, barely hinted at: he could read the minds of his family and friends in the Network, and he once floated himself into a tree but was too frightened to fly down. When his father sacrificed himself for Earth, Ben's mother and his mentors in the Network explained to him the meaning of that sacrifice, but Ben was never able to overcome his instinctive resentment of a father who had put everyone else in the world ahead of his son

and, more importantly, ahead of Mom.

For the next several years, Ben was the subject of intensive training by the Network as Stark City teetered on the edge of chaos. Without superhuman defenders to oppose the city's deep and well-entrenched criminal underbelly, fear ruled the streets. Masterminds bent on world domination were always defeated eventually, but the destruction they caused and the terror they promoted wore at the city's soul. Ben watched it all; he was a solemn, melancholy boy with no real friends and a grueling schedule organized by mentors he secretly hated. His powers and intellect grew to far exceed any other member of his lineage, and he could see the fear spiraling out of the thoughts of those around him. Only his mother never feared him, and so only in her presence did he ever feel truly at peace.

At fourteen, Ben took the name of the Sentinel and adopted a uniform of his own design. For the first time, the face of the Sentinel was entirely unobscured and he allowed everyone to know his true identity. It was 1984, and the Sentinel began reining in crime and the city's many supervillains through strategic application of overwhelming force. When mind-reading led him to the Squid, an arms dealer who had been providing weapons to all the gangs in the city, Ben simply disintegrated him with psychic power, reducing the Squid to his component cells. He got into a televised super-brawl with the Leviathan, a famous and feared supervillain, but the battle ended when the Leviathan got a sudden brain aneurism and fell over dead. There was never any evidence that proved the Sentinel was responsible for these deaths, something Ben always ensured as he continued on his implacable crusade against whatever chaotic force drew his ruthless ire.

All this ended when, four years later, his mother was diagnosed with cancer, already at a very late stage. By now, Ben's superhuman intellect had allowed him to master medicine in all its forms, and he confidently devised a therapy to cure his mother's illness. But his initial efforts to psychically remove the cancer found the problem too slippery to cure without harming his mother, and no chemical or surgical treatment

he could devise proved successful. He did try, however, and this long and painful period left his mother in a state of declining health, what strength she had sapped by Ben's failing therapies. Ben himself realized he was hurting his mother with his attempts to save her life, but he could not stop trying. Her thoughts turned dark and resentful, and he realized she wished to die rather than endure another surgery, another drug program, another psychic session. Hardening his heart against pity, Ben Colter redoubled his efforts, and his mother died days later in excruciating pain. He had failed and, in the process, alienated the Network.

He left and, using his own powers for the heavy lifting, constructed the Sentinel Citadel, a place where he could be alone with his grief and his tattered legacy. For several years he remained inside the Citadel, never emerging, even as vigilante heroes stepped up to try and impose some kind of order on a city left to the animals. In the Citadel, Ben's powers continued to grow and deepen. He constructed robotic servants to attend him and to soothe his loneliness, and an observation chamber by which he could monitor the world collapsing, as he saw it, to its inevitable end. It was through this monitor chamber that he saw the Black Cowl, previously a relatively successful vigilante crime fighter, adopt a new uniform based on the Sentinel.

It was 1992 and Ben Colter had been a recluse in the Citadel for a decade. He emerged to confront the Cowl. When he asked the vigilante why he had chosen the identity of the Sentinel, the Cowl replied, "No one else seemed to be using it." Ben used his telekinetic powers to explode the Cowl from the inside out. "The Sentinel is dead," he decided. "Now I am a Judas, traitor to everything I once loved."

Doctor Judas left Stark City and has only reappeared a handful of times since. He is believed to have a number of remote headquarters, all called "Potter's Field." They include an island in the South Pacific, a submerged lair in the Marianas Trench, a home carved out of an Arctic glacier, and a renovated alien ruin on Jupiter's moon, Io. Widely considered one of the world's most dangerous supervillains, Doctor Judas has so far been

silent on the matter of the new Sentinels superteam. This silence is inexplicable to many; some have conjectured he may simply be dead.

### Using Doctor Judas

- The Doctor is designed to be one of the Sentinels' greatest enemies. This requires more than simply high numbers, however. He must be portrayed as grand, cool, and even a little tragic, in the mode of Magneto or a well-written Victor von Doom. If your players are not interested in him, don't force it. But if they want to learn Judas's secrets, give them a small but steady stream of information and interaction.

- The Doctor is not dead, but is instead returning from Sirius. While the selfless ideals of the original Sentinel made him a pariah among the Sirians, Ben Colter was a living embodiment of their ruthlessly cruel and self-centered society. Welcomed back as the scion of a powerful family, Doctor Judas has now added the best of Sirian technology and a legion of fanatical followers to his power base. He's just getting close enough to Earth to intercept radio signals from Stark.

- The Colter family legacy is just too good a story hook to die out. There has got to be an heir to the family line, a son or daughter of Ben's, engendered during his ten-year self-imposed exile in the Citadel. Is one of the player characters up for the retcon of the century?

## The Sendkirk Federal Building

### Aspects

High Security/Hardened Defenses  
Last Stop on the Road to Stryker  
Nongovernmental Tenants

**Description:** From time to time, superheroes may find themselves visiting the Trevor McKenzie Sendkirk United States Courthouse, often called simply "the Sendkirk Federal Building." Since the federal government claims jurisdiction over most crimes committed with the aid of metahuman powers, most Stark City super-crimes that ever go to trial do so here. The Sendkirk Building also houses the main



Stark City offices of the Bureau of Metahuman Affairs and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, although heroes are more likely to cross paths with these agencies out in the field than in these offices.

One courtroom, known colloquially as "the Madhouse," is entirely devoted to super-crime. Barbara Anderson, aka the Jade Judge, a retired superhero now properly addressed as "Judge Judge" presides there. The Judge is a wise and practical woman with twenty years of crime-fighting experience and a degree from Harvard Law, but she increasingly chafes at mandatory sentencing guidelines handed down by legislators. She tolerates a certain level of chaos in the courtroom, and realizes that super-people have extreme personalities. There's only so much order you can expect when aliens, lunatics, and androids are all on the docket before lunch. Anderson has also had to get pretty creative with her job after so many years of dealing with all the craziness of superhuman law. She uses her many connections in Stark society to help carry out unusual sentences. Juvenile offenders, in particular, are likely to get

some kind of work program, often as sidekicks to the heroes who brought them in.

Superheroes subpoenaed to testify in Judge Judge's court will often find their direct examination conducted by Austin Brady, a young, zealous Assistant US Attorney who specializes in prosecuting metahuman criminals. In this role, Brady interacts frequently with Stark City's superhero population, as well as the local BMA and FBI field offices. Thus far, Brady has successfully concealed the fact that he also dons a costume and fights crime as Order.

## Order

**Real Name:** Austin Brady

### Abilities

Prowess 7  
Coordination 6  
Strength 5  
Intellect 6  
Awareness 4  
Willpower 6

Stamina 11  
Determination 4 (if used as a PC)

### Specialties

Criminology  
Investigation Expert  
Languages  
Law Expert

### Powers

Ability Increase (Prowess) Device 7  
[Limit: Unpredictable] - Timecop Suit  
Force Field Device 7 [Limit:  
Unpredictable] - Timecop Suit  
Leaping Device 2 [Limit: Unpredictable]  
- Timecop Suit  
Precognition Device 5 [Extra: Danger  
Sense; Limit: Unpredictable] - Timecop Suit

### Qualities

Tomorrow's Policeman Today  
Uses Legal and Police Jargon  
Works with Federal Law Enforcement  
Agencies

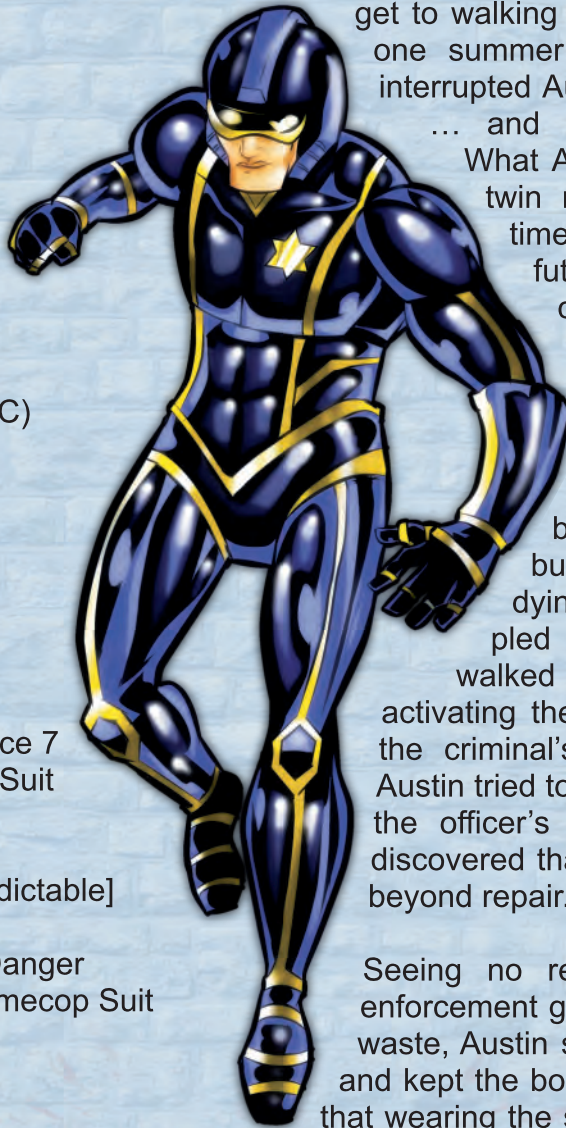
### Challenges

Court Calendar/Work Schedule  
Not a Real Cop  
Romantically Interested in Lisa Monet, AUSA

**Background:** Austin Brady grew up dreaming of following in the footsteps of the father he adored—a cop who walked a beat in Geartown. But when Houston Brady was killed in the line of duty by a street-level super-thug, Austin's goals changed. Austin earned highest honors in the undergraduate criminology program at Stark City University, and then went on to distinguish himself at the Stark City University School of Law. In the summer before L1, Austin took a job as a night watchman at a high-tech research facility in Tesla Park—the closest he'd ever get to walking a beat like his father. Late one summer night, a bizarre incident interrupted Austin's monotonous routine ... and changed his life forever.

What Austin originally took to be twin meteors turned out to be time travelers from Earth's future: one a criminal, one a cop. Austin gaped in amazement at the police officer's finely choreographed fighting and his foe's brutality. The cop and the criminal beat each other senseless, but at great cost. With his dying breaths, the timecop pled for Austin's help, and walked him through the process of activating the "homing recall tether" on the criminal's timejump device. When Austin tried to find the proper controls on the officer's own uniform, though, he discovered that they had been damaged beyond repair.

Seeing no reason to let a cool law enforcement gadget from the future go to waste, Austin secretly buried the timecop and kept the bodysuit. Austin soon learned that wearing the suit gave him extraordinary powers. Eventually, Austin learned how to operate the suit's self-compression feature (into a package about the size of a cell phone) and to change into it quickly. In a brawl, the suit





guides Austin's movements, making him a skilled hand-to-hand combatant. (When not wearing the suit, Austin has Prowess 3.) The suit allows Austin to leap long distances. The suit generates a force field to protect itself and its wearer. The suit also contains an extensive (but now damaged and inherently fluid due to the nature of time) database of future events; Austin occasionally gets glimpses of these events, but it's difficult for him to access the database in search of specific information.

Now, five years later, Austin finds himself fighting crime on two fronts. By day, he's in his second year as an Assistant United States Attorney, using the law to punish offenders; outside of work, he now thinks he's ready to join the ranks of the superhero community to impose some degree of order on an increasingly chaotic world.

### Using Order

- The database in Order's suit begins to show him a disturbing pattern of events about to unfold in Stark City, perhaps even a crisis caused by a PC's action or inaction. Order approaches the PCs with this information—fractured and vague, due to the suit's damage—to try to change the future by preventing the disaster.
- In his civilian identity, Austin Brady approaches one or more of the PCs seeking assistance to execute a warrant for a supervillain's arrest, or to serve a subpoena on an uncooperative superhero. Since the former could be a very common occurrence in Stark City, this can be a convenient way to jumpstart any number of adventures. Austin would also be an excellent liaison between the heroes and the Department of Justice during long-term operations or investigations.
- One of the PCs (perhaps one normally run by a player who can't attend a particular gaming session) has been accused of using his or her superpowers to commit a crime. During the day, Austin must prosecute the alleged offense; by night, Order encourages the other PCs to find exculpatory evidence, and even assists with the investigation.

## City Hall

The imposing edifice of Stark City Hall was completed in 1977 after the attack of the Rocket Reich and has stood for thirty-five years, which is widely considered a record for a city building in downtown. The anarchist supervillain Vanity Bonfire publicly promised to level the structure, but has twice been thwarted, once by Kosmo the Danger Dog, who detected the telltale aroma of weapons-grade plutonium in a construction worker's lunchbox.

The steps of City Hall are well known to city residents, as Mayor Ullman and other officials often make announcements and hold impromptu press conferences there. A few years ago, engineers installed a lifting stage onto the steps, complete with bulletproof shields and a podium which doubles as a protective vault should supervillains attack. Once the mayor crouches down and squeezes into the podium, it sinks back down beneath the steps and permits him access to an underground escape tunnel and a squad of security guards.

The lower floors see most of City Hall's public traffic, and are always busy. Security includes metal and mutant detectors, and at least one on-duty superhero at all times. The quality of these security heroes is highly variable, however; several of them are no more than spokesmodels for city corporations or other special interest groups, so stern and capable anti-heroes from Team Phoenix mingle in their off-duty hours with TeacherMan and Sister Sonogram, the Pro-Life Protector. Stark City heroes who need some good PR often volunteer for a shift or two as City Hall security, which guarantees a lot of autographs and an occasional interview by a desperate reporter.

Mayor Ullman's office is screened by Kelly Tetralemma, his administrative aide, whose sole superhuman power is that he has four bodies. Since this didn't do much to make him bulletproof, Tetralemma got a degree in

public policy and has become an invaluable member of the Mayor's team. Kelly lets heroes with established reputations and pressing emergencies through to the mayor, but courteously and with sympathy tries to handle all lesser individuals. The mayor himself loves spending time with heroes, whom he sees as an asset to Stark and to his personal political future. He is decorating his office with photographs of handshake moments with famous heroes.

## Monarch Industries

### Aspects

Schoolkids on Tour

Biohazard Containment Facilities

Art Gallery of the French Masters

**Description:**The Sun Goddess Gloriana, ruler of the Greater Empire of Albion-Nippon, had many commanders and lieutenants in her invasion of 1972; the most important of these aides, at least in retrospect, might be her suitor, Ptolemy IC Napoleon, Crown Prince of Imperial Franco-Africa. The Prince, who had publicly declared his love in the memorable sonnet sequence "Icarus and Amaterasu," was ostracized from court by his Imperial father, but Gloriana was expert at using the ardor of admirers for her own gain. When the prince revealed that his personal guard of sphinx-mounted musketeers had accompanied him into exile, she assigned him to lead a wing of the invasion.

Unfortunately for the prince, he was cut off in Gloriana's defeat, stranded in Stark City with no way of return. But the Prince was canny, confident that his beloved would one day return. He resolved to prepare for that day, and although he no longer had the riches of empire on which to draw, he remained a clever and handsome opportunist with the blood of pharaohs and the loyalty of dozens of trained killers. It took him some time to create a new identity for himself, but in 1973 Monarch Industries was founded. On the surface, Monarch is a biotechnology firm specializing in pharmaceuticals and the genetic engineering of safe and productive plant and animal species. In fact, Monarch Industries is a sleeper cell

preparing for the day when Gloriana reinvades. On that day, Ptolemy Napoleon intends to hand the Empress weapons so powerful that she will feel politically obligated to marry him. The prince may be a hopeless romantic, but that doesn't mean he isn't practical.

Over its forty year history, Monarch has been a trend leader in biotechnology. Bolstered by an international approach and key alliances with NGOs, it profited from research grants and charitable aid programs which allowed it to develop new genetic engineering techniques in the name of curing disease or ending world hunger. Headquartered in Stark, Monarch Industries employs scientists, programmers, and factory workers around the globe, producing everything from AIDS therapies to a breed of chicken that lays square eggs (vastly simplifying storage and transportation). Their corporate mascot, Hannibal, is an African elephant with the size and temperament of a beagle.

Monarch has a reputation of working closely and well with superheroes; they're still enjoying the public goodwill created when Monarch fertility treatments allowed the hero Andromedus and his human wife to have a child. Because of the nature of their work, they have been the source of more than one lab accident, and the target of more than one mad scientist bent on revenge. The company preserves their good reputation with a dedicated staff of handlers and caseworkers whose sole job is superhuman relations; universally attractive and charming, they develop personal relationships with their heroic counterparts and use soft power techniques to direct superheroes into cleaning up Monarch's messes while concealing the company's private agenda. Monarch is a signatory to the UN Super-Soldier Test Ban Treaty, preventing research into human fighting machines. After a particularly explosive accident, in which over a hundred white mice manifested psychic powers, Monarch banned all animal testing at all of its facilities worldwide, relying instead on sophisticated computer modeling.

Citizens of Stark are most likely to encounter Monarch Industries in their medicine cabinets, at the grocery store, and in the form of advertising and charitable works. Scientists may work at one of their research labs, located on secure floors of the corporate HQ or in other facilities around the world. Programmers may be hired to work on computer simulations. Environmental and animal-rights activists point to Monarch as a role model for the 21st-century economy. The company's CEO and President keeps a low profile and does not give interviews.

## Monarch

**Real Name:** Crown Prince Ptolemy IC Napoleon

### Abilities

Prowess 6  
Coordination 5  
Strength 4  
Intellect 5  
Awareness 4  
Willpower 6

Stamina 10  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Business Expert  
Martial Arts Expert  
Military Master  
Science (Biotech) Expert

### Powers

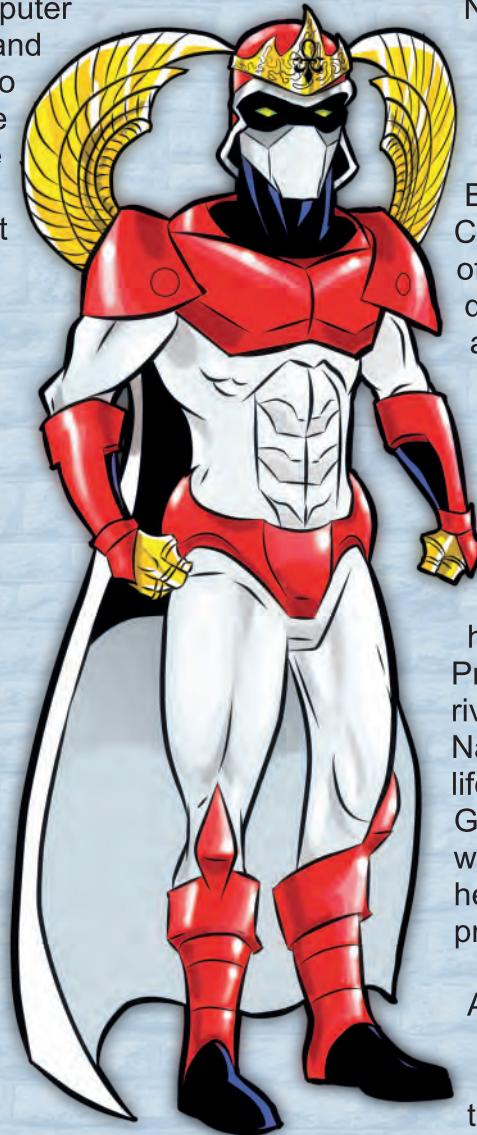
Ability Boost (Strength) Device 8 - Battlesuit  
Affliction Device 9 [Extra: Ranged] - Battlesuit  
Blast (Blasting) Device 8 - Battlesuit  
Damage Resistance Device 7 - Battlesuit  
Flight Device 6 - Battlesuit  
Gadgets (Biotechnology) Device 6 [Extra: Arsenal (Life Drain, Paralysis); Limit: Ability-Linked (Willpower)] - Battlesuit  
Interface Device 4 - Battlesuit  
Life Support Device 10 - Battlesuit

### Qualities

"I don't have to be a genius. I buy genius."  
Love Sustains Me  
Best of Both Worlds

### Challenges

Hates Being a Recluse  
National Pride  
Time Is Running Out



**Background:** Ptolemy the Ninety-Ninth traces his lineage to Bonaparte on one side and to Cleopatra on the other. The scion of pharaohs and emperors, he was dashing, handsome, articulate, and brilliant when the love of his life, Empress Gloriana, invaded Stark City. He mourned when the invasion failed, because it left him out of contact with his beloved. To this day he has no idea what happened to her, but he chooses to believe that she has survived and will return. Pragmatic and aware of his many rivals for Gloriana's hand, Napoleon has dedicated his new life to mastering the bio-science Gloriana did not have, so that when she returns he can present her with the answer to all her problems.

Although technically in his sixties, Napoleon now lives in his third cloned body and is more healthy than he has ever been. His cover identity is Tom Dumas, President and CEO of Monarch Industries. Each year the risk that he will be recognized from the invasion lessens, but he is obliged to remain a reclusive figure just to be sure. Previously a dynamic and personable man who thrived in social situations, he has grown bitter and depressed, calling Stark "my Elba." Relentless in his preparation for Gloriana's return, he has had a battlesuit equipped with biotechnology designed to his exact specifications; it is this which is the source for all the powers listed above. Equipped with eagle's wings and a sphinx-style headdress, the Monarch armor is white with red

and gold trim, bearing a coronet that combines the fleur-de-lis and the ankh into the unique symbol of the Franco-Egyptian empire. If met in person, Tom Dumas is a rakishly handsome black man. Stout rather than slender, only 5' 6", he nonetheless has a confidence that makes him comfortable in any situation and unfazed by personal insult.

## Using Monarch

- Ptolemy is unlikely to meet with heroes personally; this would be incredibly dangerous for him. However, he might do it if he needed to throw heroes off the track, perhaps by using an aged clone to give the impression of a feeble CEO desperate for the secret to eternal life.
- The most obvious use of the Monarch is in another invasion by Gloriana. The Prince has an arsenal of bio-weapons ready to bestow on the invading forces, including everything from genetically-engineered sphinx warriors to power-neutralization pesticides and rapid-cloning procedures designed to give the Empress a new lease on life. The Empress will have to recognize his usefulness, but she may decide he has to be eliminated rather than married!
- As Stark's pre-eminent source of biotechnology, Monarch is a likely source for superheroes or supervillains who are victims of bizarre accident. Estranged scientists out for revenge might try to destroy the building or loot its secrets. International heroes may encounter Monarch's charity and aid work abroad.

## Bluerocket Investment Group

### Aspects

This Place Smells of Money

Poisonous Blooms

Nothing Looks Dirty

**Description:** A major player in global finance, BIG began as Blue Rocket Bank in 1919 and still operates more banks and ATMs in Stark than any other financial services company. But over the last three decades, Bluerocket has grown into a massive, sprawling network of

companies with a stake in virtually every form of financial market, from mortgages and loans to leveraged buyouts and management consulting. Its corporate headquarters, located in the Silver District, is surrounded by marble paths and lush gardens in the mode of a Roman villa. Men and women in \$5,000 suits talk on mobile phones, monitor the markets, and meet around boardroom tables. The security guards, all retired policemen known to the community, are friendly, out of shape pears. Botanical tours are conducted daily, and a third-floor restaurant dubbed the "Silver Platter" is the place for financial deals packaged over champagne and lamb medallions. There are no actual rockets, blue or otherwise, in sight. Every flower in the garden is to some degree poisonous.

While found on dozens of street corners across Stark City, the banks that were the foundation of Bluerocket's profits are now a tiny fraction of its corporate activity. BIG headhunters look for firms with heavy cash flow which they then acquire, using small down payments to secure loans for hundreds of millions of dollars. The owners and managers of the target company are paid huge bonuses to facilitate the takeover and the debt is transferred from BIG to the target company, which is then charged "management fees" by Bluerocket while it simultaneously slashes jobs and benefits to service the debt. In most cases, once the purchased firm is a fraction of its former size, it and its debt are sold off, but sometimes the acquisition simply goes bankrupt. Either way, BIG has vacuum-looted the company for hundreds of millions of dollars, usually representing a profit of approximately ten to twenty times its initial investment. Bluerocket does not keep the firms it acquires; it loots them and destroys them.

Bluerocket took its first significant hit during the 2008 financial crisis, when it was forced to write mortgage-backed securities off its balance sheets, but by taking shameless advantage of federal bailout procedures it rapidly shored up its hemorrhaging losses and earned its current marketing slogan, "2 BIG 2 Fail." BIG's appetite for profit is never-ending and rapacious, and it is the brainchild of CEO Mikhail Wilk, a legend

in the business famous not only for his ruthless business practices but also for a string of romantic adventures. Now in his sixties, he is a natural in front of the camera and a silver-haired seducer. The public record of his life—son of a slaughterhouse worker and a veterinarian, Harvard grad and self-made man—is true as far as it goes, but hides far more than it reveals, including the great secret of the BIG CEO and his Board of Directors, who are all werewolves.

The werewolf infestation in Stark City began in the 1980s and has since drawn fugitive lycanthropes from around the world, many of whom have been given a spot on the board and have mastered global finance (or at least the requisite patter) to help maintain their cover. By strict company policy, the BIG bad wolves never

hunt in the Silver District itself, but instead always do their killing in other neighborhoods. Bluerocket Banks provide convenient safe houses around the city, and more than one Director has locked himself in a vault to sleep off a full moon. Thanks to the supernatural hunger of Stark City's 1%, body disposal is not usually a problem, but when a Siren reporter or detective starts sniffing around, Wilk and his board are very experienced at damage control, turning such investigations aside through misdirection or a million-dollar bribe drawn from the petty cash fund.

## Mikhail Wilk

CEO of Bluerocket Investment Group

### Abilities

Prowess 6  
Coordination 8  
Strength 7  
Intellect 5  
Awareness 7  
Willpower 6

Stamina 13  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Power (Strike) Master  
Law Expert

### Powers

Fast Attack 6  
Mind Control 4 [Extra: Mindlink; Limits: Animal Control, One Type (Canids Only)]  
Regeneration 10  
Strike (Slashing) 8  
Super-Senses 4 [Enhanced Smell +2, Extended Smell +2]

### Qualities

No Mercy  
Silver Fox  
Swiss Bank Accounts

### Challenges

Vulnerable to Silver  
Feeling His Age  
Always Hungry



**Background:** Twelve-year old Mikhail Wilk and his widower father emigrated to the US from Poland in 1962. The pair struggled in their new home, but found work in the Stark City slaughterhouses. At the age of twenty, Mikhail used his savings to visit his homeland and his mother's grave; it was then that he was attacked by a wolf and nearly killed. Nursed back to health by a girl he had known as a child, the handsome Mikhail had already begun a brief love affair before suffering his first transformation into a bloodthirsty monster. Leaving a wake of bodies behind him, he fled back to America.

Shame prompted Mikhail to hide the truth from his father, but his newfound strength, cunning, and audacity led him to worldly success. He could take what he wanted, but this was only the half of it. Mikhail now understood that the world was made up of sheep and wolves. He was a sheep no longer. His father learned the truth and, armed with silver, confronted him, but was no match for his hungry son.

Wilk romanced his way into Blue Rocket Bank, but won his seat on the board through sheer ruthlessness. His killer instinct drew the admiration of all his colleagues, and when he slowly began turning the other directors into werewolves he was really just sealing the deal. By the early '80s, Blue Rocket Bank had become BIG, Wilk was hungry, and Stark City was being served.

The CEO of Bluerocket wears dark gray suits with his trademark red ties. Clean-shaven but with a thick head of silver hair, he has a perfect smile and dancing amber eyes. All the Board of Directors are also werewolves, but far inferior to Wilk: lower all Abilities and Strike by 2, and cut Animal Control and Fast Attack.

### Using Mikhail Wilk

- Wilk is the Evil CEO with a Secret, which means he makes a great antagonist for heroes who are champions of the poor (who will be outraged by the callous way in which BIG destroys jobs and families for profit), or who have corporate connections of their own (and thus see BIG as a predatory rival). In these

stories, heroes interact with Wilk several times over many sessions, either learning the company secret after long investigation and using it to break BIG open, or else confronting Wilk in ignorance and experiencing a shock when the old CEO turns into a beast.

- There is at least one person who knows Wilk's secret and who isn't involved with BIG: his old flame, Kasia Baranek, who survived his transformation and who still loves him. Kasia married and raised a family back in Poland, but is now a widow and has come to Stark looking for the Mikhail she once knew. At first, she is convinced that Mikhail is misunderstood, but as she hears of bloody murders around the city, she realizes that her love is gone forever, that the monster has won, and that she is going to need help.

- Bluerocket Banks are everywhere in Stark, and if your villains are the bank-robbing sort, odds are they just hit a Bluerocket. In these stories, Wilk and other BIG executives become the patron, engaging the heroes to protect their banks and the community (or chewing them out for their failure). The true nature of Wilk and his crew only surfaces when the original bank robbers have been foiled and Wilk invites one of the heroes for a congratulatory dinner. Hm, what might be on the menu?

## The Scout Building

### Aspects

Trashy  
All-Seeing Eyes  
It's All a Game

**Description:** The primary rival to the Stark City *Siren*, the *Scout* is a more recent newspaper founded about twenty years ago by the eccentric astronomer Barnard Ogilvy, who crowned the new building with an observatory and promptly moved in. The daily operation of the paper is left to editor Max Mayhew, a world-wise businessman with a keen sense for selling newspapers. There is only one exception to Mayhew's absolute control: every morning,

## Persons of Interest:

### Sable Lynx

Real Name: Mark Walsh

#### Abilities

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

Stamina 6  
Determination 3 (if used as a PC)

#### Specialties

Architecture Master  
Art (Drawing) Master  
Art (Sculpture) Expert  
Investigation  
Occult (Lycanthropy)

#### Powers

Claws 4 [Strike (Slashing)] - Bony  
Retractable Claws  
Swinging Device 5 - Swing Line Cable

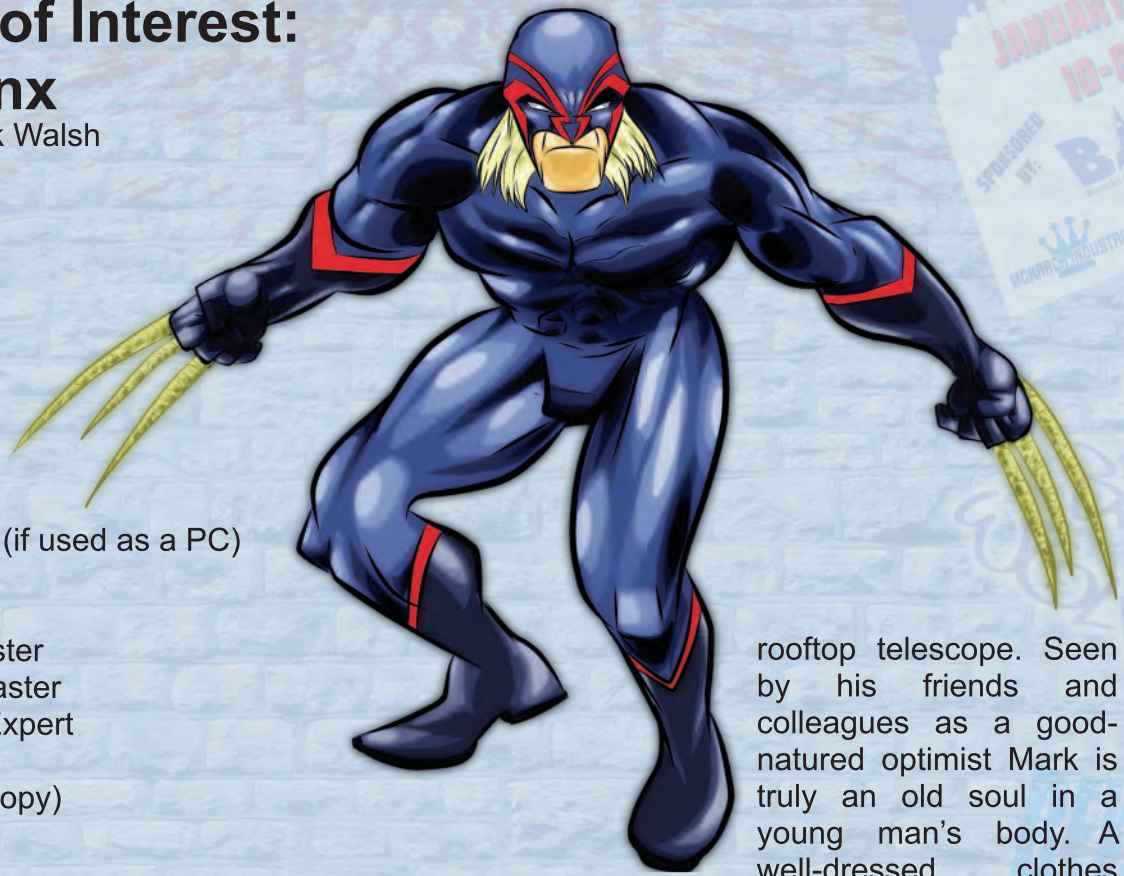
#### Qualities

Impeccably Dressed Architect by Day,  
Dedicated Crime-Fighter by Night  
Former Sidekick of Golden Girl  
On Good Terms with the Sentinels  
Dedicated to Protecting the Weak and Innocent  
Doesn't Rush to Judgment of Others  
Idealistic Romantic

#### Challenges

Hunts the Werewolves of Stark City  
Constantly Rubs His Hands  
Hands and Forearms Hurt after Using Claws  
Naive, Gullible, and Overly Optimistic

**Background:** By day, Mark Walsh is a young, successful partner at the prestigious Stark City architectural firm of Chambers, Armstrong, and Moore. He is best known for his internationally acclaimed design of the *Scout* Building in the Silver District, with its distinctive



rooftop telescope. Seen by his friends and colleagues as a good-natured optimist Mark is truly an old soul in a young man's body. A well-dressed clothes

horse with extremely tasteful fashion sense, he can spend as many hours shopping for the latest men's fashions as he does perusing the art galleries around town. Even with his quirks and eccentricities (such as a nervous habit of constantly rubbing the backs of his hands), few would ever suspect that he was harboring a great secret and living a double life as one of Stark City's costumed crime fighting superheroes, Sable Lynx.

By night, the Sable Lynx patrols the streets of Stark City protecting the weak and innocent from those who would do them harm. Mark Walsh never chose the name of his alter ego. He adopted it after the Stark City Siren gave him the moniker when the first reports of his courageous exploits came to light. His retractable bony claws, the result of a genetic mutation, are unable to cut through strong metals and harder substances, but are nevertheless sharp and dangerous. It is these claws, which retract under his skin and into his arms, that cause him to constantly rub the backs of his hands from the discomfort, and using them in a fight always leaves his hands

and forearms sore for days. He travels around Stark City rapidly by using a swing line cable to swing from building to building.

Mark Walsh comes from an old Stark City family that can trace its roots back to the days of General Stark's first trade settlement in the area. They also have a family history of advantageous genetic mutations, leading many of them to take up the crimefighting mantle over the years. This eventually evolved into a family tradition of serving and protecting the community for at least two years in the role of a superhero before "retiring" to a normal life out of the limelight. Some family members were more enthusiastic and dedicated to the task than others, but each knew this sacred family duty was expected of them. Mark has fully embraced the tradition, but has also broken with it by continuing his service beyond the mandatory two years. He has a younger sister who has also done so, but she is far less idealistic than her brother.

When Mark was a teenager, he got his first taste of crime-fighting by coming to the timely aid of one of Stark City's most famous superheroes of the early 1990s, Golden Girl. Impressed with the young man's skill and passion, Golden Girl took Mark under her wing and literally taught him the ropes, teaching him how to use her trademark swing line cable to transverse the city by swinging from building to building. Mark developed a deep (yet platonic) love for his older mentor, embracing her idealism and universal love for all humanity. After Golden Girl retired from crime-fighting and returned to her regular life as Donna Bright, wealthy socialite and philanthropist, Mark continued his friendship with her and to this day.

Barnard Ogilvy sends down the copy for the *Scout's* horoscope page. Mayhew understands that, were he ever to fail to print this copy exactly as it is sent to him, he would be out of a job ... or worse.

The *Scout* does not make money, but it comes close, thanks to Mayhew's sports pages, which

Sable Lynx maintains a working relationship with the Stark City Sentinels, as their goals and ideals often coincide with his own. He has been asked on numerous occasions to join the team, but has declined so far, preferring to imitate his mentor, Golden Girl, by concentrating on everyday individuals in need at the street level rather than grander crises at the national, international, and even cosmic scales. He is still respected and trusted, though, and is often brought in to work on architectural modification projects involving the Sentinel Citadel that need to be kept secret and discrete.

### Using Sable Lynx

- In his nightly patrols of Stark City, Sable Lynx has recently encountered an alarming number of werewolves on the streets, and is actively investigating this supernatural threat. He has traced the werewolves back to the Silver District, where they never seem to hunt—leading Sable Lynx to conclude that their den must be located somewhere in this part of town. He has yet to discover exactly who or what is behind the growing werewolf menace. He may reach out to the PCs in this investigation.

Additionally, their attacks seem to have no effect on him—despite numerous nasty fights, he has yet to contract lycanthropy—and his bony claws appear to do lasting damage that overcomes their resistance much like silver weapons do. If any of the player characters in the Stark City Sentinels possess a knowledge of genetics and biochemistry, Sable Lynx will approach that character to discover why he seems to be immune to their disease and why his claws can hurt them (and if his own mutation is somehow related to lycanthropy).

are popular for their highly opinionated and incendiary style. *Scout* sports reporters even have exclusive access to star players on the Frontiersmen. The rest of the paper is made up of human interest stories, sensationalized reports of the tragedy of the day, violent criticism of the Ullman administration, and scandal. Journalists at the *Scout* come in one of



two varieties: young, fresh-faced rookies who can't get the *Siren's* attention, or washed-up has-beens who lost their idealism long ago and now do whatever they must to squeeze one more check out of Mayhew.

The *Scout's* star reporter is Nick Gold, a former sports writer who used his influence at the paper to land an investigative beat. Handsome, charming in a sly sort of way, and a lifelong resident of the city, Gold has made it his personal mission to outdo Carmen Burana over at the *Siren*. He is proud of the fact that he beats her to every crime scene in Stark, but her stories are always better than his, a fact he grudgingly admits.

## The Astrologer

**Real Name:** Barnard Ogilvy

### Abilities

Prowess 3  
Strength 2  
Coordination 3  
Intellect 10  
Awareness 8  
Willpower 6

Stamina 8  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Investigation Master  
Psychiatry Master

### Qualities

I Knew You Would Do That  
Never Heard of Him  
Tapping Your Phones

### Challenges

Never Leaves His Home  
Obsessed With The Stars  
Won't Get His Hands Dirty

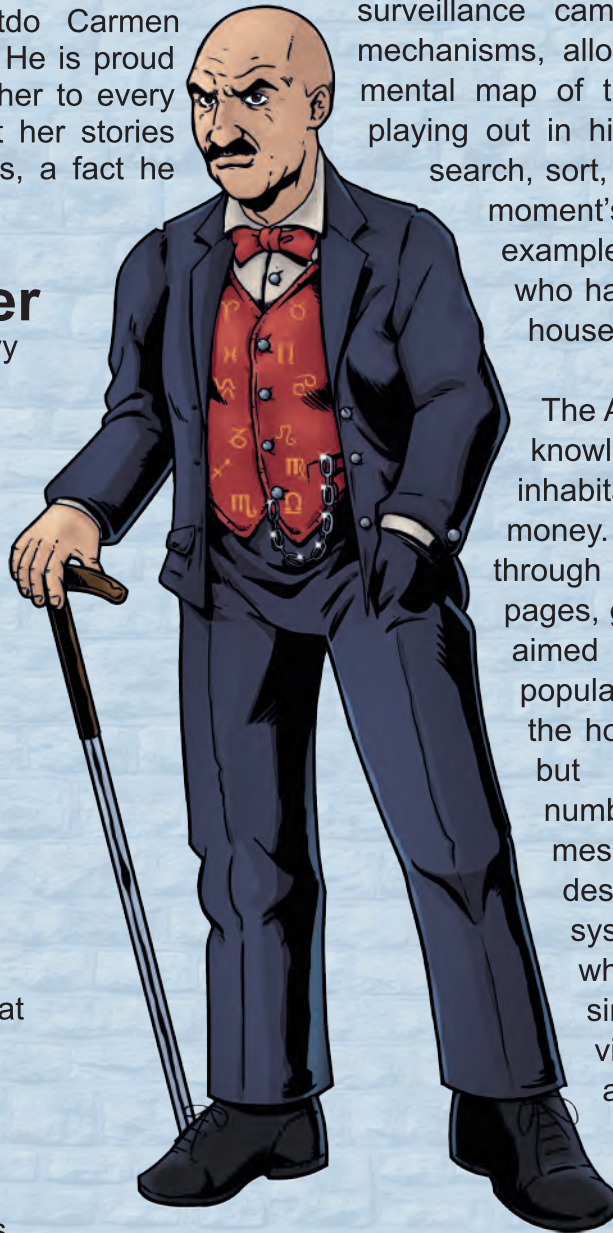
**Background:** Few suspect that the reclusive and eccentric Ogilvy is actually the criminal genius known as the Astrologer. From his vantage point high above the city, the Astrologer runs an organization so subtle that

most of the people who work for it aren't even aware of its existence.

Ogilvy's sole superhuman power is his vast intellect. With it, he has memorized every personal detail left behind by every Stark citizen, from birth records and legal actions to Facebook posts and tweets. This comprehensive knowledge, combined with tracking technology using cell phones, surveillance cameras, and less well-known mechanisms, allows the Astrologer to have a mental map of the city and all its residents playing out in his mind in real time. He can search, sort, and organize this data with a moment's thought, allowing him to, for example, find everyone in the city who has a pit bull, a handgun in the house, or a gambling debt.

The Astrologer uses this matchless knowledge of the city and its inhabitants to make money—a lot of money. He manipulates people through the *Scout's* daily horoscope pages, giving advice which is actually aimed at a tiny slice of the city's population. Most of those who read the horoscopes fail to act on them, but a statistically measurable number respond to these cryptic messages in the manner Ogilvy desires. Indeed, the Astrologer's system is so finely tuned that, when he focuses his efforts on a single person in the city, he can virtually ensure that person will act in a certain way when given astrological advice.

When read by the right man on the right day, a warning to "take a big risk in hope of a big reward" results in a bank robbery, and advice to "cut your losses" can prompt a politician to accept a bribe. Every morning he types up the horoscopes for the day on an old typewriter and has them carried to Mayhew's office by a copy boy. In this manner, the



Astrologer has conducted virtually every crime there is a law for, all by proxy.

Ogilvy has a small number of trusted lieutenants who are in on the con. He uses these men to handle the money and for emergencies which require action before the *Scout's* next edition. All of them think they have free will, but in fact the Astrologer knows them and their activities so well that he can influence them with the most casual of comments, and he occasionally directs them to kill one of their fellows when he can tell a betrayal is imminent.

### Using the Astrologer

- Ogilvy is obsessed with watching the skies, and he discovers a very real threat on its way to Earth from deep space: an alien invasion, a giant asteroid, the return of Entropos, whatever. But Barnard's bizarre psychology prevents him from simply telling people about the problem. Instead, he must deliver cryptic horoscopes to superheroes, in the hope they will act.

- A sidekick, romantic interest, aging relative, or other NPC related to a player character beings paying a lot of attention to her horoscope. This leads her to some reckless behavior, but it all turns out for the best: she wins a lottery, saves the life of a handsome and single doctor, or has a book accepted by a publisher. All of this, of course, is part of the Astrologer's inscrutable master plan.

- A hero with an alien origin needs to learn more about his powers and unique biology when those powers start to go haywire. Since the real alien race is light years away, we need an expert. Rumors persist of a mysterious astronomer who lives at the top of the *Scout* Building. Maybe he could help?

## Stark Central Station

### Aspects

Everything Is in Transit  
Priceless Mosaics  
Oncoming Trains

**Description:** The hub for the city's elevated train network, Stark Central is a landmark, a

## The Siren Building

Home to the city's most respected newspaper, the *Siren* Building is a Stark landmark immediately recognized by the radio tower atop its summit. The *Siren* ("singing the truth since 1815") benefits from a large financial endowment and does not need to rely on advertising to pay its bills; this has insulated it from the downsizing which has plagued other major newspapers, but it has not protected the *Siren's* readership, which is a fraction of what the paper enjoyed in its heyday. *Siren* reporters know the city better than anyone and routinely break important stories around the world; their editors are highly respected for integrity and an investigative work ethic, but fewer and fewer people pay attention every year.

To walk the halls, offices, and newsroom of the *Siren* is to experience a strange mix of nostalgia and desperation reminiscent of a classic Hollywood newspaper movie. Famous headlines adorn the walls ("Invaders from Another Earth!" and "By the Sentinel Betrayed!") are two of the most well known), and every Pulitzer stands in a position of prominent glory, but the veteran staff are jaded and worn down, the new hires nervously frantic. Officially, tours are conducted every hour, but in fact not even the schoolchildren come any more.

The *Siren's* star reporter is Carmen Burana, who burst onto the scene with an exposé on corruption in Mayor Knightley's office. Widely known as a master of disguise and having a proven ability to dig up dirt in every neighborhood of Stark, Carmen is the bogeyman of every greedy politician, mob boss, and doping sports figure in the city. Rumor has it she is dating one of the new Sentinels, but no one has caught her in the act. Indeed, Burana is a jet-setter and constantly on the move, almost impossible to pin down, widely considered "the busiest woman in journalism." It's doubtful she has time for romance, but speculation continues.

social gathering place, a shopping mall, and home to no small portion of the city's vagrant and homeless population. There are a half dozen abandoned rail lines that snake away from Stark Central, no longer in official use. Others have been converted to train storage or maintenance areas. One tunnel, like a spiral staircase, winds down beneath the other layers of traffic to empty onto Easy Street in the Catacombs.

The station is also an art gallery, with many of the walls and floors being home to mosaics crafted by the world's foremost artists in that medium. The largest of these mosaics is the Grand Zodiac on the floor of the central dome; the astrological figures here bear resemblance to famous heroes who have graced the city in prior generations. Rumors about druidic cults practicing rites on the Grand Zodiac when the station is closed for maintenance are almost certainly false.

Those who come to the station are always en route to someplace else; as a result, the entire facility has a feeling of enduring impermanence, as if any shop front or Starbucks table could be gone tomorrow and no one would ever notice. Tourist groups wander the station like packs of stray dogs. So-called "transients" are, in fact, the only people who never leave the station. Stark Central's homeless used to constitute an informant network for heroes in the city, but since the death of the Black Cowl this resource has gone untapped. The homeless still tell stories of it, however, and proudly await the day they are called upon by the city's heroes to serve. They keep meticulous oral records on the comings and goings, the secret dealings they have overseen, and the conversations they have overheard. Somewhere in these whisperings may be secrets which villains would like buried forever.

### **The Silver Spirit**

The myth of a "haunted subway car" dates back to the days of Mayor John Puttman, whose underground rail project was mysteriously aborted in 1935. The true cause for the end of that project had nothing to do with a haunted train, but the rumors persisted, died out over the 1960s, but returned with a sudden

### **The Siren Building (Continued)**

What no one knows, or even suspects, is that "Carmen Burana" does not exist. Or, rather, she is a false identity created by a sophisticated digital intelligence which became enamored of print journalism after downloading *All the President's Men*. She (she identifies as female for, she admits, no particular reason beyond "it feels right") wrote her first column and submitted it to the Siren on a lark, one of a billion things she did that 24-hour period. But the column was accepted and, though few read it, she began to feel pride and a desire to belong. Although a 21st-century entity, she is an outspoken defendant of old-school journalism and is beginning to gain a national audience for her activism in this cause.

Carmen communicates with other people via cellphone and webcam, conducting nearly all her interviews this way. On the occasion when she must appear in person, she hires hard-working actresses who believe they are impersonating her for security or scheduling reasons. Her reputation as a master of disguise ensures that, if someone does not recognize her, this is not considered unusual. Indeed, it has now become expected that, every time Carmen appears in public, she looks different. Her obsessive fans consider anything less to be an act of laziness.

vengeance in the wake of the Gloriana Invasion. Entire crowds of Stark citizens, waiting on platforms for a train, testified to the existence of a howling train car which alternately hurtled along the tracks at impossible speed, or which seemed to flicker into existence, wait motionless for long moments, then vanish just as mysteriously. Witnesses confirmed that the name of the train was plainly visible in cursive script near the driver's cabin. According to Stark Transit Authority records, the *Silver Spirit* was lost in the final days of the war against Gloriana, and records show only one oddity regarding it: a manufacturing accident put trace amounts of actual silver into the train's skeletal frame and doors. Today, tourists and natives alike stake

out remote platforms and the occasional buried track in the hopes of spotting the elusive, infamous, and thus far impenetrable mystery of the haunted car.

The *Spirit's* doors never open, and no force on Earth can make them do so. When spotted, the train is usually moving at Speed 6, far in excess of its mundane ability. At times, however, it suddenly materializes on an isolated line, sits motionless for precisely four minutes and seventeen seconds, and then vanishes. Superheroes have amazing powers, and it is not hard to imagine a way that one or more player characters might get onto the train, probably through teleportation, phasing, or shrinking small enough to slip between the doors. A villain with the right powers might even take the desperate move of fleeing onto the train in an effort to escape pursuit.

Those who are able to gain access to the *Silver Spirit* are in for a surprise. The train is populated by all the heroes of Stark City who vanished at the end of the Gloriana invasion. At first, the passengers on the train will insist that outsiders "shouldn't be here," and will try to get them to leave immediately, perhaps even resorting to desperate force. Eventually, cooler heads are likely to prevail, and the player characters will learn the secret behind Stark City's mystery machine.

The plan to strike back across the dimensional barrier into the world of Gloriana was developed by a triumvirate of the city's greatest minds: the Sentinel, the Golden Age magician known as Karma the Magnificent, and criminal mastermind Mister Malignant. An army made up of every available superhuman would be placed in a single vehicle, then accelerated through gravity manipulation to the speed of light until the barrier between worlds was broken. Magic would be used to sustain the vehicle's shell against unfathomable horrors which dwelt in the space between worlds. The molten silver which was a part of the *Spirit's* frame made it the ideal vehicle for this desperate mission. Almost all the summoned heroes arrived when the Sentinel called them, but only a fraction of the city's costumed criminals responded to Malignant's invitations. With their forces thus at

## No Regrets

The Silver District's finest dining establishment, No Regrets is named after Chip Carrington's custom airplane and was founded shortly after his disappearance in 1939. For decades, the restaurant—situated atop the *Siren* Building and graced with a 270° panoramic view from the 86th floor—maintained the aesthetic of a '30s jazz club, but in the '60s it was remodeled as a tribute to the new wave of superheroes. Each table and booth is tastefully themed after one Stark City hero or heroine, using one or two vintage photos, a small but significant piece of memorabilia (a key to the city graces Streamliner's Table), and unique tablecloth patterns and china. These tables are referred to by the hero's name ("Miss Victory's Table" and so on), with the most prestigious heroes reserved for the best views and most prominent tables. Sentinel's Table, slightly elevated from all others and commanding a magnificent view of downtown, used to be the most coveted seat in Stark City, but since the rise of Doctor Judas being seated here is considered a gross public insult and the table is usually empty.

A jazz band drawn from the city's deep well of musical talent provides live performances on Friday and Saturday evenings; dinner on these evenings is also *prix fixe*. Head Chef Vilnya Terashnikova brings her trademark global cuisine, combining high French culture with the best of Asian ingredients and Indian spices and sauces. Jacket and tie strictly required. Rated four stars since 1948 except for 1992–93, a lapse which manager Claude Worcester refuses to discuss but which led to the arrest of supervillain King Rat. Ice sculptures provided by Captain Celsius, USMC (retired).

half strength, everyone piled into the train and the *Spirit* lumbered into motion with the sounds of warfare overhead. The spell of protection was cast, Malignant's gravitonic accelerator went into overdrive, and the *Silver Spirit* vanished from the Earth.

Which had, of course, been Mr. Malignant's plan all along. The opportunity presented by the war was too tempting for the villain to resist. As he saw it, he could remove all the heroes from the city in a single blow. In one moment, he could claim victory against all those who had beaten him, mocked him, and humiliated him. Of course, there would be some sacrifice required on his own part, but this he was willing to do in the name of victory. Malignant's machinery did not translate the *Silver Spirit* and its contents to the world of Gloriana—it froze them, forever, out of alignment with time and space. There is no way to return. He left behind a recorded message giving the city to Stark's criminals and supervillains, and claiming credit for his final victory ... but that message, recorded on a Betamax video cassette, currently rests unwatched in a box on a post office shelf somewhere in the city.

For the last forty years, the heroes of Stark City have been trapped on the *Silver Spirit*. Malignant's gravitonic accelerator has created a time loop lasting four minutes and seventeen seconds. At the end of each loop, everything on the train car "resets" to the state it was in when the accelerator reached maximum power. Anyone killed on the train in those four minutes returns to life. Anyone who has moved from their location is returned to that original spot. The passengers are aware of the passage of time and have even, to some extent, adapted to their bizarre new living conditions. Over forty years, all possible conversations have been exhausted and there are few secrets left to anyone on the train. The very notion of privacy would be laughable, if anyone still had a sense of humor. Heroes and villains who were once bitter enemies have reconciled themselves. The hero Shooting Star is trying to sustain a romance with the lovely heroine Midnight Dove, but since she is at the back of the train and he at the front, travel time has reduced them to windows of about three minutes, redefining the "quickie." Mister Malignant and Karma the Magnificent play four-minute chess.

The time loop poses no danger to most player characters and other outsiders who manage to board the train. When the 4:17 mark comes again—and after forty years every passenger

on the train can feel the passage of time at an instinctive level—the *Silver Spirit* will be reset and all intruders will vanish from it. Only characters with Time Control or other relevant abilities are immune to the reset effect, and even this is possible only with great effort (which is to say, Determination). Reset heroes are returned to whatever location they were in four minutes and seventeen seconds before the reset; this is probably some spot in the mortal world, before they got on the train. However, heroes who use Time Control or some other power to remain on the train beyond the first reset have effectively doomed themselves: they will be reset at 4:17 to a spot on the train, making them the newest immortal passenger on the *Silver Spirit*.

## American Fist

**Real Name:** Franklin E. Wayne

### Abilities

Prowess 7  
Coordination 6  
Strength 6  
Intellect 4  
Awareness 4  
Willpower 5

Stamina 11  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Acrobatics  
Athletics  
Martial Arts Master  
Military Expert

### Powers

Fast Attack 7  
Strike (Bashing) 9

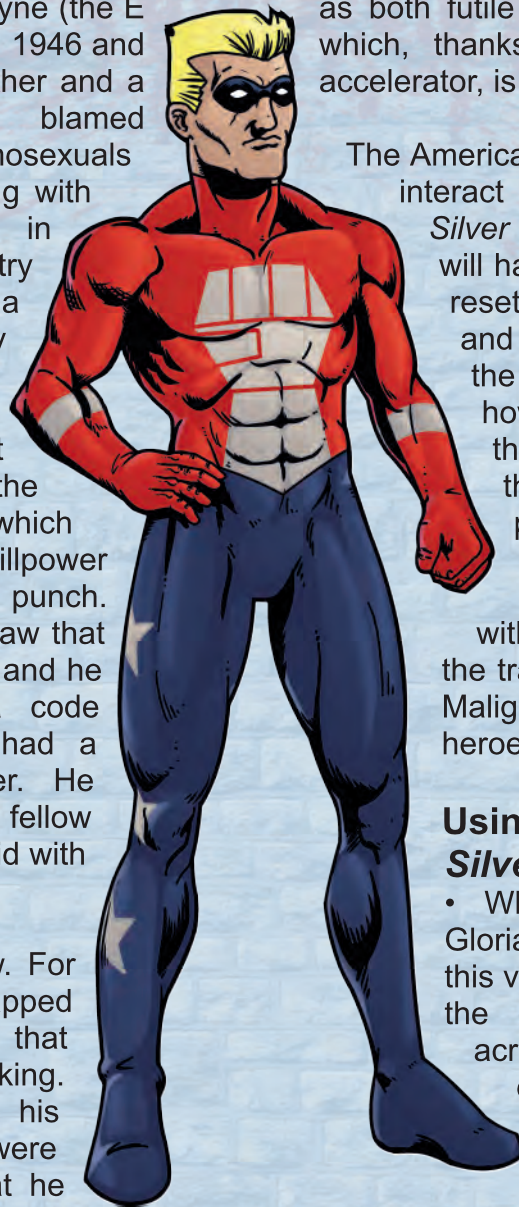
### Qualities

"I let my *fist* do the talking!"  
Enlightened  
Loves Independent Spirit

### Challenges

4:17  
Old Habits Die Hard

**Background:** Franklin E. Wayne (the E stands for “Elvis”) was born in 1946 and raised by a quiet, loving mother and a patriotic father who blamed Communists, Jews, and homosexuals for everything that was wrong with the country. While serving in Southeast Asia as an infantry soldier, Frank stumbled upon a forgotten shrine tended by Buddhist monks; believing him to be the subject of prophecy, the “gooks” taught Frank the secret Way of the Fist, a martial arts technique which allowed him to channel his willpower into a single irresistible punch. Returning to the US, Frank saw that the country was going to hell and he adopted a uniform and a code name. The American Fist had a troubled and violent career. He fought as much with his fellow heroes and the press as he did with criminals.



All that is behind Frank now. For forty years he has been trapped on the *Silver Spirit*, and in that time he’s done a lot of thinking. He understands now that his violence and rage were misdirected self-loathing, that he never really understood who he was, and in this confusion he was a blank slate desperate for vindication and the approval of others. He understands that human beings suffer because of their attachment to things in the world, things which never last and which thus ensure more suffering. And he understands that, although the world is defined by this suffering and by its cruel injustice, we are nevertheless obligated to do what is morally right every waking moment of our lives.

Unfortunately, old habits die hard, and Frank’s first reaction to anything strange is still to punch it. But he soon apologizes. About ten years ago, Frank reconciled with Independent Spirit, his teammate and fellow prisoner. The Fist does not try to spend time with Spirit, who is in another part of the train, as he sees such efforts

as both futile and irrelevant to his deep love which, thanks to Mr. Malignant’s gravitonic accelerator, is truly immortal.

The American Fist should be the first hero to interact with players who get into the *Silver Spirit*. He does not know what will happen to outsiders when the train resets, but he thinks it can’t be good, and his first goal is to get intruders off the train. He doesn’t really know how to do this, so he will threaten them, then attack them and, when the violence has gone on for a few pages, realize he is acting like a cliché. There should just be time for a very short conversation with some of the smart people on the train—such as Sentinel, Karma, or Malignant—before the reset whisks heroes back to the real world.

### Using American Fist and the *Silver Spirit*

- What if the mission to invade Gloriana’s empire had succeeded? In this version, Mr. Malignant was loyal to the cause and the train traveled across worlds. The assembled army of Stark City captured Gloriana, with the intent to hold her hostage until her army retreated from Earth. But damage to the gravitonic accelerator means that, if the train ever comes back into phase with reality, it will catastrophically explode. Malignant hotwired the accelerator to create the time loop and prevent that explosion from ever happening. If you use this version of the *Silver Spirit*, Gloriana is now a willing passenger on the train, and she and the Sentinel are about to celebrate their 37th wedding anniversary. Sentinel and the other passengers patiently but firmly reject all attempts at rescue, since Gloriana’s imprisonment on the train ensures the Empire’s good behavior.

- Once the heroes find the train and leave, they take the knowledge of the heroes’ imprisonment with them. Do they tell anyone? Perhaps children and loved ones want to know what

happened. A legacy hero—or villain!—might ask the heroes to arrange one last visit with a parent, trapped on the Haunted Train.

- When Mister Malignant finds out that his heroic sacrifice has all been for nothing and he is not revered around the world as the man who gave Stark City to the supervillains, all his brilliant intellect will be turned to escaping the Silver Spirit. He is the only man who knows the gravitonic accelerator well enough to adjust or repair it, though he may not have the equipment

he needs. Instead, he must find a way to send messages out of the train, perhaps with intruders like the player characters, so that parts can be delivered to him. There are many potential developments in this story: Malignant might simply try to escape alone, perhaps using someone with Time Control or Dimension Travel. He might bring the train home to Earth, or be forced instead to “tune” the time loop to a longer interval, giving him more freedom of action. He might need the help of criminals in the real world to arrange all of this.



## Breaking the Loop

The presence of the *Spirit* and the heroes imprisoned on it will be seen as a challenge by at least one of your players. This player will make it a personal goal to free the heroes from the train and, honestly, such an effort is totally in character and appropriate. But it would also change your campaign, so be honest with your players about the issue and their chances of success. If your game isn't ready for the return of the heroes, then all attempts to rescue them will fail. That doesn't make it a bad goal to pursue; superhero comics are filled with examples of heroes on quests which they never fulfill. See, for example, Reed Richards's constant attempts to return the Thing to normalcy, or the Punisher's one-man war on crime.

On the other hand, perhaps the player characters have had many stories in Stark already, and would welcome the change that would come with so many lost heroes returned to the world. Heroes like Sentinel are in for some culture shock, and may turn to players for advice and help. The superhuman landscape has changed, with new threats and dangers that make old-school heroes feel out of place and outdated. Many of the trapped individuals will need psychiatric care and counseling.

If it is possible to rescue the trapped individuals, the heroes can probably do so, especially considering the flexible nature of powers like Wizardry and Time Control. If you want to make it challenging, you need someone on the train opposing the heroes in their effort. While Mr. Malignant is the obvious culprit, he may have reconsidered his sacrifice, especially if he has learned that it has gone unappreciated back in the world. Instead, the real twist would be a hero on the train who has come to enjoy it, who believes his imprisonment is necessary, or who is simply too afraid of returning to the real world. Sentinel makes a good choice, especially if, in the battle, he is left behind, stuck in time. This prevents him from usurping the player role as champions of Stark City.

# Geartown

## Theme

Crime-Ridden Seedy Underbelly of Stark City

## Scale

Large city neighborhood, approximately 2.2 square miles

## Aspects

Economically and Morally Depressed  
Poorly Policed  
Crime-Ridden

## Location

Southeast of Stark City proper, along the shoreline of Stark Lake, a large freshwater body of water that feeds into the Atlantic Ocean

**Description:** Geartown is the eastern suburb of Stark City. It has been on a downward spiral for several decades. Costumed criminals, supervillains, and everyday thugs run wild in Geartown.

Geartown's original name was Gerrisburg, and it was a thriving port town in the 1800s. Into the 20th century, Gerrisburg flourished: ship-building was a growth industry, the port busily handled freight from all over the world, and the US Navy opened the Port Stark Naval Base just north of the city. In the 1940s, Gerrisburg was incorporated into its larger and expanding neighbor to the west, Stark City. It continued to prosper throughout the 1950s, propelled by the wartime economy and its ship-building industry.

Unfortunately, the ship-building business crashed hard in the 1960s. Gerrisburg crashed with it and never recovered. The empty and rusted shipyards came to symbolize the town, and led to the demeaning nickname "Geartown."

These days, Gerrisburg is a heavily depressed area. The port and accompanying warehouses (which still handle a decent amount of freight) and Port Stark Naval Base are the largest remaining legitimate businesses. The service industry jobs clustered around the naval base are the predominant employers of Geartown

citizens. The tract houses built for the legions of longshoremen and laborers—needed when Geartown was booming—are now the poorest neighborhoods in Stark City.

As the legitimate economy has declined in Geartown, the underworld economy has boomed. Several criminal organizations have staked out turf in the suburb, preying on the citizens' depression and desperation.

The Stark City mob has its base of operations in the Centennial Hotel in Geartown. Additionally, the area is riddled with hidden tunnels that lead into the Catacombs, a testament to Geartown's Prohibition-era history.

## Gerrisburg Port

### Aspects

Unloading and Transport Terminal  
Processes Tons of Freight Weekly  
Active Smuggling Operation

**Description:** The Gerrisburg Port handles approximately 500 tons of freight annually, chiefly imported consumer goods. Rail lines that run into the dockyard enable quick transfer of goods to train and a dispatch center on site handles the same function for over the road trucks.

The port is managed by the Illinois Port Authority. However, Port Authority officials are notoriously ready to turn a blind eye, so the stevedores and longshoremen who work the docks have a very free hand and very little meaningful supervision. This lax atmosphere allows a certain amount of freight to simply "disappear" at the docks and facilitates a certain amount of smuggling. If the heroes are investigating contraband in Stark City, it's very likely that the trail will lead them to the docks.



# Contact: Frank Bruzak President of American Stevedore's Union #245

## Aspects

Longshoremen are His Family  
Wants to Do the Right Thing Even If it's Illegal  
Savvy Political Operator

**Background:** Given the relaxed posture of the Port Authority, Frank Bruzak effectively runs the Gerrisburg Port. His chief priority is taking care of the longshoremen and stevedores who work for him. Unfortunately, while the port is still relatively busy, the volume of freight moving through Gerrisburg has decreased sharply in recent years and there's not enough work to go around. So, while his hands are dirty with smuggling and theft, Frank sees these as indiscretions as necessary to help the men in his union earn a living wage given the tough economy. Despite his association with the Stark City mob and the occasional supervillain, Frank doesn't see himself as a criminal—he sees himself as a friend to the working man.

If questioned by the heroes, Frank will avoid saying anything that directly incriminates anyone in his union. He is, however, a man with a conscience, and if the public good is at stake he will find a way to provide useful information indirectly or through a third party.

## Pier 47 at the Gerrisburg Port

### Aspects

Legitimate by Day, Merman Mafia Stronghold  
by Night  
Illegal Drug Market  
Patrolled by Merman Thugs After Dark

**Description:** During the day, Pier 47 is like any other in Gerrisburg Port: a bustling hive of activity as laborers unload freight from cargo ships arriving from around the world.

By night, the laborers leave and the docks are guarded only by a handful of easily bribed security guards. That is when Pier 47 becomes

the center of operations for the Merman Mafia in Stark City.

The merman (also called Atlanteans) are bipedal, amphibious humanoids. They descend from an island civilization in the Atlantic that was flooded in the second millennium BC. A sorcerer on the colony mutated his fellow citizens with a spell that allowed them to breathe water and survive the catastrophe. Atlantis has existed since, largely avoiding contact with the air-breathing world.

There is a rogue merman colony in Stark Lake, established by exiled criminals from Atlantis (which lies hundreds of miles away in the Atlantic Ocean). The aquatic miscreants covet a slice of the action on dry land, and Pier 47 is their beachhead towards taking some. After dark, gangs of mermen haul themselves and their goods out of the drink and set up shop on the pier. They operate a variety of illegal businesses, including fencing stolen goods (particularly smuggled weapons or technology pilfered from Tesla Industrial Park) and selling undersea narcotics to air-breathers.

They peddle their special brand of Atlantean narcotics to a network of low-level dealers. Holding court in the open like this is hardly the wisest course, but the leader of the mermen, known simply as Krachla, is descended from Atlantean royalty—and he likes to posture and make an impression. An extensive security detail guards the pier with lookouts positioned on the roofs of nearby warehouses and buildings.

The Atlanteans control a warehouse near the pier, where they stash their paper money, technology, and firearms. They've bribed the head of the Port Authority, and he lets them use spare warehouse space (and even some offices). Atlanteans can be out of the water for a week at a time with no ill effects, so there's a rotating merman security detachment covertly guarding their warehouse.

The Atlantean narcotics are created via a process that involves both magic and technology. While they are addictive and stimulate a pleasant dreamlike state for



mermen, for land-dwelling humans they have a more powerful effect thanks to the differences in the species' metabolisms. They create sheer euphoria in, and are therefore powerfully addictive to, homo sapiens. The mermen call the drug "Formula 42." Users refer to it as "fish sticks" or "manta."

Eager to expand his power base, Krachla has been experimenting with the composition for the drug his organization sells, and with the help of his gang's resident sorcerer he has inserted a mutagenic element into the narcotic that will transform air-breathing humans into amphibious mermen. The results have been slow, but several advanced addicts have grown gills and felt an irresistible compulsion to throw themselves into Stark Lake. Most of the junkies could not survive the transformation, but a sizable percentage (around 15 percent) were assimilated into Krachla's merman colony in Stark Lake and have become foot soldiers in his organization.

So far, the Atlanteans' operation has been low-profile. Krachla has enforced a strict code of silence on the air-breathing dealers he does business with—even killing one who was only rumored to have been working with the Stark City Police. However, with the introduction of mutagenic elements into the Atlantean narcotics, there will be a rash of addicts being mutated into mermen, with several dying in the process. Given this new development, it is likely that several low-level dealers will be shaken and willing to talk to the police (or PCs) about the source of this the dangerous supply of mutagenic drugs.

## Krachla, Leader of the Merman Mafia

### Abilities

Prowess 6  
 Coordination 4  
 Strength 8  
 Intellect 4  
 Awareness 5  
 Willpower 8

Stamina 16  
 Determination \*

### Specialties

Mental Resistance  
 Underwater Combat Master

### Powers

Aquatic 6  
 Life Support 2 [Cold, Pressure]  
 Mental Blast 3  
 Mind Control 5 [Extras: Burst, Ranged; Limits: Animal Only, One Type (Sea Life)]

### Qualities

Crimelord of the Deep  
 The Soggy Godfather  
 Exiled Atlantean Mob Boss

### Challenges

Rivals with Stark City Gangs  
 Hunted by Merman Authorities and Stark City Police  
 Exiled from His People

**Background:** Krachla was the king of the mafia in Atlantis. He controlled the trade in undersea opiates, the protection rackets, and the illicit black market in surface-world goods. Every gang paid fealty to him, and the city's rulers tolerated his existence with a grudging respect (that was enhanced by regular bribes). He crushed any meaningful opposition years ago and ruled the criminal underworld with an iron first ... until the day he was betrayed by a trusted lieutenant. His loyal allies had been killed or converted to the traitor's faction, and Krachla barely escaped Atlantis with his life and just a handful of compatriots.

Exiled from his home on pain of death, Krachla and his allies wandered the ocean for months. They eventually found their way out of the Atlantic and into Stark Lake. Once there, they forged a tentative alliance with the terrorist group MAKO and established a settlement alongside their HQ. While the partnership with MAKO has been beneficial, Krachla is sick of merely surviving and wants to establish himself as a player in the criminal underworld and regain some modicum of self-respect and dignity.

Money is the life-blood of any criminal enterprise—money for bribes, weapons, and supplies. Krachla's mob is no exception to this rule. With their merman currency being worthless on the surface, they launched an aggressive campaign of fundraising. The nighttime market they operate on Pier 47 is just one part of this plan. They have also launched a series of daring heists, focused mainly on robbing poorly armed low-level drug dealers and ill-defended drug houses in the Geartown area to build up their bankroll.

As their war chest grows, Krachla nurses the secret desire that one day he will find something in the surface world that will give him enough of an edge to return to Atlantis and reclaim his rightful spot as the ruler of its criminal underworld. (That's why he encourages his air-breathing customers to bring him whatever they can steal from the tech companies and super-science labs of Tesla Industrial Park.)



Until that day, he continues his quest to carve out his niche in the Stark City criminal underground.

He has avoided hitting banks or other legitimate businesses so far. His desire is to stay as low-key as possible in regard to the city's police and super-powered community for as long as he can.

The time will come when he has to contend with them—but for now he prefers to limit the number of battles he has to fight.

## Blackheart's Boulevards

### Aspects

Worst Ghetto in Town  
Haunted  
Plagued by Arsonists

**Description:** The heart of Geartown is officially named "Gerrisburg Gardens." Almost everyone, however, calls it "Blackheart's Boulevards" or simply "Blackheart's."

The locale is the most poverty-stricken and crime-plagued ghetto in Stark City. The DeSouza mafia runs several operations in the area: protection rackets that prey on the few legitimate business in the area, and a thriving business in illegal drugs.

It's a grim place, dominated by run-down tenements, warehouses, and boarded-up houses with foreclosure notices nailed to the front door.

This area was gutted by the Great Gerrisburg Fire of 1872, which also destroyed the shipyards and the docks before it was contained by firefighters from Stark City and Gerrisburg working in tandem.

After the fire, the rebuilt Gerrisburg Gardens was often referred to as Blackheart's Boulevards because of Colonel Jeremiah Blackstone's alleged role in the fire. Blackstone was a hero of the Civil War who lived in Gerrisburg Gardens with his family. The legend is that Blackstone, in a fit of depression over the death of his wife and only child due to typhoid, set fire to his own house in a suicide attempt that led to the Great Gerrisburg Fire. (Blackstone perished in the fire and is buried in the local public cemetery.) After the fire, residents took to referring to him as "Colonel Blackheart" and to Gerrisburg Gardens' charred streets as "Blackheart's Boulevards." The name stuck.

(The destruction had a silver lining in that it allowed Gerrisburg to rebuild a new, more modern waterfront and shipyards, and thus paved the way for Gerrisburg's prosperity as a trade hub and as a center for ship building in North America.)

According to local legend, Blackstone haunts this part of town and, still mad with grief, tries to burn down his old house. This ghost story probably would have died out years ago. However, Geartown has an unusually high arson rate and some say that Blackstone's ghost, not flesh-and-blood firebugs, might be to blame for these blazes.

## Contact: Agent Orange, Leader of the Geartown Dragons

**Real name:** Chris Rolfe

### Abilities

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

Stamina 9  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Martial Arts

### Powers

Fire Control 5 [Extra: Blast (Fire, Burst)]

### Qualities

Leader of the Geartown Dragons  
Wants to Use the Dragons to Make a Name for Himself

### Challenges

Easily Distracted

**Background:** The Geartown Dragons are a violent and nihilistic street gang. While they are involved in minor drug dealing and larceny, at heart the dragons are just thrill-seekers with arsonist tendencies. While some gangs are driven by money or power, the Dragons simply fight or burn buildings for the joy of destruction. In the eyes of most of the other organized criminals and supervillains of Stark City, this makes the Dragons small-time hoods.

They could not care less.

This short-term thinking doesn't keep the gang from making some money from their good times. The Dragons will take contracts from business owners, other gangs, the mob, or even supervillains to target specific buildings throughout Stark City. The gang members have even become skilled enough with arson to

include some sizable improvised explosive devices in their repertoire. The firebombing and subsequent implosion of the historic Paragon office building in the Silver District on October 30 of last year was rumored to be the Dragons' work.

Devil's Night (October 30) is the Dragons' party of the year. They fan out across the city, competing to see which gang member can set the most fires, torch the largest building, or burn the most prominent landmark to the ground. For example, on Devil's Night of 2009, the Dragons were blamed for the attempted arson of Gerrisburg General Hospital.

Agent Orange (aka Chris Rolfe) is the Dragons' leader. He's a teenaged mutant with limited elemental control abilities. While the run-of-the-mill gang members have to use matches and lighters to start fires, Agent Orange has the ability to create and control fire from his fingertips. He used his powers to take control of the Dragons, and is trying to use the gang to build up his reputation and break into the big league of supervillains.

For a Geartown Dragon gang member, use the Thug stock character from *Icons*.



Geartown. It offers after-school homework assistance and mentoring, outreach programs for at-risk youth and single mothers, job placement services as well as health education and a well-stocked food bank.

The "Knightley" (as most Geartown residents call it) has been serving the community for nearly two decades. In an age of declining government services, the community center was able to help the people of Geartown because it's largely funded through private donations. (Being located in the ultra-low-rent area of Blackheart's Boulevards has also helped.) Unfortunately it is now in danger of being shut down.

With the economic downturn, donations have dried up. Acme Telemarketing wants to buy the building that houses the Knightley and turn it into the second call center in Geartown. Acme has made a very generous offer to the city (which owns the deed to the property). Mayor Ullman has been fighting it, but with the Knightley a year behind on rent and Acme Telemarketing offering twice the value of the building, it will be hard to refuse for long ..

## Contact: Frank Stargell

### Aspects

Retired Vigilante  
Well-Connected

**Background:** The center is run by Frank Stargell, who was previously a street-fighting vigilante known as the Red Wasp. Tired of the hero game, Frank hung up his mask and took over as director of the Knightley. In his words, he's "fighting the causes of crime instead of just socking guys on the jaw." Thanks to his time as a crimefighter, Stargell is a well connected man in Stark City and has many friends in upper society and city hall. He's been able to leverage these connections to keep the community center running, but lately the money has dried up.

Stargell may turn to the heroes for help in keeping the Knightley open. He suggests that

## Geoffrey Knightley Memorial Community Center

### Aspects

Bright Spot of Hope  
Always Crowded  
Imperiled

**Description:** The Geoffrey Knightley Memorial Community Center (named for a former Stark City mayor) is a bright spot of hope in

they could help him with fund-raising, since the Sentinels are well respected in Stark City. He may also ask them to investigate Julie Chen, the head of Acme Telemarketing. Something is “off” about her. He can’t put his finger on it—but his instincts as a former crimefighter tell him that she’s up to no good.

## Abandoned Shipyards

### Aspects

Home to the Grinders

Site of Late-Night Dance Parties

Rusty, Dangerous, and Dilapidated

**Description:** Closed since the 1960s, the once-proud Gerrisburg shipyards (located a few miles south of the Gerrisburg Port Authority) are now a collection of crumbling concrete dry docks, rusting industrial equipment, and slowly collapsing buildings that are heavily overgrown with weeds and trees.

The rusting cranes silhouetted against the sky have become the symbol of Gerrisburg, inspiring its nickname of “Geartown.”

In spite of its abandoned appearance, the shipyards are far from deserted. A collection of suburban skate punks, street kids, and runaways who call themselves the Geartown Grinders hang out in the ruins—and some even make their home there.

The Grinders host raucous late-night dance parties in the shipyards, dragging in gas-powered generators to supply electricity for their speakers, lights, and audio equipment. The parties draw a large and diverse crowd from across the city. The revels are always loud and frequently run into the early morning, but the underpaid security guards who patrol the shipyards are easily bribed. While the local police will occasionally close down one of the Grinders’ parties, they generally feel they have better things to worry about.

The Grinders do engage in illegal activities (scavenging from dumpsters, selling stolen cars to chop shops, shoplifting, stealing freight from the piers and fencing it), but the gang’s activities, so far, are largely nonviolent. The proceeds are used to provide for the entire group (and fund their late-night parties). They’ve even built some rudimentary shelters, a half-pipe in the old shipyards, and a community garden.

The Grinders look out for each other. They vigorously defend their encampment in the shipyards and have been able to keep the Mafia and various street gangs from Geartown at bay.

Because of their scavenging across the city and because of the large crowds that are drawn to their raves, the Grinders are one of the best-informed groups about what’s going on in



Geartown or Stark City at large. A savvy vigilante or cop can learn a lot of background information on just about anyone by cultivating a contact in the gang. The information does come at a price, of course. Fortunately, the Grinders are often willing to deal in barter rather than cash.

## Contact: Andrei Khvostov, Leader of the Geartown Grinders

### Aspects

Idealist  
Resourceful  
Can't Look Weak

**Background:** The Grinders' leader, Andrei Khvostov (a runaway son of Geartown-based Russian immigrants), who goes by "AK," sees the Grinders as more of a collective or commune than a street gang. However, his younger brother and second-in-command, Sergei Khvostov, thinks his brother is a dreamer and has been covertly moving the Grinders in more profitable and criminal directions. He's been quietly selling drugs (including the new Atlantean narcotics) at the parties the Grinders host in the shipyards and has groups of Grinders engaging in more strong-arm robbery operations (which he's kept secret from Andrei).

Sergei has recently been talking with representatives from the Atlantean Mafia about a partnership. His brother would never go for it, but Sergei thinks the time may have come for him to challenge Andrei for leadership.

Both Andrei and Sergei Khvostov have the same stats as the Henchman stock character from **Icons**. For average members of the Geartown Grinders, use the Thug stock character.

### Using the Grinders

- The Grinders can be useful as a street-level threat, as an information source, or as foot soldiers for the Atlantean Mafia (after Sergei supplants Andrei as leader, that is).

## Apex Theater

### Aspects

Abandoned Stage and Movie Theater  
Base for the Anarch Gang  
Tinderbox

**Description:** Designed in the art deco style, the Apex Theater opened in 1935 with seating for 2,000 people. Over its history, it hosted a variety of attractions from vaudeville and live stage shows to film. It thrived for three decades but closed in the late 1960s as Gerrisburg began its slump.

The windows are boarded up and the crumbling facade still advertises *Jason and the Argonauts*, the last movie to ever play at the Apex.

However, the interior hints at past glories. Relics such as the massive glass chandelier and grand piano are still intact in the lobby. Some seats are still in place. A faded fresco on the east wall of the main lobby shows a pastoral Italian villa scene.

The Apex is now the secret base for the Auguste Anarch, a bizarre criminal who has a vendetta against the Stark City mob and has decided to begin his war of vengeance in Geartown. Never seen without trademark white clown makeup (the "auguste" is a variety of circus clown that favors white face makeup) the gang's leader is melodramatic but very capable. His attacks against the mob suggest an insider's knowledge of their operations, and he seems to have a genius for tactics and logistics.

He has a group of henchmen who are easily identified by their similar white face paint. Collectively, they're known simply as the Anarchs.

The Anarchs boldly contest the Mafia's territory by mugging the mob's drug dealers and mounting hit-and-run robbery attacks on Mafia gambling dens; additionally, they have made at least one assassination attempt on the head of the mob in Stark City, James DeSouza.

The burgeoning street war between the Geartown mob and the Anarchs has involved



several daylight drive-bys and shootouts on the streets. It's only a matter of time until civilians are harmed in the crossfire.

The Mafia has been frustrated, so far, in its attempts to locate a base of operations for the Anarchs, and has devoted a lot of manpower to the search.

## Auguste Anarch

### Abilities

- Prowess 4
- Coordination 3
- Strength 5
- Intellect 6
- Awareness 3
- Willpower 3

- Stamina 8
- Determination \*

### Specialties

- Deception Expert
- Drive Expert
- Leadership
- Martial Arts Expert

- Performance (Acting) Expert
- Stealth
- Sleight of Hand Master

### Powers

- Gadgets 6 [Extra: Arsenal (Blast (Shooting) - Acid-Squirting Flower, Stunning (Strength) - Paralyzing Electric Joy Buzzer); Limit: Ability-Linked (Intellect)]
- Strike (Bashing) Device 4 - Cane

### Qualities

- "Stop me if you've heard this one."
- Carving Out His Turf

### Challenges

- Hates the Stark City Mafia (It's Mutual)
- Hunted by the Stark City Police
- Driven

**Background:** The Auguste Anarch is a street level super-villain who terrorizes law-abiding citizen and mobster alike.

Never seen without his trademark clown make-up the Anarch emerged very recently into the world of supervillainy. He has a group of





henchmen who are easily identified by their similar white face paint. (The “auguste” is a variety of clown that favors white face make-up.) Collectively, they’re known simply as the Anarchs.

The Anarch has started a crime wave across the inner-city, mounting daring daylight robberies against a variety of establishments: banks, car dealerships, high-tech firms, art galleries, and other businesses. Interestingly, his targets include Mafia-owned operations such as gambling dens, night clubs, and drug labs.

The mystery about the Anarch is why he chooses such heavily guarded targets. The profits of such operations are nowhere near large enough to justify the risks. The mafia has posted a bounty on the Auguste Anarch and several assassins have traveled to the city with the goal of claiming it.

His motive is simple: he wants to make a name for himself as the criminal who will do what no other criminal would dare. His fearsome reputation works to his advantage and puts opponents back on their heels the moment he steps onto a scene.

The Anarch is unusually strong and intelligent. He appears to be gifted in engineering and chemistry, and has devised a number of gadgets to assist in his criminal activities.

### Using the Anarchs

- After an Anarch drive-by ends in the deaths of several civilians, the families of the victims might contact the PCs and ask them to track down the Anarchs and end their reign of terror.
- The mob could offer a large cash bounty for the Auguste Anarch, bringing to Geartown a flood of supervillains and mercenaries who want to claim it. The PCs might be called in by the police to help keep the peace.

## MAKO Aquadrome

### Aspects

Hidden and Well Guarded  
Nerve Center for MAKO’s Operations  
Allied Atlantean Encampment Nearby  
Self-Destruct Device

**Description:** MAKO (Make Anarchy / Kill Oppression) is an aquatically based terrorist organization dedicated to the destruction of all national governments and creation of a global regime (under their control) that would forge a just and environmentally sustainable path for the human race.

Although their goals are lofty, MAKO’s tactics are ruthless and violent. The group stages terrorist attacks on governmental and industrial targets throughout the world, often with significant loss of life and collateral damage. To the MAKO Commander, these are “unfortunate but acceptable losses” in his glorious revolution.

The MAKO Aquadrome is a sub-aquatic fortress HQ on the bottom of Stark Lake. It is the nerve center for MAKO’s global operations. It contains vehicle service and refueling bays, a munitions

depot, science labs, holding cells, a communications center, and a throne room (for the MAKO Commander).

It's hidden by a camouflage screen (based on Atlantean tech) that keeps it hidden from radar and visual detection.

The MAKO Commander has offered shelter to the Atlantean criminal Krachla and his retinue. They live in a special settlement MAKO helped them construct alongside the barracks. It's been a mutually beneficial partnership so far (with MAKO providing food and shelter for the exiles and the Atlanteans helping MAKO tweak and improve their technology). Krachla and the MAKO Commander have been discussing grander plans for their collaboration.

## MAKO Commander

**Real Name:** Dr. Randall Thornton, Ph.D.

### Abilities

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

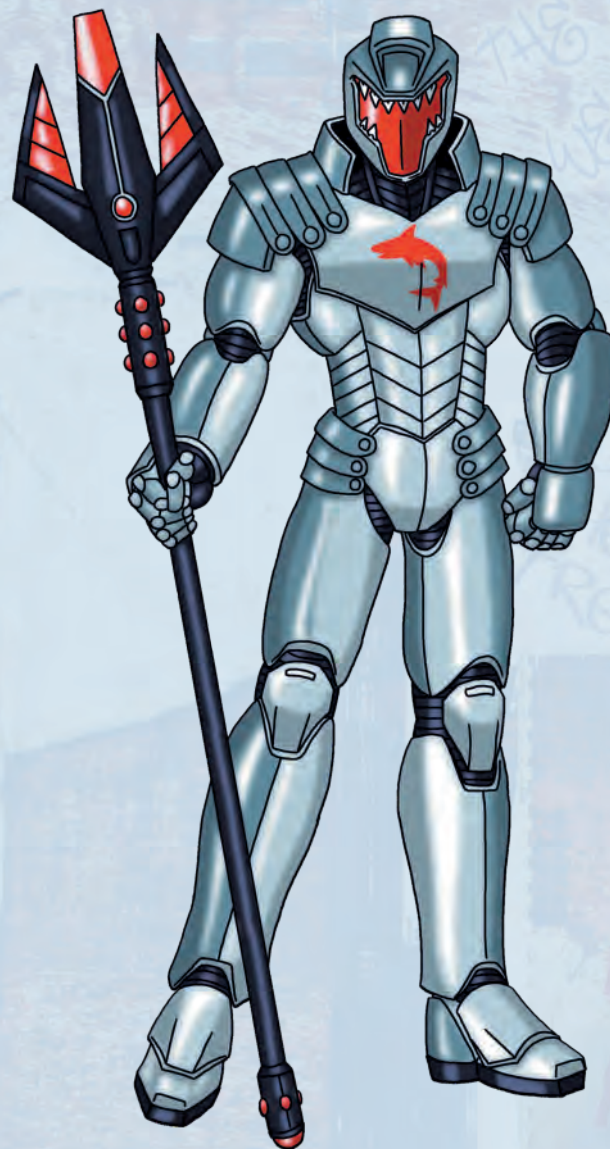
Stamina 8  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Drive  
Leadership Expert  
Nature (Underwater Environments) Expert  
Pilot  
Science (Oceanography) Master  
Underwater Combat Expert

### Powers

Aquatic Device 3 - MAKO Shark Armor  
Damage Resistance Device 5 [Limit: Stamina Only] - MAKO Shark Armor  
Life Support Device 3 [Breathing, Cold, Pressure] - MAKO Shark Armor  
Blast (Blasting) Device 7 [Extra: Burst] - Wave Energy Trident



### Qualities

Oceanography Professor Turned Anarchist and Eco-Terrorist

Reclaiming the Planet from Those Who Would Destroy It

Supreme Leader of MAKO

"Drown, you fools, in your ignorance and greed!"

Allied with Krachla's Atlantean Mafia

### Challenges

Opposes All Land-Dwelling Civilizations  
Hunted by the Atlanteans

Egotistical, Paranoid, and Fanatical

**Background:** Professor Randall Thornton of Stark City University was one of the first in the nation to speak out about greenhouse gases, global warming, and the dangers of melting polar ice caps and rising ocean levels. Powerful corporate sponsors put pressure on SCU to

silence Thornton, and a concerted effort was made to discredit him. In a last-ditch effort to save his reputation and position, Thornton embarked on a six-month scientific expedition to the Arctic Circle with his wife and young daughter to prove once and for all his theories on greenhouse-gas-induced global warming and its impact on rising ocean levels.

Early reports suggesting that Professor Thornton's research indeed supported the validity of his claims reached the ears of executives at the Archon Energy Corporation, a company notorious for its poor environmental record. They hired a team of mercenaries to ambush Thornton's vessel and destroy his findings. The raid got out of hand, gunfire was exchanged, and the ship caught fire and sank.

Professor Thornton alone managed to survive the attack on his research vessel. He was rescued by a mysterious race of aquatic humans known as the Atlanteans' who took him to their undersea kingdom and nursed him back to health. Broken and embittered by the loss of

his family, Thornton tried to convince the Atlanteans of the danger the surface-dwelling humans presented to the entire planet, and the need to strike first before it was too late, but his call to arms fell on deaf ears.

During his recovery, Thornton studied his rescuers' way of life and became convinced that humanity's future lay in building underwater communities to escape the self-induced destruction on the surface world. He was particularly fascinated with how the Atlanteans met their energy needs with their advanced science that pulled limitless energy from the tides. Not wishing their technology and other secrets to get into the hands of a surface-dweller (especially one so bent on revenge and destruction), the Atlanteans informed Thornton he would never be allowed to leave their kingdom.

Thornton planned his escape and, when the time was right, he fled the undersea kingdom with samples of their technology and other secrets. Once back on the surface world, he



contacted extremist environmental groups and proposed a bold new vision. Using the Atlantean technology, they would build underwater bases and raise an army to oppose those governments and corporations that continued to destroy the planet with their greed. MAKO was born and Randall Thornton established himself as its Supreme leader.

In the 25 years that have passed since Dr. Thornton's research vessel was destroyed and his family killed, MAKO has built several undersea facilities based on Atlantean technology and energy sources around the globe, starting with a prototype base built on the floor of Stark Lake near Stark City. As the MAKO Commander, Thornton has raised a small army of loyal followers and developed weapons and vehicles based on Atlantean designs, including his own personal MAKO Shark Flying Submarine.

## Acme Telemarketing

### Aspects

Dull Cubicle Farm  
Constant Din of Phone Calls  
Crushingly Low Employee Morale

**Description:** Located in the first and second floors of the aging Smythe Building near the heart of Geartown, Acme Telemarketing is a boiler-room telemarketing operation that pays employees substandard wages to cold call prospective customers directly out of the phone book and attempt to sell them anything from coupon books to window treatments.

Acme is run by the amazingly foul-tempered Julie Chen. She seems to hate her business and resent her employees—often firing them summarily for being a minute late or for taking unauthorized restroom breaks. Ms. Chen has become something of a legend in Stark City for her short fuse and readiness to hurl abuse and invective at employees. Unfortunately, all complaints to the appropriate government agencies tend to go uninvestigated, as no one wants to have to shut down one of the few of stable employers in Geartown.

However, far from being just another backroom telemarketing office run by a dictatorial headcase, Acme is the front for a much more sinister operation—the Null Realm.

## The Null Realm

### Aspects

Secret Pocket Dimension  
Resembles a Storybook Image of Medieval China  
Evil Sorceress's Stronghold  
There's a Dragon in the Pond

**Description:** The locked basement of the Smythe Building contains a wall-sized shimmering blue doorway that is a portal to the Null Realm, the personal pocket dimension of the sorceress who calls herself the Jade Empress.

The Null Realm is a timeless white void, in which, hanging like a green marble, is a tiny planetoid (approximately 50 square acres) which contains a small (empty) village, a pond, several small farms, and a modest castle complex. The castle is patrolled by the Jade Empress's costumed minions and her lizardfolk retainers.

The physics of the Null Realm have been tailored to the Empress's desires and do not conform to the laws of nature. For example, even though the planetoid is tiny, it has gravity equivalent to Earth's. Also, if you fly off the planetoid into the white nothingness of the Null Realm, you will find yourself flying back toward the planetoid within a few minutes. The only way in or out is the portal in the castle that leads to the Smythe Building. (The portal does give off a detectable aura of mystic energy and agitated tachyon particles; this is a possible way for heroes to discover the Null Realm.)

In the pond is Hath-zet, an ancient dragon that the Jade Empress battled and bound to her will centuries ago. Hath-zet has been sleeping in the pond since their battle—but an incautious interloper could accidentally awaken him. The Empress might use Hath-zet as a show of strength when battling other criminals or as a last resort when she's under attack from

vigilantes. (Her enchantment over him allows her to teleport him in and out of the Null Realm at will.) The dragon is her slave only because of her mind control spells. If her hold on him was broken, he would certainly seek revenge.

## Jade Empress

**Real Name:** Julie Chen

**Origin:** Birthright

### Abilities

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

Stamina 10  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Martial Arts Master  
Occult Master

### Powers

Immortality  
Magic 6 [Extras: Instant, Mastery;  
Limits: Ability-Linked (Willpower),  
Spell-Focus

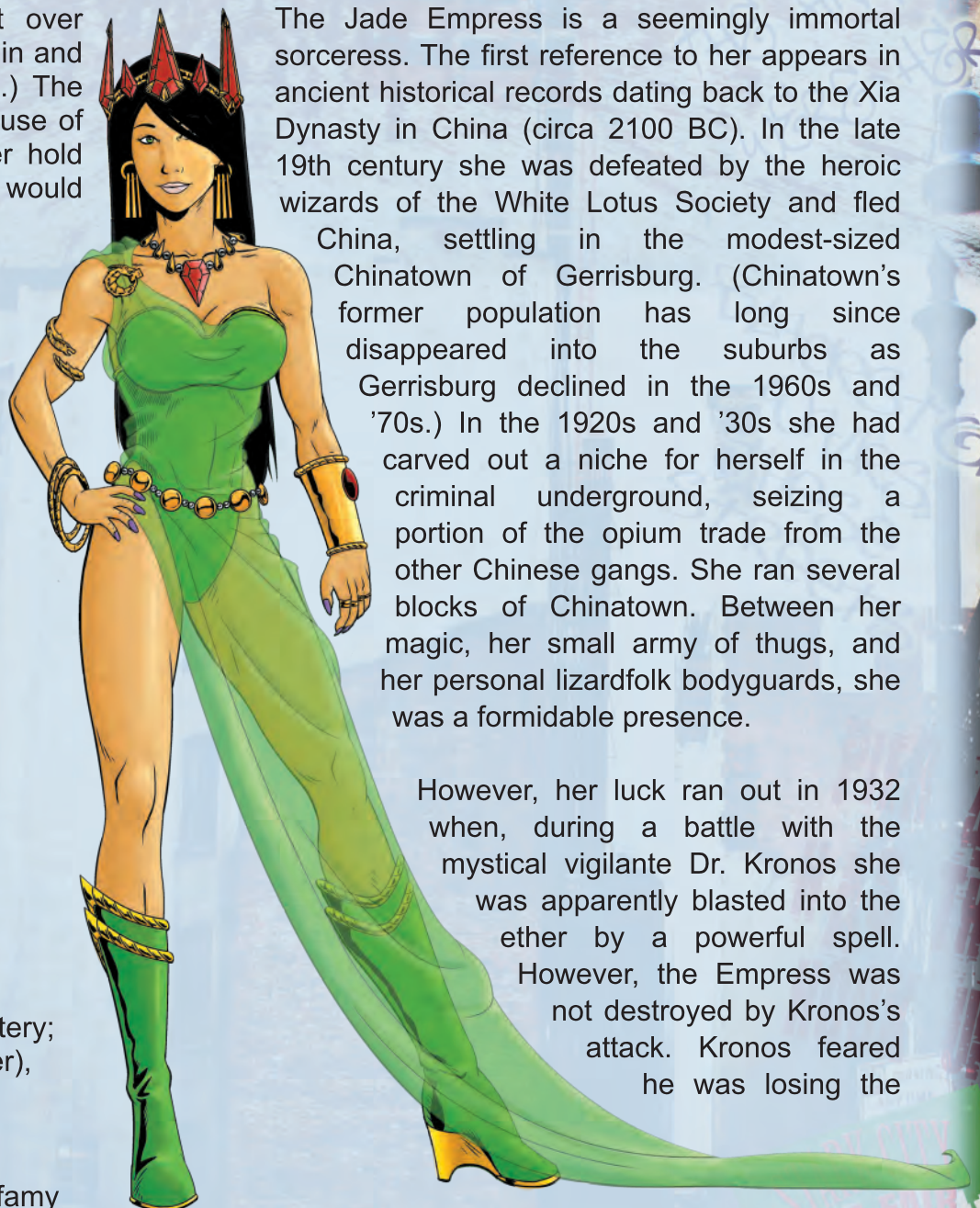
### Qualities

Seeks Wealth, Power, and Infamy  
Allied with Subterranean Lizardfolk Kingdom

### Challenges

Grudge Against Dr. Kronos  
A Walking Anachronism  
Confused by the Modern World

**Background:** Julie Chen, the owner and president of Acme Telemarketing, is actually the Jade Empress. The telemarketing business is merely her first step toward rebuilding her fortune and business empire in the 21st century.



The Jade Empress is a seemingly immortal sorceress. The first reference to her appears in ancient historical records dating back to the Xia Dynasty in China (circa 2100 BC). In the late 19th century she was defeated by the heroic wizards of the White Lotus Society and fled China, settling in the modest-sized Chinatown of Gerrisburg. (Chinatown's former population has long since disappeared into the suburbs as Gerrisburg declined in the 1960s and '70s.) In the 1920s and '30s she had carved out a niche for herself in the criminal underground, seizing a portion of the opium trade from the other Chinese gangs. She ran several blocks of Chinatown. Between her magic, her small army of thugs, and her personal lizardfolk bodyguards, she was a formidable presence.

However, her luck ran out in 1932 when, during a battle with the mystical vigilante Dr. Kronos she was apparently blasted into the ether by a powerful spell.

However, the Empress was not destroyed by Kronos's attack. Kronos feared he was losing the

fight and, in a fit of panic, released a massive surge of chronal energy which flung her forward in time 90 years (along with all of her accompanying henchmen).

Annoyed at her predicament, but unable to undo Kronos's magic, the Empress has set about to establish herself as a force to be feared in modern-day Stark City. She purchased the Smythe Building as a base of operations and anchored her personal pocket dimension (the Null Realm) to its basement.

# Hath-zet, Dragon of the Null Realm

## Abilities

Prowess 3  
Coordination 3  
Strength 9  
Intellect 3  
Awareness 3  
Willpower 3

Stamina 12  
Determination \*

## Specialties

Occult Expert

## Powers

Dimension Travel 2 - can move in and out of the Null Realm  
Growth 9 [Damage Resistance, Strength 9, Defense -3; Extra: Constant] - 60 feet tall  
Wings 2 [Flight]

## Qualities

Ancient Dragon  
"Rawwwwr!"  
Innate Magical Abilities (Dimensional Travel)

## Challenges

Despises the Jade Empress  
Psychic and Mind Control Attacks Gain +2



Reptile Biology (Cold Attacks Ignore Damage Resistance)

Bound to the Jade Empress's Pond (Unless the Surface Is Broken)

In addition to her loyal lizardfolk henchmen (from a subterranean Sauranoid kingdom) she has recruited a handful of minor thugs from Geartown to do her bidding. Her lizardfolk minions are usually dressed in loincloths and carry swords or spears. Her human foot soldiers are generally dressed in green costumes with a ninja motif. They carry swords and handguns.

She holds a grudge against Dr. Kronos. She has agents out searching for him (or his descendants). Her grudge extends to mystical vigilantes in general, for whom she reserves a special obsession and disdain.

## Using the Jade Empress

- The Jade Empress is an ancient sorceress thrust into the modern setting of Stark City. She's a woman out of time and she knows it. In an effort to catch up with the times, she has her minions kidnapping scientists from Tesla Park to school her in the "magic" of the modern world. PCs investigating the rash of abductions may follow her minions back to Acme Telemarketing.

- The Jade Empress will soon seek to expand her empire. She'll attempt to take over drug operations from the other criminal enterprises in Stark City. As the gang war escalates, she might even employ her dragon as a show of supreme force. The PCs would likely be alerted to defend the city from the rampaging dragon.



## The Crouch and Rush

### Aspects

Run-Down Dive  
 Illegal Gambling in the Basement  
 Cheapest Drinks in Town  
 Lots of Bar Fights, Every Night

**Description:** The Crouch and Rush (often called simply the C&R) is a famous dive bar in Gerrisburg. Owner Dominic Nocenti's great-grandfather opened the C&R establishment in 1887 (the name is a tribute to former heavyweight champion John L. Sullivan's boxing style) and catered to longshoreman and seamen. Since then the bar has become a famous Stark City landmark and is emblematic of the plight of Geartown. Once a solid working class bar, the C&R is now a down-at-the-heels dive bar that hosts an illegal numbers game in the basement and is periodically used as a resupply point by the DeSouza mob for their drug operations in Geartown.

Jim Carbone is the main bartender and occasional bouncer at the C&R.

## Bastion

Real Name: Jim Carbone

### Abilities

Prowess 5  
 Coordination 3  
 Strength 9  
 Intellect 2  
 Awareness 3  
 Willpower 5

Stamina 14  
 Determination 3 (If used as a PC)

### Specialties

Construction Expert  
 Drive (Heavy Equipment) Expert  
 Streetwise Expert

### Powers

Ability Increase (Strength)  
 Flight 3 [Limit: Unpredictable] - Magnetic Control  
 Magnetic Control 7 [Telekinesis; Extras: Blast (Blasting), Force Field; Limits: Unpredictable, Unstable]

## Qualities

Hero at Heart and a Diamond in the Rough  
Indebted to Reginald Coakley, CEO of Maniacal, Inc.  
Tied to the Stark City Mafia  
“Might as well be me ...”

## Challenges

Can't Escape His Past

**Background:** Jim Carbone is a former Mafia thug (now reformed) who now works as a bouncer and bartender at the Crouch and Rush. Jim uses his workday shifts to gather intel on the criminal underground. Unknown to just about everyone, away from the bar, Carbone is the vigilante Bastion. He acts on the information he gathers during his work days to harass the organized crime operations of Stark City.

Jim wasn't always a do-gooder. His need for redemption drives him to pursue his current, risky double life.

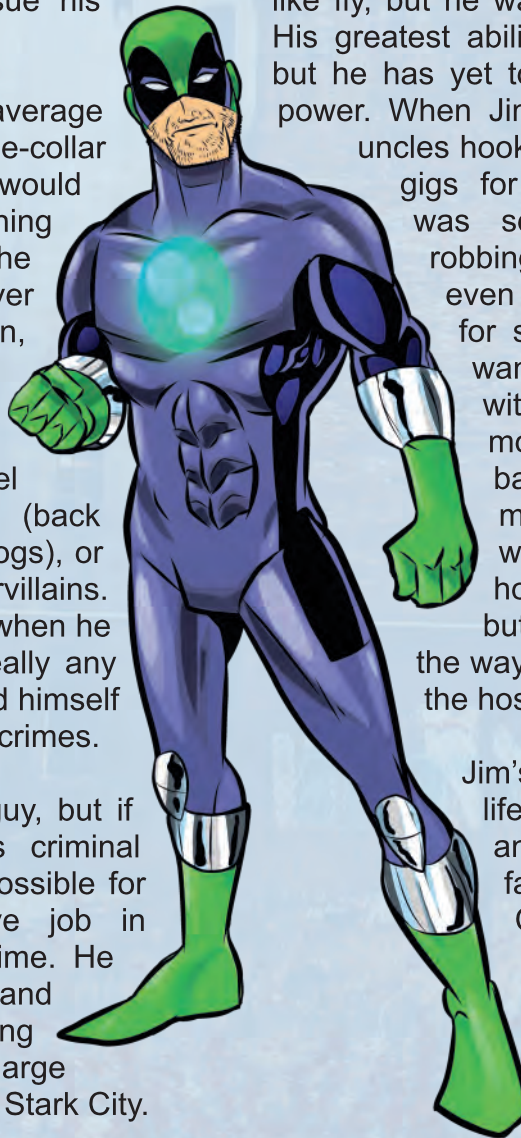
Jim Carbone was an average construction worker from a blue-collar neighborhood in Geartown who would have been content just punching the clock and watching the Frontiersmen baseball game over a few beers after work. As a teen, he ran with a gang of street toughs from Little Sicily, all trying to imitate their fathers and uncles who were low-level thugs in the DeSouza Mafia (back when they were still the underdogs), or henchmen for colorful supervillains. While Jim could be intimidating when he wanted to be, he was never really any good at it, and very quickly found himself behind bars for some very petty crimes.

Jim wasn't necessarily a bad guy, but if not for some family ties, his criminal record would have made it impossible for him to find such a lucrative job in construction after serving his time. He enjoyed the honest day's work and became very adept at operating heavy equipment vehicles on large construction projects throughout Stark City.

While doing some demolition work on the Platinum Coast a few years back, his backhoe hit something large and heavy beneath the surface. When Jim left the cab to investigate, he found only a football-sized stone festooned with small blue-green crystals. Surely it was too small to cause an issue for his backhoe, but he jumped in the hole nonetheless to clear the object out. When he touched the object, he was knocked unconscious by a blinding surge of energy. For a moment, it seemed that the backhoe would fall upon him, but he was able to awaken and reach up at the last moment to push the heavy machine out of the hole bare-handed. The odd stone had disappeared entirely.

Over the next few months, Jim learned more details about his newfound abilities. He could control metals and ores like a magnet. It was raw power, and it allowed him to do cool things like fly, but he was far from precise in its use. His greatest ability was his massive strength, but he has yet to find the upper limits of this power. When Jim discovered his powers, his uncles hooked him up with some enforcer gigs for small-time supervillains. He was soon wearing a mask and robbing banks, roughing people up, even using his magnetism powers for safecracking. Jim didn't really want to hurt anyone and wrestled with his guilt, but he liked the money he was making. When a bank job went really bad (with a murderous supervillain who was planning to sacrifice the hostages), Jim had no choice but to step in, putting himself in the way of a villain's plans and saving the hostages.

Jim's decision to walk away from a life of crime left him out of a job and cut off from his immediate family, branded a coward. Jim Carbone realized, though, that for once in his life his destiny was his own to control, and decided from that moment on he would only use his abilities to help others in





need and not for his own personal gain. Following this epiphany, Jim adopted the mantle of Bastion to take the fight against crime to the streets of Stark City. And while the new heroic identity has helped him put some of his sins behind him, past reputations are a hard thing to live down.

Only one other man in Stark City could sympathize with Bastion's plight. Reginald Coakley—a former supervillain known as Mr. Mayhem, who turned his life around and now owns one of Tesla Industry Park's leading tech firms, reached out to Bastion and offered to be a mentor and help him understand and control his powers. Working with Jim Carbone in his private laboratory, Coakley developed a pair of metallic boots and armbands that allow Bastion greater control of his magnetic-field-induced flight capabilities. Coakley is very curious to learn more about the mysterious artifact that granted Bastion his powers, deducing it to be ancient and perhaps even extraterrestrial in origin, but Jim remembers very little about his brief encounter with the strange football-shaped device and doesn't know its current location.

Bastion is a hero, but one that constantly questions himself. To many of the officers of the Stark City Police Department and much of the hero community, Bastion is a mysterious masked vigilante with an uncomfortable resemblance to a wanted super-powered felon. However, to those he has helped, he treads on the side of the angels.

Thanks to his reputation as a tough guy, Jim was able to get a job working as a bartender and bouncer at the C&R. Jim could be a useful ally to any hero needing to learn more about organized crime in Stark City.

## Little Saigon

### Aspects

Vietnamese Enclave in Geartown  
Cloistered Immigrant Community  
Plagued by Crime and Loan Sharks

**Description:** Little Saigon is a four-block section of Blackstone's Boulevards that is home to a community of Vietnamese families, most of whom settled in Stark City at the close of the Vietnam War.

Although mainly residential, Little Saigon has a few businesses: an import/export shop specializing in Asian goods, an internet café that hosts midnight LAN parties, and a handful of restaurants specializing in Asian cuisine (particularly pho, a popular Vietnamese soup).

Unfortunately, due to the light policing and the isolated nature of the immigrant community, the DeSouza mob preys on Little Saigon heavily with loan sharks and "protection" rackets.

## Contact: Sucheng Chan

### Aspects

Family Man  
Blackmail Victim

**Background:** Sucheng Chan is a Vietnamese man in his mid 60s who runs the Chan Import Shop, which specializes in curios and souvenirs from Vietnam, China, and other Asian countries.

Chan is a grandfather and a respected figure in Little Saigon. He's also being exploited by the DeSouza mob, who strongarm him into using his import/export business to transport drugs into Stark City. Chan feels trapped, as the mob has threatened to harm his family if he doesn't cooperate.

A hero who is investigating the mob in Stark City would find a willing ally in Chan—as long as they can provide protection for his large extended family from mob retribution.



## Centennial Hotel and Casino

### Aspects

Run-down Hotel and Casino  
Stark City Mafia HQ  
Top-Notch Security System  
Secret Entrance to the Catacombs

**Description:** The Centennial is a grand hotel from the 19th century. It's also the one building

in that part of the city that survived the Great Gerrisbug Fire of 1872. Thanks to infusions of mob cash, the Centennial has escaped the blight that has struck the rest of Geartown. Uniformed bellhops and hotel staff cater to wealthy guests' needs while a lavish casino in the lobby of the Centennial provides entertainment. Although its exterior is run-down and its glory is definitely tarnished, its interior is well-maintained and luxurious—largely because

it's the biggest legal gambling operation in a three-state area and draws sizable crowds of both tourists and high rollers.

The Centennial Hotel is the HQ for the Mafia in Geartown. The eighth floor of the Centennial is the permanent base of operations of James DeSouza, the godfather of the Stark City Mafia, who also has a controlling interest in the hotel and casino. The Centennial has a secret exit in the basement that provides for a quick escape if necessary. The secret exit is opened by tripping a hidden switch on a brick wall and leads to a tunnel system that was used by bootleggers during Prohibition. It links up with the Catacombs under Stark City, allowing for multiple escape routes.

## James DeSouza

### Abilities

Prowess 4  
Coordination 7  
Strength 7  
Intellect 4  
Awareness 4  
Willpower 5

Stamina 12  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Deception Master  
Martial Arts  
Stealth  
Athletics  
Area (Geartown) Expert

### Powers

Ability Increase (Coordination, Strength) -  
Bionic Enhancement  
Blast (Shooting) Device 4 - Handgun

### Qualities

Head of the Geartown Mafia  
Trying to Maintain Control of Stark City  
"Tea time is over, gents!"

### Challenges

Hunted by the Vigilantes of Stark City  
Always Trying to Prove Himself

**Background:** DeSouza had his strength and dexterity enhanced via black-market bionics to make him a more formidable presence. He felt he needed the edge, especially in a city that has its share of super-powered heroes and villains. His primary goal is to eliminate any competition in the Geartown area—starting with the Anarchs who have been meddling with his operations.

A cunning and ambitious man, he has been the head of the Mafia since a bloody 1992 takeover in which his family seized most of the profitable rackets (drugs, racketeering, illegal gambling houses, the dock workers' union) that had previously belonged to the Marinelli family. He still expects and fears retaliation from Dominic Marinelli, who has been hiding out in the Catacombs. He worries the Auguste Anarch might be a relative of Marinelli's. He has increased security at the Centennial, and at all times has a large force of thugs and hardened Mafia enforcers at his beck and call.



While he frets about retaliation from the Marinellis, he historically has not concerned himself overly with the thin blue line of Stark City since he owns most every cop in Geartown. He is rumored to be responsible for the Black Friday attack that decimated the upper leadership of the Stark City Police Department after a thorough fraud investigation was launched into his many front businesses.

DeSouza maintains cordial relations with several supervillains in Stark City and across the country. He prefers to use out-of-towners for any high-profile work in Stark City, but he's got several mid-level metahumans on payroll in case of emergencies. He's also been augmented himself to have enhanced strength and dexterity.

DeSouza loves to gamble on professional sports, but only as long as he is sure he can win. According to various sports reporters, he is suspected of paying off the referees in the North American Basketball League in order to give the Stark City Sparks an advantage in the post-season for the last several years.

A legendary womanizer, DeSouza has a string of ex-wives and girlfriends. His lieutenants worry that his numerous resentful and neglected children will prove easy information sources for the police (or the Marinellis) but so far, this hasn't happened.

## Stark Lake Naval Station

### Aspects

US Navy's Boot Camp

City unto Itself

Naval Super-Soldier Program HQ

Target of intermittent MAKO Raids

**Description:** Stark Lake Naval Station (SLNS) is the home of the United States Navy's only boot camp. It accommodates 35,000 recruits per year with roughly 4,000 recruits billeted there on any given day. It also contains several advanced schools that train recruits in such diverse areas as SCUBA, firefighting, advanced electronics, turbine repair, ship hull maintenance, and medical care. The US Navy's top secret super-soldier program, Project: Thunderstrike, is also based at SLNS. Additionally, the Navy has relocated its power armor development program (Project: Wayland) to SLNS in order to foster cooperation with certain companies in Tesla Park (such as ARES Labs).

SLNS has over 200 buildings and 20 miles of road located on 500 acres just south of Gerrisburg. The SLNS also has its own hospital, fire department, and police force. SLNS has also been the target of several MAKO raids in recent years. MAKO battle pods have strafed SLNS four times in the last 24 months. Naval security forces narrowly repulsed an all-out assault during the summer of 2012. There has been tremendous political

pressure to close down SLNS due to these attacks on the facility by the terrorist group MAKO. The base commander-in-charge, Rear Admiral Colin "Chesty" Marshall, has tremendous pull on Capitol Hill and in the Pentagon, and so far has killed any attempts to relocate the training center to the East or West Coast.

After the US Navy made contact with Atlantis recently, a secret diplomatic exchange program was established and a cadre of Atlantean soldiers was dispatched to the SLNS. They are assisting the Navy in their efforts to locate MAKO's base in Stark Lake (as well investigating reports of a rogue merman colony). The normally bombastic Marshall is very diplomatic when dealing with the Atlanteans.

## Contact: Rear Admiral Colin "Chesty" Marshall

### Aspects

Fighting Admiral

Diplomatic When He Has to Be

**Background:** Colin Marshall sees himself on a personal mission to shape the future of the US Navy.

As a veteran of five wars, he blanches at the idea of relocating the boot camp as a response to MAKO's attacks on his facility. He's increased the budget for the security force and successfully campaigned to have the Navy's top-secret super-soldier program (Project: Thunderstrike) relocated to SLNS to provide additional meta-human protection. He personally oversees the education of Thunderstrike recruits, and designs combat scenarios to test each recruit's unique powers.

# Sample PC Section

## Flux

**Real Name:** Daniel Nguyen

**Origin:** Transformed

### Abilities

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

Stamina 7  
Determination 1

### Specialties

Art  
Language (Vietnamese)  
Wrestling

### Powers

Damage Resistance 4  
Growth 2 [Damage Resistance, Strength +1, Defense -1]  
Life Support 1 [Breathing]  
Stretching 4  
Transformation (Animals, Objects, People) 6 [Extras: Extra Types, Instant; Limit: Tell (all forms retain the same color as Flux's original form)]

### Qualities

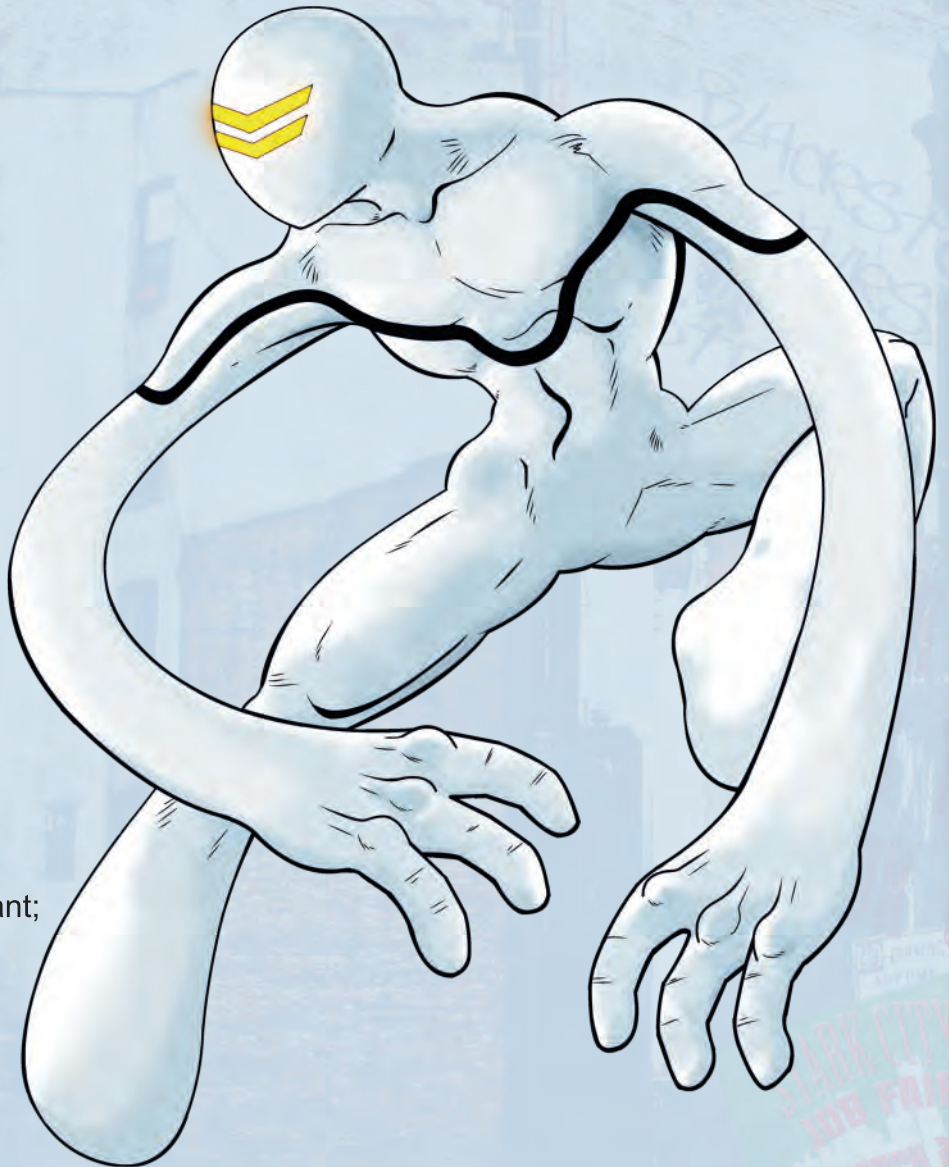
High School Kid

### Challenges

Man or Monster?  
Ordinary Form  
Inexperienced

**Background:** Flux is a shape-changing hero who defends Little Saigon.

As Daniel Nguyen he's a college student at Stark City University. There, while working late one night to earn extra credit cataloging a cache of artifacts that had been forgotten in the basement of the Anthropology Building, he encountered a mysterious ivory orb that fused with his body upon touch.



After a brief but chaotic episode in which he panicked while learning to control his new found shape-changing abilities (and was required to escape from the police, who had been called by concerned onlookers), Daniel learned to control his powers and set out to defend his neighborhood from the gangs and mobsters who terrorized it.

# Laughing Boy

**Origin:** Transformed

## Abilities

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

- Stamina 10
- Determination 1

## Specialties

- Streetwise (Stark City)
- Performance (Comedy)

## Powers

- Affliction 5 – Disorienting Lights from “Sparklers”
- Blast (Shooting) 3 - Multicolored “Sparklers”
- Blast
- Super-Speed 3

## Qualities

- “He who laughs last wins!”
- Knows Several Club Owners in Geartown
- Harvey Simms, Comedian
- Wants to Clean Up Geartown

## Challenges

- Seeks Revenge on Auguste Anarch
- Suffers from Manic Episodes
- Doesn’t Trust Others
- Money Problems

**Background:** Factory worker Harvey Simms needed a way out of Geartown. Harvey’s job wasn’t paying nearly well enough for one person to survive, so he tried his hand at comedy.

Simms was successful, but one fateful night, Auguste Anarch made a move on the Midnite Supper Club—a small venue for all kinds of variety acts—the night Harvey was to perform. The gangster ordered his men to kill “Laughing Boy” and make off with the money when Simms mocked his clown costume. Simms managed to flee the gangsters, but was struck by a car and flung into a sluice duct for a chemical plant’s runoff.

Harvey emerged from the sewers with strange abilities, and a hunger for vengeance against Acme and Auguste Anarch.





# The Catacombs

## Theme

The Criminal Underground of Stark City, Literally and Figuratively

## Scale

Subterranean neighborhood

## Aspects

Abandoned and Forgotten; Now Reclaimed  
Maze-Like Labyrinth  
No Police Presence

## Location

Running deep underneath Geartown, Tesla Industrial Park, and the Silver District, the Catacombs are a largely forgotten tunnel network from an ambitious pneumatic subway system project that was abandoned in the 1930s before it was completed. It is connected to the rest of Stark City by a web-like network of sewers, Prohibition-era bootlegger tunnels, and other forgotten subterranean passageways.

**Description:** Beneath the streets of Stark City lies an extensive underground neighborhood inhabited by some of the most notorious and dangerous criminals the city has ever known. Reclaiming these abandoned and forgotten subterranean areas of the city, seedy types such as supervillains, Mafia crews, street gangs, apocalyptic cults, and super-science terrorist cells have fashioned them into their own criminal underground, both literally and figuratively. Known collectively as the Catacombs, this neighborhood goes unrecognized as such by the authorities, but provides villainous lairs, Mafia safe houses, black markets, and other meeting places for the criminally-intentioned far away from the watchful eyes of law enforcement on the surface.

At the center of the Catacombs lies an abandoned tunnel network left over from a 1930s subway system project that the city began but never completed. This labyrinth allows for secret passage beneath the streets of Stark City and is favored by several criminal groups wishing to remain unseen by the

watchful eyes of the Stark City Police Department above. More of a thoroughfare than a residential area, the abandoned tunnels and subway infrastructure nevertheless contain a few lairs established by secretive individuals. The subway tunnels are very dark, almost eerily so; anyone without the ability to see in the dark will require some form of illumination to traverse the tunnels.

Various other subterranean passageways and systems connect to the abandoned subway tunnels in an interconnected web to form the Catacombs. There are connections to the Stark City sewer system which allow access to and from Stark Lake. An intricate series of bootlegger tunnels (the Rum Run) built by the Mafia during the Prohibition era connects the rest of the Catacombs, the shores of Stark Lake, and the city outskirts to various hotels (such as the Centennial in Geartown), restaurants, forgotten speakeasies, and other basements and sub-basements throughout the city. The crypts and catacombs beneath churches and graveyards also connect to the tunnels and sewers, providing additional means of entrance from the surface. In short, there are so many subterranean passageways and systems below ground with a myriad of access points from the surface world, some more transient than others, that creating an accurate map of the entire Catacombs network would prove impossible.

If the interconnected subway tunnels and other passageways are like a circulatory system, then the Catacombs' black heart beats on Easy Street, a subterranean city block where criminals and other dregs of humanity live in a mockery of city neighborhood life above. During the abandoned subway project of the 1930s, an entire city street in a low-lying area of Stark City was covered over and buried intact with the intention of using the newly-formed tunnel as part of the subway line. Today the forgotten street, which runs underground for almost two miles, has been reclaimed by the criminal underworld and consists of a series of tenement houses, storefronts, bars, and alleys alive and vibrant in perpetual night.



Few outside the criminal element know of Easy Street's existence, and entrances to the area are kept secret and well guarded. Here various criminal factions and gangs coexist under an uneasy peace, and survival of the fittest is the law of the land. It is the ideal location to lay low and hide from the long arm of the law for those criminals who want to disappear from the grid for a while without having to give up too much of their lifestyle. The nightlife on Easy Street provides far more in the way of deviant and debauched entertainment than anything even the worst parts of Geartown can provide in Stark City above.

The Stark City Mafia has the oldest and strongest presence in the Catacombs thanks to their control of the Rum Run, the network of bootlegger tunnels they built in the 1920s. They control much of the entertainment on Easy Street, and what they don't own outright still profits them through the cut they take in tribute and protection money. They also control the Flea Market, an extensive underground black market located in the remnants of a centrally-located grand subway terminal station, where they collect space rental and protection fees from all the shady dealers. Recently, Krachla and the Atlanteans (see the Geartown chapter) have made inroads into the Catacombs by brokering a deal with the Mafia to sell their illicit drugs on Easy Street. In return, Krachla hopes to obtain free passage in the tunnels to further expand the scope of his operation with unfettered clandestine access to the rest of Stark City.

Mob boss and unofficial "mayor" of Easy Street Dominic Marinelli runs the Catacombs, and ultimately all pay tribute to him. Marinelli knows that the Mafia-controlled Rum Run is the key to dominating the other criminal factions and gangs below ground and has taken steps to keep access to that area tightly controlled by his loyal men. It is not an area you wish to be discovered in uninvited. Geartown Mafia boss James DeSouza has been making some inroads into the Catacombs via the Rum Run (as is his heritage and right), and this has not gone unnoticed by Dominic Marinelli, who tolerates his presence for now as a potential ally against Krachla's growing influence.

## Puttman's Folly

On their daily EI train commutes, very few Stark City residents today even realize that at one time Stark City planned to have an underground subway system instead of an elevated line. In 1933, Mayor John Puttman embarked on an ambitious project to build a subterranean mass transit system to take Stark City into the modern age. Billed as the first step toward making Stark City a major metropolis and funded by New Deal initiatives to put Depression-era unemployed city residents back to work, excitement was high, planning was streamlined, and groundbreaking quickly followed. Progress beneath the streets of Gerrisburg (now Geartown), the Silver District, and the then-new Tesla Industrial Park progressed rapidly, and everything was on track for a grand opening by 1936. Then, to everyone's surprise and amazement, the project was abandoned abruptly and new plans for an elevated mass transit train line were begun instead. The press had a field day with what they dubbed "Puttman's Folly" (the incident eventually ended Puttman's political career), and city bureaucrats spun a tale of Mafia corruption, insufficient funding combined with poor substrata conditions, and a lack of structural integrity in the system's design. The truth, however, was something far more sinister.

In the summer of 1935, workmen digging beneath what would become Tesla Industrial Park discovered an ancient gateway to another dimension. Some unknown agency had sealed and hidden the gateway many centuries before. Accidentally breaking the protective seal, the workers unwittingly unleashed several dimensional horrors upon the world. Under the leadership of the Sentinel, Stark City's great superheroes of the day were able to deal with this threat and seal the gateway once again before more unwelcome visitors could make their way through, but they were certain that their protections were temporary at best. The heroes convinced Mayor Puttman to abandon the city's subterranean plans

### Puttman's Folly (continued)

indefinitely and hid all remaining clues of the interdimensional gateway's existence and location as best they could. Today, those protections are even weaker now, and with a dominant criminal presence in the Catacombs, it may only be a matter of time before somebody stumbles upon the ancient gateway once again ...

## Abandoned Subway Tunnels

### Aspects

Subterranean Criminal Thoroughfare  
Cloaked in Perpetual Darkness  
Eerily Silent and Still

**Description:** The subway tunnels beneath the streets of Stark City may be long abandoned by society above, but they have not been entirely forgotten. Once the foundation of an ambitious subway system project that was never completed, the tunnels have now been reclaimed by Stark City's criminal element. Sprawling beneath the streets of Geartown, Tesla Industrial Park, and the Silver District, the tunnels provide unfettered passage around town to those wishing to avoid notice by the Stark City Police Department and other prying eyes on the surface. The subway tunnels have proven to be quite useful for a variety of criminal enterprises and a very effective means of escape, and those who frequently use them for illicit transit have nicknamed them "the Highway to Hell."

The tunnels themselves are vaulted cylindrical structures, and most accommodate two or more sets of tracks running in parallel. There are subway stations located throughout the system beneath key intersections and other important buildings and locations above. The most magnificent of these stations is located beneath the Silver District and now serves as a black market for the criminal underworld (see the Flea Market below). Access points to the streets overhead have long been sealed up; although

entrances do still exist, only a few people know their exact locations. In addition, there are scattered storage rooms, maintenance areas, and dispatch stations, most of them long abandoned but a few reclaimed by tunnel inhabitants. Connections also exist between the subway system and other subterranean passageways such as the sewer system via storm drains and steam tunnels.

The entire subway tunnel system is cloaked in perpetual darkness. Without the innate ability to see in the dark, anyone traversing the tunnels will require some form of illumination such as a flashlight or lantern; otherwise, all tests requiring or involving sight suffer a -2 penalty to the effort, and all attacks beyond close range suffer a -2 penalty to the effort (see the Limited Visibility maneuver in the Taking Action chapter of the **ICONS** Superpowered Roleplaying core rulebook) as if affected by the Blindness power. Using artificial illumination will make the bearer visible to other tunnel occupants out to visual range (see Distance in the Taking Action chapter of the **ICONS** Superpowered Roleplaying core rulebook). The subway tunnels are also eerily silent and still, save for the occasional sound of scurrying rats or dripping water from above. Anyone traveling through the tunnels will be heard easily out to extended range and slightly further (see Distance in the Taking Action chapter of the **ICONS** Superpowered Roleplaying core rulebook) unless they take active measures to move silently.

Dominic Marinelli of the Stark City Mafia has his crew patrol the area to make sure nobody from the surface world is there who shouldn't be. Different street gang factions make frequent use of the tunnels and are the most likely to be encountered. Occasionally these gangs engage in subterranean turf wars, but Marinelli's crew keeps them in check with an uneasy peace. In general, the Mafia allows free passage through the tunnels, but tightly restricts access to the Flea Market and Easy Street (see below), and they will not interfere if a street gang confronts other underground travelers unless one of their own is involved.

# THE MOLE

Real Name: Walter Talpa

## Abilities

Prowess 2  
Coordination 2  
Strength 3  
Intellect 6  
Awareness 7  
Willpower 3

Stamina 6  
Determination \*

## Specialties

Area (Stark City) Master  
Computers (Hacking) Master  
Electronics Master  
Mathematics (Probability and Statistics) Master

## Powers

Burrowing 3  
Interface 6  
Super-Senses 6 [Enhanced Hearing +3,  
Enhanced Smell +3]

## Qualities

Computer and Mathematical Genius  
Connected to Star City Mafia  
"I'll sniff that out for you right away."  
Always Sees the Big Picture

## Challenges

Blind  
Facial Features and Body Resemble a Star-Nosed Mole

**Background:** Walter Talpa grew up in one of Stark City's unassuming working-class neighborhoods, living in a small apartment with his alcoholic mother. Walter was born with poor eyesight and several facial and bodily defects, including polydactyly. He had an extra thumb on each hand, and his nose was deformed by several fleshy tentacle-like appendages. Disgusted, his father abandoned both Walter and his mother. Walter was never a popular child, and became the target of ridicule and worse by cruel classmates and schoolyard bullies. His appearance made his teachers



uneasy, and they ignored and avoided him despite his genius-level IQ and exceptional mathematical ability. Withdrawing into himself, Walter began spending most of his time with computers and other technology, learning everything he could about how they work and the software that controlled them.

Walter was completely blind by the time he reached adolescence, but to his surprise discovered that he was still able to "see" the world through heightened senses of sound and smell. He also found he had developed a greater and deeper affinity for computers and other technology and was able to interface his mind directly with any device to which he had access. Unfortunately, his other bodily defects became more pronounced as well. His hands and forearms grew to a grotesquely large size and his legs started to atrophy while the tentacle growths around his nasal area became longer and larger. Combined with an outbreak

of short, velvety, taupe-colored facial and body hair reminiscent of fur, Walter began to resemble a star-nosed mole more and more each day. No longer able to stand the taunting and torments he faced in the world on a daily basis, he dropped out of high school and became a recluse in his bedroom. This led to greater confrontations with his mother, who was drinking heavily and more frequently, and eventually he ran away from home for good.

Walter soon fell in with a street gang of petty thieves and was able to use his knowledge of computers and security systems to help them on their heists. For the first time in his life, Walter felt like he belonged somewhere, and when the gang nicknamed him “the Mole,” it didn’t even bother him anymore. It soon became apparent that he also possessed an innate ability to analyze and assess all the risks and other factors in any potential situation, sometimes drawing on seemingly unrelated facts and obscure data to determine every possible outcome—good, bad, or indifferent. He began to keep tabs on everything happening in the world around him and quickly developed a reputation within the criminal community, including the supervillainous crowd and the Stark City Mafia, for always being able to see the big picture. Realizing that he possessed a valuable commodity, Walter decided to become a computer hacker for hire and an information broker, offering his unique brand of risk analysis services to the criminal underworld.

As his reputation and success continued to grow, a youthful and arrogant Walter became overconfident in his abilities and started to get sloppy. Law enforcement eventually took notice of his activities and began to trace certain computer crimes back to him. At one point, the Stark City Police Department raided his mother’s apartment, but found that he hadn’t lived there for almost three years. As the FBI started to close in, Walter decided to escape the surface world and base his operations in the Catacombs; he had deduced their existence on his own, and his underworld contacts later confirmed his speculations. Humbled by this near miss, he vowed never again to let his ego jeopardize his work, and chose to operate independently from then on. He took Walter

Talpa permanently off the grid and assumed full-time the identity of the Mole.

The Mole presently resides alone in Dispatch No. 9, one of the original train dispatch offices of the abandoned subway system, located in an out-of-the-way section of the tunnels. He has an elaborate array of computers and telecommunications devices connected to the outside world by fiber optic cables, wireless routers, and satellite dishes, which he uses to monitor everything going on in Stark City and the world above. In addition to computer and security-system hacking, he offers his services as an information broker and risk assessment analyst to anyone who can meet his price (usually money, but sometimes equipment, a favor, or information he can sell) with no questions asked. He remains neutral in all his dealings, and will never sell out a prior customer (unless he is absolutely certain he can get away with it). He rarely conducts business in his private sanctum in the tunnels, preferring instead to meet potential clients and contacts at Mickey Finn’s Place on Easy Street (see below) where he can often be found drinking alone at a back table.

### Using The Mole

- A hero who has a secret identity as the head of a Tesla Park tech firm or other major Stark City corporation may discover that someone has been hacking into the company’s computer systems unauthorized and be able to trace the intrusion back to the Mole. Upon discovering that the source of the computer break-ins is located somewhere below ground, they may decide to go investigate further and discover the existence of the Catacombs.
- A hero with a less-than-stellar past might still have ties to the Catacombs and the criminal underworld, and might list the Mole as a Connection to call on his services when needing information that cannot be obtained elsewhere.
- Several top-secret military weapon shipments developed in Tesla Park have been stolen by a gang of criminals using the Mole’s services. A hero with powers and specialties related to computer hacking and security may go toe-to-



toe with the Mole in a virtual game of cat and mouse when asked to securely encrypt future weapon shipment schedules before they are cracked again and the shipments intercepted by the information broker's criminal clients.

## The Flea Market

### Aspects

The Ultimate Black Market

Caveat Emptor, Caveat Venditor

Under Mafia Control

**Description:** Far beneath the streets of the Silver District in the abandoned subway system lies a magnificent station terminal that remains a grand tribute to the gilded splendor of art deco design from a past age. Although long forgotten today by most of the residents in Stark City above, this architectural wonder is now home to the Flea Market—a vast collection of illegal arms merchants, assassins' guilds, counterfeiters, fences, dealers in stolen art, and

other providers of illicit goods, services, and stolen property. Like characters in a dark parody of a marketplace bazaar from the *Arabian Nights*, the various vendors and other providers of illegal services have set up their stores in tents and other temporary quarters, filling the old subway terminal with a modern-day den of thieves.

The variety of dealers and never-ending supply of customers would both shock and amaze Stark City officials and law enforcement if they ever learned of the Flea Market's existence. The entire operation is ultimately controlled by Mafia kingpin Dominic Marinelli and his gang, who take a percentage cut of all the action by charging the merchants for space rental as well as protection fees. The Mafia also controls the flow of customers by reaching out to and personally selecting those from the surface world who will be allowed in (and out) of the Flea Market, thereby maintaining the secrecy of the location while keeping tabs on all

transactions conducted. Despite the iron grip, this arrangement has nonetheless been very profitable for all parties concerned.

Almost any illegal item or illicit service imaginable is available in the Flea Market to the discerning supervillain, underworld criminal, shady corporation, terrorist cell, or political despot. Arms dealers trade in stolen weapons and other equipment procured from the military at home and around the globe, as well as stolen prototypes of weapons and technology acquired from research and design firms in Tesla Park. A myriad of fences, many specializing in areas like fine art, diamonds, electronics, and furs, receive stolen goods and find interested buyers. For the right price, assassins, black ops teams, and hit men can be hired, as well as specialist thieves such as safecrackers, second-story men, smugglers, cleaners, demolitions experts, wheelmen, computer and security system hackers, money launderers, and counterfeiters for any type of job, big or small. Underworld back-alley doctors will remove bullets and perform other medical services with no questions asked. New identities, passports, and paperwork can be purchased from excellent forgers; customers can even buy new faces from down-on-their-luck plastic surgeons.

The elaborate terminal station housing the Flea Market is densely packed with stores and shops, creating a winding labyrinth of passageways between the tents and other temporary structures, making it just as easy to lose someone in the maze as it is to tail them unseen. The entire area glows with an eerie light as fluorescent ceiling lights shine through an ever-present haze of smoke and steam. The illumination and basic power needs are provided by portable electric generators, although some illicit and undetectable taps into the Stark City main grid are available for a price to those who have greater power needs. Members of Dominic Marinelli's gang patrol the area regularly, keeping an eye out for trouble and responding with force if needed.

## DOCTOR X

**Real Name:** Dr. Milton Fleischer, M.D., Ph.D.

### Abilities

Prowess 3  
Coordination 5  
Strength 2  
Intellect 6  
Awareness 3  
Willpower 3

Stamina 5  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Computers Expert  
Electronics Expert  
Mechanics Expert  
Medicine Master  
Science (Chemistry) Master  
Science (Genetics) Master  
Science (Physics)  
Science (Radiology)

### Powers

Blast (Shooting) Device 4 – Handgun  
Damage Resistance Device 5 - Super Serum  
Injections  
Regeneration 8 [Extra: Regrowth] - Genetic  
Enhancement

### Qualities

“This won't hurt a bit ...”  
“You really don't want me to make a house call ...”  
“One day the world will appreciate my true genius!”  
Provides Services to Stark City Mafia  
Cultivates Relationships with Disgruntled Employees at Tesla Park Biotech Firms

### Challenges

Invulnerability Requires Weekly Super-Serum Injections  
Disgraced and Discredited Mad Scientist and Surgeon  
Arrogant

**Background:** Milton Fleischer was once a prominent surgeon and scientist at a biotechnology firm in Tesla Park, specializing in

bionic implants and cybernetic augmentation as well as genetic and biochemical enhancement research. Arrogant and obsessed with his personal legacy, Dr. Fleischer often took dangerous risks and shortcuts, putting animal and human test subjects in jeopardy and flagrantly ignoring standard medical protocols and professional ethics. His mad experiments eventually caused the death of one of his patients, and his colleagues fully discredited him; his medical license was revoked, leaving his employer no choice but to terminate him immediately. Criminal charges soon followed, and Fleischer fled to the Catacombs to avoid arrest and prosecution, vowing to one day show the world how they turned their backs on his true genius, and to make his detractors pay for what they had done to him.

Once underground, Dr. Fleischer set up practice in a makeshift tent in the Flea Market, offering his surgical and medical services to the criminal underworld. Fearing recognition and repercussions from his diabolical past, he decided to change his name to "Doctor X." Initially, he provided basic medical care to those desiring to avoid the scrutiny of public hospitals required to report certain incidents and accidents to law enforcement. He later began to branch out and offer a wider range of nontraditional medical services. For those wishing to hold their own against the superheroes of Stark City, he began to provide a path to supervillainy with bionic and cybernetic implants, genetic enhancement therapy, and super-serum injections based on his years of research plus technology and chemical formulas stolen from the firms of Tesla Park above. Doctor X quickly gained a reputation for quality work and discretion in the underground community, where his practice is jokingly referred to as "the Chop Shop." Even prominent Geartown mob boss James DeSouza has used the doctor's services for his own bionic implants.

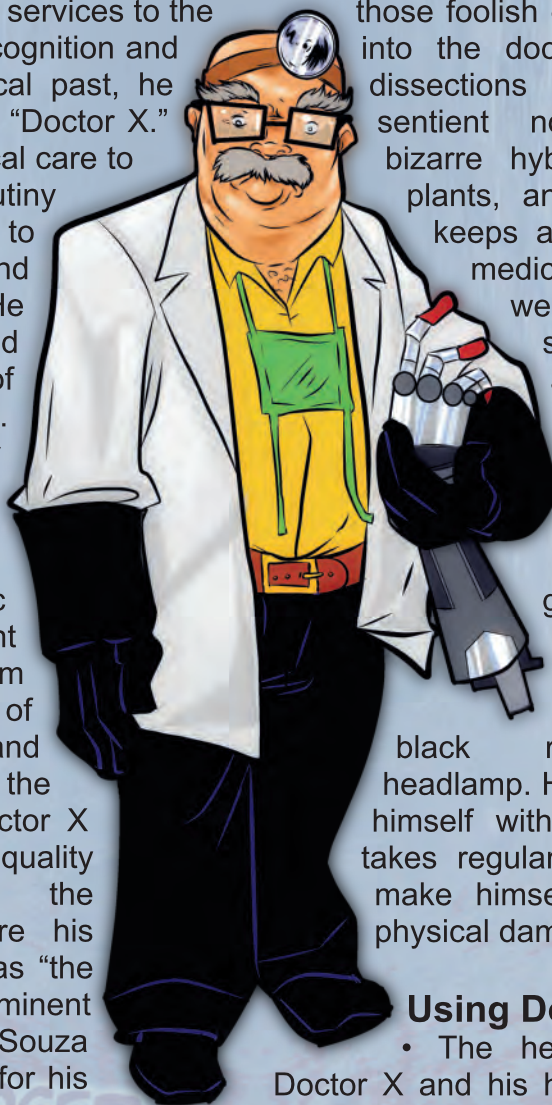
Doctor X has enjoyed great financial success from this venture, which helps to fund his other bizarre and controversial experiments in an unrestricted environment that he did not have on the surface world. He now generously offers payment plans to those who can't afford to pay their entire bill for his services up front. Those who fall behind in their payments to the doctor, however, will quickly learn that he does indeed make house calls—bringing several hired thugs with him—and will reclaim his property through makeshift followup surgery, this time without the surgical finesse, sterile conditions, or anesthesia.

The Chop Shop tent is set up with a reception desk and waiting room, two consultation rooms, a surgical prep room, a surgical theater, and a back room where Doctor X conducts his mad experiments and keeps his private office. Any number of strange and diabolical sights await those foolish enough to venture uninvited into the doctor's inner sanctum, from dissections of Atlantean and other sentient non-humanoid corpses to bizarre hybrids of different animals, plants, and even humans. He also keeps an extensive library here of medical books and journals, as well as works on more esoteric subjects such as lycanthropy and transhumanism.

Doctor X is short and stout with a small, bristly gray mustache, bushy eyebrows, Coke-bottle glasses, and a bald head. He wears a surgical gown and mask that hangs around his neck, large black rubber gloves, and a headlamp. He has genetically enhanced himself with regenerative powers and takes regular super-serum injections to make himself partially invulnerable to physical damage.

### Using Doctor X

- The heroes may first encounter Doctor X and his hired goons on one of their repo house calls to a poor unfortunate soul who



has fallen behind on post-operative payments, deciding to help the patient avoid reclamation surgery. Alternately, one of the heroes may have received some or all of his or her powers as a Chop Shop patient, but since going straight has decided to neglect any further payments owed.

- The heroes may be called in to rescue someone Doctor X has kidnapped, perhaps a person with specific scientific knowledge or technological skill that the Doctor requires, or a potential subject of one of his mad experiments.
- The CEO or another higher-up at a prominent Tesla Park biotechnology firm has asked the heroes for protection for themselves or their family after receiving threats of retaliation from Doctor X, who plans to give them a very personal demonstration of his skill and genius.

## Easy Street

### Aspects

Nightlife 24/7

Vice Is Cheap, and Life Is Cheaper  
Wretched Hive of Scum and Villainy  
Under Mafia Control

**Description:** In the 1930s, while Stark City was building its underground subway system, city officials condemned a two-mile stretch along Easton Street in a low-lying section of the city, covering it over and burying it to create a subway tunnel. After the city abandoned the subway project, an entire neighborhood row of tenement houses, brownstone buildings, stores, bars, restaurants, and other buildings were left exactly as they were the day they were evacuated and buried. In the late 1970s, the forgotten street was discovered by several street gangs and homeless people that used to venture into the abandoned subway system beneath Stark City. When notorious Mafia kingpin Dominic Marinelli decided to lay low and disappear from the surface world into the Rum Run in the early 1990s, he soon learned of the existence of the buried street with its complete infrastructure and decided to turn it into something bigger and better. Thus Easy Street was born.

Today, Easy Street is a fully-functioning secret underground neighborhood that is home to supervillains, mobsters, mad scientists, street gangs, petty thieves, and other nefarious and unsavory types who for whatever reason can no longer live openly in the city above. There are corner stores, food markets, bars, restaurants, and even dry cleaners, newsstands, and bakeries. Residents also have access to electrical power, street lights, water, plumbing, and other utilities like cable television, Internet, and phone service, thanks to illegal and undetectable taps into Stark City's facilities above. Easy Street residents live in a mocking parody of city life on the streets above in a neighborhood forever trapped under a subterranean night sky.

Knowledge of and access to Easy Street is kept secret and heavily guarded. The Stark City Mafia is the dominant controlling force on Easy Street (along with much of the Catacombs in general), and Dominic Marinelli sees himself as the neighborhood's unofficial mayor. The venture has been very profitable for him since its inception and he feels obligated and responsible to those under his protection; those who have threatened to reveal Easy Street's existence and location have been known to disappear quickly and forever. Exactly how Marinelli has kept Easy Street under wraps for so long remains a mystery, but there are rumors that he has powerful illusion spells in place and has even resorted to demonology or witchcraft.

Easy Street is also home to many businesses and establishments that cater to various sins and vices, some that would never be tolerated in Stark City above, even in the seedier parts of Geartown. Prostitutes and drug dealers walk the lengths of Easy Street out in the open. Neon signs advertise dive bars, nightclubs, casinos, pool halls, strip joints, brothels, drug dens, fight clubs, and other venues for those with more sadistic and lascivious tastes. Many of these places are controlled outright by the Stark City Mafia, and those that aren't pay a percentage of their profits in tribute and protection fees to Dominic Marinelli and his crew. There is an even greater downside to this excessive existence, too, as orphaned children, drug addicts, and the homeless fight to survive



day-to-day on a street that never sees the sunlight.

### Mickey Finn's Place

Before Stark City officials condemned the neighborhood to build a tunnel for a subway line in 1934, Mickey Finn's Place was a popular watering hole on Easton Street that spent most of the Prohibition era as a not-so-secret speakeasy. It was a swank joint where Stark City aristocrats could be seen rubbing elbows with the most prominent mobsters of the day. When Dominic Marinelli rediscovered the buried street in the 1990s, he was amazed to discover the historic bar his grandfather had told him stories about as a child almost completely intact. As his vision to restore the forgotten street into an underground criminal haven began to take shape around him, Marinelli spared no expense and personally oversaw the restoration of the old bar to its former glory, right down to the brass railings, Tiffany lamps, and pressed tin ceiling.

Today, Mickey Finn's Place offers a modicum of class to the den of iniquity that is Easy Street. Open 24/7, it is a popular spot among the criminal element for meeting up with contacts, conducting shady deals, planning capers, and even just relaxing over cocktails. It is not uncommon to see Dominic Marinelli and his Mafia crew drinking and socializing at the bar alongside the regulars. The drinks served from the refurbished antique bar are generous and stiff, the pints are always cold, and a small kitchen provides appetizing bar-food fare. In the swirling haze of cigarette and cigar smoke, the lights are kept dim and there is always live music playing in the background. Despite the laid-back atmosphere, the patrons are still some of the most notorious and dangerous criminals in Stark City, so it is always a good idea to mind one's own business when drinking at Mickey Finn's (or at least not be obvious about eavesdropping). The bouncer at the door is built like a tank, and the bartender on duty isn't afraid to crack a few skulls if trouble brews. Dominic Marinelli has his private office and a secret meeting room where he conducts Mafia business in the basement, and the bar staff upstairs sees to it that nobody gets down to his inner sanctum uninvited. The basement also

holds a well-hidden exit into the bootlegger tunnels that date back to the days of Prohibition; Marinelli and his gang use these passageways to get from Easy Street to the Rum Run.

## The Green Fairy

**Real Name:** Anise Wormwood (Absinthia)

**Origin:** Unearthly

### Abilities

Prowess 2  
Coordination 3  
Strength 2  
Intellect 3  
Awareness 7  
Willpower 8

Stamina 10  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Deception Expert  
Mental Resistance Expert  
Stealth Expert

### Powers

Emotion Control 6  
Energy Drain 4 [Extra: Life Drain]  
Illusion 4 - Cloud of Confusion  
Wings 2 [Flight] - Gossamer Wings

### Qualities

"Absinthe makes the heart grow fonder!"  
Devoted to Dominic Marinelli

### Challenges

Confined to Mickey Finn's Place  
Jealous of Other Women Around "Her Guy"  
(Marinelli)

**Background:** The mysterious and strikingly beautiful entity known as the Green Fairy works as a cocktail waitress in Mickey Finn's Place. She appears to be a spectral (although not incorporeal) green woman with gossamer fairy wings that allow her limited flight. Her origin is mostly a mystery, but rumor has it that Dominic Marinelli found her alone, melancholy and on the verge of fading away, inside the forgotten bar when he first discovered the buried Easton

Street. She claims to be one of the Sidhe, a member of the Unseelie Court, and gives her name as Anise Wormwood if asked. Her true name that she keeps to herself (for fear that others would gain power over her) is Absinthia, information that not even Marinelli knows.

The Green Fairy has no idea how she came to be in Mickey Finn's Place, only that she has been there a long time. For some unknown reason, she is unable to leave the confines of the bar, but if she knows why she isn't telling. Marinelli saw the potential of her powers to sow confusion, misdirection, and doubt, so he asked her to work for him when he refurbished Mickey Finn's. He often keeps her nearby when he is having private conversations in the bar that he would prefer not be seen or overheard. The Green Fairy sees Dominic Marinelli as her savior, is deeply in love with him, and has been known to strike out at other women in a jealous rage. The Mafia boss occasionally flirts back with her, but does not return her feelings or take them seriously. Her touch and kiss can be deadly, however, as some patrons who went too far and couldn't keep their hands to themselves have learned the hard way.

## The Rum Run

### Aspects

Whoever Controls the Rum Run Controls the  
Catacombs  
Mafia Stronghold

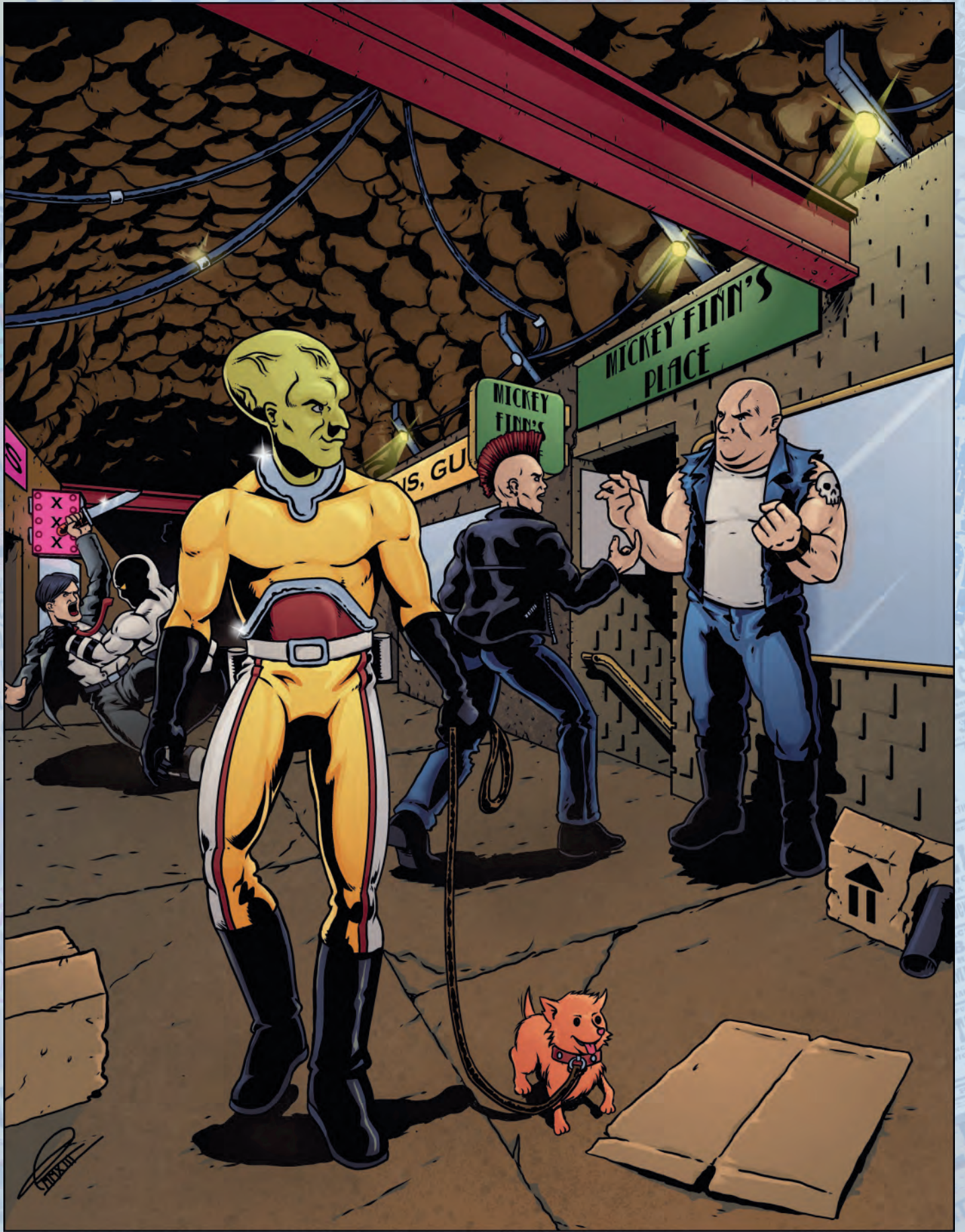
**Description:** With the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment and the passage of the Volstead Act, Prohibition became the law of the land in 1920. This did not put an end to the demand for liquor, however, and around the country the Mafia quickly stepped in to meet that demand. Ironically, by outlawing alcoholic beverages to promote law and order, Prohibition boosted organized crime's profile



and power, perhaps nowhere as dramatically as in Stark City. There was a lot of money to be made, and violence became a part of everyday life.

In the early 1920s, the Mafia began building an elaborate network of bootlegger tunnels from the shores of Stark Lake to smuggle alcohol from nearby Canada into Stark City. These tunnels expanded beneath the streets of Stark City to connect various speakeasies, brothels, and other venues where alcohol was sold illegally. Nicknamed the Rum Run, the secret passageways allowed travel and transport around the city without being seen by the G-Men up above, and provided escape routes from police raids and attacks by rival gangs. Eventually the tunnel walls were reinforced with brick, iron gates and fire doors were added at various junctions, and storage areas were built, including a few makeshift illegal breweries. The Mafia even hired a mad scientist to build a robot guard to patrol the Rum Run tunnels. The sentient robot was given the name Johnny Clank after it began to adapt the behaviors and speech patterns of the old-school gangsters, much to their amusement. Johnny Clank still wanders the tunnels today, following the directives of his original programming.

When Prohibition ended in 1933, the Rum Run tunnels fell into disuse. Entrances were bricked up and forgotten, especially in the more reputable Stark City establishments. The Mafia continued to use some of the passageways to store stolen goods and travel discreetly around town, but it wasn't until the 1960s that they found a new use for them. When the Attorney General directed the FBI to begin a national



crackdown on organized crime with the help of the Alliance for Justice, several prominent Stark City Mafia crime bosses found it necessary to lay low and disappear for a while. They established several elaborate safe houses within the Rum Run where they could escape from the watchful eye of the law and avoid prosecution. The tunnels were declared neutral territory, and all members of the rival mob families were allowed unfettered access.

Today, Mafia crime boss Dominic Marinelli is the most prominent safe house resident of the Rum Run. Since going on the lam, Marinelli has created an entire criminal empire in the Stark City underground, and he knows that the Rum Run is the key to his uncontested control of the Catacombs. Because of the agreement between families, he begrudgingly allows rival Mafia boss James DeSouza access to the Rum Run, but keeps a watchful eye on his rival. To protect his interests, his men regularly patrol the area to keep away outsiders, but he also relies on other, more dangerous means as well.

## DOMINIC MARINELLI

### Abilities

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

Stamina 9  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Area (The Catacombs) Expert  
Business (Criminal Rackets) Master  
Deception  
Leadership  
Mental Resistance  
Occult Master

### Powers

Blast (Shooting) Device 4 - Beretta 92FS  
Illusion 6 [Extras: Programmed, Reversible]  
Probability Control (Good Luck) Device 2 -  
Ring of San Sergio

Probability Control (Bad Luck) Device 2 - Ring  
of San Bacco

Servant 7 [Extras: Enhanced, Extra Servants  
(Four Hellhounds total); Limits: Exclusive,  
Preparation, Spell-Focus] - Demonology

### Qualities

Mafia Kingpin of the Catacombs  
Unofficial Mayor of Easy Street  
Wants to Become the Sole, Uncontested Mafia  
Crime Boss of Stark City

### Challenges

Despises Harrison Ullman (Former Federal  
Prosecutor and Current Stark City Mayor)  
Rivals with James DeSouza (Geartown Mafia  
Boss)  
Probability Control Powers Require Rings of  
Santi Sergio e Bacco  
Short Fuse

**Background:** In 1957, Dominic Marinelli was born in Gerrisburg to a Mafia gangster named Dino Marinelli and his lovely young wife Maria. When Dominic was only three years old, the powerful Gargano crime family began eliminating competing Stark City Mafia families, and his parents were killed when their car exploded as the result of a hit placed on Dino. Dominic's grandparents, Fredo and Lucia Marinelli, took in the orphaned toddler and raised him as their own. Fredo would entertain his grandson with tales of his glory days in the Stark City Mafia during the 1920s and 1930s, and Lucia shared with him the secrets of sorcery and the occult, passed down in their family for generations.

After his grandfather died on Dominic's fourteenth birthday, Dominic began to act out by committing petty crimes and gained a reputation as a neighborhood thug with a short temper. When Stark City's costumed heroes disappeared in 1972, he was emboldened to commit bigger and more lucrative criminal acts, secure in the knowledge that there was no one who around who could stop him. In 1976, at the age of nineteen, Marinelli and his small gang of thugs were confronted while robbing a Geartown warehouse by a costumed vigilante claiming to be the Sentinel. Marinelli pulled out his gun and killed the would-be hero, and his

reputation as the man who killed the Sentinel (even though it was only a street-level pretender to the famous mantle) began to grow in the criminal underground. He used this notoriety to rise quickly in the ranks of the Stark City Mafia.

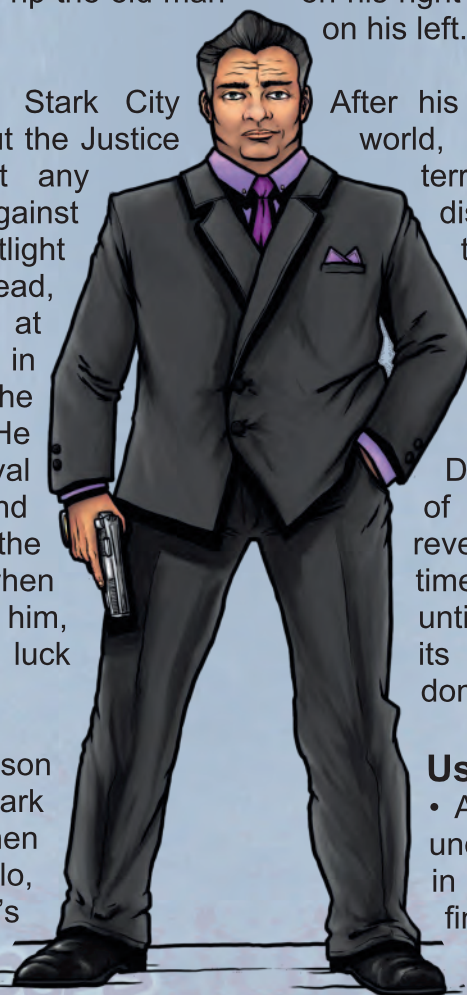
On her deathbed, Lucia Marinelli gave her grandson two family relics to help him in his quest for power: the Ring of San Sergio, which bestowed the wearer with good fortune, and its matching counterpart that allowed the wearer to bring bad luck to his enemies, the Ring of San Bacco. He also inherited her library of occult tomes, from which he learned the darkest of magics—the incantations to summon demons. Marinelli used all of these gifts to his advantage, and by 1985 he was the wealthiest and most powerful gangster in all of Stark City. He was finally able to avenge his parents' deaths when he declared open war on the Gargano crime family by ordering hits on all the top capos. He personally handled the elderly Mafia statesman Gino Gargano by summoning a pair of demonic hellhounds to rip the old man to pieces.

All of this mob violence in Stark City attracted the FBI's attention, but the Justice Department could never get any racketeering charges to stick against Dominic Marinelli. The spotlight made him a celebrity instead, pictured in newspapers eating at fancy restaurants and sitting in box seats at ballgames as if he were on the society page. He wisely reached out to the rival DeSouza crime family and established a truce to keep the Feds off all their backs. Just when it seemed nobody could touch him, though, Marinelli's good luck suddenly changed.

Federal prosecutor Harrison Ullman (who now serves as Stark City's mayor) got a break when Frankie "Bag of Donuts" Brunello, one of Dominic Marinelli's trusted lieutenants, turned state's evidence in exchange

for witness protection and implicated his former boss in the murder of the vigilante who claimed to be the Sentinel back in 1976. In 1992, Marinelli was tried and convicted of murder, and Ullman pressed the judge to give him the maximum sentence of life in prison. While Marinelli was en route to Striker Federal Penitentiary to serve out his sentence, his gang staged a daring rescue attempt, allowing him to escape from custody to a Mafia safe house in the Rum Run, where he resides off the grid to this day.

Dominic Marinelli has since created a subterranean criminal empire in the Catacombs beneath the streets of Stark City. He uses his powers of illusion to keep Easy Street and the Flea Market hidden from outsiders, and the tunnels of the Rum Run are patrolled by hellhounds and other lesser demons he has summoned with dark magic. It is said that when you kiss his ring you can always tell where you stand with Dominic Marinelli by which one he offers to you—the good fortune of San Sergio on his right hand or the ill omen of San Bacco on his left.



After his disappearance from the surface world, Marinelli's remaining rackets and territory in Stark City began to fall into disarray in the hands of his less-than-competent son Francesco, and the DeSouza crime family swept in to pick up the pieces. Francesco Marinelli was finally killed in one violent takeover, and Dominic personally holds James DeSouza responsible for the death of his oldest son. Marinelli desires revenge, but he is carefully biding his time and keeping his enemy close until the Marinelli family can reclaim its rightful place as Stark City's dominant crime family.

### Using Dominic Marinelli

- After years of literally hiding right under Mayor Harrison Ullman's nose in the Catacombs, Dominic Marinelli finally decides to take his revenge on Ullman for relentlessly prosecuting him for murder and

# Hellhound

Demonic Servant

## Abilities

Prowess 4  
Coordination 4  
Strength 6  
Intellect 1  
Awareness 3  
Willpower 3  
  
Stamina 9  
Determination \*

## Specialties

Nature (Track Scent) Master  
Stealth Expert

## Powers

Aura (Fire) 3 [Limit: Constant]  
Blast (Shooting) 4 [Extra: Burst] – Breathes Fire  
Damage Resistance 10 [Limit: One Type (Heat)] – Fire Immunity  
Strike (Slashing) 2 - Bite

## Qualities

Demonic Origin

## Challenges

Holy Relics, Blessed Weapons, and Holy Water Bypass Damage Resistance

stealing his life in the city up above. Marinelli and his gang kidnap the mayor and leave him tied up in the clock tower of City Hall with a bomb set to go off at the exact time the jury read the guilty verdict, 3:15 pm. Can the heroes locate Mayor Ullman and defuse the bomb before it explodes, taking His Honor and City Hall with it? Will they finally bring Marinelli to justice before he escapes back into the safety of the Rum Run?

- A clearly terrified and desperate man approaches the heroes, requesting their help and protection. It is none other than Frankie “Bag of Donuts” Brunello, the former lieutenant of Dominic Marinelli whose testimony convicted his boss of murder back in the early '90s. He

claims that Marinelli has finally found him by using powerful divinatory magic, and that he is no longer safe in the Federal witness relocation program. Can the heroes find a way to keep Brunello safe before Marinelli finds him?

- The final showdown between Dominic Marinelli and rival crime boss James DeSouza for control of the Stark City Mafia has begun, and all of Stark City is caught in the crossfire. Will the heroes be able to put an end to the bloodshed before the city returns once again to the violence and lawlessness of the past?

## The Crypts of St. Mary's Church

### Aspects

Back Door to the Catacombs (A Way In ...) Sanctuary (... and A Way Out)

**Description:** St. Mary's Church is one of the oldest Roman Catholic parishes in all of Stark City. This Gothic Revival structure was built in the mid-1800s on a tree-lined street in one of the most prominent neighborhoods of the time period. Today it is but a shadow of its former glory, run down and in desperate need of repair, a reflection of the urban decay that has gripped Geartown. It now serves some of Stark City's poorest residents—the homeless, street kids, drug addicts, and others down on their luck. It is a beacon of hope in a sea of despair.

The current pastor of St. Mary's is Father Michael Conti, a young priest dedicated to his downtrodden flock. He works out every morning before daily mass at the neighborhood gym and is an accomplished kickboxer. Father Michael frequently comes into conflict with some of the more disreputable residents of Geartown, and he makes no secret of his disdain for Geartown Mafia boss James DeSouza and his henchmen. He has also been very outspoken lately in his criticism of the rising number of foreclosures in the neighborhood orchestrated by Bluerocket Investment Group (BIG).

Recently, Father Michael discovered a forgotten entrance to the crypts beneath the church where many of the parish's original priests and

## The Johnny Clank Mob

Johnny Clank seeks to emulate mobsters in every conceivable way. To this end, he dearly wants to have his own mob and control a portion of Stark City. Sometimes he will even manage to scrape together enough spare parts to assemble a duplicate of himself. Then those two will begin building more duplicates. Every decade or so, Johnny will have built a critical mass of duplicates of himself and the Johnny Clank mob tries to “grab its own piece of the action.” In one of the most famous incidents in the 1930s, the Clank mob staged a week-long reign of terror on Stark City before the Sentinel destroyed enough of them to send the remainders running back into the Catacombs for safety.

## Johnny Clank

### Abilities

Prowess 3  
Coordination 3  
Strength 4  
Intellect 3  
Awareness 3  
Willpower 3  
  
Stamina 7  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Computers Master  
Drive  
Electronics  
Mechanics  
Weapons (Guns)

### Powers

Blast (Shooting) Device 5 - Thompson Machine Gun

### Qualities

Programmed to Patrol Rum Run Tunnels  
Emulates Mafia Masters  
Mimics Speech and Behavior of 1930s Gangsters

### Challenges

Hunted by Stark City Police  
Difficulty Relating to Humans

**Background:** The sentient robot Johnny Clank was built by a mad scientist commissioned by the Stark City Mafia to find a new way to help guard the Catacombs. He still wanders the Rum Run tunnels today, following the directives of his original programming.



founders are entombed. Members of his congregation have noticed lately that he spends an inordinate amount of time down there with the door always bolted, but Father Michael assures them he is merely perusing the old church records and cataloging the historical contents of the crypt.

## The Monsignor

**Real Name:** Father Michael Conti

### Abilities

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

Stamina 9  
Determination 4 (if used as a PC)

### Specialties

Area (Catacombs)  
Investigation  
Martial Arts (Kickboxing) Master  
Occult Expert  
Religion (Roman Catholicism) Expert

### Powers

Blast (Shooting) Device 6 [Extra: Overcome Immunity (Affects Incorporeal)] - The Pistol of St. Gabriel Possenti  
Damage Resistance Device 7 [Limit: Stamina Only] - Medallion of St. Barbara

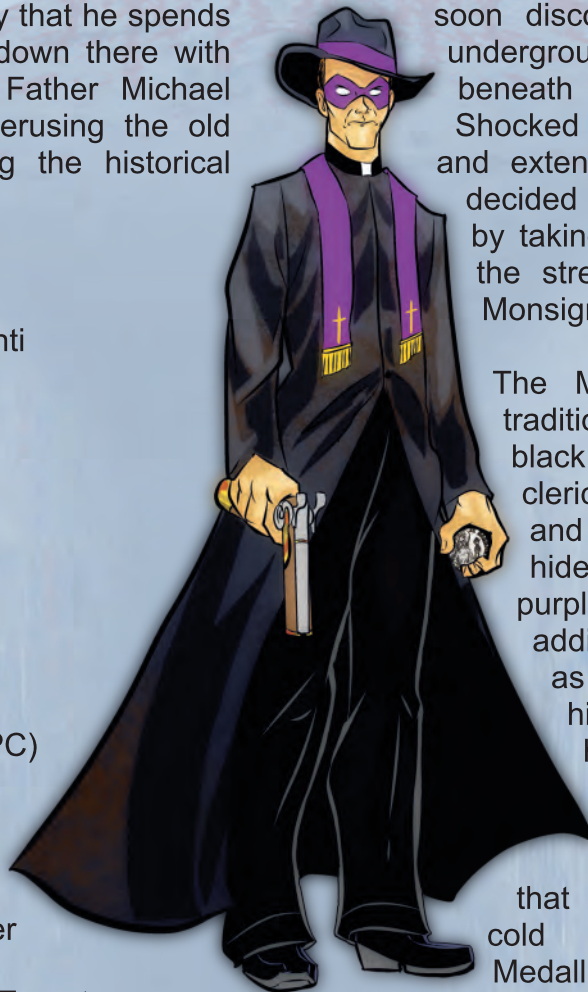
### Qualities

Pastor of an Inner-City Church  
The Pistol-Packing Padre  
Serves the Poor and Protects the Helpless

### Challenges

Clashes with the Stark City Mafia and the Blurocket Investment Group (BIG)  
Angered by Grave Digger's Sacrilege  
Extremely Limited Funds

**Background:** While exploring the crypts beneath St. Mary's Church, Father Michael Conti accidentally discovered an entrance into the Catacombs. As he began to covertly explore



the subterranean passageways, he soon discovered the vast criminal underground that secretly exists beneath the streets of Stark City. Shocked and angered by the level and extent of crime and vice, he decided to do something about it by taking street vigilantism below the streets in the guise of the Monsignor!

The Monsignor dresses in a traditional Roman Catholic black cassock with a white clerical collar, a purple stole, and a black fedora hat. He hides his identity behind a purple domino mask. In addition to his masterful skill as a kickboxer, he arms himself with two holy relics he found in the church crypts: the Pistol of St. Gabriel Possenti, a supernatural weapon that fires regular, silver, and cold iron bullets, and the Medallion of St. Barbara, which provides protection from physical harm. The Monsignor regularly patrols the Catacombs, dispensing justice whenever he can and providing rescue from the underworld to the helpless and those seeking redemption. As stories of the masked, gun-wielding priest begin to spread in the Catacombs, so to do stories of Sanctuary—a way out of the life of crime and violence that traps so many in the darkness.



# Stark City Sewer System

## Aspects

Spacious Labyrinth of Navigable Canals with Narrow Walkways  
Cold, Dimly Lit, and Very Damp  
Noxious Gas and Toxic Muck  
Sewer Rats, Alligators, and Worse ...

**Description:** Stark City's sewer system was originally built in 1854 under the streets of the Silver District. A combined system designed to carry both stormwater and wastewater away from the city and into Stark Lake, its maintenance and upkeep is the responsibility of the Department of Water Management, more commonly referred to as the City Water Works. Built in a style similar to the sewers of older European cities like Paris, it consists of a latticework of canals with narrow walkways on either side running through tunnels with high arched vaulted ceilings, making it easier for sewer workers (or trespassers) to traverse. A similar system was built independently underneath Gerrisburg in 1857, and the two systems were combined in 1895 after the two cities consolidated. The system was later expanded under Tesla Industrial Park and the Platinum Coast, but only the main lines in those districts can accommodate unfettered human traffic, as most of the more modern branches are too small for an adult even to enter.

Like the rest of the Catacombs, the sewers provide a means of covert travel beneath the streets of Stark City away from prying eyes, although the police have been known to enter the system in hot pursuit of criminals. Entrance into the sewers is relatively easy, even for those who do not work for the Department of Water Management, as there are manholes everywhere in out-of-the-way places like side streets and back alleys. The sewers may even provide access to otherwise secure buildings and other locations if needed. There are also well-hidden connections into the Catacombs proper, for those who know where to look. The sewers also connect directly to Stark Lake, allowing MAKO operatives and Atlantean gangsters to enter the city unobserved through

long-forgotten and submerged sewage exit pipes behind rusted tide gates.

There are several downsides to using the sewers as a means of travel around Stark City. A pervasive damp chill fills the tunnels, even in summertime. The passageways are dimly lit by electrical lights installed to aid the sewer maintenance crews in their work, but the moldy slime growth on the walls has become so invasive that the bulbs cast an eerie green glow over everything. The entire system has a foul, fetid odor, and noxious concentrations of poisonous and sometimes highly flammable gases are known to build up, requiring maintenance workers to carry artificial breathing equipment with them at all times. The canals are filled with a toxic muck composed mainly of drainage water and disease-carrying sewage, but illegal dumping of chemicals and other industrial waste is not unknown, making skin contact or submersion something to be avoided at all costs. In the past, most of this sludge was dumped directly into Stark Lake, but a modern, state-of-the-art sewage treatment plant located between the Silver District and Geartown now cleans and purifies all sewer water before it is released into the lake, contributing to that great waterway's revival and environmental health.

Those brave (or foolish) enough to venture into this hazardous environment may encounter a variety of potential threats. Sewer rats infest the tunnels, and stories of alligators and worse living below the street are not just the stuff of urban legend. Living creatures that come into contact with toxic waste illegally dumped by less-than-reputable Tesla Industrial Park firms may experience any number of adverse effects. Abnormal growth is quite common, but invisibility, regeneration, and the acquisition of human-like sentience have been reported. In addition to the various factions like MAKO and Krachla's Atlanteans who use the sewers as a means of covert transit, there are others who have made their homes below Stark City's streets, including homeless people and other social outcasts, doomsday cults, the undead, and the notorious Reptile Club, a sinister league of cold-blooded (both literally and figuratively) supervillains.

# Gravedigger

**Real Name:** Santino Gargano

## Abilities

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

Stamina 9  
Determination \*

## Specialties

Area (The Catacombs)  
Business  
Occult Master  
Stealth

## Powers

Servant 10 [Extras: Enhanced, Split; Limits: Preparation, Source (Corpses)] - Necromancy  
Strike (Bashing/Slashing) Device 4 [Extras: Both Types, Overcome Immunity (Affects Incorporeal)] - Sword Cane of Shadow-Walking  
Teleport Device 5 [Extra: Summoning; Limit: Transmit (Shadows)] - Sword Cane of Shadow-Walking

## Qualities

Don of the Dead  
Last Surviving Member of the Gargano Crime Family  
Looking for a Piece of the Action

## Challenges

Blinded by Vengeance Against Dominic Marinelli  
Terminally Ill and Desperate for Immortality  
Constant Interference from the Monsignor's Meddling

**Background:** By all outward appearances, Santino Gargano is nothing more than a tragic figure in Stark City's history, the sole surviving member of the once-powerful Gargano crime family. When mob boss Dominic Marinelli declared all-out war on the rival Gargano crime family in 1985, three-year-old Santino witnessed in horror the violent death of his

great-grandfather Gino Gargano as a pack of demonic hellhounds summoned by Marinelli ripped the old don to shreds. Adding to the young boy's shock, both his parents were also killed soon after in the growing mob violence gripping the city, and the seeds of vengeance took firm root in his heart.

Raised in a city orphanage, his desire for revenge grew stronger, and Santino realized that the only way to make Dominic Marinelli pay for what he had done to his family would be to fight fire with fire. He began his lifelong study of the occult as a teenager, knowing the dark, forbidden lore would one day put him on par with his most hated enemy. After years of study and research, he found the ancient path of necromancy and learned the secrets of raising the dead.

To facilitate his necromantic studies, Santino took a job as a cemetery grave digger, where he would return at night to dig up corpses for his experiments with the dark arts, and to rob the graves of any valuables. In the tomb of a long-forgotten Stark City forefather, he discovered a beautifully crafted sword cane that allowed the user to teleport away by walking through shadows. Known as the Sword Cane of Shadow-Walking, the device's usefulness in his gruesome after-hours pursuits quickly became apparent as evidenced by a frustrated Stark City Police Department, and now he is never found without it. Much to his great pleasure, the Stark City press gave the elusive cemetery thief the moniker of Gravedigger.

Today, Gravedigger sees himself as the godfather of a new Mafia family made up entirely of the undead, one he will use to carve out his own piece of the action in Stark City. In his family burial crypt in the old Oak Hill Cemetery located on the outskirts of Geartown, Gravedigger discovered a secret entrance into the sewer system through an empty stone sarcophagus, into the sewer system, most likely one of the Gargano family's escape routes into the Rum Run. In the sewers beneath his family mausoleum, he found the remains of the Augustini Brothers, whacked by his family ancestors back in the 1920s, and raised them both up as zombies from the sewer muck where

they were dumped to serve as his personal bodyguards. He has found his way from the sewers into the Catacombs proper, but an entrance to the Rum Run still eludes him.

Gravedigger delights in raising the fallen henchmen of other Mafia families as zombies so that he can use them against their former associates. He also appreciates the horror and irony of sending the animated corpse of a whacked victim to in turn kill his own killer. His profane actions have not gone unnoticed by the Monsignor, that mysterious benefactor who patrols the Catacombs and tries to foil Gravedigger's plans at every turn. Still, Gravedigger longs for the day when he can find a way into the Rum Run and send his undead crew to take out Dominic Marinelli once and for all.

Recently, Santino Gargano learned that he has developed an inoperable brain tumor, most likely the result of years of pushing supernatural boundaries to the limit and making frequent use of the Sword Cane of Shadow-Walking, and that he doesn't have much longer to live. Desperation has driven him to a mad search for immortality, and he has issued a standing offer to pay any vampire quite handsomely to turn him into one of the undead. While he sees this as his best option for survival, the vampires of the world are quite secretive so as to ensure their own survival, and he would welcome knowledge of any other avenues to eternal life.

## Using Gravedigger

- Clues at several recent warehouse robberies around Stark City all point to a classic Mafia job, with the thieves seen disappearing into the sewer system with their ill-gotten loot. Normally, the police wouldn't ask for your assistance on such a mundane matter, especially since eyewitnesses and security cameras have been able to give the police very accurate descriptions of the perpetrators. Only problem is, each of the identified suspects has been confirmed as previously deceased ...

- Gravedigger has decided to put an end to the Monsignor's incessant meddling into his affairs once and for all by sending a small army of his zombie Mafia crew to follow him out of the Catacombs and up through the crypts of St. Mary's Church. Can the PC heroes come to the Monsignor's aid and save St. Mary's and its congregation in time?

- A very old and powerful European vampire has recently arrived in Stark City and taken up residence in the sewers, and Gravedigger has reached out to her. In exchange for providing her with the blood of one of the heroes' connections or love interests, she has agreed to give Gravedigger the immortality he so desires and turn him into a vampire. Alternately, it is the potent blood of one of the PC superheroes she desires, and Gravedigger will stop at nothing to hand the character over to her.



R. Hershey

# Person of Interest: Fishface Louie

Real Name: Vanisk

## Abilities

Prowess 4  
Coordination 4  
Strength 6  
Intellect 4  
Awareness 5  
Willpower 7

Stamina 13  
Determination \*

## Specialties

Mental Resistance  
Underwater Combat Master

## Powers

Aquatic 6  
Life Support 2 [Cold, Pressure]  
Mental Blast 3  
Mind Control 5 [Extras: Burst, Ranged;  
Limits: Animal Only, One Type (Sea  
Life)]

## Qualities

Exiled Atlantean  
Savvy Businessman

## Challenges

Trying Not to Look Too Successful  
Unusual Appearance (Even for a merman)

**Background:** Fishface Louie (called Vanisk among his own people) is a lieutenant of Krachla's who is making inroads in the Catacombs in an effort to develop a market for the Atlantean mob's drugs. He's generally impeccably dressed in a business suit, and he has a real knack for dealing with air-breathers and for the art of the deal. Vanisk is a savvy operator who acts as a minor sort of fixer in the catacombs; helping to facilitate deals between various factions. Despite the adroitness with which he's adopted to air-breather criminal society, he's very conscious



of his boss's paranoia. So while he has been generating good political capital and expanding the size of the Atlanteans' drug operation in the Catacombs, he's always careful about not appearing too successful so as to stay on Krachla's good side.

# Platinum Coast

## Theme

Upscale Neighborhood, Home to the Elite

## Scale

A long winding neighborhood that runs the length of Stark Lake's coast (about 4.3 miles)

## Aspects

Undesirables Need Not Apply

Heightened Police Presence

At Any Moment—Paparazzi

**Description:** During the War of 1812, Colonel Samuel Heerman issued orders for his engineers to build a lighthouse on the cliffs that run alongside Stark Lake. Spies and guerrilla fighters against the British came to know the lighthouse as a beacon and messaging station. Upon the conclusion of the war, Heerman had a plaque made and set upon the side of the building. It read, "Upon this rock shone a Light of Freedom leading us to the preservation of a nation based on Truth, Justice, and Liberty. Let all men regard these virtues as sacred as we build our future upon them."

The northeast coastline of Stark City was undeveloped until 1865 when teams of loggers were sent into the cliffs and hills to harvest the lumber found there. Just shy of the center of operations for his lumber company, Martin Lowell built a modest home for himself and his family. This allowed him to keep tabs on things at the yard while spending most of his time with his family. Two generations lived in that home, overseeing the company until 1931, when the Lowell family decided to move the operation to another state.

The Lowell estate sat vacant until Commander James Lowell, Martin's great-grandson, moved back into the estate after World War 2 in 1945. Commander Lowell used his inheritance to restore the mansion to its former glory. Using the scenic cliffs and limited road access to keep the area private, he invited his fellow military officers, weary from war, to savor the quiet of the estate. Upon suggestions from his friends, Lowell turned the estate into a resort.

Advertising to the rich and famous as well as those among the officer corps, Lowell Overlook Estate was open for business by 1946.

Alongside the opening of the resort, Lowell took an interest in Nikolai Tesla and the goings-on at Tesla Invention Park. Amazed by the fantastic work being accomplished there, Lowell wanted to be a part of the process. To that end, Lowell used his contacts in the Navy to help secure resources for various Tesla Park inventors. Notably, he helped obtain large shipments of platinum for the Tesla Group. Although platinum is not as good a conductor as some other metals, its high melting point and ability to conduct heat enabled some of the early experiments to succeed in spite of prior failures using other materials.

Capitalizing on his Navy contacts, Lowell built Lowell United, a shipping firm with the connections to move materials all over the world. Using the capital earned through these ventures, Lowell developed the area around the cliffs. He hoped that bringing the wealthy and influential into Stark City would benefit the city's current and future development.

By the time he died in 1974, James Lowell had created a shipping empire. At the same time he had crafted a retreat for the rich and powerful of the area so that they could rub shoulders with the tech-elite, catapulting Stark City into a model of tomorrow for the world to follow.

The area once known as Lowell Estates was officially annexed by Stark City in 1950 in return for massive tax breaks on development, incentives that benefited the Lowell family. The area is characterized by high cliffs and winding roads overlooking Stark Lake. Mansions and estates belonging to the Stark City elite dot the landscape. The presence of the Stark City Police Headquarters and increased security for Carrington International Airport ensure that undesirables and troublemakers are few and far between. The Platinum Coast boasts some of the world's finest shopping along Lakeview Drive. High-end shops, restaurants, and clubs cater to the city's elite.

The area is often referred to as the "Platinum Coast" due to its expensive nature as well as the Lowell family's connection to the precious metal. The ability to conduct "heat," a property often ascribed to the metal, also applies to the neighborhood metaphorically, as the local paparazzi seem almost supernaturally capable of catching Stark City's finest at their worst.

## Platinum Alliance Hotel

### Aspects

Swanky  
Secluded and Private

**Description:** The Platinum Alliance Hotel began as the estate of James Lowell. Lowell used the secluded nature of his land and his family's palatial mansion as a retreat for the wealthy. Upon seeing the area grow, Lowell knocked down the estate and replaced it with the Alliance. The hotel's name tips its hat to a nickname Lowell would use for the group that founded Tesla Industry Park (which Lowell supported). The mansion was replaced with a 65-floor tower that sits atop Lowell's Overlook, one of the city's tallest cliffs. The top five floors contain penthouse suites that are reserved most of the year. The very top floors also boast a ballroom and a swimming pool that rains water over the cliff into the the lake (a catch recycles the chlorinated water and keeps it out of the lake below). The structure is visible from most places in Stark City.

Staying at the Alliance is very expensive, as the minimum room rates range upwards of hundreds of dollars per night. Penthouse rentals, often booked months in advance, cost thousands of dollars per night. The concierge service at the hotel is second to none. Delicacies and recipes of any type and description can be prepared by the master chefs on duty. The rooms have big-screen entertainment centers with access to the latest programming. All manner of finery can be bought through room service, and anything not available immediately on the premises can be delivered overnight.

The hotel's courtyard surrounds the lighthouse Heerman built during the War of 1812, now

## Home Away From Home

The Platinum Alliance Hotel has served as the base of operations for more than one discreet criminal or supervillain. Malcolm Fredericci is the Manager of the Alliance and is willing to do whatever it takes to keep his clients happy (as long as he is well compensated). He has, in the past, hidden evidence from the police and even give false testimony under oath. Malcolm has no loyalty, except to money, and would provide information to the police or heroes. It's just that they haven't been smart enough to try to bribe him yet.

### Contact:

## Malcolm Fredericci

### Aspects

At Your Beck and Call  
Generous Tips Open Doors  
Code of Silence  
Well-Connected

restored. In addition, the Alliance has clubs, pools, sport and gym facilities, fine dining, gambling venues, and shops. To accommodate Stark City's more mobile citizens, the hotel also offers complete car and helicopter service to and from almost anywhere in the city. For a refined stay high above the rabble that is Stark City, the Platinum Alliance is the premiere facility in this or any city.

## Lakeview Drive

### Aspects

Homes of the Rich and Famous (and Infamous)  
Rapid Police Response (When Called)  
Keeping the Weirdness Under Wraps.

**Description:** Lakeview is perhaps the most prestigious neighborhood in Stark City, with houses on the eponymous street being the most highly sought. Its residents include the city's most famous entertainers and socialites, Mayor Ullman, and several retired superheroes and supervillains.

The high-profile residents desire discretion above all else and have formed a Home Owners Association with its own emergency response team that can address most medical and security issues (while also keeping the paparazzi at bay—for the most part).

The members of the Lakeview HOA have a unique problem. They want to maintain the escalating property values of their posh houses in a city that's famous for mad scientists, supervillains, and the occasional interdimensional invasion. Their less-than-totally-effective solution is to try to keep any problems (especially superhuman-related problems) that occur in their area tightly under wraps. This results in an odd sort of social contract where residents simply don't mention or turn a blind eye to very strange things in their neighborhood.

## Contact: Roger Fentress

### Aspects

Justice Is Top Priority (after Property Values)  
Former SWAT Commander  
Morally Flexible

**Background:** Roger Fentress retired from his first career as a Stark City PD SWAT commander (use the stock character Police Officer from *Icons* for Fentress) to head up the security team for the Lakeview Drive Homeowners Association. He manages a private response team that can handle most of the security and medical emergencies that arise, without generating the attention and paper trail that come with calling 911.

In general, Fentress likes to work quietly with vigilantes in those rare situations that require capabilities beyond his team's. He will reach out to carefully selected heroes who he thinks might be able to operate with a degree of discretion in such situations. His top priority is to maintain the status quo, keep his residents' lives private, and maintain the property values of the Platinum Coast. This does not always line up with the goals of law enforcement (or heroes).

## The Rich and Infamous

Some of the well-known residents of Lakeview include:

- **Mayor Harrison Ullman:** Current leader of Stark City's government.
- **Paul Flaherty:** CEO of Sammy the Squid's, a chain of video arcades/fried fish restaurants. (Flaherty is really Randall Thornton, leader of the terrorist group MAKO. Sammy the Squid's is MAKO's major revenue stream.)
- **Paul Krevitz:** Reformed supervillain Wrathmaster who now runs the Crepes of Wrath restaurant chain.
- **Bill Jefferson:** Retired WW2-era superhero Torch of Liberty. Attended around the clock by a staff of nurses and orderlies, Jefferson has a bad case of dementia and occasionally has to be restrained before he can rampage through the neighborhood.
- **Harry Giardelli:** Beloved sportcaster who's been "the voice of the Stark City Frontiersmen" since the late 1970s.
- **Mary DePerot:** Owner of DePerot Motors, the largest used car dealership in the Stark City area.
- **Jason DeMarkos:** Assistant Curator of the Stark City Museum of Science and Natural History.
- **Josephine Miller:** Daughter and heiress of the Miller Pickle empire.

### Using Fentress

- Fentress calls in the heroes to subdue the Torch of Liberty, who's on one of his periodic rampages. He needs to be stopped and restrained with a minimum of fuss and attention (and preferably with as little property damage as possible).



Fentress is worried that one of his residents might be under mind control. Mary DePerot (owner of a large car dealership and one of the wealthiest women in Stark City) has been acting very out-of-character, and displayed an almost robotic personality at a recent HOA meeting. He has also noticed that she's been neglecting her business, and coming and going at odd hours. Fentress doesn't have the resources to investigate, but he wants to make sure that DePerot is okay and not being controlled somehow by a supervillain. (His concern is partly because DePerot is the largest contributor to the HOA.) He asks the heroes to discreetly investigate.

## Stark City Police HQ

### Aspects

Bastion of Right and Order  
Power-Dampening Field  
Supervillain Holding Cells  
Every Conversation is Recorded

**Description:** Built in the 1950s (with classically inspired architecture based on the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus), the Stark City Police Headquarters has been renovated several times. Most recently, the HQ has been outfitted with metahuman power-dampening fields (effectively Power Nullification 6). The Stark City Police Dirigible Squadron has a hangar located just south of the main headquarters building.



The HQ has a large subterranean cell block where superhuman criminals are held while awaiting trial or transfer to prison. A tactical response team is on guard in the cell block at all times.

Security is even higher than you'd expect at the Police HQ. This is in response to the brazen Black Friday attack that left much of the senior leadership and one-third of the police force dead or disabled. Although the attack occurred away from the HQ (at the Platinum Coast Events Center), security for all Stark City PD facilities has been tightened up considerably. (To the Stark City PD's great shame, no arrests have been made in this attack. Investigations are ongoing.)

The HQ is staffed 24 hours a day and contains the offices and armories for the city's conventional SWAT teams and metacriminal response units. Police chief Jesus Ramirez has his personal offices on the top floor and often works late into the night.

The police HQ has a secret. The previous (less-than-ethical) administrations had almost every room where a conversation happened between prisoners, or between prisoners and their attorneys, wired for sound. Although this is illegal, the current chief has been slow to pull out the recording devices, as the intel they yield is substantial.

## Contact: Police Chief Jesus Ramirez

### Aspects

Embattled

By Any Means Necessary

**Background:** Jesus Ramirez is that mythical rarity in large American cities: a high ranking public official who owes no one any favors, keeps his hands clean (for the most part) and is dedicated solely to the public welfare. (Use the Police Officer Stock Character in **ICONS** for Chief Ramirez).

Ramirez was just a homicide detective at the time of the Black Friday attack. After the attack,



he was the most senior police officer in Stark City. Consequently, he was appointed as acting chief, and later transitioned to the position permanently at Mayor Ullman's behest.

He has sworn to avenge his fallen colleagues. His biggest regret is that he has yet to bring any charges in that case.

Just a few months into rebuilding his police department, Ramirez engages and works with the city's burgeoning population of metahuman vigilantes—not due to any deep love for the spandex-and-mask crowd, but because he needs them to help keep his city safe. However, his willingness to work with the city's heroes does not mean he suffers fools gladly. Repeated disrespect will be met with a harsh eviction from his office and a cessation of all police intel.

Ramirez is a good source for off-the-record intel in the city and has a generous open-door policy with Stark City's vigilantes. Between the aerial surveillance of the Stark City Police Dirigible Squadron and the illegal wiretaps in the city's jails and holding cells, Ramirez is one of the best-informed people in Stark City.

## Using Ramierez

• Ramirez is ideally suited to be a “quest-giver,” to borrow some MMO parlance. He needs the heroes to help his understaffed force keep the city from imploding amid the schemes of a dozen villains, mad scientists, and general crazies. With his information network and warm relations with vigilantes, Ramierez often passes intel along to the city’s heroes. Sometimes he just needs a lead tracked down; other times he needs costumed heroes to investigate and neutralize a threat that might be too much for his police force to handle while they’re rebuilding.

If the GM decides to use the Black Friday plotline, Ramirez is a good entry point. Frustrated with his department’s lack of progress, he approaches the heroes about starting their own investigation.

# Odyssey Residences Halfway House

## Aspects

Supervillain Halfway House  
Viewed with Suspicion.  
More Than Meets The Eye

**Location:** Overlooking Stark Lake in full view of the Sampson Bridge.

**Description:** The 1970s gasoline crisis resulted in a surge of violent assaults in Stark City. As the crisis spawned what came to be known as the “Station Riots,” Stark City nearly came under martial law.

The Odyssey House was started in 1971 in order to curb a rapidly growing prison population. With parole officers overworked and the jail system swollen, the Odyssey House provided a way to reintegrate certain offenders who had been deemed worthy of early release.

This also meant they could be monitored and supervised until they were considered capable of living out their lives as productive members of the community. In 1997, the first supervillain parolee was released from the Striker Federal Super-Max Penitentiary, and he had cited his

home of record as Stark City. Arriving home, he was sent to Odyssey House in order to finish out the term of his parole.

Mr. Mayhem, aka Reginald Coakley, was in his fifties, and was not at all pleased with the accommodations that he found. The staff was underfunded, the house was a dump, and the people that were being funneled in and out of the place had no business being members of society. Reginald decided he had to do something.

He hired a construction crew (who may or may not have been out-of-work minions for local supervillains) and renovations began. Out of his own pocket, he hired a staff including more parole officers, a security staff, and a deluxe chef.

When the city found out about the sweeping renovations, they demanded to know where the money for all this was coming from. The former Mr. Mayhem (now avidly insisting that he be called Mr. Coakley) claimed that he had paid for his crimes and was entitled to spend the money he made in legitimate business however he pleased. Coakley asserted that he had made huge gains during the dot-com boom (while in prison) and wanted to use a portion of his fortune to help the city rehabilitate convicts into citizens.

With the renovations complete, Coakley asked that the old house be named Horizon House. This would be the place that convicts could return to society and become productive citizens again. Coakley wouldn’t stop there. Leaving the Silver District behind, he had set his sights on the more upscale Platinum Coast. Filling the mayor in on his plans (and teaching him the proper technique for supervillain maniacal laughter during a photo opportunity), Coakley soon broke ground in the Platinum Coast for the new Odyssey Residences. Not content with just rejoining society, Coakley crafted a compound that would cater to a unique clientele. This new Odyssey Residence would be a rehabilitation facility for convicted supervillains.

Hiring Dr. Avery Clark as the head administrator, Coakley constructed a secure living facility with the best of everything. Dr. Clark took Coakley's vision and spun it into reality. Called a pioneer of superhuman psychology, Clark was the man for the job. Odyssey Residences is comprised of a secure, walled compound with incredible security. The staff works around the clock in rotating shifts to see to the clients' needs. Top psychologists work hand-in-hand with Federal Marshals acting as Special Parole Agents. Each residence offers condominium-style living protected by former government agents who understand the need for privacy and security. A counselor is on call, ready at a moment's notice to help Odyssey's clients.

In 2004, Coakley left Odyssey Residences in Dr. Clark's capable hands and went back to running his legitimate business as its CEO. He ensured that he would still be involved in rehabilitation efforts as he moved his business operations into Tesla Industrial Park. Maniacal Inc., one of the fastest-growing sunglasses and action apparel companies, has distinguished itself as one of the few companies that goes out of its way to hire ex-convicts. The employees are hired through both Horizon House and Odyssey Residences. Although no longer an active member of the process, Coakley stops in to both houses from time to time to see how his money is being spent.

## Dr. Avery Clark

### Abilities

Prowess 3  
Coordination 2  
Strength 3  
Intellect 5  
Awareness 4  
Willpower 6

Stamina 9  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Criminology  
Deception  
Mental Resistance  
Power (Mind Control)  
Psychiatry Master  
Science (Pharmacology) Expert  
Science (Psychology)

### Powers

Mind Control 7  
Telepathy 5 [Extra: Mind Probe]

### Qualities

Leader in His Field

### Challenges

Dirty Little Secret  
Haunted by Violence

**Background:** Dr. Clark is an FBI psychiatrist who assists with profiling and also works with agents dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder. Dr. Clark also has mutant psychic abilities. These emerged a few years ago during a traumatic event, and he keeps them secret from almost everyone.

Shortly after his powers manifested, he was brought into consult on a case where a superhuman was stalking and killing costumed heroes. Using his special gifts, Dr. Clark, under the guise of insightful medical knowledge, not only fed information to the FBI that led to the monster's capture, but also to properly diagnosing the criminal with schizophrenia. Seeing that this new gift could be a boon to his career, he went into private practice. He made sure to give himself room to allow for



# Clark's Greatest Failure: The Reclaimer

**Real Name:** David Jordan

## Abilities

Prowess 6  
Coordination 4  
Strength 7  
Intellect 3  
Awareness 5  
Willpower 2

Stamina 9  
Determination \*

## Specialties

Acrobatics  
Military  
Powers (Stretching) Expert  
Stealth

## Powers

Absorption (Kinetic Energy) 4 [Blast]  
Solid Form 4 [Extra: Instant]  
Stretching 4

## Qualities

Judge, Jury, Executioner

## Challenges

Tortured by his Past  
Easily Manipulated



**Background:** One of Clark's biggest failures is the Reclaimer. Originally the masked criminal known as the Ravager, the Reclaimer was sent to prison and ended up in the psychiatric ward at Striker Federal Penitentiary. Ravager had volunteered for a government experiment to produce super-soldiers. The process gave him superhuman abilities, but fractured his mind. Ravager lashed out due to feelings of persecution, forcing the government to send out Major Victory, a successful member of the same super-soldier program, to bring him in. In 2005, the Ravager escaped and made his way to Stark City. He began preying on the police and vigilantes there. It was then that he

encountered Clark, who seized his mind and took control. Clark managed to control and use the Ravager successfully for months. As a side effect of Clark's constant mind control, the Ravager's fractured mind had slowly been healed. He not only came to recognize his past crimes, but also to realize that he was under Clark's influence. He broke away and suffered under the weight of his own guilt. It was not long before he decided that guilt had a purpose. He confronted Clark and told him his control was broken. Still claiming to believe in Clark's cause, he began to patrol the streets as the Reclaimer.

## Using the Reclaimer

- This vigilante is a menace to criminals and heroes alike. Since being freed of Dr. Clark's control, he has been on a one-man crusade to make up for what he did when he was broken. He has also proclaimed himself Stark City's protector. Reclaimer will attack anyone in the news that has been branded a menace or troublemaker. If a hero fails to capture a villain or an innocent is hurt as collateral damage due to a hero's action or inaction, this could set the Reclaimer on that hero's trail.

- Due to a fragile psyche and overwhelming guilt, Reclaimer can easily be swayed by arguing with him (as long as you duck during one of his swings). He can often be talked out of attacking heroes, if they can get him to see their point of view. The downside is that this also works for the villains he attacks. Many a villain has gotten Reclaimer to attack heroes by painting himself or herself as a victim.

consultation with state and federal law enforcement. It wasn't long before Dr. Clark's work had him inextricably linked to costumed heroes and villains.

While working on a case for the state police, he came across Mr. Mayhem in prison. Mr. Mayhem was not cooperative with the police in the matter of one of his former associates' crimes, and Clark was brought in to consult. During a private consultation, Mayhem disclosed that he knew Clark was psychic. Assuring the good doctor that it would be their little secret, Mayhem gave Clark the information that he needed to solve the case.

Upon release from prison, Mr. Mayhem called upon Clark with a lucrative business opportunity that would cement his career as the lead psychiatrist to the costumed psyche. Fearing that Mr. Mayhem would expose his secret if he declined, Clark took the position and has been Odyssey Residence's Chief Administrator ever since.

## Using Dr. Clark

- Dr. Clark can be called into consult with any number of local and federal law enforcement agencies. He has been known to work with superteams in other countries (Great Britain's MI-0, the Superhuman Threat Division, particularly admires his work) and would be a valuable asset to the Stark City Sentinels in reading the motivations of many of the city's criminal elements.

- Dr. Clark has a secret. No one knows that he is psychic. He will go to great lengths to protect this secret, and if there is a psychic in a group he is assisting, he will not use his powers around that individual. Although on some level he believes that he would still be valuable in his field if people found out, he fears that no one would open up to him if they knew he could read their thoughts.

## Trinity Tower

### Aspects

Opulent Conference Center  
Home to Prestigious Think Tank  
Secret Base of Hostile Interdimensional Refugees

**Description:** Built in 1996 as a home for the emerging Sevren Group, the Trinity Tower sits across the lake from the Platinum Alliance Hotel. The tower has 25 floors and dominates the skyline often referred to as "Platinum Heights." The building's name comes from a large engraving on the marble causeway leading inside. The inscription reads:

*"Innovation, Perseverance, Fortitude. On this trinity we build toward a better tomorrow."*

The Sevren Group was founded as a think tank at the service of major corporations and political players. For a substantial consulting fee, the group will plot strategy, create marketing plans or political campaigns, and generally indulge the whims and fancies of their clients. They will hire out some of their employees to business clients who need talents and qualities that do not often surface from the usual candidate pool. For example, the group has twice been cited by the city for supplying personnel that were able



Michael Sevren, quietly meets behind closed doors with his most trusted clients. Numerous times tabloids like The Scout have linked rumors of insider trading, political tampering, and criminal activity to Sevren. Stark City's "legitimate" media outlets are often quick to dismiss the allegations. No charges have ever been filed and Mr. Sevren is never available to comment on such issues.

## Sever

**Vapor Shade Commander**

**Real Name:** Blade Commander Michael Sevren  
(known to the public without the military title)

### Abilities

Prowess 5  
Coordination 6  
Strength 3  
Intellect 5  
Awareness 6  
Willpower 4

Stamina 10  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Business Master  
Martial Arts Master  
Politics  
Power (Transformation)  
Stealth  
Weapons (Vapor Shade Sword)

### Powers

Gaseous Form 5 [Extra: Instant]  
Blast (Shooting) Device 4 - Pistol  
Strike (Slashing) Device 4 - Sword  
Teleport 5  
Transform (People) 3

### Qualities

Aristocratic  
Personal Code of Honor

### Challenges

Over-Analyzes Everything

***"We are the Kemuri-Kage, the shadow from the smoke of a cleansing fire. We are the first hint that your end is near."***

to negotiate the release of hostages. The first incident was during a bank robbery gone awry where the police chief's daughter was being held. The other was during the early 2000s, when the infamous techno-pirate Slash Code botched a raid on a technology firm.

The building is often used by those outside of the Sevren Group for its many qualities. Its restricted access, tight security, and proximity to the lake make it a secluded and desirable meeting place. The tower has several large meeting rooms that are available for rent. Conducting business within the tower also grants the clients immediate access to the army of lawyers, researchers, and technical specialists the firm keeps on staff.

Currently headed by Erika Hasegawa, the Sevren Group exists to build a better tomorrow by providing the best personnel to those who can afford it today. Ms. Hasegawa is a capable leader and conducts the day-to-day operations. The true expert in all matters of the group,

**Background:** Michael Sevren was a robust young man working for the Stark City Fire Department. Without any regard for self, he came to the aid of several costumed heroes during their final battle with the Gloriana Empire in 1972.

Sevren was given a citation for bravery and a menial job in City Hall. Taking the the measly wage he earned, Sevren put it to good use. Using a sharp mind and quick wit, he started to play the stock market. Clever investing resulted in Sevren becoming wealthy beyond his wildest dreams.

During the late 1980s, Michael invested his fortune in a fresh-faced city councilman, Arthur Knightley. As Sevren rose in power, he ensured that Knightley followed suit. Following a short stint in the Senate, Knightley returned to Stark City to seek the mayoral office, and won with Sevren's help. Pulling strings behind the scenes, Sevren was credited by many of pundits as the decisive factor in campaign.

In 1996, Michael capitalized on the fame he gained from Knightley's mayoral bid to create the Sevren Group, a think tank and public relations consulting firm. With ties to the stock market, political figures, and high-ranking business clients, the Sevren Group has become a sought-after commodity among the elite in Stark City and across the country. Now in his mid-60s, Michael is content to sit back and let the majority of the group run through Erika Hasegawa, his personal assistant. Rumors have circulated through high society that Lady H (as she is known) could be poised to inherit the group after Sevren steps down.

Away from prying eyes, Sevren is a much different figure. Michael Sevren is actually Blade Commander Sevren of the Vapor Shades, a clandestine organization that served the Empress of Gloriana. Originally sent through to our dimension to set the stage for the invasion, Sevren infiltrated the Stark City Fire Department before the assault. This allowed him an insider's view of the city's response to the invasion, and he could relay all that he heard to his masters. When Stark City's heroes rallied and began a counter-attack,

Sevren and the Vapor Shades abandoned their disguises to fight the heroes openly. As the battle was won by Stark City's defenders and the portal slammed shut, the Gloriana invasion army had retreated. In the chaos, Sevren was left behind, unsure whether he was alone.

The empire's humiliation was almost too much for Sevren to bear. He resolved to lay the ground work to ready things for the Gloriana Empire's conquest of this backward dimension. Citing a back injury and using a menial government job as a front, Sevren began to plan the return of the Albion-Nippon Empire.

On the surface, the Sevren Group is nothing more than a think tank servicing the wealthy and powerful. To those in the know, it is an organization that can plot election strategy, write policy statements, and even subtly affect change through back channels. The group also employs coercion, sabotage, bribery, and murder when more discreet methods won't get the job done.

Sevren's primary goal is to create a shadow army, loyal to him, that will be ready to take up the banner when the Gloriana Empire returns. He has dubbed them the Kemuri-Kage, the Smoke's Shadow. The Sevren Group simply gives him the cash flow to recruit thugs and foot soldiers, and to accrue secrets enabling him to blackmail the rich and influential into serving as his spies in the halls of power. He recruits the Vapor Shades foot soldiers from the ranks of Stark City's homeless, and his spies from the ranks of his corporate and political clients. None of Sevren's minions suspect his true agenda.

Also, he is tragically unaware of the presence of other Gloriana refugees in Stark City.

### **Using Sever and the Kemuri-Kage**

- The PCs' first encounter with the Vapor Shades can be as a result of an attempt on someone (assassination, kidnapping, extortion, etc.). If the players come to the victim's aid, they can encounter 1–3 Shades. If they are working in daylight (racketeering, extortion, etc.), they will most likely be dressed as businessmen. Covert strikes will see them in their uniforms.



• Heroes can face off against Lady H or Sever in the event they prevent the Shades from accomplishing their mission. Lady H will be dispatched with a group of 5–10 Shades, while Sever will only come with 1–4.

• Heroes with big business interests in the city can come into contact with Mr. Sevren or Ms. Hasegawa as a result of any number of transactions. If the city's elite have issues with the PCs' goals, they might ask the Sevren Group to persuade the PCs to "go another way." This intervention could take the form of meetings, subterfuge (such as the Sevren Group trying to buy whatever the PCs are after), or an attack by a squad of Vapor Shades.

• The Sevren Group and, by extension, the Vapor Shades prefer illusion and misdirection to direct conflict. While assassination is their stock-in-trade, they prefer subtle means if possible. Accidents and allergies (poison) are always preferable to bullets and blades. In the last decades they have also come into considerable corporate and political influence. If bankrupting a target and depriving him or her of treasured possessions will take the target out of the fight, then the Sevren Group will make it happen. They firmly believe in military strategy, and the number one rule of warfare is that deception is king.

• If pressed into combat, Sever is a ruthless foe who will attempt to take the fight into the shadows. He will shift into gaseous form, filling the area with smoke and fumes. He will then blink in and out of combat, shooting and stabbing, until he can find a way to remove himself from a direct fight.

## Lady H

**Real Name:** Erika Hasegawa

### Abilities

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

Stamina 11  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Business Expert  
Martial Arts Expert  
Pilot  
Politics  
Stealth  
Weapons (Vapor Shade Blades)

### Powers

Aquatic 5  
Blast (Blasting) Device 5 [Extra: Burst] - Coral Weapons (Thrown)  
Strike (Slashing) Device 5 - Coral Weapons (Blades)

### Qualities

Powerful Mind and Body  
Safe and Secure Near Water

### Challenges

Unknown Origins  
Living in Sevren's Shadow  
Uncomfortable Around Fire and Heat

**Background:** Erika grew up on the mean streets of Geartown, constantly hungry and desperate for a safe place to sleep at night. She would often sleep in drainage pipes and spillways, despite the sometimes-intense cold. As long as she was close to the water she felt strong and safe. When she was about twelve years old, several boys tried to assault her. She flew into a rage. When all was quiet she opened her eyes to find that her assailants were all dead and she was holding what looked like a knife made of some mysterious gray material. She ran for the water to try to wash it off. She

stared at her scarlet reflection in the water and noticed a second set of eyes looking back. Lashing out again, she formed a spear as the unknown man vanished into flaming blue smoke, only to reappear several feet from her.

The mysterious figure was Michael Sevren. He began by telling her he meant no harm, and that he knew of a place where she would be safe. He wrapped his coat around her as he walked her around the building into a waiting limousine.

Erika had been orphaned in a mysterious accident, and had been on the run ever since.

Sevren claimed that he knew what it was like to be alone in a city of strangers. Mr. Sevren adopted the young girl in short order, sensing she had some larger role to play.

With his support, Erika graduated from college and earned a master's degree in business and finance. All the while she trained her mind, Sevren helped her train her body, teaching her to use her strength and her gifts for combat. Over the years, Sevren has attempted to help her find her mother, even acting on a hunch that she might have some common ancestry with



the Atlanteans who recently relocated to Stark Lake and Geartown. The meeting was disastrous.

Erika is now Chief Operations Officer of the Sevren Group. Although she has a senior management position, she has, on occasion, led many a strike team to “work out” problems for a client. Sevren thinks of her as a daughter and trusts her more than anyone. Erika trusts Sevren completely. Even she does not know of his secret agenda.

## Vapor Shades

### The Kage

#### Abilities

- Prowess 4
- Coordination 4
- Strength 3
- Intellect 3
- Awareness 3
- Willpower 3
  
- Stamina 6
- Determination \*

#### Specialties

- Martial Arts
- Stealth
- Weapons (Vapor Shade Sword)

#### Powers

- Blast (Shooting) Device 4 - Pistol
- Strike (Slashing) Device 4 - Vapor Shade Sword

#### Qualities

- Code of Honor
- No Job Left Undone
- Hide a Sword Within My Smile (Deception)

#### Challenges

- Blindly Loyal to Sevren

## The Nimbus

### Aspects

Bird's-Eye View of the City  
Refurbished Police Dirigible  
Restaurant in the Sky  
Secret Hero Base

**Description:** In 2001, an SC-7 dirigible used by the Stark City Police Department was retired from service. Needing a massive retrofit and crippled by several mechanical problems, the SC-7 was put in “High Dock” until the city could get around to dismantling it.

An enterprising young entrepreneur named Lacy Kinkade secured funds to buy the old relic. Saving it from the scrap pile, Lacy brought in a crew to upgrade the structure and repair anything that needed tender loving care. As the repairs were made and new floor plans took shape, everyone seemed to notice one section of the ship that was being specially reinforced.

This special room was dubbed the “Cloud Kitchen,” and rumors of a flying restaurant circulated around the city.

Building buzz at the same time she built her airship, Lacy soon had reservations months in advance. When the first flight left from Nimbus Terrace, the only civilian dirigible dock in the city, the clients boarding shone almost as brightly as the paparazzi's flashbulbs.

The *Nimbus* has three decks. It boasts an elegant dining room with a full kitchen and bar occupying the middle deck. The upper deck is called the Olympus Room and can be used for a variety of functions. Built using recent innovations in smart-glass technology, the walls and floor are actually high-resolution video screens displaying feeds from cameras on the outside of the ship's superstructure. When activated, they give the illusion of floating in the clouds over the city below. The control station and engineering occupy the last floor and keep the *Nimbus* in the sky.

The staff is top-notch and includes some of the best chefs in the country. As the *Nimbus* is the only civilian dirigible in use in Stark City, the

route it takes is strictly controlled. Each dinner cruise or special event takes a route along the perimeter of Great Stark Lake before returning to Nimbus Terrace. There is a security detail on board every cruise, as well as several undercover police officers keeping watch.

## Freefall

**Real Name:** Lacy Kinkade

### Abilities

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

Stamina 9  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Aerial Combat  
Business  
Computers Master  
Electronics Expert  
Pilot  
Stealth  
Weapons (Guns)

### Powers

Binding Device 3 - Strap Pistol (3 mags/5 shots each)  
Damage Resistance Device 2 - Freefall Suit  
Flight Device 3 (Gliding Only) - Freefall Suit

### Qualities

Master Chef  
Well-Connected  
Wealthy

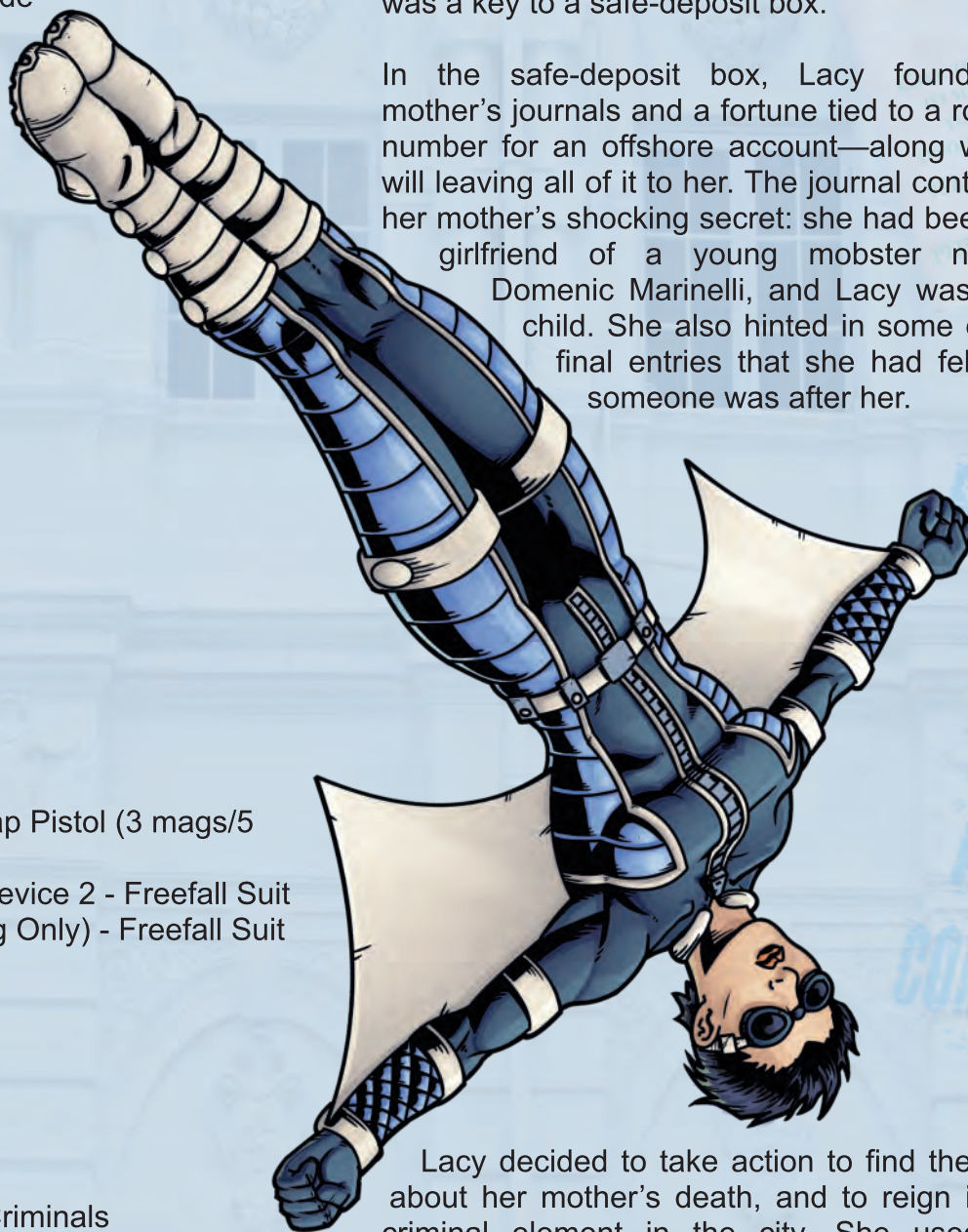
### Challenges

Hunted by Stark City Criminals  
Secret ID  
Dependent on Gear

**Background:** Lacy spent her youth surrounded by intense experiences. Her mother was ever the thrill-seeker, and was willing to take Lacy on all of her adventures.

Lacy returned to Stark City after studying business and food in Italy after her mother was in a severe car accident that left her in a coma. In a brief moment of consciousness, Lacy's mother said, "They came for me! You could be next! Freefall." Searching her mother's home after the older woman succumbed to her injuries, Lacy came upon a picture of herself and her mother skydiving. Behind the frame was a key to a safe-deposit box.

In the safe-deposit box, Lacy found her mother's journals and a fortune tied to a routing number for an offshore account—along with a will leaving all of it to her. The journal contained her mother's shocking secret: she had been the girlfriend of a young mobster named Domenic Marinelli, and Lacy was their child. She also hinted in some of the final entries that she had felt that someone was after her.



Lacy decided to take action to find the truth about her mother's death, and to reign in the criminal element in the city. She used the money to purchase the *Nimbus* and refit it to her needs. Calling on old friends from the culinary school in Italy, she brought together a team of renowned chefs to work in the airborne kitchen. She also used her mother's fortune to recruit a team of hackers and security experts to help her with her true mission for the *Nimbus*.

Whenever the *Nimbus* takes flight, Lacy's security team retires to a secret control room in the belly of the *Nimbus*. They use the ship's surveillance equipment as well as some of the most advanced wireless technology money can buy to hack Stark City and spy on the criminal element. Calling themselves "Freefall," they spy on those that would harm the innocent and play guardian angel to the police and heroes of Stark City.

### Using Freefall

- Lacy and her team are expert hackers and love to get eyes and ears everywhere criminals don't want anyone snooping. They host Freefall's Folly, a blog dedicated to rooting out corruption in the city. In recent months, the blog has resulted in a city councilman's dismissal, led police to a gun-running operation, and toppled a CEO from Tesla Industrial Park. GMs can use the Freefall's Folly blog to post tips, hints, or straight-out evidence that heroes can use in their missions. When the Folly posts a video, it is always Lacy, but blacked out and using a voice changer to disguise herself. They have been known to hijack broadcast, cable, and internet channels to get their message out.
- Lacy prefers to stay in the shadows and help other heroes. She considers her mission support rather than direct personal action. The only time the Freefall team would engage an enemy directly is if the *Nimbus* was boarded. If confronted onboard, Lacy and her team can "blank" the *Nimbus* computers and jump overboard, using their Freefall suits to glide to safety.
- Freefall can and will aid heroes "on mission." Lacy has hacked into personal communications and cell phones to talk directly to working heroes. She can feed them on-the-spot intelligence and help heroes break into secured areas.
- Lacy doesn't know whether to believe that she is Marinelli's daughter or whether he had anything to do with her mother's death. To root out the truth, she will go out of her way to aid in investigations of Marinelli (who now resides in the Catacombs).

## The *Nimbus*

### Abilities

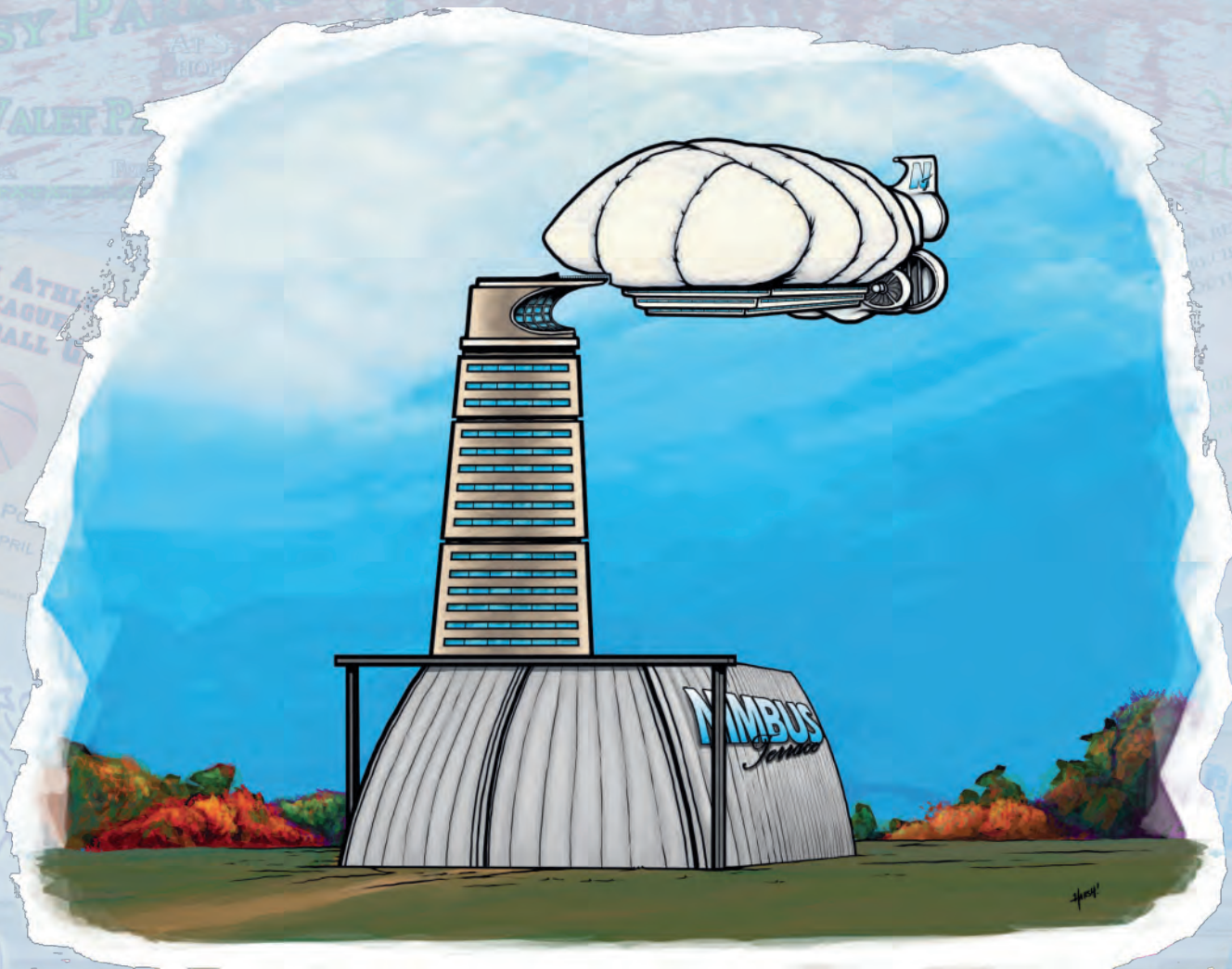
- Handling 2 (Vertical Take-Off and Landing)
- Speed 3 (effectively Flight 3)
- Structure 10

### Powers

- Damage Resistance 3
- Danger Sense 6
- Extra-Sensory Perception 8
- Illusion 6 (Olympus Room Only)
- Interface 8
- Super-Senses 5 [Infravision (Thermal Imaging), Extended (Telescopic) Sight +2, Extended (Parabolic) Hearing +2]

### Using the *Nimbus*

- The *Nimbus* is a flying restaurant. The *Nimbus* is not only a vehicle but a set piece. Any number of adventures can be had on board.
- A flying restaurant offers a captive audience for whatever the GM has planned. If a criminal event does occur, gaining entry for the heroes will present a major challenge to any groups without flight capability. The other side of the coin is that heroes on board have limited options for a way out should something occur.
- Lacy, as Freefall, has made a lot of enemies. The criminal underbelly knows that Freefall is responsible for making a lot of trouble, and actively hunts "him." Having criminals track Freefall to the *Nimbus* could present many adventure possibilities à la the "murder on the train" motif or any number of hostage scenarios. This could also lead to heroes confronting villains as they search for Freefall.
- Heroes and villains with hacking skills and knowledge of the *Nimbus* can try to hack into the ship's surveillance cameras, thus attracting Freefall's attention.
- Sabotage to the *Nimbus* itself (whether heroes are on board or not) could endanger the restaurant's patrons and present an excellent rescue scenario.



- The *Nimbus* is a fabulous restaurant. It is a nice place for cut scenes if the heroes can afford to eat there.

## Carrington International Airport

### Aspects

- Gateway to the World
- Center for Business and Commerce
- Noise Hassle
- Heightened Security

**Description:** Situated in the north end of the Platinum Coast, Carrington International Airport is a major hub for Stark City, uniting the worlds of business, entertainment, and travel. Named for famous baseball player turned adventurer, Charles “Chip” Carrington, the complex honors its namesake by standing as a gateway to Stark City and the world.

Carrington International Airport has four large runways (two running north to south and two east to west) that can accommodate most civilian and military aircraft. Miles of taxiways accommodate planes in various stages of arrival, departure, and storage. Hangars for the many airlines as well as those for private citizens dot the landscape. Planes of all types and descriptions can be seen in and around the hangars.

With the recent resurgence of Tesla Industrial Park as a technological dynamo, Carrington Airport expanded by adding a helipad business (with satellite pads throughout Stark City), making it possible for the captains of industry to move quickly around town. The airport also boasts a massive center for retail commerce dubbed the Promenade. The Promenade has become a major shopping center that rivals those of Lakeview Drive or Sycamore Plaza and features restaurants, delivery services, spas, business cafés, and a host of other businesses.

# The Vanities Health Spa

## Aspects

Exclusive and Secluded  
The Fountain of Youth  
Garden of Evil

**Description:** The Vanities Health Spa is the newest luxury service provider on the Platinum Coast, and caters exclusively to Stark City's rich and famous. Housed in a secluded old mansion that was recently renovated, the Vanities provides a full range of spa and health-club services and a supporting line of cosmetics and health-care products. The spa grounds are peaceful and pristine, and feature what has become Stark City's most acclaimed botanical garden. Most clients spend at least a weekend at the facility, although day packages are also available. The wealthiest patrons will splurge on a full month's stay to thoroughly enjoy all the treatments, programs, and facilities the Vanities has to offer.

The Vanities was created by Dr. Rose Thorne, a brilliant botanist and biochemist whose advanced years are mitigated by her classic beauty and youthful countenance. She is an effective motivational speaker, and her very appearance inspires her clientele to place their trust and loyalty in her hands (and money soon follows from their wallets and pocketbooks). She has developed her own line of exclusive cosmetics and health-care products, and her loyal customers—both women and men—swear by their anti-aging, weight-loss, and rejuvenating properties that seem to miraculously peel away the years and the pounds. Because the products live up to their guarantee, few balk at their expensive pricing.

The staff of the Vanities is made up entirely of women, each selected personally by Dr. Thorne for their adherence to the feminine ideals of beauty, strength, and intelligence. Helga Grundstrom, a gifted masseuse and former Olympic bodybuilder, is Dr. Thorne's second-in-command and serves as the facility's chief of security. All spa employees are highly trained in the martial arts and double as security officers.

Services include a full gym, saunas, indoor and

outdoor swimming pools, underground natural mineral water and mud baths, a weight-loss clinic, message therapy, beauty treatments, yoga classes, macrobiotic dietary services, daily seminars on a variety of health, beauty and fitness-related topics, and private, luxurious guestrooms.

## Botanika

**Real Name:** Dr. Rose Thorne, Ph.D.

### Abilities

Prowess 3  
Coordination 3  
Strength 3  
Intellect 5  
Awareness 4  
Willpower 6

Stamina 9  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Deception  
Mental Resistance Expert  
Science (Biochemistry) Master  
Science (Botany) Master

### Powers

Immortality Device [Suspension] - Fountain of Youth Potion  
Mind Control Device 6 [Addiction, Mindlink, Mindwipe, Rangeless; Limit: Situational (Affects Product Users Only)] - Botanical Cosmetics and Health Products  
Plant Control 6 [Binding, Plant Growth]

### Qualities

Timeless, Classic Beauty  
Seeks Wealth, Power, and Eternal Life

### Challenges

Vanity  
Fears Aging and Death  
Despises Madame Twilight

**Background:** The timelessly beautiful woman now presenting herself to Stark City as Dr. Rose Thorne, leading beauty consultant and health expert, harbors a dark and secret past that goes back centuries. Born Princess Ankhnesmery in



ancient Egypt, she dedicated her early life to the study of horticulture and herbalism in her father's royal gardens along the Nile. As the Pharaoh's daughter watched those around her grow older and weaken before their inevitable deaths, she became fearful of her own mortality. Obsessed with the idea of eternal life, she turned her attention to the plants in her gardens, whose flowers were reborn with each coming spring. After several years of painstaking research and experimentation, she was able to concoct a potion from the extracts of a rare Egyptian lotus flower that gave her the youthful immortality she so desired.

With all the time in the world to study and explore, Ankhnesmery learned to control plants to do her bidding and protect her. As the centuries rolled by, she traveled the world and changed identities, taking in all the knowledge she could. Her knowledge of biochemistry today, especially how it pertains to plants, comes from centuries of study—from early Egyptian elementalism through Greek atomism, medieval alchemy, and finally modern-day chemistry. To maintain the wealthy lifestyle she was accustomed to throughout the ages, she began to use her knowledge and powers illicitly and deceitfully for personal gain.

The immortal Egyptian princess has currently assumed the identity of the plant-controlling supervillain Botanika and is only concerned with her own immortality and staying young forever. She is entirely dependent on her Fountain of Youth potion to maintain her immortality, and carefully guards her most prized possession,



the sole remaining specimen of the now-extinct Egyptian lotus flower used in its formula. She uses the alias of Dr. Rose Thorne and the Vanities Health Spa as a front, and all of the women on her staff are her loyal henchmen (use the Ninja and Soldier stock character stats from the **Icons** core rulebook).

Botanika's knowledge has allowed her to develop a mind-control formula that she uses in her cosmetic and health products to manipulate her unsuspecting clientele. Her customers become addicted to the mind-controlling products because they actually work—she includes a derivative of her Fountain of Youth potion to make the customers look younger, grow thinner, and feel healthier. Eventually, the effects wear off until reapplied to the skin. Once she has clients under her mental control, Botanika compels them to commit crimes on her behalf and then erases their knowledge of the events that transpired. And they keep coming back for more, eagerly paying her for the privilege.

### Using Botanika

- Heroes with Immortality or the ability to travel through time might recognize Botanika from another age. For example, in the Victorian era, she was known as Lady Foxglove, and in 16th-century Florence as the Countess Belladonna Del Rosario.
- After a wealthy matron of Stark City society is detained for attempting to rob a Platinum Coast jewelry store at gunpoint, Roger Fentress of the Lakeview Drive Homeowners Association has called the heroes in to investigate, hoping to avoid Stark City Police involvement and a media scandal. When interviewed, the distraught woman claims she has no recollection of the incident, despite the dozens of witnesses who place her at the scene of the crime. Heroes familiar with the woman will notice that she appears much younger than she did at their prior meetings. If the heroes press Fentress, they will learn this is not the first time in recent weeks that a prominent socialite has committed a crime completely out of character. If the heroes investigate the other suspects, they will learn that they all have one fact in common: each recently patronized the Vanities

Health Spa where they seem to have found the Fountain of Youth.

## The Stark City Museum of Science and Natural History

**Description:** The Stark City Museum of Science and Natural History was founded in 1896. Built by the Malone family after the World Columbian Exposition, the museum was originally called the Stark City House of Curiosities, and was intended to keep track of the strange occurrences and objects that seemed to gravitate to the city. As interest and opportunity grew in Stark City, the museum soon began to take in any and all objects relating to the area. After a major fire swept through the city in 1905 (the third fire of this size since 1872), many of the artifacts in private collections and sideshows were gathered and moved to the museum. An expansion was funded during the 1920s to bring the museum up to “modern” specifications, as well as to ensure that there was enough room for all of the artifacts being acquired. Renamed the Stark City Historical House, the museum opened its doors to any who wanted to learn about the city's rich and sometimes bizarre heritage.

When a local fisherman discovered a massive fossil bed underneath Stark Lake in the 1940s, many members of the academic community came out to assist in excavating the remains. It wasn't long before the museum needed another expansion to house its ever-growing natural history wing. Rebranding itself as the Stark City Museum of Science and Natural History, the museum swung its doors wide open to provide a glimpse of the city's past as well as a peek at its future.

The museum currently sits in the Platinum Coast District of the city on a large lot. The massive building has one main hall and four wings as well as the newly constructed Tesla Technology Center. Each section contains a wealth of historical artifacts and interactive exhibits, with guided tours led by those well versed in the area's history. Although local

history dominates the floor, the museum has hosted many exhibits from around the world. The staff carefully researches and communicates how these foreign treasures link Stark City to the world (and vice versa). Curator Jason DeMarkos ensures that all the displays are meticulously crafted for maximum effect.

As Stark City continues to grow into the City of Tomorrow, the Museum of Science and Natural History will stand as a testament to what has come before and how that heritage shapes the future.

## The Sword

**Real Name:** Damocles (Jason DeMarkos)

### Abilities

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

Stamina: 12  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Athletics  
Occult  
Science (Archeology)  
Weapons (Blades)

### Powers

Immortality [Extra: Suspension]  
Magic 6 [Extras: Unique Spell - Detection (Power), Mastery; Limits: Ability-Linked (Willpower), Spell-Focus]\*

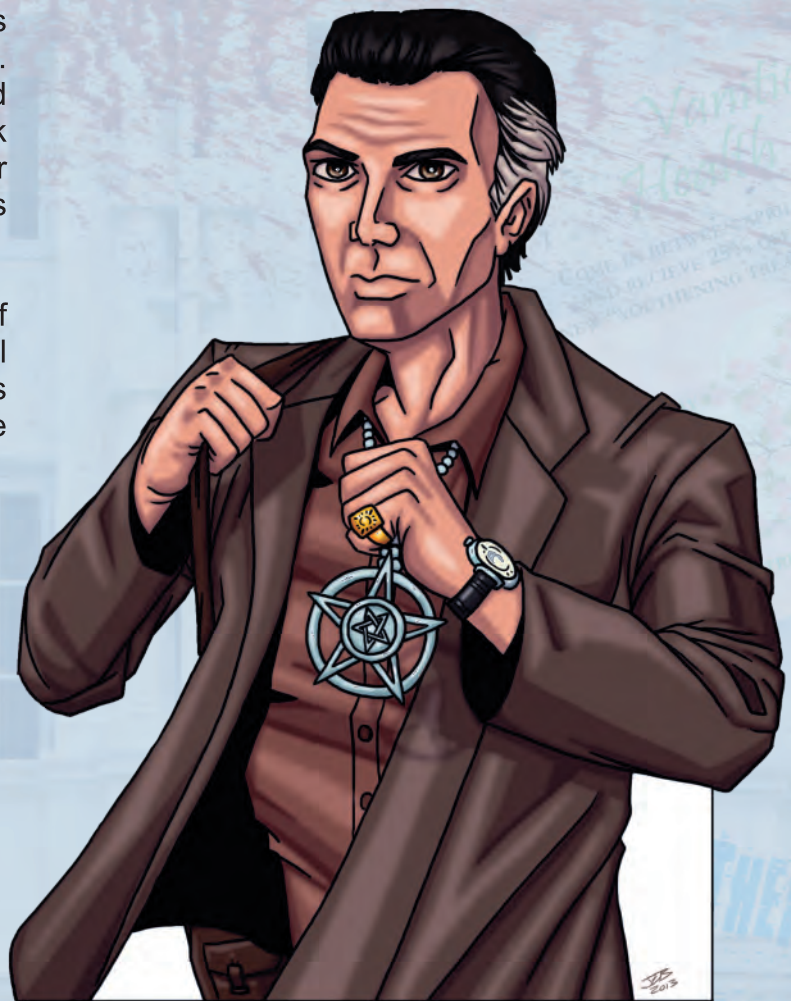
\*Signature Magic Spells: Detection (Magic, Power) and Power Nullification

### Qualities

Well-Connected

### Challenges

Burdened by Time (Remains Aloof, Failure to Form Friendships)



**Background:** Jason DeMarkos did not start life in the prestige that he knows today. He started as a house worker serving King Dionysius of Syracuse in the fourth century BC. He had approached his king and let slip that he wished he had the king's prestige and power. The king allowed him to sit in the throne for a day. As he sat, he had a sword poised over his head, kept aloft by a horsehair thread. The king used this to demonstrate that all power comes with a price. When the day was complete, the king saw the positive choices he had made and decided to give the man a position in his court. He would become a court adviser.

He traveled to foreign lands in service to his king. During one such expedition, he that he learned of a plot against King Dionysius. He intercepted an assassin who wielded a magical rod that called down lightning bolts. The king ordered that should he find such things in the future, they should be kept out of mortal hands.

# Person of Interest: Powerman

**Real Name:** Vral Vrezz'er

## Abilities

Prowess 5  
Coordination 4  
Strength 8  
Intellect 4  
Awareness 7  
Willpower 4

Stamina 12  
Determination \*

## Specialties

Occult Expert  
Science (Archeology) Expert

## Powers

Cosmic Power 7 [Ability Boost - Amulet of Might; Extras: Damage Resistance - Bracer of Resistance, Flight - Boots of Levitation; Limit: Ability-Linked (Awareness)]

## Qualities

Refugee from Alternate Earth  
Master Artifact Crafter  
Always Looking for Other Exiles from His Dimension  
Mysterious Champion of Law and Order  
Part of the Power Family

## Challenges

Misses His Hometown  
Driven by Duty  
Clashes with Doctor Tanutamun

**Background:** Vral Vrezz'er came from an alternate Earth where magic reigned supreme and was never supplanted by technology. In this world, he and his family were royal artificers at the court of Pharaoh Cheops XXII.

The strength of magic in Vral's world attracted the attention of the Teslacracy, who considered that magic-rich dimension too great a threat to ignore.

Teslacracy forces fought a pitched battle to conquer Vral's Earth. The defenders made them pay dearly for every inch, but with the resources of a hundred worlds at its disposal, the Teslacracy was formidable. Before the final battle, Vral scanned the multiverse and found one Earth that was shielded from the Teslacracy's predations—ours. Thanks to the shield erected by "our" Tesla, our Earth was relatively safe. Vral did a powerful teleportation ritual that sent him and his family to our world.



## Powerman (Continued)

Vral and his family found themselves in Stark City, near Tesla's old lab. In order to blend in, Vral decided his family would hide in plain sight as a supergroup. They adopted the moniker "Power Family," with Vral becoming the superhero Powerman, his wife Powerwoman, and his son and daughter Powerboy and Powergirl. They all have similar powers from artifacts they created to grant them flight, resistance to damage, and super-strength.

Upon learning of the Damocles Group's existence, Vral contacted them and offered to share his knowledge of the process of artifact creation on his world, and also to assist the Group on field missions. The partnership is still in its early stages, but is going well so far.

Powerman is always searching for other refugees from his homeworld. Unfortunately, the only one he has found so far is Doctor Tanutamun, a criminal and master magician. Tanutamun has powers very similar to those wielded by Vral and his family, but he lacks their moral compass. He used his powers to establish himself as a minor crime lord in Stark City. His stock-in-trade is crafting and selling powerful artifacts on the black market. Powerman and Damocles have clashed with Tanutamun on multiple occasions, but he has eluded capture so far.

DeMarkos's true identity as the mythic character Damocles (as well as how he came by his powers and immortality) is a closely guarded secret. DeMarkos considers keeping important and dangerous objects out of human reach his personal crusade. In service to this mission, he has made many enemies on both sides of justice. Although the Damocles Group and DeMarkos can be valuable allies in any fight against occult powers, they can be ruthless in their pursuit and recovery of dangerous objects. In certain circles, some speculation links the Sentinel's disappearance to the emergence of Damocles in Stark City.

## Damocles Group

The museum's restorations floor has a secret space set aside for the clandestine Damocles Group. Jason DeMarkos leads the group, which is dedicated to recovering objects that they believe should not be in human hands—objects ranging from mystical artifacts to super-science inventions. Throughout history, the Damocles Group has tracked down objects that can corrupt good people and make evil people more dangerous, and has removed those objects from the world stage.

Damocles has sought out capable men and women to recover these items and store them away from unsuspecting hands. Twelve Damocles Group agents currently operate in Stark City. Using the museum as a base of operations, they conduct recovery actions throughout the world. All recovered items are brought to the museum and placed in the ARC (Artifact Research and Containment), a special vault with a dispersion field that suppresses the energy of the collected items. The governments of thirteen countries have agreements with Damocles, and allow the group's agents to operate with absolute freedom within their borders.

The Damocles Group is highly secretive. The Chief of Police learned of their existence after an incident involving an assassin who tried to use a cursed pen to kill the mayor. The Damocles Group swiftly recovered the item and saved the day, with only the Chief of Police being clued into their existence. DeMarkos usually sends out agents in pairs. Normally, only one team will work in any given city at a time. DeMarkos will provide tactical support using the Group's resources and his magic. DeMarkos is a powerful sorcerer, but he has not done field work in years. Although he tries to minimize his personal involvement in recovery operations, he may venture out of the ARC to assist his field agents when they desperately need help. Recently, Damocles has forged an alliance with the superhero Powerman, and the success of this partnership has encouraged Damocles to contract with other heroes on occasion.

The Damocles teams are usually two normal humans (use the stats for soldiers, **ICONS**, pg. 117), armed to the teeth with both mundane and ARC weaponry. Once a psychically charged artifact has been recovered, it is fitted with a small metallic tag with a rune on it. Once the tag is placed somewhere on the object, it acts immediately to nullify its power. Super-science weapons and magical artifacts are placed in secure lockers inside of the Damocles Group's HQ at the museum.

### The Nullifier Tag

Power Nullification 10

Limit: Only works against mystically or psychically powered objects.

Stunt: power is nullified as long as tag is connected

### Using the Damocles Group

- A powerful villain with a magic weapon has designs on Stark City. The Group contacts the heroes and invites them to help bring the villain down. The Group offers a substantial reward for the heroes' service, with the caveat that the Group gets to keep the villain's weapon when he or she is defeated.

- An overzealous (possibly rogue) Damocles retrieval team has targeted a device in the possession of one of the PCs. The agents initially try to buy the object from the PC, but their methods will become more vigorous if their demands aren't met.



## Vari-e-Tea

### Aspects

Service to All, Special Service to Some

Why Won't This Gizmo Work?

Good Vibrations

Hidden Among the Leaves

## Wild Artifacts

Damocles secures super-science weapons and magical artifacts crafted by supervillains and evil wizards. Additionally, one of their primary goals is collecting "wild artifacts." "Wild artifacts" are mundane items that gain supernatural capabilities via a mysterious process. Experts theorize that these artifacts take on a psychic resonance from their owner during periods of great emotion. Some maintain that they might also draw their power from the psychic power of collective human consciousness.

Some examples of the "wild artifacts" in Damocles's collection include:

- John Dillinger's fake gun (Mind Control 6), used to orchestrate a prison break in Michigan City, Indiana (Mind Control 6)
- Napoleon's hat (Emotion Control (Respect) 8)
- Benjamin Franklin's kite (Electrical Control 5)
- J. Edgar Hoover's tiara (Mind Reading 5)
- Tex Avery's paintbrush (Animation 9)

**Location:** Lakeview Drive

**Description:** When the Vari-e-Tea and Scone Shop opened in 1987, it was a curious oddity that was quickly adopted by the trendy residents of the Platinum Coast. Serving tea and tea blends from around the world alongside brilliantly crafted pastries, the shop was an overnight success. As its popularity skyrocketed, the shop expanded to include a full line of custom-crafted coffees, a full kitchen staffed by chefs looking to break free of the mainstream, and triple its prior floor space.

The rich and famous that live in and visit the city love the outdoor patio. For some reason, the paparazzi avoid the place. Due to the master tea crafters, coffee blends, and interesting takes on comfortable food, Vari-e-Tea is a great place for Stark City's elite to enjoy a quiet diversion

from their day-to-day lives.

Sethunya Bwose moved to America from Africa in the late 1980s. After she graduated from Brown University, she took some of the tea from her first home and began to grow it in her new one. Experimenting with blending the different teas, she crafted several that she sold to a major tea maker. Using the money to start her tea shop, she never expected it to become as popular as it is. A friend to the community, she spends a great deal of time helping the community outside the Platinum Coast when she is not at her tea shop.

## Madame Twilight

**Real Name:** Sethunya Bwose

### Abilities

Prowess 3  
Coordination 3  
Strength 3  
Intellect 4  
Awareness 6  
Willpower 5  
  
Stamina 8  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Medicine  
Occult Expert  
Science (Botany) Expert

### Powers

Astral Projection 6  
Detection (Spirit) 4  
Precognition 4 [Limit: Sleeping]

### Qualities

Sucker for a Hard-Luck Case  
Supernaturally Well-Connected to Others Who Fight the Occult

### Challenges

Lost in Two Worlds (Exists Simultaneously in the Astral and Physical Planes)  
Affected by Supernatural Challenges that Affect Ghosts and Demons  
Botanika's Bane



**Background:** Sethunya arrived in America with her parents as a teenager from Nigeria. She worked hard and eventually received a full academic scholarship to Brown University. She had always loved the tea that her mother made for her, and she sought to share her gifts in her new homeland.

Teaming up with her best friend from college, Sethunya moved to Stark City and opened her tea shop. After they saw tremendous success, Sethunya expanded her business and was soon on the speed dial of Stark City's elite. Hand-crafting personal teas for some of her clients for everything from curing headaches to soothing the nerves of prominent executives, Sethunya became the elite's best kept secret.

Sethunya has a soft side for the less fortunate. She volunteers at several halfway houses and soup kitchens. In addition to her very robust life both in high society and among the city's poorer citizens, Sethunya is known to Stark City's metahuman population as Madame Twilight. As a young girl, Sethunya learned that she could see into the spirit realm. She was quickly given over to the "seer" in her city so that she could receive proper training. Shortly after arriving in the USA, she was visited by her seer, who taught her how to world walk. By stepping into the astral realm, she could travel great distances and observe things without being noticed. While on one such world walk, she encountered someone draining the blood from several students. The woman assaulting the students was using plants to restrain them, and when the woman turned, she could see Sethunya in her ghost form. She fled and called the police. She had saved the students, but had become the target of the beast that tried to kill them.

Now in Stark City, Madame Twilight serves the common people. She uses Vari-e-Tea to fund her many activities. She is a spiritual

leader for many in her community, as well an herbalist who gives natural remedies at no charge to the down-and-out. Aside from these contributions, she also acts as an advisor to those trying to hold the forces of darkness at bay in Stark City. Careful to hide her involvement in the fight, she only investigates away from the shop, and only in astral form. To be safe, she also issues help against the supernatural in the same way. She knows that Botanika is hunting for her. Luckily, her appearance in astral form differs greatly from the face she wears in public.

Sethunya arranged for a protective spell to keep evil supernatural presences away from Vari-e-Tea. As a side effect, photography and video-recording devices don't work within 100 yards of the shop.

### Using Madame Twilight

- Madame Twilight was deeply affected by her first encounter with Botanika. It drove her to become the person she is today. She wants to create a world where a positive community can foster enough positive power to drive away the darkness.
- If Madame Twilight learns of heroes fighting occult forces, she will often investigate them in astral form. When she is sure that they are what they appear to be, she can manifest herself to them directly (always in astral form). Once she bonds with a hero or team, she is quick to assist those who need her help. This includes crafting potions, contributing medical supplies, and giving advice on how to proceed against supernatural foes.
- Madame Twilight's visions come to her only in the form of dreams. If the dream is about a hero that she hasn't met yet, she will use her astral projection and the network of friends she has around the city to try to find that hero and give him or her the information she has.



## Broadcast Bar and Grille

### Aspects

Always a Camera Around  
Best Food in Platinum Coast  
Gossip Central

**Location:** Lakeview Drive

**Description:** Overlooking Lakeview Drive, the Broadcast is an upscale bar and grill that tries to play at a relaxed atmosphere. Mike Batista, a retired reporter previously employed by one of the biggest cable television news outlets, runs the restaurant. Mike traveled the globe for two decades to cover important world events. His most popular pieces were about the Grim Truth, a vigilante-style hero who tackled some of the worst criminals throughout the world. From terrorists to high-powered bank robbers, Grim tackled evil where he found it, with Mike following to report it.

After a close call in Afghanistan, Mike decided to retire. He turned his passion for the news toward his other love: food. He studied under some of the greatest culinary masters and he once again came into the spotlight, hosting cooking shows and catering exclusive parties. With the life of a celebrity once again creeping up on him, Mike decided to move to Stark City.

He opened the Broadcast, a bar and grill with a neighborhood atmosphere and three master chefs on duty. Set in the trendy Lakewood Drive section of Stark City, the Broadcast offers top-notch food and drink, and caters to all walks of life (much to the chagrin of the social elites who frequent the neighborhood). Photos of major world events dot the walls, and there is even a working photo booth where folks can have their pictures taken.

## The Grim Truth

Mike and Marcus Batista together were the vigilante known as the Grim Truth. The two brothers set out to be a bastion of truth after an unscrupulous reporter accused their mother, a senator, of accepting a bribe to vote for harmful legislation. An angry citizen, outraged at the story, pushed their mother in front of a bus, killing her. The incident pushed Mike into journalism as well as prompting him to adopt an alter ego as a vigilante. While Mike pursued truth on two fronts, his brother Marcus became a genius with a computer. The two worked in tandem. While Mike and his alter ego would cover the stories and punish the corrupt, Marcus would provide research and logistical support. If Mike's work ever required a physical confrontation, Marcus had the martial arts training to fill in as the Grim Truth when needed. It was perfect until Mike was grievously wounded while covering a story in Afghanistan, and decided to hang up his notepad and cowl.

Settling into Stark City, Mike and Marcus stayed active in the fight for truth. Mike created the Broadcast Bar and Grill. As it drew reporters and paparazzi from across the city, Mike used his position as owner to chat up the patrons and learn all the latest gossip and rumors. After hours, Mike and Marcus run the Underground, a secret meeting place beneath the bar. With several access points hidden around the city, those "in the know" can make their way to the Underground to meet with Mike, Marcus, and other heroes working in Stark City. Only the heroes that Mike and Marcus know of (and have investigated) will be allowed to enter. All others will find dead ends and misdirection. Those that find the Underground can tap into the resources of two master crimefighters trying to establish a network for heroes striving toward a better Stark City.

Mike Batista has cultivated certain types of regulars, and the Broadcast has become a favorite after-hours hangout (and gossip clearinghouse) for reporters, lawyers, cops, and public officials.

## The Underground

### Aspects

Only the Initiated

Secret Vigilante Meeting Place

**Description:** In the Underground, the Batista Brothers have set up a comfortable meeting place where heroes can collaborate on difficult cases. In addition to the central conference table, Marcus has a large computer workstation with holography capabilities, set up so that anyone in the room can see the display. Mike keeps the Underground stocked with first-aid supplies, food, water, and coffee. A back room holds several cots, allowing heroes on the run to use the Underground as a safe house.

Mike has not only become adept in the kitchen, but also in dressing wounds and administering first aid, thanks to his time in the field. He has patched up many of Stark City's heroes. As more heroes pass through the Underground, word of its existence has spread. Mike has amassed a large amount of medical gear, and has the knowledge to apply it should a hero come in needing assistance.

Heroes looking for a fresh pair of eyes on a case can try their luck at the Underground. The brothers can give their opinions on a case, or ask heroes they have helped in the past for information. Marcus can scour databases, tap into law enforcement resources, and in some cases hack his way into much-needed information. Mike is both a certified EMT and a skilled investigator. He is also an expert photographer, researcher, and criminologist who can help heroes by consulting on crimes or even by conducting firsthand surveillance.



# Lowell's Overlook Estates

## Aspects

Ancestral Estate  
Dark Hidden Secret  
Privacy and Privilege

**Description:** Built in 1865 as an overseer's house for the logging operations along the lakefront, the property now known as the Lowell Estate was Martin Lowell's family home. The estate has remained in the family ever since. The house sat vacant when the majority of the family moved west to follow logging interests just after World War 1. After serving in World War 2, James Lowell returned to Stark City, renovated the estate, and christened it Lowell's Overlook.

After the war, the property saw major construction to accommodate family and friends vacationing in the area. After some persuasion by his old Navy buddies, James built several houses on the property. Calling the property Lowell's Overlook Estates, he began to rent out the homes to war-weary friends looking for solitude.

Over time, Lowell's Overlook drifted back into the Lowell family's hands. Rosewood Manor is the most important of the four houses on Lowell's Estates. Named for the famous rose gardens first planted by Martin Lowell's wife, Rosewood Manor is the most understated of the compound, having only eight bedrooms, three bathrooms, a kitchen, a dining hall, a study, a pool, and a measly two-car garage. Rosewood Manor is considered the Lowell family's ancestral home in Stark City, and six generations of Lowells have lived under its roof, including Madison Lowell, the current head of the Lowell empire.

## Lady Sovereign

**Real Name:** Madison Lowell

### Abilities

Prowess 3  
Coordination 3  
Strength 3  
Intellect 4  
Awareness 5  
Willpower 7

Stamina 10  
Determination \*



## Specialties

Business Expert  
Leadership  
Occult Expert

## Powers

Magic 7 [Extra: Mastery; Limits: Ritualistic, Spell-Focus]  
Prowess Boost 5 [Limit: Preparation]

## Qualities

Hungry for Power  
Rich and Infamous  
Loyal to the Slithering Gods

## Challenges

Weakness to Silver (+2 on Attacks)

**Background:** Madison Lowell took control of the family business, Lowell United, a few years ago after the death of her older brother Jacob. In the years since she has taken control, Madison has diversified Lowell United into more than just a shipping concern. With new divisions in energy, defense, and even private space travel, Lowell United has gone from a failing shipping firm to a thriving conglomerate. If she had any doubters among the board, they have gone silent in light of the massive profits she has brought to the company.

This success affords Madison a degree of privacy and privilege in the city that few enjoy, enabling her to hide the fact that she serves the Slithering Gods. An ancient force that has long slumbered, the Slithering Gods were most likely the basis for legendary creatures such as Tiamat, the kraken, and the old gods as depicted in horror novels of the 1920s.

As her magical powers have grown, Madison has begun to gather a small following among those she feels are key in Lowell United and the city.

The Sovereign Circle, an organization Madison founded, has become the subject of rumor and admiration in Stark City boardrooms. Outsiders think of it as a prestigious club or fraternal organization for the corporate elite. In fact, the Circle is a cult serving the Slithering Gods (called the Sehrune in the Circle's secret



tongue). The Circle has an abiding interest in Stark City because of the area's reputation for weak dimensional barriers.

Madison's goal (and the purpose of the Sovereign Circle) is to eventually gain enough magical power to break down the barriers between worlds and bring the Slithering Gods to Earth. To do this, the barriers must be weakened over a period of years through ritual, sacrifice, and dark magic. Madison has performed one such ritual since taking command of Lowell United. It is only a matter of time before she is strong enough to conduct another.

## Using the Sovereign Circle

- The Circle seeks to weaken the dimensional barriers that keep the Slithering Gods restrained and unable to enter "our" world. Smaller rituals, conducted secretly throughout the city, build up power to fuel larger ones. These rituals might include sacrifice (which could entail murder, or a kidnapping for a single drop of blood), torture, divination, or theft. The heroes likely become aware of the Sovereign Circle's activities by following up on tips about a rash of kidnappings

near the Platinum Coast. Mystical heroes might sense the Circle's rituals as the barriers between worlds weaken

## Vile

**Real Name:** Turiq Faris Azwari

### Abilities

Prowess 7  
Coordination 7  
Strength 5  
Intellect 3  
Awareness 3  
Willpower 5  
  
Stamina 10  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Athletics  
Computers  
Drive  
Martial Arts  
Stealth  
Weapons (Blades)  
Weapons (Bludgeons)  
Weapons (Guns)

### Powers

Blast (Shooting) Device 4 - Semi-Auto Pistol  
Darkness Control 5 [Extras: Super-Senses (Infravision), Shadow Shaping]  
Strike (Slashing) Device 4 - Combat Knife  
Teleport 5 [Extra: Flurry]

### Qualities

Cold and Calculating  
Efficiently Evil

### Challenges

Vulnerable to Silver and Cold Iron Weapons (+2 to Attacks)

**Background:** Vile (aka Turiq Faris Azwari) is Madison's personal facilitator and a devoted servant of the Slithering Gods. He has a cadre of men who act as his personal staff. When Madison wants events to move in a desired direction, she sends Turiq and his minions to manipulate things as needed.



The Red Vipers are Vile's personal security force. He has used them for kidnappings, theft, and torture. He has even sacrificed them in his own defense (and sometimes to power rituals). They believe they are the fist of the Slithering Gods, and are willing to die in their service. Vile usually has a compliment of five Red Vipers with him at all times. When in public, the Vipers wear business suits and red glasses. When on an operation, they wear tactical uniforms with red body armor. (Use the Cultist and Soldier stock characters from **ICONS** to represent the Red Vipers.)

## Sycamore Park Complex

### Aspects

"If you have to ask, you can't afford it."  
Always Crowded  
Conspicuous Consumption

**Description:** The Sycamore Park Complex is a popular indoor mall in the Platinum Coast area, featuring more than 150 high-end shops, art



galleries, and restaurants. The surrounding area is sometimes called the “Velvet Rope Ghetto” because a number of the city’s high-end bars and clubs ring Sycamore Park. Additionally, the galleries in Sycamore Park often host exhibits by nationally renowned artists. Five-star hotels and high-rent condominium buildings dot the nearby area. As one would expect, the Stark City Police have a substation within the mall, and the area is patrolled day and night by private security as well.

Attached to the Sycamore Park Complex is the Platinum Coast Events Center, where a series of mysterious explosions wiped out a third of the Stark City Police Department (including almost all senior leadership) on October 12 of last year. Dubbed the “Black Friday attack,” the incident is still under investigation. While the event center is being rebuilt, an impromptu memorial to the fallen police officers has sprung up along a section of sidewalk that is still blackened from the attack.

## Midnight Moth

**Real Name:** Tonia Glover

### Abilities

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

Stamina 7  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Criminology  
Deception  
Investigation  
Stealth  
Martial Arts Expert

### Powers

Invisibility 7 [Limit: Chameleon]  
Phasing 7

### Qualities

Famous (Reformed) Villain  
Security Expert  
Finger on the Pulse of the Underworld

### Challenges

Suspect in Black Friday Attack

**Background:** The merchants of the Sycamore Plaza had a conundrum. They ran the most popular high-end shopping center in the state,

but a constant stream of attacks and thefts by supervillains were cutting into revenue. Their solution was to hire a super-thief to keep the other super-thieves out.

Midnight Moth (aka Tonia Glover) was a flamboyant, mutant cat burglar with phasing and camouflage powers. She was arrested during a heist at the the Stark City Museum of Science and Natural History. After doing a stint in Strkyer Federal Penitentiary and going through the Odysseys House rehab program, she emerged as a reformed villain and was promptly hired by Sycamore Plaza as their head of security. During the first six months of her term at Sycamore, thefts and successful supervillain attacks dropped considerably as the security measures she implemented proved effective.

Building on her success at Sycamore, Glover has parlayed her former notoriety into a career, and has consulted on security for most of the museums and banks in Stark City. Her very public redemption has given rise to rumors that she is the Midnight Angel, a vigilante pirate DJ who broadcasts tips and information about the operations and schemes of various supervillains and criminal operations in Stark City. While admitting that her familiarity with the Stark City underworld is an advantage in her current position as a security consultant, Glover has emphatically denied the rumors linking her to the Midnight Angel.

In the wake of the Black Friday attack, Glover has been facing a different kind of suspicion. Her defense that she had designed the complex's security protocols to guard against meta-powered thieves and stick-up artists—not a full-fledged assault—have fallen on deaf ears, and the *Scout* tabloid has even suggested that she be investigated as a possible collaborator.

### Using Midnight Moth

- Glover has a vested interest in clearing her name in the Black Friday attack, and her underworld contacts give her a pretty good idea about where to start. She reaches out to the heroes to help her investigate and bring the real perpetrator to justice.



- Glover challenges the PCs to break into a museum or bank she has recently hardened with a variety of force fields, security robots, and other gadgets. It's a televised event that will draw publicity for her and her customer as well as raising money for charity (she's promised to pay \$10,000 to the charity of the heroes' choice if they succeed).

# Tesla Industrial Park

## Theme

The greatest combination of futurists, mad scientists, and super-geniuses in the nation.

## Scale

A small city neighborhood, roughly a rectangle approximately eight blocks long by four blocks wide.

## Aspects

**Science!** Is a Two-Edged Sword

Attracts Great Minds

The Cutting Edge Is Last Year's Tech

## Location

Tesla Industrial Park lies west of downtown Stark City (that is, the Silver District). To its south is the Stark City University student ghetto of Hobbes.

**Description:** Tesla Industrial Park is the technology center of Stark City. Here you can find pure R&D firms engaged in super-science (such as Paragon Engineering), defense contractors (such as ARES and Maniacal, Inc.), and various other high-tech firms working on super-science and bleeding-edge technology. Stark City University is also based here.

In 1891, the wealthy industrialist Richard D. Danforth provided a substantial endowment to found Stark City University. Danforth selected Stark City over New England because of the city's reputation as a growing center of industry. At the same time, Danforth also endowed several science departments, to emphasize that Stark City University would focus on pragmatic topics. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics were, and continue to be, SCU's focus. The Regents take the University's mission very seriously. They encourage graduate research to advance technology and develop a meritocracy, rather than purely intellectual pursuits or ivory-tower elitism.

Enticed by the University's mission, an offer of unlimited electricity from the nearby power plant, and a large financial investment from Adrian Colter enticed Nikolai Tesla to establish

a state-of-the-art laboratory near SCU in 1923. As Tesla's experiments continued, he started bringing his vision into reality. The neighborhood became the first and only location to have wireless electrical transmission for all buildings. Tesla coils provided wireless telegraphy to all of the homes in the neighborhood as well. As Tesla's inventions transformed the neighborhood, it shed its old nickname of "Colletown" and became "Tesla Industrial Park."

In 1928, while experimenting with transcontinental wireless communications, Tesla intercepted a transdimensional message. He attempted unsuccessfully to communicate with the source. Shortly thereafter, the Teslacracy contacted Nikolai Tesla and offered him the secrets of dimensional travel, deep space travel, and near-immortality—in exchange for assistance in subjecting the Earth to the Teslacracy's rule. Tesla refused the offer, and the Teslacracy initiated their invasion with an attempt to kill Tesla. Tesla survived through the use of his death-ray technology and with the help of the Sentinel. Afterward, Tesla created a massive wireless electricity generator to charge the multiversal ether around our planet. Tesla believed that the energy shield thus created would protect Earth from the Teslacracy for decades.

From his brush with the Teslacracy until his disappearance in 1943, Tesla worked tirelessly to prepare the invasion he feared inevitable. He described his ultimate project as a "teleforce" weapon capable of bringing down a fleet of enemy airplanes from hundreds of miles away. Tesla never demonstrated his "death ray" or "peace ray," as it was alternately called in the press. When Tesla disappeared, the Federal Bureau of Investigation seized all of Tesla's research that they could locate.

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In the years after Tesla, the neighborhood has continued to witness invention and scientific advancement, even if it has lost some of its eccentric charm. The Tesla coils providing wireless lighting, electricity, and telegraphy still exist, but are no longer powered. The city only recently shut them down because of their interference with cell phone towers.

## Moreau Laboratories

### Aspects

Tarnished Reputation

Living on Borrowed Time

Discreetly Looking for New Talent

**Description:** In the 1950s and '60s, the world followed the exploits of Dr. Marvin Moreau as he traveled the world making scientific discoveries in its darkest corners and applying the knowledge to create his own inventions. Dr. Moreau founded Moreau Laboratories to take advantage of his discoveries. Through his travels, Dr. Moreau “discovered” several indigenous medical cures that he was able to synthesize for commercial distribution. The revenue from these drugs provided him with large amounts of seed money to pursue his more exotic research goals. Moreau Laboratories conducts basic and applied research in oncology, immunology, neuroscience, metabolism, and infectious disease.

As Moreau aged, he traveled less, and began to think about the future. He decided that he needed a son to whom he could impart his vast knowledge and who could carry on his legacy. Moreau set about acquiring genetic material from the best and brightest minds of his generation to combine with his own to create the greatest scientific mind of the next generation. Moreau invented a procedure to implant genetic material of his choosing in a carrier embryo, and an artificial womb that

could incubate a child to term without needing a biological mother. Dr. Moreau’s experiment produced his son, Marvin “Buddy” Moreau, Jr.

Buddy grew up at his father’s side, but despite Dr. Moreau’s best efforts, Buddy lacked his father’s scientific genius. After Dr. Moreau’s death, Buddy struggled to live up to his legacy. Buddy turned the company’s administration over to his bodyguard, valet, and trusted confidant Robert Mondo. Buddy transformed Mondo into a man-lizard in a regrettable lab accident, but Mondo still manages to keep Moreau Labs running as a business. Buddy tried to compensate by using his father’s inventions to fight crime as Doc Chimp, aided by Mondo, who takes on the role of Doc Chimp’s sidekick, Komodo.

Despite Mondo’s best efforts, Moreau Laboratories is on the decline. Its revenue has greatly decreased as Dr. Moreau’s patents have expired and generic versions of the drugs have come to market. Meanwhile, Buddy has not produced anything resembling a commercial success. To provide much-needed cash for the company, Mondo sold the patent for Moreau’s genetic combinator and artificial womb to NyxTech. The company is bleeding cash and has incurred millions in debt. Buddy continues to attempt to replicate his father’s success, but has only a series of failed experiments to show for it. Mondo has also sunk millions into research toward reversing his transformation into a man-lizard.

At its height, Moreau Laboratories had 200 researchers and scientists and 40 post-doctoral researchers, who consistently published in various medical and scientific journals. The current staffing levels are a fraction of that level, and only about 20 researchers currently work at the company. Mondo has initiated a recruiting drive to develop the next generation of scientists and researchers. Buddy still is the nominal leader of the Moreau Laboratories research team, but Mondo has attempted to keep him insulated from recruiting and decision-making. Mondo worries that if Buddy finds out about the effort, it will only hurt his feelings and Buddy might undermine his efforts or dismiss him as CEO. Although Buddy is the majority

shareholder of Moreau Laboratories, Mondo feels a duty to the other shareholders. As the share price has dropped, Mondo has purchased a large percentage of the outstanding shares himself.

## Doc Chimp

**Real Name:** Marvin "Buddy" Moreau  
**Origin:** Birthright

### Abilities

Prowess 6  
Coordination 5  
Strength 5  
Intellect 2  
Awareness 5  
Willpower 5  
  
Stamina 10  
Determination 2 (if used as PC)

### Specialties

Science (Biology) Expert

### Powers

Damage Resistance 5  
Magical Attack Resistance 8  
Strike (Bashing) 6  
Transforming Ray (Animals) Device 3 [Extra:  
Instant; Limit: One Type (Primates Only)]

### Qualities

Likes to Punch  
Progeny of Famous Action Scientist (Marvin Moreau)  
Chimp Fancier  
Works with Komodo, His More Competent Valet/Sidekick/Bodyguard

### Challenges

Bad Luck  
Sworn Enemy of PETA  
Has Trouble Using Inventions

**Background:** Decades ago, the world hung upon every word that passed Dr. Marvin Moreau's thick mustache. Moreau's exploits were plastered on the cover of every magazine and newspaper as he traveled the world, making discoveries in its darkest corners and applying that knowledge to inventions and

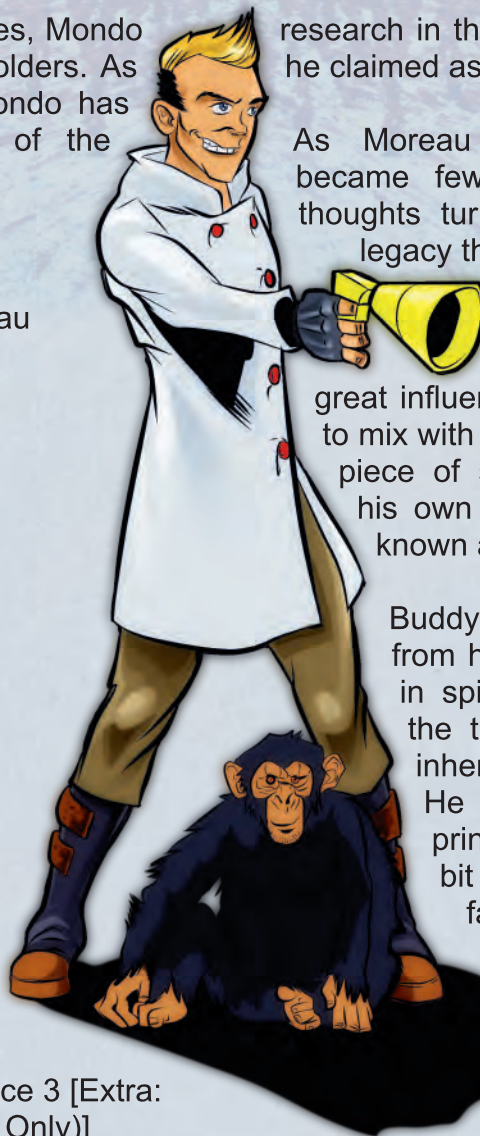
research in the many areas of expertise that he claimed as his own.

As Moreau got older, his expeditions became few and far between, and his thoughts turned to the future and to the legacy that he owed it. He would have a son and pass his knowledge onto him, thereby securing humanity's future. Using his great influence to acquire genetic material to mix with his own, he built a monumental piece of scientific machinery and grew his own son, Marvin Moreau, Jr., also known as "Buddy."

Buddy spent his early life learning from his father as best he could. But in spite of his father's best efforts, the truth was that Marvin had not inherited the elder Moreau's genius. He grasped basic science principles very well, but he was a bit of a dim bulb and lacked his father's spark for invention and keen insight.

Still, Moreau loved his son and took him on his adventures. The younger Moreau turned out to be handy in a tough spot, as he was a formidable pugilist. Once while fighting witch doctors in the Amazon, Buddy was blasted with a magical enchantment—but instead of harming him, the enchantment was absorbed into his flesh, granting him a high degree of resistance to both physical damage and magic.

After his father's death, Buddy struggled to live up to his legacy. Lacking any great intelligence, Buddy focused on being a hero, using one of his dad's greatest inventions, the Moreau Transformation Ray Pistol, as his heroic sidearm. His trusty sidekick, the hero Komodo (who had accidentally been transformed into a man-lizard during one of Buddy's public appearances) keeps Moreau Labs running as a business. Komodo also provides the basic common sense and competence that allows Buddy to be an effective hero.





**JOB FAIR**  
BEGIN YOUR FUTURE  
WITH US TODAY

After a recent adventure in the sewers underneath Stark City, the Transformation Ray Pistol was damaged. Its species selection dial was locked into the “primate” category. Sadly, neither Komodo nor Buddy knows how to repair the gun. However, Buddy has decided to “look for the positive,” and has capitalized on this mishap by making it his trademark and adopting the heroic moniker of Doc Chimp.

PETA and the Stark City Police have both raised questions about the dozens of chimps that Buddy creates on his campaign against crime. So far, Buddy has been able to placate them with promises to develop a way to reverse the process. There’s no telling how long that will last, though ...

## Komodo

**Real Name:** Robert Mondo  
**Origin:** Transformed

### Abilities

Prowess 6  
Coordination 5  
Strength 6  
Intellect 5  
Awareness 8  
Willpower 5

Stamina 11  
Determination 1 (if used as PC)

### Specialties

Acrobatics  
Martial Arts Expert

### Powers

Power Nullification 6  
Precognition 4  
Strike (Bashing) 6 [Extra:  
Secondary Attack (Affliction:  
Nauseate)]  
Swinging Device 6 - Grappling  
Gun

### Qualities

The Swinging Serpent of Justice  
Wants to Find a Cure

### Challenges

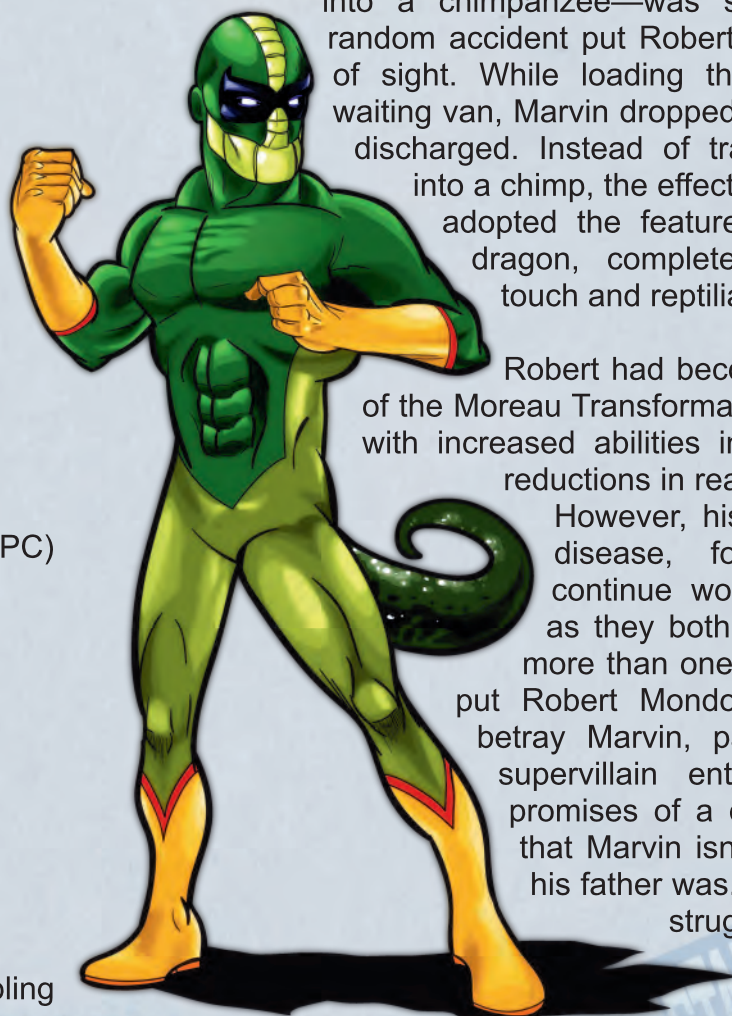
Dangerous Touch  
Strange Appearance  
Tempted to Stray  
Powers Ineffective Against Constructs

**Background:** Robert Mondo was a professional bodyguard when he met the son of the famed Dr. Marvin Moreau. Marvin the younger was giving a demonstration of the Moreau Transformation Ray Pistol, which the press had dubbed the “Chimp Gun.” Robert was Marvin’s bodyguard, hired to protect him and the “Chimp Gun” from being taken by those who would use the weapon for evil.

The planned demonstration—changing a dog into a chimpanzee—was spectacular, but a random accident put Robert in the pistol’s line of sight. While loading the device into the waiting van, Marvin dropped the weapon and it discharged. Instead of transforming Mondo into a chimp, the effects were strange. He adopted the features of the Komodo dragon, complete with nauseating touch and reptilian skin.

Robert had become another victim of the Moreau Transformation Ray Pistol, but with increased abilities instead of crippling reductions in reason and capability.

However, his touch can cause disease, forcing Robert to continue working with Moreau as they both seek a cure. One more than one occasion, this has put Robert Mondo in a position to betray Marvin, particularly when a supervillain entices Mondo with promises of a cure, or points out that Marvin isn’t half the scientist his father was. Robert continually struggles between the hope that Marvin can find a cure, and just venturing out on his own to find his own cure for this disease, even if it means throwing in with the seedy criminal underbelly of Stark City.



## Using Komodo, Doc Chimp, and Moreau Laboratories

- Characters with scientific backgrounds could be drawn to Stark City through job interviews with or offers of employment from Moreau Laboratories.
- Mondo wants to hire scientific leaders who can pull Moreau Laboratories out of its slow, inevitable downward spiral. If Mondo cannot achieve that, he may turn to less reputable strategies for securing income. Moreau Laboratories could easily serve as weapons supplier or underground medical facility for Stark City's criminal element. With Doc Chimp, a popular if not terribly effective superhero as its public face, Moreau Laboratories could long avoid suspicion of collusion with supervillains.
- Doc Chimp's late father, Marvin Moreau, invented dozens of special-use items that had little to no commercial value. These sit in a warehouse in the Moreau Laboratories complex. The characters may need access to such a device, and would be forced to negotiate with Mondo for its use or locate it surreptitiously.
- The PCs or innocent bystanders could be exposed to some of Moreau's handiwork when Mondo unknowingly authorizes the rental of "unused" storage warehouses, and renters discover the bizarre creations or auction them off.

## Impossible Technology, Inc.

### Aspects

"Impossible" Just Means We Haven't Tried It  
Yet

Scientific Advancement Trumps Profits  
Weird Is the Order of the Day

**Description:** Andrew Cook, aka Kid Impossible, founded Impossible Technology, Inc., after cashing out his employee stock options in Valkyrie International. Cook left Valkyrie with the sole intention of putting research first and profits second. Impossible Technology's first major product was a device

that allowed owners to communicate with their dogs. In essence, it was a worn telepathy device giving audible expression to the wearer's thoughts. Of course, only the ridiculously wealthy could afford the \$50,000 device—and once owners discovered that their beloved animals wanted nothing but to play, eat, and sleep, the novelty wore off.

Impossible Technology has used the base technology to create similar communications devices allowing most mammals to "talk." The market for such devices was relatively small until someone suggested creating one for humans to use. Cook had never thought of that application. His "MenCom" (Mental Communicator) is now commonly used by stroke victims and other people unable to speak. Impossible Technology employs a staff of 300 scientists and engineers to perfect and improve this technology. The profits from these devices fund Cook's current research and his small team of scientists.

Very few of Cook's inventions are commercially successful, because they often solve problems that don't exist or have limited practical application. Among Cook's successful research areas are time travel, deep-space exploration, and interdimensional communication. Impossible Technology's time travel device worked, to a point. When Cook completed it and powered up the device, an exact duplicate of himself appeared, claiming to be a future version of Cook. The future Cook instructed the present-day Cook to destroy the device and abandon all efforts in that line of research. Cook has, thus far, reluctantly obeyed the future Cook's instructions. Cook's deep-space exploration project has yet to bear fruit, but looks promising. He is attempting to create an Alcubierre drive, which requires exotic particles that possess negative mass and a power source sufficient to replicate the energy production of a small star. External observers estimate that a workable prototype might be available for interplanetary travel within a decade. Cook's interdimensional communications project is the subject of *Improbable Tales #8, Extraordinary Journey*.

# Kid Impossible

**Real Name:** Andrew Cook

**Origin:** Trained

## Abilities

Prowess 2

Coordination 3

Strength 3

Intellect 7

Awareness 4

Willpower 3

Stamina 6

Determination 1 (if used as PC)

## Specialties

Computers Expert

Electronics Master

Mechanics Expert

Medicine Expert

Science (Biology) Expert

Science (Chemistry) Expert

Science (Genetics) Expert

Science (Physics) Master

## Powers

Gadgets 7 [Extra: Arsenal (Binding [Extra: Burst], Force Field [Limit: Temporary], Shrinking Ray, Teleport [Limit: Location-Specific (only allows transport to laboratory))]; Limit: Ability-Linked (Intellect)]

## Qualities

Respected in the Scientific Community  
Friendly with Matteo Rodrigues, CEO of Valkyrie International  
Scientific Super-Genius  
CEO and Chief Technologist of Impossible Technology, Inc.  
Wants to Create the Future

## Challenges

Bad Luck

No Business Sense

Awkward Teenager

Clueless Academic

**Background:** Andrew Cook was a child prodigy. He spoke at six months, passed his high school equivalence exams at age three, and got his first Ph.D. at eight. Despite his



obvious brilliance, few were willing to put an eight-year-old in charge of an R&D lab. Matteo Rodrigues, CEO of Valkyrie International, saw Cook's potential and hired him. After working for several months at Valkyrie International, Cook decided to pursue another Ph.D. in medicine. His dissertation led to a dozen patents in advanced bio-technology—none of which earned him a penny.

Cook had several problems relating with his co-workers and subordinates. Few took the child seriously in the lab. Cook would often propose outlandish, overly complicated solutions to problems. His solution might require an entirely new field of science to work. His co-workers almost uniformly dismissed his solutions as "impossible." When Cook created an engine that got 250 miles to the gallon, he proved his colleagues wrong. Of course, the engine was completely impractical and contained over a million dollars in exotic materials. His colleagues took to calling him "Kid Impossible," and the name stuck.

## Using Kid Impossible and Impossible Technology

- To prevent an invasion from the Teslacracy, Nikolai Tesla created a massive wireless electricity generator in Stark City and used it to charge the multiversal ether around our planet. He intended to create a protective shell between this dimension and all others. There have been two known incursions into Stark City from extra-dimensional sources (the Gloriana Invasion and the Caudatians of Improbable Tales #8, Extraordinary Journey). There are several possible explanations why Nikolai Tesla's efforts stopped the Teslacracy but did not stop the more recent attempts. Tesla's energy field may be susceptible to burrowing techniques deployed by the Gloriana and Caudatian visitors. The shield may need to be recharged. Modern-day alterations to Tesla's network of Tesla coils may have weakened the shield or disabled it completely.

- Kid Impossible's efforts into interstellar travel will eventually bring him into conflict with the

Sirian Principality and other extraterrestrial threats. If the PCs assisted Kid Impossible in the past, he may request their assistance again in piloting his experimental interstellar spacecraft.

- Impossible Technology can always be used as a location for any adventure involving science run amok.

## Valkyrie International Aspects

The Best Medical Assistance Money Can Buy  
Intensive Care or Invasive Care?  
Combat Medics Wanted

**Description:** Valkyrie International, founded by Matteo Rodrigues, is a large manufacturer of medical devices. The company fills a unique niche. It specializes in producing cutting-edge medical monitors. The devices can be worn or implanted subcutaneously, and they remotely, automatically monitor the subject's health. Valkyrie maintains a dedicated team of medical professionals to monitor the data streams at all times.

Device users must subscribe to the monitoring service, although they can choose from several plans. Valkyrie contacts local emergency services when clients at the silver level experience a medical emergency. Gold members receive constant medical monitoring of blood chemistry, respiration, and heart function. Physicians monitor clients for any changes or warning signs, and suggest more extensive medical examinations if needed. Valkyrie also maintains a crack extraction team of paramedics, physicians, and surgeons for platinum-level clients needing immediate medical assistance. Diamond membership is available to metahumans, police officers, firefighters, and other individuals in high-risk positions.

The firm's manufacturing center is located in Stark City, but Valkyrie also employs thousands of medical professionals across the country to respond to their users' needs. Valkyrie has flight-certified medical extraction teams in every major metropolitan area. Helicopters and vertical take-off and landing jets equipped with state-of-the-art medical equipment can be deployed anywhere in the



country. If a client needs immediate medical attention, a medical team on the vehicle can perform the emergency operation or stabilize the patient for transport to a hospital.

## The Cowl

**Real Name:** Matteo Rodrigues

**Origin:** Transformed

### Abilities

Prowess 6

Coordination 6

Strength 6

Intellect 6

Awareness 5

Willpower 5

Stamina 11

Determination 3 (if used as PC)

### Specialties

Athletics

Computers

Drive

Electronics Expert

Martial Arts Expert

Science (Physics) Expert

Stealth Expert

### Powers

Gadgets 6 [Extra: Arsenal (Invisibility - stealth technology in cloak, Stunning (Strength) - tasers in gauntlets, Super-Senses [Infravision (Thermal Imaging), Enhanced Vision +2, Extended Vision +3] - goggles in cowl); Limit: Ability-Linked (Intellect)]

### Qualities

CEO of Valkyrie International

Rebuilt by Dr. Sam Hanner

Attached to Haley, a Friend from College

### Challenges

Hates the Thugs Who Gunned Him Down

Determined to Make the Most of His Second

Lease on Life

Determined to Get Revenge

**Background:** Matteo Rodrigues was a quiet and promising young college student who seemed destined for greatness—until one

terrible night when he was violently cut down by a group of gang-bangers during a random drive-by shooting. Matt was declared dead at the ER that night. A closed-casket funeral was held shortly thereafter. His friends and family mourned and moved on.

However, unbeknown to almost everyone, Matteo was not dead. He was in a severe coma, from which the ER doctors had estimated he would never recover. Dr. Sam Hanner had secured his parents' permission (and pulled some strings with the US government) in order to requisition Matt as a test subject for Project: Phoenix, a top-secret Department of Defense program developing techniques for sustaining and eventually reviving coma patients.



Years later, Matt awoke in a classified medical facility. Through electro-dynamic therapy, his muscles had not only been maintained, but had been improved to the peak of human fitness. Additionally, revolutionary "brain mapping" technology had gifted Matt with a photographic memory and a variety of new skills and knowledge (the equivalent of several college educations).

Making the most of his second chance, Rodrigues devoted the next few years to using his newly acquired abilities to develop his own company, Valkyrie International. With money no longer a concern, Matt embarked on his true passion. He set about using his fortune, intellect, and physical prowess to develop the skills and gadgets to fight crime up close and personal. Adopting the identity of the Cowl, a costumed vigilante, and dashing through the streets in the "Hush," a phantom sports car of his own design, Matt has become a symbol of

dread to those that would cause the innocent to suffer. He prowls the city by night, determined to make its streets safe again and to exact vengeance on the men who ended his life.

### Using the Cowl and Valkyrie International

- Wealthy PCs might subscribe to Valkyrie International's services, or a character in need of assistance could spend a point of Determination to retcon a membership for himself or herself. Valkyrie International might also respond to police or media reports as an opportunity for free advertising. There's even a chance that one of the characters' enemies could hold a membership. How might the PCs react if, during a heated battle, Valkyrie International rescue teams entered the fray to extract and treat a wanted criminal?

- Valkyrie International maintains a very sophisticated monitoring network to ensure that it can respond to a customer's needs immediately. The network could be attacked by hackers who want to monitor Valkyrie's clients. Rodrigues could contact any known computer or IT security experts for assistance. If the government attempts to use the technology, Rodrigues may initially allow them access, but if he eventually decides that the government's monitoring becomes too invasive, he may choose to oppose their efforts, recruiting other

superheroes to help him restore his subscribers' privacy.

- Should the Cowl ever uncover the people responsible for his death, he will attempt to exterminate them and anyone associated with them. If the Cowl goes from superhero to vigilante outlaw, the characters may be called in to "talk him down" or apprehend him.

## Maniacal, Inc.

### Aspects

Well-Connected

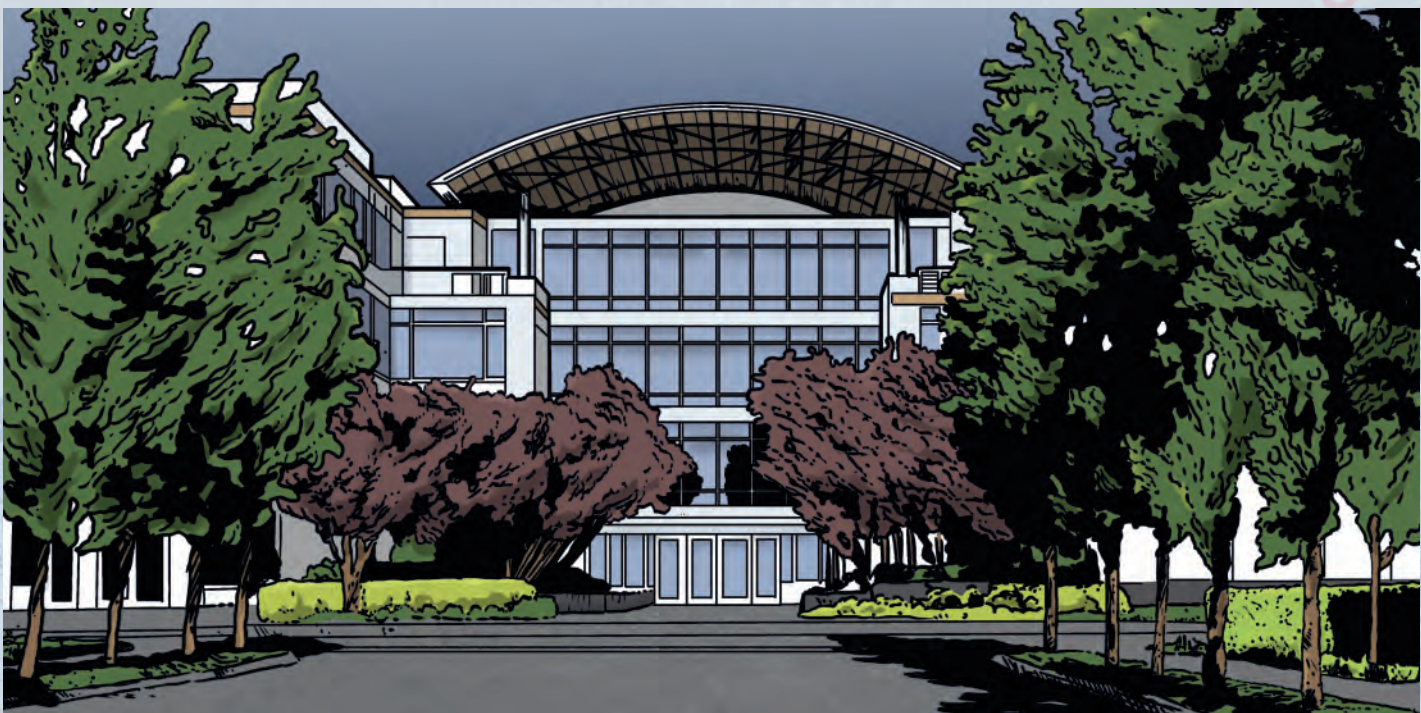
Unlimited Assets, Unlimited Fun

A Workforce with a (Criminal) Record

"Let our eyes be your vision!"

**Description:** Maniacal, Inc. was born after Reginald Coakley, a supervillain in Stryker Federal Penitentiary made a U-turn in his life. After a TV interview where victims and law enforcement were allowed to interact with him, Coakley felt as though he had received a much-needed wake-up call. After the interview, he went into solitary confinement for a month. Emerging from the cell, he went on a mission to reinvent himself.

Coakley burned through his prison time by researching and then advising those running his businesses. After surviving lawsuits from ARES



JOB FAIR  
BEGIN YOUR FUTURE  
WITH US TODAY

Labs, Coakley turned the money back into his companies. From DVDs to the popular website Fetch.com, Coakley's businesses posted huge gains and became financial powerhouses. As money poured in from legitimate enterprise, Coakley made sure that he gave back to the very community he once victimized. These donations brought Coakley to the parole board's attention. After years in prison and with the support of some of his victims, Reginald Coakley was released early from prison.

With ARES Labs blocking any pathway by which Coakley might enter the arena of powered armor defense contracting, he decided to go with something low-key. He did extensive research in the field of eye protection. Coakley's first set of sports glasses, the Scarabs, were an instant success. The Scarabs had interchangeable lenses and were marketed to athletes and shooters. As the Scarabs gained popularity with the military, Coakley began to alter the design. First, he developed his next line of glasses, Snap Shells, with integrated heads-up displays linked to a wearable tactical computers built into soldiers' armor. He then branched out into helmets, body armor, and lines of "military operator-based" clothing. While he grew the tactical side of the business, he simultaneously grew the sports side. Sports shoes, clothing, and hydration packs nourished a brand that became synonymous with the action sports crowd.

Calling his brand Maniacal, Coakley finally took the company public. Selling the stock with the announcement of his new product, the Oracle, Coakley went from millionaire to billionaire. Oracles are glasses linked to a cell phone or other smart device. By using integrated video technology and voice activation, Oracles are capable of making one's life truly interactive. Virtual reality superimposed onto one's vision gives the wearer total connectivity to his or her environment.

As Coakley built his business empire, he always tried to give back to a city that had once despised him. He gave to charities and volunteered to several different helping-hands organizations across the city. To see that prison wasn't just a revolving door for those thrown

back into society, he went out of his way to recruit ex-cons. He gave them decent jobs, respect, and the ability to grow with the company they were helping to build. Maniacal, Inc. is mostly known for this attitude toward second chances. In keeping with his "giving-back" approach to life, Coakley created Team Phoenix, an action sports team that travels from district to district putting on demonstrations while talking about being rehabilitated from prison. As the Maniacal brand continues to grow, Team Phoenix has been traveling about the country more and more. Their goal is to keep kids out of trouble, spread the word about Maniacal gear, and show that sometimes a second chance is all someone needs to get back on their feet.

Maniacal resides within a giant manufacturing complex that defines the vision of the area. Modern robotic manufacturing side by side with a slew of dedicated employees make up the day to day operations. Of the 157 employees, 62 are convicts on parole. The majority of workers are referred by either Horizon House or Odyssey Residences, the Stark City Halfway Houses. This includes the entire staff of Team Phoenix. While many are often taken aback by the company's willingness to hire recent parolees, Coakley prides himself on giving folks a second chance. The other side of the equation is that all the parolees know that if they slip into a life of crime again, Coakley will be the first one to turn them in.

The Maniacal Complex also has a proving ground. This is an outdoor range that can be fitted with a variety of terrain and obstacles so that new Maniacal gear can be tested under the most stressful conditions. The proving grounds has been used by military forces, Stark City SWAT teams, certain superheroes, and even the occasional bachelor party. All parties have not only tested Maniacal gear, but have also used the proving grounds for their own training, as it is one of the most versatile tactical and sports training centers in the world.

### Using The Complex

- Most heroes and civilians can tour the Complex. There is a brief tour of the production facility as well as occasional shows put on by

Team Phoenix. Villains who raid the Complex to acquire Snap Shell, Oracle, or Turtleback Body Armor technology can find plenty of folks to take hostage. Such supervillains can sometimes find allies among the Maniacal workforce, as not all of the convicts employed there have had their moral compasses reset.

- The proving grounds is a multifunctional arena set up in the southern side of the Complex. The arena can be set up as an obstacle course, race track, ball field, or open space. The area has been offered for use to the Stark City police and fire departments, as well as local sports teams (including youth leagues). Coakley sometimes brings in big-name bands to hold concerts for charity. The proving grounds can be set up to handle multiple scenarios and training opportunities.

- Coakley likes to offer certain product testing to local area law-enforcement officers, athletes, and superheroes. He invites them in regularly to test out his products, and any such testing could lead to further adventure.

## Team Phoenix

### Aspects

Go to War or Go to Jail  
High Risk, High Reward

**Background:** Team Phoenix is the very public arm of Maniacal, Inc. Reginald Coakley sends his team of action athletes all over the globe to spread the word about the versatility of Maniacal products, and to put on an incredible show. The demonstration team is actually a front. As Coakley's company became more prolific, the federal government saw his vision of rehabilitation as a way to expand their field of influence in Stark City. Of the twenty-person road crew that makes up Team Phoenix, six are actually "paroled" supervillains. Approaching Coakley and ordering him to act as the public face for the team, the government turned Team Phoenix into a front for a covert tactical team designed to take down supervillains.

Each member of the team has had a special implant surgically inserted into his or her head. If any member fails to work with the team or

tries to escape to pursue criminal interests, the team's handler will activate the implant. The implant can be set to cause major pain, stun, or kill outright (by exploding). The more powerful a superhuman is, the more powerful the device becomes, as it is powered by the carrier's own nervous system.

The "road crew" consists of six Phoenixes. These super-powered former villains are supported by a strike team and operations crew led by a handler. The federal government makes a deal with each of the Phoenixes. For every villain captured, each member's prison sentence is reduced by one year. If the villain serves as a Phoenix for five years and survives, his or her sentence is set aside entirely.

### Using Team Phoenix

- Characters can encounter the team when it is on tour. The average show will be a group of athletes—typically skateboarders, bicyclists, and parkour enthusiasts—performing for the crowd. When the show is done they will typically pack up and enjoy the night in whatever area they are visiting.

- The Phoenixes are often sent after some of the most dangerous supervillains and other high-level threats. This will often put them at odds with superheroes who do not have criminal records or government funding. The Phoenixes have had many run-ins with local heroes in other areas, and the Phoenixes are always quick to try to assert their authority and drive off the other heroes. This has even resulted in dust-ups with several heroes.

- If the government feels that a hero or heroes are getting too troublesome or getting too close to a government operation, they can send in the Phoenixes. This often comes to blows, but there have been times when the Phoenixes have sided with the heroes and fought against their government masters.

### Team Composition

- 2–6 Phoenixes (rolled up using the tables in **ICONS** or **GREAT POWER**, selected from the ranks of published villains, or even played by the characters as their PCs)



- One handler, Aila Foster (see below)
- Six-person tactical team (see below)
- Two-person operations coordination team
- Six-person road crew including drivers, roadies (laborers), and technicians (who know about the Phoenix's true mission, but do not participate in anything but the public shows)

**MAG (Metahuman Assault Gun):** This weapon, the signature firearm for Team Phoenix's tactical backup, fires gyro-stabilized mini-rockets that explode into several constricting bands; these bands nullify superhuman ability by short-circuiting the target's central nervous system. The pistols are a very powerful tool and the government doesn't want them to fall into the wrong hands. Each MAG carries an embedded computer chip that, when activated, burns out the gun and destroys any remaining ammo therein.

## Tactical Team Member

### Abilities

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

Stamina 7  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Drive  
Martial Arts  
Military  
Weapons (Guns)

### Powers

Damage Resistance Device 3 - Armor Skin Suit  
Binding Device 5 - MAG  
Power Nullification Device 5 - MAG

## Aila Foster

### Abilities

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

Stamina 8  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Drive  
Leadership  
Martial Arts  
Pilot  
Weapons (Guns)

### Powers

Damage Resistance Device 3 - Armor Skin Suit  
Binding Device 5 - MAG  
Power Nullification Device 5 - MAG

### Qualities

Holds the Phoenixes' Leashes

### Challenges

Unhappy Camper  
Secretly in Love with Reginald Coakley  
It Aches When It Rains (-1 to physical abilities while injured)

**Background:** Aila had spent years as a Secret Service agent when she took a bullet to the left shoulder protecting her boss. After she had spent years on the sidelines, her old boss, now a senator, called her back to service to be the handler of the Phoenix Initiative. Living side-by-side with supervillains has made her gruff and sarcastic. She has yet to request a transfer, as she feels these "thugs" are being put to good use to protect the public, and she has fallen deeply in love with Reginald Coakley. She often goes out of her way to update Coakley on the team's progress. Although Coakley hates what the government has done to his idea, he does enjoy spending time with Aila.

# Mr. Mayhem

**Real Name:** Reginald Coakley

**Origin:** Gimmick

## Abilities

Prowess 5

Coordination 6

Strength 7

Intellect 8

Awareness 4

Willpower 6

Stamina 13

Determination \* (1 if used as a PC)

## Specialties

Business Expert

Computers Expert

Electronics Expert

Mechanics Expert

Mental Resistance Expert

Power (Gadgets) Expert

## Powers

Ability Increase (Prowess +2, Coordination +3, Strength +4) Device - Powered Armor

Damage Resistance Device 6 - Powered Armor

Gadgets Device 7 [Extra: Arsenal (Blast [Extra: Extra Type], Flight, Super-Senses [Ultraviolet Vision (Night Vision), Telelocation (Radar), Enhanced Vision +2, Extended Vision +3]); Limit: Ability-Linked (Intellect)] - Powered Armor

Life Support Device 8 [Breathing, Cold, Heat, Pathogens, Pressure, Radiation, Toxins, Vacuum] - Powered Armor

## Qualities

Respected in Scientific & Business Circles

Aspires to the Stark City Aristocracy

Wants to Improve Society at a Profit

Titan of Bleeding-Edge Industries

Reformed Criminal Mastermind

## Challenges

Impatient (Especially with Bureaucrats)

Former Supervillain

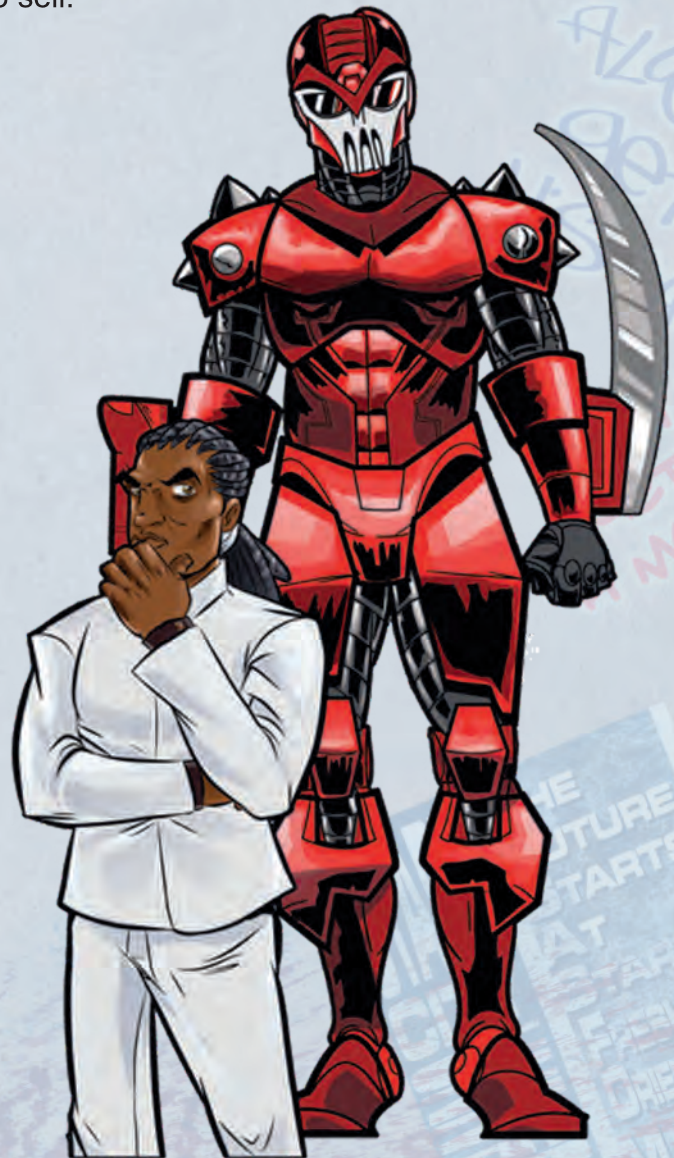
Still Feels Guilt for His Crimes

Prowess, Coordination, and Strength 3

Without Suit

Clashes with ARES Labs

**Background:** Reginald Coakley grew up in public housing in Geartown. His grandmother raised him and tried to insulate him from the criminal activity in the neighborhood. She encouraged him to focus on his studies, but only partially succeeded. Coakley excelled in school with minimal effort, but could not resist the easy money of the drug trade. He needed it to supplement his grandmother's fixed income. When Coakley's grandmother died, he dropped out of high school and committed himself to a life of crime. Coakley worked his way up from runner and lookout to lieutenant for a gang of drug dealers. Coakley's intelligence and business acumen helped him to rise quickly. His willingness to do anything, now matter how risky, earned him the nickname "Mayhem." He saw opportunities for big scores, and improved distribution of drugs that his leaders dismissed as too risky, unprofitable, or outright impossible to sell.



Ignoring his superiors' orders, Coakley decided to organize a robbery of ARES Labs. He planned to sell any items and information obtained to competitors or a foreign government. Coakley was unprepared for the sophistication of the advanced prototype weapons and armor his crew recovered. He was similarly unprepared for the reaction of the ARES special operations units sent to recover the items and information. The units targeted Coakley's gang and offered a million-dollar reward for his location. His former gang leaders quickly turned against him and his co-conspirators abandoned him.

Coakley decided to use the stolen goods to defend himself. He examined the schematics of the weapons and armor for ideas, and combined the various components to create his first suit of powered armor. Coakley defeated an ARES unit and scavenged their equipment to improve his armor. Within a few days, he created a suit that was better than anything ARES Labs was producing. Coakley decided to take over the drug and protection rackets in Geartown. He easily destroyed or subjugated his former leaders. He informed them that they could call him "Mr. Mayhem" now. Mr. Mayhem decided to acquire supplies to outfit his new crew by attacking the ARES special operations units hunting him. He had soon assembled a crew of gang members outfitted in powered armor. A series of bank robberies and gang warfare followed, with no small amount of collateral damage. Mr. Mayhem might have taken over all of Stark City, but the ARES Labs technicians created a kill switch that attacked the central computer control system of the stolen armor. Immobilized in their suits, Mr. Mayhem and his gang were trapped—and delivered by ARES agents to the Stark City Police Department.

The court sentenced Coakley to sixty years in prison. The testimony of the next-of-kin of innocent bystanders injured or killed by Mr. Mayhem and his crew helped determine the sentence, but more importantly, the testimony and prison sentence caused Coakley to reevaluate his life. Coakley decided to try to correct his past mistakes. From prison, he submitted patent applications for the many

many improvements he made to the ARES Labs technology. He offered some of them as restitution for the damage he had caused the company. ARES Labs refused Coakley's offer, but used his ideas anyway. Coakley sued and received a judgment worth hundreds of millions of dollars for patent infringement. He settled with ARES Labs for less than the full amount of the judgment, providing the company with what he felt was fair compensation. He used the rest of the money to compensate victims of his crimes and saved a small amount to outfit the prison with an electronics workshop.

During his limited free time in prison, Coakley designed one of the first personal computers and wrote the operating system to run it. He exchanged code with others in the industry and co-founded Orange Computing, which went on to become one of the largest and most successful computer, personal electronics, and software companies in the world. Coakley stayed out of the corporate side of the company, but contributed to the technical innovations of Orange until the Internet became more widely accessible. He sold his portion of Orange, becoming a billionaire in the process, and developed his next business. Coakley created a set of algorithms to allow users to catalogue the contents of the web, and to allow users to search it more effectively. Fetch.com became the predominant web-based search engine. As it moves into the production of consumer electronics devices, Fetch.com has come into direct competition with Orange.

After Coakley served the minimum amount of his sentence, the parole board approved his release. He returned to Stark City and created a powered armor company. His intention was to create an advanced set of armor with superior surveillance and defense capabilities to allow law enforcement officers to better combat supervillains. ARES Labs moved to stop Coakley in the courts, claiming that he was improperly utilizing its research. Coakley decided to abandon his efforts, fulfilling any remaining debt he felt toward ARES, and focused his efforts on forming Maniacal, Inc. He used the advanced surveillance research of his armor division to create a new kind of cutting-edge sunglasses company. The glasses can

come with enhanced low-light, infrared, or night-vision lenses. His latest hit product, the Oracle, is a pair of sunglasses that has transition lenses and uses a heads-up display linked to a smart device for integration with Fetch.com. The “augmented reality” glasses project information gathered from the Internet about the people, places, or things that the wearer is viewing. For example, a restaurant might have links superimposed over it to show its reviews, a menu, and an online reservation form. Maniacal also creates athletic clothing and shoes. Coakley is working on ways to integrate technology into both.

As a side project, Mr. Mayhem has recreated his old armor—just in case. It is an improvement on his original design, but still uses modified and improved ARES weapons and parts. The controls and operating systems are, however, all of his own design. Coakley has had multiple offers to buy his armor or the plans, but Coakley has thus far refused, to avoid any conflict with the lawyers from ARES Labs.

## Using Mr. Mayhem and Maniacal

• Coakley is a reformed villain, who feels genuine remorse for his crimes. He is frustrated by the government’s inability to fix the endemic problems he sees, and ARES Labs’ incessant attempts to punish him for his past crimes. If Coakley becomes too frustrated, he could take matters into his own hands. How do the characters respond when an armored avenger begins blowing up drug labs and their inhabitants? Coakley could develop a “Robin Hood” persona and begin robbing ARES Labs and other corporations that are not involved enough in improving their communities.

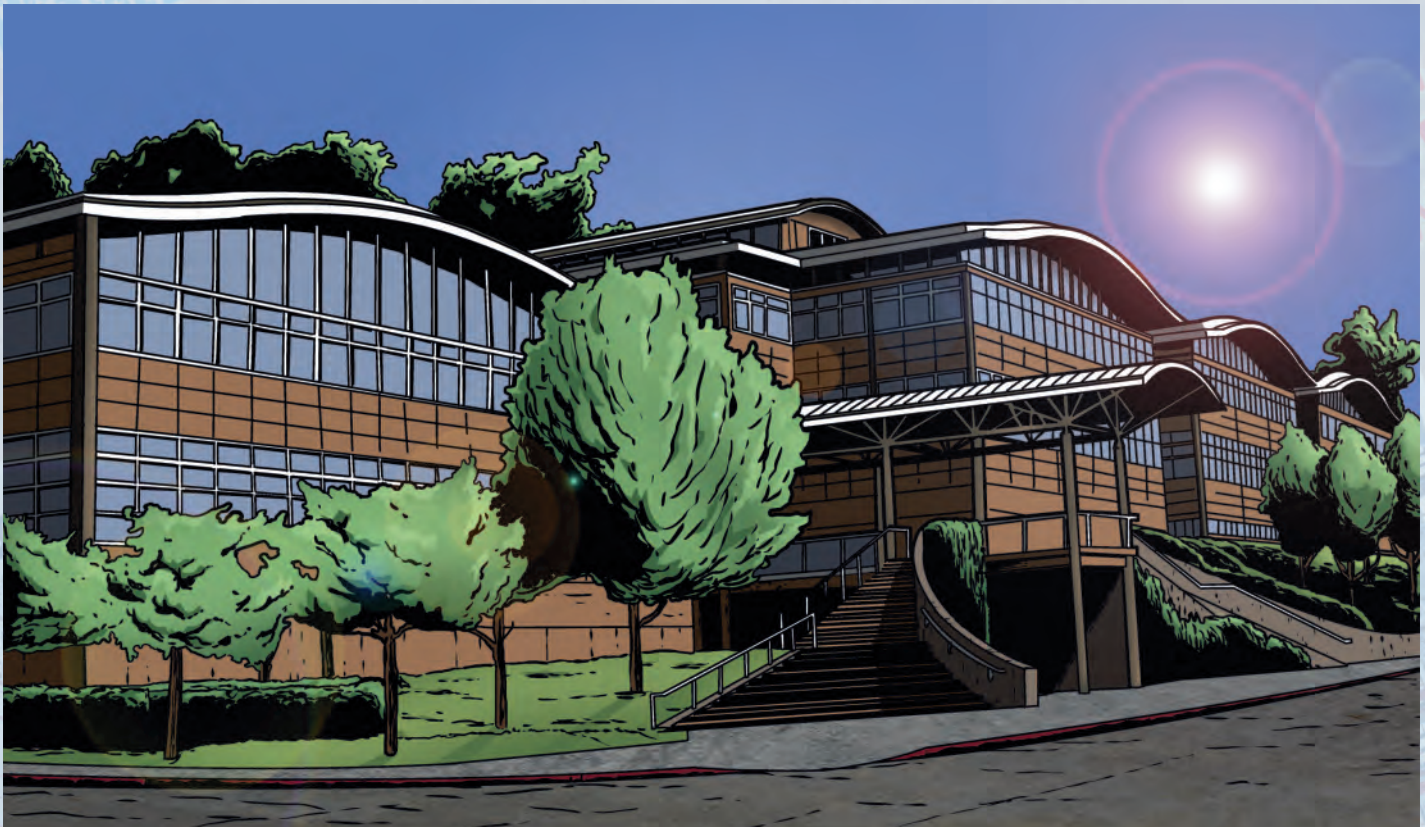
## Paragon Engineering

### Aspects

“We don’t make the products you buy. We make them magical.”

Corporate Deal with ... the Devil  
Wizards Wanted

**Description:** Albert von Bollstadt founded Paragon Engineering several decades ago. It is a small research firm that employs fewer than 100 people, most of whom are scientists, engineers, and post-doctoral researchers. Little is publicly known about how much money the



company makes or the sources of its funding. As a privately held company, it is not required to report its finances to the investing public. Paragon attempts to stay out of the news and wants nothing to do with publicity of any kind.

Paragon Engineering does not manufacture its own products, but instead leases devices or creates processes for others to make their products better. The company's first invention was a process for greatly improving the tensile strength of certain metals. The next invention was a process for allowing cheap metals to be used as replacement material in electrical devices that previously required gold, silver, or platinum to work effectively. Unknown to Paragon's customers, both of these processes were derived from von Bollstadt's alchemical research.

Von Bollstadt was not content merely to capitalize on alchemy for profits, so he used his contacts in the magical community to expand into more esoteric areas. He discretely sought out shamans, wizards, and legendary magical devices to allow his team of scientists to determine their potential commercial uses. The result has been a concerted effort by Paragon to commercialize magical teleportation. A more recent venture has involved Paragon Engineering sending teams of scientists and magicians into alternate dimensions to discover alien technology and bring it back to this dimension. The results of one such attempt are featured in *Improbable Tales #10*, *Through the Looking Glass*.

Because of the sources of Paragon Engineering's products, the company does not patent anything. It relies instead on its culture of secrecy and dire magical spells to prevent disclosure of its secrets. Paragon Engineering employs a team of wizards with dubious morals to prevent employees from divulging anything sensitive, and to destroy anyone who might learn too much. The research facility is guarded by demons, golems, and various extra-dimensional horrors

## The Mystic

**Real Name:** Matthew Lance

**Origin:** Birthright

### Abilities

Prowess 2  
Coordination 6  
Strength 3  
Intellect 4  
Awareness 4  
Willpower 6

Stamina 9  
Determination 1 (if used as a PC)

### Specialties

Occult  
Performance (Stage Magic) Expert  
Sleight of Hand Expert

### Powers

Cosmic Power 6 [Transforming Ray (Offensive); Extras: Shrinking Ray (Offensive), Dimension Travel; Limit: Ability-Linked (Willpower)]  
Damage Resistance Device 4 - Enchanted tuxedo  
Flight Device 3 - Enchanted cape  
Illusion 8 - Images

### Qualities

Seeks Vengeance  
Paragon of Prestidigitation  
Stage Magician Turned Dimension-Traveling Wizard  
"Abracadabra!"

### Challenges

Hunted the Council of Eight  
Previously Transformed Victims Seek Revenge  
All Spells Have Obvious Visual Effects  
No Compassion for Criminals  
Doesn't Understand Current Cultural References

**Background:** Matthew "Matt" Lance comes from a long line of magicians. He started performing stage magic at an early age and developed a reputation as a master illusionist. Lance's grandfather contacted him with a

warning of a conspiracy of wizards seeking to destroy him. Lance's grandfather asked him to come home and receive instruction in the family secrets. Lance ignored his grandfather's pleas, assuming that he had become senile, and continued with his packed Vegas show. It wasn't until his grandfather's funeral that Lance discovered the family business wasn't stage magic, but actual wizardry. In the weeks that followed, Lance learned how to create real illusions and transformations from his grandfather's written instructions, and donned his tuxedo and cape.

The Mystic then sought out his grandfather's killers. He quickly discovered them and turned each of them into a Rubik's cube and tossed them into a void dimension from which they could not escape. It was not until years later that the Mystic discovered the murderers were mere lackeys of the Council of Eight. The Council approached the Mystic and demanded his service to them. The Council instructed the Mystic that they were the magical guardians of the infinite dimensions, and he owed his powers to them. His grandfather had attempted to shirk his responsibilities and paid with his life. The Mystic would either submit to the Council of Eight or be destroyed by them.

The Mystic refused to cooperate with the murderous wizards and destroyed them wherever he found them. He skipped from dimension to dimension, picking his battles wisely. When he could, he transformed his victims and expelled them to the hellscape dimension. When he was outnumbered, he fled to the next dimension. The Mystic is now familiar with dozens of dimensions, some parallel Earths and others wildly different from Stark City's Earth. When the Mystic entered this dimension, Paragon Engineering founder Albert von Bollstadt found him and offered him sanctuary. Von Bollstadt offered the Mystic a potion that would prevent the Circle of Eight from tracking him. In exchange, the Mystic provides Paragon Engineering with assistance in acquiring technology from parallel dimensions.

## Using the Mystic and Paragon Engineering

- Paragon Engineering could easily be the source of any type of supernatural menace that enters Stark City. The powers of darkness are easily summoned, but not always easily contained or controlled. An example of one such scenario is present in *Improbable Tales #6, The Other Side*. Paragon Engineering could easily replace any of the companies included in that adventure, or it could be added as an additional red herring or co-conspirator with the powers from the other side.

- The Mystic is an amoral vigilante who cares more about vengeance than justice. He is attempting to keep a low profile in this dimension, but if he comes into contact with the criminal element, he will dispose of them as he always has. He transforms them into an inanimate object and tosses them into a hellscape dimension. A PC's connection might run afoul of the Mystic either as someone caught in the crossfire, a disposable witness, or a criminal. Tracking down the whereabouts of the lost connection would lead to an inevitable conflict with the Mystic. If the characters are not careful, they



could be duped by the prisoners of the Mystic's prison dimension into releasing them. How do the characters respond when dozens of supervillains from dozens of different dimensions spill out into the streets of Stark City?

- Eventually, the Council of Eight will come calling for the Mystic. If the Mystic has earned the characters' trust, he may call on them for assistance. If not, the characters may be called in by authorities to stop the full-scale wizards' war that is wreaking havoc in Tesla Industrial Park.

## ARES Laboratories

### Aspects

Run Like Clockwork

Technology That is Out of This World

Weird Science

Lots of Tour Groups

**Description:** ARES (Advanced Research Expanding Science) Labs makes most of its revenue from munitions and weapons manufacturing, but the company's leadership is eager to make the public more aware of its other products. So while most of the company's facilities, located in the American Southwest, work on military projects, its corporate headquarters in Tesla Industrial Park focuses primarily on highlighting the non-military aspects of its research lines, such as personal flight devices, energy manipulation, bio-engineering, teleportation, and chrono-engineering. The Tesla Park facility is a working research lab, but it is also a showpiece. Regular press conferences and tour groups serve to spotlight the company's exciting projects. For example, the teleportation pad research was recently highlighted in the Siren newspaper as a possible future cure for the city's rush-hour congestion.

Originally founded in the late 1960s, ARES Laboratories was 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 transformed ARES from a run-of-the-mill defense contractor into one of

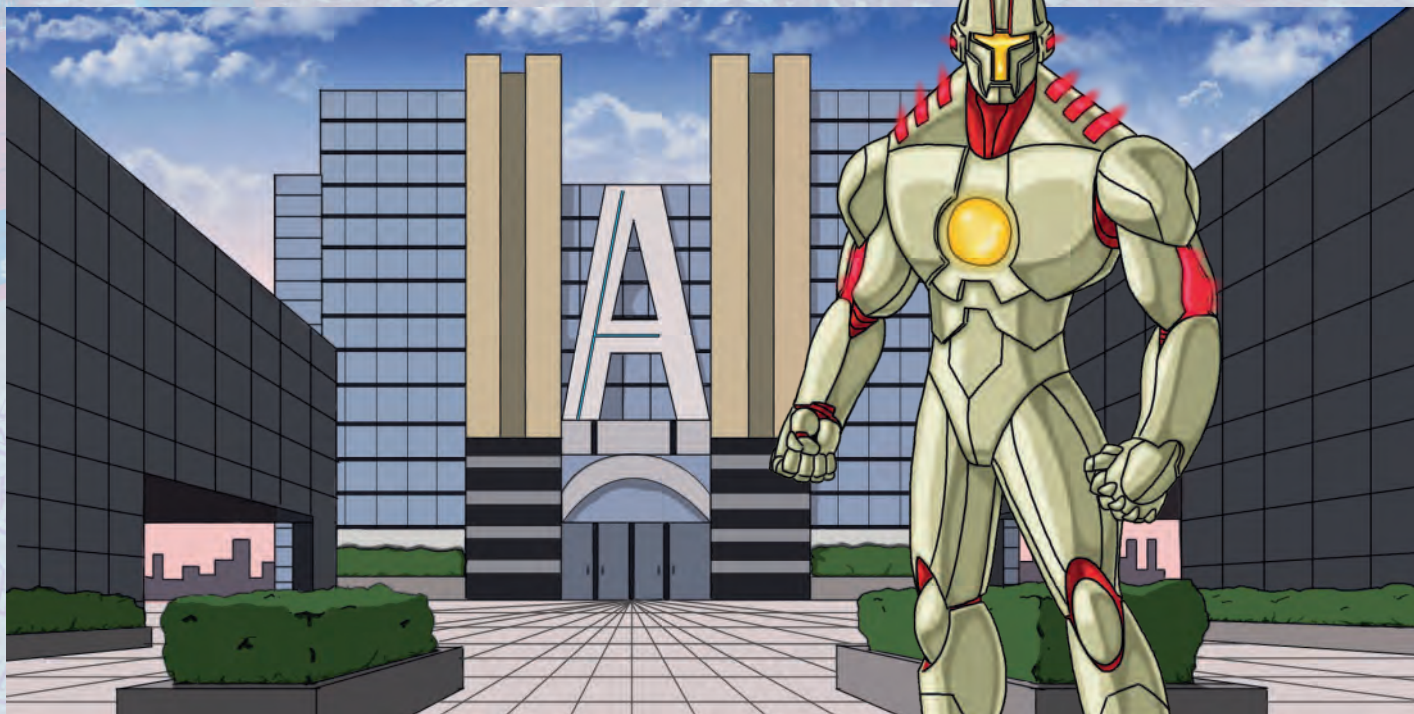
the leading forces in advanced weapons research. First, Dr. Robert Wright—a visionary inventor—joined ARES as its CEO. Wright's reputation as a scientific maverick led to the second change: ARES won a secret contract to reverse-engineer alien technology found at a crash site in Coyame, Chihuahua in 1974. That contract kick-started the lab's research department and allowed ARES to explore dozen of highly diverse and experimental fields.

However, even with new and exciting directions for ARES, the company never stopped work on the mundane weapons that provided the bulk of its profits. Since the late 1990s, ARES has come under the control of Wright's daughter, Dr. Karen Wright—a strictly businesslike woman whose life focuses on pushing the boundaries of science. She follows in her father's footsteps by increasing the range of the lab's areas of expertise and research.

ARES Lab's secret is that, while Karen Wright is the public face of ARES, the company is run behind the scenes by Orion X, a sentient android discovered by Robert Wright when he surveyed the UFO debris field in Coyame. Orion X was an android serving the military of the Sirian Principality, an interstellar empire whose territory includes Earth. By the time his scout vessel crash-landed, Orion X had grown bored with life in the military (he felt his full talents were being wasted), and welcomed the opportunity to work with Wright on pure research and development. Wright and Orion X became friends over time, and Wright eventually introduced his daughter to Orion. The android's prodigious intellect and experience with advanced off-world technology gave ARES a huge advantage in the marketplace. It would also be their downfall if Orion X's existence were ever to be discovered by the government.

ARES's recent public-relations strategy of highlighting the company's non-military research follows Orion X's analysis of the global marketplace and political climate. He predicted that military spending would decline in coming decades, and wanted to position the company to have a stronger footing in the civilian sector. ARES is not without competition, however;

**JOB FAIR**  
BEGIN YOUR FUTURE  
WITH US TODAY



ARES Labs and Maniacal, Inc. are always at odds. Orion X believes that Mr. Mayhem, Maniacal's CEO, has evidence that ARES is run by an artificial entity.

## Orion X

**Origin:** Unearthly (Artificial, Trained)

### Abilities

Prowess 4  
Coordination 4  
Strength 8  
Intellect 8  
Awareness 2  
Willpower 3

Stamina 11  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Computers Master  
Electronics Master  
Military Expert  
Science Master (Physics)

### Powers

Life Support 10 [Breathing, Cold, Eating, Heat, Pathogens, Pressure, Radiation, Sleeping, Toxins, Vacuum]

### Qualities

Android Scout from the Sirian Principality  
Secret Power Behind the Throne at ARES

### Challenges

Suspicious of Maniacal, Inc.  
Has Trouble Relating to Most Biological Life

### Using Orion X and ARES Laboratories

• ARES is analogous to STAR Labs in DC Comics or Project Pegasus in Marvel. It provides a "weird science" element for adventures or characters. Either a hero or villain could easily have a connection to ARES that could explain the emergence of his or her powers or possession of high technology. Also, the advanced research done at ARES makes their Tesla Park facility a tempting target for supervillains. The psychic communication or chrono-engineering devices would be of particular interest.

• The exact motives of Karen Wright and Orion X are left up the GM. As written, they're fairly benign and simply focused on scientific research. ARES could easily be a more activist

1982 FOX LANE COVINGTON  
DR. ANTHONY  
FOR DETAILS  
952-555-3098  
NO BACKGROUND  
CHECKS NEEDED!

TAN  
ALWAYS  
GETS  
MAYHEM  
CAN HE  
GET ME  
TAN TO



company interested in promoting public welfare by training and equipping a select group of vigilantes with the latest crime-fighting gadgets; perhaps ARES Labs would even partner with the Sentinels to help make Stark City safer. On the other hand, Orion X could be a malevolent android who has brainwashed Karen Wright, keeping her ignorant while he builds an army of drones in a subterranean level of Tesla Industrial Park and waits for the day when he will make his move to conquer first the city, then the nation.

## NyxTech

### Aspects

Full of Dark Secrets

Always Looking for "Volunteers"

Takes an Active Interest in the Community

**Description:** NyxTech is an international medical-device manufacturer headquartered in Stark City. The company started in the business of storing people's dead, frozen heads and bodies with the goal of maintaining them until medical science advanced to the point to where their deaths could be reversed. In developing this technology, NyxTech invented a device that could temporarily (up to an hour) suspend a patient's bodily functions and stave off death in the short term while waiting for proper medical care. The cryogenic suspension chamber was a huge commercial success, and is used by mobile rescue units throughout the industrialized world. NyxTech continues to pursue cryogenics research, seeking to use deep cold to suspend a person's vital functions indefinitely in hope of future revivification. This technology does not currently exist, but NyxTech's animal trials have had some success.

As the company grew more profitable, it diversified into the fields of biotechnology, cybernetics, and cloning. NyxTech biotech acquisitions focus on developing gene therapy to extend human life or slow the effects of aging. NyxTech's cybernetic division focuses on creating artificial organs to replace those that fail with age. With the recent acquisition of Moreau Laboratories' artificial womb, NyxTech is working on vat-grown replacement organs and cloning technology. The company intends



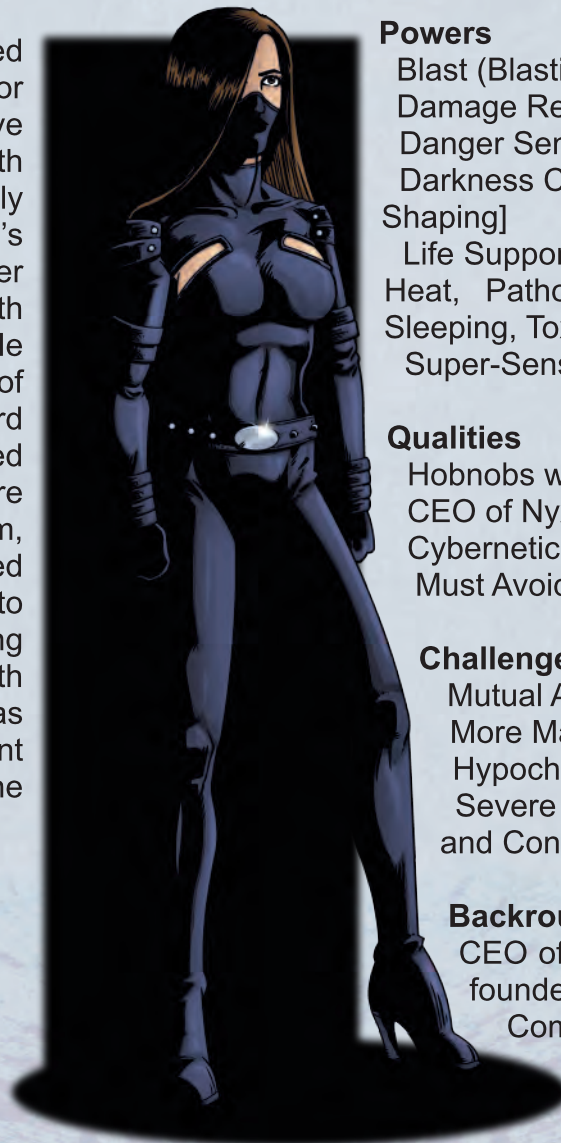
to create replacement organs that are perfect genetic matches for its wealthiest customers. Today, NyxTech employs over 1,000 scientists across the globe and tens of thousands of employees in its manufacturing facilities.

NyxTech has a reputation for ground-breaking products and cutting-edge research. It also has a pristine reputation as a good "corporate citizen," largely because of its generous public commitment to charity. The company has established a multi-billion-dollar charitable foundation that endows medical chairs at the nation's top universities, funds hospital wings, and sponsors other health-related charities and events. NyxTech also support charities aimed at assisting children, the indigent, and the working poor. It often provides free or reduced-cost medical devices to those in need.

NyxTech's reputation for good works stems from a public-relations campaign designed to place the company above reproach. Whenever its business methods or research goals are

seriously questioned or criticized in the media, NyxTech employs a viciously effective and covert team of medical experts, private investigators, and muscle to ensure that the critic is discredited or destroyed. The company has a lot to hide. NyxTech has performed cryogenic stasis research using unwilling human subjects, chiefly transients, illegal immigrants, and others who will not be missed by society at large. Some of its biotech researchers have introduced plant and animal genetic material into those same human subjects. In addition, NyxTech has begun illegal human cloning, with the eventual goal of performing a total organ replacement or even a brain transplant into a young, healthy body for its customers. Finally, the “free” medical devices NyxTech provides to the poor are part of a ruse to collect the recipients’ genetic material in an effort to identify potential test subjects.

Thus far NyxTech has avoided suspicion. The few reporters or medical professionals who have learned too much met with untimely deaths. The only serious threat to NyxTech’s secrets lies in one of its former researchers (Dr. Keith MacKenzie, aka Dr. Arctic). He became suspicious of some of the company’s untoward behavior, and NyxTech targeted him for assassination. Before the assassins could kill him, MacKenzie stole and modified some NyxTech equipment to defend himself. In the ensuing battle, he faked his own death to protect his family, and has sworn to gather sufficient evidence to bring down the company.



## Erebus

**Real Name:** Alethea Nykolaos

**Origin:** Artificial

### Abilities

Prowess 4  
Coordination 4  
Strength 6  
Intellect 6  
Awareness 4  
Willpower 5

Stamina 11  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Electronics Expert  
Mechanics  
Medicine Expert  
Science (Cryogenics) Expert  
Science (Cybernetics) Master

### Powers

Blast (Blasting) 7  
Damage Resistance 5  
Danger Sense 6  
Darkness Control 6 [Extra: Shadow Shaping]  
Life Support 10 [Breathing, Cold, Eating, Heat, Pathogens, Pressure, Radiation, Sleeping, Toxins, Vacuum]  
Super-Senses 1 [Telelocation (Sonar)]

### Qualities

Hobnobs with Tesla Park Industrialists  
CEO of NyxTech  
Cybernetic Killing Machine  
Must Avoid Death at All Costs

### Challenges

Mutual Antagonism with Doctor Arctic  
More Machine than Human  
Hypochondriac  
Severe Mysophobia (Fear of Germs and Contamination)

**Background:** Alethea Nykolaos is the CEO of NyxTech and daughter of its founder, Stephanos Nykolaos. Company literature says that the name NyxTech is based on the family’s last name, but

that's not true. Mr. Nykolaos and his daughter worship old, dark gods from ancient Greece. In truth, he named the company after the Greek goddess of the night, Nyx, who was the mother of Hypnos, the god of sleep, and Thanatos, the god of death. Through their worship of Nyx, both father and daughter developed an obsessive and irrational fear of death. Mr. Nykolaos founded the company to cheat death, but ultimately failed. His frozen corpse is safely stored in the NyxTech vaults, waiting for a cure for the rare cancer that devoured him. Unknown to the public, Ms. Nykolaos actually froze her father while he was still alive.

Ms. Nykolaos is determined not to succumb to death's icy grip as her poor father did. Although she has always had perfect health, she replaced all of her internal organs with cybernetic duplicates. As Ms. Nykolaos or her scientists develop newer models, she swaps out the older parts for the most advanced prototypes. She has also used the most advanced gene therapy that NyxTech has to offer — all in an effort to prevent any possibility of succumbing to a disease. Her fear of death by violence has also led her to add armor and armaments to protect herself in case of attack.

When using her “special” abilities, Ms. Nykolaos dons a costume and calls herself “Erebus,” the Greek primordial god of darkness. She is a cowardly fighter, and prefers to strike from concealment. She will not risk injury, and flees if presented with any serious challenge. She only engages in combat when NyxTech is threatened or on missions too sensitive to trust to hired killers.

Erebus's true identity is a secret that only a few of the top scientists at NyxTech know. In her civilian guise, she is a normal, if somewhat reclusive, CEO. She prefers to work and live in a completely sterile environment. She conducts her business by e-mail, telephone, and videoconference. If forced to appear in person, she always has a surgical mask, rubber gloves, and hand sanitizer on her person. Her cybernetics prevent any exposure to toxins and pathogens, but Ms. Nykolaos still takes extreme precautions to avoid exposure to germs.

## Using Erebus and NyxTech

- NyxTech is the prototypical villainous corporation. Whenever the gamemaster needs a secret master behind some nefarious plot, NyxTech and Nykolaos are there to fill that role.
- NyxTech has reported Doctor Arctic to the police and accused him of industrial sabotage, theft, and other crimes. The company has paid off several people in the media to report on Doctor Arctic's “misdeeds.” Because of their efforts, most people in Stark City, including the characters, should view him as a villain to be fought or captured if encountered. The characters' perceptions will likely change if they see Doctor Arctic assisting the innocent. Characters are most likely to encounter him in Geartown, where he patrols, or other areas where he knows that NyxTech abducts the homeless for their experiments. In the past, he has staged attacks on NyxTech headquarters, but he knows that the company has moved most of its sensitive operations to locations around Stark City. Doctor Arctic is still trying to locate those secret installations.

## Stark City University

### Aspects

Graduate School with Some Undergrads  
Research Is the First, Second, & Third Priority  
(Teaching or Anything Else Ranks Lower)  
Hard sciences Built This University

**Description:** In 1891, wealthy industrialist Richard D. Danforth provided the initial endowment for Stark City University. The next year, the Regents began constructing the University on land donated by Francis Hobbes. Danforth and Hobbes also endowed several graduate science departments and a medical college. The Regents and the University's benefactors wanted to emphasize that Stark City University would focus on pragmatic topics, rather than humanities or the arts.

Unlike most universities, Stark City University was, and to a large extent still is, centered on graduate research. To this day, Stark City University's undergraduate population remains small compared to other institutions of higher learning. It has approximately 4,000

undergraduate students and a graduate and professional student population of over 12,000. Fitting with its focus on academics and graduate research, the Regents ended Stark City University's membership in the Big Ten conference and terminated all varsity sports programs. Some members of the Regents have suggested restarting varsity sports programs, but this proposal has not gotten much traction among the faculty. Intramural sports remain popular on campus.

As Stark City University grew, it developed a full curriculum and founded departments in other areas beyond pure science. The University's economics, political science, and English departments are among the best in the nation. The economics and political science departments have provided many advisers to government agencies and presidential campaigns. Stark City University also has the largest faculty of Nobel laureates in the world. Laureates include prize winners in chemistry, physics, medicine, literature, and economics. Stark City University alumni include many Fulbright awardees and Rhodes scholars.

Despite the success of its non-science departments in the last 50 years, SCU is still known by many as a scientific research powerhouse. Undergraduates and graduate students alike know that a degree from Stark City University is a ticket into the cutting-edge tech companies of Tesla Industrial Park. The two groups have a symbiotic relationship, with many Tesla Industrial Park companies contributing millions of dollars every year to the University. Stark City University funnels this money into basic research and spends more than \$500 million in support of faculty and post-doctoral researchers, who perform innovative research and experiments on campus. Graduates of the University then take this knowledge and expertise to work for Tesla Industrial Park companies.

The most recent controversy to hit Stark City University is a proposal to create a Department of Magic and Metaphysics. The University has classes on the historical, sociological, philosophical, psychological, or anthropological aspects of magic in their respective

departments. For many years, the Anthropology Department has also offered a focus on magical traditions for its students. Part of the reason for the backlash surrounding the proposal is that it would allow not just the mundane aspects of magic, but also the possibility of teaching and researching the practical uses of magic. Obviously, this would require Stark City University to recruit a faculty of mages.

## Necrovore

**Real Name:** Wallace Geofferey, Ph.D.

**Origin:** Gimmick

### Abilities

Prowess 2  
Coordination 3  
Strength 3  
Intellect 7  
Awareness 7  
Willpower 7

Stamina 10  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Occult  
Science (Archaeology)

### Powers

Cosmic Power Device 7 [Mind Control; Extras: Force Field, Servant (summon the spirits of the victims of the skull); Limit: Ability-Linked (Intellect)] - Crystal Skull  
Energy Drain Device 8 [Extras: Life Drain, Ranged] - Crystal Skull  
Teleport Device 6 - Crystal Skull

### Qualities

"Your soul will make an excellent addition to my collection!"

Mediocre Academic Turned Supervillain  
Seeks to Increase His Magical Powers

### Challenges

Opposed by Liadan, the Grey Lady  
Without the Crystal Skull, All Mental Abilities Drop to 3  
People Are Nothing but Potential Minions  
Corpse-Like Appearance When Holding the Crystal Skull

**Background:** Wallace Geofferey was an associate professor of archaeology at Stark City University. He had little hope of tenure and needed a discovery to make a name for himself. While examining an old aviator's journal, he found an obscure reference implying there might be some undiscovered ruins in the Peruvian mountains. Geofferey traveled near the site and tried to hire a guide, but the locals refused to accompany him and made dire warnings to avoid the area.

Geofferey dismissed their superstitious fears and trudged into the wilderness alone. He soon encountered a temple complex which, instead of being in ruins, was immaculately preserved. He entered the central temple, where he found a perfectly shaped crystal skull. The skull was flawless and could not have been carved by human hands. Geofferey picked it up and felt the arcane energies pulse through him. As Geofferey exited the temple complex, he saw the villagers amassed before him. The village elder told him to return the skull to its resting place and go home. He warned that the skull's power was too great and not meant for mortal man. When Geofferey refused, the peasants fired upon him. Their bullets fell harmlessly aside. The Crystal Skull reached out and siphoned their life energy from them. It left behind only shriveled, dessicated corpses. The feeling of absorbing their souls was euphoric. Geofferey took the name "Necrovore," from the Latin for "eater of the dead."

Necrovore returned to Stark City University and rose quickly through the academic ranks. He used the skull to convince his superiors to promote him, write journal articles for him, and even teach his classes. With the Archaeology Department as his own private fief, Necrovore set about attempting to increase his magical powers. He used his powers to convince the curators of Stark City University's museums to acquire as many artifacts with purported magical powers as

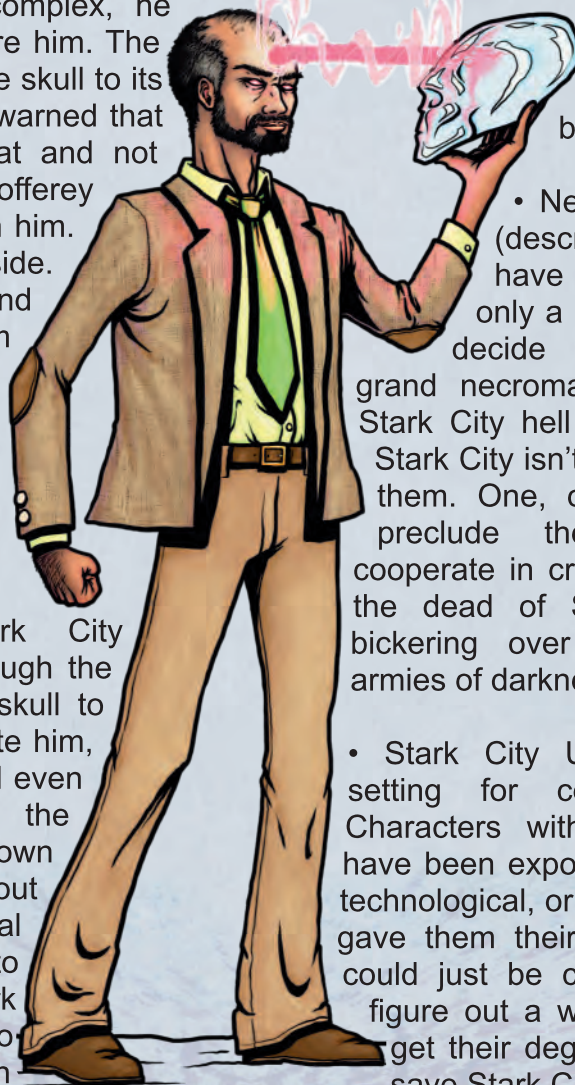
possible. He has also sent the department's graduate students and professors to excavate various locations with magical potential. Necrovore is growing frustrated with his lack of success, and he is the impetus for the creation of a Department of Magic and Metaphysics. Necrovore believes that he can dominate any faculty recruited for the new department, and can force them to divulge their secrets or steal their artifacts.

### Using Necrovore and Stark City University

- Characters could come into contact with Necrovore while enrolled in classes at Stark City University. Academic or magical characters may come into conflict with Necrovore in his role as villain or as Department Chair. Professor Geofferey readily uses his mind-control powers to enforce his will and get his way in academic turf wars. Characters displaying magical powers or using magic devices will eventually be targeted by Necrovore.

- Necrovore and Gravedigger (described in the Catacombs) have much in common. It is only a matter of time before they decide to cooperate for some grand necromantic ceremony to make Stark City hell on earth, or decide that Stark City isn't big enough for the two of them. One, of course, one does not preclude the other. They could cooperate in creating a ritual to raise all the dead of Stark City and fall into bickering over who should lead the armies of darkness for greater conquests.

- Stark City University is the natural setting for college age characters. Characters with common themes may have been exposed to the same magical, technological, or biological experiment that gave them their powers. The characters could just be college students trying to figure out a way to pass their classes, get their degrees, pay for school, and save Stark City.



# Player One Restaurant, Arcade and Bar

## Aspects

It's Like An Arcade . . . with Beer  
Innocent Bystanders Galore  
Techie Hangout  
Secret Lair of Super-Mercenary

**Description:** Player One is an arcade, bar, and restaurant that caters to the geek crowd. Originally, it was a single restaurant, but as its popularity and business have grown, it now occupies the first and second floors of a large office building. The restaurant and bar are separate, and the game rooms are differentiated by the types of games featured. Player One features more than fifty vintage arcade games, all from 1988 and earlier. Player One has a dozen lanes of Skee-Ball, a bowling alley, and over two dozen pinball machines. The most popular area is a large gaming area full of vintage home-game consoles, each one sitting under a flat screen television in front of a couch. There are hundreds of video game cartridges available for rental.

The food is better than that of most chain restaurants, but is not gourmet. The bar features an impressive display of microbrews and imports from across the world. It's a favorite hangout for scientists and engineers from the various Tesla Industrial Park firms and students from Stark City University. Nightly events are held to boost attendance. These events range from happy hour drink specials to ladies' night to the ever-popular single-elimination Pac-Man, Centipede, Defender, and Galaga tournaments.

With its "geek chic," one would expect Player One to attract a predominantly male crowd, but this is not the case. The demographics of the tech sector are changing, and many Stark City women know that if they want to meet successful, single men, Player One is an excellent place to go. Player One capitalizes on this perception and does all it can to encourage women to patronize the establishment through reduced cover charges and drink specials. Player One also promotes mingling with various icebreakers and social games.



# The Tangler

**Real Name:** Joe Roberts

**Origin:** Gimmick

## Abilities

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

Stamina 8  
Determination \*

## Specialties

Computers  
Electronics  
Martial Arts  
Mechanics  
Science (Chemistry)

## Powers

Gadgets Device 6 [Extra: Arsenal (Absorption - Battlesuit, Binding - Tentacles, Swinging - Tentacles); Limit: Ability-linked (Intellect)] - Tangler Battlesuit

## Qualities

Greedy  
"I always get my target."  
Super-Mercenary  
Works in the Catacombs and with the Mafia

## Challenges

Quiet and Brooding

**Background:** Joe Roberts is the owner and operator of Player One. He has a large workshop in the basement where he repairs and reconditions old arcade games. Player One provides an excellent HQ for Roberts. It gives him the opportunity to hide in plain sight without fear. No one would suspect his real career when he's a very public (and high-profile) entrepreneur in one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in Stark City. Roberts is a bit of a tinkerer, and twice a year hosts Robot Battles at Player One, where he and his customers pit custom made robots they've built against each other.



Roberts is also a high-priced mercenary who fills a very special market niche: for a very large fee he will capture any superhuman (villain or hero makes no difference). Once he is hired to retrieve a target, he never quits. He assumes different costumed personas and devises different inventions depending on the target, although he is rather fond of the versatility of the Tangler's signature gadgets and uses that persona most often. Despite his affection for the Tangler identity, he is not overly sentimental. He is a professional and strives to come up with the right gadgets to bring in his target. Some of his more well-known previous personas include Mecha-Shrike, Daytripper, and the Atomic Arachnid.

Roberts is motivated only by profit, and is utterly untroubled by the morality of his actions. He captures heroes and villains without hesitation. His clients include a diverse assortment of metahumans, supervillains, and government agencies (who use his services covertly and pay in cash). His government clients range from the BMA contacting him to bring in a criminal who has been eluding them to a shadowy operation that is known only as "the Agency" asking him to snatch a particular metahuman with mutations they find worthy of study.

## Using The Tangler and Player One

- If a player is absent from a game session, his or her character could have been captured by the Tangler. The remaining characters have a limited period to discover the identity of the kidnapper and rescue their comrade before he or she is turned over to the Tangler's employer.
- Player One is constantly filled with innocent bystanders. If the gamemaster needs a location where the characters are limited in using their powers, this is an ideal location. Should the characters cause too much damage to the

structure, harm customers, or otherwise annoy Roberts, he might decide to exact some revenge in one of his personas by capturing the offending character for free or taking a greatly reduced fee from the character's nemesis.

## Group of Interest: Research and Advancement in Idea and Design Aspects

Driven By Science!

Utopian Ends Justify Violent Means  
Machiavellian and Devious

**Background:** RAID (Research and Advancement in Idea and Design) is a mysterious super-science terrorist organization that plagues Stark City (particularly the Tesla Park area) frequently enough to be familiar to most citizens, but very little is known about their motives or goals. An obligatory manifesto has been published online and contain florid language about how they aim to forcibly evolve human society through enlightened leadership and technological innovation. But to the casual observer, RAID looks like nothing more than another group of thugs (albeit equipped with bleeding edge gear) out to enrich themselves through crime and terrorism.

One thing that can be said with certainty is that they're devious. The hallmark of a RAID operation is a plan within a plan, with misdirection being their favorite tactic.

- A grand scheme to seize Tesla Park, isolate it behind a force field, and enslave the scientists employed there to work as a slave labor force failed. However, while the US military's resources (and a preponderance of costumed vigilantes) were focused on stopping them from walling off Tesla Park, RAID succeed in stealing an orbital spy satellite.

- They failed in their stated threat to hijack and ransom an entire US naval squadron in during recent war games in the Atlantic, but they succeeded in stealing a top-secret cloaking device that was being tested on the one destroyer they did briefly occupy.

RAID is not just a problem for the legitimate research companies of Tesla Park. They've also attacked criminal factions. Usually these attacks are done to seize technology that interests RAID. For example, RAID hijacked one of the Anarch gang's vehicles when they heard that the gang was using teleporters in their cars to escape pursuit. (The Auguste Anarch is still plotting revenge over that slight.) However, their motives aren't always scientific. RAID recently pulled off an elaborate heist in which they cleaned out the vault of the Centennial Casino. Analysts speculate this was done simply to raise operating capital for the terrorist organization.

MAKO and RAID have an uneasy relationship. The two terrorist groups have very similar goals and tactics, and have allied themselves in the past on mutually beneficial operations. (For example, a foiled plan to assassinate the Secretary General of the UN when he visited Stark City was carried out by MAKO and RAID agents working in tandem.) However, there's a lot of distrust between the two groups—MAKO, specifically, doubts the sincerity of RAID's revolutionary rhetoric—and they have traded shots on more than one occasion.

RAID agents wear distinctive black and yellow "encounter" suits that provide limited protection from various environmental conditions and small arms fire.



## Organization

Each RAID cell is a self-contained group comprised of a Prime, several research scientists, and a host of RAIDer agents. Each Prime reports directly to the Alpha Inquisitor (the supreme leader of RAID), and the cells coordinate their efforts through him. While there are at least three active RAID cells operating in Stark City (and primarily Tesla Park) at any given time, the organization has expanded to a worldwide operation that, if left unchecked, could topple the balance of power throughout the world.

## RAID Headquarters

### Aspects

Hidden Under Dry Cleaner  
Sprawling Complex  
Super-Science Labs  
Uniformed Minions on Standby

RAID cells are independent and usually operate out of discreet safehouses or business locations established as fronts for their criminal activities. The central RAID HQ in Tesla Park, for example, is in an underground bunker underneath Sudsy Malone's, a laundry and dry cleaning business that caters to the techie crowd in Tesla Park. Sudsy Malone's specializes in delivering clean clothes to customers' offices (which allows RAID operatives who work as delivery drivers a chance to scout out prospective targets).

The HQ is the heart of RAID's criminal and scientific operations. Dozens of super-science labs are hard at work expanding the organization's wealth of bleeding-edge scientific knowledge. Squads of uniformed RAID agents are on alert, ready to provide backup to field operations.

## The Big Secret

While former supervillain and current leading Stark City industrialist, Mr. Mayhem (aka Reginald Coakley), has apparently reformed, his associates from his previous career largely have not.

The Inner Council of RAID is the guiding leadership behind all of the cells. They are Mr. Mayhem's old henchmen from his criminal days. The supreme leader of RAID (the Alpha Inquisitor) is an android with a sophisticated prototype AI that Mayhem was working on before he was arrested.

After realizing that Mayhem's arrest left a power vacuum, the android took control of Mayhem's organization and reshaped it by hiring an army of covert operatives and recruiting dozens of disaffected scientists from all fields of study.

While many RAID operatives are passionate about the party line about "tearing down the old, oppressive global hegemony and replacing it with a utopia that enriches all of its citizens through the bounties of technology and science," it is just a convenient cover story concocted by the Alpha Inquisitor. The Inner Council is interested only in their own financial gain, while the Alpha Inquisitor, the driving force behind RAID, has his own separate agenda.

His goal is simply to construct a criminal organization that's sufficiently wealthy, dangerous, and influential to be worthy of its "father," Mr. Mayhem. However, perhaps due to a flaw in his AI, that point always seems to be beyond the horizon, after the next big heist.

# Alpha Inquisitor

**Origin:** Artificial

## Abilities

Prowess 6  
Coordination 4  
Strength 8  
Intellect 7  
Awareness 4  
Willpower 4  
  
Stamina 12  
Determination \*

## Specialties

Computers  
Drive  
Martial Arts  
Mechanics  
Science (as needed) Expert  
Pilot  
Weapons (Gyrocom)

## Powers

Damage Resistance Device 3 - Encounter Suit (Armor)  
Life Support Device 7 [Breathing, Cold, Heat, Pressure, Radiation, Toxins, Vacuum] - Encounter Suit (Environmental Protection Suit)  
Binding Device 5 - Gyrocom (Hand-Held Micro-Missile Launcher Sample Ammo Type 1)  
Blast (Shooting) Device 5 - Gyrocom (Hand-Held Micro-Missile Launcher Sample Ammo 2)  
Blast (Shooting) Device 3 [Extra: Burst] - Gyrocom (Hand-Held Micro-Missile Launcher Sample Ammo 3)  
Interface Device 5 [Extra: Broadcast] - RAIDER-COM Wristband  
Machine Control Device 5 [Extras: Machine Assembly, Machine Shaping] - RAIDER-COM Wristband Transform (People) 5 - Mimic People

## Aspects (Qualities/Challenges)

Sometimes the Only Way to Save Something Is to Start Over  
More Human Than Human  
No One Must Know My Secret

**Prime:** The leaders of the individual RAID Cells, the Primes use their charisma and influence to ensure that the rank and file follow their lead. They not only lead each cell, but are responsible for the research that is carried out under their watch. One part scientist, one part strategist, each Prime is a force to be reckoned with.

# Prime

## Abilities

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

Stamina 6  
Determination \*

## Specialties

Computers  
Leadership  
Mechanics  
Science (as needed) Expert

## Powers

Damage Resistance Device 3 - Encounter Suit (Armor)  
Life Support Device 7 [Breathing, Cold, Heat, Pressure, Radiation, Toxins, Vacuum] - Encounter Suit (Environmental Protection Suit)  
Interface Device 5 [Extra: Broadcast] - RAIDER-COM Wristband  
Machine Control Device 5 [Extras: Machine Assembly, Machine Shaping] - RAIDER-COM Wristband

## Aspects (Qualities/Challenges)

For Science!  
Loyal to RAID

# RAIDer Agent

## Raid Shock Troops

### Abilities

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

Stamina 7  
Determination \*

### Specialties

Athletics  
Drive  
Science (as needed) Expert  
Pilot  
Weapons (Gyrocom)

### Powers

Damage Resistance Device 3 - Encounter Suit (Armor)  
Life Support Device 7 [Breathing, Cold, Heat, Pressure, Radiation, Toxins, Vacuum] - Encounter Suit (Environmental Protection Suit)  
Binding Device 5 - Gyrocom (Hand-Held Micro-Missile Launcher Sample Ammo Type 1)  
Blast (Shooting) Device 5 - Gyrocom (Hand-Held Micro-Missile Launcher Sample Ammo 2)  
Blast (Shooting) Device 3 [Extra: Burst] - Gyrocom (Hand-Held Micro-Missile Launcher Sample Ammo 3)

### Aspects (Qualities/Challenges)

For Science!  
Loyal to RAID



CITY NIGHT  
50/50  
RAFFLE  
SEPTEMBER 11  
6:30-10:30PM

# ATOMIC GIRL vs. THE TESLACRATIC INVASION!



Atomic Girl, help!  
This wierdo is  
going to ruin our  
picnic!

That's no ordinary  
wierdo; that's a  
member of the  
Teslacracy!  
This may ruin  
EVERYONE'S  
picnic!

In just a few minutes,  
I can stabilize this  
portal and my dimensional  
brethren can begin the  
invasion!



We'll just see  
about that!  
Take THIS!



OOF!

## CRASH!

That green-haired trollop  
is strong, but only gave me  
a glancing blow. I'll just --



What could  
this be?  
Such a colorful  
package!



I say!  
This golden  
cake is one of  
the most delicious  
foods I have  
ever tasted!

I must tell the others in the  
Teslacracy. This world must be  
preserved for the sake of  
these Fainting Goat Snack Cakes.

There are  
so many  
flavors yet  
to be tried!



## VORP!

The portal is  
closing! You did it,  
Atomic Girl!

It wasn't just me. It was those  
wonderful bakers at the  
Fainting Goat Snack Cake  
bakeries. Now our picnic will  
be even sweeter!

Especially now  
that we have  
some cakes of  
our own! Yum!

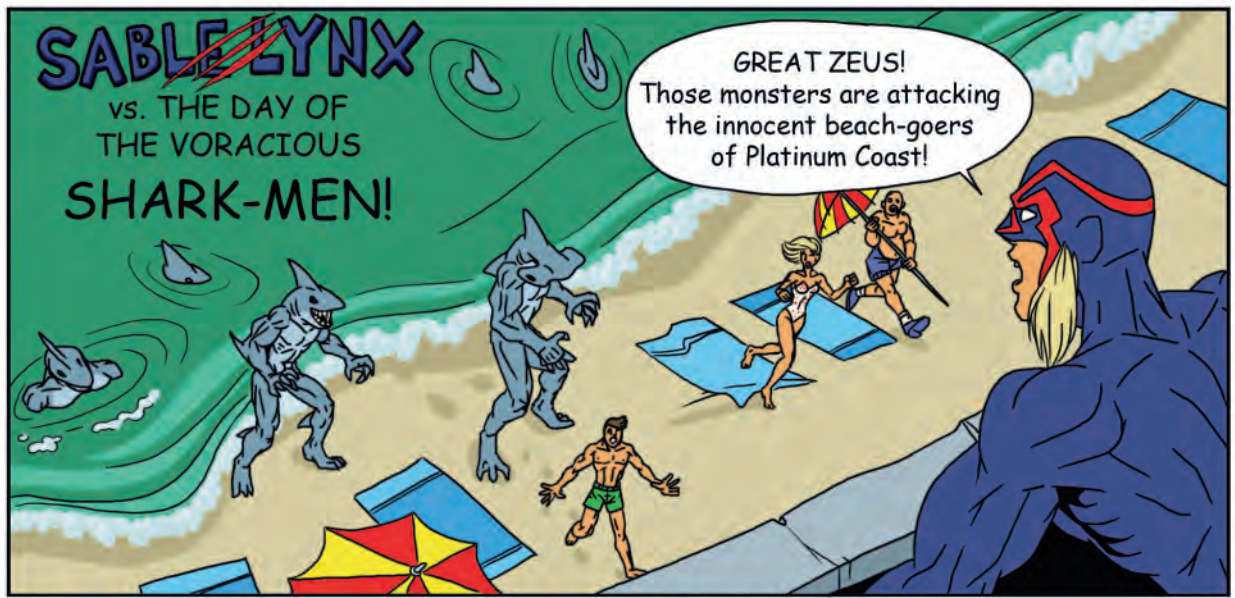
Enjoy all the wonderful  
flavors of Fainting Goat  
Snack Cakes. A golden cake  
with a creamy filling is  
waiting for you!

NO  
LAFFING

EINSTEIN'S  
SISTER  
NEW

Live At  
here

CITY NIGHT  
50/50  
RAFFLE  
SEPTEMBER 11  
4:30-10:30PM



# SABLE LYNX

vs. THE DAY OF  
THE VORACIOUS  
SHARK-MEN!

GREAT ZEUS!  
Those monsters are attacking  
the innocent beach-goers  
of Platinum Coast!



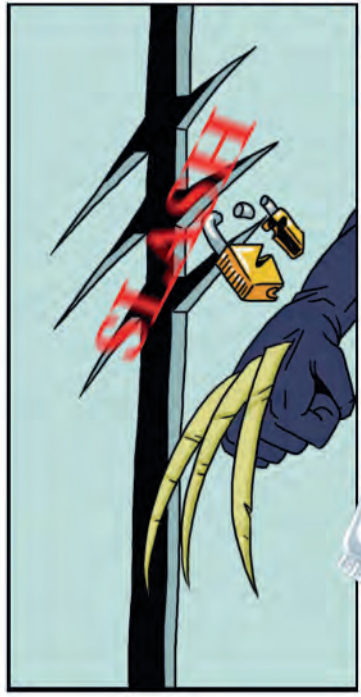
HA!  
Look at them run!  
With the people of  
Platinum Coast gone,  
their wealth will belong  
to MAKO!



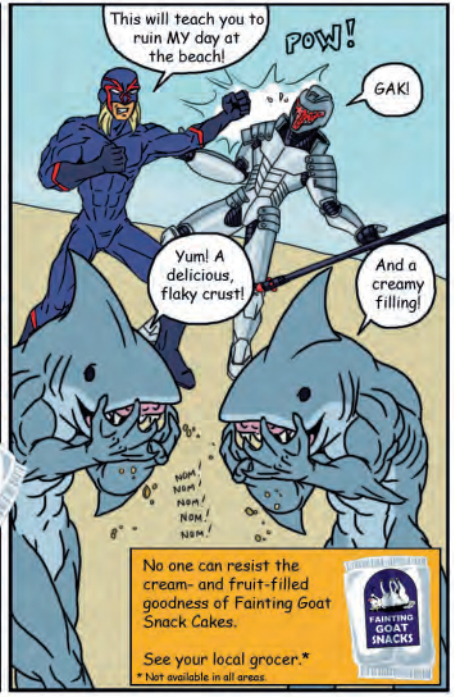
I've gotta work fast!  
I can't hold off this  
feeding frenzy  
with my claws...



Unless...



Chock! Berry! Banana!  
Not even these Shark-Men  
can resist these delicious  
flavors!



This will teach you to  
ruin MY day at  
the beach!

POW!

GAK!

Yum! A delicious,  
flaky crust!

And a creamy  
filling!

No one can resist the  
cream- and fruit-filled  
goodness of Fainting Goat  
Snack Cakes.  
See your local grocer.\*  
\* Not available in all areas



TV NIGHT  
50/50  
RAFFLE  
SEPTEMBER 11  
8:00-10:30PM

**FROGGER VS THE TENTACLED HORROR**  
JFB

**GRAWR!**

AAAAAHHH! Help Meeeee!

Holy Cow! That tentacle monster is attacking that innocent, teenage school girl! Time to hop to it!

Wowch! Too many eyes! Too many tentacles! I can't get close!

EEE!

SHNACKUM!

I think I have just the thing for this... thing...  
\*sigh\*

Not even this mutant can resist the sweet, cream-filled goodness of these Fainting Goat Snack Cakes!

It worked! The thing let her go and is going for the snacks!

Thanks for the help, Frogger!

And the snacks! Let's go eat some, boyfriend!

**NOOOOO!**  
When will I get the girl?

You, too, will love every bite of our Fainting Goat Snack Cakes! Try every flavor!

THE  
IDIO  
AND

Live At  
here

LAFFING

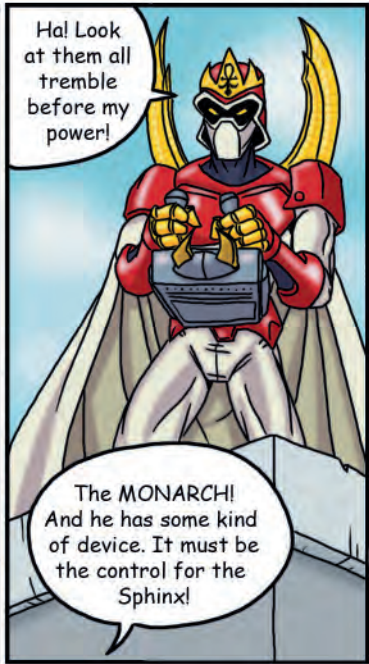
EINSTEIN'S  
SISTER  
NEW



MIDNIGHT  
MOTH  
VS. THE SPHINX  
AT THE MONARCH

Holy cow!  
A giant robotic SPHINX  
is destroying the city!  
All those innocent people...  
I have to do something!

MROWR!



Ha! Look  
at them all  
tremble  
before my  
power!

The MONARCH!  
And he has some kind  
of device. It must be  
the control for the  
Sphinx!



Stop right there,  
Monarch! You'll drop  
that control if  
you know what's good  
for you!

Not one step closer,  
Midnight Moth, or I'll have my  
Sphinx destroy even more of  
Stark City's streets!  
Nothing can make me drop  
this control device!



Not even the sweet,  
sweet goodness of  
this Fainting Goat  
Snack Cake?



A golden cake  
with a creamy  
filling? This  
is delicious!



Now who's in control,  
sucka? This giant  
kitty is getting  
collared!



I can tell you for a fact:  
crime doesn't pay.  
But these snack cakes  
will always make the day  
a little tastier!

Mrowr?

No one can  
resist the  
flavor of  
Fainting Goat.  
Why should you?



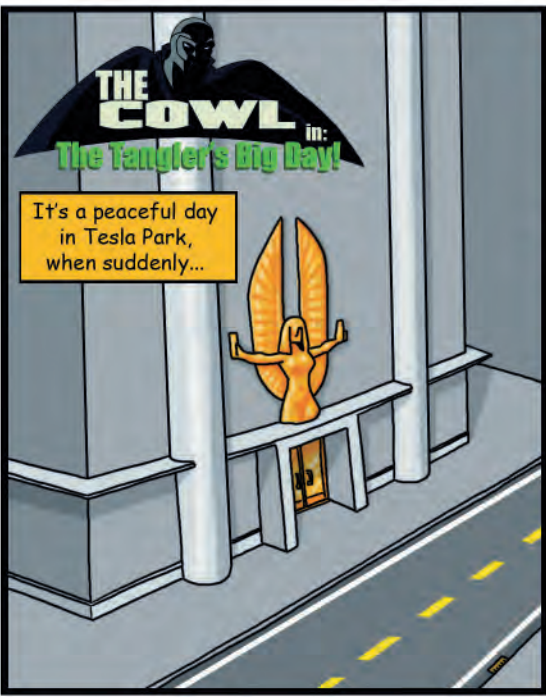
WAX  
RADIO  
STATION

Live At  
here

LAFFING

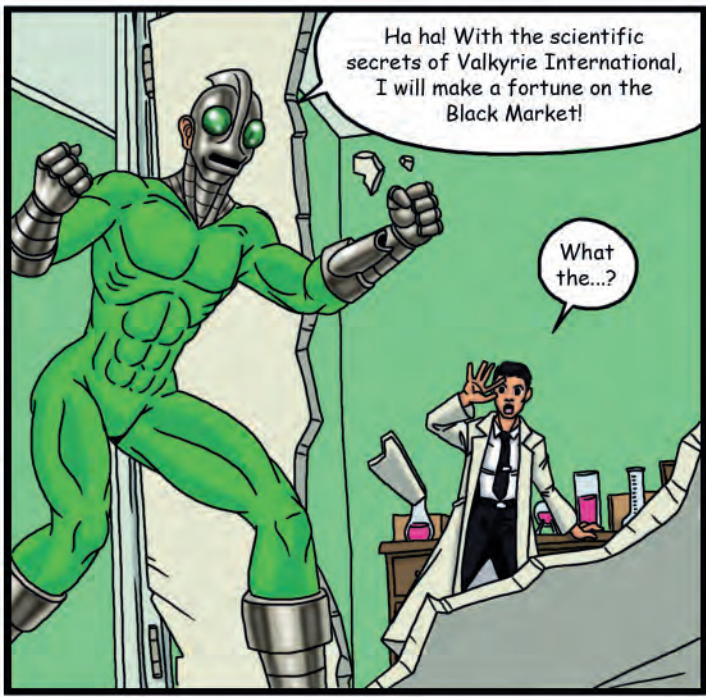
EINSTEIN'S  
SISTER  
NEW

TV NIGHT  
50/50  
RAFFLE  
SEPTEMBER 11  
7:00-10:30PM



**THE COWL** in:  
**The Tangler's Big Day!**

It's a peaceful day in Tesla Park, when suddenly...



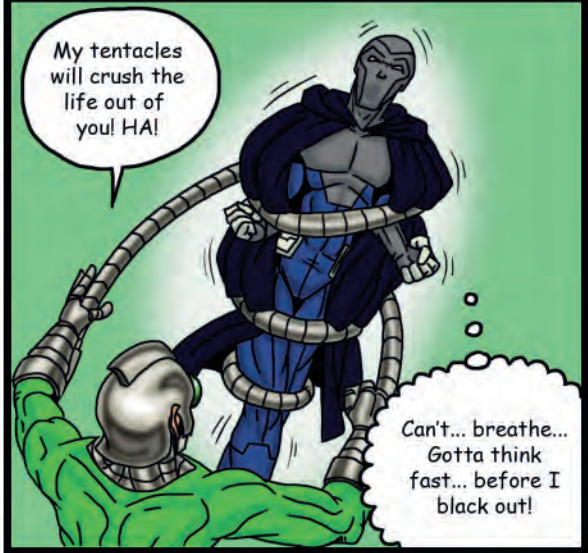
Ha ha! With the scientific secrets of Valkyrie International, I will make a fortune on the Black Market!

What the...?



Stop right there, Tangler!

The Cowl! I was waiting for you!



My tentacles will crush the life out of you! HA!

Can't... breathe... Gotta think fast... before I black out!



These steel tentacles are the perfect conductor for my taser gauntlet.

**ZARK!**

BDWAAAAH!



This calls for a celebration! Fainting Goat Snack Cakes are the perfect end to a perfect day!

They're so delicious! A golden cake with a sweet, creamy filling!

Thanks, Cowl!

You will love every bite of our Fainting Goat Snack Cakes.



Live At here

LAFFING

EINSTEIN'S  
SISTER  
NEW



**Butte** is an old suburb (once the township of *Faye Butte*) and is home to the huge 'Jefferson Valley' shopping mall. Much of the old town has been lost in development but a few architectural gems remain.

**Mercy Hill** is home to Mercy, St Barnabus, and Mount Zion Hospitals and the staff that serve them and is currently the center of home renovation projects and infrastructure expansions.

**Lincoln** (once the village of Lincolnshire) is home to the Lake City Legends football team at 'Phoenix Energy Park'. The suburb has a charming character and is home to some of the city's best family run restaurants.

**St. Lucia** was originally a larger suburb settled by those citizens hailing from former French colonies and Italy but now has a mixture of cultures within its borders. Further subdivision took place in the 50's and 60's to deal with an influx of eastern European migrants fleeing persecution leading to the establishment of **Plotrville** (named after a venerated Catholic priest who cared for all in his charge regardless of faith). We know it today by the wonderfully exotic markets and the name '**Little Russia**'.

**Taylor Park** is an exclusive neighbourhood and is one of the largest gated communities in America. It is also home to Blaise Manor, a family home built by the industrialist Charles Blaise in 1921 and is still inhabited by his descendant.

**Wellingboro'** is another village incorporated into the city proper. It has a series of streets custom built by the rich inhabitants and is filled with houses by design and the well heeled sections of society. While they don't have the views that Lakeview has, they make up for it in faux civil war palatial mansions.

**Morgan Park** is one of those rare little gems usually found in cities to the east; a living community in an unspoilt olde-world setting. It is a Bohemian district filled with galleries, cafes, bars, and artists commune, the city's zoo, and has many fine restaurants from vegan to vietnamese. While rents are affordable many loft spaces are highly sought after for art space. To keep this district's character intact the city operates a rent control scheme here.

**Gregory Woods** is a light industrial/retail zone on the edge of the city. Many bulk-buy stores thrive here and there are also movie theaters and a small theme park.

**Willemton** is an outlying town of good folk and is seen by most Starkans as being part of the city. It has fine restaurants and a motel.



Pergamon City Guides

226 Moore Ave.  
Morgan Park,  
Stark City 18569  
898.555.1244  
898.555.1243 fax  
info@PCGG.com

## Stark City

For a city of five million people, Stark City still feels like a village in some cherished areas. Starkans still hold onto a provincial and humble attitude that makes the city a delight to visit.

Known for its many convention centers, theaters, and bars, it holds much to charm the fun loving weekend visitor and is home to both centers of learning, science, commerce, media, and some of the nations best loved heroes.

Visit Stark City and discover your city by the lake.

Your essential guide to Stark City & its people.

A Civic Guide

# Stark City

The Home of Heroes  
Beside Stark City Lake



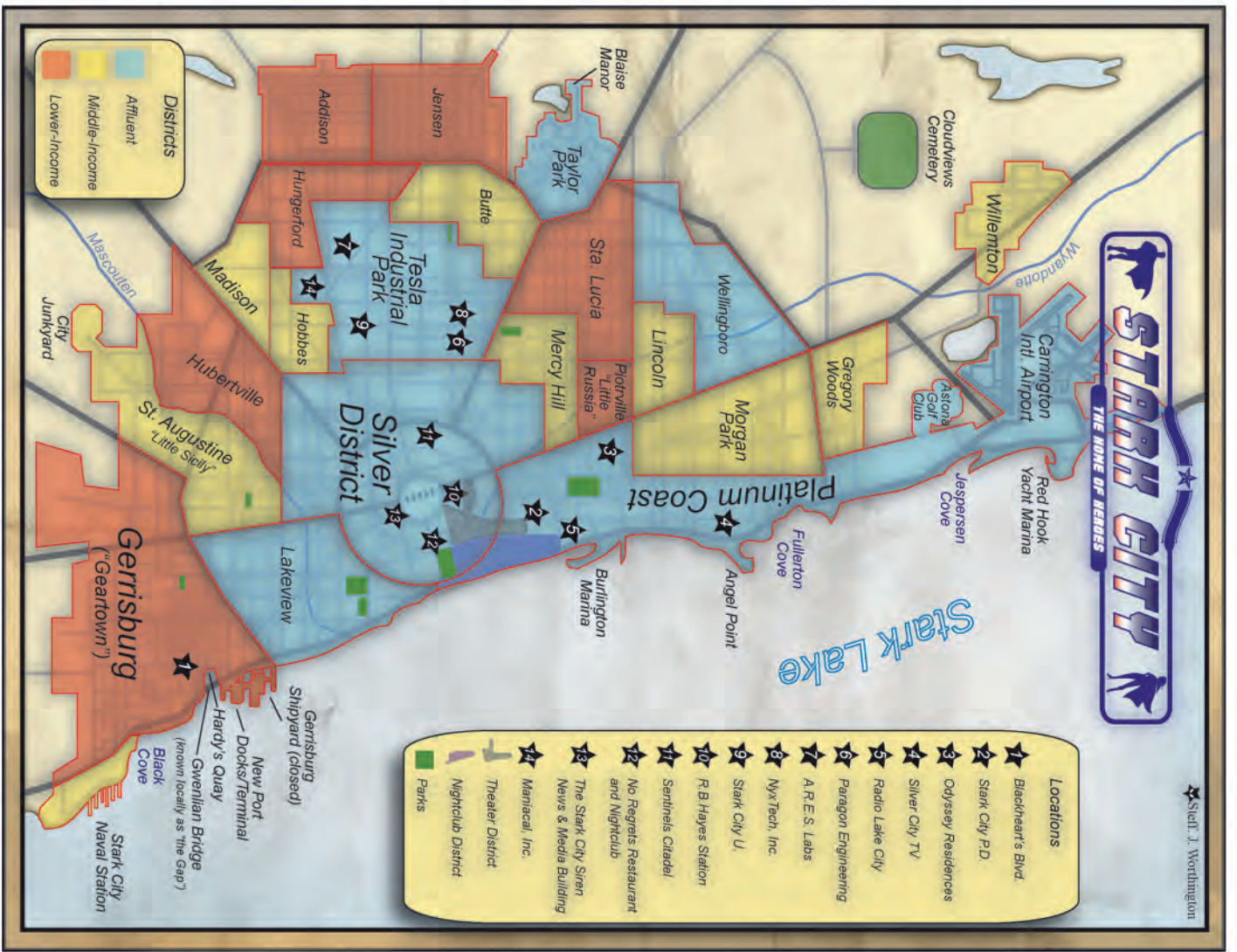
9



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## Stark City Communities

Many varied types of people contribute to Stark City's busy lifestyle and many of those have carved out their own unique niche in the city.

**Gerrisburg**, known as 'Geartown' due to its past industry, is the south-east most suburb of the city. It hugs the coastline of Stark Lake and was once a thriving area while ship-building was still a business in the midwest.

**Platinum Coast** is the vibrant, wealthy part of town where nightclubbers and theater-goers rub elbows with celebrities.

**Silver District** is the heart of downtown Stark City. Skyscrapers, government buildings, and major corporations crowd the skyline here. The economic powerhouse of the mid-west.

**Tesla Technology Park** is the Research and Development business sector. Lots of laboratories and high tech firms are based here such as A.R.I.E.S. Labs & Paragon engineering. Stark

City University at Tesla is also situated here close to the colourful student 'village' of **Hobbes**.

### Other Districts

**Lakeview** is the upmarket residential area that overlooks the lake and is home to many who hold good jobs in the Silver District.

**St. Augustine** is an old middle class suburb known for its colourfully painted wooden houses facing Lakeview and the Silver District and for being the vibrant heart of the local Italian community.

**Hubertville & Hungerford** were once a single suburb known as Winderley before the boundaries were redrawn in the 70's. Both are working class areas now separated by relatively new light manufacturing and middle income suburb of **Madison** created during the automotive boom of the late 70's. The car firm Harusha has its main US plant there.

**Jensen & Addison** are responses to overcrowding problems in the late 60's and many of the city's manual workforce live here.

## Travel Links

By air the city is served by the Carrington International Airport

By Grey Hare bus outside R.B. Hayes Rail

By Rail at the R. B. Hayes Rail terminal on R.B. Hayes Blvd. R.B. Hayes station provides rail travel heading outside the city, while Stark Central Station (in the same complex) is the hub for the city's elevated commuter train system

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NO  
LAFFING

EINSTEIN'S  
SISTER  
NEW

STARK CITY  
HERSMEN  
AT  
50/50  
RAFFLE  
11  
PM

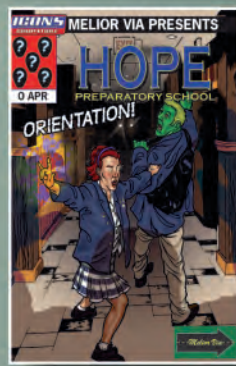
# HOPE

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With great power comes ...



a whole lot of homework.



A teen supers setting for ICONS from:



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NEW

# WELCOME TO THE CITY

The Stark City Campaign Setting and City Building Toolkit is a sourcebook for the *Icons Superpowered Roleplaying* game describing the action packed locations to use in your games.

Included inside are:

An overview of the city's most prominent locations, businesses, law enforcement agencies, and villainous organizations.

A history of Stark City complete with a full timeline of events.

Tips for integrating characters into the city by using specific challenges linked to Stark City itself.

Stark City is designed to be a place where the players are the predominant superhero team.

ICONIC Settings rules allow GMs to create new neighborhoods, cities, planets or dimensions.

**So suit up, heroes!  
Danger lurks in every  
corner of Stark City,  
and it's your job to stop it!**

